

# We Were Moving Indians

## Introduction

Welcome to the vibrant and ever-changing city of Calcutta, a place where the past and the present collide, where tradition and modernity coexist, and where the sacred and the secular intertwine. In this book, we will embark on a journey through the rich history, culture, and people of Calcutta, exploring its many facets and complexities.

Calcutta, once the capital of British India, played a pivotal role in the Indian independence movement. The city was a hotbed of political activity and intellectual discourse, and its citizens were at the forefront of the struggle for freedom. After independence, Calcutta continued to be a major center of commerce, industry, and culture. However, the city also faced numerous

challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and political instability.

In recent years, Calcutta has undergone a remarkable transformation. The city has experienced a surge in economic growth, and its infrastructure has been significantly improved. New businesses and industries have sprung up, and the city has become a major hub for information technology. Despite these positive developments, Calcutta still faces significant challenges, including air pollution, traffic congestion, and a lack of affordable housing.

Calcutta is a city of contrasts. It is a city of wealth and poverty, of modernity and tradition, of the East and the West. It is a city of temples and mosques, of skyscrapers and slums, of busy markets and quiet neighborhoods. Calcutta is a city that is constantly evolving, a city that is always changing.

In this book, we will explore the many different facets of Calcutta. We will learn about its history, its culture,

its people, and its challenges. We will also look at the city's future and consider the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Calcutta is a city that is full of life, a city that is full of stories. This book is an invitation to discover the magic of Calcutta, a city that will leave an indelible mark on your soul.

## Book Description

**We Were Moving Indians** takes you on a captivating journey through the vibrant and ever-changing city of Calcutta, a place where the past and the present collide, where tradition and modernity coexist, and where the sacred and the secular intertwine.

In this comprehensive and engaging book, we delve into the rich history, culture, and people of Calcutta, exploring its many facets and complexities. From its humble beginnings as a small fishing village to its rise as the capital of British India and its subsequent transformation into a modern metropolis, Calcutta's story is one of resilience, innovation, and cultural diversity.

We walk through the city's bustling streets, visiting its iconic landmarks, including the Victoria Memorial, the Howrah Bridge, and the Dakshineswar Kali Temple. We meet its people, from the street vendors and rickshaw

drivers to the poets and artists who call Calcutta home. We learn about the city's unique cuisine, its vibrant music scene, and its rich literary tradition.

But Calcutta is also a city of contrasts. It is a city of wealth and poverty, of modernity and tradition, of the East and the West. It is a city of temples and mosques, of skyscrapers and slums, of busy markets and quiet neighborhoods. Calcutta is a city that is constantly evolving, a city that is always changing.

In this book, we explore both the triumphs and the challenges that Calcutta has faced over the years. We examine the city's role in the Indian independence movement, its struggles with poverty and unemployment, and its recent economic resurgence. We also look at the city's future and consider the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

**We Were Moving Indians** is an invitation to discover the magic of Calcutta, a city that will leave an indelible mark on your soul. Whether you are a first-time visitor

or a lifelong resident, this book will give you a new appreciation for the vibrancy, the resilience, and the beauty of this extraordinary city.

# Chapter 1: Life in Colonial Calcutta

## The British Raj in Calcutta

Calcutta, the bustling capital of British India, stood as a testament to the power and influence of the British Empire. The city's streets were a tapestry of cultures, where Indian traditions intermingled with British customs. The British Raj had left an indelible mark on Calcutta, shaping its architecture, its institutions, and its social fabric.

The British first arrived in Calcutta in the 17th century as traders. Over time, they expanded their presence and eventually established the East India Company, which ruled large parts of India for over two centuries. The company's headquarters were located in Calcutta, and the city became the nerve center of British rule in India.

The British Raj brought about many changes to Calcutta. The city's infrastructure was improved with

the construction of roads, railways, and bridges. New schools and hospitals were built, and the city's economy flourished. Calcutta became a major center of commerce and trade, attracting merchants and traders from all over the world.

However, the British Raj also had a negative impact on Calcutta. The city's traditional industries were disrupted, and many Indians were forced to work in low-paying jobs. The British also imposed heavy taxes on the Indian population, which led to widespread poverty and discontent.

The British Raj also brought about social and cultural changes to Calcutta. The British introduced their own customs and traditions, which gradually began to blend with Indian culture. The city became a melting pot of different cultures, and a new hybrid culture emerged.

The British Raj left a lasting legacy on Calcutta. The city's architecture, its institutions, and its culture all bear the imprint of British rule. Even after India gained



independence in 1947, Calcutta continued to be influenced by its colonial past.

The British Raj was a complex and controversial period in Calcutta's history. It brought about both positive and negative changes to the city. However, there is no doubt that the British Raj left an indelible mark on Calcutta, and its legacy can still be seen today.

# Chapter 1: Life in Colonial Calcutta

## Society and Culture of Colonial Calcutta

Calcutta, the capital of British India, was a city of contrasts. It was a city of wealth and poverty, of modernity and tradition, of the East and the West. The British Raj had a profound impact on the city's society and culture.

The British introduced a new system of government, law, and education. They also brought with them their own customs and traditions, which clashed with those of the Indian population. The result was a complex and often contradictory society, where the old and the new existed side by side.

One of the most visible changes brought about by the British was the introduction of Western-style education. The British established schools and colleges that taught English and other Western subjects. This led to the rise of a new class of educated Indians who

were fluent in English and familiar with Western culture.

The British also introduced a new system of law and government. They established courts and police forces, and they introduced a system of taxation. These changes were often unpopular with the Indian population, who felt that they were being treated as second-class citizens.

Despite the many changes brought about by the British, many aspects of Indian culture remained intact. The caste system continued to play a major role in society, and traditional festivals and rituals were still widely observed. The British also adopted some Indian customs, such as the use of servants and the practice of polygamy.

The society and culture of colonial Calcutta was a complex and fascinating mix of East and West. It was a city where the old and the new, the traditional and the

modern, coexisted in a sometimes uneasy but always dynamic relationship.

The British Raj also had a profound impact on the culture of Calcutta. The city became a center of Western learning and culture. It was home to some of the finest schools and colleges in India, and it was a major center for the arts and literature. Calcutta was also a major center of political activity. It was the birthplace of the Indian National Congress, and it was the scene of many important political demonstrations and protests.

The society and culture of colonial Calcutta were complex and ever-changing. The city was a microcosm of India itself, a place where the old and the new, the traditional and the modern, came together in a fascinating and often contradictory mix.

**This extract presents the opening three sections of the first chapter.**

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## Chapter 10: A City of Contrasts

### The Past and the Future

Calcutta is a city of contrasts, where the past and the future coexist in a unique and fascinating way. On the one hand, the city is steeped in history and tradition. Its colonial-era buildings, its bustling markets, and its ancient temples are a testament to its rich past. On the other hand, Calcutta is also a city that is constantly evolving. New skyscrapers are springing up, new businesses are opening, and the city is becoming a major hub for technology and innovation.

This juxtaposition of the past and the future is one of the things that makes Calcutta such a vibrant and exciting city. It is a city where you can experience the best of both worlds. You can visit the historic sites and learn about the city's rich history, or you can explore the new developments and see how Calcutta is shaping the future.

One of the most striking examples of the contrast between the past and the future in Calcutta is the city's architecture. The city is home to some of the finest examples of colonial architecture in India, including the Victoria Memorial and the Writers' Building. These buildings are a reminder of Calcutta's past as the capital of British India. However, the city is also home to some of the most modern architecture in India, including the Howrah Bridge and the Salt Lake Stadium. These buildings are a symbol of Calcutta's growing economic power and its ambition to become a global city.

Another example of the contrast between the past and the future in Calcutta is the city's culture. Calcutta is a city with a rich cultural heritage. It is the birthplace of some of India's most famous writers, artists, and musicians. The city is also home to a number of museums and art galleries, which showcase the city's rich cultural history. However, Calcutta is also a city that is constantly changing. New trends are emerging,

and the city's culture is constantly evolving. This is due in part to the city's large and diverse population, which includes people from all over India and the world.

The contrast between the past and the future is also evident in Calcutta's economy. The city is home to a number of traditional industries, such as textiles and jute. However, the city is also becoming a major hub for information technology and other new industries. This is due in part to the city's large pool of educated workers and its strong infrastructure.

Calcutta is a city of contrasts, a city where the past and the future coexist in a unique and fascinating way. It is a city that is constantly evolving, a city that is always changing. This is what makes Calcutta such a vibrant and exciting city, a city that is full of life and energy.



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