CONTENTS

Preface ix - xiii
List of Abbreviations Used xiv
List of Figures xv - xviii
List of Plates xix - xxii
Map of today's West Bengal and Bangladesh, along with the historical extent of undivided Bengal xxiii

Introduction 1 - 6

I. Woodcarving in Bengal: a brief historical overview 7 - 36
Turning towards the history 9
Antiquity of the art of woodcarving in India 10
Indus Valley Civilisation (c 3500-2500 BC) 10; The Vedic period 11; Mahāvīra and Buddha (c 6-5 cent BC) 11; The Mauryas (c 322-184 BC) 12; The age of stupas (c 2-1 cent BC) 13; First and second centuries AD 15; Epigraphic and Textual evidences (c 3-11 cent AD) 16
Focusing towards the East 18
Woodcarving in Bengal - a brief historical overview 19
Pillar-capital from Sonarang (c 9-10/12-13 cent AD) 19; Specimens from Arial (c 10-12 cent AD) 20; ‘Surasundari’ from Kaji-Kasba (c 11/12 cent AD) 21; Wooden pillars from Rampal (c 11/12/12-13 cent AD) 22; Pillars from north Kaji-Kasba (c 12 cent AD) 24; Wooden lintel from Natevar (pre-Islamic era) 25; Wooden panel from Bengal-Tibet border (c 13 cent AD) 26; Reference from the medieval texts (c 13-14 cent AD) 28; Fragments of pillar from Satksira (c 14-15 cent AD) 26; Wooden pillar from Pandua (c 16 cent AD) 27; Reference to Pratapaditya (c 1581-1611 AD) 28; Seventeenth century AD 28; Eighteenth century AD - the legacy continues 33
Summing up 34

II. Wooden Idols of West Bengal: antiquity of traditional excellence 37 - 108
Turning towards the East 39
The wooden idols of Bengal 39
Pre-Islamic era (c 9-13 cent AD): the pan-Indian phenomenon 40

The Buddhist legacy 41
Buddhist Tārā from Kanheri (c 9-10 cent AD) 41; Mahāvīr from Rampal (c 11 cent AD) 43; Loknāth from Tongibari (c 11 cent AD) 44

Viśnū of Bhāgavat 45
Yaśo Mädhav 47; Viṣṇu from Krisnapur (c 12-13 cent AD) 48; Viṣṇu-on-Garūr from Goda (c 12-13 cent AD) 49

Garūr – the everlasting iconography 51

Thirteen to fifteen centuries AD: the age of transformation 53
Tripurasūdhar of Boral 56; Balaram of Boro 58; Kṛṣṇa of Krisnapur/Kestapur 59; Sthābhyātin of Nijaibalia 60

Fifteen-sixteen centuries AD 62
Jagannāth-triad of Mahesh 62; ‘Dadhibaman’ of Jashora 63; Madanmohan of Rudrani 64

Advent of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu (c 1486-1534 AD) 66

Sixteenth century AD 68
Kṛṣṇa in various forms – single, dual and triad 68:
Madangopal of Bhaita 70; Gopināth of Gopaladaspur 70; Sāmsundar of Hilsore and Sarveśā of Bajtipur 71; Rādhāvallabhā of Jainagar 73; Rādhāmādāvar 74; Sāmsundar of Durgapur 75; Gopāl, Rām (Balarām), Subhadra and Jagannāth of Bahir 76

Gauranga – the first deified human of Bengal 77
Gaurogopāl of Jashora 78; Gaurogopāl of Dvipa 80; Gauranga of Nabadvip 80; Katwa 81; Ekchakra 82; Śrīpāt Srikhanda 83; Tamāk 84

Nitai-Gaur – the new concept of duality 85
Nitai-Gaur of Śrīpāt Atisara 85; Simurali 86; Madanpur 87; Pal-pātā 88; Krisnapur 89; Jabigram 90; Ambika-Kalna 92

The Śākta phenomenon 93

Cīteśvarī of Cossipore 93; Kāli of Faratabad 94

Sixteenth-seventeenth century 96
Barkim/Bānkā Rāy of Veerchandrapur 96; Venugopāl from Kansat 97; Jagannāth-triad of Guptipara 98; Jayceand of Jainagar 99

Seventeenth century: the Vaishnava legacy and beyond 99
Rādha Rāj of Gopaladaspur 101; Śaṅkhu Nitai-Gaur from Tejpal 101; Nityananda, Śaṅkhu Gauranga and Gadadhar Das of Saptagram 102; Dhavanārād Kāli of Majilpur 103

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries 104
Raghubhīth of Guptipara 106; Rādhākānta of Katwa 106

Summing up 107

II. Wooden Idols: a list of existing specimens in West Bengal 109 - 145
Kolkata 109; South 24 Parganas 113; Howrah 119; East Medinipur 123; West Medinipur 125; Bankura 128; Hooghly 129; North 24 Parganas 133; Nadia 134; Bardhaman 137; Birbhum 141; Murshidabad 143; Jalpaiguri 144; Number of Wooden Idols in the districts 145

IV. The Technology: 146 - 170
The medium 146
The artist 152
’Sūtradrh’ in Indian art 153; Sūtradrhars of Bengal 155; Wooden Idols of West Bengal and the Sūtradrhars 156; ‘Thāk’ of Sūtradrhars 157; Sūtradrh and the society today 158; Important centres 160

Technique 163
Seasoning of wood 163; Carving tools 165; Carving technique 166; Chiseling of eyes 167; Joining of limbs 167; Making the surface smooth 168; Colouring 169

Summing up 170

V. The Visual Splendour: 171 - 203
Aesthetic significance 171
The pan-Indian aesthetics 172
Rasa 172; Tāla-Māna 174; Ākṛti and Prakṛti 178; Bhāv and Bhāṅgi 180;
Painting the sculpture 182
The age of transformation 183
The renaissance 186