CHAPTER-I
LIFE AND WORKS OF HARAPRASAD SHAstri

1.1 Birth and ancestry

Mahamahopaddhay Haraprasad Shastri was born on 6th December, 1853 A.D. at Naihati in North 24 Parganas District in West Bengal.

Ancestors of this famous academician family used to live at Kumira village of Jessore (later Khulna) district of undivided Bengal. The seventh forefather of his family, Rajendra Vidyalankar was the royal pandit at the court of the king of Naldanga in the later part of seventeenth century. From that time the members of this family have been practicing Sanskrit at the toll. The grand grandfather of Mahamahopaddhay Haraprasad Shastri, Pandit Manikya Tarkabhushan (1707-1806) left Kumira forever and settled at Naihati permanently. At that time many of the well-off and talented people started to gather in this locality with the hope of rapid development both in culture and economy.

Pandit Manikya Tarkabhushan became famous even when he opened a toll and started teaching Sanskrit and logic. The zamindar of Hali Shahar, Sabarna Santosh Roy Choudhury and the Maharaja of Nadia, Krishnachandra gave him some land. Gradually the popularity of Manikya Pundit spreaded over Naihati and Bhatpara. The judges and the administration of East India Company used to take help of Pandit Manikya Tarkabhushan for explanation of Hindu Law and Acts. Sir William Jones, (the founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal) the Honourable Judge at the Supreme Court, accepted some explanations made by Manikya Tarkabhushan. There after Tarkabhushan became famous in every sphere of Bengal.

Haraprasad hails from this prestigious family of Bengal, famous for their
scholarship and respected everywhere for their acceptance in administrative field. Once Shri Ramaprasad Roy, the brother of Raja Rammohan wrote:

‘As far as I have been able to trace, he is the seventh in succession to a line of Pundits renowned for their learning and piety in Bengal. At this moment I believe one half of the real Sanskrit celebrities in the country was students of his ancestors and no congregation of pundits on any religious festivals is considered complete in which his father (Ramkamal Nyayaratna) is not invited’.¹

1.2 Education:

Manikya Tarkabhushan had six sons. Among them, the third Shrinath Tarkalankar was more brilliant than others. But he died at the age of 30 only. His son Ramkamal Nyayaratna later became the greatest scholar of the family. Ramkamal also studied in the toll at their home. Ramkamal also had six sons -- named Nandakumar, Raghunath, Jadunath, Hemnath, Sharatnath and Meghnath. This very Sharatnath is our Haraprasad. Once, the little boy Sharatnath had a hard disease. When the doctors could not identify the disease and gave their hopes up, Ramkamal prayed to Lord Shiva (Hara) for his life. Anyway, after his gradual recovery Sharatnath was renamed Haraprasad.

Elder brother Nandakumar earned fame at an early age. He defied pandit Shri Ram Shiromoni in a scholastic debate only when he was Nineteen years old and established himself as a logician and pundit in the country. For some time, Nandakumar served at Sanskrit college as an Assistant Professor. After that he joined the post of Head pandit in the Kandi Government school in Murshidabad. Haraprasad accompanied his elder brother and was admitted in lower class of Kandi School. At that time also his name, as entered in the school register, was Sharatnath. But after only one year Nandakumar breathed his last without any succession. After that the family members returned to Naihati. Their family faced
a hard time after the untimely death of Nandakumar, as there was no earning member in the family. After few days of the sad demise of Nandakumar, their fourth brother Hemnath also died. After a long struggle their second and third brothers Raghunath and Jadunath respectively joined service. Meghnath, the younger brother of Haraprasad, joined a college in Jaipur, later he became the Vice-Principal of the said college.

Nandakumar’s untimely death pushed his family into distress. At that time their neighbour Tarak Sarkar extended his graceful helping hand to their family. Haraprasad showed a great respect to Mr. Sarkar and remembered his help for ever. Tarak Sarkar was Kayastha and they were Brahmins. At that time there was a rigid distinguishing line between two Barnas. Haraprasad did not mind to make the difference a least. They used to act as a united family with the least difference of Barnas.

In 1866, Vidyasagar took Haraprasad to the hostel at his own home and Admitted him to Sanskrit College. We know that Vidyasagar was much closed to Nandakumar. Now Haraprasad also wanted to light his lamp of knowledge from Vidyasagar’s magnificent talent. Though he was not the direct student of Vidyasagar, he was very much influenced by the great person’s knowledge and thought. In the formation of Haraprasad’s mental structure, taste of literature, Vidyasagar left a huge impression. At that time Bhatpara of Naihati was famous as a centre of teaching Sanskrit and logic in the tolls. The tolls as per the statement given by poet Dwijendralal Roy or Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy, were the centre for abusing the fertile brain of the Bengalese. Vidyasagar also realized so and advised Haraprasad to take Admission to an English school at Naihati, which was the first school in the region of its kind. Vidyasagar thought the old system of studying Sanskrit and practicing logic is not going to help a man of this time any more. So, he also suggested the English Governor to introduce English learning
in the country, which was also supported by Raja Rammohan Roy.

Haraprasad was not fortunate enough to study in their family toll, because it was no more there. From 1866 to 1877, Haraprasad studied in Sanskrit College. Though a small part of the period he spent in Presidency College. In Sanskrit College, Prasannakumar Sarbadhikary and Mahesh Chandra Nyayaratna were among his teachers. Prasannakumar was very expert in English and in Sanskrit also. Therefore, his student met their thirst of oriental and European literatures from him. Mahesh Chandra knew English very well though he came from a background of a toll-teaching. At that time the degree students of Sanskrit College used to attend the English classes in the Presidency College. So the students of Sanskrit College, enriched themselves with both the studies of Sanskrit and English. Haraprasad considered himself a student of Presidency College only, because -- ‘most of the part he was taught in Presidency. ²

He was promoted double classes twice, after taking admission in seventh class in Sanskrit College. Then he sat for entrance examination and was placed at 11th position and was awarded a scholarship of 14 rupees from the Government. He learned Raghubansha by heart when he was in class six. Here he got Ramnarayan Vidyaratna (নাটককে রামনারায়ণ) as his Sanskrit teacher. He was very much popular for his teaching in Sanskrit Kavyas among the students. Thus, in the very boyhood Haraprasad became a great devotee of great Kalidasa by attracting with the lectures of Ramnarayan, who was also a social reformer. His play, Kulin Kulsarbasva (কুলিন কুলসর্বস্ব), published in 1858, was against the child marriage and multi marriage system in Bengali society.

Professor Shyamacharan Ganguli also left an unerasable impression on the mind of Haraprasad. He was an English teacher but he had a profound knowledge in Bengali language and literature also. He, actually taught Haraprasad, how
to write a simple and modern Bengali and helped him to form his own writing style. We will come to this point once again later.

Haraprasad successfully passed his F.A. from Sanskrit College with scholarship and B.A. from Presidency College, securing 8th position. He passed M.A. in Sanskrit, Securing the first class alone. For this achievement he was awarded the title -- *Shastri*, Books of 250.00 Rupees as a prize and two other scholarships of Rupees fifty and Rupees twenty five each.

Now Haraprasad, being an heir of ancient Sanskrit culture of *toll Chatuspathi*, becomes the best product of the modern education and culture in Kolkata.

Haraprasad was a bit sorry for the discontinuation of the toll education and ancient Sanskrit culture. Rather he wanted the British government should modernize the Sanskrit and Arabic based oriental studies as has been done in the universities of Europe in medieval by practicing and modernizing the Latin. But Haraprasad’s this suggestion and hope was not realized for the British Government opposed it strongly through the charter of Education by Thomas Babington Macaulay -- “the mischief of in relegating Sanskrit and Arabic culture to a secondary place, and in not modernizing it [like what has been done in the medieval universities of Europe with the Latin culture] has been great.”

Haraprasad prepared himself as an essayist and creative writer. When Haraprasad Shastri was studying in F.A. the Maharaja Holker of Indore, visited the Sanskrit College in 1874, accompanied by Keshab Chandra Sen. Maharaja Holker announced a prize for the best essay writer among the students of the Sanskrit College. Keshab Chandra Sen explained the subject of the essay as ‘The Highest Ideal of Female Character as set forth in early Sanskrit works’. Essay
should be written in Bengali language. Haraprasad won the prize and while handling it over to Haraprasad, the Deputy Governor General praised him very much. The name of the essay he wrote was *Bharat Mahila*. After winning the prize Haraprasad wanted to see his essay in print. So he approached to Yogendranath Bandyopaddhay Vidyabhushan, the editor of *Arya Darshan*. Yogendranath did not accept it for his views were different from that of Haraprasad. After that Haraprasad met Bankim Chandra Chattopaddhay as he was advised by Rajkrishna Mukhopaddhay to do so. One day Rajkrishna Mukhopaddhay accompanied by Haraprasad visited Bankim Chandra at their house at Kanthalpara. Hearing everything Bankim told them to leave the essay with him. Later it was heard that Bankim Chandra was very much pleased to read it and appreciated Haraprasad as the introductory pages were silver only, but the part of the essay where Haraprasad expressed his own idea was pure gold:

...বক্তিম মনোযোগ দিয়া পাতা উক্টাইয়া পড়িতে লাগিলেন, চলিবে কিনা জিজ্ঞাসায়
উত্তর দিলেন যথা ছাপিতে গিয়াছে তাহা রূপা আর এগুলি কাঁচা সোনা।

[Bankimchandra started reading the pages carefully. He was asked, ‘How is it?’ Bankimchandra answered - ‘The pages have been sent for printing were silver only. But these pages are pure gold.’]

Bankimchandra also praised Shyamacharan Ganguly who took a great part to prepare Haraprasad in writing a quality Bengali.

Two other persons whose influence were embossed in Haraprasads life were Rajendralal Mitra (1822-1891) and Ramesh Chandra Dutta (1848-1909). Rajendralal Mitra, in his time itself was renowned for his writings on Indology. He was also the pioneer in the field of Oriental Studies in India. Rajendralal Mitra was working on various schemes on Indology and Oriental Studies in Asiatic Society of Bengal. He was in search of such a person who at the same time should be able to read and write fluently both in Sanskrit and English. Haraprasad Shastri was the most suitable person for the job, though he was very young at that time.
hence, Haraprasad became the assistant of Rajendralal Mitra in his projects like collection of manuscripts, preparation of a detailed catalogue of those collected manuscripts. This was the beginning of Haraprasad’s work. After the demise of Rajendralal Mitra, Haraprasad was appointed the Director of the Operation in Search of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Asiatic Society in the year of 1891. He prepared Descriptive Catalogue of ten thousand Sanskrit Manuscripts in fourteen volumes.

Haraprasad was praised highly by his guide Rajendralal Mitra in his book the Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal, published in 1882. Haraprasad wrote sixteen chapters and completed the book because of the illness of Rajendralal. In the introductory notes of this book Rajendralal expressed his deep gratitude to Haraprasad this way:

“I feel deeply obliged to him for the timely aid he rendered me and tender him my cordial acknowledgements for it. His thorough mastery of the Sanskrit language and knowledge of European literature fully qualified him for the task and he did his work to my entire satisfaction.”

Though Rajendralal Mitra influenced him a lot in moulding his own way, Haraprasad showed his individuality in some aspects:

[To collect the elements of history Rajendralal did not take interest in ancient literature. Though the impact of Rajendralal on Haraprasad was great. Lastly,
Rajendralal leaned to the evidence of stone and Haraprasad sunk himself into the sea of ancient literature.]

On the other hand Ramesh Chandra Dutta also acknowledged the contribution of Haraprasad in translating his *Rig-Veda Samhita* in 1885 - 87. In the introductory pages Ramesh Chandra Dutta writes:

> [I received enough help from my friend Haraprasad Shastri while I was doing the translation (of Rig Veda Samhita). Haraprasad has earned profundity in Sanskrit language and Hindu scriptures.]

As an Indologist he earned fame from home and abroad. He was one of the best products of the Renaissance of Bengal. Accepting the impressions of the renaisaance he became one of the first enlightened persons of Bengal. He preferred the path followed by the great sons of Bengal, like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasager, Rajendralal Mitra, Bankim Chandra Chattopaddhaya and so on who accepted the renaissance in Bengal positively and wanted to reform the society with the best fruits of the culture both of India and Europe. With other qualities, patriotism is reflected in the life and works of Haraprasad Shastri.

1.3 Family Life:

Haraprasad Shastri got married to Smt. Hemanta Kumari Devi. The second daughter of Roy Krishna Chandra Chattopaddhay Bahadur of Deyasin village, near Katwa, in Burdwan district. He was the Sub Judge of the said district.  

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He got married on the 9th March, 1878, the same day the Maharaja of Cooch Behar Kumar Naranarayan got married to Suniti Devi, daughter of Sri Keshab Chandra Sen, the leader of Brahma Samaj.

Anyway, Haraprasad and Hemanta Kumari had five sons and three daughters. The first among the children was Manorama. She got married to Bhuban Mohan Chattopaddhaya of Kumira. Later he became the district judge in Orissa. Second daughter Surabala was married to Sharat Chandra Chattopaddhay of Ranaghat. The third among the children was Santosh Bhattacharya. The eldest brother was an engineer and was posted at a Copper mine in Ghatshila; younger to him was Ashutosh Bhattacharya, he was an M.A., B.L. Third among the sons was Paritosh Bhattacharya. He was a contractor and had a similar look to his father. Binoytosh Bhattacharya, M.A., Ph.D, was the fourth son and was the Head Librarian at the Royal Baroda State Library. Younger to him was Sushama, third among the children, was married to Ashutosh Chattopaddhay of Gaya. The fifth among the sons, younger to Sushama was Kalitosh Bhattacharya -- M.Sc. he was an order supplier.

Binoytosh inherited the scholarship in Sanskrit but was not of the line of Haraprasad. Actually the inheritance of Ancient Sanskrit Scholarship of this family ended with Haraprasad:

“বিনয়তোষ সংস্কৃতজ বর্তে কিন্তু এই বংশের প্রাচীন পাদিতোর গৌরব শাখী মহাশয়েরই পর্যবিত্ত”

Haraprasad’s wife died in January 1908. He was a lady of aristocracy and spent their thirty years of married life happily.

Haraprasad Shastri was known popularly as an M.A. D.lit, FASB, FRAS, CIE. He was born on Tuesday, the 22nd Agrahayan 1260, the 6th December, 1853, in Naihati and breathed his last on the 1st Agrahayan, 1338, the 17th of November, at Pataldanga Street in Calcutta in 1931.
1.4 Service:

Haraprasad never tried for any administrative job. He joined *Hair School* as a Translation Master and Head Pundit on 6th February, 1878. He served *Hair School* till 24th January, 1883. In between he served the Lucknow *Canning College* for 13 months as a temporary lecturer in the place of Rajkumar Sarbadhikary who was on leave. On the way to Lucknow, Haraprasad visited Vidyasagar. He writes:

আমি লক্ষ্যের সংকৃত পড়াইতে যাইতেছি। এম,এ, ঝাসেও পড়াইতে হইবে
তিনি তিনি (বিদ্যাসাগর) একটি ভাবিত হইলেন, বলিলেন, “বই খানি বড় কঠিন।”
তিনি আমাকে হর্ষচরিত এবং অন্যান্য বই পড়াইবার কিছু কিছু কৌশল বলিয়া
দিলেন, তাহাতে আমার বেশ উপকার হইয়াছিল।

[I was going to Lucknow. I have to take classes with the M.A. students also, hearing it, Vidyasagar thought for a while and said that ‘Harshacharita’ is very hard ... he gave me some tips on teaching the book. It helped me a lot.]

He was elected the Commissioner of Naihati Municipality in 1880. Later he became the Vice-Chairman and also Chairman of the said Municipality.

Haraprasad was very close to his teacher Professor Mahesh Chandra Nyayaratna of Sanskrit College. In 1883, Ramnarayan Tarkaratna retired from the post of Lecturer in Sanskrit College and Haraprasad joined in the said post with the recommendation of his teacher Mahesh Chandra Nyayaratna. In that very year, on 25th September he was appointed the Assistant Translator in the Translation Department of Government of India. He took charge of the non-remunerative Magistrate of Naihati bench. Later, he was nominated the President of the bench. He was in the chair till 1927.

In 1886 he joined the post of Librarian of the *Bengal Library*. This was established under the Press and Registration of Books Act (Act XXV, 1867).

Haraprasad was elected the member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal as
supported by Rejendralal Mitra. Haraprasad helped him when he was writing *Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal* (1882) and was translating the *Gopala Tapani Upanishada* into English. Since then, Rajendralal Mitra became very close to him in various aspects. Any way, Haraprasad became the Librarian of the Bengal library as the Government took some policy to know the minds of the Indian common people:

"[The Britishers became conscious to know about the people and their mind in India. Taking an account of the literature of the time is one of the ways ... So, they thought it necessary that what kind of books are being published and what they expressing through it....]

So, this was a permanent settlement for collecting the information about the actual disposition of the mind of the people of India.

As the Librarian of the Bengal Library, Haraprasad had to prepare a catalogue quarterly and had to submit a report annually to the superior officer and to the Education Department. Some say that these reports carried some exclusive tendencies of its preparer.

Haraprasad Shastri served nine years in Bengal Library. He did not prepare a mere list of ordinary books. He used to categorize the books according to their subject. He used to arrange them as, Art, Biography, Drama, Novel, History, Geography, Language, Law, Medicine, Philosophy, Politics, Poetry, Religion, Science, Tourism, Journals and Miscellaneous -- categories. After arranging, he used to compose a summary of the book with his comments. Various approaches
of the book were brought out brightly with its merits and demerits. Satyajit Choudhury wrote:

[They just drew up a complete image of the literature published in that year in their report ... Articles were published in the journal - Pioneer, praising these reports. Through this work, Haraprasad built up an idea on the contemporary literature. Later, he utilised this experience in his own writings ...]

Haraprasad was nominated the member of Central Text book Committee in 1888. He was also nominated the fellow of Calcutta University in the same year. He served the post till his old age, though he had no such contribution towards the administrative or education in the said University. Because, he did no have a good relation with Sir Ashutosh Mukhopaddhay, the Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University. Even, he had to be deprived when a post in the University was created when Carmichael Professor George Frederick William Thibaut (1848-1918) expired. Professor Thibaut was the first Carmichael Professor in the Department of Ancient Indian History and Sanskrit. Haraprasad Shastri was the most suitable candidate for the said post, but he was not given due respect and the post
went to Professor Bhandarkar. University had to face a huge protest of the educationists for this unjust decision. If he was chosen that day in the said post, he could become a pioneer of the researchers in various fields in the country, unless, his name would not have gone under the oblivion. Only because of the maladjustment with Sir Ashutosh Mukhopaddhay country lost a man who could do a lot for them.

He joined the post of the Head of the Department of Sanskrit in Presidency College in 1895, on 28th February. The College started M.A. classes in 1896 onwards by his effort.

On 8th December, 1900, Haraprasad became the Principal of the Sanskrit College. He served the post for eight years. He was appointed the ‘Register of Sanskrit Examinations in Bengal’. He devoted himself to both the Administrative and Academic activities of the College:

[Besides his own research work, creative writings and fulfillment of various social and cultural responsibilities, Haraprasad did never show any irresponsibility in the administrative work of the college ...]

Another great son of Bengal, Rakhal Das Bandyopaddhay, a Historian and
An anthropologist -- who discovered the Civilization of Mahenjo-Daro -- was the student of Haraprasad Shastri. Rakhal Das Bandyopaddhay recognized this indebts in the introductory part of his book *Pashaner Katha*.

Haraprasad retired from the post of Principal of Sanskrit College in November 1908. But from the next day he was given the charge of the ‘Bureau of Information for the Benefit of Civil Officers in Bengal, in History, Religion, Customs and Folk-lore of Bengal’. He served there tirelessly till his death.

In 1903, Government of India formed a Commission for preparation of a report on the temple of Buddhagaya with Haraprasad Shastri and Sarada Charan Mitra as the member of the Commission. The then Governor of Bengal, J.A. Bardillon expressed his gratitude to Haraprasad in this report:

*Let me do so now and in doing so allow me to express to you the acknowledgements of Government for the complete, erudite and valuable memorandum which you have prepared. It can not fail to be of use to Government, and will I hope lend to the settlement of a difficult question. In any case it will remain a monument to your learning, assiduity and impartiality.*

Haraprasad Shastri accompanied Professor Arthur A. MacDonnell to North and Western India for the purpose of visiting the sites of excavation, temples and anthropological museums on the request of the Government of India in 1908. While doing so he collected 7000 Sanskrit manuscripts including some rare puthis of the Veda and arranged to send it to *Bodleion Library* and *Maxmuller Memorial Centre* respectively. For which act, the Chancellor of the Oxford University, Lord George Nathaniel Curzon (1859-1925) thanked him in a letter on 5th January 1910.
He helped Rejendralal Mitra in the Asiatic Society in a project of the *Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts*. At the same time he was given charge of the *Bibliotheca Indica* books series as a member of the *Linguistics Committee*.

In 1784 the Asiatic Society of Bengal was established by Sir William Jones, the judge of the Supreme Court. It was established with a view to know the country.

Any human activities and everything about the nature in Asian Continent was the thrust area of the Society for systematic and scientific research. In 1829 Rajendralal Mitra was the first among the Indians who became the member of the Society. *Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts, A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts* brought out the hidden treasure of Indology and of Sanskrit literature to the researcher of the world. Haraprasad, being the assistant of Rajendralal Mitra became the member of the society in 1885. Gradually he became one of the senior researchers in the Society. Because of that he was nominated the *Director of the Operations in search of Sanskrit Manuscripts* after the demise of Rajendralal Mitra. Rajendralal published the first part of the ten volumes of *Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts*. The second part of this series was published by Haraprasad and the rest of the life he was involved in the collection of manuscripts and to prepare their catalogues.

Haraprasad Shastri visited the Raj Durbar of Nepal in search of manuscripts for four times, in 1897, 1898, 1907 and in 1922. Second time he went along with Professor Cecil Bendall (1856-1906), the Professor in Sanskrit in Cambridge University. Detailed description of these visits are embossed in the, *Report of the Operation in search of Sanskrit Manuscripts*’ (Vol-V), Report of a tour in Western India in search of manuscripts of Bardic Chronicles, *Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts*, A catalogue of Palm-leaf and Selected paper Manuscripts belong
ing to the Durbar Library, Nepal, (Vol- I & II). The third time in 1907, Haraprasad discovered the famous Charyapada, from the Royal Library of Nepal. After the establishment of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad (1894), Haraprasad was elected the member of the Parishad in March, 1897. In May, 1897, Haraprsad went to Nepal for the first time and discovered the ‘Ramcharita’ of Sandhyakar Nandi from there. Later, he was elected the Vice-President of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, in 1898. He served the Parishad as the Vice-President for the periods of 1304-09, 1318-26, 1331 and 1337-38 Bengali era. From 1309 to 1315 Bengali Sal, there was a bitter relationship between Haraprasad and the Parishad. The reason was the controversy over his book -- Meghdoot Byakhya. Haraprasad was very fond of Kalidasa, specially Kalidasa’s Meghadoota. So, in the said book he explained the excellence of the Meghdoot with all his respect and devotion to Kalidasa, revealing the aesthetic beauty of it. But, few readers found it obsessive. Some article came out in various journals against him. Even some persons inside the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad raised their voice condemning the book. Government ordered him to show the reasons. His nephew, Manjugopal Bhattacharya wrote:

[Once Trivedi Mahashay did a great favour to him. Haraprasad was fond of Kalidasa. He wished to write the explanation on Meghadoot to be published,
discussing the wonderful inner meanings of it. So, he wrote a book *Meghadoot Byakhya,...* Immediately after the publication, there was a storm of criticism of the book to be illicit. He was almost at the verge of losing his job. Then, Ramendrasundar Trivedi explained to the government that the book has been written under the influence of Kalidasa, So, it should not be judged by the rules of recent times ... Government accepted that statement and Haraprasad was saved.]

Government was satisfied with the answer given by Haraprasad and Remendra Sundar Tribedi.

Since, some members of *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* lodged a complaint against him in the Parishad, Haraprasad was unhappy and cut off all the relation with the Parishad. Later, Ramendra Sundar Tribedi brought him back to Parishad in 1316 Bengali Sal. He served the Parishad as the President for 13 years in different periods -- 1320-22, 1326-30 and 1332-36 Bengali year.


Haraprasad alone secured the first class in M.A. from Sanskrit College and therefore he was awarded the “Shastri” title. The “Mahamahopaddhay” title was conferred upon him by the Government in 1898, as the sign of the gratitude on the ‘Note’ Haraprasad prepared on the ‘Age of Consent Bill’:

> ‘Age of Consent Bill’ (১৮৯১) সম্বন্ধে তিনি যে নোট দিয়েছিলেন, তাহাতে সরকার সুস্থ্য হইয়া তাহাকে এই উপাধি প্রদান করেন ...।

1.5 Literary works:

Haraprasad Shastri’s *Bener Meye* (1920) is written in a style that is very close to the colloquial. It reconstructs with plausibility and brilliance of the domestic and social atmosphere in West Bengal in the eleventh century. His other
work of fiction *Kancanmala*, a historical tale, also is well-written. It was first published in *Bangadarshan* (1883). Shastri wrote better Bengali than many of his contemporaries, old and young, and although a Sanskritist of the first grade he did not care to load his literary style with learned words and Sanskritism.

Haraprasad Shastri’s first research article was *Bharat Mahila*, published in the periodical *Bangadarshan* when he was a student. Later, Shastri became a regular contributor to the periodical, which was then edited by the noted Bengali author Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, authoring around thirty articles on different topics, as well as novel reviews. He was first introduced to research by Rajendralal Mitra, a noted Indologist, and translated the Buddhist Puranas which Sir Mitra included in the book *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*.

Haraprasad Shastri gradually became interested in collecting old Bengali manuscripts and ended up visiting Nepal several times, where, in 1907, he discovered the *Charyageeti* or *Charyapada* manuscripts. His painstaking research on the manuscript led to the establishment of *Charyapada* as the earliest known evidence of Bengali language. Shastri wrote about this finding in a paper titled *Hajar Bachharer Purana Bangala Bhasay Rachita Bauddha Gan O Doha*. (Buddhist songs and verses written in Bengali a thousand years ago) in 1916.

Haraprasad Shastri was the collector and publisher of many other old works, author of many research articles, a noted historiographer, and recipient of a number of awards and titles. Some of his notable works were: *Balmikir Jai, Panch Chheler Galpo, Bamuner Durgotsab, Ekjan Bangali Governorer Adbhut Beeratwa, Meghdoot Byakhya, Bener Meye (novel), Kanchanmala (novel), Sachitra Ramayan, Prachin Banglar Gourab and Bouddha Dharma*.

His English works included: *Magadhan Literature, Sanskrit Culture in Modern India* and *Discovery of Living Buddhism in Bengal*. 
NOTES :

1. Manjugopal Bhattacharya : Naihatir Bhattachaya Bansha, p. 25
2. Satyajit Choudhury : Rachana Sangraha-I, p. 29
3. Ibid, p. 23
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