

Visit to the Museum 29.1.2025

A visit to the Marble Palace Museum and the Jorasanko Museum was organised by the Department of History on 29.1.2025 as part of our initiative to study the Nineteenth Century Zamindars of Bengal through Museum visits and discussions. Through a combined methodology of academic discussions and experiential learning, we hope to explore the socio-cultural history of the Zamindars of Bengal with special focus on the lavish architecture of Kolkata that stands as testimony to the opulence of the 19th century Kolkata's landed gentry some of whom incidentally were also patrons of the great Bengal Renaissance and played an important part in the progress of indigenous education, art and architecture.

The first visit was to the Marble Palace situated in Chorbagan. The palace was built in 1835 by Raja Rajendra Mallick, a wealthy Bengali merchant who had a passion for collecting works of art. The palatial building has touches of Neoclassical designs, along with the popular Corinthian columns and bas reliefs. The building, it is said, inherited its name owing to 126 different types of marble that used to cover the walls, floors, and sculptures. The campus includes among others, a lake with an ornate Italian fountain, a private zoo, believed to be the first zoo in India that was opened for public viewing.

The second visit was to the Jorasanko Thakur Bari, which is well known as the ancestral residence of the Tagore family, an important household in the socio-cultural map of Bengal. The museum though brimming with artifacts surrounding the illustrious Tagore family; the lifesize oil portraits, paintings and manuscripts, with primary focus on Rabindranath, it is however the old building, the rooms, the long verandahs and the associated biographies on the illustrious Tagore family that takes visitors on a nostalgic journey on the life of Bengal's most celebrated family.



