

CORRESPONDENCE

This department welcomes comments on the contents or policy of HM, corrections of errors in the literature, questions and discussion of previously published questions, brief notices of historical discoveries, and other communications of interest to the history of mathematics community.

BIBHUTIBHUSAN DATTA

A Note and a Question from Phillip S. Jones  
University of Michigan

The letter pictured below had been cut and pasted on successive pages of L. C. Karpinski's autographed reprint of Datta's *The Hindu Contributions to Mathematics (1927-1929 Bulletin of the Allahabad University, vols. 1 and 2)*.

TERMS

$$= S' \pm \frac{(S' - n)^m}{r - 1}$$

Dear Professor Karpinski,  
 where  $S' = a + ar + ar^2 + \dots$  to  $n$  terms.  
 your letter, dated January 26, 1934, has been forwarded from Calcutta to this place where I am residing for the present. Perhaps you do not know that I have resigned ~~my~~ the professorship of mathematics in the University of Calcutta, some five years ago in fulfilment of the life of a Vedantist realising the Brahman, the Infinite Self. I have no fixed place of residence, moving from here to there and living on the charity of others. It is only when I pass through Calcutta that I take occasional diversion to Hindu mathematics.

I am writing to a firm of booksellers at Calcutta to supply your library with the books requested for. The *Ganita Samudra* of Narayana is still in the press.

With good wishes and kindest regards, I remain  
 yours very sincerely  
 Bibhutibhusan Datta

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Dharmasindhu Arama  
 Guzra-Noapara P.O.  
 Chittagong, Beng. (India)  
 March 18, 1934

Professor L. C. Karpinski  
 University of Michigan.

## HINDU CONTRIBUTION TO MATHEMATICS

### CHAPTER IV

R. C. Gupta of Mesra Ranchi, India, in reply to an inquiry, wrote me that Dr. Datta had become "a *Sanyasin* (a wandering monk) and was leading a life of detachment after renouncing the world in accord with the Hindu tradition and mode of life".

Dr. Datta's letter, dated March 18, 1934, states that he had resigned his professorship at the University of Calcutta five years earlier. In a list of members of the Comité Internationale d'Histoire des Sciences of 15 May 1931, reprinted from *Archeion* and found among Karpinski's papers, Datta was listed as Member #59, born on 28 June 1888, and named to the Committee 15 February 1931. Part I of *The History of Hindu Mathematics* by Datta and Avadhesh Narayan Singh was first published in 1935, Part II in 1938.

It seems to be difficult to find data on Datta, one of the earliest and most prolific of the historians of Hindu mathematics. Does anyone have further information on him or on his collaborator A. N. Singh?

### A. S. SAIDAN'S REVIEW OF AL-BĀHIR EN ALGÈBRE D'AS-SAMAW'AL

*By Salah Ahmad and Roshdi Rashed*

Peut-être n'est-il pas superflu de rappeler que le compte-rendu d'un livre doit: (1) décrire son contenu d'une manière aussi exacte que possible; (2) attribuer objectivement des idées et des faits à l'auteur de ce livre avant de les admettre ou de les réfuter. Les remarques critiques d'A. S. Saïdan [1974] sur notre édition et notre introduction d'*al-Bahir en algèbre d'as-Samaw'al* [Ahmad and Rashed 1972] manquent à ces exigences pourtant élémentaires.

Non seulement M. Saïdan ne saisit pas le sens de notre analyse, mais il nous attribue des erreurs et des contre-sens qui lui sont, naturellement, imputables de part en part. Nous allons donner quelques exemples: