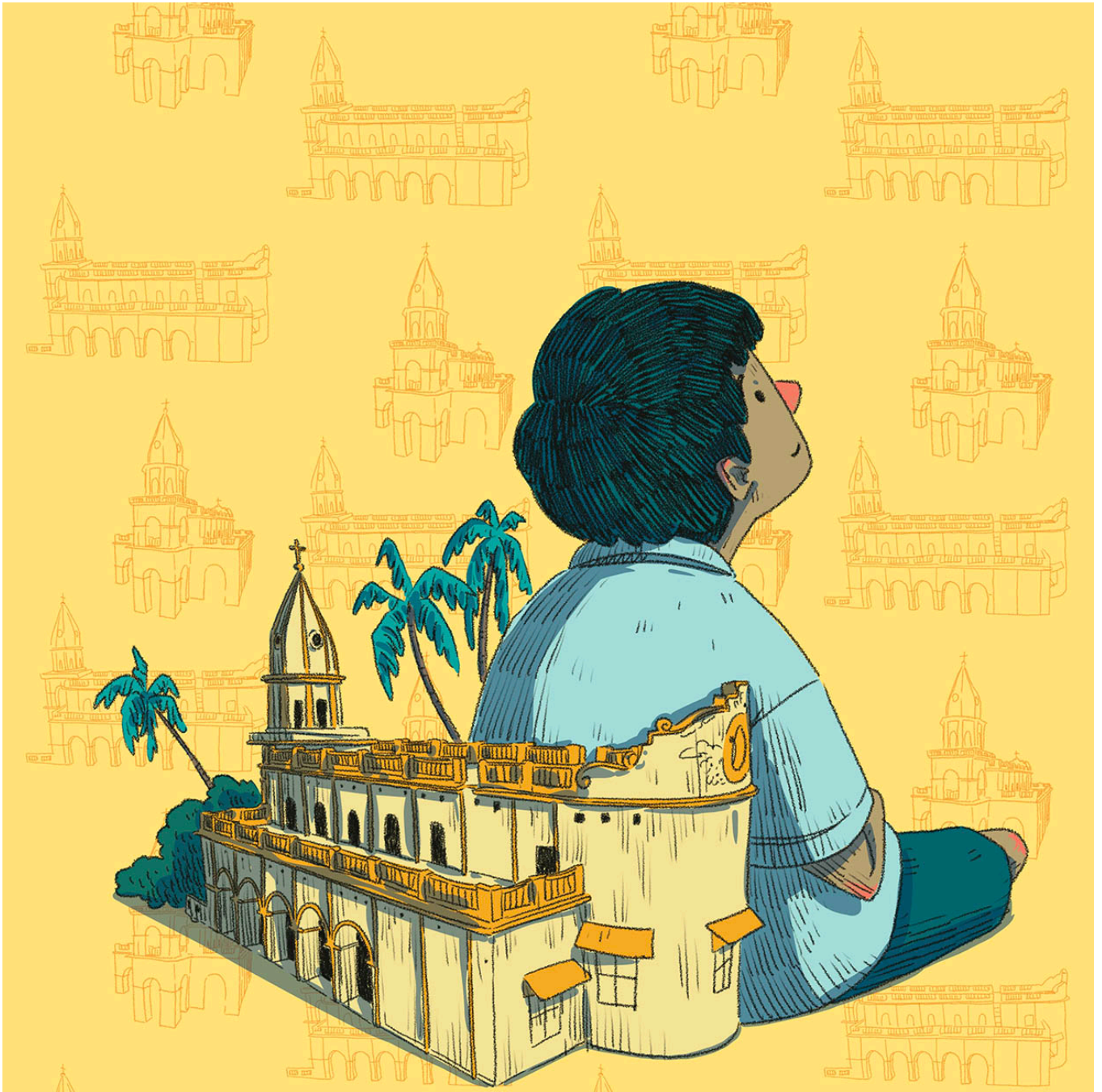


Armenians of Dhaka

Bangladesh has been host to people from many cultures and they have all left their mark. This story is about the Armenians of Dhaka who lived here a long time ago and brought with them many interesting things.



Armenians of Dhaka
HerStory Foundation



Let's Read



The Asia Foundation



“Have you ever heard of the Armenians of Dhaka?” Nahian asked. Mira shook her head. “The Armenians came here hundreds of years ago from a far away land called Armenia. Many of them enjoyed Bengal and they settled down and built a church which is still here today.”



“The Armenians lived in Old Dhaka, in an area called Armanitola,” Nahian continued. “They were jute and leather traders, and lived in large mansions. When one of them died, she or he was buried in the center of the neighborhood in the Armenian graveyard by the church. Today, there are over 35 0g raves there!”



“There is a road, called Armenian Street, which was a popular shopping place where all these merchants lived.” “What did they sell there?” asked curious Mira, who loved shopping. “All sorts of things.” “Biscuits?” Mira loved biscuits. “Biscuits too! The Armenians actually opened the very first supermarkets in Dhaka. One of the shopkeepers, Agaminus Catachik, gave away a big piece of his own land to build the church in 1781. For many generations the Armenian church was a place Armenians went to celebrate births and cry over deaths.”



"Today that area is very crowded and the church looks like a ship rising amidst the buildings. There are many mosques and temples in Old Dhaka, and people of different religions live together in harmony, like they did hundreds of years ago."



“So where are all the Armenians today?” Mira asked. “There aren’t many left living here, but the church and the graveyard are taken care of by the relatives of the people that once lived here. The church and the neighborhood is a living memory of how different cultures can live side by side.”



Note Armenians settled and created a colony in Dhaka in the early part of the 18th century. It was one of the main centers of trade and business, along with Kolkata. Dhaka was famed for fine textiles like muslin and Armenians were involved in the textile business. Armenians brought many new things to Dhaka such as the horse carriage. They also set up the first grocery stores.

Brought to you by

Let's Read is an initiative of The Asia Foundation's Books for Asia program that fosters young readers in Asia and the Pacific.

booksforasia.org

To read more books like this and get further information, visit

www.letsreadasia.org

Original Story Armenians of Dhaka. Author: HerStory Foundation.

Illustrator: Sayeef Mahmud.

Published by The Asia Foundation - Let's Read,

<https://www.letsreadasia.org> © The Asia Foundation - Let's Read.

Released under CC-BY-NC-4.0.

This work is a modified version of the original story. @The Asia Foundation - Let's Read, 2021. Some rights reserved. Released under CC-BY-NC-4.0.

For full terms of use and attribution,

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

Contributing translators: Ritica Lacoul