

GROWTH OF THE ASAMĪYĀ LANGUAGE

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASAMĪYĀ SCRIPT

PRE-HISTORIC AND HISTORIC ASAM

“The historian is a prophet looking backwards.”—SCHLEGEL

DIMBESWAR NEOG

THE ORIGIN
AND
GROWTH OF THE ASAMĪYĀ LANGUAGE

NEW LIGHT
ON
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASAMĪYĀ SCRIPT

PRE-HISTORIC AND HISTORIC ASAM

BY

DIMBESWAR NEOG

*Author of New Light on History of Asamīyā Literature
with an Account of its Antecedents, etc., etc.*

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AGAIN the same plea for pardon of my kind readers. This work, like its predecessor, may be found limited not only by the author's inconsiderable range of studies, but also by the deficiency of the all-absorbing attention that it demanded. Perhaps most people aspire after more peace of mind as his age advances, and no few of them are probably disappointed to find that worries like weeds have luxuriant growth instead in their gardens. The most pity of it is the morbid realisation that whatever we may be able to kick off with our legs, we cannot kick our legs off to be sure.

Combined with them is still another fact that, very likely, every true student of research finds himself with age more and more a learner still, but not less and less prone to mistakes yet. This pleasantly pen- sive consciousness mars any possibility of indulgence in self-compla- cence, and keeps me ever alert. But, alas! few house-holders, how- ever awake, can actually know when the most clever theft takes place in the house.

Then there are handicaps almost self-imposed. I "enter in at the strait gate" leaving "the wide", and follow the "narrow way" avoiding "the broad". For I consider orthodoxy to be the knell of scholarship and freedom its very life-breath. I feel that the pointman should more care to see that his lamp is still burning than that he is shaking it while the train is shunting.

I own I owe the idea of making a separate treatise on the language to the wisdom of Jules Bloch and of dwelling at length on the inscrip- tions of ancient kings of Asam to find therein the first characteristics of the Kāmarūpa Prākṛt long looked-for to that of Beni Mādhav Baruā. The death of the former at the ripe old age of an octogenerian and that of the latter before he was sixty have inflicted heavy losses on Indological studies in general and on linguistics in particular, besides depriving me personally of two greatest friends, philosophers and guides.

I think that the field of research on Asamīyā language is still fallow and virgin and consider myself fully responsible for the originality in the production of this work. Not that I am detracting a whit from the tribute of admiration due to the industry of earlier workers. I have rather quite freely quoted them where sense prevails, eliminating all that were sheer patronising or patriotic, whimsical or mechanical.

Every particle of detail of study of the language was thought out in my own mind and published in the journals and magazines since

the last twenties as may be seen from the Bibliography of my earlier writings appended to *NLHAL*, 1962. The most laborious of my studies were those on Missionary contributions, *Goṇicāndrar Gān*, *Kṛṣṇa Kīrttan*, *Caryācarya-Viniścaya* and ancient Kāmarūp Inscriptions. They have covered at least the last forty years of my life, year to year, month to month, and day to day. They have been revised and re-revised for times without number, correcting and re-correcting my own mistakes for which I have been ashamed by myself without any knowing by others. I wonder if I can ever call any halt to this and say 'This is my last word'. So imperfect is the knowledge and so immature the judgment even after a life-time's sleepless efforts!

As early as 1947 was published my *Introduction to Asam — the Country, the People, the Speech*, from Bombay, which has been out of print long since, besides my publications in Assamese on pre-historic Asam and on history of Asamīyā language and script. They have now been thoroughly revised and produced in this volume with such modifications as were found necessary. The political history of Asam happens to arouse some peculiar interest also in the context of present happenings: I mean the Chinese aggression. —

(i) King Bhagadatta of Kāmarūpa fought in the Kurukṣetra war with Chinese soldiers in his army, indicating that at least some portion of China proper was included in Ancient Asam (p. 110).

(ii) The Kalitā kingdom which was, perhaps for about a thousand years, situated in the Pemako district in Tibet, and had been in a more flourishing condition even in the fifteenth century A.D. than the Ahom kingdom in Asam in its most prosperous days, was wiped out of existence in the eighteenth century in an early Chinese aggression (pp. 196-8).

(iii) The Himalayan territory in between the rivers Śamkha and Hindola, is known to have been the capital city of King Śalya of Kurukṣetra fame. Narasiṃha, the eldest son of Viśwa Siṃha, became the king of Bhutan in 1540 A.D. and had his royal seat at the same site (p. 153).

(iv) *D.R.V.* gives a detailed list of Bhot officers appointed by King Narasiṃha to work under him.

(v) The Bhots were not the original inhabitants of present Bhutān. It is not more than two or three centuries now that they have usurped that country from the people of Asam residing there (p. 153).

(vi) The earlier inhabitants of present Bhutān were Tephus, who were inhabitants of West Kāmarūpa. They were driven away in another Tibetan aggression (p. 153).

(vii) King Nara-nārāyaṇ conquered Nepal in 1540 and Ahom kings had complete sway over the Mishmi country south of the Himālayās.

(viii) King Indrapāl's mother Durlabhā, had her father's kingdom about the Paraśurām Kuṇḍa at the foot of the Himālayās, perhaps covering the whole stretch of land between present China and India proper (pp. 198-9).

The old saying that 'history repeats itself' has perhaps been too old now to be true. As a matter of fact, history *never* repeats itself, though historical conditions may. History of Asam is perhaps a witness to this fact. It may probably be little more than a pious wish to say that Asam is coming back to her own in any near future. She has become less and less physically, which fact has so badly told upon the mind of her children. They cannot believe all that they had been, and they fight shy of peeping beyond the last seven centuries or past the Ahom rule. Even one history of Asam in the proper sense has not been forthcoming till this day, though institutions like the Publication Board are sinking colossal amounts of good public money annually in encouraging few works of any worth.

But even histories have miracles. Let us hope such a miracle will act favourably to bring Asam to her own from the moribund state she has been in. Let us not despair the people, to quote Henderson, who now, "seeing the greatness which was theirs, and at the same time not shutting their eyes to the mistakes and weaknesses which were also indisputably theirs, may rise again to greater things, while to the strangers at their gates it will bring a better understanding and all that follows in its train." 'History is philosophy teaching by examples', and the history of Asam has indeed so many things to teach at least her own people.

I cannot over-estimate the patronage of Śrī Sureś Candra Rāj-khōwā, our sometime student and now the Director of Public Instruction, Asam, but for which this work could not expect to see the light of day; and no less that of the present authorities of the G. S. Press, Madras, who have inherited and transmitted to me the same warmth of sympathy which my friend G. Śrīnivāsācāri, now of sacred memory, bore personally to me. I cannot thank them adequately, but I can simply remember them that virtue is its own reward. My son Śrīmān Śarat Maṅgal (Nandan) earns my blessings by helping me in preparing the Index, and the Ministry of S.R. & C.A., New Delhi, have my gratitude for their kind offer of an aid towards 50% of the cost of production of *NLHAL*.

IN MEMORIAM
OF
* LATE LOKANATH DATTA NEOG *

A "nameless" uncle who would just have a 'name'
for his dearest nephew, but was cruelly disappointed:

WHO could not complete his education in the first
institution he joined, but was in himself an
Institution of self-less love and magnanimity:

WHO made his nephew 'educated' enough through
his sacrifices, but alas! his nephew would now
give all his 'education' and sophistry to get

SIMPLICITY, PEACE AND HAPPINESS

which his "nameless" uncle possessed, even still as an octogenarian:

this small volume is dedicated

with

PROFOUND RESPECT AND GRATEFULNESS
of the unworthy nephew

BĀPU
DIMBESWAR NEOG

CONTENTS

ONE	GROWTH OF THE STUDY OF MODERN INDIAN LANGUAGES	1-6
TWO	ANCIENT ASAM AS AN EAST-INDIA CULTURAL CENTRE	6-13
THREE	MEETING OF DIFFERENT CULTURES IN ANCIENT ASAM	13-19
FOUR	TRACES OF EARLY NON-ARYAN INVASIONS OF ASAM	19-25
FIVE	TRACES OF EARLY ARYAN INVASIONS OF ASAM	25-31
SIX	SOCIAL EVIDENCES OF EARLY ARYAN INVASIONS	31-37
SEVEN	LINGUISTIC EVIDENCES OF TRANSITIONS TO ASAMIYA	37-43
EIGHT	TRAILS OF KAMARUPA PRAKRIT SINCE THE SIXTH CENTURY	43-50
NINE	RULES OF KAMARUPA PRAKRIT, AND PROPER NAMES	50-56
TEN	TRAITS OF ASAMIYA IN APABHRAMSA AND EXTENSION	56-62
ELEVEN	EARLIEST LITERARY RECORDS OF MODERN ASAMIYA	62-70
TWELVE	TRAITS OF ASAMIYA LANGUAGE IN THE SYLHETI DIALECT	70-71
THIRTEEN	DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER, NUMBER AND CASE-AFFIXES	71-84
FOURTEEN	PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DERIVATIVE SUFFIXES	84-91
FIFTEEN	NUMERALS, CARDINALS AND FOREIGN WORDS	91-96

INDEX OF MORE IMPORTANT MATTERS

- Alpine culture, immigration, people, Homo: 5, 15-17, 19.
- Asam, cultural centre, polyglot, Aryan island: 6, 13, 19.
- Asamīyā aboriginal population, primitive elements in: 20-22.
- Asamīyā Aryans, dress and customs of, Bihus: 29, 35-36.
- Asamīyā causative formation, nominal roots, group-verbs, indeclinables: 89-91.
- Asamīyā colloquial vocabulary noticed in the Caryas: 59-60.
- Asamīyā conjugation in six tenses, preterite conjunctive, pleonastic *ka*: 87-89.
- Asamīyā correspondence with Sinhalese: 95-96.
- Asamīyā declensions of personal pronouns—*āpuṇi*, third personal; *lok*, Hindī imitative plural suffix. Linguistic luxury in M.A., nasalisation, influx of Arabic and Persian words like Brajabuli: 84.
- Asamīyā earliest modern forms traced: 62-69.
- Asamīyā genders really two: 77; number really one: 78; sub-words; tatsama, tadbhava, deśaja words: 78-79; case-endings really six: 79-82.
- Asamīyā grammatic peculiarities noticed in Buddhist songs; looseness of Sandhis, plural affixes and case-endings, etc.: 58-59.
- Asamīyā, Khāsi, Mundā, Sāntālī, Maia-yan, Vedic, Pre-vedic (Indo-European): 22-23, 28-29.
- Asamīyā numerals, cardinals, indefinitives, flood-gate of foreign words: 91-95.
- Asamīyā plural and feminine suffixes, six case-endings, formation thereof: 41-43.
- Asamīyā Prākṛt, instances thereof: 44-50; laws thereof, shortening of long vowels, substitution of one vowel for another, absence of *sandhi*, dropping of *m* in a feminine suffix, random substitution of sibilants etc.: 52-54.
- Asamīyā Prākṛt proper names curiously agreeing with modern ones: 54-55.
- Asamīyā primary and secondary derivative suffixes: 84-87.
- Asamīyā retaining more of Vedic than of Sanskrit characteristics: 60-61.
- Asamīyā traces in modern districts of Bengal: 61-62; in Sylheti: 72-73.
- Asura (Daitya) civilization (*vide* Ahur Mazdā): 27.
- Āvestic Aryans (Magians), Early Iranians, Zoroastrians (fire-worshippers): 15-16, *27.
- Bhāskar in Kaṛṇa Suvarṇa, of Brāhman caste: 7, 26.
- Bhauma dynasty, rulers: 10, 12.
- English language—a parallelism of: 24-25.
- Indian vernacular, as parent of Sanskrit and Vedic: 30-31.
- Kalitā, civilisation, culture: 9-10, 15-18, 27-28, 31-37.
- Mediterraneans (Dravidians, Paṇis), Early Aryans (Harappāns): 15, 17, 33.
- Mongoloid contribution: 24.
- Nāgar Brahmans, Baniās: 8-9, 14, 26.
- Naraka "Mahātmāna", historicity of: 25, 34.
- Prākṛt of Kāmarūpa: 3.
- Pre-vedic Aryans, civilisation: 6.
- Process of de-Sanskritisation—dissolution, elimination, elision, epenthesis, umlaut, amplification: 40-41.
- Re-Sanskritisation rather than de-Sanskritisation in N.I.A.: 61.

ABBREVIATORY

I

ABMV	Asamīyā Bhāṣār Mauhk Vicār (Bharāli's)
AVB	Asamīyā Vyākaraṇ āru Bhāṣātattva (Medhi's)
EHK	Early History of Kāmṛup (Baruā's)
HA	History of Assam (Gait's, Sec. Ed.)
HBLL	History of the Bengali Language and Literature (Sen's)
HSL	History of Sanskrit Literature (Keath's or Macdonel's)
JAS	Journal of the Assam Research Society
JASB	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
KK	Kṛṣṇa Kīrtan (Baḍu Candidās's)
KR-KS	Kāmarūp Rājāvali with Kāmarūp Śāsanāvali
LSI	Linguistic Survey of India (Grierson's)
M.K./M.D./S.D.	Mādhaw Kandali/Mādhawdew/Śankardew
NLHAL	New Light on History of Asamīyā Literature (Neog's)
NSD	Note on Sylheti Dialect (Rājkhowa's)
OR/dA/NA	Asamīyā Old/Middle/New
OIA/MIA/NIA	Indo-Aryan Old/Middle/New
ODBL	The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language (Chatterji's)
REPI	Racial Elements in the Population of India (Guha's)
SHK	Social History of Kāmṛup (Basu's)

II

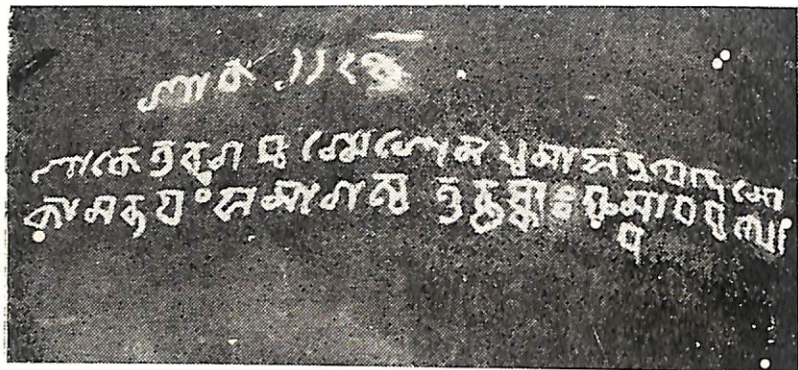
JASB	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
KR-KS	Kāmarūp Rājāvali with Kāmarūp Śāsanāvali (Mm's)
M.M-W	Monier Monier-Williams
NLHAL	New Light on History of Asamīyā Literature (Neog's)
OBS	The Origin of the Bengali Script (Banerji's)

III

AA	An Account of Assam (Wade's)
ACR/BCR	Assam/Bengal Census Report
AG	Ancient Geography (Majumdar's)
AN	The Ālangir Nāmāh
AR	Archaeological Report
BP	Bānglār Purāvṛtta (Banerji's)
DRV	Darrang Rāj Vamśāvali
EHK	Early History of Kamrūp (Baruā's)
GLM	Gauḍa Lekha-Mālā
GPA-AR	The Geography and Population of Assam in Asiatic Researches, 1828
HB	History of Bengal
HIL	History of Indian Literature (Weber's)
HRMPI	History of the Rise of the Muhammadan Power in India till the year 1612 (Brigge's)
IA	Indian Antiquary
IB	Inscription of Bengal
JARS	Journal of the Assam Research Society
JASB	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
JBORS	Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society
KR-KS	Kāmarūp Rājāvali with Kāmarūp Śāsanāvali (Mm's)
LHT	The Life of Hiuen Tsiang
LTS	The Loss of the Ter Schelling
MASB	Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
NS/RS	Nṛpa Śaka Rāja Śaka (B.E. so-called)
ODBL	The Origin and Development of Bengali Language (Chatterji's)
P.M.B.	Political Missions to Bhutan
RCT	Rām Caran Thākur
SAKB	Statistical Account of Koch Behar (Hunter's)
T.A.P.A.	Travels and Adventures in the Province of Asam (Butler's)
VSMRS	Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Sects (Bhandarkar's)
WICBM	Where India, China and Burma Meet

New Light on Development of the Asamīyā Script

Facsimile of the Asamīyā script by the 12th century.
(facing the first page of OGAL)



(Through courtesy of DHAS, Asam)

Photographed from the rock inscription of Kānāi-Baraśi-bowā Śil (Rock whereon Kṛṣṇa is said to have stood while angling) on the north bank of the Brahmaputra opposite to the city of Guāhaṭi, Asam, to the south-west of which lies Aśwaktlānta where Kṛṣṇa's horse is said to have rested fatigued on its journey to Sadiyā (Kuṇḍil), the kingdom of Rukmiṇī's father, Bhīṣmaka.

Read: Śāka 1127.

Śāke turagayugmeśe madhumāsatrayodaśe:

Kāmarūpam samāgatya Turaṣkāḥ kṣayamāyayuh:

Translated: 'In the Śaka era of horses (7) pair (2) God twice (11) [reversed order, 1127, equivalent to 1205-6 A.D.] in the honeyed month (Caitra, March-April) on the thirteenth day, Turks (Mughals) having come to Kāmarūpa met with total annihilation.'

GROWTH OF THE STUDY OF MODERN INDIAN LANGUAGES

Before coming to a study of the history of growth of Asamiyā, or any Indian language for that matter, it may be found necessary to come to a study of the growth of history of Indian languages in general. As early as 1317, Amir Khusru attempted a survey of modern Indian languages referring to Sindhi, Lahori, Kashmiri, Dogra (Dugari), Dhuar Samandar (Kanarese), Tilang (Telugu), Cryerati (Guzerati), Ma'ber (Tamil), Gaur (North Bengal), Audh. Then one finds mention of some of the Indian languages in the accounts of Abul Fazal before coming to the names of such early European linguists as Terry, Freyer, Ogilby, Daniel Messer-Chmidt and Schulze doing the spade work for a scientific study of the modern Indian languages.

Discovery of Sanskrit made by European scholars and the first recognition of it as a member of the Indo-European family of languages by Sir William Jones in 1796 must be the beginning of the beginning of the study of comparative philology of Indian languages, all maiden attempts of earlier scholars despite. Whatever may have been the fate of his other speculations in regard to modern Indian languages, one thing proved to be more and more certain in the light of further research that Sanskrit was definitely connected with the great European languages. It was re-affirmed and confirmed by the new researches of Franz Bopp in 1816, and the publication of Bopp's grammar in 1853 became the first milestone in modern comparative philology.

In between, William Carey, J. Marshman and W. Ward collected specimens of as many as 33 Indian languages; and Brian Houghton Hodgson produced a paper on the language, literature and religion of the Bauddhas of Nepal and Bhutan in 1828. Then Hodgson issued a series of articles on the ethnology of Nepal, and also a comparative vocabulary of sub-Himalayan dialects in 1847. He really compiled comparative vocabularies of nearly all the languages of the Tibeto-Chinese group spoken in India and also of the Munda and Dravidian languages.

Hodgson was the first scholar to discover and give the name Dravidian to that group of dialects, but he included the Munda group in it. It was no other person than Max Muller who in his letter to Chevalier Bunsen in 1854 established the Munda group as an independent family of non-Aryan languages. In 1853 Sir Erskine Perry published his

essay on the territorial distribution of Indian languages styling Hindi, Kashmiri, Gujarati, Marathi, Oriya, Konkani, etc. as Sanskritoid, and the principal languages of the south as Tamiloid. He altogether ignored the Austro-Asiatic group and did not even mention Munda.

Stevenson's Comparative vocabulary of Aryan and non-Aryan languages appeared in 1856, and it was Stevenson who first pointed out ingeniously the fact of borrowing of Dravidian words by the Indo-Aryan languages hinting at the ethnical significance and suggesting quite a new line of research. In 1867 and 1872 respectively came out *Outlines of Indian Philology* and *Comparative Grammar* of the Aryan languages in India. In 1872 also appeared Dr. Hoernelle's first essays in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*. His grammar of Eastern Hindi compared with other Gaudian languages appeared in 1880. In between, Sir George Campbell issued a series of vocabularies of local languages in 1874.

Dorn, a Russian linguist, wrote the first regular grammar of Pushto, and another Russian compiled the first grammar and vocabulary of Newari, *Die Mon-Khmer Vokker*, produced by Pater W. Schmidt in 1906, proved the inter-relation between the Munda group one hand, and Indo-Chinese and Indonesian groups on the other, with Khasi coming in between these groups. Schmidt established the bifurcation of the Austric speech as Austro-Asiatic spoken in India and Austro-Nesian spoken in Indonesia, Melanesia and Polynesia.

As early as 1886 the Oriental Congress held in Vienna passed a resolution urging that systematic survey of the languages of India should be soon undertaken; and the Government of India conducted it carefully from 1894 with Sir George Grierson at its head. Sten Konow helped Grierson in the final stage; and the results of the investigation were compiled during the following years, compared with the Census of 1921 and published in several volumes in 1927 as a monumental work. (*New Age*, V. 10, pp. 28-36).

Curiously enough, Grierson was the first to try to judge Asamīyā in its proper perspective; for Asam was ever outside the pale of political India practically until 1856, and earlier philologists inclusive of Prākṛit grammarians, had no chance whatsoever to have come in direct contact with it. Almost as a rejoinder to the grievous mistake of thinking Asamīyā to be a patois of Bengali by interested and ignorant people, Grierson observed: "North Bengal and Assam did not get their language from Bengal proper but directly from the West. Magadhi apabhraṃśa, in fact, may be considered as spreading out eastwards and southwards

in three directions. In the north-west it developed into Northern Bengali and Assamese, to the south into Oriya, and between the two into Bengali. Each of these three descendants is equally and directly connected with the common immediate parent, and hence we find North-Bengali agreeing in some respects rather with Oriya, spoken far away to the south than with Bengali of Bengal proper of which it is 'usually classed as a sub-dialect'. (*Linguistic Survey of India*, I, 1, p. 126).

Sincere as this survey by Grierson had been, it still suffers from the serious defect that it was mainly theoretical and had no correlation with the history of the people speaking those languages, a factor which no truly scientific survey could really ignore. For it is not enough to postulate a pet theory and to show classifications and sub-classifications of linguistic families and sub-families, but it is essential to study the history of languages with their particular characteristics and traits in close relation to the political, social and cultural history of their speakers. Just like literature, a language also does not grow in vacuum, and could not thrive with its roots in the air. So it was defective, at least in respect of Asamiyā, to have conducted that comprehensive survey without due care to its historical and geographical, political and social, linguistic and cultural perspective.

Even at the first sight it must appear an anachronism to speak of 'North Bengal', if not of the whole of Bengal, as distinct from modern Asam when we are considering the origin of modern Indian languages, for it was an integral part of the same country until late in the eighteenth century, even politically, as it is still so socially, linguistically and culturally. To push further, the whole of Bengal with its ancient provinces of Karna Suvarṇa and Puṇḍra Vardhana was really a part and parcel of the vast kingdom of Kāmarūpa under Bhāskara Varman, styled the Emperor of Eastern India in Chinese annals, as is also sufficiently evidenced by epigraphy and other Indian records.

That linguistically, also politically, the province of Bengal was under the vassalage of the Prākṛt of Kāmarūpa as first suggested by the historic *Records* of Yuān Chwāng, finding separate Prākṛts for Magadha and Kāmarūpa, and supported by epigraphic and literary records of Eastern India as the copper-plate inscriptions of the line of the Varman kings from the sixth to the twelfth century and by the Buddhist songs composed at least by the later part of this period.

Hoernelle's Essays appear to be the basis of the present comparative philology directly or indirectly. The theories developed by him, mainly about the two different migrations of the Aryans based on the peculiarities of the outer and the inner band of Indian languages, had

been accepted by Grierson in a slightly modified form. The ingenious hypothesis of Hoernélle was supported by Sir Herbert Risley, the anthropological expert, with the linguistic expert, Grierson, of the Census of 1901.

According to the ingenious theory postulated and supported, the earlier wave of immigrants was of the pre-Vedic Aryans who spread themselves over the greater part of western and northern India; and the later wave was that of the Vedic Aryans who "probably came across the northern frontier, and entering the Punjab like a wedge thrust the the early comers outwards in three directions. The language of the outer band represents the speech of the earlier immigrants and the language of the Midland the speech of the later immigrants... There was no room for expansion to the west, but to the south it flowed over the Maratha country and to the east into Orissa, into Bengal and last of all, into Assam." (Grierson, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XIV, p. 488).

In appreciating the ingenuity of this hypothesis we must be warned that it might not be literally applicable in practice. For instance, in taking this speculation of a theory Grierson had in his view only the present geographical position of Bengal and Asam, and seems to have been totally forgetful not only of the historical and cultural, linguistic and social aspects involved, but even of geological aspects. On this aspect we find below the correct perspective as laid down by a modern Bengali scholar:

"Bengal is the youngest part of India and as islands emerged from the primeval sea, slowly linking themselves together to the main land, they drew colonists from all points of compass, from Tibet and Nepal from Burma and Assam, from Chota-Nagpur and Gondawana and from Aryavarta itself... Her mixed origins and extra continental contacts put Bengal beyond to pale of Vedic civilisation. She played no conspicuous part in the legendary warfare of the Mahabharata. In recorded history her first appearance is as a Buddhist country visited by Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hian in the fifth century. In the eighth century king Dharma Pal of Gaur (in Malda district) marched with victorious armies across northern India and thereby made the presence of Bengal felt". (*Bengali Literature*, P.E.N., Bombay, pp. 3-4).

Against this "antiquity" of Bengal, we have: "The pre-historic kingdom of Pragjyotis which extended from modern Jalpaiguri to the backwoods of Assam, was one of the earliest Aryan colonies in this country". (Dr. D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 1). So Bengal has little to produce of traces of languages of the outer band far less to claim any priority to Asam where the pre-Vedic Aryans are wrongly alleged to have entered "last of all".

What is more, linguistic traces of earlier Aryan immigration into Bengal are necessarily rare. It is clearly accounted for by the same Bengali scholar. "He (Dharma Pal of Bengal) was a Buddhist, but the form of Buddhism then prevailing had little of Buddha in it. It was full of gods and goddesses, mostly Tibetan. When Hindu kings replaced their Buddhist predecessors in the tenth century, the Brahmans adopted those deities and incorporated them in the Hindu pantheon. The protest of the Buddhist monks, if any, were rendered ineffective by the advent of the Muslims in 1199 A.D. who disposed of the few remaining monasteries.

"Whatever other difficulties they experienced under the Muslim rule, the Brahmans were left free to Sanskritize the speech of the people; and to Aryanize their names. The process still continues to this day. As long as they had their share of the spoils of Buddhism the Brahmans allowed the Muslims to effect mass conversions in regions outside their sphere". (*Bengali Literature*, P.E.N., Bombay, pp. 4-5).

The same point has been stressed by another scholar: "In the case of some of these vernaculars like Guzerati, Eastern Hindi and Bengali, the overlay of Sanskrit has been so great that it is now difficult to trace their ancient Pisachi origin. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji has thus been led to trace the origin of the Bengali language to Vedic Sanskrit through Magadhi Prakrit, rejecting Dr. Grierson's classification of the Indo-Aryan languages into inner and outer bands, and the entire evidence adduced by anthropologists based not only on cephalic indices but also on other somatic characters and blood groups.

"Having rejected these scientific data he has been forced to postulate two sets of Aryans entering India, Vedic and non-Vedic, the latter preceding the former and occupying Eastern India before the advent of the Vedic Aryans by whom they were designated as Vrātyas. It is hardly necessary to add that this theory which is only an adaptation of Dr. Hoernelle's speculation of a second Aryan intrusion through the Himalayas is now discredited.

"Rai Bahadur Ramaprasad Chanda's theory of a tribe of the *Homo-Alpines* entering India and pushing towards the east giving rise to the Pisachi languages of Eastern India and non-Mongoloid brachycephaly, particularly in Bengal, has now been accepted by all competent scholars who have correctly postulated an earlier date for this invasion". (*Indian Culture*, Vol. II, No. 1).

On the evolution of Modern Indian languages from Magadhi etc. A. B. Keith observes: "Pischel and Sir G. Grierson have given currency to the view that the term Apabhraṃsa denotes the true vernaculars as opposed to literary Prakṛits, and the latter has constructed a scheme for the derivation of modern vernaculars from the various local apabhraṃśas. Thus from Saurasena (or Nāgara) apabhraṃśa came western Hindi, Rājasthani and Gujarāti, from Mahārastra apabhraṃśa Marathi, from Māgadhi Bengali, Bihāri, Assamese and Oriya. from Ardha-Māgadhi Eastern Hindi; from Vrācaḍa Sindhi, and from Kaikeya Lahndā. Unfortunately this theoretical scheme will not stand investigation; for the evidence of texts, and even of the literature, proves clearly

that Apabhramśa has a different 'signification'. (*A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 32).

A careful study of Asamīyā life and society, their physiognomy and racial traits, manners and customs, linguistics and phonetics, clothes and habits, rites and festivities, all and sundry, may betray both Vedic and pre-Vedic civilisation of the people, besides traces of the earlier Austric and Mongoloid culture, over and above what history and epigraphy preserve for us. But we must remember at the same time that like the Asamīyā speech among tribal dialects, the Aryan population of the State is also like an island in a sea of non-Aryan people, even the Census returns of 1931 not showing more than ten lacs of people of "reputed Aryan descent".

Even admitting immigration of pre-Vedic Aryans early scholars were generally loath to believe early spread of Vedic culture in Asam. There is no denying the fact that the sacred fire crossed the Kosi and reached as far as the western bank of the Sadānīrā (Karatoyā) as early as in the days of the *Satapatha Brāhmana*. In his *Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India* (2nd Ed., C. O. Series No. 21, E. 13, 1927) Nundolal Dey writes; "Sadānīrā, 1. The river Karatoyā which flows through the districts of Rangpur and Dinajpur, the Ancient Pundra. (*Amarkosha*, Patala V, *Tithitattva*, p. 796). Besides this, there are cultural and linguistic evidences which may prove early Aryanisation of Asam.

TWO .

ANCIENT ASAM AS AN EAST-INDIA CULTURAL CENTRE

News as it may appear to many, there can be no denying the fact that the whole of Eastern India tended to form a single unit historically and geographically, politically and socially, linguistically and culturally, with Kāmarūpa or Ancient Asam as the centre, until about one thousand years ago.

On the political side we find Bhāskar Varmā styled in Chinese annals as the Emperor of Eastern India. During his visit (636-645 A.D.) Yuān Chwāng found it divided into the following provinces:

1. Magadha	5,000 li	6. Kāmarūpa,	
2. Irina or Hiranya Parvata	3,000 ,,	more than	10,000 li
3. Champā	4,000 ,,	7. Samatata	3,000 ,,
4. Kāyangala	2,000 ,,	8. Tamralipti	1,400 ,,
5. Pundravardhana	4,000 ,,	9. Karṇa Suvarṇa	4,450 ,,
		10. Udra	7,000 ,,
		11. Kongoda	1,000 ,,

(Quoted in Basu's *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, Vol. III, pp. 2-3.)

Bhāskar Varmā met Harṣa Vardhana accompanied by Yuān Chwāng near Kāyangal (modern Rājmahal). From that place Harṣa proceeded along the southern coast, and Bhāskar along the northern, to meet again at Kānyakubja (modern Kanauj) where the great Buddhist Council was held with the Chinese pilgrim as the guest of honour. It was a grand procession with 300 elephants, and 20 kings of India joining it. While Harṣa was dressed as Śakra (Indra), Bhāskar was dressed as Brāhmā (the Creator) himself. This fact is also a pointer to the particular privilege Bhāskar enjoyed in the estimation of Harṣavardhana and the assemblage of kings.

It was in Spring of 644, Prācyā Vidyā Mahārṇava Nagendranath Basu opines, that Bhāskar Varmā was installed on the throne of Karṇa Suvarṇa, in 646-47 A.D. making land grants of a minimum of $166^{11}/_{16}$ shares to a minimum of 205 scholars dividing themselves at least to 56 different *gotras* as could be gathered from the inscriptions available, from this new extension of his kingdom which Bhāskar gained for himself by launching a successful joint attack on Śaśānka with Harṣa.

Bānglār Itihās (Vol. II, p. 112) imagined that Bhaskar Varma did not live in the Rāḍha country for a long time, which Basu has refuted with reason and has proved that Bhāskar did reside in Karṇa Suvarṇa "for a considerable period of time". Basu also argues: "The view that Bhāskar Varmā sought the help of Harsha after having sustained defeat at the hands of Śaśānka is not supported by any evidence and is based entirely on imagination". (*S.H.K.*, III, p. 12, footnote 13).

In *New Light on History of Asam̐yā Literature* (Antecedents, pp. 8-9) it has been shown what army and navy Bhāskar Varmā really commanded, and how he enforced his invitation of Yuān Chwāng on Harṣa Vardhana by a serious threat. It has also been shown how even until about 748 A.D. one of the successors of Bhāskar Varmā, namely Harṣa Varmā, earned the reputation of being "the Supreme Lord of Gauḍa, Odra, Kaliṅga and Kośala etc, including the modern provinces of Bengal, Orissa, Behar and Ganjam, besides the country of Kāmarūpa (as described by Yuān Chwāng, for example) proper (*Ibid*, p. 11).

Basu opines: "From the large number of copper plate inscriptions that have been found in Kalinga it appears that after Bhāskar Varmā, a certain relation of his also came to rule over Gauḍa, Uḍra and Kaliṅga, and he was reputed to be a member of the Bhauma dynasty. We have seen that the far-famed Lichchivi dynasty which had entered into matrimonial alliances with the Gupta emperor and the powerful Maukhari Kshatriyas, felt proud of a connection with Sri Harshadeva of the Bhagadatta dynasty.

"The cause of this lies in the fact that their fame and prestige had grown enormously on account of the signal honour done to Bhāskar Varmā and the long rule which they enjoyed over Gauḍa, Uḍra, Kāliṅga and Kośala." (S.H.K., III, 29-30).

Basu suggests a different chronology of the Bhauma rulers after Bhāskar Varmā as Jayatuṅga, Avanti Varmā, Śrī Harṣadeva, Khemaṅkara, Śivaṅkara, Śubhankara, Śivakara, based on inscriptions found beyond Asam. So he argues that Harṣa Varmā or Śrī Harisa and Harṣadeva cannot be one and the same person. He continues: "After the death of Śrī Harṣa (in 732-33), Jayanta, styled Ādisuṅga, conquered Gauḍa and the successor, of the Bhauma king Śrī Harṣadeva retired to Orissa. The Neulpur plate of Śubhaṅkaradeva of Orissa who was known as a scion of the Bhauma dynasty, issued in the eighth year of his rule, records the grant of land to Brahmans from Uttara Toshali . . . The Bhauma dynasty ruled over Orissa from the eighth century to the 13th century of the Christian era. A large number of stone and copper plate inscriptions were left by them". (*Ibid*).

In anticipation of further light on the subject that suggested chronology may be regarded as merely tentative, but the statement that Bhauma rulers of Kāmarūpa ruled over Orissa until about the thirteenth century may not be called in question as the inscriptions found in many places in Orissa contain accounts of the rulers of Kāmarūpa for over four hundred years. The Bengali era commencing about 593 A.D. really commemorates the year of Bhāskar Varmā's ascension to the throne of Kāmarūpa, for his being overlord of Karṇa-Suvarṇa.

The copper plate inscription of Rājā Lokanātha was recovered from the district of Tipperā that formed a part of Samatata over which he must have ruled. It is claimed that the surnames of Brahmanas mentioned in the Nidhanpur charter and the Tipperā copper plate of king Lokanatha are peculiar to Eastern India and "are now in vogue only among the community of Brāhmins and Kāiyasthas or Kshatriyas whose ancestors migrated the western provinces or to the Deccan . . . A number of Brāhmins from Śrihatta or Chandrapur, within the territorial limits of Kāmarūpa, founded the Nagara Brāhman community in Gujarat. It is therefore significant that Yuān Chwāng styled Bhāskar Varmā as a Brāhman by caste". "Varma" is really recognised as one of the 14 Amushyayānas or Sarmans of Nāgar Brāhmins of Gujarat, and it is natural to suppose that Varmās of Kāmarūpa or Eastern India were originally of the same stock as those of Gujarat.

It is interesting to note in this connection that one "Parama Bhattāraka Mahārājādhirāja Parameśwara Patola deva-sahi Śrī Nava-Surendrāditya Nandideva", probably connected with the well-known Hindu Sahi dynasty ruling in Kabul, about the time of Bhāskar Varmā

of the first half of the seventh century A.D., is also described as "Śrī Bhagadatta Vaṃśa-sambhūta" in an inscription in Sanskrit prose found on a rock within the territory of Gilgit, now in West Pakistan (Neog's *N.L.H.A.L.*, Antecedents, pp. 28-29) The Prāgjyotiṣa fame and Naraka-Bhagadatta ancestry claimed both by Eastern and Western India is also a pointer to the fact that probably one common stock of certain people migrated to and lived in the two ends of India.

"*Tadantare Śivarathaḥ Dvijah pracuracakrikahi Kāyasthapāśa pūśena galam baddhvā byapadata*". "In the meanwhile there died by strangulation that rogue (pāśa) of a Kāyasthā, the Brāhman Śivaratha who had been a mighty intriguer". (Rendered by Dr. Bhāndarkar, *Indian Antiquary*, 1932, p. 50). Both Bhandarkar, and Raghubar Sastri quotes the above couplet from *Rāja-Taranginī* to prove that many of the so-called Kāyasthas of this compilation, namely Kalhana, Kṣemendra, Somadeva and Prājyabhatta, whose number was quite considerable, were really Brahmans. Mentioning a passage of Kṣemendra's *Narmamāla* (I, 108-13), Raghubar further asserts that he must have been a Brahman by caste though appearing as a Kāyastha.

Nor are these instances solitary. Works like *Nagar Puṣpānjali* and *Nagarotpatti* provide sufficient instances if Nagar Brāhmans become in Nagar Baniās by taking to trading. In his *Brāhmanotpatti Mārtaṇḍa* Harikṛṣṇa Śāstrī shows how as many as 7450 Nagar Brahmans living in Gartatīrtha became Nagar Baniās by taking to trading and renouncing their threads and castes, whence came the interesting practice of putting the mark "74½" (hundreds) on the back of letter covers to warn that none but the addressees should open them. (*S.H.K.*, III, 136-38).

Thus on the social side we see how in Eastern and Western India Nagar Brahmans underwent a process of uniform disintegration according to the profession undertaken. So in regard to the Nidhanpur copper plates, D. R. Bhandarkar remarks about "the Brahman donees who bear Kayastha surnames": "It thus seems natural to hold that Bengal Kāyasthas were originally none but the Nagar Brāhmans". (*Indian Antiquary*, March, 1932).

What has been said of the Kāyasthas of present Bengal is true also of the Kalitās of Asam. *Rājvaṃśāvali* by Raja Upendra Siṃha records some important ancient traditions one of which says that it was Bhagadatta who first got Vedic Brahmans of Sandilya, Upamanya, Bharadvāja, Kāśyapa and Upamanyu gotras at a cost of *Sapāda laksa* (one and quarter lakhs of rupees). The prestige of the dynasty of Bhagadatta himself suffered hereby and came to be designated as

“Mlech Brahmans” as the Sāgnik Brāhmins looked at them with disfavour. ‘Meches’ and ‘Koces’ may be derived from the present Sanskrit words *Mlecca* and *Kuvaca*; the dynasty of Bhagadatta might be called Mlech Brāhmins because of doing the priestly duties for these tribes of Meches and Koces, which duties were discharged until late in the sixteenth century. So Kanaklāl Baruā opines that like the Vrātyas of Eengal, the Kalitās of Asam are of Alpine origin and are descendants of the Naraka-Bhagadatta line.

Also on the emotional and cultural side, the Bhauma rulers of Kāmarūpa wielded immense unifying influence “from the coast of the Pacific Ocean in the east to the boundary of Magadha on the west, and from the foot of the Himalayas on the north to Ganjam in the Madras presidency in the south. Not only the influence of the Rajas of Kāmarūpa was felt in those provinces, but with them the customs, manners, and the ideals of the Nagar Brahmans who went with them, were felt greatly. And remnants of these customs, manners and ideals are still seen prevalent there.

“With the advent of the Bhauma dynasty, their protege, the Nagara Brahmans, went to Gauda and Utkala to spread their sacred literature, manners and customs in those places. Again, with the advent of Muhammadan administration Muhammadan manners and customs were introduced in Bengal and customs and manners of the Bhauma period became almost extinct. But in Kāmarūpa and Utkala, instances of old influence of Bhauma rulers and their advisers can be seen even now”. (Basu’s *S.H.K.*, Vol. III, Preface).

Basu started his preface arguing and finding himself “How could there be such an unanimity of *Nām Kīrttan* in two distant places at Utkala and Kāmarūpa? With all the slight variations and the manner of singing, the *Kīrttan* seems to pass for one and the same.... My first reasoning forced me to think that probably Sankardeva, the great religious reformer of Kāmarūpa, went to Utkala and brought with him manners of singing *Kīrttan* from that country. But after going through the Vaishnava literature of Utkala, I came to the conclusion that through the influence of Mahāprabhu Sri Chaitanyadeva, *Kīrttan* songs were introduced in Utkala; that before Sri Chaitanya, Sankardeva used to sing *Kīrttans* at Kāmarūpa.... Under these circumstances it can be asserted that *Kīrttans* had been in vogue at Kāmarūpa before they were known in Utkala.

“How the Brāhmins from Kāmarūpa, Srihatta or Vanga, migrated to Utkala and settled there, and how the ancient kings of Kāmarūpa ruled not only Kāmarūpa and Gauḍa, but the whole of Utkala as well, with a high hand for a pretty long time, I tried to explain”. (*Ibid*).

On the educational side too, we find the integrating and unifying influence of Kāmarūpa working so effectively. Yuān Chwāng records that Kāmarūpa was a great educational centre attracting scholars from

all parts of India by its magnetism. Bhāskar Varmā himself is described as having noteworthy leanings to learning, people in general being inspired by his example. The fact particularly noted by the Chinese traveller that the king welcomed the Brahmans and Sramanas alike testifies to his special academic taste. But as N. N. Basu puts it: "We may conclude that the prosperous condition of Kāmarūpa of which the Chinese pilgrim has drawn such a brilliant picture had been in existence long before the time of his visit. We find in the Nidhanpur copper plate inscription of Bhāskar Varmā that during the reign of Mahābhūta Varmā or Bhūti Varmā, Rig Vedī, Yajurvedī, Sāmavedī and Atharva Vedī Brāhmanas of various denominations lived in the Agrahāra of Mayur Salmala which was granted by him and which was situated in his territory called Chandrapuri". (S.H.K., IV, 13-4).

Mahābhūta Varmā or Bhūti Varmā was the great-grandfather of Bhāskar Varmā who simply replaced the copper plate granted by his great ancestor. Thus a minimum 205 Brāhmanas of at least 56 different *gotras* were seated in Kāmarūpa before the sixth century to disseminate scriptural knowledge in the country, a fact which is of no minor importance to be neglected. Curiously enough, most of the surnames held by the Brāhman donees of Bhāskar's inscription are found again in copper plates of king Lokanatha though the latter cannot possibly be connected with the former consistent with reason. This latter inscription is dated (l. 29) 44th year, probably of the Harṣa era, corresponding to 650 A.D., Harṣa having died in 648. Thus it belongs to a period called *matsyanyāya* (anarchy) of Bengal, Śaśānka having been killed already and the Pala reign of Bengal in the seventh century not yet coming into existence. The eighth verse of the inscription bears a reference to a fight with Jayatunga Varmā who is supposed to be his liege lord and successor of Bhāskara Varmā of Kāmarūpa.

"Nirbyājorjitasvatvasāra turagah Śrī Lokanāthanrpo:
Yasmin Śrī Parameśwarasya vahuśo yatam kṣyam sainikam
Durlanghye Jayatunga Varmā samare sadyah prayogorthinām:
Nitau nitividhānatoti caturo nitya prahrṣṭaprajāh".

The inscription is further conspicuous by the absence of any reference to Buddhism so much to be expected in this period. Rādhā Govinda Basāka who deciphered this script makes a special note of this fact and says: "The prevalence of Brahmanic influence in Eastern India at the time can be rightly inferred also from the mentions in the inscription of the sacred fires, Puranic deities, Brāhmanas versed in the four Vedas etc. and also from the fact that the Brāhmanas could be Samanta Chiefs". (*Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XV, p. 306).

J. C. Ghosh, writing on Visākha Datta, the author of *Mudrā Rākṣasa*, opines: "In some manuscripts of the *Mudrā Rākṣasa*, the reading of Avanti Varmā has been found in the last line of the last *sloka* in place of Chandra Gupta....Although the history is silent about any descendants of Bhāskar Varmā of Kāmarūpa, the reference to Varāha Avatāra leads us to think that Avanti Varmā might be the immediate descendent of Bhāskar Varmā who claimed his descent from the Varāha avatāra". (*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XXVI (1930), p. 244).

On these authorities N. N. Basu postulates: "But from the account already given we find that the paramount ruler, Jayatunga Varmā was on the throne before 668 A.D. Under the circumstances, Avanti Varmā should be a descendant of Jayatunga Varmā and predecessor of Śrī Harshadeva of the Bhagadatta line." (*S.E.K.*, III, 26-27). There are at least two difficulties in admitting this tentative chronology after Bhāskar Varmā, namely, that Bhāskar Varmā was in all probability a confirmed bachelor whence possibly he had his title Kumāra, and his line ceasing with him and the line of Śālastambha being admitted immediately after Bhāskar Varmā there can be no room to thrust this new chronology in.

Whatever this may be, the linguistic unity of East India languages is a point which is most notable. N. N. Basu has a pointed reference to it: "Needless to say, under the influence of Bhāskar Varmā and his successors the social customs, practices, education, culture and even the language in Kāmarūpa, Gauḍa, and Kalinga tended to be similar. Though the social structure of Gauḍa underwent profound changes as a result of the great influence which the Barendra and Rāḍhīya Brāhmins came to exercise over it in a later age, the civilization and even the languages of Kāmarūpa and Kalinga are still reminiscence of the close association which existed at one time between these two provinces. Another reason of this is to be seen in the influence which the Bhauma dynasty of Kāmarūpa exercised over Kalinga even in a subsequent age". (*S.H.K.* III, p. 13 ff).

This view is practically confirmed by S. K. Chatterji when the latter says: "The three eastern-most speeches of the great Indo-European family of languages, Assamese, Bengali and Oriya, are closely linked with each other; in fact they are like uterine sisters within the family. A thousand or twelve hundred years ago, Assamese, Bengali and Oriya, virtually formed one single speech. Their differentiation into three distinct literary speeches as vehicles of three slightly different forms of the same pan-Indian took place as a result of the ethnological, political

and economic conditions in Assam, Bengal and Orissa during the last few hundred years.

"It is the fact that the Brāhmins form a single inter-marrying community, combined with the political situation in Assam and Orissa as independent Hindu lands as contrasted with Bengal as being under Muhammadan rule, that was largely responsible for the gradual establishment of the local speeches of Bengal, Assam and Orissa as separate languages". (Preface to *New Light on History of Asamīyā Literature*, pp. v-vi).

THREE

MEETING OF DIFFERENT CULTURES IN ANCIENT ASAM

It may be recalled that while all the neighbouring provinces of northern India were thoroughly Buddhist-ridden and infested with the Buddhist monasteries, ancient Kāmarūpa was the single instance of a province free from Buddhist influence and having Brahmanic culture and Hindu temples in abundance. Yuān Chwāng's authentic personal records about Kāmarūpa of the early seventh century may be carefully noted.

"They (the people of Kāmarūpa) worshipped the Devas and did not believe in Buddha. So there had never been any Buddhist monastery in the land. The Deva temples were some hundreds in number and various systems had some myriads of professed adherents... His majesty (Bhāskar Varmā) was a lover of learning and his subjects followed his example; men of abilities came from far lands to study here". (Watters' *Yuān Chwāng*, Vol. II, p. 186).

As earlier noted, the copper plate inscription of Bhāskar Varmā alone has at least 205 Brahman donees belonging to a minimum of 56 different gotras. As Bhāskar Varmā simply replaced the copper plate grant of his great-grand-father Bhūti or Maha-Bhūta Varmā which was burnt, it may safely be surmised that it was the self-same situation at least about the latter half of the fifth century. Since the descendants of these Brāhmins claim usually to have been Maithili by tradition, it may be that because of the above situation Brāhman scholars from Mithilā might have come originally with a view to study in this Brāhmanic centre of culture divorced from Buddhist influence, and then settled here.

The Pañcakhaṇḍa Pargaṇā, where the grant of Bhāskar Varmā was discovered, has a tradition that it originally formed a part of Tripurā and that it was so named from the fact that Brāhmins of five gotras,

namely Batsa, Bātsya, Bharadvāj, Kṛṣṇatreya and Parāsāra were indentured by the then king of Tripura for the performance of a great *jajna*, to be subsequently settled here. They, in their turn, got Brāhmins of still another five gotras, namely Kātyāyana, Kāśyapa, Maudgalya, Svarṇa-Kauśika and Gautama to become their companions and neighbours. The Brāhmins of these ten *gotras* are known in that locality as *Vaidikas* or *Sāmpradāyika*. They pride in having such illustrious persons as Raghunāth Śiromaṇi in the Kātyāyana and Caitanyadeva in Batsa *gotra*. Any way almost all of these ten *gotras* are fully represented among the donees of the grant of Bhāskar Varmā.

Not only of these ten *gotras* alone, but Vedic Brahmins of other groups now settling in Bengal proper may probably be the descendants of the donees of this grant. As earlier noted, there can be no denying the fact that when Bengal became divorced of Buddhist influence, no few families of Brahmins came here as colonists and then settled. The point of immigration of Brāhmins to Bengal from Kānyakubja (Kanauj) has now been proved to be baseless. The similarity of the title "Swāmi" of most of the donees of Bhāskar Varmā's grant with that of many Brāhmins of Madras may not mislead us to think of their immigration from Madras (*Kāmrup Śāsanāwalī*, pp. 8-9 ff.).

At least fifteen most common surnames of the Brāhmins and Kṣatriyas (Kāyasthas) of modern Bengal namely (1) Basu, (2) Ghoṣ, (3) Dev, (4) Datta, (5) Dam, (6) Sen, (7) Som, (8) Palit, (9) Kar, (10) Kunda, (11) Nag, (12) Das, (13) Nandi, (14) Pal, (15) Mitra are derived from the surnames of the Kāmarūpa donees of Bhāskar Varmā's grant of c. 610 A.D. So also fourteen principal surnames of present Nagar Brāhmins of Gujarat are said to agree with these surnames found both in the Nidhanpur charter and the Tippera copper plate inscription of the feudatory ruler Lokanāth of c. 669 A.D. (*S.H.K.*, p. 130). So also is the case with the Neulpur copper plate inscription of king Śubhaṅkara Deva of Orissa of the latter half of the eighth century.

It is earlier stated how and why Brāhmins in large number gave up their threads and profession and took to trading etc., and also how a similar number of Brāhmins and other high caste people came to settle in Bengal when it became purged of Buddhist influence. Thus it is that we find most of the surnames of the donees of the Nidhanpur charter, for instance, highly prevalent mainly among the Brāhmins and Kāyasthas of modern Bengal. *The Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Part I (Report) by J. H. Hutton and part III (Ethnographical) by B. S. Guha are two most outstanding records on the origins of races of India determined by these latest authorities. Guha opines that the Nagar Brāhmins of

Gujarat, the Kāyasthas of Bengal and the Khos of Chitral represent the purest form of Alpine people.

The Alpine immigration into India took place during the third millennium B.C. They were "brachycephals with leptorrhine noses" and are believed to have had some mutation at least with the Avestic Aryans about the Iranian tableland if not with the common Nordic forefathers of both the Vedic and Avestic Aryans. One branch of them came to the western coast of India and must have passed through the Indus valley, as at least one Alpine skull has been discovered at Mahenjo-Daro, the other branch to Eastern India laying their foundation in these places. So the Kāmarūpī Brāhmins of the Nidhanpur charter like the Nagar Brāhmins of Guzerat must be the descendants of the Alpine priests.

Long before the Alpines there came to India "a short statured dolicephalic strain with high cranial vault and medium lips", another race of people whom Hutton calls Mediterraneans, probably thinking, like R. D. Banerji (*Pre-Historic and Hindu India*), that they lived about the Mediterranean sea before this immigration, where they also must have had a mutation with the Indo-European Nordics. Guha also opines that the Mediterraneans originally belonged to the same stock as the Nordics, whose immigration into India is dated the second millennium B.C., but were bifurcated pretty long ago. He thinks that the Pods of Bengal, the Telegu Brāhmins, the Oriyā Brāhmins, the Kanarese Brāhmins, the Sāraswat Brāhmins, the Chippavan Brāhmins and the Desastha Brāhmins are descendants of Mediterraneans. And Hutton opines that though anthropometric measurements were not made here, Kalitās occupying a high position in Assamese society and usually passing for Aryans, may have really been descendants of the Mediterraneans.

Mediterraneans, earlier styled as Dravidians, are thought to be responsible for the Indus valley civilization, whence they become either identical or allied with the Harappans. But A. S. Altekar, identifies the Paṇis of the Ṛg Veda, who were bitter enemies of the Aryans, with the Harappans (*Address of the General President, Indian History Congress, 22nd Session, pp. 8-9 ff*). Are we then to equate the Paṇis of the Ṛg Veda with the Mediterraneans? Hutton thinks that "the Alpines were not a warlike race and that peaceful penetration was their forte". So they may not be bought in to have any rival claim with the Mediterraneans who are identified with the Paṇis of the Ṛg Veda to be deadly foes of the Vedic Aryans.

Similarly about the Kalitās of Asam, Hutton identifies them with the Mediterraneans, and Kanakāl Baruā connects them with Alpines or Vrātyas through Narakāsūr who was installed on the throne of Kāma-

rūpa having been brought up by another Vṛātya king, Janaka of Videha. Again Prāḡjyotiṣa with Magadha, Kosala and other ancient kingdoms is considered by Baruā as a product of Alpine culture while R. D. Banerji calls it a monument of Mediterranean civilization. But like the Nāgar Brāhmins and others, the modern history of the Kalitās show them more as intellectuals than athletes and hence more Alpine than Mediterranean. And they may even be an amalgam or hybrid between the two; or probably yet, the Nordic-cum-Mediterranean culture of the Punjab and Midland might meet here the Alpine-cum-Mediterranean culture of Eastern India, as Baruā suggests (*Indian Culture*, Vol. III, No. I).

So much on the racial and cultural side in general. Curiously enough, some particular customs of the Kalitās, and of the early Asamīyā society, for that matter, have been cited both by both Baruā and Kārirām Medhi (AVR) without any mutual reference whatsoever to prove that it is definitely influenced by Alpine culture similar to the one seen in the Magian or Early-Iranian Alpine civilization.

We are not ourselves so sure, but both Baruā and Medhi vouchsafe that like the Zoroastrians, Asamīyā people of old used to expose human corpses in the open to be eaten by vultures and jackals. Both of them maintain that though they have now taken recourse to cremation, and burial in certain cases, as a rule, the old method of disposing the dead body still lingers.

It is of course a fact that as by the Vendidad of the Early-Iranians the Asamīyā people do always consider the dead body unclean and the house where one dies is thought impure; and unclean and impure are also those who come in contact with them. Like the Magians also the Asamīyās take the corpse immediately out of the house, and then cleanse it as best as they can with *gomez* (*Sans. gomaya*) or cowdung.

Though like the Zoroastrians, the house where one dies is not cleansed with fire, the corpse-bearers after their return from the cremation and bathing with all their clothes, have to cleanse themselves by a fire burnt outside, with hey and dry jute leaves, throwing some oil seeds into it, and they have to stand on stone and chew some green leaves of jute plants tasting bitter. Then alone they are allowed to touch other people and enter the house.

Asamīyās also consider a *dastin* or menstruous woman unclean and impure as the Zoroastrians do by the dictates of *Zend Avesta*. Such a woman is not touched, and food is not passed to her from hand to hand. She is not to sleep in the usual bed of wood even alone, but is to sleep on the floor on a bed of hey or straw. She is not to touch any body and

any thing in the house until she cleans herself specially on the third day of the mens. These rules are still very strictly observed at least in the villages, and they probably betray an Alpine culture.

So much about the social side of Asamīyā life. On the linguistic side too there are similar traces of Alpine immigration into ancient Asam and Eastern India for that matter. It may be surmised that the Austro-Asiatic was the prevailing speech in Northern India before it gave way to the Dravidian (Mediterranean) language. Whatsoever be the original characteristics of the latter, it met with the Indo-European form of speech as imported by the Alpine immigration in the third millennium B. C.

Of more than half a dozen daughters of the Indo-European speech, those of the *Kentum* group, namely the Greek and the Latin, the Celtic and the Teutonic speakers are believed to have left their original home much earlier than those of the *Centum* group, including the Indo-Iranian speakers. But D. Bharāli in his *Asamīyā Bhāsār Maulik Bioār* (2nd Ed. pp. 15-17) cites several examples of Asamīyā words as *dāk* (to bite, Sans. *daṁś*), *kām* (a kind of bird, Sans. *śyām*) etc. which show affiliation of Asamīyā rather to the earlier *Kentum* group of Indo-European family of languages than to the later *Centum* group to which Indo-Iranian belongs.

Bharāli also illustrates, side by side, instances of Asamīyā words like *jah* (hot, Sans. *dah*), *jāh* (annihilation, Sans. *dah*) etc. where as in the Greek language of the *Kentum* group the initial *d* is changed into *j*, examples of which are so rare in the *Centum* group of I.A. languages. "Change of *d* to *j* through the influence of a near palatal vowel is a extremely rare phenomenon in Indo-Aryan although change of *dy*, *dhy* to *j*, *jh* is regular law". (ODBL).

Baruā makes no attempt to explain such important facts nor does he try to cite characteristics of the Dravidian speech mentioned by himself though he would style the Mediterraneans as Early Aryans. But as Guha opines that the Mediterraneans belonged to the same ancestral stock as that of the Vedic Aryans, and also since R. D. Banerji too thinks that the Mediterraneans had at least a mutation with the Nordics sometime and somewhere before their entrance into India, we are inclined to think that the Mediterraneans were bifurcated from the speakers of the *Kentum* group of Indo-Europeans while they all lived in their original habitat. And as Hutton thinks that the Kalitās of Asam, like the Pods of Bengal, the Telegu Brahmans, the Oriya Brahmans, the Kanarese Brāhmans, the Sāraswata Brāhmans, the Chippavan Brāhmans, and the Desastha Brāhmans (according to Guha), basically be-

long to the Mediterranean race, it is through the Kalitās of Asam as a member of the Mediterranean race, that the Asamīyā speech shows an affiliation to the *Kentum* group of the Indo-European family of speech.

Next to the above peculiarities is the Asamīyā X pronunciation of the sibilants which also must have first been brought by the Early Aryans called Mediterraneans. On this point S. K. Chatterji notes: "It seems that in certain forms of OIA the X sound was the actually one employed for s as can be inferred from a mediaeval pronunciation of s as *kh* being the nearest approximation to the traditional X. The change of initial, intervocal and final to the guttural spirant X in Assamese is something remarkable and is paralleled by what we see in Sinhalese and Kashmiri. This is also noticeable in Iranian, Hellenic and Celtic." (O.D.B.L.).

Absence of cerebrals in Asamīyā as a rule marks an early Indo-European influence. As Macdonell opines: "The cerebrals are mainly Indian products. They are rare in the Rig Veda where they occur medially and finally only". (*Vedic Grammar*). When the Nordic of Vedic Aryan immigration into India took place in the second millennium B. C. the X sound as in Asamīyā was prominent. Chatterji thinks that *tata X kim* was the actual pronunciation at the time of the Rig Veda. It came to be pronounced as *tatah kim* in later times owing to the loss of X sound due to non-Aryan influence predominating over the Aryan. But it remained almost intact in the Dardic or Piśaci speech which like Asamīyā is a language of the outer band.

Grierson's wonder on looking at the close affinity between Assamese and Kashmiri and his exclamation how the extreme west could thus meet with the extreme east may not now be shared by those who know how the two branches of the Alpines migrated to the west and east simultaneously and carried with them new Aryan culture in advance, probably also the Narak-Bhagadatta tradition like-wise on parallel lines, whence it was possible for a rock-inscription of the North-Western frontier Tract in Gilgit to record of an ancestor of the Hindu Sahi dynasty of Kabul as "Sri-Bhagadatta-vaṃśa sambhūta".

Grierson, and following him Chatterji and others, used to call this Alpine immigration one of pre-Vedic or non-Vedic Aryans; but they really meant one and the same thing. There is yet a pet theory among a circle of scholars maintaining that the Aryans never came to, but went out from, India. It says that the Early Iranians or Magians who also make *jasnas* (sacrifices), but never worship fire or any other gods as do the Vedic Aryans, their brethren, really went out of India by quarelling only on this point. As the Early Iranians too belong to the fire-

cult, we think it may not be reasonable to suppose that Indo-Iranians did not belong to the same branch of Indo-European speakers and still less, to say that they were not basically Aryans at all. This is not to deny Early Iranian or Magian correspondence with Asamīyās or not to admit an Alpine immigration, but simply to doubt the identity of the Early Iranians with the Alpines as a race.

FOUR

TRACES OF EARLY NON-ARYAN INVASIONS OF ASAM

ASAM is a proverbially polyglot State of Bhārat (India) today, only five millions out of nine millions of its inhabitants having Asamīyā for their mother-tongue, there being as many as 120 different mother-tongues spoken by the rest of the population, different tribes of Nāgās alone having about 20 mother-tongues among themselves. Thus Asamīyā is really a small island of Aryan speech in a sea of non-Aryan dialects, and it would probably be the instance of another Tower of Babel had not Asamīyā served as a *lingua franca* among these ten dozen mother-tongues.

As in language, so in creed and culture, the State of Asam presents the appearance of a veritable museum of nature embracing large varieties and types of races ranging from the Negroids to the Nordics with all shades of anthropological differences among them, and including particularly brachycephal Alpines playing so important a role in the composition of the highly complex and advanced culture of Asamīyā civilization. The proper Asamīyā-speaking area, namely the Brahmaputra Valley itself, is also like a small island in the sea of hills surrounding the State in as many as three sides and occupying the vast area of 61,979 sq. miles out of the total of only 85,012 square miles of the entire State.

Yet it may sound even as a miracle of history how the small island remains from time immemorial not only unswallowed by the sea, but also commanding and lording over it for a wholesome influence for the State. This is not to deny that hill people have contributed anything to Asamīyā culture in general and to the language in particular, but simply so say that the contribution is not as large as it could be expected. Asamīyā has as much as 90% Aryan words and of the remaining 10% one cannot be sufficiently sure that they are all borrowed and at least some percentage of them is not indigenous. It seems really surprising to see that like the Tibeto-Burmans who invaded Asam in pre-historic times and have since been absorbed in the Asamīyā population, the Tai-

Siam invaders of comparatively recent times, who ruled the State for as many as six hundred years and have also merged similarly, should leave only a dozen words or so in the Asamīyā language.

The Census of 1931 returns Austric 6.0, Tibeto-Chinese 17.6 Dravidian 1.5 and Indo-European 74.9 percent speakers of the population of Asam, there being 234,000 Khāsi speakers and 321,000 Muṇḍā speakers of whom 159,000 speak Muṇḍāri and 102,000 Sāntālī, the balance belonging to Śavāra, Kurku, Kharia and other Muṇḍā dialects. It is to be noted that almost all the Muṇḍā speakers are modern tea-garden coolies or ex-coolies save and except the Sāntālī speakers of the Goālpārā district. The Tibet Chinese family of Mongoloids is known to be distributed as the largest number of languages in the State, the total number of its speakers being 1,628,000 further distributed as 1,622,000 and 6,000 speakers of the Tibeto-Burman and the Tai-Chinese sub-family speakers respectively.

The Āhom speech, now extinct, belonged to this Tai-Chinese sub-family which has only 6,000 speakers and which further bifurcates into Khānti Phākiāl and Tai-Siam groups. The Tibeto-Burmān sub-family of Mongoloid speech is by far the greater and more important of the two as it is also various and numerous in its descendants. Of its three groups the Tibeto-Himalayan includes 7,000 speakers with the Bhotia of Tibet, Māgari, Limbu and many other dialects spoken in Nepāl and Sikkim. The second or the North-Asam group consists of 99,000 speakers of whom 81,000 are Miri, 14,000 are Abar, 2,285 are Mishimi and 1,644 are Dafalā speakers. The third of the Asam-Burmā group is further subdivided into three sub-groups of which (1) the Kuki-Chin includes Manipuri and Kuki dialects having 591,000 speakers in all (2) the Nāgā sub-group including Ao and Lhotā with 265,000 speakers, and (3) the most important the Baḍo sub-group comprising 531,000 speakers of various important sub-dialects. Of these (a) 4,315 are speakers of Cutiyā supposed to be the original language of non-Aryan upper Asam and now spoken by the Deori section alone; (b) Baḍo (Plains Kachārī) or Mech speakers number 283,000; (c) Dimāchā (Hills Kachārī) speakers are 14,680; (d) Lālūng speakers number 9,000; (e) Mikir, said to be coming in between Baḍo and Kuki sub-groups, has as many as 126,457 speakers; (f) Koc (Rājvaṃśī) styled sometimes as a kind of Mangal Garo speech, is now spoken in the Gāro Hills, and (g) Rābhā, probably allied to Lālūng are the members of the Baḍo sub-group. (*Vide Census of India*, 1931, Vol. III, Assam, Part I, Report by C. S. Mullan).

It appears that the identification of the Tibeto-Burman Mongoloids with the Kirātas taking prominent part in the Mahābhārata warfare under Bhagadatta has never been questioned; but their immigration prior to that of the Aryans seems to be challenged in certain quarters from the fact that the former have been designated as Mlecchas which term is said to mean 'foreigners' (*E.H.K.*, Ch. I). While the outpour of hordes of Mongoloids had been continuing until very late in historical times, it is difficult to agree that the earliest immigration of them must be a pro-

Aryan fact simply for the designation 'Mleccha' which might or might not mean 'foreigners'. On the other hand, it appears more natural to think that it was rather Naraka with his line who came as foreigners to establish the first Aryan rule in Prāgjyotiṣa by displacing the Kirāta (Mongoloid) king Ghaṭaka, and his descendants handled the solid Mongoloid army in fighting in Kurukṣetra war even though they might look down upon them as 'Mlechhas'. Among the races considered as first coming to settle in the Indian soil are the Negritos or Negroids (*Racial Elements in the Population of India*, Oxford Pamphlets, No. 22, p. 3). They are discovered of late to have considerably wide distribution in the interior of the hills as of Cochin, Travancore, Rajmahal and of Assam. The Āngāmis alone of the various Nāgā tribes are said to belong to the aboriginal Negrito race coming to India (J. H. Hutton, *Man in India*, 1927, p. 7).

The next earliest and apparently more wide-spread primitive element in the aboriginal population seems to be the proto-Australoids, many members of the Muṇḍā, Sāntāl and Kol groups being included among others. "The proto-Australoid type is the most dominant element at present in the tribal population of southern and central India." (*R.E.P.I.*, p. 11).

The long-headed type of the Palae-Mongoloid strain appears "in the sub-Himalayan region as the more ancient stratum of the population and forms a dominant element in the tribes living in Assam and the Indo-Burmese frontiers. (Ibid). These three races constitute the non-Aryan population of India, and hence of Asam.

Not much is known about the contribution of the Negrito people to Indian culture save that the cult of the *ficus* tree is said to have originated from them; and still less is known about their speech. The Australoids are said to have two sub-families of speech, the Austro-Nesian and Austro-Asiatic. The latter has two groups known as Monkhemer and Muṇḍā.

Khāsi is the type of Monkhemer speech, forming a sort of island in the heart of the State of Asam. In the Census of India, 1931, the Khāsi (Monkhemer) speakers were shown to be 234,000 while Muṇḍā speakers were 321,000 of which 159,000 were Muṇḍāri, 102,000 Sāntāli, the balance being composed of Savara, Kurku, Khariā and other dialect-speakers.

It may be erroneous to identify the speakers of a language of a race with the members themselves of the race as a matter of course. For languages and social customs are acquired traits and may be subject

to constant changes. Such a mistake is committed by hasty scholars who seek to identify the Austric-speaking Khāsis with Austriacs themselves which they are not. "The Tibeto-Chinese languages are spoken by Mongoloid tribes belonging to all the racial elements within that division. Similarly the Austric languages belong not only to the palae-Mongoloid Khāsis of Assam, but also to the Muṇḍās, Sāntāls and Hos of Central India and the Negrito Semang and Sakai of the Malay Peninsula" (*R.E.P.I.*).

Austriacs are known to have been neoliths while their predecessors, the Negritos, are thought to have been paleoliths. Some scholars would suspect the Mongoloid invasion to be pro-Mediterranean and even pro-Nordic fact for no other reason than that "the Aryans designated them as Mlecchas thus indicating that they were foreigners". (*Early History of Kamarupa*). Such reasonings do not convince, and while some later immigration of Mongoloid people is not denied, the first invasion of them cannot be doubted as pre-Mediterranean and pre-Nordic of course.

One can hardly hazard any opinion as to any traces of earliest Austric and Mongoloid influence on the Aryan Asamīyā language. To open a modern dictionary of the descendants of such speakers and to opine that every similar word is a loan from them seems far from a scientific method. Even every non-*Tatsama* or non-*Tadbhava* word may not be non-Aryan.

One safer method for guess may be to test a word on the culture of the race. We know that pro-Australoid contribution to Indian culture as a whole; are a good deal of totemistic rites, exorcism, food taboos, magical beliefs, ban on commensality and intermarriage now forming the basis of Hindu caste system (*R.E.P.I.*).

Megalithic culture and agriculture in general with an idea of mother-goddess, as also a feminine conception applied to the Earth as a procreating agency, might be theirs.

So it is not unlikely that we owe not only such cottage industries but also the words as *mugā* (silk-cocoon, Muṇḍā-Asamīyā) and *kimkhāp* (a high class silk, Khāsi-Asamīyā) to the Austric people. Theirs might also be the *lātum* (spinning top, Muṇḍā-Asamīyā) for the textile industry and *bātalū guti* (clay pellet, Mālayān Asamīyā) might be their invention for driving away crows from taking away the *mugā* cocoons. *Nāngal* (plough) and many more things and words connected with it, as also many words naming the private parts of men and women, related to their megalithic culture on one side and to their conception of the Earth as procreating agency having their parallels in the procreating organs of men and women, might owe their origin to the Austriacs. In connection with their ploughing, they may have been first acquainted with the use of

bokā (mud, cf. Sans. *ṣanka*, Sāntāli-Asamīyā) and have come across *dong* (small pool of water, Khāsiā-Asamīyā), *holā* (shallow pool) and as well as *ui* (white ants), *ṭilā* (a mound of earth, both Mālayān Asamīyā), and *ḍhip* (raised earth, Mundā-Asamīyā); and they may have needed a *tokon* (a big bamboo stick, Mālayān-Asamīyā) to drive away the *methon* (a wild bull, Khāsiā-Asamīyā): and of course, they may have first discovered and tasted the *jahā* (fine rice) and other rice. They may have needed and so invented the *holongū* (bamboo pointed to be used for carrying rice plants etc.), which would not do if it were *buti* (short and blunt).

They must have been high-class weavers, for they not only carried on the cottage industries of *mugā* and *kimkhāp*, but also might know the use of *āchu* (coloured thread, Mālay-Asamīyā) and in order to keep their *topolā* (bundle) of such valuable clothes, they must have invented the *japā* (a bamboo box).

We know little of the physiognomy of the Austrics. They might either be *bhutkurā* or *ghut-mut* (dwarfish, Muṇḍā-Sāntāli-Asamīyā) and *nodokā* (stout, Khāsiā-Asamīyā) or they might be *lengū* (very tall, Muṇḍā-Asamīyā) or even *mechā* (curved) and *kongū* (with crooked fingers), or *telekā* (large-eyed, Mālay-Asamīyā). They might have sports and games of *ḍhop* (ball of cloth, Muṇḍā-Asamīyā) and might become *cafal* (strong, Mundāri-Asamīyā).

Still less we know of their inner nature. They might be *ālābādū* (useless) or *bhodā* (stupid, Muṇḍā-Asamīyā) or they might be *ātom-tokāri* (smart, both Muṇḍā-Asamīyā); they might have often been in *dodhor-mor* (dilemma, Sāntāli-Asamīyā) or in *khang* (anger, Khāsiā-Asamīyā). They might be *hutā* (rough, Muṇḍā-Asamīyā) or even *gongorā* (cross-tempered). Their *maṭā* (male) and *māiki* (female, Muṇḍā-Asamīyā) might have worked together in the field, where they might feel *cecā* (cold) and *ceṅgā* (burning) sensations in their *dingi* (neck, all Mālayān-Asamīyā) at times, as also *thetuai* (numbness due to cold), even so by *danguā* (bachelor, all Muṇḍā-Asamīyā) people.

They might or might not be *tokonā* (extremely poor), but all-the-same, they ate *bagā* (white, Mālayān-Asamīyā) eggs by removing their *cokorā* (shell, Khāsiā-Asamīyā) and could say when the milk would be *serekā* (dilute, Muṇḍā-Asamīyā).

Next to the Austrics came the Mongoloid invasion of India. Their contribution to Bhāratīya culture is even more valuable. Besides, perhaps, more widespread terraced cultivation of rice and of silk industry, we owe to them the cultivation of tea and betel nut as also the pine-

apple and cocoanut, besides the use of outrigger and canoe and the practice of communal houses and head-hunting' (R.E.P.I.).

Since the Mongoloids, whose descendants are the Baḍos in Asam, are credited with the first cultivation and use of betel-nut, they must have made the discovery of preserving the arecanuts by *gorā* (seasoning in mud) and also of *jakhalā* (bamboo-ladder) to get betel leaves from high in the trees. They must have been good fish-eaters and so they must have invented *lāngī* (fishing net), *khokā* (fish trap) and such other bamboo implements of catching fish. Not only these, they may probably be rightly suspected of having an advanced bamboo culture; for they must not only have had *hengār* (fencing) to protect their crops and *cakoā* (family fencing) for reserve in compounds, but they also must first have made *kharāhi* and *pāci*, (bamboo baskets big and small) to keep paddy and rice, must have first prepared *kharicā* (condiment made from tender shoots of bamboos), *cungā cāul* (rice boiled in tender bamboo tubes) and *cungā piṭhā* (cakes made in tender bamboo tubes) to suit various tastes.

Mongoloids may possibly be held responsible for inventing bamboo instrumental music such as *takā* (half-split bamboo instrument) and *gaganā* (fine bamboo instrument). Nor is this all. A sort of bamboo-worship is there for which cutting of bamboos on Tuesdays and Saturdays is strictly prohibited. This cult may perhaps be safely attributed to these bamboo culturists.

Mongoloids must have had first invented *cāng* (bamboo scaffold) for a cot to lie on, and must have occasionally indulged in *jīrani* (recreation) or even in *hāmāhi* procrastination; but they do not seem to have been either *hojā* (simpleton) or *hebāng* (stupid). They surely had some *jong* (point) in their intellect, for which they would either *gabā-mār* (clasp) or *thalāmuri mār* (slap on the head) their juniors who would *cekur mār* (take to heels) at their sight.

It may be interesting to note a parallel event of the English language to show how history of words may both reveal and corroborate political history. Ox, cow, calf, sheep, swine, boar, deer etc., are English while beef, mutton, pork, venison etc., were originally French words, which fact tells the tale that the native people, forming the subject race and lower class, were in charge of those very animals which appeared on the table with tempting names of their foreign masters. So also *sauce, boil, fry, roasts, toasts, soup, jelly, dainty* etc., belong the French masters who enjoyed life even at the cost of the natives of England. So also while the humble *breakfast* is English, the sumptuous *dinner, supper, feasts* etc., are French.

It is only later that the English natives borrowed *joy, pleasure, delight, ease, comfort* and even *leisure* from their Norman masters. While the English merely *hunted* earlier, they have now learnt the games of *chase, dice* and *card-playing* etc., and they, who earlier simply *clothed* themselves, have later learnt to *dress* in new *apparel, costume, or garment* following the leading French fashion. Also in art, the English had borrowed French *colour, beauty, ornament, paint* etc., and had had new *furniture* as *chair, table* etc., new *palace, castle, vault, cloister*, even changing their humble *hut* for the fashionable French *cottage*. Thus the English have reformed their social life in every manner, becoming better and cheered even adopting French exclamation as *alas, adieu* etc. Finally, as a proof of peace cemented between the two nations, English words formed *hybrids* with French words or English inflectional-ending being added to French words such as *children, simpleness, courtly, beautiful, artless, companionship* etc (*Composite Character of the English language*, by D. Neog, *Jeuti*, IX, 3, April, 1935).

FIVE

TRACES OF EARLY ARYAN INVASIONS OF ASAM

PARADOXICAL as it may appear to speak of Asam as a home and habitat of non-Aryan people and to admit it again as "one of the earliest Aryan colonies in the country" (*H.B.L.L.* p. I) in the same breath, it is none-the-less a fact as clear as broad daylight only if one cares to know the composite character of the Asamīyā society and culture, manners and customs in general.

The first introduction of early light (Prāgjyotiṣ) into this country is attributed to none else than the line of kings beginning with Naraka who is styled as Mahātmana in the illustrious *Harṣa Carita* by Bāna who is styled as Mahātmanastasya (Narakasya) anvaye Bhagadatta-Puṣpadatta-Vajradatta prabhrtiṣu vyatiteṣu meru-pameṣu mahatṣu mahipāleṣu" (*H.C.*, Ch. VII). The life story of Naraka is described in the *Bhāgawat* (Bk. X, Ch. LIX) and *Yoginī Tantra* (first half, Ch. XII) besides the *Kālikā Purānā* (Chs. XXXVI to XL). It is narrated in the latter that Naraka was brought up in the family of Janaka, king of Viḍeha and he married Māyā, the princess of Viḍarbha. It is further related how he killed his predecessor Ghataka, a Kirāta (Mongoloid) king, with the help of Kṛṣṇa and established an early Aryan kingdom in the east.

Historicity of Naraka no longer can be brushed aside once we admit Janaka and Kṛṣṇa as historical figures. Yuān Chwāng, the prince of travellers, as he visited this country early in the seventh century A.D., left

this historical record in this connection: "The present king belongs to the old line of Nārāyandev. He is of the Brahman caste. His name is Bhāskar Varmā, his title Kumār. From the time that this family seized the land and assumed the Government, there have elapsed a thousand generations" (Beal's *Records* Vol. II, p. 195). Thus Yuān Chwāng places Naraka some time about the middle of the third millennium B.C., which curiously coincides with the time fixed by some scholars about the Mahābhārata war. On the matter of Bhāskar Varmā being of Brahman caste, some people were usually prone to think it to be a confusion made by the Chinese traveller between Varmā and Śarmā. But one must be warned that Yuān Chwāng was always a keen observer and an accurate compiler of facts so-much-so that few of his statements could be challenged till present times. And he stayed for more than a month in the capital of Bhāskar Varmā and looked into matters with penetrating eyes. So it must be wrong to think that he might be mistaken.

Later research now points to the fact that Varman is also the title of the Nagar Brahmans, who are like the Telegu, the Oriyā, the Kanarese, the Sarasvata, the Chippavan and the Desastha Brāhmans. Bhāskar must have been a Brāhman of the non-Vedic Mediterranean or Alpine race. During the third millennium B.C., which exactly coincides with the age of Naraka as suggested by Yuān Chwāng, the Alpine immigration poured into India, one branch of them moving toward the western coast of India through the Indus Valley and the other branch pushing towards Eastern India. In his Report (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. I) J. H. Hutton calls them Mediterranean; and B. S. Guha opines that these brachycephals and the Vedic Aryans of a much later period must have belonged to a common ancestral stock and finds that the Pods of Bengal, Telegu Brāhmans, the Oriya Brāhmans, the Kānārese Brahmans, the Sāraswat Brāhmans, the Chippavan Brāhmans and the Desastha Brāhmans are all basically of this race". (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol., Pt. II Ethnographical).

Some clarification seems necessary on the Asura designation of Naraka. R. D. Banerji opines that the Indo-Aryans had enemies of two different classes, the Vṛtras, the civilized foes, and the Dāsas or Dasyus who were uncivilized or non-Aryan. In later literature, references are not wanting to the cultured race of Asuras whom they were bound to recognize as civilized but tried to look down upon them as they did not revere the gods whom the Vedic Aryans worshipped. So in the Vedic and post-Vedic literature and in the Epics and the Purāns they are represented as Daityas (demons) and formidable enemies to the Vedic gods, but admitted as highly cultured and skilled in architecture.

Thus it is that Vṛtra, the Asura Chief, is styled a Snake in the *Śatapatha Brāhmana* while in the *Mahābhārata* he is found as a prince. (*Pre-historic Ancient and Hindu India*, pp. 18-19). As Ahura (Asura) Mazdā was the God of the Early Iranians so also they might be called Asuras.

These Asuras or Vṛtras (who are sometimes wrongly confused with the Medes or Assyrians, an aboriginal tribe of Chota-Nagpur, also called Asuras) are called Vṛātyas so that the traditional literature describes the countries of Eastern India as *aunpadeśa* Vṛātya land. They are since identified with the Alpines who had prosperous kingdoms in the east such as Magadha, Videha, Kośala and Prāgjyotiṣa. These Asuras were great builders and their building operations were regarded with awe and revered by the Aryans. At any rate, these Alpines were certainly far more civilized than the Indo-Aryans who, somehow, conquered them in the long run. It is suggested that the Asuras even formed a belt around some Vedic Aryan colonies.

Also, Asura (cf. Ahura Mazdā) was the designation of the Early Iranians who might have belonged to the same stock of round-headed Alpines originally and who shared the same strong disapproval of the Aryan gods. It must also be the robust Alpine thinkers who were responsible for the towering pillars of the metaphysical theosophy of the Upaniṣads superseding the ritualism of the Vedas and Brāhmins.

Unfortunate as it is that the late anthropometric research in India was not carried into Asam, J. H. Hutton thinks that the Kalitās, a prominent high caste of Asam as of Orissa, belonged probably to this stock of Alpines and therefore they may have descended from the kings of the Naraka line through Bhāskar Varmā and others. Yuān Chwāng's mention of Bhāskar Varmā as a Brāhman is, curiously enough, supported by the strong tradition of the Kalitās which is pointedly observed by Montgomery Martin (*The History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India*, Vol. III, Rungpoor, 1883):

"As soon as the Koch became noted in tradition or history, we find that they had adopted a priesthood called Kolita or Kulta. They no doubt had some science and continued long to be the spiritual guides of the Koch, and indeed in some places they still retain by far the chief authority over the people. . . . It is not therefore wonderful that in the Account of Assam published in the second volume of the *Asiatic Researches*, the people of that country are said to be the Assamians (Ahoms) or Koltanians (Kalitās), the former the temporal lords, the latter the spiritual guides, and then perhaps still more powerful than even now.

“The power of the Kalitās received a severe blow by the introduction of the Kāmarūpa (Vedic) Brāhmins by Visu, the grandson of Hajo who chose them as his guides in religion. . . . Still however under the Brāhmins, as I have said, they retain much power, and more than one of the princes of Vihar have rejected the Brāhmins and chosen to return to the guidance of the ancient priesthood (of the Kalitās).

“These persons (Kalitās) have now entirely adopted the Hindu (Vedic) worship and customs and are contented with being considered as pure Sudras. . . . They endeavour to pass themselves as Kāyastha, and probably all the Barendra Kāyasthas are of this origin. There are Brāhmins called Assameṣe. They are Baidika of Kanyakubja. . . . Before their arrival there were learned men among the Kolitas who were *Gurus* for all people”. The *District Gazetteers*, *Census Reports* and Dalton’s *Ethnology*, all speak about the priesthood of the Kalitās in unequivocal and eloquent praise.

In the Asamīyā speech we come across a set of words which are not met with in Sanskrit or in its earlier Vedic language, but have regular coincidence with Indo-European words with almost identical forms and meanings and are too persistent to be brushed aside as mere accidental. Such words are—Asm. *ābu* (grand-mother), Lt. *avia* (grandmother), *avus* (grand-father); Asm. *ātā* (grand-father), Lt. *atta* (salutation to father equivalents); Asm. *āl* (e.g. *āl-dharā*, attendant), Lt. *alo* (to nourish); Asm. *uruli* (auspicious cry), Lt. *ululo* (auspicious cry); Asm. *or* (end), Lt. *ora* (limit); Asm. *geri* (shout), Gk. *gerys* (cry); Asm. *nāo* (boat), Gk. *neo*, *naus* (boat); Asm. *pām* (farm), Lt. *firma* (farm); Asm. *powāli* (young ones) Lt. *puellus*, *puellia* (issues), Asm. *minā* (enamel of gold), Lt. *mina* (enamel); Asm. *markuciā* (demon), Zend *mahrkusa* (evil spirit); Asm. *necā* or *lecā* (skein of thread) Gk. *lachne*, Lt. *lana* (skein); Asm. *suhuri* (whistling), Lt. *su-suris* (whistling). (A.V.B.).

R. D. Banerji observes: “References in the Vedic literature very clearly indicate the Indo-Aryans regarding that part of Northern India only to be fit for the occupation of Indo-Aryans where their peculiar manners and customs, and mode of worship, had obtained prevalence. The Indo-Aryans had brought with them the cult of worship of fire. The *Satapatha Brāhmana* mentions that from the banks of the river Saraswati, the sacred fire travelled along the northern bank of the river Ganges and crossed the Saraju, Gandak and Kosi rivers and reached the western bank of the river Sadanira” which last river Banerji would identify with the Tapti, but which must really mean the Karatoyā which agrees both in reference and meaning. The Kōsi (Kausika) was generally the eastern and western boundary of Mithilā and Kāmarūpa as is so often proved by the epigraphs, some kings of Kāmarūpa really extending their boundaries beyond Kōsi into Behar. It is further proved by the oft-quoted statement: “It is so remarkable that while in the neighbouring province of Gauḍa (Bengal) the alleged import of Ādisura of Brāhmins from Kanauj, or the mythical creation of Saptasthi (700) Brāhmins is not attributed to a period earlier than the eighth century

A.D., there could be so many Brāhmins found in a single village in Kāmarūpa two centuries earlier". (*Ēpigarphia Indica*, XIX).

Side by side with pre-Vedic manners and customs of certain sections of people, a set of words are there in the language which definitely show their direct descent from the Vedic than from high-sounding Sanskrit equivalents. Asm. *vākali* (barks of trees), Ved. *Vakala* (It. Br. III, 7, 4, 2); Asm. *vasati* (dwelling), Ved. *vasati* (Rk. I, 31, 15); Asm. *śah* (crop), Ved. *śas* (Rk. I, 51, 3); Asm. *śakat* (able), Ved. *śakat* (Rk. I, 10, 6); Asm. *vit* (wealth) Ved. *vit* (Rk. I, 12, 19); Asm. *makhā* (multitude), Ved. *makhās* (Rk. I, 18, 9); Asm. *sāh* (courage), Ved. *sāhaḥ* (Rk. I, 24, 6); Asm. *sacā* (truth), ved. *sacā* (Rk. I, 51, 12). There are a large number of words besides which appear to descend direct from Vedic: Asm. *āpa* (venerable person), Ved. *āptah* (Rk. I, 10, 34); Asm. *āpi*, *āi* (women, mother), Ved. *āpi* (Rk. I, 26, 3; I, 31, 16); Asm. *āyati* (woman having husband), Ved. *āyaji* (Rk. I, 28, 7); Asm. *ene*, *enā* (this sort of); Ved. *ena* (Rk. I, 25, 3); Asm. *ohār* (udder), Ved. *udhar*; Asm. *kalā* (a pulse), Ved. *kalva* (Sām, XVIII, 12); Asm. *kundhac* (useless), Ved. *akundhyañca*; Asm. *kuli* (cuckoo), Ved. *kulika* (Vaj sam, XXIV, 24); Asm. *khari* (firewood), Ved. *akhareṣṭh* (Sat. Br. I, 2, 6, 1); Asm. *jor* (torch), Ved. *jurni* (Rk. I, 129, 8); Asm. *dāduri* (frog), Ved. *tāduri* (Ath. V. IV, 15, 14); Asm. *nirgat* (vile), Ved. *nigut* (Rk. IX, 97, 53-54); Asm. *pakharā* (leprosy), Ved. *pakaru* (Vaj. Sām. XII, 97); Asm. *palu* (caterpillar), Ved. *plusi* (Rk. I, 191, 1); Asm. *pec* (adornment), Ved. *peśas* (Rk. II, 3, 6; IV, 36, 7; VII, 34, 11); Asm. *vāk* (pour), Ved. *vāk* (Rk. I, 63, 7); Asm. *bihu* (equinoxial festival), Ved. *visuvant* (Ath. V, XI, 7, 15); Asm. *veji* (needle) Ved. *vesi* (Rk. VII, 17, 18); Asm. *bhem* (pride), Ved. *bhema* (Rk. I, 11, 2); Asm. *menā* (drooping horned), Ved. *menā* (Rk. I, 62, 7; I, 95, 6; I, 121, 2; II, 39, 2; X, III, 3); Asm. *molān* (part of edible lotus), Ved. *mutali* (Ath. IV, 34, 5). (A.V.B.).

Over and above these are certain words equivalent to Vedic, immediately reminding us of the peculiar dress of Asamiyā Aryans, men and women, coming down from time immemorial. Asm. *mekhalā*, Ved. *mekhala* (Ath. VI 133, 1; kath. Sam. I, 33, 5; VI, 2, 27); it is "a woman's underskirt, like the gown of the Indo-European women" and is equivalent to a Brahmācārī's girdle of old. So is also Asm. *rihā*, Ved. *vṛhatikā*; it also is a part of Asamiyā Aryan woman's dress, counterpart of *mekhalā*, in the manner of the holy thread which Aryan women certainly wore as *Sahadharmīnī* or associate in religious performances of men before they were replaced by the profession of a priestly-class. Asm. *khāḍu*, Ved. *khāḍi* (Rk. I, 116, 9; V, 53, 11; VII, 56, 13); it is an armlet of gold which Asamiyā Aryans, men and women, used to wear till now. Asm. *keru* and *karia*, Ved. *kurirā* (Rk. X, 85, 8); it is an ear-ornament of gold of Asamiyā Aryan women till today. Asm. *maṇi*, Ved. *maṇi* (Rk. I, 122, 14); it as a necklace of pearls worn by Asamiyā Aryan men women till recent days. Asm. *khopā*, Ved. *kaparda* (Rk. I, 114, 1-5;

X, 114, 3); it means locks of hair worn by Asamīyā Aryans, men and women, though men now generally wear their hair short. (A.V.B.).

It is of course not quite safe to suppose that all the Asamīyā words having any similarity with Vedic or Sanskrit words were derived from the latter, and that the opposite process could not be possible. A. B. Keith in his *History of Sanskrit Literature* describes "Sanskrit as a vernacular" in his preface and notes: "On the question of the origin of Sanskrit no conclusive evidence has been recently adduced.... It is clear that the Aryan invaders succeeded in imposing their speech on many of the earlier inhabitants of the country, and there is no cogent argument to refute the natural belief that strange Prakritic forms, such as we find sporadically even in the Ṛgveda, when not mere later corruptions, are often loan-words from class dialects with which the speakers of the more conservative form of speech were in contact. The influence of lower speech-forms was doubtless of increasing importance, since it evoked the elaborate grammatical studies summed up in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* testifying to the anxiety of the priests to preserve the Bhāṣā from corruption, and Patanjali's insistence on the evils of barbarisms doubtless proves their occurrence. But there seems no ground for conceiving of the position as one in which the priests used a formal language only in their business, and discarded it for a true vernacular in daily life.... The presence of many Sanskritized versions of Prākṛit terms to which Zachariae has suggested an interesting addition in the term *protha*, is a perfectly natural phenomenon where higher and lower speeches exist contemporaneously in the same community, apart altogether from the further possibilities of speech mixture due to the development of local as well as class dialects. At any rate, arguments used to deny vernacular character to Sanskrit are quite adequate to prove the same hypothesis of standard English, which unquestionably is a true vernacular.

"Moreover, the fact that Sanskrit was thus regularly used in conversation by the upper classes, court circles, eventually following the examples of the Brāhmins in this regard, helps to explain the constant influence exercised by the higher form of speech on the vernaculars which reveals itself *inter alia* in the constant influx of *Tatsamas*, words whose phonetic state runs counter to the tendencies of the vernacular. It is quite impossible to explain this phenomenon by the theory of borrowing from literature; only those who adopted the vernaculars for the purpose of writing in any form or literary composition were doubtless in constant touch with circles in which Sanskrit was actually in living use..... for the period from A.D. 300 up to 1200.....there is little evidence of any fundamental change in the extent or character of the use of Sanskrit; the same impression is given by *Kāmasūtra*, perhaps c. 400, the *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā* of Rājasekhara (c. 900), and Bilhana (c. 11.00). (pp. XXIV, XXVII).

Almost the same contention may apply also to the Vedic language. Macdonell in the *History of Sanskrit Literature* notes: "The beginnings of these (present day Indian dialects) go back to a great antiquity. Even at the times the Vedic hymns were composed they must have existed as popular languages". Uhlenbeck opines: "There is reason to believe that Sanskrit descended from another old Indian dialect than that of the Vedic". "The Vedic language was spoken in the Punjab in 1500 B.C.". "There is indeed no doubt that in the second century... Sanskrit was actually spoken in the country...extended beyond the Brahmins". (H.S.L.).

It may therefore be surmised that while an early Aryan invasion of Asam is a fact beyond dispute, the similarity of many Asamīyā words of Vedic and post-Vedic vocabulary may be due also to the old Indian dialect prevalent in Kāmarūpa being contemporaneous and probably analogous, to the one from which the Vedic and post-Vedic vocabulary sprang.

SIX

SOCIAL EVIDENCES OF EARLY ARYAN INVASIONS OF ASAM

BESIDES the fig tree and possibly a crude fertility cult and invention of the bow and arrow by the Negritos laying the foundation of neolithic culture and introducing of the use of pottery and totemistic rites by the proto-Australoids and founding almost a full agricultural civilization with almost all its luxuries by the Mongoloids, the three or more non-Aryan invasions appear to have contributed not much to the intellectual or spiritual culture of India in general and Asam in particular. On the other hand, while the three or more Aryan invasions appear to have contributed not much on the material and secular side, almost the whole structure of intellectual and spiritual civilization of India appears to be broad-based by them in more or less varying degrees. In Asam, the actions and reactions of the different Aryan cultures may be found embodied in one ethnic group called the Kalitās.

Kalitā, as there were occasions to observe, is no caste name as it is so often supposed to be, but is really an ethnic group. It was first suggested by Rajani Kumar Padmapati in his valuable paper, *Purāṇi Asamat Bhūmuki*, 1910 first published in *Bāhi*, Vol. II, where he showed how this group embraced so many castes or sub-castes as potters and goldsmiths and blacksmiths, washermen and barbers, as also priests within their fold. That these Kalitās were certainly regarded as Brāhmanas and they did the priestly business of the Koces, sometimes even in preference to Vedic priests, has been proved from authoritative and

historical sources. The culture and physiognomy and all other features connected with the Kalitās betray their Aryan origin to be sure; but the above facts and figures about them seem to prove at the same time that they were non-Vedic, if not anti-Vedic. This is further corroborated by their manners and customs which are definitely peculiar to Indo-Aryan people. They positively belong to a high caste among the Aryans, but they ever refused to practise child-marriage and to obey prohibition of widow marriage as Vedic Ayans of a later age did. Perhaps they practised *homa* in marriage at a later stage, probably in spite of themselves.

“Assam is the home of the Kalitās, and its (Assam’s) civilization is pre-eminently a Kalitā civilization. The other sub-castes follow the Kalitā social law and customs in their entirety”. (AVB, *Introduction*, p. XXXVI). It is hard to say when the Kalitās submitted themselves to the subjugation of the Vedic rules and rites, but even in it their supremacy is acknowledged; for any proselyte from a non-Aryan group is first placed in such a sub-caste as Koc with a promise to promote him through an intermediate class as Keot finally to a Kalitā. Even then Kalitās try their level best to keep their blood unmixed as best as they can. Dalton says of them: “The Kalitās are to be found in every district of Assam and as no one appears to know how they got there or where they came from, we may infer that they are the remnant of the earliest (Aryan) colonists of the Valley. . . They are the people to whom the Assamese population generally owe the softening of feature observed that many Kalitās have the grey eye so frequently found amongst the Rajputs of western India. . . I do not know of any castes corresponding to them in the western districts; but I find Buchanan Hamilton says that the Kalitās once had great sway in Rungpur, and many of those remaining there have assumed the title of Kaists. As Rungpur was once part of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa, we might expect to find Kalitās there; but a Hindu tribe, in every way resembling them and having the same name, Kalitā, is to be found in the Sambalpur district and some of the Cuttack and Chot-Nagpur Tributary Mahals. . .

“I believe we have good grounds for supposing that Assam or Kāmarūpa was amongst the earliest established of the Eastern Aryan settlements. Bhagadatta, king of Kāmarūpa, is mentioned as a warrior in the Mahabharata and in the antiquities and traditions of the country. . . Wilson observes in the preface to his *Vishnu Purana*: “It is a singular and as yet uninvestigated circumstance that Assam or at least the north-east of Bengal seems to have been in a great degree the source from which the Tantrika and Sakta corruptions of the religion of the Vedas and Puranas proceeded”. . . It appears from the earliest notices of Kāmarūpa that the Ayans who first occupied it were subsequently regarded as infidels by their western brethren. . . The older head-priests were probably Kalitās. . . It appears certain that there were no Brahmans with the earlier colonists (*Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 77-82).

It is a fact that caste system even among the Vedic Aryans was comparatively a later development, and the group of Aryans with whom Kalitās might be connected certainly were one among the first to have left their original home as is found from the extant linguistic evidences. There is an equal possibility that the Kalitās themselves might not have been Nordic people, from whom the Vedic Aryans descended; and they might even belong to the Mediterraneans or Alpine, or an Alpine *cum* Mediterranean race having a mutation with the Vedic Aryans long before the Vedic people entered India. Latest investigations in this respect appear to point to the conclusion that the Kalitās descended through the Varman line of kings, whose representative Bhāskar was recognized as a Brāhman by Yuān Chwāng, from Naraka who in turn was connected, in regard to his breeding and culture, with Janaka of Videha, the latter definitely belonging to the Alpine *cum* Mediterranean civilisation. These Alpines are decidedly responsible for the metaphysical theosophy of transmigration of *ātman* (soul), which the Vedic Aryans learnt at their feet, the religion of the latter being only a form of nature worship, and the great civilization of the Indus Valley in Mahenjadarō and Harappa belong to these Mediterranean people.

Latest researches would connect these people with the Paṇis mentioned in the Vedic literature and would prove their co-existence even in martial relations against each other with the R̥g Vedic Aryans. The Paṇis are represented as "traders, userers and enormously rich" as were the Harappans having their trade representatives in Babyloniā. "There were clear traces of the relics of the Harappan civilisation in the valley of the Ghaggar, the ancient Saraswati "Yā śaśvāntamācara vādā-vasaṃ Paṇim (which pounded the Paṇis, Rk. VI, 61, 1). Again "Saraswati gharunamāyaso pūh (Saraswati was the iron fortress, Rk. VII, 95, 1) may imply that the river had been the boundary between the two civilizations. What is still noteworthy is that the Paṇis are described as "non-sacrificing or as not worshipping the gods". From the Rig-Vedic references, hostile as they must be, it can be gathered that the Vedic Aryans were always jealous of the Paṇis and they cared more for acquisition of the wealth of the Paṇis than for annexing their territories. Paṇis were powerful enough for them and they must have defeated the Vedic Aryans on various occasions, but the Rig Veda is not expected to give details of these defeats".

A. S. Altekar refers to an interesting incident. "There is one hymn in the Rig Veda which shows that if the Aryans raided and looted the Paṇis, i.e. the Harappans the latter often paid them back in the same coin. The Rig Veda, X, 108, shows that the Paṇis i.e. the Harappans had raided the Aryan territory, carried away their kine and confined

them in a fort. The Aryans did not send a thundering ultimatum or undertake an immediate expedition; instead they sent a detective *cum* diplomat to find out the cows and persuade the Paṇis to return them without a fight. This detective *cum* diplomat was Saramā, a lady. She eventually finds out the place where the cows were kept in captivity. She does not deliver an ultimatum; the Aryans were obviously not held in awe by the Paṇis.

"When Saramā refers to the invincible powers of Indra, the Paṇis retort: "Let him come here; we shall give him the high post of the cowherd." ("Athā gabā Gopatirṇī bhavāti," *Rk.* X, 108, 3). Saramā again requests the Paṇis to return the cows without an appeal to the arms. The Paṇis reply: "Do you really think that any body would ever return such booty without a fight? Remember that our weapons are strong and sharp". (*Utāsmāka māyudhā santitigmā.* *Rk.* X, 108, 5). The Aryans do not appear to have engendered a terror in the mind of the Paṇis i.e. the Harappans. They were frequently attempting to overthrow them and the Asvins are prayed in the Rigveda to foil their plans and efforts." (*Jare thāmasmadvipaṇermaniṣām* 3, 5, 2). Vṛtra's confinement of the celestial waters is compared to the confinement of the Aryan cows by the Paṇis. The incident must have been a common one, otherwise it would not have become a standard of comparison". (Presidential Address, 22nd Session, Indian History Congress, Gauhati).

Hence it may be presumed that the Mediterraneans were never at peace with the Vedic Aryans even abroad, whence Naraka is known to have been killed by a stratagem of the latter, decidedly for his anti-Brāhmanistic ways. We are not positively informed as to what cult the Kalitā priests really preached or practised, but we may be sure that like their Mediterranean ancestors they were "non-sacrificing" and non-worshippers of gods of the Vedic Aryans even like the Early Iranians who despised the Vedic gods. It appears that the Kalitās were no supporters of *homa* or fire-worship, at any time, but neither they possibly observed the *pūjā* or flower-dedication ceremony said to have originated from the Dravidian people. We find that the Varman sovereigns down through the Pāla kings of Asam professed Śaivism, some of them like Bhāskar having some Buddhistic leanings and all of them sharing some bias for Vaiṣṇavism, Viṣṇu or "Nārāyaṇdev" being their origin as also observed by Yuān Chwāng; and finally the faith of the line culminating in Vaiṣṇavism pure and simple as is proved by the last epigraphic record of king Dharma Pāl.

On the comparative contribution of the Mediterraneans and Nordics, B. S. Guha says: "The Palae-Mediterraneans probably brought pottery, megalithic culture with its associated fertility rites and human sacrifice, and it seems likely that they were responsible for introducing matriarchal institutions and high positions of women in penninsular India. The Mediterranean race proper, as far as can be judged, deve-

loped the civilization of the Indus valley and to it we owe the largest content of the present-day Indian religion and culture. Most of the common domestic animals, river transports, garments, the structure of house, the use of brick, painted pottery and the buildings of towns are due to them. Astronomy and the Indian script are also their contributions. . . . If the contention of the late Ramprasad Chanda be right, then the developments of the Bhakti cult and religious emotionalism of Gujarat and Bengal must be attributed to them.

"The Nordics brought horses, probably iron and the best variety of wheat. . . . The use of milk, alcoholic drinks, dieing, chariot racing, and tailored garments were due to them. They introduced patriarchy in Indian social life, but their chief gift was undoubtedly the Aryan vehicle of thought. They gave the shape into which the contributions of other races were filled. Their chief contributions were in the domain of thought rather than in material culture. Epic poetry, the concept of cosmic order or *Rta*, lofty ethical ideas and philosophical thoughts and abstract natural science were their gifts in building up the Indian civilisation, and it would be historically wrong and scientifically inaccurate to deny that they have been directly or indirectly responsible for most of the glories of Indian literature, philosophy and art". (*R.E.P.I.*, Ox. Pm. pp. 121-29).

The Asamīyā Bihu (Viṣuva) festivals, so peculiar to the Aryans of Asam, definitely connected the equatorial (Viṣuva) phenomena of equinoxes and solstices, must decidedly have been founded by the Early Aryans or Mediterraneans who first brought with them the study of the astronomical science first introduced into India. Only at a later stage it might be identified with *Viṣuvant* (Ath. XI. 7, 15) and *Viṣuvahā* sacrifices etc. of the Vedic Aryans. Bihu festivals were actually four in number, Bahāg Bihu and Kāti Bihu corresponding with the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, and Śāon Bihu (now lost) and Māgh Bihu corresponding with the summer and winter solstices respectively. It must be noted that the early Indian calculation of these *saṃkrāntis* has a difference of about 20 days with the western calculation of these important astronomical dates such that each of the Bihu days fall behind the equinoxes or solstices, as it may be, by about 20 days, accordingly.

These Bihus were very elaborate Asamīyā national festivals a faint idea of which we can only find from the Bahāg Bihu as still observed in villages and continuing for nearly a month. It is also called the *Rangālī* (joyous) Bihu for it is performed in the height of the happy spring season when the people also enjoy leisurely days. The Māgh Bihu is called the *Bhogālī* (enjoying) Bihu for it is held just after the harvest season when all people have enough to eat and enjoy. The Kāti Bihu is called *Kangālī* (destitute) Bihu, for it is held in the

middle of the year when average people exhaust their store of grain and have not much to eat and enjoy. It is now on the verge of extinction. The *Sāon Bihu* is already extinct, probably as it fell in the middle of the plantation season, the busiest period of the agricultural people. Even after the beginning of the present century it survived as a festival in which the farmers used to enjoy *bhāt-piṭhā*, a unique "preparation of rice-flour of which the dough is passed through a sieve to boiling water" where it is cooked, and has the appearance of boiled rice of bigger size.

An interpretation of the *Bihus* is sometimes given in terms of Vedic practices. "In Vedic literature *viṣuvant* is the middle day in the *sattra* or sacrificial session of a year's duration. It literally means ... equinoxial day (Ath. XI, 7, 15). On that day *Govāmayan* rite is performed (At. Br. IV, 18, 6)." It is of course true that the last day of *Caitra* is called *Catar Bihu* or *Garu Bihu* (cow-equinox festival) in which "the cattle are ceremonially bathed" in the morning and *jāg* (*jajna*) is prepared for them in the afternoon; they are tied in the evening with new ropes made of *tarū* plants, fed with *piṭhā* (*pistaka*, cakes) specially prepared for them. Cows, generally adored by the Aryan population, are treated with due deference on that day, and abusing or beating specially on that day is strictly forbidden. So the Vedic *gavāmayan* (cow-equinox festival) may certainly claim some influence on the *Catar Bihu* which precedes the first day of *Baisākh* when the *Bahāg Bihu* or *Mānuh Bihu* (man-equinox, as opposed to cow-equinox) festival begins.

"In the course of the above sacrificial session (*sattra*) the *Mahāvratā* sacrifice was performed by the Vedic Indians at the winter solstice... (Rk. 6, 16, 16)". "At the *Mahāvratā* maidens dance round the fire". Although women have absolutely nothing to do with it, the *Asamīyā Māgh Bihu* (at-winter solstice) is definitely connected with bonfire called *Meji* which may be further related to the wrongly alleged fire-worship of the Magians. Linguistic, social and religious evidences are surely there to show traces of very early Indo-Iranian relations of ancient *Asam*. "In the *Aitareya Brāhmana* *Atiratra* sacrifice is enjoined as a part of the *Aśin Sattra* (IV, 18, 4) ... The first part begins at the autumnal equinox..." We are concerned here not with the identity of the customs, but simply with the early foundation of the *Asamīyā Bihus* into which not only Vedic but even various later cultures may have been woven.

Prohibition of widow marriage and prescription of child marriage were definitely of very late phases even in the Vedic religion, and happily we find no trace of them in the early composition of Aryan customs in *Asam* save and except among a small section of the people professing themselves to be votaries of neo-Vedic religion. *Kalitās*, as a rule, do not obey those practices while those who called themselves *Kāyasthas* followed them for some time in the past; but since then not only *Kāyasthas* but even Vedic *Brāhmins* in *Asam*, probably all over *India*, have gradually got rid of them all right. Among other customs

of the Kalitā civilization of Asam, that go back as far as the Indo-Iranian days, are the rules of removing impurity. "The vendid of Zend-Avesta, Ch. V-XII, deal with impurity arising from the dead, and the way of dispelling it, Ch. XVI with uncleanness of women during menses and Ch. V, with defilement during child-birth. (*The sacred Books of the East*, vol. IV. *The Zend Avesta* by J. Darmesteter)". "When a man dies... the *Drug Nasu* or *Corpse Drug* falls upon the dead from the regions of hell, and whoever thenceforth touches the corpse becomes unclean, and makes unclean whomsoever he touches... The *Drug* is expelled from the living, whom she has seized through their contact with the dead, by a process of washing with ox's urine (*Zend Gomez*, Sans. *Gomaya*) and with water combined with *sāg-did* (a sort of washing)". "The menses are sent by Ahriman, especially when they last beyond the usual time; therefore a woman, as long as they (menses) last, is unclean and possessed of the demon; she must be kept confined apart from the faithful whom her touch would defile... Her food is not given to her from hand to hand, but is passed to her from a distance... Whoever has touched a Dastin (menstruous) woman must wash his body and his clothes with *gomez* and water". "A woman during the first three days after delivery is in danger of death. She is not allowed even to drink water unless she is in danger of death. A great fire is lighted to keep away the fiends who use their utmost efforts to kill her and her child".

These and such rules, strictly followed in Aryan and Aryanised families of Asam, apparently came through the Mediterranean *cum* Alpine *cum* Nordic people about the time when the Indo-Aryans and Iranians were not separated, the Kalitās representing that early race and leading other people in this country. Cleansing with cowdung and ox's urine is a rule which must have been practised from time immemorial.

SEVEN

LINGUISTIC EVIDENCES OF TRANSITIONS TO ASAMIYĀ

It would not only be ungrateful but would also be impossible to deny that the Aryans "gave the shape into which contributions of other races were filled". However meagre might be the contributions of the Nordics to the material culture of India, it is to their gift of the Indo-European speech in the vast Vedic literature that Bhārat has found her voice, almost the first flowering of human speech, "*puṣpitā vācā*". Scholars generally agree that the Vedic language was not artificial at all as many may suppose; but was really a form of the then spoken dialect of the country.

"The language of the Vedic hymns must have been at one time a spoken language in North-west of India, but it must be remembered that we know it in its poetic form only and mostly applied to religious subjects". (Max Muller's *Science of Language*). "The spoken language of the Vedic priests probably differed from this dialect of the hymns only in the absence of poetical constructions and archaisms". (Macdonell's *History of Sanskrit Literature*). "On linguistic grounds we postulate a group of conveniently styled Aryan, whose speech can be regarded as the ancestor of the speeches of India and Iran. Of these Indian speeches our oldest evidence is the *Rig Veda*"... (Keath's *A History of Sanskrit Literature*). "The Vedic language was spoken in the Panjab... in 1500 B.C." (Uhlenbeck). "The beginnings of these (present-day dialects) go back to a great antiquity. Even at the times that the Vedic hymns were composed they must have existed as popular languages". (Macdonell's *H.S.L.*) This refers to the old Indo-Aryan period ranging roughly from B.C. 1500 to 500 B.C., "when the language was most copious in both its sounds and forms." (O D B L).

One Bengali scholar has found out an ingenious device to give us an idea of the transitions of old Indo-Aryan through Middle Indo-Aryan (roughly from B.C. 500 to A.D. 1000) to the New Indo-Aryan (from A.D. 1000), by inventing a couplet to show its descent from OIA to N.I.A.

Gānam gāthayitvā nāwam vāhayitvā kakah āviśyati pāradhi:
 Dṛkṣitvā yadṛśyam manodhi bhavati cihnyate amuśyakṛte.

This is taken as a specimen of spoken OIA Vedic dialect of 1000 B.C. The steps in the transition of this dialect are shown by the changes of *gāthayitvā* to *gāthetvā*, *vāhayitvā* to *vāhetvā*, *kakah* to *kake*, *pāradhi* to *pāladhi*, in the first line; and *dṛkṣitvā* to *dekkhitvā*, *yadṛśyam* to *yādiśam*, *manodhi* to *manadhi*, *bhavati* to *hoti*, *cihnyate* to *cinhiyati*, *amuśyakṛte* to *amuśaskate* in the second line. So the couplet would stand as:—

"Gānam gāthetvā nāwam vāhetvā kake āviśati pāladhi:
 Dekkhitvā yadiśam manadhi hoti cinhiyati amuśas kate".

This now stands a specimen by the close of the OIA, c. 500 B.C. Further steps in the transition are shown by further changes of *gāthetvā* to *gādhia*, *vāhetvā* to *vāhia*, *kake* to *kage*, *āviśati* to *āviśadi* in the first line; and *dekkhitvā* to *dekkhiā*, *yadiśam* to *yadiśanam*, *hoti* to *hodi*, *cinhiyati* to *cinhiadi*, *kate* to *kaladhi* in the second line. So the couplet would then stand as:

"Gānam gādhia nāwam vāhia kage āviśadi paladhi:
 Dekkhia yadiśanam maṇadhi hodi cinhiadi amuśas kaladi.

This is said to stand as Māgadhī Prākṛt of c. 200 A.D. Here the transition seems to be again up the current as in changes *n* to *ṇ*, *k* to *g*, *t* to

d, *śam* to *śanam*, and *ti* to *dhi*. However, this meets with further steps in the transition as *gānam* to *gāya*, *gādhia* to *gāhia*, *nāvam* to *nāwā*, *kage* to *kai*, *āvisadi* to *āvisai*, *pāladhi* to *pārahi* in the first line; and *yadisanam* to *jaihana*, *manādhi* to *maṇahi*, *hodi* to *hoi*, *cinhiadi* to *cinhiāi*, *kaladhi* to *oharāhi* (?). So the couplet now stands as:

‘*Gāna gāhia nāwā vāhia kai āvisai pārahi:*
Dekkhia jaihaṇa maṇahi hoi cinhia oharāhi.”

This is said to stand as Māgadhī apabhraṃśa of c. 700 A.D. Further steps in the transition are shown by dropping of superfluous nasalizations as in *gānā*, *nwā*, etc., and by changes of *gāhia* to *gāhiā*, *vāhia* to *vāhiā*, *kai* to *ke*, *āvisai* to *āisai*, *pārahi* to *pāre* in the first line; and *dekkhia* to *dekhiā*, *maṇahi* to *mane* in the second line. So the couplet then stands as:—

“*Gāna gāhiā nāwa vāhiā ke āisai pārahi:*
Dekhiā jaihana mane hoi cinhiāi oharāi.”

This is said to represent Old Bengali c. 1100 A.D. Further steps in the change are shown as:—*gāhiā* to *gāya*, *nāwa* to *nāo*, *vāhiā* to *bāyā*, *āisai* to *āisye* in the first line; and *dekhiā* to *dekhyā*, *jainhana* to *jena*, *hoi* to *hoe*, *cinhiāi* to *cini*, *ohārahi* to *ōāre*. So the couplet is made to stand as:

‘*Gān gāyā nāo bāyā ke āsye pāre:*
Dekhyā jena mane hoi cini oāre.”

This is said to represent Mediaeval Bengali of c. 1500 A.D. And steps to the final transition are shown as:—*gāyā* to *geye*, *nāo* to *nā*, *bāyā* to *beye*, *āsye* to *āse* in the first line; and *dekhyā* to *dekhe*, *jena* to *yena*, *hoe* to *hay*, *oāre* to *ore*. And the couplet is:

“*Gan gaye nā beye ke āse pāre: Dekhe yen mane hay cini ore.*”

Thus new Bengali of today is ingeniously discovered. Quite theoretical as it may be, it certainly gives us some clue to the process of transition of O.I.A., through M.I.A. to N.I.A., although we do not find here the actual facts of transition and we have really no proofs to warrant that Bengali ever came through Māgadhī Prākṛt or Apabhraṃśa.

The hymns of the Rig Veda represent the earliest specimens of an old Indo-Aryan dialect promoted to a literary language, subsequently applied to the Brāhmaṇa and Sūtra literature. It was really a Prākṛt spoken by the people and was almost as simple as the Prākṛt of much later days. But soon after came the Sanskrit period in which the

language became more complex, artificial and high-sounding, few instances of which may be repeated. Ved. *vakala* (Asm. *vākali*, bark of a tree), Sans. *valkalam*; Ved. *śaśa* (Asm. *śah*, crop), Sans. *śaśya*; Ved. *śakat* (Asm. *śakat*, strong), Sans. *śakta*; Ved. *viṭa* (Asm. *vit*, wealth), Sans. *viṭta*; Ved. *sāhaḥ* (Asm. *sāh*, courage), Sans. *sāhasa*; Ved. *sacā* (Asm. *sacā*, truth), Sans. *satyam*; and so fourth. Naturally the O.I.A. dialects were free to enjoy linguistic exchanges; but the hard and fast rulēs of Pāṇini and others put a stop not only to these exchanges but also to the life-breath of the living language in their earnest endeavour to Aryanise or refine it. Probably thus it is that Sanskrit became a dēad language.

The M.I.A. period, which was really ushered in by the advent of the Buddha, inaugurated a movement towards simplification of older consonant groups and a general curtailment of grammatical forms. The Buddha not only got his teachings preached in Pāli, a form of earlier Prākṛt, but warned his disciples against rendering them into Sanskrit. Any way, this movement towards simplification of older consonant groups was really a reverse process of Sanskritisation, and had been effected in various ways as: (1) DISSOLUTION: e.g. *ratna* → *ratan*, *svapna* → *sapon*, *ślāghā* → *śalāg*, *śatru* → *śaturu*, *bhikṣu* → *bhikahu*, *Lakṣmī* → *Lakhimī*, *dagdha* → *dagadh*, *Brāhmaṇa* → *Bāmuṇ*, *Sūdra* → *Sūdir*, *stabdha* → *tabadh*, *muktā* → *mukutā*, *mitra* → *mitā*, *mitir*; *sneha* → *seneh*, *mleccha* → *melech*, *mugdha* → *mugudh*, *hṛdaya* → *hiyā*, *dugdha* → *dud*, *bhramara* → *bhamarā*, *śakta* → *śakat*, *janma* → *janam*, *karma* → *karam*, *padma* → *padum*, etc. (2) ELIMINATION: e.g. *pūrvāhna* → *pūwā*, *kaṅkarolaḥ* → *karalā*, *jihvā* → *jibā*, *ādarśa* → *āriśa*, *catvāri* → *cāri*, *snāna* → *noā*, *hradah* → *dah*, *da*, etc. (3) ELISION: e.g. *nāsti* → *nāi*, *nābhi* → *nāi*, *gāvī* → *gāi*, *śrgāl* → *śiāl*, *pati* → *pai*, *dadhi* → *dai*, *madhu* → *mau*, *badhu* → *bau*, *nadī* → *nai*, *suvarṇadāru* → *soṇāru*, *āśusiddhi* → *āhudi*, *mukhasudhi* → *muhudi*, *karmakār* → *kamār*, *carmakār* → *camār*, *kumbhakār* → *kumār*, *padasthān* → *paśhān*, *śirasthān* → *śithān*, *śitān*; *bātul* → *bāṭul*, *kadalām* → *kal*, *cathurthā* → *cāthā*, etc. (4) SIMPLIFICATION: e.g. *balkal* → *bākal* *bākali*; *puskarinī* → *pukharī*, *mithyā* → *michā*, *br̥ścik* → *bichā*, *uṣtra* → *uṭa*, *muṣṭi* → *muṭhi*, *taila* → *tel*, *uṣman* → *um*, *āmra* → *ām*, *tāmra* → *tām*, *vāspa* → *vāp*, *ṛju* → *uju*, *caḥṣu* → *caku*, → *sota*, *sotā*, *suti*; *gātra* → *gā*, *ardha* → *ādhā*, *rātri* → *rāti*, *droṇa* → *doṇ*, *sūtra* → *sūtā*, *grhastha* → *giriḥata*, *kiñculaka* → *kecu*, *krorāṅkana* → *karāṅgan*, *śṛṅkhala* → *śikal*, *śikali*; *spandana* → *phandiā*, *guccha* → *guchi*, *bandhyā* → *bājā*, *sāndhyā* → *sāj*, *upādhyāya* → *ojā*, *bilva* → *bel*, *vaṃśa* → *vangah*, *māṃśa* → *maṅgah*, *mṛttikā* → *māṭi*, *bhitti* → *bheṭi*, *oṣṭha* → *oṭh*, *br̥ddha* → *budhā*, *br̥ddhi* → *bāḍhi*, *tikṣṇa* → *tikhā*, *jirṇā* → *jīṇ*, *karkatakah* → *kekorā*, *bartula* → *bātula*, *vyotisnā* → *jona*, *vyoti* → *jui*, *batsar* → *bachār*, *dīrgha* → *dīgh*, *dīghal*; *prastha* → *putal*, *buddhi* → *budhi*, *makṣikā* → *mākhi*, so forth. (5) EPENTHESIS: e.g. *kanyā* → *kainā*, *bākya* → *bāik*, *sādhya* → *sāidh*, *bhāgya* → *bhāig*, *artha* → *arath*, *satya* → *sait*, *yogya* → *yoig*. (6) UMLAUT: e.g. *go-rūp* → *garu*, *batsarūp* → *bācharu*. (7) AMPLIFICATION: e.g. *karṇa* → *kāṇ*, *danta* → *dāt*,

larā janī (the female child); larā-to or ti (the male child), chowālī-tī or jani (the girl); gach-jopā or jupi (the shrub, of a tree); dhuliā-jorā (the band of drum-players); mānuh-jerā (the party of a respected man), culi-tār or țāri (the bunch of hair); gākhir-topā or tupi (the little quantity of milk); mangah-tukurā or tukuri (the piece of flesh); gach-dāl or dāli (the branch which is the whole tree); kal-thok or thuki (the bunch of plantains); ful thopā or thupi (the bunch of flowers); kāth-dokhar or dukhari (the piece of wood); māți-đarā or đari (the plot of land); mālā-dhār or dhāri (the stream of the garland); bāthā-pāt or pāti (the sheet of the ore); vācan-fāki (the sentence of the speech), bāh-fāli (the half sheet of the bamboo, pāñ-birā or biri (the sheet of the betel leaf); kathā-aṣār or aṣāri (the akṣar or alphabet of the speech); sūtā-sopā or supi (the limp of threads); soñ-ferā or feri (the little gold).

To the large number of TATSMA (Sanskrit) and TADBHAVA (Sanskritic) words feminine suffixes are added, just as in Sanskrit; and for the words of indigenous origin the suffixes added are (i) -i, as bagā (white)-bagī, kālā (black)-kālī; kajalā (darkened)-kājali; mugā (brown)-mugī; buđhā (old)-buđhī; kujā (bent)-kuji; mecā (bent inward)-meci; kanā (blind)-kāni; khorā (lame)-khorī; pakharā (leper)-pākharī; bengā (idiot)-bengi; jeđhā (father's elder brother)-jeđhī; khurā (father's younger brother)-khurī; pehā-pehī (father's younger sister); mahā-māhī (mother's younger sister); kōwar (prince)-kūwari; ligirā (page)-ligiri; bhāluk (bear)-bhāluki; bāndar (monkey)-bāndari; (II) -ni e.g. Bamun-Bāmunī; Kalitā-Kalitāni; māli (gardener)-mālini; bāđhai (carpenter)-bāđhaiāni; Koc-kucunī; yakh (miser)-yakhini; (iii) otherise, kalā (deaf)-kālari; makhanā (elephants without tusks)-mākhundi. Such words as bopāi (father), po (son), dekā (youth), damarā (young bull) etc., are considered as always masculine, while their equivalents ai (mother), jī (daughter), gābharu (grown up girl), cēuri (young cow) are considered as always feminine. Chāgali (goat), kāuri (crow), mekuri (cat), bagali (crane) are really words of common gender like hāh (duck), śiāl (jackal), kukur (dog), but some masculine and feminine forms are sometimes forced. The tendency for keen discrimination of genders in Asamiyā is rarely noticed.

There are really six case-endings, not seven, in Asamiyā as we shall find presently. The nominative affixes now found are (1) -e when the noun ends in a consonant e.g. Rām-Rāme; (2) -i when it ends in a, ā and e, as in Hara-Harai, Sitā-Sitāi, Pābhe-Pābhei; (3) -ye when it ends in i, ī, ṛ, or ai, as in Hari-Hariye, Draupadī-Draupadayiye, māṭṛ-māṭṛiye, āmai (mother's friend)-āmaiye; (4) -we when it ends in u, ū, o, or au as in Yadu-Yaduwe, badhū-badhūwe, Balu-Balowe, halau (a big monkey)-halauwe. The nominative affix e in particular is commonly found in the Caryas which may be discussed later. These case-endings are dropped with intransitive verbs except those with √hāh (to laugh), √kānd (to weep) etc. The e affix was probably derived from the Sanskrit instrumental singular case-ending -ena with nominative sense

(*kartari*). It is not to be confused with *-e* in the Sanskrit locative singular. The accusative singular is *ka* (as in *Rāme Rāvanak mārile*, Ram killed Rāvana) which affix is dropped when the object is a lower animal or an inanimate object (as in *Śyāme māch māre*, Śyam kills fish). The accusative *ka* is said to be derived from Ṛg. Vedic dative *kam* as in *śrāddhe kam* or Sans. *asmākam*, Pāli *amhākam*, while others would attribute it to Dravidian *ko* or *ku* in the accusative. The instrumental case-ending is really *-ere* as in *hātēre* (with hands) and *-di* as in *nāwedi* (by boat) having a locative sense. *Dvārā* is a separate word and cannot be a case-ending. In compounds as in *hāte-karā* (done with hand) *-re* is dropped; some would suggest that to *-e* of Sanskrit instrumental singular *r* is joined for emphasis.

The dative Asamīyā affix is *lai* which might come from a different word *lagi-lai* or *lāgi-lāi* to the noun in the accusative as in *Harik+lāgi=Harilāgi>Harilai* (to Hari). *Lāgi* is attributed to Sans. *lagne*, Ap. *lag-hi*, H. *lagi* (?). Ablative affix being really absent in Asamīyā, a separate Vedic word *parā* (afar) is used with the help of genitive affix *ra* as in *Yadur parā* (from Yadu). *Hante*, also a separate word meaning 'from', was used in Med. Asm. as in 'āji hante'. (from today). The genitive affix *ra*, as in *Rāmar* (of Ram), is believed to be derived from some form of *keri* (cp. *yākeri nāhi upām* "Mādhāwdew), Sans. *kr̥ta*, as *kerā* (cp. *vāpaker* in Mānbhūm dialect, *L.S.I.*) of which *ke* or *ka* alone is retained in Hindi; *ra* alone is retained in Asamīyā. *Bāpar* (of father) is said to exist in Mārwarī. The locative *ta* is believed to be derived from Sans. *antah* of which *ta* is retained in Asamīyā, while Mārāthā retains *anta* for the locative.

EIGHT

TRAILS OF KĀMARŪPA PRĀKṚT SINCE ABOUT THE SIXTH CENTURY

ASAMIYA has so far and so long been dealt with simply by the way by outside scholars not interested in it directly. They have not only generally spoken about it superficially and quite tentatively, but even patronisingly. Few of them, it appears, have really cared to study it in reference to its ancient history and geography and its society and culture, except Grierson, who also spoke mostly with theoretical and speculative view with the scanty materials then available.

On the other hand, local scholars generally had an approach to the subject that was more patriotic than scientific, except those who thought scientific approach to be to follow outside scholars who had really no true knowledge of the subject but spoke on it aside as it were. Tripitakācārya B. M. Baruā, though really an outsider too, happened to hit at the right point for a true scientific study of Asamīyā on the valuable crude materials offered by the scholarship of Mm. Padmanāth Bhattācārya. (*N.L.H.A.L.*, pp. 39-42).

A Māgadhi origin for Asamīyā, and Bengali and Oriyā for that matter, was concocted by Grierson and had been followed by Suniti Kumar Chatterji and other scholars making it an orthodox theory, in spite of protests from such competent scholars as A. B. Keith (*NLHAL*, pp. 453-54), and even inspite of itself. It did not stand analysis and scrutiny; and even one main criterion of Māgadhi Prākṛt, namely *ṣa-sau-śah* (ś for ṣ and s) never applied to Asamīyā, and Bengali and probably Oriyā old scripts for the matter of that. Against it we have rather the *śa-ṣau-sah* (s for ṣ and ś) formula in these Prākṛts and scripts in general.

B. M. Baruā starts by saying: "The pre-Ahom inscriptions of Kāmarūpa contain a few other instances of Prākṛtism that may be taken to indicate the nature and form of the dialect as current in those times, say from the 6th to 12th century A.D., I mean the Prākṛt language in the historical background of Assamese. The archaic forms crept in these records and held their rightful place through the inadvertance on the part of the local composers, or that of the local scribe-engraver, or that of both, inspite of the conscious attempt made for producing the legal documents, the land grants, in authentic Sanskrit". (*IHQ*, Sept. 1947).

The Mahamāhopādhyāya who edited the copper-plate inscriptions of Kāmarūpa from the 7th to 12th century A.D. even "corrected" these aberrations from the orthodox Sanskrit spellings as "mistakes", but fortunately recorded them in the footnotes. An unbiassed and critical study of these "mistakes" really shows a "method" in them from which we may gather the true nature of Kāmarūpa Prākṛt that may be put to any test.

We first quote some instances of aberrations of spellings from the Nidhanpur charter of c. 610 A.D. But this was really a copy, renewed and replaced, of the original inscription of Bhūti or Mahābhūta Varmā, the great-grand-father of Bhāskar Varmā, who is placed about the close-

of the fifth century A.D. So we may ascribe these forms of spellings to the fifth century.

<i>Line</i>	<i>Sans.</i>	<i>Prāk.</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Sans.</i>	<i>Prāk.</i>
2.	ujjalām	Ujjalām	61.	aṃsāccaturthi	aṃsācaturthi
10.	mātsyanyāya	mātsanyāya	62.	Yaśobhūti	Yaśabhūti
11.	dvairatha	dūratha	67.	hinapāda	hinapada
11.	abhavattasya	abhavatasya	67.	Īswara	Īswara
18.	bhūtam- dadhu	bhūtandandhau	72.	Āślāyan	Āślāyan
21.	varmanastato	varmanatato	78.	siṃha	siṃha
22.	mūrte	murte	80.	Pradyumna	Pradyunna
23.	sunū	sunu	81.	Haryadbhūta	Hari-adbhuta
26.	ajojanat- taṇayam	ajojanatanayam	82.	Dhṛtisvāmī	Dhṛtisvāmī
27.	jasyonnatiḥ	jasyonnattiḥ	83.	Vājasaneyo	Vājasunayo
28.	kulācalasyeva	kulācalasyaivah	86.	Vājasaneyi	Vājasaneyī
30.	pumśam	pusam	88.	Bhārggavo	Bhaggavo
31.	sammukhī- nesu	sanmukhinesu	89.	Taittiriya	Taittiriya
31.	stejobhi	staijobhiḥ	96.	Bāhvṛcyā	Bāhavṛca
32.	pātreṣviva	pātreṣviva	100.	Paurṇā	Pauṇṇa
37.	prakāṣītāryya	prakāṣītarjya	104.	ardhāmśah	ardhamśa
38.	parampariṇās	parampariṇāsu	104.	Sāvitra	Savitra
39.	kalpitā	kalpatā	105.	Gārgyo	Gāgyo
39.	viḥita	vahita	105.	Vājasaneyo	Vajasaneyo
40.	racita	racata	108.	Dhauṭeśwara	Dhoteśwara
41.	sattva	satva	108.	caturbhāgah	caturbhaga
42.	parah	pare	109.	Jahnu- viśwara	Jahneśwara
44.	Lakṣmīsamā	Lakṣmissamā	111.	Gāyātripāla	Gāyātripāla
45.	abhigāmika	abhikāmika	113.	Taittiriya	Taittiriya
48.	darśita	darśita	114.	Bhaṭṭinanda	Bhattinanta
50.	mayūra	mayura	115.	Sunayana	Sanayana
51.	paṭṭā	paṭṭa	117.	ananta	ananda
52.	mahārājena	mahārājye	118.	Mandraghoṣa	Managhoṣa
52.	bhadrān	bhadra	123.	Kāśyapo	Kāsapo
53.	dattvā	datvā	125.	Kāśyapayoh	Kāśyapaya
55.	aṃśa	aṅśa	126.	Kauśiko	Kośiko
56.	chāndoga	chandoga	129.	samvedyā	saṃbedyā
58.	Dattogotra	Dattogotra	129.	cchedaḥ	cchada
60.	Śanaiścara	Śaniścara	130.	faṅginikā	ganganikā
60.	Bāhbṛcyo	Bāhbṛco	132.	puṣkariṇī	puṣkiriṇī
60.	Gaurātreyā	Gaurātraya	134.	prabhṛtayah	prabhṛtayah
			136.	modati	modate
			135.	śāsayatā	śāsaitā
			139.	tebhyoḥṣarāṇe	tabhyoakṣarāṇi.

The Hāyuntal copper-plate inscription of King Harjar Varmā belongs to the early part of the ninth century. One rock inscription of Harjar Varman found at Tezpur is dated 510 Gupta era which is

enquivalent to 829 A.D. This charter coming more than 200 years after that of Bhāskar Varmā has the following instances of Prākṛtism:—

Line	Sans.	Prāk.	Line	Sans.	Prāk.
8.	rājñī	rājña	21.	Hārūppeśwa-	Hāṭappeśwarā-
8.	bhūvi	bhūva		rābāsī	bāsī
10.	sastā	satvā	23.	devī	devyā
16.	madhyāsate	madhyasitaṃ	23.	nivāsinīva	nivāsīmiba
16.	deve	daive	24.	Mahādevī	Mahādevyā
19.	siṃhāsana	siṃhāsana	26.	payantyevaṃ	payantiva
19.	Vāsavaḥ	Vāsavaḥ			

The Nagāo-copper plate inscription of Vala Varmā is fixed in the first half of the tenth century, and is applauded as containing less "mistakes" i.e. Prākṛtism. But here too we come across the following:—

Line	Sans.	Prāk.	Line	Sans.	Prāk.
2.	amalam	amalan	26.	siṃhāsana	siṃhāsana
3.	dūritamvaḥ	dūritambaḥ	30	ayaśasi	ayaśaśi
5.	dolāyitaṃ	dolāitaṃ	31.	visambādī	visambādī
16.	paṅktiḥ	paṅktiḥ	42.	śāmāyikayā	syāmāyikā
18.	yaśāmsi	yaśānsi	43.	ahastryāma	ahastryāma
19.	yauvanam	yauvanan	48.	āmra	āmba
24.	Karma-	Karmanāmbi	49.	puṣkariṇī	puṣkiriṇī.
	ṇāmbi				
25.	puṃsām	puṃsāṃ			

Next in chronology comes the Bargāo inscription as Ratnapāl's first charter issued in early 11th century. It is reputed to have the highest order of composition in prose and verse combined (*campu*). Here too instances of Prākṛtism are none the less:—

Line.	Sans.	Prāk.	Line	Sans.	Prāk.
3.	vahatiha	vahatiha	34.	prajvareṇa	prajareṇa
3.	kiṃvādhaudh	kimbādhaudha	35.	jayakṣmaṇā	janmanā
4.	Śāṅkarī	Śāṅkari	36.	kalahaṃsa	kalahaṅsa
4.	jāyeta	yāyeta	38.	dukūla	dukula
9.	Prāḡjyotiṣe	Prāḡjyotise	38.	paṭenāneka	paṭeneka
9.	sañcaraṇ	saṃcaraṇ	42.	āśakti	āśakti
11.	tejāmsya	tejāṅsya	43.	priyā	prīyā
14.	jayalabdha	jayallabdha	43.	pisitā	piṣitā
14.	kharāṃsau	kharāṅsā	43.	piṣtā	vāsapā
15.	kṣitimātha	khimatha	46.	nandī	nandī
17.	viṃśati	viṃsati	47.	yasya	yasā
18.	yuyjate	yuyyate	47.	tiraśkṛtā	tiraśkṛtā
18.	Svāmīti	Svāmīti	48.	āśāmsi	āśansi

<i>Line.</i>	<i>Sans.</i>	<i>Prāk.</i>	<i>Line.</i>	<i>Sans.</i>	<i>Prāk.</i>
19.	nvidam	nidaṃ	48.	yaśasi	yaśāsi
20.	anyepi	anepi	55.	rājanyaka	rājanaka
20.	ittham	itham	56.	moddeśa	modeśa
22.	rājājaneṣu	rājājaneṣu	58.	sāsanikṛtya	śāsanikṛtya
27.	sambidrate	sambidrite	58.	pārāśa	pārāsa
29.	śato	sato	59.	yamveda	yamveda
32.	sthali	sthali	60.	agnyāhita	āgnyāhita
32.	antarhita	antahr̥ta	60.	dvijeśam	dvijeśam
33.	niṣevita	nisevita	67.	tannau	tanau.

The first charter of Indrapāl found at Guāhāti is fixed about the middle or latter half of the same century as Indrapāl succeeded to the throne of his grandfather, his father Purandar Pāl dying without coming to the throne. The instances of Prākṛtism are:—

<i>Line.</i>	<i>Sans.</i>	<i>Prāk.</i>	<i>Line.</i>	<i>Sans.</i>	<i>Prāk.</i>
2.	pratyarpitam	pratiyarpitaṃ	32.	Prāḡjyotiṣā	Prāḡjyotisā
4.	vaṃśa	vaṃsa	33.	ksapitā	ksapṛtā
8.	sambhoga	sambhoga	44.	śāsnikṛtya	śāsnikṛtya
10.	Lakṣmyā	Lakṣmā	44.	bhūreśā	bhūresā
14.	vīryya	vījja	44.	duṣkara	duskara
15.	yaśa	jaśa	45.	kūlam	kūlammm
15.	asminneva	asmineva	47.	dīrghikā	dīrghā
16.	diśya	disya	49.	kāśe	kāṣi
17.	sambādhā	sambadhā	51.	bhātāraka	bhātāraka
19.	sarvvā	savvā	52.	puṣkariṇī	puṣkiriṇī
31.	sakala	śakala			

The second charter of Indrapāl was discovered at Guākuci in Nalbari of the Kāmarūp district. It is an interesting inscription from other aspects too and contains instances of such Prākṛtism as:—

<i>Line.</i>	<i>Sans.</i>	<i>Prāk.</i>	<i>Line.</i>	<i>Sans.</i>	<i>Prāk.</i>
3.	vaṃśa	vaṃsa	43.	yaju	yayu
9.	Lakṣmyāḥ	Lakṣmā	44.	vaśinaḥ	vasinaḥ
13.	toṣita	tosita	58.	amra	amba
16.	padairyasya	padaiyasya	60.	kūle	kūlau
20.	śārdḍulaiḥ	sārdullaiḥ	61.	dvātrim	dvatṛm
20.	vaṃśa	vaṃsa	66.	vaṃśa	vaṃsa
25.	kūṭṭimaṃ	kutṛmim	69.	arthi	arthi
25.	tantra	tanta	72.	Dhani	Dhani
38.	svaso	saso	ff.	Śrī	siri
43.	kāṇva	kaṇva	ff.	pustam	puṣṭā

Dharma Pāl's first charter styled Śubhaṅkara Pāṭaka inscription is fixed in early 12th century, as he was the great-grandson of Indra-Pāl. The instances of Prākṛitism in this inscription are:—

<i>Line.</i>	<i>Sans.</i>	<i>Prāk.</i>	<i>Line.</i>	<i>Sans.</i>	<i>Prāk.</i>
3.	Śatakratu	Satakaratu	33.	rājñī	rājñī
4.	śasāsa	sasāsa	34.	sarbbān	sabbān
5.	saṅgara	saṅgara	34.	samādiśanti	samādisanti
5.	viṣīda	visīda	35.	dyupetā	dupetā
12.	praśāsāsa	prasasāsa	43.	dīghite	dīghiti
17.	śāsvat	saśvat	44.	saccaritra	sacaritra
23.	sambhavayā	sambhavayā	47.	Śubhaṅkara	Suhaṅkara
26.	kalasa	kaḷaṣa	52.	āsvattha	āśvattha
27.	praśasti	prasasti	54.	kañjiyā	kaṁjiyā
30.	kuśalinaḥ	kuśalinaḥ	56.	vaṁśa	vaṅsa
31.	Dijjinnā	Dijinnā	57.	auracoṣa	auracosa
31.	kañjiyā	kaṁjiyā	58.	Ḍumbarī	Ḍummari
32.	Śubhaṅkara	Suhaṅkara	60.	vaṁśa	vaṅsa
33.	jānapadān	janapadān	61.	kāśimbalā	kāśimlā

The last copper plate inscription of Dharma Pāl is styled Puṣpabhadra charter and is fixed about the middle of the twelfth century. Instances of Prākṛitism are:—

<i>Line.</i>	<i>Sans.</i>	<i>Prāk.</i>	<i>Line.</i>	<i>Sans.</i>	<i>Prāk.</i>
1.	rūpo	rupo	28.	sangocchalita	saṅgotsalitaḥ
2.	pavanairyasya	pavannaiyasya	29.	goṣṭheṣu	goṣṭesu
4.	vapuṣo	vapuso	29.	catuspatheṣu	cattuspatheṣu
4.	prasiddho	prasiddha	29.	makheṣu	makhesu
5.	mahānvaye	māhānvaye	30.	adyāpi	ādyāpi
7.	dhamme	dhamme	31.	tadvamśā	tadvāṅsā
13.	nṛpateḥ	nṛpatih	31.	Lakṣmivānna	Lakṣmīmānna
16.	praśasti	prassatim	32.	mīmāṁsā	mīmāṅsā
16.	Prāgjyotiṣā	Prāgjotiṣā	32.	vaṁśa	vaṅsam
17.	śeṣa	sesa	37.	śāva	sāva
17.	Parameśwara	Parameswara	40.	Śatadhṛte	satradhṛte
17.	Bhattāraka	Bhatāraka	40.	uttarastam	utrastha
20.	rājanyaka	rājannaka	41.	Kāmarūpa	Kāmarupa
21.	svasimā	sasimā	43.	nṛpatiḥ	nṛpatim
21.	hasti	hasthi	44.	cittvā	citvā
22.	pāsiko	pāsiko	45.	taḥṣakāra	taṭṭakāra
22.	hastyśvoṣṭra	hastiśvoṣṭara	46.	Gūheśwara	Guheswara
23.	prabhṛtināḥ	pravṛtin	48.	puṣkariṇī	puṣkiriṇī
26.	śikhaṇḍinaḥ	sikhaṇḍinaḥ	52.	vaṁśa	vaṅsa

Mahāmahopādhyāya, the editor of Kāmrūp Śāsanāvalī highly extols the scholarship of the poets of these inscriptions in general and of the

poet of Nidhanpur charter in particular, and observes that the latter was almost equal in merit to Rāṇa Bhatta of all-India fame who probably had not yet begun writing his famous *Harṣa Carit* and *Kādambāri* when Bhāskar Varmā's charter was composed by this poet of Kāmarūpa. He also eulogises the poetic merit of the others by appreciation of their metres, pun, etc. Hence, we are really warned against ascribing any of these aberrations to any lack of proper knowledge of Sanskrit. We are therefore to remember that these were the days when Prakṛts were occupying their rightful place to give birth to the modern Indian vernaculars which we see immediately.

The Mm. also observes that in these texts of the inscriptions in general the *anusvar* (ṃ) and *visarga* (h) already wore out as a rule, whence he avoided making separate mention of them. And *ṇi* was generally confused with *ng* in most cases which have been cited. He also notices that the first *m* as in *sammān*, *sammukh* etc., is replaced by *n* as in modern Asamīyā to result in *sanmān*, *sanmukh* etc., the same tendency being visible even from the Nidhanpur charter. So also, as in modern Asamīyā the cerebrals are aggressive in these inscriptions with the result that we find even Dhani written for Dhani in the second charter of Indra Pāl. Against the general law of shortening as in Asamīyā, we have the peculiar instance rather to the contrary and without exception of *puṣkarinī* > *puṣkiriṇī* from which modern *pukhuri* is derived.

The charter of Harjar Varmā records *Devyā* in the first case for *Devī*, and the learned editor observes that it has been a practice in Asam since to write *Devyā* for *Devī* and *Dāsyā* for *Dāsī*. In editing the second charter of Indrapāl, the Mm. frankly admits that he cannot vouchsafe the correctness of the names in Prakṛt found in the inscriptions. In defining the boundaries of land, the Nidhanpur charter records *uttareṇa vṛhājātālī*. *Jātālī* is definitely a local name for a kind of trees. Similar local names of the different kinds of trees found in these inscriptions are *Dumbari* (Sk. *udumbara*, a fig tree), *Jhari*, *Pārālī*, *Pākati*, *Pārula*, *Oḍiāmma*, *Kantābakar*, and so forth. *Paṇḍarī*, *Olindā*, *Kaṇḍjayabhītiva*, *Bhallābhīthi*, etc., as local names for plots of land are noteworthy. So also are *jolā* (= *khāl*, a ditch) and *puṣkiriṇī* (a pond).

The charter of Vala Varmā, for instance, defines the boundaries of the land as: "Asyāssimā pūrvena *Koppā gosantāras* ca. Pūrva dak-
 ṣiṇena jambu śrīfalavṛkṣaḥ. Dakṣiṇena vṛhadālīḥ *Suvarnadāru vṛkṣaś*
 ca. Dakṣiṇa-pāścimenāba vṛkṣaḥ. Pāścimena vṛhadālīḥ *śālmālī vṛkṣaśca*."

Paścimottreṇa vṛhadvata vṛkṣaḥ Diddesāvāpī ca. Uttareṇa Seva vā-pyarrddham uttarapūrvvena puṣkiriṇī jaṭi vṛkṣaśceti.”

Koppā as Hoernelle rightly suggested is a local form of Sk. *kūpa*, equivalent to modern *kuwā*, which the Mm. failed to realise. So also *suvarṇadarū* is definitely a Sanskritised form of the local name of a kind of famous and valuable trees called *soṇāru*, which the Mm. again failed to grasp. *Āli* is a very common local name for small roads generally; but they particularly refer to very small embankments in paddy fields some times making their boundaries, but more often raised for keeping water from flowing away. *Āmba* is the Prākṛt form of Skt. *āmra* and mod. Asm. *āma*. *Śālmali* is popularly called *śimalu*. *Vāpi* may be another local word for *khāt* (Skt. *kṣetra*) or a vast paddy land.

The Mm. follows the reading and even accepts the meanings of difficult words as offered by Hoernelle who also is in doubt about *Diddeśa* and *Seva*. The latter suggests that the words may be the Prākṛt forms of *Diddeśa* and *Śaivata*, both referring to *Śiva*, according to the well-known rule *Śaṣau sah*.

NINE

RULES OF KĀMARŪPA PRĀKRIT AND PROPER NAMES

THE illusion of Māgadhi Prākṛt as the parent of modern Asamīyā, so also of Bengali and Oriyā probably, for that matter, disappears the moment we come to a study of these inscriptions from the 5th or 6th to the 12th century A.D. of Kāmrūpa kings. *Suhaṅkara* occurring in the lines 32 and 47 of Dharma Pāla's first charter have been particularly noted by the learned editor, who observes: "It is distinctly a prākṛt from *Subhaṅkara*. In Prākṛt we do have *s* for *ś* (*śaṣausaḥ*, *Prākṛt Prakāś* 2/43), and *h* for *bh* ("kha-gha-tna -dhabhāṃ haḥ, *Prākṛt Prakāś* 2/27). This is directly against the alleged rule of Māgadhi Prākṛt professing always to have *ś* for *ṣ* and *s*.

The previous chapter gives enough instances of both *ś* and *ṣ* changing to *s*. The few exceptions found have also been quoted to show how they prove the rule, and show overcautiousness. For instance, shortening of long vowels being the law governing certain changes from Sanskrit to Prākṛt, we find exceptions to the contrary where short vowels are lengthened showing over-cautiousness. Any way, before coming to a study of the laws of Kāmarūpa Prākṛt in particular, we may have an idea of the laws of changes at random as found in the

toponomy (*Vide Preface to The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India by N. L. Dey*).

<i>Old</i>	<i>New</i>	<i>Old</i>	<i>New</i>
Tirabhukta	Tirhuta	Pratiṣṭhāna	Paithāna
Navadvipa	Nadiā	Kapisthala	Kaithala
Mudagiri	Munger	Vāmanasthali	Vanthali
Suvarṇagrām	Soṇārgāo	Sthānviśwara	Thāneśwara
Rājgrha	Rājgira	Daradasthān	Dārdistāna
Śrihatta	Sylhata	Mūlasthāna	Mūltāna
Kuśinagara	Kuśināra	Lakṣmaṇāwatī	Lakṣaṇāutī
Pāṇiprastha	Pāṇipata	Vetrawatī	Vetowā
Puruṣapura	Pesawāra	Durjayalinga	Dārjilinga
Lavapura	Lāhora	Kauśika	Kośi
Rājapuri	Rājauri	Aciravatī	Airāvati
Māhārāṣṭra	Mārāthā	Bhojapāla	Bhopāla
Māyārāṣṭra	Mirāṭha	Jayatipura	Jaipura
Arbuda	Ābu	Meghanāda	Megnā
Ayodhyā	Āudha	Lavaṇa	Luṇā
Yavanapura	Yonpura	Vakṣu	Oxu (s)
Karṇasuvarṇa	Kāṇsoṇā	Kṣiprā	Śiprā
Trikaliṅga	Tiliṅga	Naiṣiṣāranya	Nimsār
Pesthāpura	Pithāpura	Uḍisya	Orissā
Kāṣṭhamanḍapa	Kāṭamunḍa	Prasthala	Pattiāla
Puskarā	Pokharā	Dakṣiṇa	Dekkāna
Acinta	Ajanta	Balokṣa	Beluchi (stān).
Airāvati	Irāwadī	Vidyānagara	Vijanagara
Gāndhāra	Kāndāhāra	Kundinapura	Kundilapura
Tripadī	Tirupati	Nalapura	Narawāra
Śrinagarī	Singheri		
Kujagrha	Kajughira	Karatoyā	Karati
Jejabhukti	Jajhoti	Padmapura	Padumpura
Varadā	Wārdhā	Ratnapura	Ratanpura
Vidiśā	Bhilsā	Dehālī	Delhi
Avagānasthāna	Afghanistān	Bārānāsī	Benares
Ghargharā	Gagrā	Mātangalinga	Māltaṅga
Bhuskara	Bokhāra	Śārangānātha	Sārnātha
Śubhramatī	Sābarmati	Kusumapura	Kumrār
Kubhā	Kābu (I)	Āmrākūta	Amarkaṇṭak
Mahānadi	Mahānai	Kāśyapapura	Kāsmir
Śrīngagiri	Simhari	Kartṭpura	Tripura
Tṛṣṇā	Tiṣṭā	Gopakavana	Goā
Kānyakubja	Kanauja	Kāmalankā	Kumillā
Himavanta	Tibbata	Madhupura	Madura
Punāka	Poonā	Trisotra	Tistā
Tamasā	Tanse	Apāpapuri	Pāvapuri
Hastimati	Hautmati	Illālapur	Ellorā
Guṇamati	Gomati	Gurupāda	Gurpā
		Ariṣṭhapur	Aritthapur

All these changes are not necessarily as in Prākṛt, but they show the general tendency towards simplification. That the modern Asamīyā language is evolved directly through Kāmarūpī Prākṛt as revealed in the epigraphic records, and not from Māgadhi or any other form, no critical student of Indian linguistics can deny. Tripitakācārya Beni Madhav Barua, in his article "Miscellany: The Scribe-Engravers of Indrapāla's Second Copper-Plate and Prākṛit of Pre-Ahom Times" has brought out a good deal of very important details in this regard by a pains-taking and erudite study of the early copper plates of Asam: "Confronting the Garuḍa in the second space (I₂) are inscribed two letters *śa-ni*, and below them in a vertical table two letters *dha-ni* and two others *a-ni* . . . Just below the three symbols of the lotus, the conch-shell and the wheel figuring in a row there is the continuation of the subscript matter in a row of eight letters to be read *puṣṭa-siri-aṣṭa-henta* . . . Pandit Padmanath suggests that here we have three personal names, the first, *Śani*, being the name of the composer of the metrical text of the inscription, and the remaining two, *Dhani* and *Ani*, those of the scribe-engravers . . . Here *siri* for *śri* is a clear instance of Prākṛitism. In Pali, too, we have invariably *siri* for *śri*. The *henta* after *aṣṭa* is a suffix or surname peculiar to Assamese. [If the intended word is *hanta* (=hañt) it is a plural suffix (the same as *vōr*) used in a sense of humility.]

"The Pre-Ahom inscriptions of Kāmarūpa contain a few other instances of Prakritism that may be taken to indicate the nature and form of the dialect as current in those times, say from the 6th to 12th century A.D., I mean the Prakrit language in the historical background of Assamese. The archaic forms crept in these records and held their rightful place through the inadvertance on the part of the local composers, or that of the local scribe-engraver, or that of both, inspite of the conscious attempt made for producing the legal documents,—the land grants—in authentic Sanskrit. [Abbreviations. BhN = The Nidhanpur copper-plate of Bhāskar Varman; H, B, R, = The copper-plates of Harjaravarman, Balavarman, Ratnapala (respectively); I₁, I₂ = Indrapāla's first and second copper plates respectively; Dh1, Dh2, DhKho = Dharmapāla's first, second and Khanāmukh copper plates respectively].

"The causative substantives *śāsaitā* ("the composer of the land-grant"), *lekhayitā* ("the scribe") and *prāpayitā* ("the recipient" all occurring in BhN are unusual in Sanskrit, although their coinage may be grammatically justified. *Puṣkirini* for *puṣkarini* (BhN, B, I, Dh2) must have been local spelling, and not an accidental feature. *Balavanto* in H, cf. Pāli *mahanto*, Bengali *Śrimanta*, Assamese and Chittagong dialect *Śrimanta*, *guṇavanta*, *buddhimanta*, *lakkhimanta* (cf. Pali Theragāthā verse 1050; *gatimanto satimanto dhitimanto ca yo isi*). Dumbari for Sk. *udumbara*, Bengali *dumur* (a fig tree) too is a local word. *Pārāli*, *pārula*

(a kind of tree too is a local form. *Koppā* (B), *Diddeśā* and *sevā* as names of two *vāpis* (B), *Paṇḍari* as the name of another plat (I_2), *jola* (I_2) meaning a small canal, same as *gor* in Chittagong dialect, *Jhari pākati* as the name of a tree (Dh1), *Bhallābhīṭhi* as the name of a plot of land (Dh1), *Dijinnā* as the name of a stream (Dh1), *Ākhota* as the name of a tree (Dh1), *Odi-amma* as a kind of tree (Dh1) *Olāndā* and *Kaṅjoya-bhīṭiva* as two plots of land (Dh1), *Orangitantrā* as a class or section of weavers (Dh1), *Kaṅṭāvakkada* as the name of a tree (Dh1), *Digḷola* as the name of an old village (Dh2), *Sovvaḍi* as the name of a tank (Dh2), *Hāruppeśvara* as a place name (B), and the like are all local names. *Sekyakāra* (BhN), Bengali *Sekrā* ("a smith"), seems to have been just a Sanskritised form of a local word.

"Turning at last to the words "corrected" by Pandit Padmanāth we can easily make out the following distinctive features of Prākṛitism of the age. (1) Shortening of long vowels; *Vājasaneyī* (BhN) for *Vājasaneyī*; *Savitra* (BhN) for *Sāvitra*; *Caturbhaga* (BhN) for *Caturbhāga*; *pattābhavat* (BhN) for *pattābhavat*; *Taittiriya* (BhN) for *Taittirīya*; *Gayatṛipāla* (BhN) for *Gāyatṛipāla*; *Dhṛti svāmi* (BhN) for *Dhṛtisvāmī*; *mayura* (BhN) for *mayūra*; *sunu* (BhN) for *sūnu*; *Kośiko* (BhN) for *Kauśikā*; *Dhoteśvara* (BhN) for *Dhaṭeśvara*. (2) Shortening of long vowels before conjoint consonants and *anusvāra*: *Chandogya* (BhN) for *Chāndogya*; *Śaniścara* (BhN) for *Śanaīścara*; *Bhaggavo* (BhN) for *Bhārgava*; *Jahveśvara* (BhN) for *Jahvīśvara*; *bhūtvā* (BhN) for *bhūtṛvā*; *murtte* (BhN) for *mūrtte*; *īvara* (BhN) for *īśvara*; *arddhamśa* (BhN) for *arddhāṃśa*.

"(3) Substitution of one vowel for another: *kalpatā*, *vahatā*, *racata* (BhN) for *kalpitā*, *vihita*, *racita*; *Vajasunayī* (BhN) for *Vājasaneyī*; *Taittiriya* (BhN) for *Taittirīya*; *jagadudaya* (BhN) for *jagadudāya*; cf. *udupāna* (Asoka's R.E.I.) for *udapāna*; *daive* (BhN) for *deve*. *Ṛi* represented by *a*: *vaha* (BhN) for *vriha*.

(4) Absence of Sandhi: *Hari-adbhūta* (BhN) for *Haryadbhūta*; *tebhyo akṣarāṇi* (BhN) for *tebhyo'kṣarāṇi* cf. *vasa-abhisetana* (Asoka's PE), *guṇa-upetena* (Khāravēla's Hathigumpha inscription). *Yi* represented by *i*: *Sāsaitā* for *śāsajitā*; *dolāitam* (B) for *dolāyitam*.

"(5) Dispensing with *y* in consonantal combinations: *matsanyaya* (BhN) for *mātsyanyāya*; *Lakṣmā* (I_2) for *Lakṣmyā*; *Kāśapo* (BhN) for *Kāśyapa*. Dropping of *t* or *ṭ* in a consonantal sandhi in which it is followed by another consonant: *ujvalam* (BhN) for *ujjvalam*; *sampatyupāta* (BhN) for *sampattiyupāta*; *satva* (BhN) for *sattvā*; *bhavatasya* (BhN) for *bhavattasya*; *kutimam*; (I_2) for *kuttimam*. Doubling of *t* in (BhN) for *bhavattasya*; *kutimam*; (I_2) for *kuttimam*. Doubling of *t* in (BhN) for *bhavattasya*; *kutimam*; (I_2) for *kuttimam*. (6) Euphonic advent of consonants in the middle of words: *Kamalavāsini iva*, *divākara-m-iva* (H) Cf. Pali *Kasā-m-iva*, *Lakṣmi-samā*; *ām-v-ra* (B) for *amra*.

"(7) Dropping of the initial vowel of the second word in a Sandhi: *payanti va* (H) for *payantyevam*; *m* followed by *sa* or *ha* changes

(8) Change of *m* into *n* at the end of a word: *amalan*, *yauvanan* (B) for *simhāsana*; *aṃsa* (BhN) for *aṃsa*; *mīmāṃsā* (Dhkh) for *mimāṃsa*. *m* followed by *sa* changes into *n*: *vansa* (I_2) for *vaṃśa*; *mimāṃsā*

(Dh₂) for *mimāṃsā*, a phenomenon noticed in later inscriptions only. (8) Change of *m* into *n* at the end of a word: *gmalan*, *yanvanan* (B) for *amalam*, *yauvanam*.

“(9) Dropping of *m* in a feminine genitive suffix: *Dattadevyā*, *Ratnavatyā* (BhN) for *Dattadevyāṃ*, *Ratnavatyāṃ* cf. Pali *deviyā*. Tendency to change *aḥ* into *o* as in Pali: *nāgebhyo* (BhN) for *nāgebhyaḥ*; *Chāndogo* (BhN) for *Chāndogaḥ*. (10) Substitution of one consonant for another: *abhikāmika* (BhN) for *abhiḡāmika*; *yāyeta* (R) for *jāyeta*; *Bhāṭṭinanta* (BhN) for *Bhattinanda*; *Ananda* (BhN) for *Ananta*. (11) Assimilation of *rya* into *ja*: *vījja* (I₁) for *virjya*; of *tṣa* into *ccha*: *vacchare* (Dhkh) for *vatsare*. (12) Dropping of *n* followed by *n*: *aṣṃineva* (I₁) for *asminneva*; *tasmāmaitāni* (BhN) for *tasmānnaitāni*:

“(13) Random substitution of one sibilant for another as in the Asokan dialect of Kalsi, Mansehra and Shabhzggarhi: *darṣita* (BhN) for *darsita*; *śakala* (I₁) for *sakala*; *jyotisā* for *jyotiṣā*; *duskara* (I₁) for *duṣkarā*; *tosita* (I₂) for *toṣita*; *vansa* (I₂) for *vaṃśa*; *Satakratu* (Dhl) for *Śatakratu*; *śasāsa*, *śasvat* (Dhl) for *śasāsa*, *śāsvat*; *addhaśotaḥ* (Dh₂) for *arddhasrotah*; *aslāyāṇa* (BhN) for *aslāyāyāṇa*. (14) The dropping of *visarga* in a sandhi: *Yaśabhūti* (BhN) for *Yaśobhūti*. Instances of *samprasāraṇa*: *siri* (I₂) for *Śrī*; *Bāhavṛca* (BhN) for *Bāhvṛcyā*. (15) Tendency to do away with *ref* in all cases of assimilation as in Pali: *suvaṇṇa*, *puṇṇa* (BhN) for *suvarṇa*, *puṇṇa*. An instance of assimilation which is the same as in Pali: *Pradyinna* (BhN) for *Pradyumna*, Pali *Pajunna*. Dropping of *v* in the assimilation of *śvāsa*, *samucchāsa* (BhN) for *samucchvāsa*.” (*Indian Historical Quarterly*, September, 1947).

Besides spelling and grammar the copper plate inscriptions contain a good number of proper names which agree so curiously with modern Asamīyā equivalents. The inscription of Bhāskar Varmā dated c. 610 A.D. contain among others such tree names as *dumbari* (l. 130, mod. *ḍimaru*) and *Jatali* (l. 131, mod. *jatali*); and names of donees like *Yogeśwar*, *Viśveśwar*, *Divveśwar*, *Gaṇeśwar*, *Buddheśwar*, *Jāteśwar*, *Dhoteśwar*, *Mogheśwar*, *Jahnivīśwar*, *Nandeśwar* (ll. 106-09). Other persons mentioned in the plate are *Haradatta Kāyastha*, *Dundhunāth* and *Kaliā*, (ll. 134-36), the last of the names being so homely, so non-Sanskritic and so commonly Asamīyā. There are also other homely Asamīyā names as *Panu* (l. 112), and a significant religious institutional name as *Valicaru Satra* (l. 126). The inscription of king Vanamāl dated c. 840 A.D. contains the word *Kuwā* (v. 34, mod. *Kuwā*, well) as such and curiously as already mentioned.

The inscription of Vala Varmā dated c. 900 A.D. uses *Kupā* (l. 47) for *kuwā* (well), and *āli* (l. 48, dam) exactly as in modern Asamīyā, and has the tree names (ll. 48-49) *Suvarṇadāru* (*soṇāru*), *āmba* (*āma*), *śālmali* (*śimalu*), *vaṭa* (*vaḍa*), *jati* (*jaḍi*) almost as in modern Asamīyā.

The first inscription of Ratnapāl dated c. 1000 A.D. also contains the words *āli* (dam), *śālmali*, etc. (ll. 65, 68, 71) besides other tree names as *Kāsimbala*, *hijjala* (ll. 67-69), etc., almost as in modern Asamīyā. The tree name *badari* (mod. *bagari*, plum, l. 67) is interesting. The second inscription of Ratnapāl dated c. 1010 A.D. in defining the boundaries of the land granted mentions *Khodāmba* (l. 59, mod. *kharā ām*, a topless mango tree), *betasa* (mod. *beta*) and *hijjala* (ll. 60-64) as tree-names besides *śālmali* (l. 61), and also (ll. 62-64) *Dakṣiṇapāta* (cp. mod. *Dakṣiṇapāta Satra*), *Uttarapāta*, *ālimastaka* (mod. *āli-myra*, top of embankment), etc.

The first inscription of Indrapāl dated c. 1040 A.D. mentions a boundary mark as *mākkhiyāna* (mod. *mākkhiyān*, l. 45, *mākki*, a fly; *yān*, a streamlet). His second inscription dated c. 1050 A.D., besides constant mentions of *āli* (dam, embankment), speaks of *kaṇṭāfala* (mod. *kathāla*, jack-fruit, l. 50) and *āmba* (mod. *āma*, mango, l. 58). It also describes its engravers as *Sani*, *Dhani*, *Ani* (l. 72) which are so common homely Asamīyā proper names. The first inscription of Dharma Pāl dated c. 1100 A.D. has more popular tree names as *āsvattha* (mod. *āhata*), *locana* (l. 52), *Oḍiāmma* (l. 52), mod. *Oḍiāma*), *jhari* (mod. *jari*) and *pākati* (mod. *pākati*, l. 59), besides *āsvattha* (l. 52), *śālmali* (l. 53), *hijjala* (ll. 55, 57), *ḍumbarī* (l. 58), *kāsimbalā* (l. 61), *baṭa* (l. 62) already mentioned. His third inscription dated c. 1110 A.D. contains the words *joli* (l. 50, mod. *juri*) and *jān* (l. 52, mod. *jān*) both synonymous for a streamlet. Other interesting words are *pāralimundāh* (l. 52), *suvarṇadāru mundāh* (ll. 53-54), *madhunāsvattha mundāh* (l. 56) where the word *mundā* connected with the names of various local trees is equivalent to mod. *muḍhā* (heads of trunks of trees felled). *Mayura Śālmala* in Bhāskara's inscription is found as *mārā śālmali* in Dharma Pāla's inscription showing perhaps a confusion which the Asamīyā word *marā* gives rise to having a double meaning *mārā* (*mayura*, peacock) and *marā* (*mṛta*, decayed, dead).

The importance of these nearly a dozen copper plate inscriptions cannot be exaggerated or over-estimated in tracing the origin and growth of the Asamīyā language, though so unlickily barren attempts have been made to show the formation and development of the language without an eye to them. These epigraphic proofs are the first and foremost records of sterling worth showing the early stages of departure from Sanskrit. The learned editor of the inscriptions, Mahamahopadhyaya Padmanath Bhattacharya, reputed as a highly orthodox Sanskrit scholar, who wrongly considered these signs of Prākṛitiśm as "mistakes", yet extols the great scholarship and high poetic abilities of the writers of the inscriptions. He definitely remarks that the position of Bhāskar's inscription stand at par with those of Bāṇa Bhatta but are not his imitation in any way, and challenges that whether Bāṇa Bhatta was yet the reputed author of *Kādambarī* and *Harṣa Carit*, when Bhāskar's inscription was written, can be seriously doubted.

The most common "mistakes", the very learned editor opined, were the general and usual dropping of *m* and *h* which are the first signs of the Sanskrit language even to a lay man. And for us, it is the first important land-mark of Prākṛitism; for instance, we have *Śaśisekhara* for *śaśisekharam* (Bh. I. 1) and *hetu* for *hetuh* (Bh. I. 5). Then there are other ways of simplification as in dropping of constants in conjuncts, as in *ujjalam* for *ujjvalam* (Bh. I. 2), and *mātsānyāya* for *mātsyanyāyā* (Bh. II. 10). Then we have *n* for *m* as in *sanmukhinesu* for *sammukhinesu* (Bh. I. 41) just like modern Asamīyā, and random simplifications of vowels, e.g. *Kalpatā* for *kalpitā*, *vahita* for *vihita*, *rācata* for *racita* and of consonants *satva* for *sattva* (Bh. II. 36-41). Also *aṁśa* has usually been spelt as *aṁśa* (Bh. I. 55) and *siṁha* as *siṁha* as is sometimes done in mod. Asm. Another interesting spelling is *puṣkiriṇī* for *puṣkariṇī* (Bh. I. 132, also found in inscriptions of Vala Vaimā and Indra Pāla). This spelling, it appears, is the starting point from which we come to modern Asamīyā *pukhuri* (tank).

The very learned editor of *Kāmrūp Śāsanāvalī* gradually felt the growing pressure of Prākṛit on Sanskrit in these inscriptions, and admits in his comments on the last inscriptions that the Prākṛit names of persons, plots, tanks, streamlets and rivulets remained unintelligible to him. Being a non-Asamīyā, the editor felt much difficulty even in explaining *suvarṇadāru* which may have been a Sanskritised name for the popular Asamīyā name *soṅāru*, a common but precious timber of Asam. In this last inscription *saṅgocchalita* is engraved as *saṅgot-salita* (Dh. III, I. 28) and the learned editor notes that in Asam, Sanskrit *s*, *c*, *ch* are still pronounced without discrimination.

TEN

TRAILS OF ASAMĪYĀ APABHRAMŚA AND EXTENSIONS

THE second literary proof of the Asamīyā language is come across in the Buddhist songs written in an early apabhramśa dialect. They were first collected and published as "sample of Bengali one thousand years back" by the Bengali scholar, late Haraprasād Śāstrī, about the beginning of the present century. A new collection of these songs has of late been made and published by Pandit Rāhul Sāṅkṛtyāyan, and claims on them have been placed now by the Oriyā, Asamīyā, Maithili and Hindī speakers besides the Bengalees. These claims simply prove that all these modern East India languages evolved through a stage in which these Buddhist songs were recorded.

The period in which these songs were recorded almost synchronizes with the period of the inscriptions of the Bhauma kings of Kāmarūpa, the *Caryās* being started probably about 700 A.D. The Buddhist poets are said to have flourished during the reign of Dharma Pāl of Bengal and later, but their dates are not well established. Any way, the Buddhist poets probably did not linger beyond the eleventh century. But although the period is the same, naturally we find much more and better instances of Asamīyā vocabulary and grammar in these songs as they were composed in the apabhramśa dialect and not directly in Sanskrit as the inscriptions.

Thus the language of the Buddhist songs is probably the immediate predecessor we find of the Asamīyā language proper and the trails of Asamīyā in the inscriptions are a little more indirect and a bit remote. The copper-plate inscriptions could not furnish any specific instance of Asamīyā grammar, but the Buddhist songs do. It is here that we first come across the use of the Asamīyā case-endings almost complete, the Asamīyā verbs, complete or incomplete, in right use, besides a large Asamīyā vocabulary of *deśaja* words, not found even in the popular Vaiṣṇavite literature more than half a millennium years thence. So a proper and direct study of these songs were a pre-requisite for a real study of the formation and development of the language, if it were to be worth while. History of the 84 Siddhas was published in German by Arthur Grundvedel. Also Dr. Giuseppe Tucci, on the authority of the Tibetan works *Grub tōb* and *Bkābabs-bdun*, refers to one Siddha Mīnanātha, a fisherman from Kāmarūpa. Tārānāth as well mentions this Siddha Country and the two beautiful couplets, attributed to Mīnanāth and grafted into the Sanskrit commentary of Caryā 21, are quoted. There is still a place called Rājñī or Rāñī in the vicinity of Gauhati in this Eastern Country (Prācyā deśa) of Kāmarūpa to which Saraha belongs by the local tradition. So also about Lui and his disciple Dārikapā.

The reign of the Pāla Kings of Kāmarūpa began in the eleventh century and some of them seem to be somehow connected with some of the Siddhas. Kāhnupāda or Kṛṣṇācārya, the poet of as many as 13 caryas, and reputed to be the seventeenth in order of the 84 Siddhas, acknowledges himself in his Caryā 36 to be a disciple of Jalandharipāda alias Hāḍipā who had another disciple in Gopicandra connected with old Kāmarūpa kings, Dharma Pāla and Durlabh Nārāyaṇ, at least by strong tradition. Any way, there is much to show that the mediaeval Asam was a hot bed of Vajra Yāna monks right upto the hey-day of Śrī Śaṅkardev's fame.

However, there is little in these things to be emphasised and still less to be dogmatised. What is important is the fact that wherever they might hail from, they came to live in Magadha where they wrote their songs, and the most important is the text of the songs themselves. Allegations are made against corruptions of the text brought about by the Nepalese and "Maithili scribes", and "Bengali editors" giving a "a-Bengali garb"; but the Assamese are certainly no party to all this. Yet alteration of a word or two in many lines of the Caryas can easily make them read like Assamese and make them intelligible to any Assamese-knowing reader. Dr. Mishra shows the Maithili affinities in the caryas, and some of these affinities are also common to Assamese, ancient Asam having long been contiguous and sometimes bordering on a portion of Mithila at the Kosi river in the Purnea district as is seen from the famous copper-plate inscription of Bhāskar Varman (verses 26-28).

Some of the peculiarities of Assamese grammar noticed in the Caryas may be noted. Looseness in Sandhis are seen in Assamese even from the oldest inscription of early seventh century down to the present day; and such words as "nacchaṅte" in Caryā 42 bear witness to this fact. One of the honorific signs of plural number in Assamese is "sakal" (as in Gurusakal), and it is often used as "saala samāhīa" in Caryā 1, "maṅḍala saala" in Caryā 16. One of the common feminine Assamese suffix is "ni", and it is used in such words as "śuṅḍinī" in Caryā 3. The only Assamese nominative case-ending for words ending in consonants is e, and it is used exactly as in "Kumbhīre khāa" and "core nila" both in Caryā 2. The nominative sign in Assamese is always dropped with intransitive verbs in general as in "Kāa taruvara pañca vi dāla" in Caryā 1. The accusative sign in Assamese is 'ka', and it is used as in "Thākuraka parinivītā" in Caryā 12. This accusative sign is dropped in "gauṇa bhāve" as in "bākhorha morhiu" and "bāndhana torhiu" Caryā 9. The instrumental sign in Assamese is sometimes "e" as in "Kuṭhāre chijaa" in Caryā 45 and "joiṅṅāle raani pohāa" in Caryā 19. The Assamese genitive 'ra' is used as in "harinār khur" and "harinār nilaa" both in Caryā 6. The Assamese locative "ta" is used in a large number of words as in "duārat" in Caryā 3, "māṅgat" in Caryā 8, "bāṭat" in Caryā 8 and 14, "dombit" in 18, "ṭālat", "hārhit" in Caryā 33, "gaṅṅat" in Caryā 34, and 50. Old Assamese and even modern Assamese, in poetry, uses e in locative as in Sanskrit.

While both *iā* and *i* are found in incomplete verbs in old Assamese, modern Assamese gives predominance only to the latter which is used profusely as in "erhi" in Caryā 1, "kari" in 3, 38; "cumbi" in 4, "meli" in 6, "dekhi" in 7, "carhi" in 10, "uṭhi" in 21, "raci" in 22, "dhuni"

in 26, "lai" in 36, 138; 47; "tuli" in 37. The negative sign in Assamese, as opposed to Bengali, is always put before the verb as is abundantly found in "najai" in Caryas 2, 4, 14, 20, 22, 29, "najivami" in 4, "nachāraa" "nadekhi" in 16, 42, "napāṭhiai" in 26, "nighina" in 10.

It is curiously interesting to note that non-Tatsama words rare even in the so popular Vaiṣṇavite Assamese literature occur so nicely in these Caryas agreeing exactly and more or less with modern Assamese phonology, morphology, and in every day use. To mention a few of such non-tatsama, words at random from the Caryas with their Assamese equivalents C.I. "eri" (Asm. eri, leaving); "dāl" (Asm. dāl, a branch) c. 2. "tentali" (Asm. tentali, tamarind), "core" (Asm. cor, a thief); "rāti" (Asm. rāti, night); "bahuri" (Asm. boāri, a daughter-in-law), "samāirha" (Asm. somāila, entered); c. 3. "thira kari" (Asm. thira kari, having decided); "duārat" (at the door), "saru" (Asm. saru, small); c. 4. "sāsu" (Asm. śāhu, a mother-in-law), "tai" (Asm. tai, thou); c. 5. "nai" (Asm. nai, a river), "thāi" (Asm. ṭhāi, space) "saṅkama" (Asm. sāko, a bridge), "pāti" (Asm. pāti, a sheet); c. 6. "meli" (Asm. meli, spreading), "berhila" (Asm. berhila, has surrounded), "hāka" (Asm. hāka, forbidding), "harina" (Asm. harina, a male deer), "harini" (Asm. harini, a female deer), "chupai" (Asm. chuwai, touches), "pāni" (Asm. pāni, water), khura (Asm. khura, a hoof), c. 7. bāt (Asm. bāt, a path), dekhi (Asm. dekhi, having seen), gai (Asm. gai, having gone), napasai (Asm. napasai, does not enter), c. 8. bāṭat (Asm. bāṭa, on the way), mili mili (Asm. mili mili, by uniting); c. I. balaga (Asm. balega, separate); c. 10. choi choi (Asm. choi choi, by touching), nighina (Asm. nighina, hate not), paduma (Asm. paduma, a lotus), pakhuri, (Asm. pukhuri, a tank), cari (cari, riding), bāpurhi (bāpuri; a pitiful woman), nāwe (nāwe, by boat), molān (molān, a stick of lotus), c. 11. sāsu, (sāsu, a mother-in-law), 'nanda' (nanda, a sister-in-law), c. 12. guniā (guniā, counting); c. 14. nāi (nāo, boat), burhilo (burhilo, have drowned), bāṭat (bāṭat, on the way), siñcahu pāni (siñcahe pāni, throw away the water), nalai (nalai, does not take), kule kule bulai (kule, kule bulai, walks by the shore); c. 15. uju bēṭ, (uju bāt, easy way), anabāt, (anabāt, wrong way), sijhai (sijai, is fulfilled), c. 16. gājai (gājai, thunders), mai (mai); c. 17. lāu (lāu, a gourd), hoi, (hoi, is), c. 18. mai (mai, myself), tai (tai thyself), bolai (bolai, śays), namelai (namelai, stretches not), āgali (āgali, front part), chinali (cinali, introduced); c. 19. pohāi (pohāi, dawns), c. 20. kahana najāi (kahana ne najāi, indescribable), bapuḍhā, (a pitiful man), c. 21. "tuṭaa (tuṭai, diminishes), uñcal pāñcal ūcal-pācal, pitiful man), c. 22. raci raci (raci raci, by composing), najānaho, excitedness), c. 23. dhuni dhuni (dhuni dhuni, scutching), napābjai, (najānaho, know not), bahal, (bahal, broad), balaga (belega, separate), (napābiai, won't get), adha rāti (adha rāti, midnight); mai (mai, napasai enters not); c. 27 adha rāti (adha rāti, midnight); mai (mai, myself), c. 28. gharini (gharāni, ghaini, wife), rāti pahāi (rāti puāi, dawns), c. 29. nahai (nahai, is not), najāi (goes not), patāi (patāi, believes), bakhāni (bakhāni, explains), uha (uhā, clue), bhani, (saying), mai, (mai, myself), c. 31. tali poisaa (tali paisai reaches bottom), ghina (ghina, hatred), c. 32. uju (uju, easy), dāpan (dāpan, mirror), khāl (khāl, a ditch), c. 33. tālat mor ghar (tālat mor ghor, at rock

my house), hādit bhāt nāi, (hādit bhāt nāi, no boiled rice in the cooking pot), bengasa sāpa bārhila (bengese barhila, the frog extended to a snake), benta (behta, a mode), samāa (somāi, enters), bālad (balad, a bull), bāñji (Bāñji, barren female), budhi (budhi, plan), cor (cor, thief), niti niti (nite nite, every day), siāla siāl, a jackal), jujhaa (jújhe, fights); c. 35. etakāl (etakāl, so much time), ac-shilō (mai āchilō, I had been), mai bujhila (mai zujhilō, I understood), c. 37. tuti (tuti, diminishing), āchile (āchile, had been), c. 38. cīaa thira kari (cita thira kari, settling the mind), t̄ānaa guna t̄ānaa gune, pull by the rope), kulalai khar sōte ujaa (kulalai khar sōte ujai, goes up with quick current to the short); samāa (enters); c. 39. tai (tai, thou); mai (mai, myself); gohāli (gohāli, cowshed), ekele (akale, alone), nasamāa (nosamāi, not enter), c. 41. sāpa dekhi (sāp dekhi, snake seeing), tutai (tutai, diminishes), dapan (dāpan, a mirror); c. 42. sosai (sucks up), nadekhai (nedekhai, not see); c. 43. samāa (somāi, enters), c. 45. bahal pāt (bahal pāt, broad leaf), kuthāre chiju (kuthāre chidai, cut with an axe), (bārhai (bārhai, increases), pāni (pāni, water); cheva (cheva, sever), najānai (najānai, know not), dāl (dāl, a branch); c. 46. tutai (tutain, diminishes), nau (nau, not yet), nahoi (nahay, is not); c. 47. miali (mihali, mixed), lai (lai, taking) pāni (pāni, water); c. 49. khāle (khāle, by the ditch), kārhi, (kārhi, robbing), āji (āji, today), mor (mor, my); c. 50. cañali (cancali, a bamboo bier), kāndai saguna siāli (kāndai saguna siāli, weep vultures and jackals), dehadahe dahadihe, in ten directions).

The Indo-Aryan language is divided into three distinct periods as Old Indo-Aryan (B.C. 1500-500), Middle Indo-Aryan (B.C. 500-1000 A.D.) and New Indo-Aryan (A.D. 1000 onwards). O.I.A. is further subdivided into Vedic (1200 B.C.), Epic (600 B.C.), Sanskrit (500 B.C.) sub-periods, and M.I.A. is subdivided into Pāli (200 A.D.), Māgadhi (600 A.D.) and apabhrāṣā (1000 A.D.). O.I.A. is characterized by copious sounds and forms in the language, M.I.A. by simplification of older consonant groups and curtailment of grammatical forms, and N.I.A. by use of new help-words, wearing of the inflectional system and its replacement by the analytical method.

As in vocabulary so in grammar the Asamīyā language retains more of the Vedic than of the Sanskritic characteristics in it. For instance, the modern Asamīyā *i* (as in *kari*, doing) may be traced back to the Rig Vedic *-tvi* than later rather Vedic and Sanskritic *-tvā* from which is derived *iā* (as in *kariā*, doing, found in middle Asamīyā). Both *i* and *iā* are found in the Buddhist songs, though the former is perhaps more common than the latter. While Sanskrit and Prākṛit languages were synthetic having the inflectional systems of declensions and changing of number and gender, N.I.A. languages become analytic and began to take recourse to help-words to effect those changes. From about 1000 A.D. we find evidence of this transition from M.I.A. to N.I.A.

While M.I.A. may be said to be characterized by de-Sanskritization, N.I.A. came to be characterized by re-Sanskritization once more almost as a reaction of the preceding period. An attempt to renew the older Sanskrit pronunciation and forms seems to be made, and there was naturally some sacrifice of the older *deśaja* vocabulary too. In Bengal, particularly, the Sanskritization became much enhanced when she came under the Mughal rule to the effect that not only her social relation but also her linguistic and cultural connections with Asam and the rest of Eastern India came to be practically cut off at least for some time. But for that Mughal rule in Bengal the cultural unity of Eastern India would be much more compact to be sure. The shades of difference to which the language of old Kāmarūpa lent itself may be imagined from the following extracts quoted from Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India* (Vol. v, Pt. I).

Asamīyā. "Ejan mānuhar duṭā putek āchil. Tāre sarutowe bāpekak käle, he pitā, sampattir ki bhāg mot pare tāk mok diyā".

Rājbarāsi dialect. "Ek jankār dui betā āchil. Tār madhye choṭa betā tār bābāk kaila, Bābā, gāirastir ye bhāg mui pāim tā mok de".

Rangpur dialect. "Ekjan mānsēr duikonā betā āchil. Tār choṭa konā uyār bāpak käle, Bā, mor paisā-kaḍir bhāg mok deo".

Jalpāiguri dialect. "Ek jhan kār dui jhan betā āchil. Amhār madhyat choṭa betā ār bāpak kahil ki bole Bā, hāmār sampattir mui ye bhāg pām tā tui mok de".

Kocbehār dialect. "Ekjanā mānsēr dui konā betā āchil. Tār madde choṭajan uyār bāpak kahla, Bā, sampattir ye hisyā mui pāim tāk mok den".

Darjiling dialect. "Ak jhankār duitā betā chil. Tārhe vīcat chota betātā āpnar bāpak kohol, ge Bā, dhan-dolat yei mui pān tā mok de".

Dacca dialect. "Āk janer duiḍi chāoāl āchile. Tāgo maidde chotaḍi tār bāpere kailo, Bābā, āmār bhāge ye vitti vāsād pare tā āmāre dāo".

Mymensing dialect. "Ek janar dui put āchil. Tār chuḍu pute bāpere kailo, Bā ji, māl-byasātar ye bakhrā āmi pāibām tā āmāre deukhāin".

Tripura dialect. "Ek betār dui put āchil. Tārār māije hurutā tār bāpre kail, Bābuo, mālāmāl yetān āmi pāyām hetān āmāre deo".

Noākhāli dialect. "Ek śākser āchil. Tāder madhye choṭa betā bāpere kaila, Bāyāji, māl-mattā yā āmār hiasyāy pare tā āmāke den".

Bāchanganji dialect. "Ekjan mānşer dugga polā ācil. Tārgo madhye choṭagga hero bāpre kaṭila, Bābā, bitter ye bhāg mui pāmu tā more deo".

Chattagram dialect. "Eguyā mānsyer dui poā āchil. Choḍuya tār bāire kaila Bāyāji, ār hicchār sampatti āre dey".

Srīhatta dialect. "Kon mānşar dui poā āchil. Tārār mājhe choṭaṭi bāpre kaila, Bābā, vişayar ye aṃśa āmār bāte pare, āmāre deo".

Kāchār dialect. "Ekjan mānuşar duguyā puā ācil. Tār mājhe chuṭaṭi bāpre kaila, Bābā, āmār hisyāt sāmānar ye bāt pare hibāt āmāre deo".

Bagurā dialect. "Ek jhaner dui bāṭā āchil. Tārkerē madhye choṭaṭi jhañ kaila, Bā, hāmi yā pāmu tā hāmāk bātā de".

Dinājpur dialect. "Ekjan mānuşer dui chāoā chil. Tāder choṭa chāoā āpan bāpke kahila, Bāp, sampattir ye bhāg hāmi pām tā hāmāk deñ".

Sūothāl dialect. "Ek jāḍar duiṭā beṭā āchlek. Uhiyār madhya choṭa beṭā āpdār bobāk balla, O Bābā, dhaner jāhāl bākhrā mui bhetbo mokhe de".

Midnāpur dialect. "Ek lokkar duṭṭā po thāila. Tānekār mājhu koeyā po lijer bāfuke kalla, Bāphu he, vişaiāsaier ye bāti mui pām seṭā moke de".

Standard Bengali. "Kon ek byaktir duṭi putra chila. Tanmadhye kaniṣṭhaṭi tāhār pitāke kahila, pitā, vişayer ye aṃśa āmār prāpya tāhā āmāke din".

That the language of old Kāmarūpa lingers till of late in most of the modern districts of Bengal is proved by such specimen passages of the dialect of Chittagong (quoted from an advertisement on a patent medicine by D. C. Sen, *HLL*, p. 113): "*Rahim-Ayi Baksir hāḍar Hṛdaya doctorer doyanat poār lāi kirmāir dāvāi āintām yāira. Karim-Ibā keyan dāvāi? Baḍa nām hunira; parakh kari nacāi. Rahim—Ar khālat bhāir poār lāi ek ānā di ek purgyā ni khāvāilām ye.... Bājār gyā bāut dāvā ni khāvāi cāi kono al nahay—Ar ek kathā jāna ni?.... dosharā jolāp nalāge yayāt hei doñnat.*"

ELEVEN

EARLIEST LITERARY RECORDS OF MODERN ASAMĪYĀ

NEITHER the numerous instances of Prākṛitism in the copper plate inscriptions of the Bhauma kings of Kāmarūpa from the sixth to the twelfth century A.D., nor the copious examples of modern AsamĪyā vocables

and even of Asamīyā grammar found in the Buddhist songs of about the same period in the Apabhraṃsā dialect can truly be regarded as regular records of the modern Asamīyā language. We are also warned at the outset that while from external evidences we may be inclined to place *Prahlād Carit* by Hem Saraswati, *Sūnya Purāṇ* by Rāmāi Pandit, *Rāmāyana* by Mādhaw Kandali and *Kṛṣṇa Kīrtan* by Candidās by 1200, 1300, 1350 and 1400 A.D. respectively, we have really few internal evidences to confirm us since we seldom come across any manuscripts that are even four hundred years old in fact.

The manuscript of *Kṛṣṇa Kīrtan* which is even alleged to be in Candidas's own handwriting, is claimed to be written by 1385 A.D. as its handwriting is said to agree with another work named *Śūdra Paddhati* where the date "1442 Śake" is written. Rākhāldās Banerji, an expert on the subject, read it as "1442 Sambat" and attributed the work to 1385 A.D. But Haraprasād Śāstrī, another authority, rightly contends that there can absolutely be no justification to read "Śāke" as "Sambat" at one's sweet will, and that "1442 Śāke" can only mean 1520 A.D. (*Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad Patrikā*, 1326 B.E.). Besides, Banerji admits that the handwriting is not uniform all through, and that it is ancient, imitation of ancient and modern mixed. But it is Asamīyā script all through with Asamīyā vocables and grammar consistently and persistently whence Yageścandra Vidyānidhi rightly points out that the manuscript of *Kṛṣṇa Kīrtan* definitely proves the stage in which the Bengali language was still one with the old Kāmarūpī or Asamīyā language (*Ibid*).

For our present purpose we leave out of account the oral folk literature both secular and religious, the nursery rhymes and other folk songs on one hand and the *mantras* and aphorisms of Dāk on the other, for instance. So we leave out of consideration at the present moment the ballads of *Ful Kōwar* and *Maṇi Kōwar*, and also *Gopīcandra* or *Maināmatīr Gīt*. In the *New Light on History of Asamīyā Literature* they were considered in those periods as assigned by external evidences, as we were concerned with ideas and thoughts in particular in which domain errors, if any, may not prove fatal. But when we are out to consider the linguistic peculiarities we cannot ignore the facts of their being transmitted orally from generation to generation till they were recorded comparatively much of late with the result that the linguistic peculiarities they now contain belong to the later times and not to the earlier. As against the fact that few of the manuscripts now available are even four hundred years old, we allow that they are copies, and mostly copies of copies, perhaps many times, with not only copyists' mistakes which are usual, but even with conscious and purposeful changes,

we shall only be careful and cautious in our judgments and weigh them in the measure of consistency.

Prahlād Caritra by Hem Saraswati was first edited and published by Kālirām Medhi in 1923 from a manuscript found at Rāmdīā, Gauhati, copied about 10 Māgh, 1769 Śak, equivalent to January, 1847, rejecting another manuscript found at Barpetā owing to too many mistakes. The work contains one hundred verses in *pad* and *dulari* and is edited with such spellings as s or ṣ for ś, ṣ for kha, i for ī, ñi for i, r for l, and so forth, alleged as spellings under Prākṛt influence:

Sehi dinā prābhū dew jagātar pati;
Ādesilā vivāda lagāilā Saraswatī.
Svāmīr vacan devi kari sirogat;
Pravesilā Saraswatī tāhār kaṅṭhat.
Sehi belā Prahrāde Vaiṣṇava rūpa dhari;
Hiranyar āge gaiā sumarila Hari.

More instances are there having *tṛ* for *tri*, *c* for *ch*, *je* for *ye* etc.

Pāce Hiranyākṣa mātibe lāgilā putrar mukhak cāi;
Rātṛ dine tañi Hari sumarāṣa Hari āce kona thāi.
Etini bhuvane mañi adhikāri jal sthal ādi kari;
Keś gac jeve vicāri cāhilo khujiā napāilo Hari.

Save and except such few peculiarities we have in it modern Asamīyā vocables and grammar almost intact. Hem Saraswatī wrote under the patronage of Durlabh Nārāyaṇ and so did Harihar Vipra and others. Harihar like his junior contemporary Kaviratna Saraswatī, writing under the patronage of Indra Nārāyaṇa, probably Durlabh's son and successor, exhibits few archaisms except that in these three poets, perhaps for the first time, we come across such old forms of pronouns as *tehō* for mod. *teō* (he), *tāhāna* or *tāna* for mod. *teōr* (his) etc.

“*Kamatā Mandana, Durlabha Nārāṇa; ṅrpavar anupām:*
Tāhāna rājyat, Rudra Saraswatī, Devayāni kanyā nām.
Tāhāna tanay, Hem Saraswari, Dhruwar anuja bhāi:
Padavandhe tehō, pracār karilā, Vāman Purāṇ cāi”.

Sūnya Purān, earlier claimed for Bengali, presents characteristics of Asamīyā vocables and grammar more elaborately and prominently than the Buddhist songs wherein we find them first budding forth. Cosmology described in the former is also found elsewhere in Asamīyā:

Daś dikpāl nāhi megha tārāgaṅ:
Āu mittu nāchil Jamar tādaṅ
Ghare dhān thākileka sukhe anna khāba:

Annar vihane parbhū kata dukh pāba
Samkha upajila kara samkhar vicār: °
Kaha kaha paṇḍita samkhar sār.
Kon samkhe nachowe pānī:
Dakṣiṇ samkhe nachowe pānī

As in *Prahr̥īd Caritra*, instances of Prākṛitism are there in *Jamar* for *Yamar*, *saṃkha* for *śaṃkha* etc. besides *āu* for *āru* (also) and *mṣttu* for *mṛtyu* (death). Particular characteristics of modern Asamīyā sixth case-ending (possessive singular) is precise in *annar* (of food), *saṃkhar* (of conch) besides the verbs *kḥāba* (will eat) *pāba* (will get) etc. *pānī* (not *jal*) is the only word for water in daily use in Asam. *Thāki-leka* is in Assamīyā subjunctive, meaning 'if remains'. The negative verbs *nācil*, *nachowe*, are interesting. The affirmative *āchil* seems to have come direct from Sanskrit *āsīt* (had been), and *na+āchil=nāchil*. *Chowe* in Asamīyā means 'touches'; *na+chowe=nachowe* or *nōchowe* (does not touch). The prose in *Sūnyā Purān* runs as: "Hātha pāti neha sewakara argha puppa pānī". *Hasta* > *hattha*, > *hāta*. *Pāti* (spreading) as in mod. Asm. *Puṣpa* > *puppa* > *puhabā* (flower, Maithili). *Sewakar*, *pānī* etc. are shown above.

The five cantos of *Rāmāyaṇa* translated by Mādhaw Kandali were first printed and published by Mādhaw Bardaloi in the first decade of this century, supplemented by the *Ādi Kāṇḍa* written by Mādhawdew and *Uttarā Kāṇḍa* written by Śaṅkardew, as these cantos were found either lost or not written at all. In 1897 Gaṇeś Āgarwālā published these two cantos as those of Mādhaw Kandali which was evidently wrong. Mādhaw Kandali's *Rāmāyaṇa* was the earliest work, as it appears, in modern Indian vernacular; but it has not been edited with the scrupulous care it deserved. Mādhaw Candra, even as the first editor so called, took some pains; but his successor had not even that bit of it. Thus the *Rāmāyaṇa* as we find it today, contains some percentage of quite modern vocables side by side with even a bigger percentage of archaic and almost unintelligible words for which the copyists, if not the printers, have to be thanked. With these limitations and handicaps, we try to study the language of Mādhaw Kandali who is at least one century older than Śaṅkardew who refers to him with all regards for his scholarship and poetic talents.

One very important trait of grammar in M. K's writing is his peculiar use of *kṛdanta* (gerundial infinitive) as in *khujita* (*Śundara*, 30/112) which in present Asamīyā would be *khujibalai* (to look for). This present form of infinitive develops by a different process the origin of which is also there (*Śundara* 30/92) *Kāṭibāk lāgi* > *kāṭibā lāi* > *Kāṭibalai* (to cut). The older form ending in *ta* is considered to be derived from

the Vedic method as in *kartu + e = kartave* (to do) etc. We have frequent use of this older form, as in *Araṇya kāṇḍa*, (19/13-14): "Mohor Vidhiye, *likhita tāhāk*, *bādhita āra napāri*".

"Paṭhāyā *dilōho hante mātra ājñā-vāṇi*:

Māthe kari Śītāk dilek hante āni". 14/40.

These lines are from the *Kiṣkindhyā Kāṇḍa*. In present Asamīyā *dilōho hante* and *dilek hante* would be *dilōheten* and *dileheten* respectively, and it is in M. K. for the first time that we come across the original form. But "hante" with the meaning 'from' is found in M. K. as also later: "ākāsar hante" (*Lankā Kāṇḍa*, 13/42); "āji hante" (*Bhīm Carit*, Ram Saraswatī) is "ājir parā" (from today), etc. in present Asamīyā. Curiously enough, this present form is also copiously used by M.K. e.g. 'sipārar parū, (16/34); *kaira parā* (17/24) in the *Sundara Kāṇḍa*.

Frequent, more or less, is the use of verbs made directly from nouns, so sparing in present Asamīyā. Such are "lakhilō" (11/4) and "krodhilō" (15/29) in the *Araṇya Kāṇḍa*, and "khangila" (12/4) in the *Lankā kāṇḍa*, meaning, 'to do *lakṣa* (observation), *krodh* (anger), and *khang* (resentment) respectively. Even in present Asamīyā there is sometimes a luxury of lengthening the initial 'a' of a word into ā, and M.K. has such uses as in *āseṣ* (*Ayodha*, 28/23), for use of *aṣeṣ*, and *āsukh* (*Lankā*, 11/5 for) for *asukh*. M. K. has the peculiar use *hi* in the instrumental case as in "patrahi" (*Sundara*, 14/92) which in present Asamīyā would be "patrere". This "hi" is considered to be derived from Vedic "bhiḥ" as in *devebhiḥ* as against *devaiḥ* in Sanskrit. This particular use of *hi* must not be confused with *hi* as in "gotehi" (*Lankā*, 19/137, 140) which is from Sanskrit as in "Tvamhi devaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ" (*Gītā*) and which is converted to *i* in present Asamīyā.

M.K.'s frequent use of *i* in inflected passive voice, even as it is in use today, is interesting. Such instances are: "Tinio bhuvane tok lekhi mahāvīr" (*Araṇya*, 15/23), meaning 'you are considered the greatest hero in the three worlds, and "Hena vīr natu dekhi natu śuni kāṇe" (*Kiṣkindhā*, 14/85), meaning "such a hero is not certainly seen (and) not certainly heard with ears." At last once do we come across in M.K. the peculiar use of nominative in lieu of possessive for the sake of emphasis. "Taise sahāye mai jinilō Yamak" which literally translated would be: 'It is for you helping me that I have conquered Death.' He uses "kahi" (*Kiṣkindhyā*, 12/7), meaning 'where', which may be derived from *kasmin*, whence we may have *kahika*, *kaika*; *kahita*, *kaita*; *kahira*, *kaira* etc. Among the various forms of verbs "tāriera" (*Lankā*, 13/37) in the second person singular is a peculiar verb equivalent to present Asamīyā "tāri ācha" (you have been relieving). "Karasa" and "marasa"

bole (says) etc., words with second case-ending as *Lakṣmīk*, and with seventh case ending as *Prthivī*, imperfect verbs as *dhari*, *jāni*, finite verbs as *nājānil*, *bulile* etc., abound.

The second poem, *Tāmbul Khaṇḍa*, besides the above traits, shows many more as in such lines: "Kaman upāi karō yāo kon diśe"; "ekasari hailō moe"; "āji jībō kona mane"; "nātini hārāilō". "bol ek bolō"; "yave ān karō tāk badhaō Brāhmaṇ"; "parāṇ dibāk pārō"; "ful pindhilese"; "rahilō tor caraṇe"; "mati hārāilō, bulite najāno, bhailō tor śaraṇe"; "nābol nābol nirīs Baḍāi"; "mane nakarha helā"; "hera pratijñā karilō"; "pratham yauvan moe bañcilō"; "tāk ki bulibō bol Cakrapāṇi"; "mare bhāl jīye bhāl janāilo tore"; "Kāḍhi laibō sātāsari hār"; "keho tave kichu bol bulite napāre"; "nābujhō dhemāli"; "dekhi tomāk ājal"; "ehā guā pāṇ tohme āpaneī khāhā"; "sūci nayāye tathā batiā bahāe"; "tāk sōarite mōr mane bāḍhe tāp": "ekohi narākhilek tor māa bāp". And so forth.

The third poem, *Dāna khaṇḍa*, has innumerable examples to offer, only a few of which are selected for illustration. "Kon Vidhatāe mok gaḍhilek"; "nāchāḍe Nandar pōe"; "Jhāta yāo ghar, di āru mok melāni"; "Ye bola bulilō, mane nadharile, ulatiyā dilō piṭhi"; "Bāt dān hāt dān lailō nājhare: to'kāraṇe āilō moe Yamunār tīre." "Nābol nābol Kāhnāi hena pāp-būñ"; "bale dhari bole tave dibō āliṅgan"; "Bāreka eriā deha yāo moe ghar". "Neta pātōl nāpindhibō, nāpindhibō sisat sindur: bāhar balayā nāpindhibō, nāpindhibō pāar nupur." "Rājā āge karibō gohāri: tave tok lai yāba dhari". "Pākhī jāti nahō Bar-āi uri-pari yāo: Yathā se Kāhnāir mukh lekhiṭe nāpāo". "Bhaila eta beli", "Hena mane kare Barāi dahe paisi māri: Parar puruṣ same dhāmāli nakari"; "Bol ek bolō tok śunaha abodh: Jurāyile soād lāge tapat ḍudh". "Bukut lāgil ghune"; "anek prakāre kākuti karila" etc.

The fourth poem, *Naukā khaṇḍa*, is similarly rich in traits of Asamīyā. "Rādhāk nāpaya mōr beākul man"; "Sahbāi caḍhile nāa nāsahiba bhārā"; "nāa kulat capāū", "talbal kare nāe"; "Kichu pātāl hau mor nāa bhārā"; "Dhau dekhi mor kāle sava gā"; "tok dekhi nātini" etc. The fifth poem, *Bhār Khaṇḍa* contains among others such Asamīyā phrases and lines: "Rājār Kōwari bhaili"; "bhār lae ulatiā"; "ulati ulati Rādhā" etc. The sixth or the *Brndāvan khaṇḍa* contains such phrases and lines as "ṭeṭan natak" (cf. "Bhīme bole śuna hera ṭeṭan natak", *Bhīmcarit*, *Rām Saraswatī*); "tohmār gharat anna-pāni nākhāiba"; "buliba dhāmāli"; "Barār bahuāri āhme Barār jhāri: Ful curi bād āmi sahite nāpāri". The seventh or the *Kāliya Daman Yamunā Khaṇḍa* has among other instances: "dilanta melāni"; "Anek kākuti kaila"; "ghātāt bhetila Nandar po"; "goālinī āhme nahō nācanī"; "dālim sadṛś tan"; "Bar dukh upajil mane; Śarīrat harilō cetane". "Mok lai yāba dhari" etc. etc.

The eighth poem *Bāla Khaṇḍa*, contains among others such phrases and lines: "Tor bol pālilō bahilō dadhi bhār". "Guā-pāṇ diā dūtī pāṭhāilō tore". "Anek kākuti karilō tohāre." "Ki kāraṇe Rād̄hār hiāt dilō ghāa". And so forth. The ninth, *Bam̄sī khaṇḍa*, contains further instances. "Pakhī nahō tār ṭhāi uri-pari jāo". "Kāhnāi laiā r̄āti pohā-yibo". And so forth. The tenth and last, *Rād̄hā Birah Khaṇḍa*, also contains innumerable traits of Asamiyā vocables and grammar, eg. "Nakhāilō kāhnur guā-pāṇ". "Nāsunilō tor bol laā jāite pānī". "Yamunāt pār kailō nilō dadhi bhār." "Uttam kulat mor janam bhaila". "Āchilō moi Śisumati, najānilō ranga-ratī". "Tot upajiba roṣ tāk najāno". "Mai toḷō Yamunāte pānī". "Māthe hāth bulāi". So on and so forth.

It may be noted in this connection that despite all these traits of Asamiyā vocables and grammar, KK is never claimed to have been written within the modern boundaries of Asam. Bengali scholars claim it to have been written in West Bengal which is not refuted. Then it shows that this was the state of the language prevailing even in West Bengal until at least the sixteenth century. In 1743 a *Benglo-Portugese Dictionary* by Manuel do Assumpcao, a Portugese Padre, and a *Crepār Xaxtrer Orthbhed* were issued from Lisbon. The spelling of the name of the latter book shows that the Asamiya X pronunciation lingered in Bengal until at least the middle of the eighteenth century from the earliest times even through the *Caryas* and KK etc. Perhaps even today the state of Bengal has two distinct cross-currents of their speech—the lower and deeper being that of old Asamiyā or Kāmarūpī, and the upper or surface current being that of the modern or standard Bengali so called. As for the X pronunciation, it has mostly changed to *h* as in East Bengal.

Another most note-worthy fact is that Muhammadan rule in Bengal after the twelfth century has not only isolated Bengal from Kāmarūpa, and Eastern India for that matter, by cutting off their cultural and social connections, but has also brought about a split in the speech within Bengal itself. While mass conversion of the Hindu people into Muhammadanism was so vigorous and unopposed, the rest of the Hindu population was simply busy in Sanskritizing the popular speech with the result that the new Bengali had assumed almost a new hue being too Sanskritic, while Kāmarūpa and other parts of Eastern India as Orissa and Mithila yet retained much of their original and popular colour. But while the remnants of Hindu population were blind in Sanskritization, the Muhammadan rulers with their mass proselytes were naturally silent and content with the original speech. Thus it is that when about 1878 Grierson collected the popular ballads of the Rungpur district since illustrious as *Gopicondrar Gān* or *Maināmatīr*

Gīt from the mouths of local peasants, mostly the proselytes, the songs were found to be at par with the original Kāmārūpī speech, of course now mixed with few Arabic and Persian words and with a tincture of grammar of new Bengali.

TWELVE

TRAILS OF ASAMĪYĀ IN THE SYLHETI AND NORTH BENGAL DIALECTS SO CALLED

THE *Sylhet District Gazetteer* writes: "Little is known of the history of Sylhet . . . There seems to be little doubt that the Tipperas are closely allied with the Boḍo or Kachāris and it is generally thought that a considerable portion of the present inhabitants of Sylhet were originally descended from that stock". (Vol. II, Ch. II, p. 21). This district came under British rule in 1765 along with the districts of Bengal in which it was merged, and whatever might be its early relations with Asam it now started to think itself as a partner of the Bengal districts adopting the new Bengali language. So it is that when in 1874 it came to be re-linked with Asam as a Chief Commissioner's province, it not only dis-owned Asamīyā as its mother-tongue but also proved itself an unhappy partner with the other districts of Asam until again in 1947 it resigned its partnership with this State.

Edward Gait observes: "Sylhet may at times have formed part of the ancient kingdom of Kāmārūpa, . . . from the circumstance that Boḍo-speaking tribes are found both north and south of it, it may be conjectured that in early times it was inhabited by people of the same stock and was ruled by Boḍo kings". (HA, p. 274). On the point of language, Grierson observes: "The dialect spoken in Sylhet town and in the north and north-east of the district is that which the Europeans call Sylhettia. Natives do not use this title. They call it Jaintipuri, Purba-Srihattiya or Ujaniā. The latter means the language of the Upper country (Upper Assam). It is estimated that of the 2,033,000 speakers of Bengali in Sylhet, 678,000 use this dialect . . . The language spoken by the inhabitants of Eastern Sylhet is not intelligible to the natives of central or Northern Bengal . . . The inflections also differ from those of regular Bengali, and in one or two instances assimilate to those of Assamese". (LSI, Vol. II, Pt. I, p. 224).

We know of the Koc king Nara-Narayan (1540-84) conquering Sylhet, as vividly described by the *Darang Raj Vaṃśāwalī* (vs. 465-88), the submission being caremonially offered by the royal brother Asirāi,

and accepted on condition of paying the fixed tribute regularly as a feudatory Chief. This fact is further confirmed by the *Sylhet District Gazetteer* (Ch. II, p. 26). The latter further records: "Rudra Singh formally notified the Muhammadan Fauzader of Sylhet that Jaintia had passed into his possession and the two governments prepared to exchange lists of the products of their respective countries with the object of facilitating trade". The letters exchanged between the Fauzdar of Sylhet and Ahom king Rudra Simha's (1696-1714) Barphukan of Gauhati shows not only the cordial relations between Sylhet and Asam, but also proves close affinity of the Sylheti dialect with the parent Asamiyā. The full texts of these letters were first published in *Asam Banti* (Vol. I, No. 26), and reproduced in *Śrīhatter Itibritta*. We quote just a few sentences from the letter of the Fauzdar of Sylhet to show the affinity of his language to Asamiyā: "Yerūp Jayanta O Kāchārīr kārāṇ *likhilā* serūp haiba. Prācin āmār pitā Nawab Nāthul khā siraji Kocbehār O Rāṅāmātīr āchilā, tāte tomār thāi adhik prīti āchil. Ekhan patra pāi paraspar prīti pālan ucit. Āpani *likhiāchilā* thānā fauj pāthāitechī. Āru tomār mānuṣar pratyuttar kahiyāchī *śunibā*. Āpane *likhichilā* Āru tomār kārāṇ thāke tāke *likhibā*. Ekhanē bhāl nahay kārāṇ uttam drabya nāpāithālām Āmār mānuṣya śighra bidāi dibā. Emat karibā tomār āmār mānuṣ sarvadāye prem-patra laiā gatāyāt kare santoṣ kare. . . . Śak 1629 tārikh 15 Māgh Ei cithir lagat sandeś ānichil kāpar 1, pāguri 1, Sāl kāpar 1 jor muthat 10 kāpar".

The Bengali author of *Śrīhatter Itibritta* accuses the poets and music-composers of Jayantiyā, then amalgamated with Sylhet, such as Siva Ojhā, Rāmrāi, Majumdār, Mohanrām Dhar, Rajā Rājendra Simha, of "vulgarity" for using such words as *pāt* (capital), *khel* (clan), *kūwari* (princess), *kūwar* (prince) etc. which are indigenous words and for the use of which the poets are rather to be congratulated. (*S.I.*, Ch. VI Sec. IV, Pt. II, pp. 50-51). While *S.I.* is usually loath to admit Asamiyā influence over the Jayantiyā-Sylheti dialect, he had at least one occasion to have been bound to do so. He writes that Mājh (Māju) Gossāin, the successor of king Parvat Rāi assumed the title Gossāin in imitation of the Ahom officials of Asam who called themselves Gohāin or Gosāin. Burhā Parvat Rai (c. 1532-48), who succeeded Māju Gosāin, was in his turn succeeded by Bar Gosāin (c. 1548-64). A rural Jayantiya ballad with the burden *Mui kāi jāum re*" (*Asm.*, *Mai kalāi jām O*)" has been quoted in *S.I.* probably without suspecting its Asamiyā traits (Pt. II, Sec. IV, p. 37).

A bundle of contradiction as it may appear, *S.I.* itself turns the tide of its argument and pleads and feels proud for Sylhet remaining

long under Kāmarūpa kings. The relevant portions translated would run like this: "But it is sure that Sylhet was long under Kāmarūpa". (Ch. I, Pt. II, Sec. III, p. 2). "Up till seventh century after Christ no Aryan colonisation was established in Bengal. Mahatma Bankimandra in his article "Banger Brāhmanādhikār" proves: "Before the eighth century after Christ, Bengal was a non-Aryan land devoid of Brāhmins. If any individual Brāhman came before this and lived here that is to be left out of account. There was definitely no Brahman society in Bengal before the eighth century A.D." (Pt. II, Sec. I, Ch. III, p. 31). Again, "So it can be undoubtedly asserted that Sylhet was under Aryan rule from olden times. When the ancient Prāgijyotiṣ shed the lustre of the genius of Aryan civilization, Sylhet also shone by its reflected glory. There are ample proofs to show that Sylhet was included in Kāmarūpa for several centuries. . . . It is not humiliating to admit that Sylhet had long been under Kāmarūpa. It is not infamous to have lived under Kāmarūpa described to be as glorious as Bārānasī in the Yogini Tantra In fact, it is not only not infamous, but is particularly glorified that Sylhet could reap the fruits of Aryan civilization by being included in Kāmarūpa from very ancient times". (Pt. II, Sec. I, Ch. III, p. 46).

Benudhar Rājkhawā in his *Notes on the Sylheti Dialect*, 1913, considers all these aspects, historical, cultural and linguistic, himself then serving as a first-class Magistrate in the district sufficiently long. Col. Gordon a scholar in Asamīyā, who was then serving as a Sub-Divisional Officer in South Sylhet, comments: "The arguments in the book show considerable observation of the peculiarities of rural Sylhetti and its resemblance to Assamese. The author is to be congratulated on this original and interesting book". Benudhar has put forward as many as 96 points only "to show some of the linguistic affinities between the Sylhete and the Assamese", which we may try to summarise in the salient features. (1) Sylhete mass people pronounce the sibilants ś, s and ṣ as X (of course leaning towards h) like the Asamīyā people and so unlike Bengalees. (2) As in Asamīyā, the difference in pronunciation of c, cha, j, jh etc., in Sylhete is not sharp. (3) Unlike Bengali, the pronunciations of the finite verbs ending in *āchil* is consonantal both in Asamīyā and Sylhete. (4) Both in Asam and Sylhet, the first personal verbs in future tense ends in *m* (as in Sans. *karisyāmi*) and not in *b* (as in Sans. *karisyāba*) like Bengali. (5). In both, the future tense in advising is *ba* and not *be*, as in Beng. (6). Sylhetees say *gel ge* (Asm., *gāl gāi*), *kay* (Asm. *kay*), *hāmāi* (Asm. *somāi*) etc. (7) for euphony, Sylhetees say *bā-bātās* (Asm., *bā-batāh*), *māt-bol* (Asm. *māt-bol*), *giā meli* (Asm. *gai-meli*), and says *karibar man nāi* (no mind to do) just like the Assamese, as opposed to alien Bengali expressions.

(8) Sylhetee words *he* (he), *hau* (that), *mui* (I), *ata* (so much), *kior* (of what), *hetāo* (that also) are alike with Asamīyā *si*, *sau*, *mai*, *ata*, *kihar*, *seito-o*, respectively. (9) Sylhetees use *muśuddhi* (Asm. *muhudī*), *bar-ghar*, *tiri*, *tenā* (Asm. *tanā*), *śītān*, *bur*, *ājarī*, *biyā kanyā* etc. exactly in the sense that the Assamese do. (10) The Asamīyā colloquial words *choāli*, *dekā*, *bhur-bhuriā*, *kaṭhā*, *purā*, *hālicā*, *parāci*, *barat*, *kāikai* are exactly used in Sylhet as such. (11) The Asamīyā words *miṭhā* (sweet), *titā* (bitter, also wet) are used exactly as such in Sylhet. (12) Many of the numerals, names of months and of trees etc. are alike in Asm. and Syl. (13) Earlier Sylheti proper names for persons as *Maṇirām*, *Jairām*, *Kālorām*, *Dhani*, *Lakhāi*, *Manāi*, *Guṇāi*, *Rangāi* etc. are real Asamīyā names. (14) *Kuhiār*, *teṅgā*, *ghariāl*, *ud*, *neul*, *ḍharā*, *taṅgi*, *paghā*, *bhūi*, *dāuk*, *sarāli*, etc. are homely Asamīyā words in common and exact use in Sylhet. (15) Common Asamīyā Adjectives as *dāṭh*, *ṭān*, *saru*, *dūrai*, *śudā*, *kajalā*, *bekā*, *bahut*; (16) Common Asamīyā verbs as *ubh*, *pāhar*, *khoj*, *khajuā*, *dā*, *ro*, *pindh*, *khed*, *jokā*, *ḍirā*, *māt*, *bāt*, *mel*, *cā*, *pakā*, *er*, *bicār* etc. (17) Common Asamīyā adverbs as *lage lage*, *śudā-śudi*, *teo*, *dāghale*, etc. (18) Asamīyā articles and utensils of daily use as *loṭā*, *kalah*, *śarāi*, *mūrali*, *nāo*, etc. are also in exactly the same use in Sylhet with self-same names.

Beṇudhar Rājkhowā also came across an old Sylheti manuscript named *Padmā Purān* (*Baṇik Khaṇḍa*) by Ṣaṣṭhivar written in old Asamīyā script. The *puṭhi* had 29 or 30 leaves; curiously enough, the last one or two leaves, probably containing the colophon of the poet, were missing and the first six leaves are replaced with the present Bengali script. The original pages in O.A. script contain all the characteristics of Asamīyā almost as it is, save and except that probably for fear of missing the Asamīā X pronunciation, the sibilants are sometimes spelt with *kh*, e.g. “*khuna*” (lf. 9) “*Khunaha*” (lf. 30), “*khunare*” (lf. 46), etc., for *śuna*, and “*khudā*” (lf. 103) for *śudā*, and so forth. In the present perfect tense first person *u* is applied for *ō*, as *dilu* (lf. 8), *janmilu* (lf. 34) *āchilu* (lf. 77), for *dilō*, *janmilō*, *āchilō*, etc. *Lakṣmī-dhar*, the hero of the epic, is at least once written as *Lakhidhar*, and almost invariably in other places is styled as *Lakhāi* (lvs. 87, 111, 121, ff) a very popular way in Asamīyā of naming familiarly. Lvs. 48-49, for instance, have “*titā vastra*” (wet clothes) as in colloquial Asamīyā, which is of peculiar interest. *Titā* from Sans. *tikta* (bitter) is usual in Asamīyā; *titā* in the sense of “wet” is probably owing to a confusion with Sans. *sikta* having similar sound with Sans. *tikta*, and hence particularly noted. The book is Asamīyā all through, with a tincture of

Sylhetee here and there; but such lines with Asamīyā diction and idioms are noteworthy:

“Nagarīā loke kānde kari kolāhol:

Uṣānī nagare uthe kāndanar rol”. (lf. 67).

“Āisakale kare yukārar dhvani:

Bar-kanyā upare Brāhmaṇe dhāle pānī”. (lf. 72).

“Haṃsa pārāvāt dilā lekhā jukhā nāi:

Pūjā pāiā tuṣṭa haila aṣṭa nagar āi”. (lf. 126).

“Vistar melila puṣpa bipula rūpaṣī:

Dhutura kunkum mele ādya tulasī.

Lavanga kulanga mele āra mele māli:

Śrifalar patra mele jāruli pārāli.

“Keoā ketaki mele mādhvīr ful:

Jāti mele juti mele ṭagar bagul.

Āur campak mele puṣpa nāgeśwar:

Bakul kunikum mele pārijāt bar:

Āra puṣpa mele kanyā rakta utpal:

Ṣeṣkāle mele puṣpa sahasra kamal”.

The word *mele* (opens) in connection with flowers is to be noted in contrast with the Bengali equivalent *fuṭe*. Such a thorough influence of Asamīyā on Sylheti is also suggested by toponomy of Sylhet, such as *Goyāghāt* (Gohāi Ghāt) in Jayantiya Pargaṇā, *Bagāpānī* (white-water, or Bokāpānī, muddy water) river, *Baruā Pāhār* east of the Ita Pargaṇā. Besides such lines as “Pānīt kānde pānī-kāurī, sukhnāi kānde bheri” in Sylheti ballads, *kīrttan* in Sylhet leans more towards Asamīyā religious singing than Bengali, and socio-religious customs of Sylhet have a definite stamp of Asamīyā among all other things.

The Sylhet District Gazetteer writes: “The pouṣ or Uttarāyan Saṃkrānti, held about the middle of January, has no religious associations and corresponds to the Māgh Bihu of the Assam Valley; the villagers light bon-fires in the rice-fields at which they warm themselves after the morning bath, and devote the day to merry-making”. (ch. I, p. 101). *Śrīhatter Itivratā* further records the custom of eating rice boiled in soft bamboo tubes in the months of Pauṣ and Māgh which is a pure Asamīyā custom. Thus Sylhet was socially and culturally, as it was linguistically, a part and parcel of Asam for long.

Gopīcandrar Gān or *Maināmatīr Gīt*, collected by Grierson about 1878, show the remaining traits of Asamīyā in the old Western Kāmarūpa districts, now styled as North Bengal, after the usurpation by Bengali then for over two centuries. These districts which formed the western part of Kāmarūpa from time immemorial and which may claim

to have been the seat of government from the time of the illustrious Bhagadatta, came last under the sway of the Koc kings, and are known to have fallen into the hands of the Muhammadans terminating the rule of the last Koc king Prem Nārāyaṇ (1636-66). The districts since came to be ruled with the other districts of Bengal whence they are styled as North Bengal; and the people and their language have gradually been called Bengali in spite of their old Asamīyā or Kāmarūpi culture at the bottom. Any way, the ballads collected by Grierson in the Rungpur district from the mouths of local peasants show that the traces of old Asamīyā speech were still there even toward the close of the last century.

“Māṅikcandra Rājā chil dharmī bar rājā:

Maenāk biā karil tār nao buri bhārjyā.

Maenāk biā kāri Rājār napūril manar ās:

Tār par Dābpurar pañca kanyā biā kari puri gāl manar hābilās.

Āji āji kāli kāli bāra bachar hail; . . .

Dekhibāk napāri (Maenāk) byagal kari dil”.

This is how the ballad begins. Besides the Asamīyā accusative case-ending *ka*, the sign of incomplete verbs ending in *i*, past tense affix ending in *il*, the negative sign prefixed to the verbs, etc., the use of Asamīyā *tatsama* and indigenous words as *biā*, *buri*, *hābilās* are noteworthy. *Byagal* (Asm. *beleg*, separate) is interesting besides the Asamīyā idiom and diction “Āji āji kāli kāli bāra bachar hail”. More of it:

“Mahārājā rājya kari khāy pātar upar:

Maenāk ghar-bandī dile ferusār bandar . . .

Maenāmatī carkhā kāti bhāt khāy bandar bhitar”.

Besides Asamīyā grammar and the particular use of *pāt* (cp. *rājapāt*, throne), the phrases in Italics are quite idiomatic in Asamīyā, specially ones like “ghar-bandī dile”. The last phrase in the above is still more interesting. *Carkhā* is of course not the right word for Asamīyā; but “katanā kāti bhāt khāy” is a very old and significant idiom. “Carkhā kāti”, etc., has of course the same meaning, though not idiomatic. This is an idiom used in reference to women of respected families in Asam who have recourse to earning their living by weaving, and it is so apt in the case of the queen Maināmatī.

“Ke kay egulā kathā ke ār paitāy:

Puruṣer sange gele strik bāghe dhari khāy”.

Lines as these show superposing of Bengali on the original Asamīyā. The present district of Kāmarūp has the form “kāi” in its dialect for

the interrogative pronoun 'who'. It seems akin to new Bengali "ke". But "kay" is Asamīyā, against Bengali "bāle". So "ke kay" is actually "kai kay". The same Kāmarūpī dialect of Asamīyā uses *eigilā* (these) which is again akin to *egulā* in mod. Bengali. *Paitāi* is an instance of *epenthesis* so common to this dialect; the original word is *patiāy* (believes), a verb from *pratyay* (belief). While the first part of the second line in the above shows Bengali influence, "Strik bāghe dhari khāy" is pure Asamīyā in every word.

The Asamīyā *mantras* and aphorisms of Dāk are known to have spread far beyond the limits even of ancient Kāmarūpa, the aphorisms, for instance, being distributed all over Bengal and Orissā. In NLHAL (Book Two) it has been shown that in Asamīyā itself they have suffered interpolation enough to mislead and misguide any uncritical readers in regard to the original ideas. When such is the position in point of thoughts, it must be quite futile to find any trace of old Asamīyā linguistic development in them. But in point of literary research it was comparatively easier, as it was simply to make a survey of the general trend of thoughts from the average ideas of the aphorisms. That method is not applicable here to trace the development of the language. All that can be done is to study the nature and structure of the aphorisms, and to compare their formation with the language of the *Caryas*, for example, and then guess.

We opined that some of the aphorisms by their very ideas seem to be comparatively more primitive than others. What was spoken in connection with literature may be applied to language with some modifications, namely, by having an eye to archaism, if any, and to terseness of expressions. For instance, "Yathā rājā pāle: Tathā vasati bhāle". "Soṇā rūpā kibā kari: Bhāt nākhāle bhokat mari". "Jālukat gobar pānat māṭi: kalā puli rubā tini bār kāṭi". "Gāar balad kāṣar bhūi: Tāk neribā jānantā hui". "Garu kinibā nighun bagā: Dāke bole mai tār lagā". "Māghī saptamīt bariṣe dew: "Behā eri kar nāngal sew". "Ākāśt bhāse pānir gachā: Pṛthivī burāba jānibā sacā". "Śīt sariyah Mīt māh: Śrāvaṇat nākāṭe bet bāh". "Bhādar cāri. Āhinar cāri: Māh bābā yimān pāri". "Āośir pratipad pūrṇimār tri. Mākar gharak nājai jī". "Some śani pūbe bās: Duṭi gāleo eṭi nās". "Rājāk cini dānat: Ghorāk cini kāṇat. Kṣurak cini śānat: Tirik cini snānat". "Nṛpati hui prajāk hiṃse: Baidya hui mare āpuni biṣe. Daṇḍa bhed sam dān: Cāri upāye jimbā ān". "Jāpi lāthi tanā: Iyāk erile dinatē kaṇā." "Ṭik baladhā khāne māṭi: Māk bhālei jīyek jāti. Māṭi kinibā māj khāl: choāli ānibā mākhāl. Saru danti laanī māṭ: Gharat banti sandhyā belāt. Randhan karē vacan iṣṭa. Sei gṛhṇik bolā iṣṭā".

What has been said of the aphorisms may be applied to proverbs and nursery rhymes with slight reservations. "Āputar put: Kolāte mut". "Gharar buḍhā: pathārar muḍhā". "Yetekate nāṭche: Tetekate fāṭiche". "Abujanak bujuā: Dheruā ṭhāri sijoā." "Ṭhāi dibar guṇ: Tap-tapani śun". "Amātar māt: Ākālar bhāt". "Amānuhe mānuḥ ninde: Jonākīye sūruj ninde." "Abhyāsar nar: Karṇa-pathe kare śar". "Āti śrī: Hata-śrī". "Alap arjan bistar bhojan: Sei puruṣar daridra lakṣaṇ". "Āche dān: Nāi samidhān". "Ākālo nāi: Bharālo nāi". "Haṣṭiro pichale pāo: Sajjanare bure nāo." "Ārje mukutā: Khāy śokotā". "Ām kathāl dumāh: Māt-bol, nāi chamāh". "Āśā param dukh: Nirāśā param sukh". And so forth (*Vide* collection in Neog's *Rah-Rahi*, 1948). For nursery rhymes and ballads, etc. we may refer only to such lines as "Okāṇi sakhī mari gāl bage barat kare: Luit phenāy, māh manāy: gach nipātī, kapau kaṇā". "O ful, O ful, nufula kiya? Garue ye āg khāy, mai fulim kiya?" etc. (*Vide* collection, Neog's *Putali*, 1943).

THIRTEEN

THE DEVELOPMENTS OF ASAMĪYĀ GENDER, NUMBER AND CASE-AFFIXES

In Chapter Seven we have spoken of a step in transition from Sanskrit to Asamīyā through Prākṛit and Apabhraṃśa stages, particularly by changes of conjunct consonants in the process of dissolution, elision and simplification through reduction, vocalisation, transportation etc. mostly of nouns.

In Asamīyā there are really two genders, not three like Sanskrit, the neuter gender having no special form. The feminine of *tatsame* words are formed usually as in Sanskrit save a few words which have alternate feminine forms made as of *tadbhava* or of indigenous words. The so-called Asamīyā feminine affixes, *ī* and *nī*, are really Sanskrit feminine affixes *īp* and *ānī* respectively, slightly modified and employed in *deśaja* words e.g. *pehā* (uncle), *pehī* (aunt); *bāgh* (tiger), *bāghinī* (tigress). There are of course many words which are by themselves masculine or feminine eg. *po* (son), *jī* (daughter); *śar* (swamp deer), *bhelengi* (swamp she-deer). Such forms as *pai* (husband), *ghainī* (wife) are nothing but corrupt forms of *pai*, *ghainī* etc. The so-called Asamīyā feminine form *tī* or *watī* is nothing but the Sanskrit feminine affix *ī* added to the *batup*, as in *gunawatī* (an accomplished woman). As a matter of fact, the point of gender in Asamīyā is not strictly followed as in Sanskrit and many words like *kāuri* (crow), *cilani* (kite) *bagali* (crane), *chāgali* (goat) etc., are really used in both genders;

and it is only the overzeal of some so-called grammarians that is responsible for presenting them artificially as feminine forms of *koā*, *cilā*, *baḡ* and *chūḡ* respectively. They say *gāvini śiāl* (pregnant vixen) which shows that *śiāl* is used in both genders, and *śiāli* is its diminutive, not feminine.

There are a large number of what may be termed sub-words (*upaś-abdā*) which are variously used in Asamīyā, mostly equivalent to the definite article in English. The most common forms of them are *to* or *ti* in masculine and *khan* or *khani* in feminine, e.g. *tāmōl-to* (the betel nut) and *pāṇ-khan* (the betel leaf), where, curiously enough, we find a clear ascription of masculine or feminine gender to neuter names. The alternative forms *ti* and *khani* applied as above would simply mean *ādar* (endearment). *Kaṇ* or *kaṇi* and *pāt* or *dāl* affixed to *lārā* (child) for instance, would mean large difference on that point on the right and wrong sides respectively. There are about three dozen of such words with very fine shades of difference.

Common forms of indicating gender, mainly of animals, is by use of the words *maṭā* (male) and *māikī* (female), as in *maṭā gādha* (he-ass) and *māikī gādha* (she-ass). They are even extended to human beings as in *maṭā mānuh* (man) and *māiki mānuh* (woman); but they are not used in polite society. They sometimes even use *matā lārā* (boy) and *māiki chowālī* (girl) where the genders seem doubled. Such apparent irregularity was given rise to probably by the fact that *lāra* (cp. Hindi *larkā*, boy; *larki*, girl) might originally have been common gender as also *chowālī* (*chāwā*, a child, in the Goalpāra dialect, and *chali*, a child, in Kāmarūpi dialect) the latter of which is supported in "Nāpāile dhari māraṇṭa chawālī" (*Daśan Bhagavat*, Śaṅkardev) where it means 'boys', and not 'girls' as in modern Asamīyā.

Number in Asamīyā is really one, namely, the singular, not two as in Prākṛit or Pāli and not three as in Sanskrit. The Vedic language too had singular and dual number only the latter as alternate to the plural number; for the Vedic was itself derived from some Prākṛit form of speech as some responsible scholars opine. For instance, Vedic *Ubhā Yantarā* is equivalent to Sanskrit *Ubhau Yantarau* (both governors), according to the rule of Prākṛit grammars "dvivacane vahu vacanam" (Kātyāyan, 5/106; Bararuci 5/63; or "dvivacanasya vahu vacanam", (Hemcandra, 3/130). Again, the Prākṛit "Dohi vāhuhi veḍhanti dampaī hā parofaram" (the pair, or the husband and wife, are embracing each other with both hands (A.V.B., p. 125). In Asamīyā the singular number is made into plural by the analytic method of affixing certain sub-words, and not by inflections as in Sanskrit, *narāḥ* (one man), *narau* (two men), *narūḥ* (more than two men).

the dative 'lai' and locative *ta* with sufficient illustrations. The general affix of the nominative is of course *e*, for nouns ending in consonantal sounds, which is probably derived from *ena* (with *na* elided), the Sanskrit instrumental affix, originally with the nominative (*kartari*) sense. But *e* is changed to *ye* after nouns ending in *i*, *e*, *ṛ*, *ai*, and to *we* after nouns ending in *u*, *ū*, *o*, *au*; and *e* is changed to *i* after nouns ending in *a*, *ā*, *e*. The nominative case-ending is elided before intransitive verbs save before a few verbs like *hāh* (laugh), *kānd* (weep) etc., where it is not elided.

The accusative case-ending is *ka* which is elided when the object is inanimate or secondary as lower animals. Hoernle opines that Asamīyā *ka*, like Hindi *ko* and Bengali *ke*, is from Sans. *kakṣe* (by the side of) which is itself in locative (*Comparative Grammar of Gaudian Languages*, p. 224). Kellogg in his *Hindi Grammar* (p. 130) and Beames, author of *Comparative Grammar of the Modern Aryan Languages of India* support Hoernle, but the latter's earlier view in the above work (*Introduction*, p. 48) was that it came from Vedic or Sans. *kam*. *Ṛk Veda* has "Taugrāya *kam*" (1/182/5, to the son of Tugra, for the benefit thereof), "Amṛtāya *kam*" (9/106/8, to the love of immortality, for the sake thereof), "śubhe *kam*" (7/57/3, to the beauty, for being beautiful) etc. The Asamīyā accusative *ka*, like old Hindi *kāu*, mod. H. *ko*, Punjābi *khe*, Bengali *ke*, Odiyā *ku*, probably came from this *kam* which is also the accusative singular form of Sans. *kim*. Caldwell too holds that this accusative *ka* is not derived from the Dravidian dative case-ending *ku* (*Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages*, 3rd ed., pp. 280-81). The Boḍo and Gāro dialects have *kho* in the accusative which are probably derived either from Asamīyā *kā*, or Sans. *kau* or Hindi *ko* (A.V.B., pp. 171-75).

The general case-affix for the instrumental in Asamīyā is *ere*. For instance, "Āke-*ere* kare nāmaka sari", "Uḍukhale-*ere* bāndhe cāpi". (*Kirttan*, Śaṅkardev); "Ito prāṇ-*ere*, samān tomāk, māni āchō mane āmi"; "Sādhu-*ere* dewetirthe aneka antar". (*Gurucarit*, Daityāri). Of the two syllables *e* and *re* the latter is elided in compounds, as in *hāte-kaṭā* (hand-spun) and the former is elided after words ending in vowels, as in *caku (e)re* (with eyes). *Ere* cannot be a separate word, but *āvārā* is, since we cannot say "Rām-dvārā", we must say 'Rāmar dvārā' or "dvārāi". Also *re* is instrumental affix in Oriyā and locative in Mundāri; Nepāli *le* is like Asamīyā *re*. But we find no reason to opine that either Mundāri or Nepāli had any influence in the formation of the Asamīyā *ere*. The nominative affix *e* is already there in the *kartari* (nominative) sense, and the genitive *ra* with *e* as a sign of emphasis might somehow join it.

The other affix for the instrumental in Asamīyā is *di*, as in *nāwedi* (by boat), *bāṭedi* (by road) which seem to have a locative sense, signifying medium as they do. But it may originally have been derived from the incomplete verb *diā* (having given) as in "Gharar koṇāy *diā* camu camu gai" (Daityāri) where *koṇāy diā* might form *koṇedi* (by the corner). Mankar's line "Hātedi nājāno tāl ye mandirā, mukhedi nājāno gīt" is interesting. The earlier instrumental affix *hi*, derived from Vedic *viḥ*, as in "Vaidurjya ruwali śuddha rajathēhi chāiā" (Mādhaw Kandali), or "Puti thailo pratimāka bālūkāi dhāki" (Śaṅkardew), is now obsolete. *Ṛk Veda* has *vipreḥbhiḥ* for Sans. *vipraih* (*Ṛk*, 1/20/1). *Dvārā* cannot be a case-affix in any way.

The dative affix is *lai*, so curiously absent in the Vaiṣṇavite literature almost as a rule, is distinctly found in the Apabhraṃśa dialect of Buddhist songs at least five centuries earlier. Caryā 38 says "Kūlalai khar sonte ujāa" (goes up with quick current to the shore). Against this we find, "Cala Gokula lāi", "Garaba tāhe lāi" (Śaṅkardew), from Sans. *lagnaḥ* (contact) and Prāk. *lag-go* (Hem, 2/74), Apabhraṃśa *lagge* and *laggi* in the locative singular, whence come Hindi *lagi* and Asamīyā both *lagi* (*lai*) and *lāgi* (*lāi*). The word above *kulalai* < *kulak* *lagi* might be similarly derived from Prākṛit in the Apabhraṃśa stage.

The ablative *parā* in Asamīyā appears to be a separate word like the English word 'from', directly used from the *Ṛg* Vedic language where it is exactly used in the same sense. For instance, "parā hi vimanyavah patanti" (*Ṛk*, 1/25/16, go from more to more distance); "Parā yānti dhītayo" etc. (*Ṛk*. 1/25/16, go from a great distance), *paras*, *pari* etc. are also used in the sense of *parās* "dibaḥ *pari*" (*Ṛk*. 1/47/6, from the sky). The same word *parā* is also found in the *Āvesta* in the same sense: "Parā kawahmād nered" (away) Darmesteter, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. IV, p. 266). In Vaiṣṇavite literature we find it used exactly in the same way: "Bimānar parā paḍe dukkhe" (Śaṅkardew). But it is a separate word rather than the ablative affix.

Again, in old Asamīyā we find: "Bṇay sante nṛpatir śiharil gāa" (Mādhaw Kandali); "Rākhila Brajak bṛstita hante". (Śaṅkardew). Both *soṃta-o* or *soṃta-u*, and *hoṃtao* or *hoṃtau*, in Apabhraṃśa, and *sumto* and *hiṃto* in Prākṛit, derived from \sqrt{as} and $\sqrt{bhū}$ respectively are used in ablative, whence the Asamīyā *sante* and *hante* may have been derived. So it appears futile to try to trace *parā* from Boḍo ablative *frāi*, and also *hante* or *sante* from any other source except as shown above.

The Asamīyā genitive affix *ra* is also no less interesting. It is supposed to be derived from Prāk. genitive *kero* and Apabhraṃśa *kerau*,

etc. In "kassa (Sans. *kasya*) *kerakam*" or "Ajjā (Sans. *Ārjyāyā*) *kerao*", etc., as in *Mṛcchakatika* there seems to be double genitive as also "Tumhaham *keram* ḍhaṇu". In old Asamīyā (mixed with Maitili) we have: "Yākeri e guṇa nām" (Śaṅkardew); "Yākeri nāhi upām" (Mādhawdew). But we have also "Sarva-awtārar kāraṇ Nārāyan" (Śaṅkardew), "Nija bhakatara vaśya" (Mādhawdew) where simply *ra* is common and overwhelmingly general. So the above examples of *kero*, *keri*, etc., cannot be considered as genuine traces for the Asamīyā genitive. "Yāhār mukhat thāke Hari hena nām", "Yadibā āmāka snehe āilā gopīgaṇ", etc., are also by Śaṅkardew, where *āhār* and the accusative *ka* has been used for genitive. So also "Nandaku nandana" and "Jagannāthaki dāsa" by Mādhawdew where *ku* and *ki* are also used in genitive. Also "Āmāther" used by Mādhaw Kandali and others long after him is in genitive. These all and sundry do not prove that the genitive *ra* came through those forms. On the other hand, we have genitive *ra*, plain and simple, direct in Apabhraṃśa of the Buddhist songs; for instance, we have "*harinar khur*", "*harinir nilaa*" in *Carya* 6, just as it is used in present Asamīyā too.

In Mānbhūm and some other districts of modern Bengal *ker* is used in genitive as "*mithāiker dar*", "*bāpker pās*" (*Linguistic Survey of India*). In Oriyā *kera* becomes *kara* and in Hindi it becomes *ko*, etc., while in Asamīyā it is simply *ra*, and in standard Bengali it is *er*. But we find no earlier stage of its transition to be sure; and the various other forms used for genitive do not help us to trace the growth of *ra* upward. "Dekha hṛdaye hāmāru" (Śaṅkardew). We do not have *ra* from *ru*, but *rū* may be lengthened from *ra* to make the sound more mellifluous.

The Asamīyā locative *ta* is said to be derived from Sans. *amto* of which *mto* is the Mārāthā and *ta* is the Asamīyā locative affix that survives. Besides, the Sans. locative affix *e* survives in adverbs of place as in *ghare ghare* (in every house). The affix *e* is also used in adverbs of manner as in *bhāle-kuśalē* (in health and spirit). The Sans. case-ending *āy* is used as locative affix in idiomatic phrases as in the proverb:

"Lārāi lārāi kathā kay kathāy kathāy hāhe:

Buḍhāi buḍhāi kathā kay kathāy kathāy kāhe".

(Boys talk with boys, they laugh in each talk; old folk talk with old folk, they cough in each talk). In the above "lārāi" and "buḍhāi" have the nominative case-ending 'i', (but *i* is also otherwise used for emphasis being derived from Sans. *hi*); *āy* in *kathāy* is as in Sanskrit *kathāyām*, where only *-ām* is elided.

In declensions of personal pronouns we have —

	MAI (Asmād, I)		TAI (Yusmad, Thou)	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nom.	mai	āmi	tai	tahāte
Acc.	mok	āmāk	tok	tahātak
Ins.	more	āmāre	tore	tahātare
Dat.	molai	āmālai	tolai	tahātalai
Abl.	mor parā	āmār parā	tor parā	tahātar parā
Gen.	mor	āmār	tor	tahātar
Loc.	mot	āmāt	tot	tahātat

This is how the two personal pronouns I and Thou, stand in different cases and in the two numbers. *Tumi* in the second person is honorific; *āpuni* is more honorific, but it is really in third person (himself): *tekhet* is also used for it.

	TUMI (you, honorific)		ĀPUNI (himself, more honorific)	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nom.	tumi	tomāsav	āpuni	āponāsav
Acc.	tomāk	tomāsavak	āponāk	āponāsavak
Ins.	tomāre	tomāsavere	āponāre	āponāsavere
Dat.	tomālai	tomāsavalai	āponālai	āponāsavalai
Abl.	tomār parā	tomāsavar parā	āponār parā	āponāsavar parā
Gen.	tomār	tomāsavar	āponār	āponāsavar
Loc.	tomāt	tomāsavat	āponāt	āponāsavat

Probably in imitation of Hindi, *lok* is sometimes used as a plural suffix in lieu of the original Asamīyā plural suffix *sav*. Even the double plural form *āmālok* is sometimes wrongly used. The direct nom. sing. *mai*, or its earlier form *mañi*, like Hindi *māi*, is found in the earlier written literature of M.K. KK and Bhattadew. It is a direct form and may have been derived from Sans. *Asmad* inst. *mayā* or loc. sing. *mayi* through Prākṛit as in *kim māe kidam* (*Mālavikāgnimitra*, = Sans. *kim mayā kṛtam*). This view is held by Lessen and Kellogg; but Hoernelle opines that *mai* may be derived from the gen. sing. in Prākṛit as *mahu* > *maha* > *mai*. It might be gen. *kartari* (nominative). The oblique forms in other case-affixes with *mo-* in sing. may have been derived from Apabhraṃśa *mahu-*, Early Asm. *moho* = the plural forms *āmi* < *āhmi* and *āmā* < *āhmā* etc. may be from Sans. *asma-* through Prākṛit.

The direct nom. sing *tai*. (*tañi*) or *tumi*- (*tuhmi*) is probably from Sans. nom. sing. *tvam*, Lat. *tu*. *Tai* may be from sing. inst. *tvayā* or loc. *tvayi*. The oblique form *to-* may be from Apa. *tuhum*, Early Asm. *tomō-* as Kellogg thinks. The plural affixes with *tai* is *hāt* < *hanta* and with *tomā-* is rather *sav* than *lok* as in Hindi, after which the respective case-endings are joined. The Early Asm. gen. sing. *tuwā* appears to be

derived from Sans. *tava* > Prāk. *tua*, and *tayu* through *tujjhu*. The Early Asm. *tohār* or *tuhār* (yours) is supposed to be derived from Prāk. *tuha kerā* < Sans. *tava kṛtam* which gen. has of course a *kartari* (nominative) sense. The pl. forms *tuhnā-*, *tuhun* etc. present in the Kāmarūpī dialect of Asm. might be from Apa. *tuhum* noted above. Like *āp* in Hindi, the honorific second person, *āpuni* in Asm. is really in the third person (as is also *tekhēt*, he) from Sans. *ātman* > Prāk. *āppāno* > Apa. *appan*, *appanu* > Asm. *āpon*, vide Sans. *bhavān*.

Even the two first and second personal pronouns in old Asamīyā show a large variety of forms in literature all of which may not be considered as having been used in speech. Many of them were probably fanciful and artificial, and the Vaiṣṇavite writers in particular appear to have mostly indulged in these luxuries of speech. Sanskritisation of nouns was similarly the order of the day. Nasalisation of words seems to be another article of phonetic luxury. Use (or manufacture) of Vrajabuli or Maithili grammar was more so. Over and above these, the use of words of Islamic origin, like "farmān", "wāsil" etc. by Śaṅkar-dew himself is noteworthy. This tendency explains the prevalence in literature of such various forms in pronouns as *tomāsār*, *tāsambār*, *koṭher*, *tāhānka* etc.

FOURTEEN

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DERIVATIVE ASAMIYA SUFFIXES AND VERBS

LIKE the words in general, Asamīyā roots of verbs are mostly derived from Sanskrit through Prākṛt as may be suggested by the list below:—

Org. Root	Sans.	Prāk.	Asm.	Meaning
ud + √ghat	udghāṭayati	ug-ghārhai	√ ughāl	(uproot)
ud + √gr	udgrnāti	oggālai	√ ugār	(eructate)
ud + √sthā	uttiṣṭhati	uṭṭhai	√ uṭh	(arise)
√kr	karoti, karate	karai, kare	karai	(do)
√krī	krīnāti	kin	√ kin	(buy)
√khād	khādāti	khāi	√ khā	(eat)
√khel	khelati	khelai	√ khel	(play)
√gai	gāyati	gāi, gāai	√ gā	(sing)
√ghṛs	gharsati	ghasai	√ ghah	(rub)
√granth	granthati	gutthei	√ gōth	(knit)
√ghūrṇ	ghūrṇate	ghorai	√ ghūr	(turn)
√chad	chadati, chādāyati	chāyai	√ chā	(cover)

Org. Root	Sans.	Prāk.	Asm.	Meaning
√ chid	chinai, chīmtte	chindai	√ ching	(break)
√ trut	trutati	tuttai	√ tuṭ	(lessen)
√ drś	drśyate	dekkhai	√ dekḥ	(see)
√ dhṛ	dharati	dharai	√ dhar	(hold)
√ nr̥t, nart	nr̥tyati	naccai	√ nāc	(dance)
pra + √ kṣal	prakṣālayati	pakkhālai	√ pakhāl	(wash)
√ pat	patati	parai	√ par	(fall)
√ paṭh	paṭhati	padhai	√ paḍh	(read)
pra + √ sthā	prasthāpayati	paṭṭhāi	√ paṭhā	(send)
√ pā	pivati	piai	√ pi	(drink)
√ sphuṭ	sphuṭati	phurai	√ fut	(burst)
√ sphur	sphurati	phurai	√ fur	(walk)
√ brdh	bardhate	bāḍhai	√ bāḍh	(increase)
√ vid	vindati	vindai	√ bindh	(pierce)
√ budh	budhyate	bujjhae	√ buj	(understand)
√ vāl	vālati	volai	√ bul	(walk)
√ labh	labhate	lahai	√ la	(take)
√ śru	śṛnoti	śunai	√ śun	(hear)
√ śubh	śobhate	sohai	√ śuā	(adorn)
√ siv	sivyati	siwai	√ sī	(sew)
√ bhū	bhavati	hoi	√ ha	(be)
√ has	hasati	hasai	√ hāh	(laugh)
sam + √ arp	samarpati	samappu	√ sāp	(entrust)

In clear exclusion to the Sanskrit ones even the indigenous *kṛt* *pratyaya* or Primary Derivative suffixes are no few in number. These P.D.S. added to roots of verbs form the primary basis to which Secondary Derivative suffixes may be inserted. For specimens:

Verb-roots	P.D.S.	Result-forms	Meaning
√ śo (sleep)	-an	śowan	(sleeping)
√ khund (grind)	-anā	khundanā	(mortar)
√ jir (rest)	-ani	jirani	(resting)
√ jān (know)	-anī	jānanī	(notification)
√ khajuā (itch)	-atī	khajuwātī	(itching)
√ khīr (milk)	-aniā	khīratī	(milch)
√ de (give)	-arī	dewarī	(distributor)
√ khā (eat)	-ariā	khāwarīā, khāwaiā	(eater)
√ jīā (enliven)	-aniā	jīwanīā	(enlivened)
√ dekḥ (see)	-aniār	dekḥaniār	(worthy to be seen)
√ sāñc (preserve)	-atiā	sāñcatiā	(preserved)
√ gan (count)	-ak	ganak	(counter)
√ jval (dazzle)	-akā	jvalakā	(dazzled)
√ pañcā (contribute)	-akī	pañcakī, pācaki	(contribution)
āl + √ dhar (attend)	-ā	āldharā	(attendant)
√ śik (learn)	-aru	śikāru	(learner)
√ la (taker)	-ōtā	laōtā	(taker)
√ hāh (laugh)	-i	hāhi	(laughing)
√ kānd (weep)	-urā	kāndurā	(weeping)

Again in clear exclusion to the Sanskrit ones, the indigenous Taddhit Pratyaya or Secondary Derivative suffixes are large in number. These S.D.S. are joined to nouns primary basis of which may even have been formed by adding P.D.S. to roots of verbs. Just a few instances of S.D.S:—

Words	S.D.S.	Result forms	Meaning
rūp (beauty)	-ah	rūpah	(beautiful)
chal (deceit)	-āhi	chalāhi	(deceitful)
nāo (boat)	-arā	nāorā	(boat-shape)
bhāl (pleasing)	-ari	bhālarī	(pleasant)
āg (top)	-āli	āgali	(fore-part)
pāt (leaf)	-al	pātal	(leaf-like, light)
gāo (village)	-aliā	gāwaliā	(villager)
bhāw (presentation)	-ariā	bhāwariā	(stage-player)
kheti (cultivation)	-ak	khetiyak	(cultivator)
andha (blind)	-alā	andhalā	(blind-like)
jābar (rubbish)	-ā	jābarā	(with rubbish)
ban (grass)	-ani	banani	(lawn)
ṭengar (clever)	-ali	ṭengarāli	(cleverness)
maniṣ (man)	-āi	maniṣāi	(manliness)
jong (point)	-āl	jongāl	(pointed)
rang (joy)	-ial	rangiāl	(joyous)
bhitar (inside)	-uāl	bhitaruāl	(private)
pāh (luxury)	-oāl	pāhowāl	(luxuriant)
hāl (plough)	-oā	halowā	(ploughman)
māgan (begging)	-iār	maganiār	(beggar)
rai (war)	-uā	raṇuwā	(warrior)
bāh (bamboo)	-i	bāhi	(flute)
pānī (water)	-iā	paniā	(dilute)
māh (month)	-ili	māhili	(monthly)
nām (song)	-atī	nāmatī	(songster)
baś (subordination)	-atiā	baśatiā	(subordinate)
put (son)	-ek	putek	(his son)
bopā (father)	-er	bopāyer	(your father)
bhāi (brother)	-erā	bhāiyerā	(your brother)
āṭhu (knee)	-aniā	āthuwaniā	(knee-deep)
paḍhā (reading)	-ai	paḍhuwai	(reader)
kathak (speaker)	-kī	kathakī	(garrulous)
ghar (house)	-ciā	gharaciā	(domestic)
bāt (way)	-aruā	bātaruwā	(wayfarer)
lāj (shame)	-kuriā	lājkuriā	(shy)
jon (moon)	-āk	jonāk	(moon-light)
soṇ (gold)	-ali,-wali	soṇāli, soṇowāli	(golden)
tel (oil)	-etiā	teletīā	(oily)
theh (complaint)	-ulā	thehulā	(complaining)
kām (acts)	-ilā	kāmilā	(active)
bhebā (dull)	-elā	bhebelā	(idiotic)
jethā (elder)	-erā	jetheri	(wife's elder brother)

Words	S.D.S.	Result-forms	Meaning
bāchā (child)	-eri	bācherā	(piteous)
jopā (bush)	-urā	jopurā	(bush-like)
cubā (a mass)	-uri	cuburi	(neighbourhood)
rangā (red)	-cuā	rangacuwā	(reddish)
urā (flying)	-at	urāwat	(still flying)*
pratyaya (belief)	-ayan	patiyān	(confirmation)

Tali (Sans. sthali) is a separate word and therefore cannot be a suffix as it is supposed to be.

Just for an idea of Asamīyā conjugation in six different tenses of a verb, Asm. $\sqrt{\text{kar}}$ from Sans. $kṛ$, for instance, we may have the following table:

Tense	First person we	Second person thou/you	Third person He/she/it/they
Present	karō	kar	karā
Present	karichō	karicha	karichā
Imperfect			
Past	karilō	karili	karilā
Past Imperfect	karichilō	karichili	karichilā
Preterite	karilōheten	kariliheten	karilāheten
conditional			
Future	karim	karibi	karibā

Here we see at glance that (1) 1st per. pr. tense is directly equivalent to Sans. *karomi* (sing.), and the same, Future Tense, to *kariṣyāmi* (sing.), while (2) the 2nd and 3rd Per. Future Tense is equivalent to Sans. *kurba* and *kariṣyāba* in dual. The *li*, *la*, *le* in the past tense seem difficult to explain by themselves and the explanations provided till now are zigzag and far-fetched. But we feel that both *cha* and *la* with different vowels come in from *āchil* descending from *āsīt*, Sans. $\sqrt{\text{as}}$, past sing. *karichil* in various forms is really *kari āchil* (was doing) whence we find Sans. $\sqrt{\text{as}}$ coming in definitely, to change $kṛ$ to an auxiliary verb. That this form *āchil* from Sans. *āsīt* was very widely prevalent all over Asam and Bengal is proved by the specimens from L.S.I. already quoted in Chapter Ten.

The preterite conjunctive with *heten*, *hante* is in extensive use even in M.K. as “*karilāhā hante raṅ, bhaila hante maran*”. Also *hay* as an alternate preterite conditional is found in M.K. side by side with *hante* eg. “*Prāṅak tejilō hay tohor santāpe*”. (I would have given up life in grief for you). This *hay* has also the same $\sqrt{\text{bhū}}$ (to be). The indefinite conditional *hūbalā* (*hūba*, *pāi*, *haba*), from $\sqrt{\text{bhū}}$, probably abbreviated from *haba lāge* with the ending *ge* elided is found at least from Śāṅkardew onwards: “*Mai bolō huiba prāṅa-*

priya⁴ gaila mari" (S.D.) "Bole mane mok baribek pāy" (M.D.). So *hābalā*, *hāba pāy* etc., meaning, possibly or probably, has a similar sense with "hogā", also from $\sqrt{bhū}$, in Hindi.

The two sentences "Dekhilehe lekhim" (I shall count when (or if) I shall see), and "Mai sudhilat si nāmātile" (I having asked him he replied not), the former denoting the future and the latter the past, are in conditional or subjunctive mood. Now *le* (from *la* with *e* in conditional sense) in future tense seems curious; but it may not seem unusual when we consider that it has the future perfect tense in sense, for *dekhile*, with the sign of emphasis in *he* (from Sans. *hi*) means "when I shall have seen". The locative *ta* joined to *ila*, as in *sudhilat* above calls for notice; *ila* joined to *sodh* (ask) makes *sudhila* a sort of participle Adjective, and the loc. *ta* further joined to it makes it a conditional conjunctive. Participle Adjectives are also with the Sans. suffix *kta* added to a root, as in \sqrt{mr} (to die) + *kta* = *mṛtaḥ*, which becomes *mṛtaka*, a pleonastic *kā* being joined and the Asm. part. Adj. *marā* is thus originated.

The Asm. incomplete verb ending in *i* is derived from Ṛg. Vedic *tvi* as in *pitvi* (drinking), rather than from Sans. *tvā*, as in *pitvā* (E. A. *piyā*); and from the early Buddhist songs (*Caryas*) enough instances of this preference are found. Again, *ba* joined to this *i* in the infinitive is Ṛg. Vedic as in *karttu* + *e* = *kartabe* where the dative is preferred to the accusative while at least since the time of the Atharva Veda the preference became reversed. So in Asm. *kartabe* became *kariba-* and the indeclinable *lagi* (or *lāgi*) being joined to it for the said ground, it became *karibalai* germination of which too is found in the *Caryas*. Also, in the Vedic language, the dative affix is dropped before such verbs as *śak* (to be capable); similar is the case in Asm. where the dative affix *lai* is dropped before verbs with *pār* (to be capable) as in *kariba pārē* (can do), not "karibalai pārē".

The use of pleonastic *ka* is found in early Asm. added to verbs as in *gaileka* (had gone), *kariyoka* (please do), *dibeka* (do give). This form is curiously present in the dialects of Goālpāra and Kāmarūpa in the east and as far as the Mānbhūm district in the west (L.S.I.). This *svārthika* (pleonastic) *ka* is considered to have germinated as early as later Sanskrit age with such words as *mānikya* from *maṇi*, *yuvaka* from *yuvā* etc. (A.B.M.V., p. 173).

The verbs in Asm. are generally derived from the Sans. verbs in the present tense whether *parasmaipadī* or *ātmanepadī* which forms lost their differentiation at least since Pāli flourished. So we have

labhyate > labhati > labhai > labhe (gains); as also pivati > pivai > pive > piye, and gāyati > gāyai > gāy. As a matter of fact, Asm. has no *karma vācya* in reality where the object assumes the form of nominative as in Sanskrit or English. In the sentences "Nām gowā hāl" "Bhāt khowā nāi" etc. the form seems passive; but the objects remain as objects. As in other cases, there has been attempts of late to form *karma vācya* in Asm. after Sanskrit or English. "Rāmar dvārā Rāyanak baḥh karā hāl". (Rāvana was killed by Rāma): such sentences are foreign to Assamese and are definitely artificial. But sentences like "Duwār mel khāle" (The door became opened); "Perā jāp gāl" (The box became shut) etc. are idiomatic, and are like *bhāva vācya* in Sanskrit. *Pācāni* or *nijanta* (causative) verbs in Asm. are generally formed by inserting *ā* to the root; *pare* (Sans. *patati*, falls) becomes *pāre* (Sans. *pātayati*, to make fall, drop). This *ā* is supposed to be derived from the Sans. *aya* or *āva* affixes. But there are other causative affixes in Asm. as may be seen from the following illustrations:

Org. root	Asm. root.	caus. affix	caus. form	meaning
√kr	√kar	ā	karā	(to get done)
√khan	√khān	ā	khanā	(to get dug)
√khād	√khā	uwā	khuwā	(to feed)
√gai	√gā	owā	gowā	(to make sing)
√chad	√chā	owā	chowā	(to get covered)
√dā	√dā	owā	dowā	(to get reaped)
√paṭh	√paḥh	ā	paḥhā	(to make read)
√pā	√pi	ā	piyā	(to make drink)
√sphur	√fur	ā	furā	(to make walk)
√bṛdh	√bāḥh	ā	baḥhā	(to make grow)
√budh	√buj	ā	bujā	(to make understand)
√labh	√la	owā	lowā	(to cause to take)
√śru	√śun	ā	śunā	(to make hear)
√svap	√śo	uwā	śuwā	(to cause to sleep)
√sidh	√sij	ā	sijā	(to make boiled)
√bhū	√ha	owā	howā	(to cause to be)
√hṛ	√herā	uwā	heruwā	(to cause to miss)
√mr̥	√mar	ā	marā	(to cause to die)

There are still double causative forms as *karowā*, *khanowā* etc., when a third party is concerned. It may be observed that certain roots which have long initial vowels become shortened as *khān-khanā*. It is

true of participles also as in *pār-parā*. Besides these there are nominal roots (*nām dhātu*) derived from nouns:

<i>nouns</i>	<i>denominatives</i>	<i>meanings</i>
ānuli (finger)	ānuliā	to point with fingers
dali (clod of earth)	daliā	to throw with a clod of earth
māri (stick)	mariā	to beat with a stick
bol (colour)	bolā	to paint with colour
gor (heel)	guriā	to strike with heels, to kick
chāl (skin)	chelā	to unskin, to peel.
mukh (mouth)	mokh	to border
mer (circuit)	mevā	to encircle

In Early Asm. we come across such verbs as *khangile* (showed anger) tracing remnants of the old synthetic process, which presently gave way to such forms as "khang karile" by the analytic process, now current. The analytic process is really as old as the Prākṛit stage and probably influenced later Sanskrit in producing such verbs as *camatkār* (to cause surprise), *bhaṣmā-bhū* (to reduce to ashes) etc. In Asm. we have a rich store of such compound roots or group-verbs which are usually idiomatic exhibiting fine shades of thought, the same word often expressing various senses with different verbs by which they are governed.

<i>compound roots</i>	<i>meanings</i>	<i>compound roots</i>	<i>meanings</i>
kān-kar	to listen	gā-lar	to feel delivery pain
kān-de	to mind	gā-uṭh	to be elated
kān-pāt	to hear	gā-tol	to be up and doing
kān-pelā	to try to avoid	gā-rākh	to protect oneself
kān-salā	charge responsibility	ā dāng	to come round
gā-kar	to thrive	ā ghelā	to be easy going
gā-dhar	to put on flesh	gā-ṭeṅā	to be afflicted
ga-jurā	to be in leisure	man-kar	to pay attention
gā-bandh ha	to conceive a child	man-de	to be careful
gā-sār	to pass child-birth	man-mel	to desire
gā-mūr dho	to be clean after menses	man-tāpar	to restrain
gā-kharā	to suffer from diabetes	man-pār	to fix the mind
ghar-pāt	to marry	man-mār	to be morose
ghar-bhāñ	to excite family quarrel	peṭ-de	to reveal one's mind
caku-mud	to die	peṭ-la	to know diplomatically
caku-de	to be attracted	peṭe-bhāte	to live from hand to mouth
caku furā	to glance	khā	mouth
mukh-de	to commit opinion	pāñi-kāṭ	to charm water
mukh-mār	to gag, to retort	pāñi-lāg	to feel cold
mūr-khā	to ruin	pāñi-kar	to waste
mūr-pāt	to commence	hāt-de	to set hands
mūr-mār	to spoil chances	hāt-par	to be ebbing in business

These idiomatic compound roots may be differentiated from ordinary compound roots as *juar-par* (to suffer from fever), *talakā mūr* (to be silent for the present) etc. and from the emphatic compound roots as *śuvāi dhar* (to be highly beautified), *bai pariche* (overflowing, as fame etc.) where the main verb is incomplete (*asamāpikā*).

“Sadṛśam triṣu lingeṣu sarvāsu ca bhībhaktiṣu:
Vacaneṣu sarveṣu yanna byati tadavyam.”

Indeclinables in Sanskrit are defined as those which do not change in genders, cases, and numbers. They are divided into four classes in Asamiyā: (1) Prepositions, like *pine* or *phāle* (direction); *yen*, *heñ* (manner); *bine*, *bihane*, *abihane* (without); *bāje*, *bhitare*, *māje*, *dātiye-kāṣare* (*kakṣe*), *opare*, *tale* (medium). (2) Conjunctions like *āru*, *teo* (copulative); *pāche*, *atñaca* (adversative); *navu*, *nahāle*, *nāibā* (disjunctive); *heno*, *jānobā*, *jānocū* (conditional); *tenehale*, *tente* (concessive); *eteke*, *gatike*, *yihetuke* (causal); *yen*, *hen*, *yene* (attributive). (3) Interjections include vocatives like *O*, *hero*, *heri*; exclamatives *bhaiāi*, *dehī* etc. (4) Particles of affirmation as *ō*, *erā*; of negation as *jā-no*, *ōhō*; of question as *hō*, *hā*.

FIFTEEN

NUMERALS, NASALISATION, FOREIGN WORDS ETC.

THE numerals in general, and cardinals in particular, have been derived in Asamiyā from Sanskrit through Prākṛit by the various rules of simplification as earlier stated.

Figures	Sanskrit	Prākṛit	Asamiyā
1	ekah	ekko, eka	ek
2	dve, dvau	due, dui	dui
3	triṇi, trayah	tri, tiṇṇi	tini
4	catvārah	cattāri	cāri
5	pañca	paṃca	pāc
6	ṣaṭ, ṣaṣ	chas, cha	chay
7	sapta	satta	sāt
8	aṣṭa	aṭṭha, aṭha	āṭh
9	nava	nāa	na
10	daśa	das, dah	dah
11	ekādaśa	egārah	eghāra
12	dvādaśa	bārasa, bāraha	bāra
13	trayodaśa	terasa, teraha.	tera

<i>Figures</i>	<i>Sanskrit</i>	<i>Prākṛit</i>	<i>Asamiyā</i>
14	caturdaśa	cauddaha	caudha
15	pañcadaśa	pannaraha, pandharaha	pandhara
16	soḍaśa	solasa, solaha	ṣola
17	śaptadaśa	sattaraha, sattara	saṭara
18	astādaśa	athārasa	aṭhara
19	ūnabimśati	ekunabis	ūnais
20	bimśati	biśati, bis	biś
21	ekabimśati	ekavis	ekais
22	dvābimśati	bāvis, bāisā	bāis
23	trayobimśati	tevis	teis
24	caturbimśati	caubisai	caubis
25	pañcabimśati	pācisā	pācis
26	ṣaḍabimśati	chaivis	chābis
27	saptabimśati	sāttavisa	sātais
28	aṣṭabimśati	aṭṭhāis	āthāis
29	ūnatrimśat	ūntisā	uṅtris
30	trimśat	tisā	tris
31	ekatrimśat	ekkatisā	ektris
32	dvātrimśat	battisā	batris
33	trayatrimśat	tettisa	tetris
34	catustrimśat	cauttisā	cautris
35	pañcatrimśat	pantisam	pāytris
36	ṣatrimśat	chattisa	chaytris
37	saptatrimśat	sattatisam	sātatris
38	aṣṭatrimśat	aṭṭhatisā	āthatris
39	ūnacattvāriatṛṣat	ūncattalisā	ūncallis
40	cattvārimśat	cattālisā, cālisā	callis
41	ekacattvārimśat	ekacattālis	ekcallis
42	dvācattvārimśat	bāyālisam	bāyāllis
43	trayaścattvārimśat	teālisā	teālis
44	catuhcattvārimśat	cauyālisā	cauāllis
45	pañcacattvārimśat	pañcacattālis	pañcallis
46	ṣaṭcattvārimśat	chaccattālis	chayāllis
47	saptacattvārimśat	satacattālis	sātcallis
48	aṣṭacattvārimśat	athacallālis	āṭhcallis
49	ūnapañcāśat	ekunapañcās	ūnapañcās
50	pañcāśat	pañcāsā	pañcās
51	ekapañcāśat	ekkāwaṇṇam	ekāwan
52	dvāpañcāśat	vāvaṇṇam	bāwan
53	tripañcāśat	tevaṇṇā	tewan
54	catuḥpañcāśat	cauvaṇṇam	cauwan
55	pañcapañcāśat	pañcapaṇṇa	pācpan
56	ṣaṭpañcāśat	chappaṇṇā	chāpan
57	saptapañcāśat	sattāwaṇṇam	sātāwan
58	aṣṭapañcāśat	aṭṭhawaṇṇam	āthāwan
59	ūnaṣaṣṭhi	ekunaṣaṭṭhi	ūnaṣāṭhi
60	ṣaṣṭhi	saṭṭhi	ṣāṭhi
61	ekaṣaṣṭhi	eksaṭṭhi	ekṣaṣṭhi

Figures	Sanskrit	Prākṛit	Asamīyā
62	dvāṣaṣṭhi	dvāsaṭṭhi	bāṣaṣṭhi
63	triṣaṣṭhi	tesaṭṭhi	teṣaṣṭhi
64	catuḥṣaṣṭhi	causaṭṭhi	cauṣaṣṭhi
65	pañcaṣaṣṭhi	pañṇasaṭṭhi	pāyṣaṣṭhi
66	ṣaṣaṣṭhi	chaṣaṭṭhi	chayṣaṣṭhi
67	saptaṣaṣṭhi	sattasaṭṭhi	sāṭṣaṣṭhi
68	aṣṭaṣaṣṭhi	aṭṭasaṭṭhi	āṭṣaṣṭhi
69	ūṇasaṣṭhi	ūṇasaṭṭhi	ūṇasaṭṭar
70	saptaṭi	sattari	sattar
71	ekasaṣṭhi	ekasaṭṭhi	eksaṭṭar
72	dvāsaṣṭhi	vāsaṭṭhi	bāsaṭṭar
73	trisaṣṭhi	tesaṭṭhi	tesaṭṭar
74	catuḥsaṣṭhi	catusaṭṭhi	causaṭṭar
75	pañcasaṣṭhi	pañcasaṭṭhi	pāyṣaṭṭar
76	ṣaṭsaṣṭhi	chaṣaṭṭhi	chayṣaṭṭar
77	saptaṣaṣṭhi	sattasaṭṭhi	sāṭsaṭṭar
78	aṣṭasaṣṭhi	aṭṭasaṭṭhi	āṭsaṭṭar
79	ūṇāṣṭhi	unnā	ūṇāṣi
80	aṣṭhi	āṣi	āṣi
81	ekāṣṭhi	ekkāṣi	ekāṣi
82	dvāṣṭhi	beāṣi	bāyāṣi
83	tryaṣṭhi	teāṣi	tirāṣi
84	caturaṣṭhi	cauāṣi	caurāṣi
85	pañcāṣṭhi	pañṇāṣi	pācāṣi
86	ṣaḍāṣṭhi	cheāṣi	chayāṣi
87	saptāṣṭhi	sattāṣi	sātāṣi
88	aṣṭāṣṭhi	aṭṭhāṣi	āṭhāṣi
89	ūṇanavati	ūṇanavavai	ūṇanabai
90	navati	navuti	nabai
91	ekānavati	ekkānavavai	ekānabai
92	dvānavati	bānave	bānabai
93	trinavati	trinavavai	tirānavai
94	caturnavati	caunavavai	caunabai
95	pañcanavati	pañcanavavai	pācnabai
96	ṣaṇṇavati	chenavavai	chaynabai
97	saptaṇṇavati	sattānave	sātnabai
98	aṣṭanavati	aṭṭhanavavai	āṭhnabai
99	navanavati	naunavavae	nanābhai
100	śata	saam	śa

While cardinals do thus agree almost as a whole, the ordinals and fractionals, collective, reduplicatives, etc., agree only in a few cases—as in the following:

English	Sanskrit	Prākṛit	Asamīyā
fourth	caturthakaḥ	cauthā	cāthā
one-fourth	pādah	pāo	nowā
one-third	ṭṛtīyakaḥ	taiae	tihāi

English	Sanskrit	Prākṛit	Asamīyā
one-half	ardhaḥ	addha	ādhā
three-fourth	pādaṅgāḥ	pāṅgo	paṅge
one and one-fourth	sapādah	savāo	sawā
one and a half	dvi-ardhah	diadhā	deḍh
two and a half	ardha-tṛtīya	aḍḍhaaiā	āḍḍhāi
plus one-half	sārdhaka	sāḍḍhao	sāḍḍhe
couple	yugalakam	juarau	yor
double	dviguṇakam	duaṅgaṃ	duṅgā
two-fold	dvidha	dohā, duhā	doā, dohār
three-fold	tridhā	tihā, tehā	tehā
four-fold	gaṇḍakah	gaṇḍao	gaṇḍā, ārā

Indefinitives are formed in Asamīyā by adding *ek* to some numerals, as *diyek* (*dui-ek*), *cār-ek* (*cāri-ek*), *śatek* (*śata-ek*), etc. Some cardinals are shortened when joined to certain words, as *edinā* (*ek-dinīyā*) *dudinīyā* (*dui-dinīyā*), *tindinīyā* (*tini-dinīyā*), *sādinīyā* (*sāt dinīyā*), etc.

Sanskrit words used in Asamīyā have their *sandhis* (combination of letters) and *samāsas* (compounds of words) as in Sanskrit; but non-Sanskritic words have not their *sandhis* and *samāsas* in the same manner. For instance, when the secondary derivative suffix (*taddhit pratyaya*) *ani* is affixed to *hābi* the resultant form is *hābiyani*, and when affixed to *ulu* it becomes *uluwani*, combinations quite foreign to Sanskrit. So also, words cannot be compounded in Asamīyā at will; only such words as are already compounded are only used.

One special characteristic Asamīyā acquired in the Vaiṣṇavite period is nasalisation of words which were not originally so. Such words are *benkā* (Sans. *bakra*, curved), *sonā* (Sans. *srota*, current), *sañcā* (Sans. *satya*, true), etc. To these words were added, probably later, other words as *śētā* (Sans. *śveta*, white or pale), *ghōrā* (Sans. *ghotaka*, horse), *gāt* (Sans. *garta*, hole), and so forth. So also are the pronouns *tānka* or *tāhānka* for *tāk* (him), *savāhānka* for *savāka* (all, accusative), etc. This shows, as was remarked elsewhere, a linguistic luxury.

Use of words, Persian or Arabic, like *naḥar* and *farmān*, *wāsil*, etc., by Śaṅkardew himself has earlier been noted. But it is in the post-Vaiṣṇavite and the British period, after the seventeen Mughal invasions, that the flood-gate of foreign words, mainly Persian, was opened into Asam.—

Āin, *āinā*, *āngur*, *ātar*, *ātasbāji*, *āwāj*, *āb-hāwā*, *ādāb*, *āsal*, *banduk*, *bārud*, *bāhādur*, *bīmā*, *barfī*, *bāgicā*, *bulbul*, *bajjāt*, *carkhā*,

casmā, cābuk, cākar, cādā, chābi, durbīn, dārogā, daptar, dalil, dar-khāsta, dakhāl, dam, dāg, dālān, dānā, dokān, doāt, ejāhār, ektiār, firīngi, fariādi, fauj, fānus, greptār, golāp, garam, garaj, gomastā, hujūr; hisāb, hāwā, hajam, hājār, hāudā, hukā, hukum, hujug, halaf, hākim; Ihudi, Ingrāj, ijat, jakham, jin, jāhāj, ketāb, khetāb, kadam, kabar; kāgaj, kimkhāp, kāci, khātā, kamar, khorāk, kam, khabar, lāgām, mālik; māf, mohar, mokaddamā, majbut, malam, makhmal, michri, mistry, minā, muhuri, nājir, nālis, nābālak, nesā, nerāj, nagad, ojar, pachand, peyādā; pari, rakam, rāyat, sikār; sarkār, sitār, sālis, saram, sahid, sarbat, sisi; sāheb; top, tāluk, tarjamā, ukil, are just a few of the mainly Persian words in daily use in Asamiyā. Besides a lot of English words as school, bench, tool, office, doctor, time, hospital, and so forth, Portuguese and other words as alkatrão, alfinete, anāras, atū, armāria, balde, botão, bacia, bomba, camarā, camisa, carrane, chave, couve, fitā, falto, gāmela, gudão; igrejā, jñālā, leilāo, marcā, mascarā, mestre, pāo (ruti), pipā sabão, sūgu, tobacco, vārāndā, vergū; French words as coupon; Hollandais words as hartan, ruitan, schopen, troch, schroef are in general use.

APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE OF SINHALESE WITH ASSAMESE

STRIKING correspondence of Sinhalese with Assamese is observed in linguistic peculiarities which may be compared as we quote some characteristics of Old Sinhalese noted down by Tripitakācārya Beni Madhav Baruā. "To these may be added also the difficulty arising from the oldest known form of the Brāhmī alphabet in Ceylon and the oldest known form of the Sinhalese language. This language, as may be judged from the oldest known inscriptions of Ceylon, retains the r sound, dispenses with such long vowels as ā, ī and ū; has the first case singular ending in e instead of in o as in Pali, or aḥ as in Sanskrit, and uses all the three sibilants at random. The dialectical peculiarities of this language...* The change of the genitive singular suffix sa (= Pali ssa, Sk. sya) into ha, eg. in maharajaha, is quite peculiar to old Sinhalese, without its exact parallel in any of the known inscriptions of India... [The Assamese genitive singular suffix ra as in mahārājar may perhaps be considered its parallel found in post-thirteenth century copper plate inscriptions etc. D.N.]

"The old Sinhalese dialect is found wanting in the traces of influence of the Sanskrit phonetics other than the three sibilants, and it equally lacks the long vowels ā, ī, and ū of the Kalsi dialect. So far as its tendency to dispense with such long vowels, as ā, ī, ū, goes, it is the same as noticed in all the ancient inscriptions of India, whether of Aśoka

or the Kuṣāṇas, written in Kharoṣṭhī characters...its dialect bearing these four characteristics of old Sinhalese: (i) the shortening of long vowels, (ii) the de-aspiration of consonants, (iii) ...suffix *e* in 1st case singular, and (iv) the random use of the three sibilants. * See E.Z., Vol. I, p. 15 for comments on five characteristics." (*Ceylon Lectures*, pp. 44-47).

With our present knowledge we are unable to cite specific and sufficiently authoritative proofs of correspondence of Kasmirī with Assamese, but we are sure a comparative study of Kasmirī will bring to light many points of resemblance with Assamese as random use and pronunciation of sibilants, and also in vocabulary of the two speeches.

THE TRIANGULAR SHAPE OF ASAM:

The north-eastern boundary of ancient Asam appears to have met the 30° latitude north with 98° longitude east, and the north-western boundary met 28° latitude north with 86° longitude east, the former being said in reference to the inscription of Indrapāl and the latter to that of Bhāskar Varmā. The triangular shape of Asam with the base to the south-west, always remains intact, but it was much reduced in bulk about the fourteenth century when *Yoginī Tantra* describes its dimensions as well as the shape:

Tridaśa yojana vistṛṇaṃ dīrghena śata yojanam
Kāmarūpaṃ vijānihi trikōṇākāramuttamam.
Karatoyāṃ samāśritya yāvaddikarvāsinim:
Uttarasyāṃ Kuñjagiriḥ Karatoyāttu pascime.
Tīrthaśreṣṭha Dikṣu nadī pūrvasyāṃ Girikanyakā:
Dakṣiṇe Brahmaputrasya Lakṣyāḥ saṅgamādhiḥ Kāmarūpa.
Iti khyātāḥ sarvāśāstreṣu niścitaḥ.

FROM what we have since gathered in our latest studies on the subject, we are now of opinion that like the speculative theory of Māga-dhī concocted as the parent of Asamīyā, the notion that the Asamīyā script as developed through Deva-nāgarī or through Gupta and Kuṭil varieties is really not borne by facts. On the first point, we have the opinion of no less an authority than Hogarth George Bühler of Vienna whose *Indische Palaeographie*, 1896, is a standard work on the subject, which says: "In Eastern and Central India, the Nāgarī appears first on the copper plate of the Mahārājā Vināyaka Pāla of Mahodaya probably of A.D. 794". But we have epigraphic records of Asamīyā script developed at least two centuries earlier. The second point is refuted by the same fact, and if Gupta and Kuṭil scripts developed they did so only co-ordinately with Asamīyā, to say the least of it. •

At least a brief survey or rapid review of the growth of Indian script in general seems thus warranted here. A non-indigenous origin of Bhāratīya script is betrayed by the fact that we have not a Sanskrit word equivalent to the English word 'literature' (a letter) in spite of the vast literature. On the other hand, we have the word *lipi* (script) from 'lip' and such words as *Veda* (from *vid*, to know), *Śruti* (from *śru*, to hear), *Smṛti* (from *smṛ*, to remember) etc. all of which point to the fact that our ancestors considered "that the things from books are not so advantageous as things from the living and abiding voice." (Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Introduction, Sec. IV, pp. xxiv—xxv). So the theory of German Sanskritists, "that an early passage of phonographic symbols took place from a Phoenician centre eastward towards Mesopotamia and India, at about the same period as their passage westward towards Europe, namely, about 800 B.C."

The first phonographic alphabet found on ancient Phoenician monuments was an advancement on the ideographic and syllabic stage, but was not yet a perfect alphabetic system then having only twenty-two phonograms. The Greeks, who got it from the Phoenicians, presently developed it into a true alphabetic method of their own, and made it finally to flow from left to right in opposition to the semitic method as the Hebrew and Arabian. Similarly, the Romans, who received the Phoenician graphic signs from the Greeks, developed a more practical alphabet out of it.

Bhārat, that did not feel the necessity of writing, as hinted earlier, and no invention of its own could hence be born, still adopted it notwithstanding. But when and how? Could it be through contact with Greece (and Grecian influence is considered to have penetrated into this country prior to Alexander's invasion)? There are scholars who opine that the Phoenician phonetic signs were introduced here by the Bhāratīya traders themselves who carried on commerce with Aramaean semitic traders passing up the Persian Gulf. Bühler's *Indische Palaeographie* presents a table illustrating the most ancient of Phoenician letters "side by side with the kindred symbols" of Moabite inscriptions known to be as old as 850 B.C.; and in parallel columns, in a series of tables are shown the corresponding phonographic symbols from Aśokan inscriptions.

M. M-W. opines that the change of the Phoenician (hence of the semitic Hebrew, Aramaean and Arabian) direction in writing to one from left to right, may be owing to Greek influence in Bhārat, as Greek coins and imitations of Greek coins unearthed in North-western India testify the import of Greek alphabet into this country prior to Alexander's invasion. The Aśokan edicts, referred to above, were inscribed on rocks and pillars about the middle of the third century B.C. The alphabets of these edicts are of two kinds, one of which is now termed *Kharoṣṭhī* (or Ass's lip) and belongs to North-western Punjab and Eastern Afghanistan. Scholars like A. Cunningham maintain Indian origin of *Kharoṣṭhī*, but others seek to prove at least a Persian influence in the fourth century B.C.

The second type of old India script is called *Brāhma* (or *Brāhmī*), signifying that *Brahmā* himself had created it (a variation of it being termed *Bhaṭṭiprolu* by Bühler). Whatever the origin, *Brāhmī* appears decidedly to be the oldest and the most orthodox script of Bhārat, the one that was employed when Vedic hymns came to be written, probably by the sixth century B.C. It is found used in the Aśokan edicts of Central and Northern India, and also in North-western India side by side with *Kharoṣṭhī*. *Brāhmī* expressed the *Prākṛit* of the Buddhist kings in the edicts and flowed from left to right, about the third century B.C. M.M-W. suggests that *Brāhmī* must have taken sufficient years for flowing in this opposite direction, and it could not be later than sixth century B.C. This fact is proved by the direction of letters seen on the ancient Indian coin the discovery of which is due to A. Cunningham at Eran.

Thus it is that *Brāhma* letters of Bhārat have so many features in common with the ancient Phoenician and hence with Greek and Roman. In order to conceive the differences it may suffice to remember that as

many as seven centuries divide the Phoenician from the Brāhmī, and when Brāhmī, like Greek, changed the direction of writing "some of the symbols were turned round or their forms inverted, or, closed up or opened out in various ways." In order to secure a system of straight writing and to set the letters upright, a horizontal stroke was continued in Indian script to serve as a line for the letters to hang down from, an instance which is paralleled by a similar line found in English copybooks, and note-papers, but written above and not below as in Indian script. While an alphabet of only twenty-two letters filled the needs of Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans, even Prakrit of Aśokan edicts needed forty symbols; and Brāhmī for expressing in Sanskrit required not less than fifty or fifty-one—thirty-five simple consonants and sixteen vowels—following the "one sound one symbol" phonetic scientific principle. Even with thirty-three simple consonants and a large number of complex conjunct consonants, more than five hundred distinct types are used in Sanskrit now.

Now, Asamīyā, like Deva-nāgari and other co-ordinate scripts of modern India, shows a further development of ancient Brāhma symbols. An independent study of the Asamīyā script, even as we have it from about the fifth or sixth century in close continuity may reveal more close resemblance with Brāhma letters. The so-called Bengali script and Maithili alphabet are really one and the same with the old Kāmarūpa script which keeps its continuity intact in the form of modern Asamīyā from which Bengali and Maithili have separated and started independent careers so called.

Pre-historic or pre-thirteenth century epigraphic records that we are in possession of are the royal charters of (1) Bhāskar Varmā, (2) Harjar Varmā, (3) Vanamāl Varmā, (4) Vala Varmā, (5) Ratna Pāl, (6) Indra Pāl, and (7) Dharma Pāl. Inscriptions, belonging to these kings and so far discovered, vary up to as many as three, as in the case of the last of them, and are generally dated. The reign of Bhāskar Varmā is established and is supported from at least three different sources. The year of his ascension to the throne of ancient Kāmarūpa is 594 A.D., identical with the so-called Bengali Era. Earlier manuscripts of ancient Asam are sometimes dated *Nṛpa Śaka* or *Rāja Śaka*, proving how popular this era had once been.

The present Nidhanpur charter of Bhāskar Varmā, it must be remembered, was not the one that was first issued. It is specifically mentioned in this very inscription: *Etad-ṛṣayāntahpāti Mayūra-Sālmālā-grahāra kṣetraṃ Rājñā Śri Bhūti Varmenā kṛtaṃ yat tat-tāmrapaṭṭābhāvūt karadamiti Mahārājena jyeṣṭha-bhadrān vijñāpya punarasyā*

bhinava paṭṭakaraṇāya śāsanam dattvā . . i.e., 'this plot of land, Mayūra Śāmalāgrahārā, was donated by King Śrī Bhūti Varmā issuing a copper plate inscription which being lost (damaged), and the land becoming rent-payable, the Emperor (Bhāskar Varmā), having intimated this to the elders and the gentile and having issued orders to renew the grant'—and so forth.

It is interesting to note that a subsequent verse (26) clarifies how the original grant was lost and why this inscription should not be suspected as spurious:

*Śāsanādāhādarvāgaminavalikhitāni bhinnarūpāni:
Tebhyo'kṣarāṇi yasmāt tasmānnaītāni kūṭāni.*

i.e., 'Since the (first) charter being burnt and this one having been re-inscribed, the letters have (a little) changed their forms, they are not (to be suspected as) forged.'

Now, all these ancient charters, without any honourable exception, gives the genealogy of the Bhauma kings from Naraka down to themselves. The tentative and comparative genealogical tree of the Varman line (given towards the end of the following book *Pre-Historic and Historic Asam*) may be referred to in this connexion. Reigns of Gupta kings from Candra Gupta I down to Skanda Gupta give an average of nearly thirty years. Bhāskar Varmā ruled for about 56 years. Even if we take an average of thirty years' reign for this line of kings, Puṣya Varmā's time comes to the early part of the third century A.D. But from internal evidences brought forth (*NLHAL*, Antecedents, pp. 6-11), we now think that Puṣya Varmā was a senior contemporary of Candra Gupta I (320-30) as Samudra Varmā was of his name-sake Samudra Gupta (330-75). Any way, the reign of Mahābhūta or Bhūti Varmā, the donor of the first grant and the fourth ancestor of Bhāskar Varmā, comes at least to the middle of the fifth century. And the rule of Puṣya Varmā appears to be in the latter half of the third century A.D. and reign of Mahābhūta or Bhūti Varmā, the donor of the first grant and the fourth ancestor of Bhāskar Varmā, comes at least to the middle of the fifth century.

The letters used by Bhūti Varmā in the fifth century changed a little, as mentioned, towards modern forms, as we may find, in the sixth century about the reign of Bhāskar Varmā. Those letters might be more archaic about the dawn of the fourth century when Puṣya Varmā flourished. And those were the small hours when Brāhmī *lipi* developed into the then Kāmarūpī and Gupta scripts co-ordinately, on

parallel lines, and not one from the other of the two, as we may be sure. We may agree, samples of Gupta script, like those of Gupta sculpture or even of Gupta era, came to Kāmarūpa, owing to intimacy (vide *NLHAL*, Antecedents, pp. 6-7) existing between the two kings. Thus far and no farther. The script, like the culture of the two different kingdoms, must have run on parallel lines, and there is really nothing to show that it was not. Like the old orthodox, but erroneous, theory ascribing the parenthood of Kāmarūpa speech to Māgadhī, this similarly old and pet theory of the Kāmarūpa script being derived through Gupta and Kuṭila scripts is born of imagination, but not borne by facts.

An independent study of the Nidhanpur charter of Bhāskar Varman, besides those of his successors, may easily bring home to any one that it is a direct development of Brāhmī *lipi* starting afresh. An analytical study of these ancient charters may show that a decidedly increasing percentage of the letters was fast coming to the forms of modern Asamīyā, and so-called Bengali, for that matter, letters, till in the Kānāi Barasī rock-inscription of the dawn of the thirteenth century (fascimile of which is given facing the first page of *The Origin and Growth of the Asamīyā Language* in this volume), we find almost all the letters fully developed to their present forms.

A new scientific compilation of inscriptions of ancient kings of Āsam appear to be a desideratum for a better study of the growth of Asamīyā. K.S. by Mm. Padmanāth is a work for which one cannot be over-thankful; but it was a maiden attempt which had its own shortcomings. The learned editor himself appears to have become more and more conscious of his defects as he proceeded with the work. So he records here and there in his prefaces and appendices to the following effect:

(i) The usual procedure is to print the inscriptions as they are and point out any mistakes or irregularities in the footnotes. This method has not been followed and the inscriptions have been corrected *yathāmati* (according to the knowledge) of the editor. (ii) It cannot be affirmed that all 'corrections' relate to mistakes; but they have been done following the local practice. For instance, *sampatti* is corrected as *sampatti*, *śaurya* as *śauryya*, *paryālocan* as *paryyālocan*, *Chandogyā* as *Chāndogyā*, *Bāhbrca* as *Bāhbrca*, and so forth, though both the forms are correct. (iii) Letters, words and phrases, even *m* and *h* that are dropped have been inserted. (*Mukhabandha*, p. v.) (iv) According to Sanskrit grammars of Pāṇini and others, *m* at the end of a word cannot change to *ṃ* if not followed by a consonant. These inscriptions mostly used *ṃ* in such cases, as *bibhūṣitaṃ* in the end of the first half-verse of Bhāskar Varmā, and sanction of such alternate forms is given by rules as *mo'nusvarāh avasāne bā* (2/9/18, *Sārasvata* Sans. Gram.) Also *Mugdhabodh* supports it (*Ibid.*, fn. 2).

Such mutilations of the text (although the original aberrations of some of them are given at the footnote) vitiate and handicap a free study of it. But the learned editor really invited young scholars by his work to improve upon it, and unfortunately we see none of them yet.

Kāmrūp Śāsanāwalī was published as early as 1931 with fescimile of at least one folio each of about ten inscriptions discussed in the work, and the learned editor expressed his desire that some scholars would soon come forward and deal with the evolution of ancient Asamīyā (Kāmarūpi) script. Even one full generation has passed by and not a single scholar with a scientific acumen has come forward yet to start the work. The Tezpur inscription of King Vanamāl of Kāmarūpa was first published in *JASB* (Vol. IX, p. 766), and it was the small hours in the dawn of the science of epigraphy in India, and no photography being then in use pictures of the Seal with the Elephant, the first half of the first verse of the inscription, script in the lower half of the Seal, and samples of the letters used were all printed in one and the same block.

The land granted by the Charter was *Trisrottyāyāh paścimataḥ* (to the west of the modern Tistā) in the old Rangpur district, for the Karatoyā ever remained the western boundary of ancient Asam proper. The time of this inscription, and of the reign of Vanamāl for that matter, is known, as the Hāyūngthal inscription of King Harjar Varmā, father of Vanamāl, is clearly dated 510 Gupta era (equiv. to 829 A.D.). At least 27 out of 47 letters shown in the block appear to have already been assuming modern Assamese shapes by this time, and they are *a, ā, u, ū, o, ṃ, ḥ, kā, kha, ga, gha, ṇa, cha, ja, ḍha, ṇa, tha, da, na, ba, ma, ya, ra, la, śa, ṣa, sa* in particular.

The first folio (11" × 6") of Bhāskar Varmā's Nidhanpur Charter was made into a block (scale 0.6) and published in *Epigraphia Indica* (Vol. XII). To any casual reader of old Asm. mss. the folio presents the appearance of a leaf of a *puthi*, and at least the following words read without much difficulty.

(L. 1) ... *praṇamyā devaṃ śāśīsekḥara priyaṃ.....bhaṣmakanaṇair*
 ... (L. 2) ... *karomi vācāmuḥvalām svasti....sampatyupātta*
 (L. 3) *skandhā vārāt Karnasuvarṇṇa vāsakāt bhogo*
kr̥ta ... Kāmarūpam (L. 4) nija bhūti vibhuṣitam jayati.
 (L. 6) ... *kapaṭa kolarūpasya ... vṛndārako Naraka. (L. 7) tasmādr̥ṣṭa*
Narakānnarakāt Bhagadattaḥ vijaya (L. 8) yudhi yah
samāhbāyata. Tasyātmaja Vajragati Vajra ... (L. 9) ... lagati ...
ṣayad ... saṃkḥya ... vaṃśeṣu tasya nṛpatiṣu ... saha ... (L. 10)
sratrayam ... Puṣya Varmā ... nyāya ... (L. 11) ... hita prakāśa
 ... *samudra Samudra Varmā ... (L. 12) ... Vala Varmā Vala Varmā*
tasya ... (L. 13) ... tasyāpi ... nṛpatiḥ Kalyāṇa Varmā ... tanaya
 ... (L. 14) ... *Gandharvavati tasmād Gaṇapatimiba ... (L. 15)*
Gaṇapati maganīta gaṇa ... kali ...

This script of the royal Charter of Bhāskar Varmā is at least two centuries earlier than that of Vanamāl or of his father Harjar Varmā. And the charter of Bhāskar is simply *karomi bhūya phuṭavāca mwj-valām* (making the words distinct and legible once more), the original grant of Bhūti or Mahābhūta Varmā, the great-grand-father of Bhāskar Varmā, having been burnt. So the history of this script evidently goes back to the latter part of the fifth century A.D. or the early days of its first departure from the Brāhmī or Early Indian Script. It may be re-iterated, as about language so about script, that in spite of the best specimen of Sanskrit poetry exhibited in the inscription, *m* and *h* (making up the main outer appearance of the Sanskrit language) have already been dropping down almost as a rule, the tendency towards modern Indian languages being proved.

The inscription of King Harjar Varmā is not quite distinct and the editor does not vouchsafe his reading of the text as all correct. So we come to the inscription of King Vala Varmā, son of Jayamāl (alias Vira-vāhu), grandson of Vanamāl and great-grand-son of Harjar Varmā. Vala Varmā's reign may thus be assigned to the tenth century and so his charter, each folio of which measures 12" × 7", the block (scale 0.6) made out of its first folio having been printed in 1897 in *JASB*. The letters of the inscription are also quite clear so-much-so that such parts of it read easily like letters of *puthis* or old *Asm. mss.* —

(L. 1) ... *bhava timira ... jagataḥ ...* (L. 2) ... *salilaṃ Lau-*
hitya vāridhera malam Kailāsa ... mṛga madavātama ... (L. 3) ... *pra-*
layapayodhau magnā ... Vasumatimupendrasya. Naraka iti sunurāsīd
 ... (L. 4) ... *trailokyā vijaya tuṅga yenāpahrtam Mahendrasya ...*
kuṇḍalayugalam kapola ... (L. 5) ... *tāmbūlavallī ... kṛṣṇāguru*
skandha nivesināilam. Sa ... (L. 6) *Kāmarūpe jita Kāmarūpo Prāg-*
jyotiṣākhyam ... (L. 7) *ka ... nāla nṛtyan mayūropa vane sa tasmin*
vasanāmāsādya Murāri ... (L. 8) *raṇaiso dibamāru ... Bhūpāla*
Maulimanicumbita pādapīthastasyātmajobhudbha ... (L. 9) ... *gadatta*
nāmā. Rājā prajārañjana labdha varṇṇo varṇṇāśramānām gurureka
vīrah. Upagatavati suralokamtasmi ... (L. 10) ... *tasyānuje bhavad*
bhumeḥ patiramala bhakti ... yaṃ prāhur Vajradatta iti kavayaḥ ...
vanava prā ... (L. 11) *kṛta sāgara ... surājsau Sālastambha bhavannṛ-*
patiḥ Pālaka Vijaya prabhṛtiṣu sma ... (L. 12) ... *ṣu tasya vaṃśeṣu.*
Abhavad bhavi nṛpacandro Harjaronāma. Ahamahamikayā vivandī ...

Then we have the inscriptions of the Pāla kings of Kāmarūpa, the first of which is the first charter of King Ratnapāl whose reign is fixed about the eleventh century, the grant having been made *pañcavimśābda rājyake* (in the twenty-fifth year of it). The size of this charter is similar to that of Vala Varmā and the first folio of it was made into a block (size 0.7) and published in *JASB*, 1898. Not only the letters,

but also the *campu* (poetry mixed with prose) of the inscription is acclaimed as of the highest order and as not comparing unfavourably with that of the poet Vāṇa Bhatta who is said to have no second in Sanskrit literature in this regard. The second charter of Ratnapāl was issued *rājye ṣaḍviṃśadbdi* (in the twenty-sixth year of his reign) and was published in *JASB*, 1898.

Next come the two grants of King Indrapāl, grandson of King Ratnapāl and son of Purandarpāl who died while his father was still on the throne. The first of these grants were made in *rāje aṣṭama same* (in the eighth year of his reign) and the second *rājyasya ekāviṃśati batsare* (in the twenty-first year of his reign). The first folio of the first charter was made into block (scale 0.68) and published in *JASB* in 1897. The first folio of the second charter was also made into a block (scale 0.7). Then come the three grants of King Dharma Pāl, the great-grandson of Indra Pāl whose reign is fixed in the twelfth century, probably towards its end. Internal evidences show that Dharma Pāl reigned long, and the Śubhaṅkar Pāṭak charter was issued *rājye trivarṣe* (in the third year of his reign). Although it is not mentioned when the other two grants were made, they are considered to be later on various grounds, the chief being palaeographic.

Dharma Pāl is considered to have reigned long enough to witness development of the old Asamīyā script as has been on record in the inscriptions. The letter *bha* is specially noted. In all the copper-plates issued before Dharma Pāl and even in his own Śubhaṅkar grant the descending curve of *bha* had always been to the right; and it is only in his last or Puṣpabhadra grant, so called, that this curve is definitely to the left as it is in its modern form. So also are the letters *ha*, *pa*, *da*, etc. The first part of the last grant was composed by the king himself who must have acquired poetic talents of no mean order in the latter part of his life whence the royal composer and poet Prasthānakalasa styles the king as *Kavi-cakravāla-cūḍāmaṇiḥ*. The seventh verse, composed by the king himself, runs as:

*He bhāvino nṛpatayaḥ praṇayena yācñna
Sṛi Dharmana Pāla nṛpateḥ śṛṇuteti yuyam:
Vidyucchatācapala rājyamṛṣābhimāna-
stājyaḥ kadācidapi nityasukho na dharmmaḥ.*

(‘O future monarchs, do listen to this affectionate appeal of King Dharma Pāla: this vanity of royalty which is as fickle as a flash of lightning is to be abandoned, but never so in regard to *Dharma* yielding everlasting happiness’). Such spiritual injunctions on the part of the king-poet must have come to him late indeed of his reign and life.

With the reign of the Pāla kings and their inscriptions in the eleventh and twelfth centuries we almost come to the modern stage of the Kāmarūpa script which is proved by the fascimile of the rock inscription dated 1127 Śaka, whence we refrain from further remarks, which should necessarily be supported by more and more fascimile reproductions. Let us hope some younger and more enthusiastic spirit with proper scientific acumen will soon appear to dwell upon the subject in all details.

An earlier change in the development of Kāmarūpī script in between the reigns of Mahābhūta (Bhūti) Varmā and Bhāskar Varmā is definitely suggested by the last verse of the latter's charter which runs as:

*Śāsanadāhāttarabāgamīnabalikhītāni bhinnarūpāṇi:
Tebhyoakṣarāṇi yasmāttasmānnaitāni kūṭāni.*

'The older charter being burnt and this being re-inscribed the letters have assumed different forms whence they must not be suspected as forged'.

The learned editor of K. S. makes occasional observations in the footnotes that deserve attention, particularly in regard to the copper-plates of King Dharma Pāl. For instance, he observes: (i) *ṃ* almost as a rule assumes the modern form (p. 151, fn. 1). Again, (ii) Letters *ha* and *bha* have become similar (p. 164, fn. 1).

L.S.I. records 179 Indian languages with 544 dialects, inclusive of 16 major literary languages written in a dozen different scripts. Not only in India, but upon the face of all the earth, we do not desire that the Tower of Babel should still stand and scatter us abroad. The whole earth was of one language and the people was one. So it shall be, and there shall be no emulation of the generations of the sons of Shem, Ham and Japheth. Tracing the origin and finding the distinctive features of the Asamīyā script may also help to immediately use the common script again at least in Asam, Bengal and Mithilā, with large advantage. As a matter of fact, they are still using the same script and slight difference developed in regard to a few letters. For instance, the Asamīya *ra* which was used before by all the three, may be used once more as such. Modern Bengali is definitely unhappy by the omission of the Asamīya *wa*, and it may not fight shy of using it now. This being done, Bengali is again one with Asamīyā. The few letters in which these two differ from Maithili may be discussed and whichever forms about them seem more suitable may be used.

George Bühler, the father of the science of Indian Paleography, is responsible for the discovery of the earliest Indian inscription on the Piprawa vase, and for proving that the forms of the Brāhmī script used in incising this record are older than those of the Asokan inscriptions. The archaic forms of the Brāhmī alphabet discovered on the Persian *sigloi*, wearing out of ordinary use in the Asokan period but used in the Piprawa inscription, proves its antiquity as earlier than the inscriptions of Asoka. It is also surmised that this Brāhmī script does not really belong to the eastern variety of Mauryan alphabet of this period, which bifurcated into Northern and Southern types, the Northern script further sub-dividing itself into North-Eastern, North-Central and North-Western. Inscriptions of the railing pillars and cross-bars of the Bhārhut Stupa of 150 B.C. and also of the great temple of Bodh Gayā show exclusive North-Western character of the alphabet.

Bühler observes: "The next step in the development of Brāhmī of Northern India is illustrated by the inscriptions from the time of the Kuśāna kings Kaniska, Haviska and Vasuka-Vasudeva, the first of whom made an end of the rule of the older Sakas in the Eastern and Southern Panjab". The dates in the inscriptions of these kings are generally taken as Śaka dates founded by Kaniska in 78 A.D., and so the inscriptions of these kings belong to the first and second century A.D. and were more abundantly found in North-Western India. The Eastern variety of the North-Indian alphabet of the Kusana period is sub-divided into (1) the earlier variety, as found incised on the edge of a slab of stone lying under the Bodhi-tree at Bodh Gaya, and (2) the later variety, no inscription of which is found in N.E. India.

The so-called Gupta alphabet of the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. are sub-divided into (1) the last Gupta or Śārada, (2) the West Gupta or Śrī Harṣa, and (3) the Kuṭila alphabet. As specimen of these alphabets the Bodh-Gaya image inscription dated 64 of the Gupta era, equivalent to 388-84 A.D. is as important as the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samadragupta dated about 360-70 A.D. Hoernelle opines: "In India proper, the North-Eastern alphabet gradually came to be entirely displaced by the North-Western alphabet in comparatively very early times. This displacement must have been in progress during the earlier part of the sixth century A.D. and must have been completed about 580 A.D., for in 588 A.D., we already find the inscriptions

of Bodh Gaya . . . which shows an exclusive North-Western character. There is not a single inscription known . . . about and after 600 A.D. which show the distinctive marks of the old N.E. alphabet". The Allahabad inscription of Samudra Gupta "shows the fully developed form of the Eastern variety . . . The next inscription in the chronological order, in which the Eastern alphabet has been used is the Udaygiri cave inscription of Chandra Gupta II" (O.B.S., p. 28).

A.D. 550-1100 may be identified with the period of development of the Eastern alphabet, and the Bodh-Gaya inscription of Mahanaman has now been proved as containing the specimens of the North-Eastern alphabet of the sixth and seventh centuries following the discoveries of several dated records. Also, the final establishment of the chronology of the Gurjra Pratihara dynasty had enabled scholars to find the right date of the introduction of the Nagari script into its proper area. Bühler observes: "In Northern and Central India, the Nagari appears first on the copper-plate of the Maharaja Vinayaka Pala of Mahodaya probably of A.D. 794". The so-called Bengali script is traced from the reign of Dharma Pal of Bengal in the eighth century A.D. and according to R. D. Banerji "Nagari has had very little influence on the development of the Bengali alphabet", (O.B.S., Ch. III), and enumerates—"the principal characteristics of the alphabet which remained current in North-Eastern India from 550-650 A.D." with the evolution of the letter 'ra' in particular (p. 41) . . . (26) In *ra* we find for the first time pointed wedge or arrowhead at the lower extremity which is found earlier in inscription of the western variety e.g. the Lakkhamandala Prasasti and the Bodh-Gaya inscription of Mahanaman. It is still more developed in the Apsad inscription where it resembles a *da* of short stature". p. 51. "The Bodh-Gaya and Khalimpur inscriptions of the 26th and 32nd year of the reign of Dharma Pal, most probably, were incised in the 9th and last decade of the eighth century A.D. In the Bodh-Gaya inscription of Dharma Pal we find . . . (23) In *ra* the arrow-head on the wedge becomes distinct".

P. 107. "The final development of the alphabet. Ch. IV. . . . 23 *ra*: (a) In the Manda inscription the archaic arrow-head form of *ra* is used. (b) The modern triangular form is used in Kamauli grant. (c) The same form is used in the Torpandighi grant. (d) This is also the case in the Dacca image inscription. (e) The form used in the Bodh-Gaya inscription is similar but slightly cursive. (f) The Western Bodh-Gaya inscription is similar but slightly cursive. (g) The modern variety form is used in the Gedudhara temple of Gaya. (g) The modern form minus dot is to be found in the Cambridge manuscript. In the later periods we find that a slanting cross bar in the interior of *va* denotes *ra* as in modern Assamese:—(1) Manuscript of Candidasas

Kṛṣṇa. Kirttara, fol. 179, . . . (2) Niranta in 1.4 of the Kamakhya minor temple inscription of Śaka 1666-1744 A.D." (O.B.S.).

A History of Maithili Literature (Vol. I, block-print, facing pp. 68-69) fully proves that not only modern Bengali but also early Mithila or Tirabhukti had the same alphabet with old Kāmarūpa (modern Asam) inclusive of the letter *ra* as it is used even in present Asamiyā. We are sure this *ra*, which almost by itself differentiates the so-called Bengali script from Asamiya, did not emerge all of a sudden in the *Kṛṣṇa Kirttan* about the fifteenth century, and it was there in the wider Kāmarūpa at least of the reign of Bhāskar Varmā.

LOSS OF AUTHORITY IN AN AUTHORITATIVE WORK:

While this work is still in the press and the proofsheets of the last part of this work are being corrected, E. A. Gait's *History of Assam*, "revised and enlarged," 1963, by newer hands, has been placed in the market. It is a fact that any handling of such "a classic of its kind" can easily tantamount to "an impertinence," and a patch-work can be no "re-orientation". We are constrained to note that this very authoritative work has thus been divested of its authority by thrusting foreign matter into the text itself so that the work can no longer be safely referred to which will ever have to be regretted.

PRE-HISTORIC AND HISTORIC ASAM

DIMBESWAR NEOG

Author of *Introduction to Asam—the Country, the People, the Speech* (1947);
New Light on History of Asamīyā Literature with an Account of its Antecedents,
etc., etc.

1964

XUWANĪ PRAKĀŚ (BEAUTY PUBLICATIONS)

TIŞPUR, ASAM, BHĀRAT

IN MEMORIAM

OF

MĀTRĀ CANDRAPRABHĀ DEVĪ

(*Jananī Jangmabhūmiśca Swarīādapi Gariyasi*)

First practical devotion to whom may be responsible
for later growth of devotion to my mother-country;
the two having probably coalesced,
she being now no more:

An unworthy son as I surely am to the latter:
Hope still lingers that I may yet be pardoned;
As the former not only forgave but even compensated
the unworthiness by more overflowing affection.

Ājalitarā, Guāhātī
September, 1963

BĀPU
Dimbeswar Neog

CONTENTS

I. FROM THE REIGN OF NARAKA UNTIL VARMAN RULE	.. 109-115
II. FROM VARMAN RULE TILL THE REIGN OF PALA KINGS	.. 116-124
III. CAPITAL CITIES SINCE THE THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C.	.. 124-132
IV. AFTER PALA KINGS AND BEFORE THE AHOM INTRUSION	.. 133-141
V. BARA BHUYA, CUTIYA AND KACHARI RULERS OF ASAM	.. 141-149
VI. HISTORIC EMERGENCE AND DISAPPEARANCE OF THE KOCES	.. 149-161
VII. THE AHOMS IN THE ZENITH OF THEIR POWER IN ASAM	.. 161-176
VIII. FAR-REACHING EFFECTS OF MAYAMARA PERSECUTIONS	.. 176-182
IX. FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE BRITISH IN THE PICTURE	.. 182-186
X. TENTATIVE CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF ANCIENT RULERS	.. 187-191

I. FROM THE REIGN OF NARAKA UNTIL THE VARMAN RULE

ASAM IN THE RAMAYANA. ASSAM, rather ASAM, is the north-eastern-most State of India. But neither the present territorial distribution nor the name goes much beyond two centuries. Undoubtedly this was the country renowned as Prāgjyotiṣa in the days of the Epics and as Kāmārūpa in the Purānic times. Both the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata have constant and distinct references to this country. The Rāmāyaṇa (Kiṣkindhyā Kāṇḍa, ch. XLII) refers to this place as being located in the Varuṇālaya in connexion with the search for Sītā:

*Yojanāni catuṣṣaṣṭhir Varūho nāma parvataḥ:
 *Svarṇaśrīṅgaḥ sumahān agādhe Varuṇālaye. 30.
 Tatra Prāgjyotiṣaṃ nāma jātārūpamayam puram:
 Tasmin vasati duṣṭātmā Narako nāma Dānavaḥ. 31.
 Tatra sānuṣu ramyeṣu viśālāsu guhāsu ca:
 Rāvāṇaḥ saha Vaidehyā mārjītavya stataśaḥ. 32.*

ESTABLISHING OF PRAGJYOTISA. The Rāmāyaṇa (Bengal Edition, Ādi Kāṇḍa, Ch. XXXVI) mentions that the city of Prāgjyotiṣa was established by Amūrtarāja near Dharmāranya:

*Tathāmūrtarajā dhīraścakre Prāgjyotiṣaṃ puram:
 Dharmāranya samīpasya vasuścakre girivrajam.*

The Bombay Edition (Rāmāyaṇa, Ādi Kāṇḍa, Ch. XXXII, 7) refers to this founder as Amūrtarāja:

*Amūrtarajaso nāma Dharmāranyaṃ mahāmatih:
 Cakre puravaraṃ rājā Vasurnāma girivrajam.*

The king of Prāgjyotiṣa is said to have been invited to and held in high honour in the *jajnas* made by Raghu, the solar king and the great-grandfather of Rāmacandra of Oudh ("Saumār Bhramaṇ" in *Jonākī*).

IN THE MAHABHARATA. The Mahābhārata has even a more regular and constant references to Prāgjyotiṣa especially in connexion with its king Bhagadatta, who succeeded his father, the great Naraka (in Ādi, Sabhā, Udyoga, Bhīṣma and Droṇa Parva in particular). While Naraka fought with Indra, Bhagadatta calls himself a friend of Indra in addressing his son Arjuna with paternal affection (Sabhā Parva, XXVI, 12-13):

*Ahaṃ sakhā Mahendrasya śakrādanavaro raṇe:
 Na saksyāmi ca te tāta sthātumpramukhato yudhi.
 Twamīpsitam Pāṇḍaveya bruhi kiṃ karavāni te:
 Yad bakṣasi Mahāvāho tat kariṣyāmi putraka.*

In the Bengali version of the *Mahābhārata* by Kāśirāma, Duryodhana, is said to have had married Bhagadatta's daughter Bhānumatī. But in the original text (Sabhā Parva, Ch. 111, 4-14) Durjyodhana first learns the name of Bhagadatta from his father Dhṛtarāṣṭra:

*Prāgjyotiṣādhipaḥ sūro mlechhānāmādhipo balī:
Yavanaiḥ sahito rāja Bhagadatta mahārathah.*

However, Bhagadatta, then in his extreme old age, fought very gallantly for a period of twelve days, on the side of the Kauravas with a full complement of an ancient army, namely 109350 foot, 656150 horse, 21870 elephant and 218700 chariot, giving a total of 218700 warriors; and was at last killed in the hands of Arjuna (Droṇa Parva, Ch. XXVIII, 45):

*Baliṣamchannanayanah sūrah paramadurjayah:
Akṣnorunmīlanārthāya vaddhapaṭṭo hyasau nrpaḥ.*

PORTIONS OF CHINA INCLUDED. In the Sabhā Parva, Arjuna, in connexion with his conquests on the north, is mentioned as encountering with Bhagadatta. The Aśwamedha Parva (Chs. LXXIV-LXXV) also describes the sacrificial horse of the Pāṇḍavas entering Prāgjyotiṣa just on crossing Trigartta (Jalandhara). King Raghu, the great-grand-father of Rāma of Oudh, in course of his march for universal conquest while going to the north is described as invading Prāgjyotiṣa just after conquering the Himalayan territories (*Raghuvamśa*, Ch. IV). The Sabhā Parva Ch. XXVI, 9) further relates about Bhagadatta... "Sa Kirātaiśca Cīnaiśca vṛttaḥ Prāgjyotiṣō'bhavat". All these statements make the conclusion irresistible that Prāgjyotiṣa must have embraced at least a portion of China as far as Tibet to its immediate north. Else how could Bhagadatta procure his Chinese soldiers? ("Kāmṛup Rājāvali" in *Kām-rūp Śāsanāvali*).

BHAGADATTA STYLED AS 'PARVATAPATI'. The Sabhā Parva (Ch. XXX) further relates how Bhīma came to the land of the Lauhitya (Brahmaputra) in the course of his triumphant march to the east from Indra-prastha.

*Evam vahavidhān deśān vijitya pavanātmaajah:
Vasu tebhya upādāya Lauhityamagamdūtī.
Sa sarvān mlechhanrpatīn sāgarānūpavāsinaḥ:
Karamāhārayāmāsa ratnāni vividhāni ca. 26-27.*

The presents made by Bhagadatta in attending the Rājasūya of Yudhiṣṭhira included precious stones only found in mountainous regions, tusks of elephants, horns of rhinoceroses and swift horses (The Sabhā Parva, ch. LI, 15-16). In the Droṇa Parva (ch. XXV, 52), Bhagadatta has also

been styled as Parvātapati (King of the mountains). All these facts point to the conclusion that it not only included a portion of China, but also included Bhutan with the mountainous tracts to the north-east of the Brahmaputra. Bhūtan horses are used in Asam till this day. (K. R. in K.S.).

FAMED FOR ELEPHANTS. That Prāgjyotiṣa included large mountainous regions is further corroborated by the fact of king Raghu, grandfather of king Daśaratha of Oudh, finding elephants in the forests of Prāgjyotiṣa ("Śaumār Bhraman" in *Jonākī*). The fact of this country being renowned in the days of the Epics for its elephants is supported from yet another source: "The original author of the oldest Indian treatise on elephant-training and the diseases of elephants, *Hastyaurveda*, ascribed to Palakapya, a work compiled during the Sūtra period (600-200 B.C.) is described as a man from "where the Lauhitya (Brahmaputra) flows towards the sea." (*ODBL*, pp. 70-71). That this tradition continues right up to the modern times is proved by the picture of an elephant used in their seals by the ancient kings of Prāgjyotiṣa or Kāmarūpa, and by the treatise *Hastividyaṛṇāva* in Asamiyā so beautifully illustrated.

EXTENDING AS FAR AS THE SEA. In the Sabhā Parva (ch. XXXIV, 10), Bhagadatta is described as attending the Rājasūya of Yudhiṣṭhira "saha mlechhaiḥ sāgarānupavāsibhiḥ". The Udyogaparva even styles Bhagadatta as an inhabitant on the shore of the Eastern Sea ("Pūrvasagarvāsine", Ch. IV, 11). Mm. Padmanāth opines (K.R. in K.S.), that Prāgjyotiṣa stretched as far as the sea towards south-east of China. But Kanaklāl thinks (*EHK*) that this Eastern Sea was formed by the estuary of the Lauhitya (Brahmaputra) with that of the Ganges. He argues that Greek writers in their accounts mention the islands in the estuary of the Ganges and the Buddhist Jātakas describe large sea-going vessels laden with merchandise, sailing from Champā (modern Bhāgalpur) which fact shows how inland the sea had been about fourth century B.C. By the Greek writers he particularly refers to Megasthenes who was an ambassador of Seleucus who resided for some time at the court of Candra Gupta. His reports are preserved to us chiefly in the *Indicā* of Arrian (*The History of Indian Literature*, by Weber, p. 4, footnote).

HOW SAMATATA WAS FORMED. Ptolemy (Kladios Ptolomaïos, the celebrated astronomer, mathematician and geographer, native of Egypt and resident of Alexandria, and the first systematic writer on Greek astronomy in the first half of the second century A.D.—Introduction to Mc-Crindle's *Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy*) in giving an account

of the Gangetic plain, says that the Ganges fell into the sea through five mouths. This suggests that the delta had then already formed, and the islands dotting the Eastern Sea about 1000 B.C. had now been joined to form a part of the main land and intersected by the several mouths of the Ganges. This extension of the Gangetic coast, now elevated about the sea-level, gradually came to be known as Samatata, meaning a plain on the sea-side. It was this Samatata that was visited and mentioned by Yuān Chwāng about five centuries after Ptolemy. Both Ptolemy and Alberuni of the 11th century refer to the country to the east of Samatata, including southern Mymensingh, western Sylhet and parts of Comilla and Naokhali, as being under the sea (EHK).

THE PURVA SAGARA (EASTERN SEA). Even Manu, in defining the boundaries of Āryāvarta in *Manu Saṃhitā*, really refers to this Eastern Sea:

*Āsamudrāttu vai purvādāsamudrāttu paścimāt:
Tayorevāntaram giryorājyāvartam vidurvudhāh.*

Besides the geological evidence always present, there is an epigraphic evidence too of comparatively modern times, namely, the Bhatara Copper-plate inscription of Govinda Keśava Deva, king of Śrīhatta, (cir. 1049 A.D.) which mentions the sea as one of the boundaries of the land granted by the king (*Epigraphiā Indicā*, Vol. XIX, pp. 277-86). Babu Pares Chandra Banerji states in his *Bāngālar Purāvṛtta*—‘There cannot be a shadow of doubt that Twenty-four Purgunas, Khulna, Yasohar, Nadiā, Faridpur, Bākharganj and portions of Dacca, Noākhāli, Tipperā were in the womb of the sea. The districts of Purnea, Dinājpur, Māldah, Rājshāhi, Pābnā, Rungpur and others were also immersed in the sea, but this must have been a pre-historical fact. The earth of the districts first mentioned, when tested, will bring home to any one the fact that they must once have been under the sea.’ (*Ibid.*). The hills of Asam, Tippera and Chittagong must have been on the shores of the Eastern Sea.

HISTORY OF THE KAUSIKA. Amūrta Rājā has already been described as the founder of Prāgjyotiṣa. He is said to be the son of Kuśa and grand-father of the sage Viśwāmitra who performed his austerities on the bank of the Kauśika (modern Kośi) in the district of Purnea, in Behar. This may prove that the ancient kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa embraced some districts of Behar and thus verged on Videha (Mithilā) on its west.

A KING OF ASAM IN PERSIAN ANNALS. From the *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan power in India till the year A.D. 1612*, (translated

from the original Persian of Mahomed Kasim Ferishta by John Briggs, Vol. 1 of 1908, pp. LXIX-LXX) we learn that Śaṅkalaḍib, one king of old Prāggyotiṣa became a very powerful monarch of North-Eastern India and established himself by defeating King Kedar Brahman of Northern India, who "laid the foundation and built the fortress of Kalunjar".

"In the latter part of his reign he was attacked by Sunkul, a chieftain of Kooch, who having collected a large force not only subdued Bung (Bengal) and Behar, but also attacked Kedar whom he defeated in several actions and usurped his Empire, after a reign of nineteen years". "Sunkul having ascended the throne, laid the foundation of Lucknowty, in Bengal, since known by the name of Goor or Gowr, which was the capital of the province for 2,000 years, but being destroyed in the time of Mogul empire, Tunda became the seat of the Government" (*Ibid*).

"Sunkul Raja maintained an army of 4000 elephant, 1000,000 horse, and 400,000 foot". "His downfall is ascribed to Afrasiyab, the king of Turk or Scythia. The original Afrasiyab is believed to have conquered Persia about seven centuries before the Christian era. He appears to have claimed tribute, which Shaṅkal refused to pay. He sent an army of 50,000 Mongols against him, and a fierce battle took place in the mountains of Koch near Ghoraghat. The Mongols were defeated by overwhelming numbers and retreated into the mountains. They entrenched themselves, but were on the point of being annihilated when Afrasiyab hurried up with reinforcements from his capital Gangdozh, beyond the Himalayas and utterly defeated Shaṅkal. The latter retreated first to Lakhanauti and then to the mountains of Tirhut, where he eventually made his submission and was carried away by Afrasiyab", (*Gait's History of Assam*, pp. 19-20). Śaṅkal is said to have been killed by Rustum who flourished in the seventh century B.C. (*J.A.R.S.* 1937).

ASAM IN THE KASHMIR ANNALS. Like the Rāmāyāna and the Mahābhārata, the Harivaṃśa and the Viṣṇupurāna (also the Brahmāṇḍa Purāna in mentioning the names of the eastern countries) refers to Prāggyotiṣa. *Rājatarāṅginī* (Hitabādī Edition, Ch. II, pp. 143-150) mentions the name of Prāggyotiṣa in connection with the *swayambara* of the princess Amṛtaprabhā of this country, which Meghavāhana, the king of Kāshmir attended. The reign of Meghavāhana is ascertained to be about 12 A.D. by Sir Oralstyne, the English translator of *Rājatarāṅginī*, in his *Chronological Table of Kāshmir Kings*.

IN THE ALLAHABAD PILLAR INSCRIPTION. "The earliest notice of the kingdom (Kāmarūpa, Asam) which is of any use for purposes of the historians is the statement in Samudra Gupta's inscription on the Allahabad pillar, recorded about A.D. 360 or 370, that Kamarupa was then one of the frontier states outside the limits of the Gupta Empire,

but paying tribute and owing a certain amount of obedience to the paramount power." (J.A.R.S., p. 879, quoted from Vincent A. Smith in the *Early History of India*, from 600 B.C. to the Muhammadan Conquest, Ch. II Kāmarūpa or Assam, fourth edition, p. 383). The relevant portion of the text of the *praśasti* runs as follows (Fleet's *corpus inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. 111, p. 8):—

*Samātata-Davāka Kāmarūpa Nepāla-
Katrpurādi pratyanta nṛpātirvirmālā
Varjanāyaṇaraodheya mādrākābhira prārjuna
Sanakānika kākakharaparikādivischa sarva kare
Dānājñakaraṇa praṇāmagamana."*

BOTH AS PRAGJYOTISA AND KAMARUPA. Kālidāsa who is said to have flourished just one century after, namely, in the first half of the fifth century A.D. (on the authority of V. A. Smith), refers to this country both as Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa (*Raghuvamśa*, Ch. IV):—

*Cakampe tīrṇa Lauhitya tasmin Prāgjyotiṣeśvarah. 81.
Tamīśaḥ Kāmarūpāṇāmatyākhandala vikramam. 83.*

But the Chinese prince of travellers Yuān Chwāng two centuries later (628-645 A.D.) refers only to "Kiāmo-Leu-Po" or Kāmarūpa (Julien's *Hiouen Thsang* III, 76) and not to Prāgjyotiṣa.

Like *Raghuvamśa*, the *Kālikā Purāṇa* uses, and rather defines, both the names saying that it was called Prāgjyotiṣa, because it is in this country that in the earliest times (Prāg) Brahmā created the stars (Jyotiṣ) (Ch. XXVIII, 119):

*Asya madhye sthito Brahmā prāṅ nakṣatram sasarjaha:
Tataḥ Prāgjyotiṣākheyam purī Śakrapurīsamā.*

And Kāmarūpa is so called (in Puranic legend) since Cupid (Kāma) who once being reduced to ashes by Śiva regained his life or form ("rūpa") in this very country (Ch. LI, 67):—

*Sambhunetnāgninirdagdhaḥ Kāmaḥ Sambhoranugrahāt:
Tatra rūpam yataḥ prāpa Kāmarūpam tato'bhavat.*

This Sanskrit treatise, *Kālikā Purāṇa*, is said to have been composed by the tenth century A.D. (*Bhāratvarṣa*, Vaiśākh, 1337 B.E.).

BY RAJASEKHARA AND ALBERUNI. But again, Rājāśekhara, the court-poet of Mahipāla (910-940 A.D.), the Pratihara king, names Prāgjyotiṣa, not Kāmarūpa, along with other countries of Āryāvarta. Also, Alberuni in the 11th century, in describing the eastern countries of India, writes, "Thence (from Tilwat or Tirhut) we came to mountains of Kamru which stretch away as far as the sea" (*Alberuni's India*, p. 201). But in quoting from the *Vāyu Purāṇa* or from Varāha Mihira,

he mentions Prāgjyotiṣa as a country in the east. Thus it appears that the kingdom was known both as Prāgjyōtiṣa and Kāmarūpa throughout Āryāvarta, since the beginning of the Gupta period down to the 11th century.

EARLY KINGS OF PRAGJYOTISA. The *Mahābhārata* (and so the *Purāṇas*) makes regular mention of the Prāgjyotiṣa kings Naraka, and Vajradatta. Vajradatta, son of Bhagadatta, has been particularly referred to in the *Aśwamedha Parva* (Chs. LXXV-LXXVI). He had not at first been to the Kurukṣetra war, for he was a mere child; but he immediately challenged Arjunā when the latter killed his father Bhagadatta, saying:

“Hato vṛddho mama pitā śiśum māmadya jodhaya”.

And so he fought very bravely for “trirātra” with Arjuna and made peace with him only when he fell on the ground the elephant on which he fought first falling. The *Karṇa Parva* (Ch. V, 29) refers to Bhagadatta's son as king Kṛtaprajña in giving a list of the slain on the side of the Kauravas.

*Bhagadattasuto rājan Kṛtaprajño mahābalaḥ:
Syenabaccaratā saṁkhye Nakulena nipātitaḥ.*

The *Harṣacarit* (Ch. VII, pp. 584-85, Jivānanda Vidyāsāgar edition) by Bāṇa Bhatta mentions yet another name, Puṣpadatta, who may have been Vajradatta's son.

*Mahātmanas tasya (Narakasya) anvaye Bhagadatta Puṣpadatta
Vajradatta prabhṛtiṣu byātīteṣu vahuṣu merupameṣu mahatsu
mahāpālesu...*

All the copperplates of ancient kings of Asam, including that of Bhāskar Varman, invariably mentions the names of Naraka and Bhagadatta, and all of them save the last (granted by king Dharmapāla) makes regular reference to Vajradatta too. The Nidhanpur inscription (v. 6) of Bhāskar Varman and the Guāhāṭi Copper plate (v. 8) of Indrapāla extols the valour of Vajradatta. But while the earlier inscriptions of Bhāskar Varmā and Indrapāla relate the name of Vajradatta as Bhagadatta's son the later copper plates of Vanamāl Varmā, Vala Varmā and Ratnapāl refers to Vajradatta as Bhagadatta's brother! This being opposed to what is described in the *Mahābhārata*, *Kālikā Purāṇa* and in earlier inscriptions, must be regarded as a mistake of fact. In this regard, the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (besides the *Mahābhārata*) must be regarded as an authority, since it is in this treatise that we find the full Naraka tradition, his origin, his first gaining of the kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa, and his death in the hands of Śrikrṣṇa (*Kālikā Purāṇa*, Ch. XXXVI-XL).

II. FROM THE VARMAN RULE TILL THE PALA REIGN

GAP OF THREE THOUSAND YEARS. The Nidhanpur copper-plate of Bhāskar Varman granting land at Karṇasuvārṇa states that Puṣya Varmā ascended the throne of Prāgijyotiṣa after the successors of Vajradatta reigned for three thousand years (v. 7):

*Vamśeṣu tasya nṛpatiṣu varṣasahasratrayam padamabāpya
yāteṣu devabhūyam kṣitīśwara Puṣya Varmābhūta.*

From all the copper-plates discovered and deciphered up-to-date, mainly from the Nidhanpur inscription (*Epigraphia Indica* Vol. XII, No. 13) of Bhāskar Varman and the latest discovered and deciphered Dobi Copper-plate (*The Times of Assam*, 26th May, 1945) of the seventeenth century A.D. we find a complete genealogy of eleven generations of Varman kings, prior to Bhāskar Varman, starting with Puṣya Varmā.

NRPA SAKA OR BHASKAR ERA IN 594 A.D.: Now we have the accurate history of Bhāskar Varman's reign from three different and very reliable sources. They are (1) the Copperplate inscriptions of old Kāmarūpa kings, mainly of Bhāskar Varman himself; (2) the records left by Yuān Chwāng of his travels, and (3) *Harṣacarit* (Ch. VII) by the great poet Bāṇa Bhatta. According to Bāṇa Bhatta, Bhāskar Varman's ambassador, Haṃsabega, met Harṣavardhana just on his way to invade Gauḍa whose king, he had heard, killed his elder brother Rājya Vardhana. He communicated Bhāskar's resolve to be friends with Harṣa and gave him Bhāskar's presents. Harṣa's reign in 606 A.D. is well known. Yuān Chwāng writes, "The reigning king (of Kiamo-leu-po, Kāmarūpa) who was a Brahmin by caste and a descendant of Nārāyaṇa Deva, was named Bhāskar Varman ("Sun-armour"), his other name being 'Kumara' ('youth'). The sovereignty has been transmitted in the family for 1000 generations." (Watters' *Yuān Chwāng*, Vol. II, p. 186). Now the time of this Chinese pilgrim's visit of India (628-645 A.D.) and of Kāmarūpa (643 A.D.) is quite a historical fact. Date of Bhāskar Varman's ascension to the throne in 594 A.D. marks the new erā *Nṛpa Śāka* so popularly used in Bengal and Asam.

GENEALOGY OF VARMAN KINGS: Now, on the authority of the old copperplates, Puṣya Varmā is known to have ruled eleven generations earlier than Bhāskar Varman. These Varman kings of Kāmarūpa named in a chronological order are—(1) Puṣya Varmā, (2) Samudra Varmā, (3) Vala Varmā, (4) Kalyāṇa Varmā, (5) Gaṇapati Varmā, (6) Mahendra Varmā, (7) Nārāyaṇa Varmā, (8) Mahābhūta or Bhūti Varmā, (9) Candramukha Varmā, (10) Sthira Varmā, (11) Susthita Varmā, and (12) Supratīṣṭhita Varmā and Bhāskar Varmā (brothers). These names

are found from all the three sources referred to and another source besides. It is the Seal of Bhāskar Varman found in the ruins of Nalanda giving the names of the Kāmarūpa kings from Gaṇapati Varmā to Bhāskar Varmā (*Journal of the Behar and Orissa Society*; March, 1920, pp. 151-152). Taking a century for even every three generations, we find Puṣya Varmā reigning in the middle of the third century A.D.

NALANDA AND OTHER SOURCES: This date of Puṣya Varman is supported by yet another fact. As the name of Puṣya Varmā himself has a close resemblance with the name Puṣyamitra, the great king of the Sunga dynasty and also with the name of Puṣya-bhūti, the first king of the line of Harṣavardhana, so the names of his son Samudravarmā and his daughter-in-law Dattā Devī bear close similarity with the names of the Gupta Emperor Samudragupta and his empress Dattā Devī, who flourished in the middle of the fourth century A.D. These coincidences do not seem accidental, but it is quite likely that this Kāmarūpa king whose kingdom was outside the pale of the Gupta Empire but who owed some obedience to it, and was very friendly with its Emperor, named his son and daughter-in-law after the great Emperor and Empress as a mark of love and intimacy (K.R., K.S.).

GUPTA ARCHITECTURE IN KAMARUPA: That the fact of Puṣya Varmā naming his son and daughter-in-law after his contemporary, the great Gupta Emperor and Empress is quite likely, is proved by yet another fact. In the ruins of an ancient temple in a village named Dah Parvatiyā near the Tezpur town in Asam, Rākhāldās Banerji discovered an arch which revealed the style of Gupta architecture (*Plastic Art of the Gupta Period and its influence on later mediaeval Art*, "The Bengalee", March, 3, 1925). This shows that not only the names of Gupta Emperors and Empresses, but even Gupta architecture etc. were introduced into Kāmarūpa as a proof of deep intimacy existing between Puṣya Varmā and the then reigning Emperor Candragupta I or his son, the famous Samudragupta.

GUPTA ERA ALSO INTRODUCED: In 1893, the attention of Edward Gait, the then Director of Ethnography, Asam, was invited to a rock inscription a little to the west of the Tezpur town, who forthwith sent a photograph of the inscription to Dr. Hoernle for deciphering (*Report on the progress of Historical Research in Assam 1897*, p. 4, para 8). This was subsequently fully deciphered by Haraprasād Śāstrī (*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, December, 1917, pp. 508-514) with the help of Nagendranath Vasu (*Social History of Assam*, Vol. 1, pp. 159a-b). This was inscribed by Mahārājādhirāj Śrī Harjar Varmā from his capital at Hārūppeśwara and gives the Gupta era 510 (equi-

valent to 829 or 830 A.D.). This proves that not only Gupta architecture, but also the Gupta era was introduced into Kāmarūpa about that time.

GUPTA SCRIPT AND THE EPITHET "PARAM BHAGAWAT": In another rock inscription in Gupta script, recently discovered at Baḍgaṅga in the Mikir Hills in the Nagāo district (*The Baḍgaṅgā rock Inscription of Mahārājādhirāja Bhūti-varman*, J.R.A.S., Vol. VIII, No. 4), we find that in the Gupta era 234 (554 A.D.) Āryagūṇa, (the Prime Minister of King Mahābhūta or Bhūti Varmā, a successor of Samudra Varmā) styles his royal master as "Param Bhāgawat". Curious enough, the same epithet "Param Bhāgawat" applied to the contemporary Gupta Kings appear on the coins of Candragupta II, Kumāragupta and Skāndagupta whose dates range from 400 to 460 A.D. (vide R. G. Bhandarkar's *Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism, and Minor Religious sects*). This shows that imitation of contemporary Gupta Kings went even to the extent of applying their epithets to these Kāmarūpa kings though in fact they may not have been any follower of Vaiṣṇavism at all.

A PARAMOUNT SOVEREIGN OF EASTERN INDIA: Bhāskaravarman of course survived Harṣavardhana, who in 648 A.D. was succeeded by his minister Aruṇaśwa or Arjuna. The kingdom of Arjuna was invaded by the Chinese royal ambassador Wang-Hien-tsi with a powerful army from Tibet in consequence of being tyrannised by Arjuna when he paid a visit to India. Wang Hiu-en-tsi styles Bhāskar Varmā as "Paramount Sovereign of Eastern India" in the Chinese annals of this time.

THE KOSI AS ASAM'S WESTERN BOUNDARY: The Nidhanpur inscription of Bhāskar Varmā, was of course not a new copperplate given by him, but the copperplate of his ancestor Mahābhūta or Bhūti Varmā, granted four generations before Bhāskar Varmā, being burnt and damaged, had thus to be renewed and replaced (vs. 26-28). The name of the Kauśika (modern Kośi in the Purnea district of Behar) prominently appears in regard to the boundaries of the land granted by this inscription (v. 26). Harṣavardhana's reign began in 605 when he presently started for invasion of Gauḍa and met Bhāskar's ambassador just on his way. Yuān Chwāng came to Kāmarūpa in 643 and found Bhāskar as the reigning king. So the time of this new inscription may safely be fixed in the first half of the seventh century. And since Mahābhūta Varmā, the original donor of the copper-plate was four generations or at least one century earlier, the time of the original copper-plate may be safely placed by the first half of the sixth century. So it may be no stretch or imagination to think that even from the time of Amūrtarāja, the founder of Pragjyotiṣa, till the reign of Mahābhūti and Bhāskar (in

The Ganjām copper plate (*Epigraphia Indica*, vol. VI, p. 143 et-seq) Gupta era 300 (619-20 A.D.) mentions Śaśāṅka as "Mahārājādhirāja."

BHASKAR SEIZES KARNA SUVARNA AND PUNDR VARDHANA: Yuān Chwāng travelled in Bengal about 638 after the death of Śaśāṅka which occurred in 625. He mentions four early kingdoms of Bengal, viz. Pundra Vardhana, Karṇa Suvarṇa, Samatata, and Tāmralipta (*Watters II*, 182-193; *Beal-Records II*, 193-204), besides Kajangala, the territory round Rājmahal. Puṇḍra Vardhana and Karṇa Suvarṇa were certainly the two integral parts of the kingdom of Śaśāṅka and must have embraced North and North-western Bengal, namely, the districts of Burdwan, Bīrbhūm, Murshidābād and Nadiā. Yuān Chwāng, though mentioning the names of the capitals of each of the kingdoms, says nothing about their kings; for, by this time "he found most of them included in Harṣa's own dominion and some in that of Bhāskar Varman" (Dr. R. G. Basak, *H.N.I.*, 227).

BHASKAR'S PASSAGE THROUGH BENGAL: The Nidhanpur copper-plate proved beyond doubt that Bhāskar Varman seized the capital city of Śaśāṅka and made this grant from his victorious camp at Karṇa Suvarṇa. It is further supported by other facts narrated in the *Life of Hiuen Tsiang*. It is related there that about 642, Bhāskar Varmā started to meet Harṣa Vardhana at Kājangala near Rājmahal with an army of 20,000 elephants and 30,000 ships passing along the Ganges.

"Kumara... immediately ordered his army of elephants 20,000 in number to be equipped and his ships 30,000 in number. Then embarking with the Master of the Law (Hiuen Tsiang) they passed together in order to reach the place where Siladitya was residing" "returning from his attack on Kongyodha" "... Siladitya seeing him (Kumāra) coming was overjoyed." (*The Life of Hiuen Tsiang* by Shaman Hwui Li, edited by Samuel Beal, Popular Edition, 1914, p. 172).

BHASKARA'S SUZERAINTY BEYOND QUESTION: Curiously, this passage of Bhāskar's army and ships through Bengal, and even his grant at Nidhanpur, is seen interpreted by interested scholarship as Harṣa's suzerainty over Bengal. (*History of Bengal*, Vol. I, Ch. V. "Political Disintegration after Śaśāṅka" pp. 77-35). It is as curious as it is absurd to think that a king of Bhāskar's prestige could issue a royal edict from a place which belonged to another king of Harṣa's status. Besides, Bhāskar's effective suzerainty over Bengal by 648 A.D. is further proved by the Chinese chroniclers who calls Bhāskar "the paramount Sovereign of Eastern India." It is also related in the *Life of Hiuen Tsiang* that at the time of this meeting, Harṣa himself had just returned from his victorious campaign at Konkoda, (*Beal-Life*, 172) the kingdom of

the Sailodbhavas who formerly acknowledged the suzerainty of Śaśānka" (*Ibid.*).

"EIGHTEEN COUNTRIES OF THE FIVE INDIES": Yuān Chwāng divides Eastern India into six kingdoms, namely, Kāmarūpa, Samatata, Tāmra-
lipti, Karnasuvarṇa Odra and Ganjām (Vide Alexander Cunningham's *Ancient Geography of India*, p. 572). But the records of the Chinese travellers make it clear that there were at least eighteen countries of the five Indies" besides those of Bhāskar and Harṣa themselves. "The same day he (Siladitya Raja) sent an order throughout the different kingdoms that all the disciples of the various schools should assemble in the town of Kānyakubja to investigate the treatise of the Master of the Law of China." "There were present kings of eighteen countries of the five Indies; three thousand priests thoroughly acquainted with the Great and Little Vehicle, besides about three thousand Brahmans and Nirgantṛas and about a thousand priests of the Nalanda monastery. All these noted persons alike celebrated for their literary skill, as for their dialectic, attended the assembly with a view to consider and listen the sounds of the Law; they were accompanied with followers, some on elephants, some in chariots, some in palanquins, some under canopies.

"Then Siladitya Raja, under the form of Lord Śakra with a white chowrie in his hand went on the right; and Kumara Raja under the form of Brahma Raja with a precious parasol in his hand, went to the left. They both were tiaras like the Devas, with flower wreaths and jewelled ribbons". (*The Life of Hiuen Tsiang*, Hwui Li and Beal, p. 176).

"On this the king (Harṣa) ordered them ("Kings of eighteen countries of the five Indies") to offer him ("the Master of the Law of China") gold coins and other things; Kumara Raja also bestowed on him every sort of valuable. But the Master would take none except from Kumara Raja he accepted a cap called ho-la-li, made of coarse skin lined with soft down which was designed to protect from rain whilst on the road". (*Ibid.* p. 189).

BHASKAR'S RANK ABOVE ALL THE INDIAN PRINCES: Edward Gait (*HA.*) comments on this as follows:—"It (the kingdom of Bhaskar Varman) was at any case far larger than the adjoining kingdoms of Pundra Vardhana, and Samatata, the circumferences of which are placed at only 700 and 500 miles respectively," against 1700 miles of Kamarupa. "The King (Bhaskara) was evidently a monarch of considerable power, and he seems to have taken rank above all the twenty Rajas who accepted Siladitya's invitation to Kajughira; in the great procession there, Siladitya himself led the way on the left, dressed as Shakra (Indra), while Bhaskar Varman personated Brahma Raja and occupied the corresponding position on the right. Both he and Siladitya had an escort of 500 elephants clad in armour".

From Beal's *Buddhist Records* (vol. II, p. 195) we find:—"The country of Kamarupa is about 10,000 li ("or 1667 miles"—Cunningham's *Ancient Geography*, p. 572) (nearly 1700 miles) in circuit. The capital

town is about 30 li." on this point Sir Edward Gait observes:— "As its circumference was 1700 miles, it must have included whole of Assam, (except perhaps the Naga Hills, Lushai Hills and Manipur) and also Bhutan, North Bengal as far west as the Karatoya and the part of Myemensingh which lies to the east of the old courses of the Brahmaputra." (*History of Assam*). But this must have been the area of Kāmarūpa proper, without taking the new conquests into any account.

BHASKAR, A CONFIRMED BACHELOR: The name "Kumara" often used by Yuān Chwāng and Bāṇ Bhattā in quite different sources, as a synonym for Bhāskar Varmā, may lead us to imagine the Bhāskar like Bhīṣma, remained a confirmed bachelor. (*K.R., K.S.*) From *Harṣa carit* (Ch. VII, p. 585) we find that King Harṣavardhana, when he reluctantly came to the throne at his elder brother Rājyavardhana's premature death, assumed the name of Kumāra Śilāditya. Bhāskara too ascended the throne on his elder brother Supratisthita's death and from this analogy of and his intimacy with Harṣa, he might style himself as Kumāra; but that his line became extinct after him, howsoever, is a fact.

BREAK IN THE LINE OF BHASKAR: That there had been change of hands soon after Bhāskar Varman in the kingdom of Kāmarūpa is evidenced by (vs. 9-10) of the first copperplate inscription of king Ratna pāla. Hoernle fixes the first half of the eleventh century as the time of the inscription (*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, pt. I, no. 1, 1898, p. 102). Again this first copper-plate of Ratna Pāla was given by him in the twenty-fifth year of his reign "Saṃkrantau Viṣṇu padyāncha pañcaviṃśābdarājyake"—(v. 20):— While his second copperplate was given in the twenty-sixth year of his reign "Mayā dattā dwijāyāsmāi rājye ṣaḍaciṃśatābdike" (v. 20).

HARJAR VARMA'S REIGN IN 829-830 A.D. From these data we may then easily ascertain that king Ratnapāla must have ruled in the early part of the eleventh century, and that his father Brahmapāla must have reigned about the dawn of that century. But Brahmapāla ascended the throne of Kāmarūpa after Tyāgasimha, the twenty first king of the line of Mleccādhinātha Śālastambha, who died without leaving any progeny (Vide Ratnapāla's first inscription, v. 10). The reign of Harjar Varmā, one great king of the line of Śālastambha was still in 510 Gupta era (829-830 A.D.).

SRI HARSA IN A STONE INSCRIPTION IN NEPAL: The stone inscription of Jayadeva, king of Nepal inscribed in "a slab of black slate... placed behind the bull—opposite to the western door of the temple of Paśupāti" (*Indian Antiquary*, vol. IX, p. 178) contains the following (v. 15):—

“Mādyahantisāmuhadantamusala kṣuṇṇāribhu mṛcchiro
Gauḍodrādi Kāliṅga, Kośalapati Śrī Harṣadevātīnājā:
Devī Rājyamatī kulochitagunairjuktā prabhutā kulair
Jenoḍhā Bhagadatta Rājakulajā Lakṣmīriva kṣmābujā.”

This inscription clearly states that Rājyamatī, whom king of Nepal, Jaydeva, married, was a princess of the royal line of Bhagadatta and was the daughter of Śrī Harṣadeva who was not only a famous king of Kāmarūpa of the royal line of Bhagaḍutta, but was also the Supreme Lord of Gauḍa, Oḍra, Kāliṅga and Kośala, etc., including the modern provinces of Bengal, Orissa, Behar and Ganjam besides the country of Kāmarūpa (as described by Yuān Chwāng, for example) proper.

ANOTHER SUPREME LORD OF BENGAL, BIHAR, ORISSA, GANJAM ETC.:

This inscription is dated 153 years. Thinking this to be in the Harṣa era, Mm. Paḍmanāth first took this year to be equivalent to 759 A.D. But later he found his mistake when Silve Levy declared this inscription to be in the Tibetan era equivalent to 748 A.D. (*Le Nepal*, Vol. ii, p. 170). Then we find that even one hundred years after Bhāskar Varman the whole of Eastern India including the modern provinces of Bengal, Behar, Orissa and Ganjām were included in the kingdom of Kāmarūpa.

KAMARUPA PRINCE INSTALLED AS KING OF ORISSA: It is related (*E.H.K.*, p. 114) that one Kāmarūpa prince, Khemaṅkara Deva was installed as king of Orissa by Śrī Harṣadeva, Rājādhirāja of Kāmarūpa, when the latter conquered Oḍra about the middle of the eighth century. This is supported by findings of scholars like R. D. Banerji (*J.A.R.S.*, Vol. VIII, No. 4, p. 137). Also an Eastern Gangā Copper-plate grant was found in the Sudava village in Parlākimedi Estate in the Ganjām district of the Madras Presidency (*Epigraphiā Indicā*, Vol. XXVI, April, 1941, pp. 62-68), granted by Mahārājā Ananta Varman, son of Mahārājādhirāja Devendra Varmā. It is dated in the Gangā year 204. The donee was a learned scholar, Viṣṇusomācārya, who hailed from Śrīngatidonee (Singari in the present Darang district of Asam). The relevant portion of the text runs as follows:—

“Vedavedānga paragebhyah Kāmarūpa viṣaya Śrīngatika agrahāra
Vāstavyebhyah Parāśara sagotrebhyo Viṣṇusomācārya pādebhyo vivāha
samaye kanyādānam udaka pūrvamkritvā—”

From palaeographic considerations the inscription is assigned to the last quarter of the seventh or the first quarter of the eighth century.

GENEALOGY OF MLECCHADHINATHAS: Genealogy of the Kāmarūpa kings of the line of Śālasthambha is sketched with the help of the inscriptions of Harjar, Vanamāl, Vala Varmā and Ratnapāl, which stands

as follows: (Vide K.R. in K.S., pp. 20-21): (1) Śālāstambha; (2) Vijaya; (3) Vighraḥastkambha; (4) Pālaka; (5) Kumāra; (6) Vajradeva; (7) Harṣa Varmā (or Śrī Hariṣ); (8) Valavarmā; (9) and (10) unknown; (11) Cakra; (12) Arathi; (13) Arath; (14) Pralamba; (15) Harjar; (16) Vanamāla; (17) Jayamāla; (18) Vala Varman; (19) and (20) unknown; (21) Śrī Tyāgasimha. By examining the script of the plate of king Valavarmā of this line, Hoernle opines (*Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. LXVI, 1897, part II) that the inscription belongs to 975 A.D. which date roughly agrees with the date of this genealogy running from the middle of the seventh to the middle of the tenth century A.D.

GENEALOGY OF THE PALA KINGS OF KAMARUPA. King Brahmapāla, as already found, immediately succeeded to the throne of Kāmarūpa after Tyāga Simha, in the latter half of the tenth century. Another Brahmapāla's father, Gopāl, was also the founder of the Pāla dynasty of Gauḍa about two centuries earlier; and both the founders are known to have been elected by the people. The genealogy of Pāla kings of Kāmarūpa is given as (K.R. in K.S., p. 24):—(1) Brahmapāla; (2) Ratnapāla; (3) Purandarapāla; (4) Indrapāla; (5) Gopāla; (6) Harṣapāla; (7) Dharmapāla.

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD. Thus we have almost a complete genealogy or outline of Kāmarūpa kings starting with Naraka down to Dharmapāla of a historical period. An interval of about three millenium years elapsed in between the reigns of Vajradatta and Puṣya Varmā of the fourth century A.D. (*vide* Nidhanpur inscription cited above) which means that Vajradatta flourished about 2500 years before the Christian era. This date almost fully agrees with the majority accepted time of the Kurukṣetra war. We have also defined the boundaries of Prāgjyotiṣa in the days of the Epics from the references found in the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, in the Muḥammadan chronicles and Chinese annals and inscriptions of Kāmarūpa, Gauḍa and Nepāl, down to the middle of the twelfth century.

III. CAPITAL CITIES OF ASAM FROM THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C.

PRAGJYOTISPUR, THE CAPITAL. There appears to be no direct reference in the Epics as to the capital of Prāgjyotiṣa, but from the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (ch. XXXVI-XL) we know that Nārāyaṇa, when desired by his consort, the Earth, appeared presently before her and her son Naraka, then in his sixteenth year, immersed with them in the Ganges and came to where Kāmākhyā was located, in Prāgjyotiṣapura.

There Nārāyaṇa got Ghataka, the Kirāta king, killed by Naraka who in turn was crowned as king of Prāgjyotiṣa. Thus it appears that modern Guāhāṭī was the capital of Naraka being known as Prāgjyotiṣapura. The name of Naraka is still associated with a village long known as Narakāsūr Gāo surrounded with a mountain range, similarly known as Narakāsūr Parvat, surrounding the site on three sides, giving an idea of a natural fortress near about the city of Guāhāṭī. Also a stone path from the foot of the Nilācal hill leading to the temple of Kāmākhyā at its top is called Narakāsūr path. It is connected with the legend still in vogue in Asam that Naraka got this path constructed over-night in order to marry the goddess, but was at last deceived by the goddess with her supernatural power.

ORIGIN OF GUAHAṬĪ. There is no direct or indirect reference in any inscription of the Kāmarūpa kings to the capital city of Naraka or Bhagadatta or even of Bhāskar till we come to the Nagāo copperplate of Valavarmā III (c. 975 A.D.) which inscribes (v. 5):

*Tāmbulavallī parinabdupugam bṛṣṇāguruskandhaniveśitailam:
Sa Kāmarūpe Jitakāmarūpo Prāgjotiṣākhyam puramadhyuvāsa.*

This shows that Prāgjyotiṣapura where Naraka lived (or had his capital) was full of arecanut trees and betel vines, etc. And the Asamiyā word "Guwā" (derived from the Sanskrit word Guvān, meaning 'areca nut' and its plant) 'Hāṭī' (derived from Haiṭṭa or hāṭa, 'market', and having the secondary meaning 'row' or 'line') also means a place with large rows of betel-nut plants. Thus we have here the origin of the modern name Guwāhāṭī given to the old old city of Prāgjyotiṣapura.

NARAKA'S ROYAL RESIDENCE. The two copperplates (Bargāo and Suālkuci inscriptions) of king Ratnapāla also makes mention of this residence or capital of Naraka (v. 5 in each): "Prāgjyotiṣe vasadasau puravare purāṇam".

Then also the two copperplates (Guāhāṭī and Guākuci inscriptions) of Indrapāla contain similar references (v. 6 in each):

*Ratnaprabhāruciramāspadameva Lakṣmyā puṇyopakāṇṭhāvilas-
dvanamālabhāri: Prāgjyotiṣampuramapārayaśāḥ sa uccair-
vakṣaḥsthalampiturivāparamdhyuvāsa.*

Even the first two copperplates, i.e., the Khanāmukh and Subhānkara-
paṭaka inscriptions of Dharmapāla also refer to the city of Prāgjyotiṣa
(v. 2):

Devasya Śrī(kara) tanostanayaḥ Pṛthivyām jāto babhūva nṛpatirarakāvidhānaḥ: Jitvā śatakratupurāḥ saradikupatīm yaḥ Prāgjyotiṣpuri cirāya sasāsa rājyam.

Thus Khanāmukh inscription (*The Journal of the Assam Research Society*, Vol. VIII, No. 4) was granted in the first year of Dharmapāl's reign.

CAPITAL LATER SHIFTED TO HARUPPEŚWARA. But it appears that as the throne of Prāgjyotiṣa or Kāmarūpa passed from the hands of the king of the direct Naraka line to the hands of the Mlechādhinātha Śālastambha, so the capital too shifted from Prāgjyotiṣapura to Hāruppeśwara. But we cannot say for certain when it precisely took place nor where the latter was exactly located. From the following references found in the copper-plates of Harjar, Vanamāla and Valavarmā it seems almost clear that it was situated on some bank of the Lauhitya though the bank is yet to be ascertained. The Tezpur rock inscription of Harjarvarmā makes it almost clear that it was situated somewhere near the present Tezpur town on the northern bank. It is further supported by the fact that king Valavarmā in his Nagāo inscription definitely assigns the land granted by him to be on the southern bank (v. 26):— "Dakṣiṇakūle Dijinnāviṣayantaḥpātino" etc. This particular reference to the "dakṣiṇakula" probably implies with certainty that the king resided or had his capital town on the *uttarakula* or northern bank of the Lauhitya.

FURTHER REFERENCE TO HARUPPEŚWARA. Harjar's Hāiyungthala copper-plate inscription has the following direct reference (v. 15) to his capital town, Hāruppeśwara:

Śrīmān Hāruppeśwarābūsi jayaskandhābāra Parama-Parameśwara parama Bhaṭṭāraka Parama Māheśwara mātāpitṛpādānudhyāta Harjaravarmadeva kuśalī.

The copper-plate of Harjar's son, king Vanamāla, has a similar reference to his capital Hāruppeśwara, in his Tezpur copper-plate inscription (v. 30).

Śrī Lauhitya Bhaṭṭārakena sanātha Śrī Hāruppeśwarāt sa Parama Māheśwari mātāpitṛpādānudhyāta Parameśwaraparāyaṇacittako Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Vanamālavarmādevakuśalī".

Even the Nagāo copperplate inscription of Vanamāla's grandson, Valavarmā III, has ample references to his capital which, he says, was also the capital of his forefathers (v. 25-26):—

"Lauhitasya samīpe tadeva paitāmaham kaṭakam. Tatra Śrīmatī Hāruppeśwara nāmāni kaṭake kṛtavasati. . . mātāpitṛpādānudhyā-

nadhautakalmaṣaḥ Parameśvaraḥ Paramabhṭṭāraḥo Mahārājādhirājah Śrī Valavarmadevaḥ kuśali."

SECOND SHIFTING OF CAPITAL TO DURJAYA. When the line of Śālastambha ceased with its twenty-first king Tyāgasimha, and Brahma-pāla started the line of Pāla kings in Kāmarūpa in about the latter half of the eleventh century, there appears to have been another shifting of capital from Hārūpeśwara. This is apparent from the Bargāo (also the Śuālkuci) inscription (ll. 39-40) which states:—

*"Mānanoyamanekamanujcpatisārthānām yathārthābhīdhānam,
Prāgjyotiṣeṣu Durjayākhyapuramadhyuvāsa."*

That Durjayā (literally, the invincible city) was worth its name and was quite well fortified is proved by its descriptions inscribed on the first copper-plate (ll. 34-36) of Ratnapāla:—

*"Yacca Sakakrīḍāsa (ku) nidṛḍha pañjareṇa Gurjarādhirāja
Prajvareṇa durdānta Gauḍendra Karikūṭapākaleṇa
Kēraleśācala śilājatunā vāhikatāyikātanka kariṇā dākṣhinātya
Kshaunṇipati rājajakṣmanāḥkṣapitarātīpīkṣatayākṣitipavakṣahka-
pātapaṭeneva prākāreṇāvṛtamāntam"....*

This proves how invincible the capital of Kāmarūpa had been to her fierce foes as the Śāka king and the rulers of Gujara, Gauḍa, Kerala (Malavar), Vahika, Tayika ('countries about the Punjab'—K.S., p. 105. fn. 5) and also of the king of Dākṣhinātya (the Deccan). Durjayā has been referred to and described also in both the copper-plates of Indra-pāla (v. 19)—

*Karituragaratnapūrṇā rājnastasyānurūpaguṇavasatiḥ:
Nṛpatiku (la) Durjayāsinnagarī Śrī Durjayā nāma.*

That it was situated on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra can be understood from its references to the Lauhitya and to the special mention of the northern bank, *uttarakule*, in the copperplates of Ratnapāla (l. 52) and Indrapāla (l. 35) where their lands were granted, just as we find the mention of the southern bank, *dakṣhinakule*" in Valavarmā's inscription (l. 35) when the capital was on the north bank of Hārūpeśwara. The second inscription of Indrapāla is conspicuous by the absence of any reference as to the bank on which it was situated, and it is significant. This is accounted for by saying that no mention of it was deemed necessary the land being located on the (southern) bank on which the capital itself was situated. This second inscription which is the same as the first upto the middle of the fifty second line of the former, ending with "Śrī Ratnapāla Varmādeva Kuśali", just

begins:—"Kalangavisāyāntaḥpati bhūmau" in the place where the first inscription starts *uttarakule* etc. Now the Kalang is a tributary of the Brahmaputra flowing from the south and *uttarakule* most probably refers to the grant being located about the Kalanga.

PURANDARAPALA "SURASCA SUKAVISCA". Reigns of Bhāskar (594-650), Harṣa Varmā (-748-), Harjar Varmā (-829-) and Vala Varmā (-975-) being fixed we find an average of 17 years rule for these nineteen rulers. Thus Brahamapāla's reign may be fixed near about the middle of the eleventh century. He was succeeded by his son Ratnapāla whose two copper-plates bestowed in the the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth years of his reign show that he must have ruled for nearly thirty years. Ratnapāla's son was Purandārapāla to whom is ascribed the authorship of *Nītikusum*, a rendering of the Sanskrit work *Sukra-nīti* in the local vernacular. He is referred to in both the copper-plates of his son, Indrapāla (v. 11-13):—

Āsidudārakīrttirātābhoktā śuciḥ kalākuśalaḥ

Tasya (Brahmapālasya) Purandarapālaḥ sūnuḥ śuraśca sukaviśca.

Kṛtamatikautukamasakṛnmrgayārasikena yena samarepi

Kṣaṇaviracita śarapañjaravaddhai ripurājaśārdulaiḥ

Jāmadagnyabhūjavikramārjita prājyārājya nṛpavaṃśasambhavām

Durlabheti sa tu loka-Durlabhām prāpya samyagabhavat kalatravān.

This shows that Purandarapāla was not only virtuous and heroic, but was also a great artist and a poet; and he married Durlabhā who was the princess of a king who enjoyed his kingdom as acquired by Jamadagnya (Paraśurāma). But we are in dark as to who this king was and which kingdom he possibly ruled. In the same inscription (ll. 32-35) we also find:—

Prāgjyotiśādhipatyasaṃkhyātāpratihatadaṇḍakṣapitā

śeṣarīpapakṣa Śrī Vārāha Parameśvara Paramabhaṭṭā-

raka Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Ratnapālavarmādevapadā-

nudhyāta Parameśvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja

Śrī Madindrapāla varmadeva (h) kuśalī.

MM. PADMANATH'S CALCULATION NEARLY ONE CENTURY TOO LATE.

This shows that Indrapāla succeeded his grandfather Ratnapāla. It evidently proves that Purandarapāla died before he succeeded to the throne of his father, and also that Indrapāla must have come to the throne early in life and consequently reigned long like George III. At any rate Indra Pāla must have reigned before the middle of the twelfth century, and his son Gopāla and grandson Harṣapāla in the

middle and latter half of the twelfth century, respectively. So the reign of King Dharmapāla, son of Harṣapala, may be placed before the dawn of the thirteenth century. We find Pāla kings like Indrapāla ruling for about thirty years. Even taking an average of 25 years for Pāla kings we find Dharma Pāl in 1200, a very probable date consistent with other facts and we think that Mm. Padmanāth, the very learned editor of KS, was mistaken in his calculation by about a century too late.

THIRD SHIFTING OF CAPITAL TO KAMARUPANAGARA. Three copper-plate inscriptions of king Dharmapāla have been possessed upto date, the latest discovered one being the Khanāmukh, Nagāo, grant (*JARS*, Vol. VIII, No. 4; Oct. 1941). It was bestowed in the first year of his reign (*Ibid.*, v. 7, plate II reverse):—"Rājnā Śrī Dharmapālena rājye prathamavatsyare" etc. And his second (earlier known as the first) grant was allotted in the third year of his reign (*Ibid.*, v. 21, ll. 47-8): "Rājye nīje narapatiḥ pradadau trivarṣe". But both these copperplates are silent in regard to the capital city of Dharmapāla which could ordinarily be explained away by saying that no mention of it was deemed necessary since Durjayā still continued to be its capital. But the third copper-plate, which is unfortunately not dated, definitely names the city as Kāmarūpa Nagara (v. 20):

*Kāmarūpanagare nṛpobhavad Dharmapāla iti sānvāyaddhayāḥ:
Yasyakīrtivaradājagajjaratpañjarodargatāśma rājate.*

KAMARUPANAGARA OFF FROM THE BRAHMAPUTRA. Neither the site of this new capital nor the cause nor the time of it being shifted has yet been quite definitely known. Still less we know about its author. Mm. Padmanāth thinks that the capital must have been changed sometime before Dharmapāla came to the throne, since he would certainly have mentioned of it had it occurred during his reign (*K.R. in K.S.*, pp. 19-28). Whatever the time or site, it seems certain that it was never on the bank of the Brahmaputra since even the slightest reference to it is not found in the three inscriptions of Dharmapāla; while all the inscriptions are eloquent in descriptions of the same river when the capital was seated either at Hārūpeśwara on the northern or at Durjayā on the southern bank. Again, we have not been able to adduce sufficient proof as to where the capital of the kings of the line of Bhagadatta was actually situated even in the reign of Bhāskar in the seventh century A.D. If we could know it we could find the probable site of the capital of Dharmapāla too, since these Pāla kings of Kāmarūpa claim to have resumed their reign by belonging to the line of Bhagadatta after the

line of Mlecchādhinātha Śālastambhā became extinct (Ratnapāla's inscriptions, vs. 9-10).

KAMATAPURA, PROBABLE SITE OF CAPITAL OF BHASKAR. Sir Alexander Cunningham says:—"From Paundra Vardhana or Pubna, in the middle India, the Chinese Pilgrim proceeded 900 *li* or 150 miles to the east, and crossing a great river entered Kia-ma-leu-po or Kamarupa. . . . (Julien's Hiuén Tsiang 111, 78). "Now Kamatapura, the capital of Kuch Vihara is exactly 150 miles or 900 *li* from Pubna. . . while Gohati (said to have been the old capital of Kamarupa) is about twice that distance or say 1900 *li* or 317 miles from Pubna. . . As the position of the former agrees exactly with the distance recorded by the pilgrim it is almost certain that it must have been the capital of Kamrup in the seventh century. . . The great river crossed by the pilgrim would therefore be the Tista and not the Brahmaputra. . . On the southeast the forests were full of wild elephants which is still the case at the present day. The king was named Bhaskar Varman who claimed descent from the God Narayana or Vishnu, and his family had occupied the throne for one thousand generations". (*Ancient Geography*, edited by S. N. Majumdar Śāstrī, 1924, pp. 572-73).

DHARMAPALA'S CAPITAL ASCERTAINED. King Dharmapāla is well known to us through the early biographies of Śāṅkardew composed about the close of the sixteenth century in connection with his battles and peace with king Durlabha Nārāyaṇa, which fact in turn is responsible for the migration of Candīvara, the forefather of Śāṅkardew, to Kāmārūpa. The first and foremost of these early biographers was Rāmcarāṇ Thākur, own nephew of Mādhawdew, the apostolic successor of Śāṅkardew. The facts gathered from his work show that Dharmapāla was the king of Kāmatāpur and hence was called Kāmateswar or Kāmeswar, and his rival and his distant cousin was Dhurlabh Nārāyaṇa who ruled over Gauḍa (mod. Maldah) and was hence styled as Gauḍeswar. Ultimately through a curse of the goddess Kāmākhyā, Dharmapāla left his own kingdom which was then amalgamated by Durlabh Nārāyaṇa with his own and this capital of Durlabh lay at a distance of nine hour's journey or walk from Behār. We quote the text in original (ch. IV, vs. 2572-28):

*Dharmapāla rājā āchileka Kāmeswara;
Tāhānte khātaya yata Bhūyā nirantara.
Kāmākhyā Devīye yeve tānka sāpa dilā;
Aponāra rājya eri videsāka gailā.
Dekhileka loke yeve bhaileka arāja;
Gāwe gāwe bhaila teve save Bhūyā rāja.
Durlabha Nārāyaṇa tār belegiā bhāi;
Sio kato dine rājya bhaila eka thāi.
Behārara parā tini praharara bāt;
Gariā nagar rājā Durlabhara pāt.*

This king Durlabhanārayāṇa too is an extremely well-known figure and a great patron of learning referred to by no few early Vaiṣṇavite poets of Kāmarūpa who resided in his kingdom. So definitely Kamatā and Gauḍa which formed one whole western part of ancient Kāmarūpa, now came to be ruled as adjoining kingdoms by two royal cousins.

CITIES OF DHARMAPALA AND MAINAVATI DISCOVERED. Again, Dr. Buchanan Hamilton, who as early as 1809 came to visit the ruins of Kamatāpura, records:—"Dharmapāla's city,—About two miles from a bend in the Tista, a little below Dimlā (in Rangpur District) are the remains of a fortified city, said to have been built by Rājā Dharmapāla It is in the form of a parallelogram, rather less than a mile in length and about half a mile in breadth Dharmapāl had a sister-in-law, Maināvati, the remains of whose fort still exists on the west bank of the Deonaj river about two miles west from Dharmapāl's fort At some distance from the south of this existed a circular mound of earth called Harischandra pāt I have no doubt that this is a tomb probably that of Harichandra whose daughter was married to Gopichandra, the son of Maināvati, and who succeeded his uncle Dharmapāla in his government." (*Hunters' Statistical Account of Kuch Behar*, pp. 360-62).

WHY WAS THE CAPITAL SHIFTED TO KAMATAPUR. Dr. Hamilton further continues:—"Towards the east side is a small square heap which is said to have been the temple of the Goddess Kamateswari which is extremely probable" (p. 365). "Hindu tradition has it that on the fall of the city, the fortunate amulet of Bhagadutta retired to a pond" (p. 368-9). Thus we find that Kamatāpura, the ruins of which city lies at a distance of fourteen miles to the south west of the later capital at the present Koc Behar state, was in all probability the Kāmarūpa Nagara the seat of Dharmapāl's government in the thirteenth century. That the same site might also be the capital of Bhāskaravarmā is suggested by the reference contained in it to the tradition of "the fortunate amulet of Bhagadutta". And this is confirmed by Sir Alexander Cunningham's conclusion (already quoted) that from the details given by Yuān Chwāng it must have been the capital at Kamatāpura that this Chinese pilgrim visited and not Guāhātī (ancient Prāggyotiṣapura) which was the earliest capital since the reign of Naraka. Conquests of Bengal, Behar, Orissa, and Ganjam, and consequent extension of Kāmarūpa to the west in the reigns of Bhāskar, Harṣa (and even upto the reigns of the Pala king till the thirteenth century) might be responsible for this shifting of capital from Guāhātī. And the change of capital to Hārūp-peśwara and Durjayā in between the reigns of Bhāskar and the Pala kings seems to be accounted for by the connotation Mlechhādhinātha of Śālastambha and his line of kings who reigned till the commencement

of the reign of the Pāla kings who claimed to be descendants of Bhagadatta and his line (*vide* Ratnapāls inscriptions, already quoted).

KAMARUP AND KAMATA USED SYNONYMOUSLY BY MUHAMMADAN CHRONICLERS. Still more, the Muhammadans who came to India at the beginning of the thirteenth century knew this country as Kāmruḍ or Kāmru. But later Muhammadan chroniclers used to refer to this country both as Kāmruḍ and Kāmata. In *Ayin-i-Akbari* (l. 3) we definitely find "Kamrup, which is also called Kāmāh" etc. Sir Edward Gait also corroborates the same view when he writes—"At the period with which we are now dealing, the whole tract upto the Karatoya seemed still, as a rule, to have formed a single kingdom, but the name had been changed from Kāmarūpa to Kāmata. The Muhammadan historians sometimes speak as if the terms Kāmarūpa and Kāmata were synonymous and applicable to one and the same country" (*HA*, Ch. 111, pp. 32-43). Even the Māldah Mādrassā inscription and the recently discovered Kāntādūwār Inscription of Hussain Shah contain both the names Kāmata and Kāmaru as if they are synonymous (*KR*, p. 31, fn.).

HISTORY BEHIND PHONOLOGY OF KAMATA. In all probability, Kāmata, is a corruption from 'Kāmadā' which is a synonym for Kāmakhya who is also called Kāmarūpā (*Kālikā Purāṇa* 64-73), other synonyms appearing together in a single verse of the *Kālikā Purāṇa* (62/2):—

*Kāmadā Kāminī Kāmā Kāntā Kāmāṅgadāyinī:
Kāmāṅganāsinī yasmāt Kāmākhyā tena cocyate.*

Kāmakhya is also called Kānteśvarī; and curious enough, the great fortress of Kamatāpura is called Kānteśvar Gaḍ. The copper-plate grant of Vanamāla mentions 'Śrī Kāmeśvara Mahā Gaurī Bhaṭṭārikābhya-madhishthitaśirasah, Kāmakutagireh satatanitambakṣālanādadhikatarā pavitra payah sampūrṇasrotasā" etc. (v. 30). and second copper-plate grant of Indrapāla gives similar reference "Mahā Gaurī Kāmeśvarayoh" etc. (v. 26). All the copper-plate inscriptions testify that the kings of Kāmarūpa down to the thirteenth century were worshippers of Kāmadā or Kāntā (perhaps both the words confused and corrupted to Kāmata) or Kānteśvarī (Kāmakhya) and Kānteśvara (Śiva); and wherever they founded their capital, they possibly established symbols (*yantra*) of Kānteśvarī and Kānteśwara (Hārūpeśwara might be such a name of their God or his symbol) for worship. So it is no wonder if their last capital Kāmruḍa Nagara was later on called Kāmata by the name of their goddess Kāmadā (Kāmakhya). Similarly, Kāmāteśwar or Kānteswar (literally, Lord of Kāmata (Kāmadā) or Kāntā) rather refers to the god than to the king.

IV. AFTER PĀLA-KINGS AND BEFORE AHOM INTRUSION

JAYAPALA, A POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR OF DHARMAPALA. In the Silimpur inscription (*Epigraphiā Indicā*, vol. XIII, v. 22, p. 292) one Kāmarūpa king Jayapāla, has been mentioned:—

*Yaḥ Kāmarūpanṛpater Jayapāledevanāmnastulāpuruṣādāturacintya-
dhāmnaḥ: Hemnāṃ śātāni nava nirbharamarthyamāno
naivādade daśāsato dayaśāsanaṃ ca.*

Jayapāla has been referred to in this verse simply to prove the spirit of sacrifice of one Prahāsa who even declined to accept the offer of 900 gold coins and a grant of land yielding one thousand *dronas* of paddy in connexion with the *tulā-puruṣa* gift of this Kāmarūpa king. But there is no knowing when he ruled nor is there any room for his reign in between Brahmapāla and Dharmapāla having definite epigraphic records of their reigns. So it is surmised that he must have ruled after Dharmapāla, being his son or grandson (K.R. in K.S., p. 36). King Jayapāla's name further appears in a verse in a manuscript, *Chandoga-pariśiṣṭaparakāśa* preserved in the India office, London (*Ep. Ind. XIII*, p. 289):—

*"Kṣmāpālājayapālataḥ sa hi mahāśrāddhaṃ prabhutaṃ mahādānam
cārthigaṇārharanārdra hṛdayaḥ pratyagrahit puṇyavān.*

From internal evidences put forward by Mm. Padmanāth (K.R., K.S., pp. 36-38) both these records may be assigned to the middle of the twelfth (thirteenth ?) century which must have been the time of Jayapāla. He seems to be as liberal, powerful and virtuous as his worthy predecessor, Dharmapāla, from the inscription and manuscript referred to above. No other epigraphic records, local or foreign, copper-plates or rock inscriptions, are known to have mentioned any other Kāmarūpa king.

OVERLORDSHIP OF KAMRUPA KINGS. Thus we may be certain that at least up to the middle of the thirteenth century or till the reign of the Pāla kings, the successors of Naraka and Bhagadatta kept the prestige of their worthy forefathers intact. That Kāmarūpa kings retained the overlordship of the bordering kingdoms is proved from Harjarvarma's inscription (v. 12):—

*Rājyārthaṃ vijigīṣavo giridari prānteṣu yastāsthitā:
(Sandhyarthaṃ śaraṇa)ṅgatā nṛpasutā yamadhyāsate.*

This glorious position was not only enjoyed by Harjarvarman in the middle of the ninth century, but it seems to have continued till the reigns of Dharmapāla and Jayapāla.

AGGRESSIONS AGAINST KAMARUPA. Here and there we find other kings of India said to be launching aggressions against kings of Kāmarūpa. For example, in the Bhāgalpur copper-plate inscription of Nārāyaṇadeva is mentioned "Rājā Prāgjyotishāṇām" (*Gauḍa Lekhamālā*, p. 58) in connexion with the march of Jayapāla, the brother and general of king Devapāla Deva of Gauḍa, for universal conquest of the former. The then reigning king of Kāmarūpa is reckoned to be either Jayamāla (Vīravāhu) or Valavarmā, as Devapāla's reign is fixed in the latter half of the ninth century.

HOSTILE CONTACTS WITH WEST INDIA POWERS. Hoernle opines:—"Of Ratnapala it is stated that he came into hostile contact with the kings of Gurjara, Gauda, Kerala and the Deccan, and with the Bahikas and Taikas. Assuming that Ratnapala's age has been rightly fixed at about 1010 to 1050 A.D. the king of Gurjara at that period would be the Western Chalukya king Jayasīma III or Someswara I. By the Kerala king the Chola Rajavaja is perhaps intended. The Gauda king may have been Mahapala or Nyayapala of the Pala dynasty of Bengal and Behar. To whom the term "king of Dakshinatya or the Dekkan" may refer I do not know. The Bahikas and Taikas are generally taken to be Trans-Indus people—those of Balkh and the Tajiks". (*J.A.S.B.*, pt. I, No. 1, 1898, p. 105). This is of course based on Ratnapāla's first inscription (ll. 34-36) describing the capital, Durjayā, earlier quoted.

INVASION BY A CALUKYA PRINCE FLEETING. *Vikramāṅka Carita* (Ch. III, v. 74) Vihlana records—"Tasyonmulita Kāmarūpanṛpati Prājya-pratāpaśriyāḥ" etc. in connexion with the conquests of the eastern countries by Karṇatendu Vikramāṅka, the Cālukya Prince, during the reign of his father (1040-1071 A.D.). Either Indrapāla or his son Harṣapāla must have ruled in Kāmarūpa about this time, and this must have had no lasting effect in the kingdom of Kāmarūpa.

JATAVARMA'S CONQUEST OF KAMARUPA, BASELESS. Also in the Velava inscription of Bhojavarmā, ruler of Vikramapura, and in a verse in connexion with his grandfather, Jāta Varmā, reference is found to Kāmarūpa (*Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. III, p. 20):—"Yonḡeṣu prathayaśriyaṃ paribhavaṃstāṃ Kāmarūpaśriyaṃ". This was explained by late Rākhaldās Banerji as Jātavarma conquering the countries of Anga and Kāmarūpa (*Bāṅgālār Itihās*, pt. 1, 2nd ed., p. 277). But Mm. Padmanāth conclusively proves that the verse as it stands cannot mean so, and there being pun on the words *āṅga* and *Kāmarūpa* the verse simply means that such beauty (*śriyam*) was manifested in Jātavarma's limbs

(*angeṣu*) that by it even the beauty of Cupid (*Kāmarūpa-sriyam*) was vanquished (*K.R., K.S., p. 39*). In support of his argument he refers to another verse (16) from the rock inscription of Jayadeva, king of Nepāl, (*Indian Antiquary, Vol. IX, p. 179*):—“Angaṃsriyā parigato jita-kāmarūpaḥ Kanchiḡuṇādyavanitābhīrupāsyamaṇaḥ” etc. So the conquest of Kāmarūpa by Jātavarṇa is baseless.

VAIDYADEVA'S KINGSHIP OVER KAMARUPA REALLY UNFOUNDED. *Rāma-carita* by Sandhyākar Nandi refers on more than one occasion to the conquest of Kāmarūpa by Rāmapāla, king of Gauḍa in such lines as,

“Tasya jita Kāmarupādi viṣayavinivṛttamāna sampādyā” 3/47.
“Vigrahanirjita Kāmarūpabhṛt” 4/5.

The relevant verse 13, in Vaidyadeva's inscription (*Gauḍa Lekhamālā, p. 131*):—

“Etādṛśo Hariharidbhūvi satkṛtasya Śrī Tiṃgyadeva nṛpatervikri-
timṇisāmya: Gauḍeśvareṇa bhūvi tasya nareśvaratve Śrī
Vaidyadeva urūkīrtirayaṃ niyuktaḥ”.

This simply states that king Tiṃgyadeva who was in charge of the government of the eastern territories, having rebelled during the time of Kumārapāla, son of Rāmapāla, Vaidyadeva was installed in the kingship in his place. There is no mention here either of Kāmarūpa or Prāḡjyotiṣa; but there are mentions of ‘Prāḡjyotiṣa bhukti’ and ‘Kāmarūpa maṇḍal’ in regard to the location of the land granted (*Vaidyadeva's Inscription, ll. 48-49, Gauḍa lekhamālā, p. 134*). This simply may mean that the land granted was sometimes included in the Prāḡjyotiṣa or Kāmarūpa kingdom, and nothing beyond.

CONQUEST OF KAMARUPA BY RAMAPALA INCONGRUENT. Further still, the donee for generations lived in the village Bhavagrāma (now located in Bhavata) about 22 miles to the west of the present town of Bagurā (*Bagurār Itihās, 2nd ed., p. 112*) decidedly on the west of the ancient river Karatoyā which used to form the western boundary of Kāmarūpa proper. So there is no definite proof of Kāmarūpa having been conquered by Rāmapāla of Gauḍa who must have been a contemporary of Dharmapāla's father Harṣapāla. *Gauḍa Rājamālā* and *Bāṅgālār Itihās* assign the latter half of the eleventh century to be the reign of Rāmapāla. The author further writes in his article “Palas the reign of Bengal” (Ch. VI):—“Rāmapāladeva was succeeded by his second son Kumārapāla about the year 1097 A.D.” (*Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. V, No. 3, p. 101*). Then Kumārapāla was a

contemporary of Dharmapāla, and as such he could never be in the kingship of any part of Kāmarūpa proper (K.R., K.S.).

CONQUEST OF KAMARUPA BY ANY SENA KING UNCONFIRMED. The Deopāda inscription (*Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol III, p. 48, V. No. 20) is interpreted by some people as Vijayasena's conquest of Kāmarūpa. But the relevant line in verse is—"Gauḍendramadravadapākṛta Kāmarūpabhūpam Kaliṅgamapi jastarasā jigāya." Mm. Padmanāth opines that the word "Apākṛta" in the above line seems to suggest the then Kāmarūpa king (Dharmapāla or any of his successors, may be Jayapāla already mentioned) was expelled by Vijayasena when the former attempted an invasion of the latter's territories (K.R., K.S. p. 42, fn. 3). Similarly the phrases "Vikramavaśikṛta Kāmarūpa", occurring in the Madhainagar inscription (*Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. III, p. 111, line 32) is explained as Lakṣmaṇsena, the grandson of Vijayasena, conquering Kāmarūpa; but it has no confirmation from any record of Kāmarūpa, epigraphic or otherwise. But the epigraphic records already quoted amply prove that Kāmarūpa kings retained their kingdom intact even till the reign of Jayapāl of the latter half of the thirteenth century.

BOUNDARIES OF KAMARUPA AS IN REPUTED SANSKRIT WORKS. The famous *Kālikā Purāna* (c. 900 A.D.) assigns that the Kāmākhyā pīṭha was at the heart of the kingdom, and by the accounts given in the *Viṣṇu Purāna* the country had a radius of one hundred *yojanas* with Kāmākhyā pīṭha at its centre. The *Yoginī Tantra* (c. 1400 A.D.) gives even a more detailed description. It says that the country was one hundred *yojanas* in length and thrice ten *yojanas* in breadth, and that it was triangular in its shape. The boundaries of the kingdom have been defined as the Karatoyā on the west, the Dikrong and the Dikhow on the east, the Kuñjagiri on the north and the confluence of the Lākṣyā or Lakṣmī and the Brahmaputra on the south:

"Tridaśa yojana vistīrṇam dīrghena śata yajanam:
Kāmarūpam vijānihi trikoṇākāramuttamam.
Karatoyāṃ samāśritya jāvaddikaravāsīnim:
Dakṣiṇe Brahmaputrasya Lākshyāyāḥ sangamāvadhi
Tīrthasreṣṭha Dikṣu Nadī pūrvasyāṃ girikanṇyakā
Dakṣiṇe Brahmaputrasya Lākshyāyāḥ sangamāvadhi
Kāmarūpa iti khyātaḥ sarvasūstreṣu niścitaḥ."

THE FOUR PITHAS OF ANCIENT ASAM. The country of Kāmarūpa was divided into four divisions or pīṭhas, the westernmost boundary now being narrowed down to the Karatoyā. So the westernmost division, the *Ratnapīṭha*, was bounded by the Karatoyā on the west and the

Swarnakoṣa (now Sonkoh) the eastern boundary of the present state of Kocbehar, on the east. Then the *Kāmapīṭha* in between the Sonkoh and the Rūpikā (now Rupahi) in Khāgarijān (present Nagāo). *Swarnāpīṭha* stretched between the Rūpahi and Bhairabī (now Bharali) in Tezpur. The Easternmost division, *Saumāra Pīṭha* lay between the Bharali and the Dikkara (now Dikrang) in the Lakhimpur Subdivision. These *pīṭhas* may also refer to *Kāmrūpa Dharma Maṇḍalā* divisions.

FIRST MUHAMMADAN INVASION IN 1206 REPULSED. In between the last epigraphic record of about the middle of the thirteenth century and the regular chronicles of the Ahom rulers there are some records of the Muhammadan chroniclers to throw some light on the internal condition of *Kāmarūpa* otherwise in dark. Muhammad Bakhtiyār Khilji's invasion of Tibet is described in *Tabaḡuāt-i-Nasiri* (Raverty's translation, Vol. 1, p. 560) and in *Riyaz-us-Salatin* (Abdus Salam's translation, pp. 65-68). About 1198 he overthrew the last Sena king of Bengal, Lakshmaṇiya, and some years hence started on his expedition to the north. The king of *Kāmarūpa* was then styled as *Kāmeśwar* and the *Karatoyā* still formed the western boundary of Assam. The invaders were repulsed presently and were saddled with heavy loss of his soldiers; Bakhtiyār himself escaping with a few hundred horsemen. The conquest on the side of *Kāmarūpa* has been recorded in the *Kānāi Baraśī* rock inscription near the present town of Guāhātī, which reads:

“*Śāka* 1128. *Śāke Turagayugmese madhumāsaratrayodaśe;*
Kāmarūpam samāgatya Turaṣkāḥ kṣayamāyayuh.”

SECOND AND THIRD INVASIONS IN 1227-1257 ALSO DROPPED. The *Tabaḡuāt-i-Nasiri* (Raverty, Vol. 1, p. 594) mentions that in about 1227, one Governor of Bengal, Ghiyasuddin, attempted the second invasion of *Kāmarūpa* but returned unsuccessful. This invader is said to have proceeded as far as *Sadiyā* upto the *Brahmaputra*, but was soon expelled. The same source (p. 203) reveals that again in about 1257 *Ikhtiyaruddin* *Yuzbak Tughril Khān* launched the third invasion of *Kāmarūpa*, and finally met with a sad reverse resulting in the loss of all their lives including that of the Sultan himself.

FOURTH INVASION IN 1337 ALSO CRUSHED. There occurred another, which seems to be the fourth invasion in 1337 “by *Muhammaḍ Shāh* who sent 100,000 horseman well equipped to Assam; but the whole army perished in that land of witchcraft and not a trace of it was left. He sent a second army to avenge the former disaster, but when they came to Bengal, they would go no farther, and the plan had to be given up.” (*The Alamgīrnāmāh*, p. 731).

THE KHEN DYNASTY AND DESTRUCTION OF KAMATAPUR IN 1498. Niladhvaj, the founder of the Khen (Khyān) dynasty of Kāmarūpa is often considered to have been the Kāmeśwar or king of Kāmarūpa, during the first three Muhammadan invasions with his capital at Kamatāpur on the left bank of the Dharalā. He is said to have at first been a mere cowherd who came to the throne in about 1204 by overthrowing the last Pāla king of Kāmarūpa. This suggests that the Pāla kings must have ruled till the early part of the thirteenth century. Niladhvaj was followed by his son Cakradhwaj who in turn is said to have been succeeded by his son Nilāambar (the last king of the Khen dynasty, (Gait, *HA*, rev. ed., p. 44). Nilāambar is considered to have come to the throne in about 1455, more than 250 years after Niladhvaj, which evidently shows that not two but many more generations must have passed between the two kings. Whatever that may be, Kamatāpur, the capital of Nilāambar was definitely put to destruction in 1498 by a double treachery. Nilāambar's minister, Sacipātra, who on the pretext of going on a pilgrimage really went to Gauḍa and persuaded its ruler Hussain Shāh to invade Kāmātā, for personal revenge. Though a surprise attack. Nilāambar's army was more than a match for that of Hussain Shāh and it was soon put to flight. But Hussain Shah while admitting defeat requested Nilāambar to permit his wife to see Nilāambar's queen. Trusting in his honour, Nilāambar granted his wish, and Hussain Shah by this means introduced some armed men, captured the city and took Nilāambar a prisoner who however made a miraculous escape and was not heard of since.

CONQUEST OF KAMATA PROVED TEMPORARY. Nilādhvaj is said to have imported many Brahmans from Mithilā. Nilāambar constructed a grand road from Kamatāpura to Ghorāghāt, and a part of it even today forms the main road between Kocbehār, Raṅgpur and Bagurā. He was a king of considerable power and ruled the country between the Karatoyā and the Barnadī. According to Muhammadan chronicles, Hussain Shah left his son as a Governor of Kamatā (western Kāmarūpa) at Hajo, west of the Barnadī. The Malda inscription commemorating this treacherous conquest by erecting a Mādrāssā, is dated about 1501-02. A later attempt aimed at annexation of the Ahom kingdom resulted in complete annihilation of the Muhammadan army and passing away of Kāmātā from off their hands. There is a tradition (*J.A.S.B.*, 1874, p. 216) that Ismāil Ghāzi conquered Kamatāpur about 1460; but it is unconfirmed (Gait's *HA*, p. 45, fn.). India's connexion with the Muhammadans begins about 712 when Muhammad Vin Kāšem invaded Sind, the kingdom of Daher; and regular Muhammadan rule began in India about 1192 when Muhammad Ghori, once defeated and

pardoned by king Pṛthvīrāj, launched a sudden attack on his patron, imprisoned and killed him and laid the foundation of the Muhammadan kingdom in India. Ghori died in 1206, the very year in which Bakhtyar attempted his first invansion of Kāmarūpa that miscarried, and Muhammadan conquests of Kāmarūpa, as a rule, never became lasting.

CORRESPONDENCE OF DATES OF EPIGRAPHY AND BIOGRAPHY ABOUT DHARMAPĀLA'S REIGN. Kings Dharmapāl and Durlabh Nārāyaṇ styled as Kāmeśwar and Gauḍeśwar respectively and described as cousins, have already been mentioned. Gait refers to him: "One of the legends of the Bara Bhūya mentions Durlabh Nārāyaṇ as a Raja of Kamatā and if it can be relied on, he would seem to have ruled, at the end of the thirteenth century, over the country between the Bar Nadi and the Karatoya." (HA, p. 43). Śaṅkardew flourished from 1449 to 1568, and like himself his ancestors with one honourable exception lived for an average of about 80 years which is clear from the old biographies which we have no ground generally to disbelieve. Even taking an average of seventy five years, for a generation in this particular line we find 1149 A.D. as the time of birth of his fourth ancestor Caṇḍibar, a great contemporary of kings Durlabh and Dharmapāl. And this rightly corresponds to the date of Dharmapāl as found from epigraphic records.

KAMATARAJ DURLABHA'S GENEALOGY. In the sources mentioned above, sons of Dharma Pāla and Durlabh are named Tāmradhwaj (RCT, v. 90) and Indra Nārāyaṇ respectively. The latter appears in Droṇa parva by Kaviratna Sarawatī.

*"Nṛpa śiromani, deva mahāmānī, Durlabha Nārā'ṇa rājā;
Nite putrawate, pālilā satate, pṛthivīra yata prajā.
Tāhāna tanaya, bhailā dharmamaya, Indranārāyana dewa."*

RCT even gives a genealogy (vs. 56-62) of Durlabh's immediate predecessors, his father being Pratāpadhawaj, an intriguing Kāyastha youth and minister to king Siṃhadwaj, whose throne he usurped by killing him. RCT also gives the names of Durlabh's mother Pārvatī and of his seven wives (v. 63). But Dharmapāl and Durlabh, though usually styled as Kāmeśwar and Gauḍeśwar are also styled in the reverse order, as if Kamatā and Gauḍa are synonymous. About Gauḍeśwar Durlabh we find in the *Prahalād Carita* by Hem Saraswatī:

*"Kamatamaṇḍal(e) Durlabha Nārā'ṇa, nṛpavara anupām:
Tāhān rājyata, Rudra Saraswatī, Devajāni kanyā nām.
Tāhānā tanaya, Hema Saraswatī Dhruvara anuja bhāi:
Padavandhe tēho pracāra karilā, Vāmana Purāṇa cāi."*

Also Harihar Vipra in his *Vavruvāhanar Yuddha* (Aswamedha Parva, *Mahābhārata*) writes:

“*Jaya jayi nṛpati, Durlabhnārā'ṇā,*
Kamatāpure bhailā Vīravara
Saputra vāndhawe yeve, sukhe rūjya karantoka,
Jīvantoka sahasra vatsara.
Tāhān rūjyata thita sādhujana mononīta
Awamedha virachilā sāra:
Vipra Harihara Kavi Harira caraṇa sevi
Padavandhe karilā pracūr.”

KAMESWAR QND GAUDESWAR BECAME SYNONYMOUS: “This title (Gauḍeswar) was often claimed by a quite large number of petty chiefs and in the eighth and ninth centuries there were at times as many as six princelings in North Bengal all calling themselves Gauḍeswar simultaneously (*Archaeological Survey of India*, vol. XV, p. 111). Gaur was also the ancient name of a part of the modern district of Sylhet.” (*H.A.* p. 40). In all probability the territories about the Karatoṃyā were then ruled by many minor kings, each calling himself Kāmeśwar or Gauḍeswar as he happened to choose, and this is amply proved by the instances of Dharmapāl and Durlabh.

INVADERS OF THE TAI CLAN OF THE SHAN TRIBE: All this relates mainly to Ratnapīṭha and Kāmapīṭha or the two western divisions of the Kāmarūpa kingdom, west of the Barnadī. We are enlightened about the Suvarṇa pīṭha and Saumāra pīṭha or the eastern divisions, particularly by the chronicles of a race of foreign invaders who made their appearance in the eastern extremity of the Brahmputra and had a well-developed historical sense. They were the forefathers of the present Āhoms originally belonging to the Tāi clan of the Shān tribe, who had their territories somewhere in the northern and eastern hills of upper Burmā, perhaps Mau-lung, under their Sukāphā. His forefathers Khun-lung (prince-elder) and Khun-lāi (prince-younger) are said to be the sons of Leng-don (one-powerful) or Indra, the god of heaven, by whose desire they are said to have descended there-from by a gold ladder with their followings in the year corresponding to 568 A.D. and are said to have alighted in the country of Mun-gri muṅ-grām (country-deserted country-uninhabited), with no other mission than establishing a kingdom on earth, by the elder as king and the younger as his minister.

MUNG-DUN-SUN-KHAM OR COUNTRY FULL-GARDEN GOLD: Sukāphā, due to a private dispute, is said to have left Mun-lung, where his pre-

decessors reigned, about 1215 A.D., with eight nobles, and 9,000 men, women and children, and two elephants and three hundred horses. In 1228, he arrived at the bank of the Khām-nām-jāng after moving about for thirteen years in the hilly tracts of the Pātkaī, the extreme north-east Asam range, and now and then making raids in the Nāgā villages. Step by step he proceeded to Nām-rūp, Tipām, Hābung and such other places of upper Asam by atrocities on the Nāgās and others who stood in his way and leaving a noble here and a detachment there to look after the territories he has traversed, till at last he built a city at Carāi-dew, about twenty miles to the south-east of the present town of Śiwa-sāgar, in 1253. Sukāphā then fought with and defeated the Mañās and the Barāhis, then under their kings Badan-cā and Thākum Thā, ruling over the neighbouring territories; but then made friends with them encouraging inter-marriage and adopting conciliatory measures. These foreign invaders called this land *Mung-dun-sun-khām* (country-full-garden-gold) in their own tongue. Sukāphā died in 1268 leaving his son Sutenphā to succeed him.

V. THE BĀRABHŪYĀ, CUTIYĀ, AND KACHĀRI KINGS

IN SAUMARA AND SUVARNA PITHAS OR EAST AND CENTRAL ASAM. NOW these Tāi invaders not only give us connected accounts of the country since, but also throws sufficient light on the internal events of the country in the two eastern divisions, namely, the Saumāra and Suvarṇa pīthas about that time. From those accounts, confirmed here and there by other sources, we learn that in those early days of the thirteenth century, "a line of the Chutiya kings ruled the country east of the Subansiri and the Disāng, with the exception of a strip to the south and south-east where several small Bodo tribes enjoyed a precarious independence. Further west, there was a Kachari kingdom on the bank of the Brahmaputra which probably extended half-way across the Nowgong district... west of the Kachāris on the south bank, and of the Chutiya's on the north, were a number of petty chiefs called Bhuiyas. The boundary between the tracts ruled by these Bhuiyas and the kingdom of Kāmarūpa (Kamata) doubtless varied from time to time; a powerful prince would bring many of them under his control, but they would again become independent when the sceptre passed into the hands of a weaker ruler". (Gait, H.A., p. 38).

BARA BHUYA, CONNOTATIONS THEREOF. The Bhūyās or the Bāra-bhūyās, as they are generally known, were once supposed to have some connection with the aboriginal tribe of Bāra Bhūyā of Chota Nagpur. That it was wrong at least in reference to these feudatory chiefs of

and the place where they resided soon came to be known as Kanaujpur. The *Gomotha Vamśāwali* says:

*“Caturdaśe te Kānyakubja samāgātān dvijān;
Sthāpayāmāsa tān sarvān Durlabha Nārāyaṇa nṛpottamaḥ.
Caturdaśā nāmāni pramāṇi samṛdhwāni ca;
Vāsarthaṃ pradadau tebhyaḥ Narottamaḥ Durlabha Nārāyaṇaḥ.*

Facts reveal that the families were greatly reinforced, specially the Kāyasthas, when they came to Kamatā under Dharmapāla who made them established with land-grants and slaves, in certain parts of his kingdom.

INDIGENOUS ORIGIN OF THE BARA BHUYAS. The account differs essentially from that of *Ādi Carita*, a poetical work of doubtful authorship. The narration given in AC maintains that Ārimatta, the ruler of the kingdom of Ratnapur with Viśwanāth in Tezpur as his capital, dying without any issue, left his minister Samudra in charge of his kingdom. Lakṣmī, a daughter born to Samudra's son, Manohar, and his wife, Sacī, became an orphan in her seventh year by the deaths of both her parents. She then invoked the goddess who was her namesake to come to her help, who presently appeared before her and gave her *vījamaṅtra* of letters by which she could gain any husband she desired. On her twelfth year, she used this *vījamaṅtra* to secure the Sun as her husband and was consequently successful in begetting two sons by him, named Śāntanu and Sumanta. Śāntanu married Campā by whom he had twelve sons who, as granted by their Solar grandfather, ruled as chiefs on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra with Lakshmipur, named after their grandmother, as their capital; and they became renowned as Bar Bārā Bhūyās. Sumanta married Bhadrā by whom he too had twelve sons who also, as ordained, ruled as chiefs on the southern bank with Rāmpūr as their capital. Śaṅkardew is said to have styled himself as a descendent of Sumanta, the younger son of Lakṣmī who died after her eighty-fifth year.

HOW BHUYAS, CUTIYAS AND KACHĀRIS WERE SUBJUGATED. AC proceeds further to say that as the Bar Bārā Bhūyās ruled as chiefs at Viśwanāth in Ratnapūr, the Cutiyās and Kachāris came one by one and proposed to become their kings; and the Bhūyās not only resented this but fought them and drove them out in turn. Then came the Saumāras (Ahoms) who made the same proposal which was likewise rejected. This resulted in hostility with Ahoms and ended with a defeat on the side of the Bhūyās. By conciliatory methods the Āhoms at last managed to keep the Bhūyās under their control. They also conquered the Cutiyās and Kachāris with the help of the Bhūyās who now became

lords over the four countries of Vidarbha, Kurmat, Ratnapūr and Saumār. (AC, vs. 92-214).

AC BASED ON LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS. The kingdom of Ratnapur is said to be founded by one Vikramāditya, youngest son of Janmejaya who in turn was the son of Parikṣita and great grandson of Yudhiṣṭhira. Pratāpurī, a king of this line had a son named Māyāmatta whose two sons and one daughter were Ārimatta, Nāgamatta and Dai respectively. Dai is said to have been married to Brahmā's son, Lauhitya (Brahmaputra), and Āri and Nāga were established as kings at Viśwanāth and Ratnapur (present Majuli, the river island) while Māyāmatta was killed by the hands of Ārimatta in a chase. But this legend too essentially differs from other legends mentioned by Gait (HA, pp. 18, 19, 39).

OTHER LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS. "Afterwards Jitaree, a Chatree came from Drabir, paid his devotions to Madhow and became Rajah of Camroop. He established his residence at Roobayasull mountain (Kuberachal) and gave rise to a line of seventeen princes, who ruled the country in succession to the time of Ramsunder (Ramachandra). In the capital of the latter resided a virgin of the Soodreh caste, who attended by several companions visited the Lohicheh (Lauhitya) for the purpose of bathing. Berhampooter (Brahmaputra) captivated by the beauty of the damsel conveyed her beneath his flood. A son named Arimuttu was the result of their embraces. Arimutta slew Doolubindreh, Rajah of Bayhar, called (himself) Comoleswar (Kamateswar) and succeeded to his Government. From hence, he proceeded to Camroop, attacked and destroyed Ramsunder and established his throne at Baijurghar (Vaidyargad) where he constructed a fortress. Sometime after he abandoned Baijurghur in favour of Prehttawbpoor (Pratap-pur) to the north of Bishwenaut (Viswanath) where he erected a fort. Thence he removed his seat of Empire to Camroop. Phengoo khoonur (Konwar) nephew of Doolubindreh (Durlabhendra) resided in a fort of his own construction at Soanparuda under the Government and in the service of Arimuttu (Wade's *An Account of Assam*, 1800, pt. 11, pp. 180-81).

HISTORICITY OF BARA BHUYAS UNTOUCHED. Wade's accounts of Jitāri and Rāmcandra is curiously supported by one *Rājyaṃsūwalī* by Ratikānta:

"Jitāri nāmat ek kṣatriya āchilā:

Bhakti bhāve Mādhawaka sevi Rājā bhailā.

Kuverācalat pāt kari rājya khailā."

"Jitāriye ādi Rāmcandra bhailā anta;

Ehimate caturtha puruṣa bhailanta."

ASSESSING THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE ĀDI CARIT. Ārimatta legends are so hopelessly divergent that it will simply be a wild goose

chase here to make an attempt to reconcile them. One of the traditions names Ratna Singh as Ārimatta's son (as Ratnamālā is said to be his wife, whence perhaps is the name of the kingdom, Ratnapur), and another names him Jongālvalahu (which name is commemorated by Jongāl Goḍ at Nagāo). The eldest son of Sumanta named Kanaujvara, is said to have lived in Behar for some time, giving rise to the name of Kanaujpur, before he breathed his last at Rāmpur, near Guāhātī. Kanaujvara's son and his grandson are named Gaṇḍīvar and Lanḍā Bhūyā respectively. This is sheer anachronism proving that AC is a hopeless spurious work by some comparatively recent writer, ascribing it for some motive to the great Mādhawdew. Even then the fact stands that the Bāra Bhūyās were for long the ruling chiefs "west of the Kachāris on the south bank and of the Cutiyās on the north".

TRADITIONS ABOUT THE CUTIYAS. Gait in his *Report on Historical Research in Assam*, and Brown in his *Deori-Chutia Grammar* mention a few legends of the Cutiyās whose original habitat was "not far removed from the home of the Shans" and whose "appearance suggests that they have in their frames a considerable infusion of Shan blood", but whose language was "unmistakably Bodo". (Gait, H.A., p. 40). Cutiyās trace their origin to king Bhīsmaka who ruled in Vidarbha, identified with Sadiyā "where the Chutiyas were actually found to have ruled" and whose daughter Rukmiṇī, was married by Kṛṣṇa evidently pointing to their adopting a Hindu culture. So it is that we have two sections of the Cutiyās, viz., the Āhom-Cutiyās and Hindū-Cutiyās. Whatever this may be, the founder of the Cutiyā kingdom is, according to tradition, one Virpāl whose son Saṅgiripāl (Gaurinārāyaṇ) subjugated the Cutiyās of Rangalgiri, Nilgiri, Candragiri, etc. and defeating king Bhadrasena at last established his capital at Ratnapur assuming the name of Ratnadhwaipāl in c. 1223. Ratnadhwaipāl is also said to have defeated another king Nyāyapāl and to have managed to get the hands of the princess of Kamatāpura in marriage. The eighth king of this line is known as Dhīrnārāyaṇ, whose son was assigned by the Āhom king an estate bounded on the east by the Rotā river and on the west by the northern course of the Dhansiri, on the north by the road of Kavira, and on the south by the Brahmaputra.

HUMAN SACRIFICES IN THE COPPER TEMPLE AT SADIYA. The Tāmeswari (Copper) Temple of the Cutiyās, also known as the Eastern Kāmākhyā, meant for worship of the goddess Kecāi Khātī (eater of raw flesh) was even after their subjugation by the Āhoms in the sixteenth century noted for its human sacrifices, a practice which was found also among other hill tribes such as the Tipperas, Kachāris, Koces, Jayan-

tiās (and Khāṣis) of old Kāmarūpa. ("Human Sacrifices in Ancient Assam" by Gaît, J.A.S.B., 1898, p. 56).

CUTIYAS STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM. In the reign of the Āhom king Sutuphā (1364-76), the Cutiyās encountered with Āhoms resulting in the Āhom king's murder and subsequent interregnum (1376-80). The Cutiyās were of course defeated by the next king, Tyaokhānti, who came to the throne in 1380. Very little is known about the Cutiyās in 1513 or 1516. We hear of one Cutiyā king Dhīr Nārāyaṇ or Candra Nārāyaṇ invading the Āhom kingdom under Suhung-mung *alias* Dihingyā Rājā (1497-1539). The Cutiyās were defeated and saddled with heavy losses, and the Āhom king, occupying Mungkhraṅ and the places round Nāmdāṅ, built a town there. In 1520 and 1522, the Cutiyās and Ahom kings attacked each other with alternate success and defeat till in 1522 the Cutiyās were brought under complete subjugation by the Ahoms, who had their capital still at Carāidew.

ANNIHILATION OF CUTIYA KINGDOM IN 1523. The Cutiyā kingdom was now annexed to their own and an additional State officer, appointed Sadiyākhawā Gohāi to govern it. Once more the Cutiyās rebelled in 1527, but were subdued after some trouble. The first king under whom the Cutiyās are said to have come into power about 1223 is named Ratnadhvaj, and the last king under whom they lost their kingdom is named Nītipāl. In order to prevent further rebellion the Cutiyās, after 1527, are said to be made scattered all over Assam specially in one locality in Tezpur still called Sooteā (Cutiyā), a name commemorative of the sad end of that heroic race.

DOMINATION OF KACHARIS FROM PRE-HISTORIC TIMES. The Kachārīs, it seems, are one of the earliest aboriginal tribes living in Kāmarūpa, for comparatively a very long period with perhaps a great primitive civilisation, which is apparently proved by the ruins of Dimāpur, described by Godwin Austen (J.A.S.B., 1874, p. 1) and by Dr. T. Bloch (*Archaeological Report*, 1902-03).

"The wide extent and long duration of Bodo domination is shown by the frequent occurrence of the prefix 'di' or 'ti', the Bodo word for water, in the river names of the Brahmaputra valley and the adjoining country to the west eg. Bibru, Dikhu, Dihing, Dihong, Dibond, Disang, Dimla etc. In some cases the old name is disappearing—the Dichu river, for instance, is now better known as Jaldhaka (and Dichai as Bhogdai)—while in others it has already gone, as in the case of the Brahmaputra, which in the early days of the Ahom rule was known as the Ti-lao:—The Ahoms ruled in Assam for seven hundred years, but their word for river (nam) occurs only in a few instances in the extreme east, eg. Namrup, Namtsik and Namsang. They called the

Dikhu, the earlier Kachari name has survived in spite of them." (H.A., pp. G-7) "In the Brahmaputra valley the Kacharis call themselves Bado or Bodo fisā (sons of Bodo). In Kachar they call themselves Dimasa, a corruption of Dimo-fisa or "sons of the great river." They were known to the Ahoms as Timisa clearly a corruption of Dimasa, so that this name must have been in use when they were still in the Dhansiri valley." (*Ibid.*, p. 247).

FABULOUS ORIGIN OF KACHARIS. Like the Koces, about whom we shall presently speak, the Kachāris too claim their descent from god Śiva, as the Āhoms do from god Indra and Chutiyaś from king Bhīṣmaka, the father-in-law of Kṛṣṇa. Wade in his *Account of Assam*, (Ch. III) compiled from an Āhom chronicle, relates to legends about this fabulous origin of the Kachāris. One Deongdani had paid her devotion to god Śiva to have her a male child by him, and in granting her prayer, Śiva appeared before her in the form of a native Kachāri, and the son of her desire was born as the result of their embraces. Bīrhās, the reigning king of the country, had witnessed bad omens and was ordered by Śiva in a dream to resign his government.

VICĀRPATIFĀ, THE FIRST KACHARI KING. According to the prevailing custom of the Kachāris the man from whose hand the State elephant would receive his food the moment the State cock, both preserved for the purpose, would crow, should become the king of the Kachāris. On the resignation of Bīrhās and their consequent search for a king by the above formula, Deongdani's son was found out and installed as king under the name of Vicārpatifā while the former king, who gave his daughter in marriage to the new king, himself served as the latter's prime minister.

VIKRAMADITYA-FĀ, MAHAMANI-FĀ, MAYIFĀ, LARAFĀ, KARAFĀ, AND DETSONGFA. Vicārpati-fā who much increased his territories by new conquests, was succeeded by his son Vikramāditya-fā who made further extensions of the Kachāri kingdom. He is said to have made two images of the god and goddess, popularly known as *Brā-Brī* (Buḍhā-Buḍhī), having their counter-parts in the Hindu god and goddess, Śiva and Durgā or Kālī. Establishing of these gold images in his own residence and in another town is said to be responsible for the names Soṅāpur and Banpur respectively in his kingdom, Soṅāpur, his capital, lying a few miles to the south-east of the town of Guāhātī. His brother Mahāmaṇi-fā, who was the governor during his reign and made big tanks, succeeded him to the throne and shifted his capital to Lakṣmīndarpur. On his death, Mahāmaṇi-fā ascended the throne and became known as the prince of Hurrum, making his brother Maṇi-fā the governor of Lakṣmīndarpur. Maṇi-fā then succeeded his royal brother and was

succeeded in turn by Larāfā who became the prince of Hurrum and Karāfā the governor of Lakṣmīndarpur. On Larāfā's death, Karāfā succeeded him to the principality of Hurrum, and Detsongfā to the governorship of Lakṣmīndarpur. (*An Account of Assam*, 1800, pp. 59-60).

RACIAL AFFINITIES OF KACHARIS WITH OTHER TRIBES. Now, as the Kachāris as a race appear to have been akin to the Koces, their linguistic resemblances show a very near affinity with the speeches of the Cutiyās, and of the Lalungs and Marāns of the plains and of the Gāros and the Tipperas on the hills. These Bodo people even today are widely distributed, and the spread of a uniform Bodo language over practically the whole of modern Asam and north-east Bengal points to their wider distribution and domination over Eastern India at some remote period. But there are no records of their rule and of extent of their dominion; nor their traditions appear so rich as to afford us any means of surmise. The Kachāris of North Kāchār claim their descent from the line of Ha-tsung-tsā, who ruled in Kāmarūpa long ago. Risley, in his *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, mentions that according to the Limbu legend of creation one of the two progenitors of the human race settled in the Kāchār country at the foot of the hills between the Brahmaputra and Kosi rivers, and there became the father of the Koch, Mech and Dhimal tribes. On this point Gait observes:—"Omission of the aspirate is a common occurrence in words borrowed from Bengali or Assamese . . . The district of Cachar may have got its name directly from this word or it may have been so called after its principal tribe. In any case it is certain that the Kacharis did not get their name from Cachar." (*H.A.*, p. 247).

SPREAD OF THE KACHARI KINGDOM. As earlier mentioned, the Kachāris in the thirteenth century were found to have had their dominions extending mostly from the Dikhou to the Kalaṅg river, or practically the Suvarṇa Piṭha along the southern bank of the Brahmaputra, embracing the tract about the Dhansiri and the present North Kāchār subdivision. It seems therefore that at this time the Kachārī kingdom was bounded on the east by the Cutiyā and on the west by the Kamatā territories; but about the close of the thirteenth century, due to the thrust of the Āhoms from the east, the Kachāris, east of the Dikhou, seem to have withdrawn to concentrate their power.

THE KACHARI CAPITAL SHIFTED FROM DIMAPUR TO MAIBONG. In 1490 a great battle was fought on the bank of this river with defeat inflicted on the Āhoms, and another two battles fought with them about the Dikhou in 1525 with defeat and conquest respectively on the side of

the Āhoms. In 1531 the enemies encountered afresh in the south of the Golāghāt resulting in the defeat of the Kachārīs and death of Detsong, their king's brother. The Āhoms followed the Kachārīs even to their capital at Dimāpur, up the Dhansiri, forty-five miles to the south of Golāghāt. The king Khun-khara left the capital and Detsong was set up by the Āhoms in their place. But in 1536, he too rebelled to the effect that the Āhoms plundered the capital town and murdered Detsong. Then the Kachārīs left Dimāpur and established their new capital at Māibong in north Cāchār. This is the version of Gait; but the accounts of Dr. Wade differ essentially and do not seem dependable.

DIMAPUR OR HIDIMBAPUR, SUGGESTING HIDIMBA OF THE MAHABHARATA. About the middle of the sixteenth century the Kachārī king is found to be styled as lord of Hidimba, and this name Hidimbapur or Hidamba often appears in inscriptions and other records since. So we find a suggestion here that Dimapur may actually have been a corruption of Hidimbapur, being the country of Hidimba and Ghatotkacha connected with Bhīma, and being of the Mahābhārata or Kurukṣetra fame.

COINS OF KACHARI KINGS, DATED 1583 ETC. A silver coin, dated equivalent to 1583 A.D. and discovered at Maibong, shows Yaśo Nārāyaṇ Deva "a worshipper Hara-Gaurī and Śiva-Durgā of the line of Hachengsa" (*J.A.S.B.*, 1912, Vol. VIII, p. 556). Three undated silver coins have also been found at the same time and place, the first issued by Yaśo Nārāyaṇ too, and the other two by Pratāp Nārāyaṇ, alias Śatrudaman. Another coin figured by Stapleton (*J.A.S.B.*, Vol. VI, No. 4, p. 160) has been identified by Botham as of Tāmradhwaj.

VI. HISTORIC EMERGENCE AND DISAPPEARANCE OF KOCES

EMERGENCE AND ORIGIN OF THE KOCES. Even after the fall of Kamatā in 1498, it was noticed, the Muhammadans could not hold the country long and it was divided by different chiefs among themselves. About this time, 1515, Viṣu, one of such chiefs pushed his way to the front by defeating the Bhūyā chiefs of the country and also subduing the chiefs of Phulguri, Vijni and other places. He thus made himself the master of the country west of the Bar Nadī and east of the Karatoyā and assumed the name King Viśwa Siṃha. His father was one Hāriā Maṇḍal, a Mech or Koc who is said to have married two sisters, Hirā and Jirā, by the first of whom was born Viṣu (so named for being born on the day of Viṣuva saṃkrānti or Vihu) while the second was born his second son, Śiśu. To what race these Koces or Rajvaṃsis, as they style themselves west of the Mānāh river, belong,

is not yet conclusively proved. They are sometimes identified with the Kuvacas of the Purāṇas and Tantras. Dalton called them Dravidian while Risley said they had an intermixture with the Mongoloid stock, the Dravidian characteristics preponderating. But Gait opines that the true Koces are a Mongoloid race, undoubtedly much akin to the Mecas and Gāros. He asserts that formerly the Koces and Mecas had free inter-marriages, which has of late been checked by the fact of the former being now Hinduised (*H.A.*, pp. 46-47; *Assam Census Report*, 1891, p. 212; *Bengal Census Report*, 1901, p. 382).

A KSHATRIYA ORIGIN ATTRIBUTED. But the *Daraṅ Rājvaṃśāvalī* (Gait's analysis, *J.A.S.B.*, Vol. LXIII) which is now available in print (Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1917) composed by one Sūryakhari Daibajña in about 1798 (Gait's *Koch Kings of Kāmrūpa*). Hem Goswami's Introduction to *Daraṅ Rājvaṃśāvalī* (p. XII) gives an argument as to the Kṣatriya origin of the Koc kings. Sons of Sahashārjuna, a Kṣatriya prince, son of Haihaya, of the line of the Moon, killed the sage Yamadagni, father of Paraśurāma. The latter in his fury wanted to avenge the murder of his father by removing all the Kṣatriyas on earth, specially the son of Sahasrārjuna. Paraśurām almost succeeded in his awful enterprise save that twelve sons of this Kṣatriya king concealed their identities being merged in the Mec population by manners and customs and by marriage (vs. 27-47), the last verse referred to giving the name of Chikanbāri as the place of their refuge. This is identified with Cikan Gāo in the Khuntāghāt paragaṇā of Goāl-pār whence Hāriyā Maṇḍal emerged. The names of these twelve families are described (v. 51):

*Pānbar Phedelā āur Guwābar: Phedphede Varikand mech śreṣṭhatar.
Kathiā Vaihāgu Megha Yuddhabar nāms Garṭkatā yagāi anupām.*

These are mostly very colloquial Assamese names. These twelve persons are said to be the progenitors of the Koc, and Hāriyā Maṇḍal was the chief of these twelve families.

FABULOUS ORIGIN OF VISU FROM GOD ŚIVA. Like the Kachārīs the Koces also claimed their descent from god Śiva and the two stories are almost identical. It is stated that through rather a curse of Pārvatī, Śiva came down to earth while his consort too was born of a Mech woman. She was named Hīrā and was married to Hāriyā Maṇḍal whom she used to supply food while he would work in the field. One day on her way she found Hāriyā sitting on the bank of the Awakjoār waiting for her, partook of the food and received her into his embraces. On return from the field annoyed, Hāriyā had a quarrel with Hīrā on

Sonitpurat tini kanyā pāilā bhālā.
 Satarūpā Kāñcanmālinī kanyā dui;
 Darasan mātrake mahājano moha hui.
 Mithilāt dui kanyā pāilanta vicāri:
 Vāsar śayāt āni thailā bhine bhine:
 Samastake vihā karāilanta eka dine.

DRV adds that they were all, of course, the Gandharva form of marriages.

VISWA'S ASSIGNMENT TO THE EIGHTEEN PRINCES. By these wives eighteen sons were born to Viśwa Siṃha, and their names, each to each, have also been narrated. They were Narasiṃha, Nara Nārāyaṇ, Śukladhwaj, Gohāikamal, Mayadān, Rāmcandra, Sursiṃha, Mānsiṃha, Mechā, Briṣaketu, Rāmnārāyaṇ, Ananta, Dipsiṃha, Hemadhar, Meghnārāyaṇ, Jagat, Rūpcānd and Sūrya. Then Viśwasīṃha made out a device to ascertain as to whom he should make his successor and also to what different functions of the State the others of his princes should be employed. It was a successful plan and by it he made Nār Nārāyaṇ, *alias* Malladew, his heir, and Śukladhwaj the future general, and assigned different functions to his other sons. The fact of Viśwasīṃha marrying eighteen wives and having eighteen sons is confirmed by a quite different source. Durgāvār, a poet who flourished about the close of the fifteenth century, refers to Viśwa Siṃha saying:

"Kamatā Iswar vando Viśwa Siṃha nṛpavar:
 Oṭhara mahiṣī vando oṭhara kōwar."

MALLA AND SŪKLA'S STUDENTSHIP IN KASI. Viśwa Siṃha presently despatched his two sons, Malla and Śukla, to Bārānasi (Kāśī) where they carefully studied all the useful branches of learning under one Brahmānanda Sannyāsī:

"Vyākaraṇa Purāṇ Śruti Smṛti Mīmāṃsār;
 Śikilanta astra śāstra Atharva Vedar.
 Sam dam daṇḍa nyāya nīti yata yata;
 Jyotirved Tarka śāstra śike nānāmata.
 Eka mane paḍhe dūyo tyejī āna kām;
 Bhane Surya Khaḍi dāki bolā Rām Rām."

CONQUESTS OF MARANG AND NEPAL by SŪKLA AND MALLA. After a reign of twenty years Viśwa Siṃha died and Narasiṃha, taking advantage of the absence of his brothers, Malla and Śukla, declared himself the king. But a nurse of the real heir and general, sent a message to them at Kāśī and with the leave of their teacher the two forthwith

returned and fought with Narasiṃha who of course was defeated. Following their success, they entered the country of Maraṅg where Narasiṃha with his son would be sheltered; and its king eventually made his submission to them. Then Narasiṃha fled to Nepāl, Malla and Śukla following; and the king of Nepāl with his army eventually surrendered. Then Narasiṃha left for Kāśmir, but Śukla and Malla chased him no more, and returned home.

KOC KINGDOM OF NARASIMHA IN BHUTAN. From Kaśmir Narasiṃha with his son is said to have come to that part of Hemavanta mountain between the rivers, Saṃkha and Hindola, which was formerly the seat of the king Śalya of the Kurukṣetra fame. There, as pre-ordained, he settled and made himself the king of Bhūtān; for Viśwa Siṃha also assigned him to be a king but in a different country. The names of Bhots whom he appointed in different offices are also detailed by DRV. On this point Gait observes: "The occurrence is not altogether impossible. It has already been mentioned that in ancient times Bhūtān seems, occasionally at least, to have formed part of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa" (H.A., p. 50). This finds further confirmation from Ashley Eden when he says:—"Apparently the Bhutiās have not possessed Bhūtān for more than two centuries; it formerly belonged to a tribe called Tephu by the Bhutiās; they are generally believed to have been people of Koc Bihar. The Tephus were driven down into the plains by some Tibetan soldiers, who had been sent from Lhassa to look at the country." (*Political Missions to Bhutan*, p. 108).

RETROSPECTION OF VISWA SIMHA'S RULE. Viśwa Siṃha, who seems to be the first Koc convert to Hinduism, became a great patron of it. He is said to have first rebuilt the temple of Kāmākhyā on the Nilācal at Guāhāṭī, and divided off the people under various officers, such as at Guāhāṭī, and divided off the people under various officers, such as at Thākuriās, Śaikiās, Hāzārikās. His fruitless invasion of the Āhom kingdom is described in the Āhom chronicles as a friendly visit to king Suhuṅ Mung in 1537. It is further related in the Āhom chronicles that when the Muhammadans advanced as far as Kaliābar up the Brahmaputra in order to invade the Āhom kingdom, they were driven away by the Āhoms who followed their success as far as the Karatoyā in 1532. But this has no confirmation in the Koc records. Viśwa Siṃha died in 1540.

VIGILANCE OF SUKLA, MALLA AND GOHAI KAMAL, EACH TO EACH. To return to Malla and Śukla, the former of course was immediately installed as king Nara Nārāyaṇ in his father's dominions, as also in his newly acquired territories, while the latter was made his commander-in-chief, being now named Saṃgrām Siṃha. Immediately he took a

Census of his Pākis (men) who numbered 5,225,000 and made a large preparation for invasion of the Āhom kingdom which his father left unaccomplished. He asked his brother Gohāi Kamal to erect a road as far as Parsurām Kuṇḍa in Sadiyā, about 400 miles from their capital, and to dig tanks each at a distance of six hour's journey from the other; and this was completed within a year, as *DRV* describes.

“NARA NĀRAYAN'S INVASION AND ĀHOM RAJA'S SUBMISSION. Then Saṃgrām Siṃha (Śukla) led a vast army of 532,000 soldiers gaining conquests after conquests over all chiefs or minor kings that stood on his way and making necessary contracts with them, till they reached the Āhom capital only to find its king and nobles become fugitives at Carāi Khorōṅ. The Koc army is said to have stayed in the Āhom capital for a year, and not finding them yet turning up Nara Nārāyaṇ sent his men to Carāi Khorōṅ threatening to attack them there. Thereupon the Āhom king is said to have sent Nara Nārāyaṇ one vessel full of gold and two vessels full of silver, one elephant covered with gold and another with silver, sixty elephants and the same number of valuable cloths, sixteen families of Matiās and twenty of Āhoms with his agent Sundar Kōwar to tender his submission to Nara Nārāyaṇ, who presently accepted the offer and came back. (vs. 329-86).

CONFIRMATION IN THE ĀHOM CHRONICLES. The Āhom chronicles narrate an expedition led by Śukladhwaj in 1546 resulting in a battle with the Koces about the Dikrai river and another subsequent action taking place at Kaliābar, imposing great loss and heavy defeat on the Āhoms. Then in 1547, the Koces raised a fort at Nārāyaṇpur and Suklenmung or Gaḍ-Gāyā Rājā (1539-52) entrenching himself on the bank of the Picalā river cut off the supplies for the Koces who consequently had to come back. But this was answered by a fresh attack in 1562 during the reign of Sukhāmfa or Khorā Rājā (1552-1603), Nara Nārāyaṇ inflicting an overwhelming defeat on the Āhoms on which occasion the king and his chief nobles fled to Carāikhorōṅ at Nāmṛup once more and Koces in their triumphant march occupying Gaḍ Gāo and leaving it only on the Āhom king's admission of the Koc suzerainty and other things connected with it as related in *DRV*.

CONQUEST AND SUBMISSION BY THE KACHARI KINGDOM. Nothing succeeds like success, and Śukladhwaj soon set out on an expedition against the Kachāri king of Heḍamba, and Kavindra Pātra, Rājendra Pātra, Damodar Kārji, Meghamukudum and other officers and soldiers accompanied him. Finding them at his door, the king of Heḍamba got frightened and immediately got two elephants covered with gold and another two with silver, twenty-four best elephants, one vessel full of

gold and another full of silver, one royal family and twelve ordinary households, and offered them all personally at the feet of the Koc king as a mark of submission. Being much pleased at this, the two Koc royal brothers gave him assurance of safety and made some valuable presents in return. The king of Heḍamba was then ordered to give Nara Nārāyaṇ one thousand coins of gold and seventy thousand coins of silver and sixty best elephants annually as his tribute, and this he gladly agreed to do. (vs. 380-404).

SUBMISSION BY THE KING OF MANIPUR. A messenger was then despatched to the king of Manipur to ask him to make his submission, and the king immediately came with a present of one thousand coins of gold, twenty thousand of silver and twenty-two elephants for tendering his submission. The Koc royal brothers were glad and making him presents in return gave him assurance of safety with the condition of the king of Manipur paying an annual tribute to the Koc king of three hundred coins of gold and twenty thousand of silver and ten elephants. This being promised, they fared him well (vs. 406-14).

SUBMISSION BY THE KING OF JAYANTIYA. Soon they proceeded against the king of Jayantiyā who was killed by the Koc C-in-C with his own hands. The young prince of Jayantiyā then approached Nar Nārāyaṇ with a present of one thousand coins of gold, ten thousand coins of silver, some best cloths and one hundred swords, to surrender. Nar Nārāyaṇ was overjoyed and made him some presents in return. He was then set up as the king of Jayantiyā in his father's throne and was ordered to pay an annual tribute of ten thousand silver coins, seventy horses and three hundred swords. This was promised, but the prince of Jayantiyā prayed for permission to strike coins in his own name. This was partially granted with the provision that he might mint coins simply in the name of Jayantiyā Nagar and to this the prince readily agreed (vs. 415-20). This finds confirmation from the fact that no ruler of Jayantiyā is known to have minted any coins in their names until 1731; all the coins of earlier date as most of the later ones appear minted only with the name of Jayantiyā on them. (Gait, H.A., p. 53).

SUBMISSION BY THE TRIPURA KING. After this, a Koc army of 40,000 soldiers marched against the kingdom of Tripurā and inflicted a heavy defeat with loss of life including that of the reigning king. Then prince Viśāl approached Nar Nārāyaṇ with one hundred coins of gold and ten thousand of silver, as also thirty horses skilled in the use of war and tendered submission on behalf of the people of Tipperā. He was then set up as the ruler of Tripurā and ordered to pay an annual

tribute of nine thousand gold coins only. Having promised this he bade leave of the Koc king with his presents in return. (vs. 421-30). This is corroborated by an Āhom chronicle. Gait seems to have committed two mistakes in translating the relevant portion of the Assamese text of this Koc family history (*H.A.*, p. 53) saying that the son of the late king of Tripurā was set up as king and that ten thousand rupees etc., was to be paid as tribute. The latter was the present ("bhenty") offered by the late king's brother and it was the late Jayantiyā king's son who was set up in his father's place.

SUBMISSION BY THE KING OF KHAIRAM (KHASI STATE) The ruler of the Khairām (*khāsi*) State having reports of this triumphant march of the Koc king and apprehending an attack, personally came to tender his submission in advance making a present of thirty horses, forty tusked elephants, forty thousand coins of silver and ten hundred of gold, and so forth. The king of Khairām was received affectionately by Nar Nārāyaṇ who ordered the former to pay him an annual tribute of nine hundred coins of gold and fifteen thousand of silver, thirty elephants skilled in the use of battle and fifty best horses. Having promised this, the king of Khairām begged of Nar Nārāyaṇ to strike coins in his own name, just as the prince of Tripurā did. This too was partially granted by ordering that he might strike but they must be minted in the name of Malladew, the Koch King (vs. 432-42). Gait names this ruler of Khairam Vīryavanta.

SUBMISSION BY THE KING OF DIMARUWA. Thence they are said to have entered the country of Dimaruwā (in central Asam) where a king of the line of Mṛgāṅka ruled. A battle ensued resulting in the defeat of the Dimaruwā king who was taken captive and was subsequently released on his undertaking to pay an annual tribute of seven thousand rupees (vs. 444-63). Gait names this king of Dimaruwa Pantheśwar; and if Mṛgāṅka really refers to Bhāskarvarma's father Susthita or Susthira Varma *alias* Mṛgāṅka then he might be a descendent of Bhāskar's elder brother, Supratisthitavarmā, for Bhāskar perhaps remained a confirmed bachelor.

SUBMISSION BY THE KING OF SYLHET. Then the Koc king sent a messenger to the king of Sylhet ("Chirath") asking whether he too would acknowledge Nar Nārāyaṇ's suzerainty; but he made a challenge instead. A fierce battle was fought for three days after which Cilārāi, the Koch general, killed ten millions of the enemy soldiers, the king not excluded. Then Asi Rai, the brother of the late king, approached Nar Nārāyaṇ with a present of one hundred elephants, one

hundred and eighty horses, thirty million silver and ten thousand gold coins making his submission. Asi Rai was then set up as the king of Sylhet on his promising an annual tribute of a hundred elephants, two hundred horses, three hundred thousand silver and ten thousand gold coins to be rendered to Nar Nārāyaṇ (vs. 465-89). Muhammadan rule may have begun before this in Sylhet, but it might remain independent in the meanwhile for the troubles the Muhammadans had elsewhere.

WAR AND PEACE WITH GAUDA. Later on the Koc general, Saṃgrām Siṃha (Sukla), encountered with the then king of Gauḍa; but it was no passing of the knife through butter, as in other cases. A terrible battle ensued which lasted continuously for ten days, terminating with defeat of the Koc army and Cilārāi himself being taken prisoner. After some time not only hād he been unconditionally released but the kingdom was amicably divided between the two with the Ganges as the boundary line (vs. 494-534). It is supported by the Āhom chronicles, but the Muhammadan records have no direct reference to this war. But according to Riyāz-us-Salatin (Abdus Salam's translation, p. 151), Sulaiman Kararani who ruled in Bengal from 1563 to 1572, marched for conquest of the Koc capital in 1568 with Kālāpāhār, the Brāhman renegade, as his general; and after conquering the outlying parts he was on the point of beseiging the capital when he had suddenly to leave for Orissa. This too has no confirmation from the Koc or Āhom chronicles save that the redoubtable renegade is still alive in the local traditions as the destroyer of the Hindu temples and images mainly at Kāmākhyā and Hājo.

REBUILDING THE KAMAKHYA TEMPLE AND ITS INSCRIPTION DATED 1565. On return from Gauḍa, Cilārāi engaged himself in re-building the temple of Kāmākhyā which the Muhammadans damaged and immediately ordered Maḡhamukdum to employ his men to do the needful. It is said that since the stone work did not stand, it was built by bricks every piece being baked in ghee. The work was thus completed in six months' time and by a formal ceremony the temple was dedicated to the goddess by offering a hundred thousand sacrifices, and leaving their own stone images with an inscription which reads as follows:

*“Lokānugrahakāraḡaḡ karuṇayā prārthodhanurvidyāyā;
Dānenāpi dadhīcikarṇasadriśo maryyādayāmbhonidhi.
Nānāśāstravicārācāruritaḡ Kandarparūpojjvalaḡ;
Kāmākhyācaraṇārccakoviḡayate Śrī Malladevanṛpaḡ.
Prāsādamadriduhituścaraṇāravinda:
Bhaktiyā karotudanujo vara Nīla śailye.*

Śrī Śukladeva imamullasitopalena:
Śāke turaṅgagajavedaśāsāṅkasamkhye.
Tasyaiva priyasodaraḥ pṛthuyāśāvirendra maulisthalī:
Māṅṅikyaṃ bhajamāna kalpaviṭapī Nīlācalemanjulam.
Prāsādam munināgavedaśāsabhṛt śāke śīlārājibhiḥ:
Devībhaktimatāmvaro racitavān Śrī Śuklapūrvadhvajah.

AN ASSAMESE VIKRAMADITYA. Undoubtedly the two royal Koc brothers were great patrons of learning so much so that their regal court may fittingly be compared with that of king Vikramāditya. DRV hits on this point too (vs. 604-12) and says that all the scholars of the country were gathered together in the capital and had religious councils. Puruṣottam Bhattācārya was ordered to compile the Sanskrit grammar *Ratnamālā*, Rām Saraswatī was ordered to render the entire *Māhābhārata* into Assamese verse, and so also about the seven cantos of the *Rāmāyana*. All the eighteen *Purānas* were also ordered to be rendered into Assamese. Śāṅkardew was requested to render the twelve books of the *Bhāgawat*. Śrīdhara was asked to render the astronomical works and Vakul Kāyastha to translate the mathematical work *Līlāvatī*. Dāmodardew and other Vaiṣṇavas were requested to look after propagation of the *Nām-Dharma* founded by Śāṅkardew. Thus Nar Nārāyaṇ of the latter half of the sixteenth century reminds us of Bhaskar varmā ahead of him by nearly a thousand years about whom the great Chinese pilgrim said—"His Majesty was a lover of learning and his subjects followed his example; men of abilities came from far to study here." (Watter's *Hüen Tsiang*, Vol. II, p. 186).

ALSO AN ASSAMESE ASOKA. Not only so, Malladew has a claim to be compared with the great Indian king, Asoka. From the same source we have this suggestion (vs. 558-64) that he constructed roads, temples and tanks, and got innumerable trees planted in every part of his kingdom. Institutions were started all over for providing free lodging, food and water which lots of people could avail. No famine, epidemic or diseases were known, and crops and fishes did abound. Love and friendship alone developed among the people whose rejoicings had no end. People of all creeds and professions were free and encouraged to follow their wishes and the cultivators and traders were happy in their pursuits. Besides the Gohāi Kamal Āli and its neighbouring tanks, which still exist in parts, Nar Nārāyaṇ got many similar permanent works done. After the conquest of Dimaruwā, he is said to have straightened the course of the Brahmaputra which formerly flowed past Hājo, by cutting a channel (vs. 447-51) and this stream of the river is said to have had dried up in 1636, as narrated by Muhammandan chronicles later.

NAR NARAYAN'S MINT AND COINS. Gait's "Note on some Coins of the Koch kings" (*J.A.S.B.*, pt. 1, 1895) and Stapleton's "Contributions to the History and Ethnography of N.E. India" (*J.A.S.B.*, 1910, p. 153) clearly show that Nar Nārāyaṇ had a mint, and coins with his name inscribed on them and dated equivalent to 1555 A.D. have been available. The latter also points out that his coins were modelled on those of Hussain Shah whose line became extinct in 1538. A coin of Parīkṣit Nārāyaṇ (1603-13) dated equivalent to 1603 A.D. has also been discovered.

AN ENGLISH SOJOURNER'S ACCOUNT OF KOC KINGDOM. An English sojourner, Ralph Fitch, who visited the Koc kingdom during the time of Malla and Śukla, remarks:—"I went from Bengala into the country of Couch or Quichen which lies 25 days' journey northwards from Tanda. The king is a Geatile; his name is Suckel Couse. His country is great and lieth not far from Cauchin China; for they say they have pepper from thence. The port is called Cacchegate . . . Here they have much silk and musk, and cloths made of cotton. . . There they be all Gentiles and they will kill nothing. They have hospitals for sheep, goat, dogs, cats, birds and for all living creatures. When they be old and lame, they keep them until they die." (Quoted by Gait, *H.A.*, p. 60-61).

EMPEROR AKBAR'S OFFER OF FRIENDSHIP WITH NAR NARAYAN. To return to their war and victories once more. After the first year of his return, the mother of the ruler of Gauḍa died and two years from then, the great Emperor, Ākbar, sent Nar Nārāyaṇ a letter through a mendicant intimating his intention to be friends with him and to attack Gauḍa from each of their sides concertedly just as Emperor Harṣvardhan became friends with Bhāskar nearly a thousand years ago to attack the kingdom of Śaśāṅka. Akbar also plainly informed Nar Nārāyaṇ that the newly acquired territory of Gauḍa would be equally divided between them. To this the royal Koc brothers readily responded and agreed. Being encouraged by this, Ākbar sent a large army led by Mānsiṃha. Narwang Shāh, the pātshāh of Gauḍa, being unable to stand this combined assault, fled to the country of Firinga; and the Mughals and Koces divided Gauḍa between them once more making the Ganges their common boundary (vs. 565-84). According to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, Nar Nārāyaṇ "renewed his demonstration of obedience to the Imperial throne" in 1578.

THE KOC KINGDOM DIVIDED INTO TWO. Just before their return from this second battle of Gauḍa, the messenger informed Cilārāi of a son being born to him. When he was about to return he fell ill and died on the bank of the Ganges of an attack of smallpox (vs. 585-92). Cilārāi's son was named Raghudew. Soon after, a son was born also

to Nar Nārāyaṇ and was named Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇ. Raghudew came to Barnagar near which he established a town, Gnilājyapur, settled himself with his followers and made himself a king there. It is said that he married as many as one hundred and twenty wives by whom he had as many as eighteen sons whose names are described fully in D.R.V. Seeing that he would not turn up, his uncle Nar Nārāyaṇ divided his kingdom between his son and nephew declaring the Soṅkoh as the common boundary, Raghudew's (1581-1603) kingdom on the east being called Koc Hājo and that of Parikṣit Nārāyaṇ (1584-1622) on the west being named Kocbehar (vs. 627-66). Nar Nārāyaṇ died meanwhile in 1584 which date is given in the *Vaṃśāwālī* by Prasiddha Nārāyaṇ and in *Asam Burañjī* by Guṇābhirām. Gait, while accepting this date, records his doubt and thinks that this may possibly be three years later, since the dates on the coins of Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇ and Raghudew are given as 1587 and 1588 respectively. (H.A., pp. p. 57). But his argument does not convince since the coins might be struck at any time, and Raghudew, as a matter of fact, became independent even during Nar Nārāyaṇ's reign.

UNFORTUNATE QUARREL BETWEEN FAST COUSINS. Subsequently it appears that the capital city of Raghudew was established at Vijaypur. Besides the eighteen sons, he had several daughters. He ruled for thirty two years, and was succeeded by his eldest son Parikṣit Nārāyaṇ (1603-13). For some reason or other, he shifted his capital to the bank of Brahmaputra near Śrī Ghāt at Pāndunāth and minted gold coins in his name. Unfortunately on his encroaching on Bahirbandh, possibly beyond the Soṅkoh, he was encountered by Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇ, the latter meeting with serious reverses and losing his brother. In order to avenge this, Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇ set out for Delhi and sought help from Emperor Jāhāngir (1605-27). The *Padishah nāmāh* and also the *Baharistan-i-Ghaibi*, recording the happenings of the reign of Jāhāngir (quoted by Gait) show that Nawāb Islām Khān of Dācca, at the request of Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇ in 1612, but mainly at the instigation of Raghunāth, ruler of Shushang, near Karaibārī, and also prompted by his own jealousy, ordered Mukarramkhan to attack Parikṣit's kingdom with 300 elephant, 6,000 horse, 10,000 to 12,000 foot, and 400 to 500 warships.

MUGHAL INTERFERENCE IN DOMESTIC QUARREL. It was not as easy as the Nawāb thought, to humble Parikṣit; but the different powers, making a combined assault, at last defeated him and took him a prisoner to Delhi. His kingdom upto the Barnadī was now to be annexed to Mughal domination and so with the help of the Āhoms they expelled the Muhammadans. Parikṣit (1603-16) died on his way home at the

sacred Prayāga (Allahabad). He was succeeded by his brother Bali Nārāyaṇ *alias* Dharma Nārāyaṇ (1616-37) who now removed his capital to Darang, and wanted to avenge this with the help of the Āhom kings Susenphā or Buḍhā Rājā (Pratap Siṃha, 1603-41). Here he was successful and the Mughals who evidently occupied the land were driven beyond the Karatoyā (vs. 684-794). Here DRV abruptly stops.

HISTORIC DISAPPEARANCE OF THE KOC KINGDOM. Wise's article on the Bāra Bhuyās of Eastern Bengal (*J.A.S.B.*, 1874, p. 213) and Blochman's translation of the *Āin-i-Ākbari*, (p. 343) refers to an invasion, not confirmed by any local accounts or tradition, of Raghu's dominions extending southwards from the present Goālpārā boundary and the tracts between the old course of the Brahmaputra and the Gāro hills, now covering East Mymensingh by an Afghan named Isā Khān. The invader is said to have conquered the land upto Rangāmāṭi to the north-east of Dhubri on the bank of the Brahmaputra. He rebuilt the temple of Maṇikuṭ or Hayagriva at Hājo which was destroyed by the Brāhmaṇ renegade, mentioned elsewhere, in 1583 as its inscription is dated. Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇ's kingdom embraced Rangpur, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and Kocbehar. The *Ākbār Nāmāh* says that Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇ had "4,000 horse and 200,000 foot, 700 elephant and 1,000 ships. His country is 200 kos long and from 100 to 40 kos broad, extending in the east to the Brahmaputra, in the north to Tibet, in the south to Ghoraghat and in the west to Tirhut." He is said to have given a daughter in marriage to Rājā Mān Siṃha, Governor of Bengal, in 1597. One Sikh chronicle is known mentioning Mān Singh's death as having occurred by the hand of a girl of Kāmarūpa, his mistress, when the Bengal Governor intended to make an invasion of Kāmarūpa ("Dhuburir Itivritta", *D.N.*, *Bāhī*, vol. XVII, no. 12; also the poem "Mānsiṃhar Samādhi", *D. N.*, *Asam Sāhitya Sabhā Patrikā*, 1928). At any rate the Koc kingdom was not to stay long. Bali or Dharmanārāyaṇ and his two sons were killed in a fresh Muhammadan expedition in 1637, and Sundar Nārāyaṇ's son Prāṇ Nārāyaṇ (1633-66) succeeded his uncle Bir Nārāyaṇ (1622-33), made an attempt to throw off the Muhammadan yoke in 1658 and 1662; but could not be crowned with success.

VII. THE AHOMS IN THE ZENITH OF THEIR POWER

SIXTH, SEVENTH AND EIGHTH MUHAMMADAN INVASIONS. The rise of the Āhom power in the east and their gradual extension to the west of the Saumār by defeating the Cutiyās and Bārbbhūyās and their pushing the Kachārīs first to the west of the Dikhou and then west of the

Dhansiri, and compelling them to change their capital from Dimāpur Māibong have already been mentioned. The facts of frustration of the Muhammadan invasions in 1206, 1227, 1257, 1337 of the western Kāmarūpa, Ratna and Kāma pīthas have also been referred to. After the destruction of Kamatā by the treachery of Hussain Shāh in 1498, Muhammadan hold over that part did not last far beyond 1502, which also has been mentioned. The first three Muhammadan invasions of the Āhom kingdom which are the sixth, seventh and eighth inroads of the old kingdom of Kāmarūpa, occurred in 1527, 1531 and 1537 during the reign of Suhung Mung or the Dihingīā Rājā (1497-1559) alone under Muhammadan commanders Vāzir and Turbak.

RIAZUS SALATIN DESCRIBES DEFEAT. The Riyazus Salatin (quoted by Gait) makes a combined reference to these and their former invasions: "After having reduced the Rajas of the districts as far as Orissa, Hussain took tribute from them. After this he resolved to invade the kingdom of Asam, in the north-east of Bengal, and he set out with a large army of a foot and numerous fleet and entered the kingdom and subdued it as far as Kamrup and Kamata and other districts. The Raja of the country, unable to withstand, withdrew to the mountains. Sultan Hussain left his son with a strong army in Āsām to complete the settlement of the country and returned victoriously to Bengal. After the return of the Sultan the prince pacified and guarded the conquered country; but when the rains set in and the roads were closed, the Raja issued with his men from the hills, surrounded the prince and cut off his supplies. In a short time they were all killed."

BOOTY OF THESE WARS AND INVENTION OF GUN POWDER BY ĀHOMS. In the invasion of 1527 a Muhammadan commander, Bit Malik, was killed at Khāgarījan (Nagāo) and fifty horses and many cannons and guns were captured from the Muhammadans; while in the one of 1532, April, both Turbak and Hussain Khan were put to death, and 28 elephants, 850 horses and a large number of cannons and matchlocks along with gold, silver and other booty were obtained and the Muhammadan fugitives were driven as far as the Karatoyā. Those brought as prisoners were settled in different parts of the country and took to different occupations (Gait, *H.A.*, pp. 92-95). The use of fire-arms seems to date from after this war; for Tavernier in connexion with Mirjumla's invasion in 1663, observes, regarding the Āhoms:

"Tis thought that these were the people that formerly invented gun powder; which spread itself from Āsam to Pegu and from Pegu to China, from when the invention has been attributed to the Chinese. However certain it is that Mirgimola brought from thence several pieces of cannon which were all iron guns, and stove of excellent powder both made in the country. The powder is round and small like ours, and of excellent quality". (Tavernier, London, 1678, Pt. II, Bk. III, p. 187).

SOCIAL UPLIFT AND PLITICAL ACTIVITIES. Suklenmung (1539-52) succeeded his father and having made his capital at Gaḍgāo became known as Gaḍgayā Rājā since. It is his father who during a reign of forty-two years made improvement of the country all round, subjugated the Cutiyās and the Nāgās, and killing Detsung occupied the Kachāri dominions north of the Kalaṅg. Both the Kachārīs and the Āhoms are reported to have made use of cannons in this decisive fight. The people were divided into clans and artisans were imported from the Cutiyā territories and other places. It is in his reign that the great Vaiṣṇavite movement of Saṅkardew made some headway in the Āhom countries and the Śāka era was used; and also the fire-arms was introduced. In the reign of his son, besides the establishment of capital at Gaḍgāo, the tank there was excavated and the Nāgā Āli (road) was constructed from Bar Āli to Nāgā hills. Besides, Suklenmug was the first Āhom king to strike coins. Hostilities with the Koc, construction of the Gohāi Kamal Āli (road) and fortification of the Koc army at Nārāyaṅpur, occurred during this king's reign.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF SUKHAMFA'S REIGN (1552-1603) His son Sukhamfā *alias* (Lame king) Khorā Rājā (1552-1603) succeeded Suklenmung, and it is in this king's reign that the Koces under Cilārāi made another invasion of the Āhom kingdom in 1562 compelling Sukhamfā to pray for peace, which was granted on such conditions as the acknowledgement of the Koc supremacy, the cession of a considerable tract of country on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and the payment of some war-indemnity, etc. But about 1564 peace was concluded with the Koces on friendly terms. The years 1563 and 1572 saw Cutiyā raids into Nām rūp, Tipām and such places, but they were subdued.

NINTH MUHAMMADAN INVASION IN 1568 REPULSED. In 1576 the Narā Rājā of Munkang made an expedition against the Āhoms but were driven away. During his reign in 1568 the ninth Muhammadan invasion under the generalship the Brāhman renegade took place, but it did not affect the Āhom kingdom. The propagation of Vaiṣṇavism still continued and some of the highest of Āhom officials now embraced this faith, and many religious institutions (*satras*) were established.

THE ĀHOM KING MARRIES A JAYANTIA PRINCESS. Susengfā *alias* Pratāp Singha, and nicknamed Buḍhā Rājā (1603-41), succeeded his father Sukhamfā who died after a reign of fifty-one years. About 1606. A.D. he married a princess of Yaśa Maṅik, the Jayantiyā king, and escorted the princess from Jayantiyāpur through the Kachāri territories. Pratāp Nārāyaṅ, the Kachāri king resented this, and hostilities soon began

culminating in defeat of the Āhom army in several actions and the death of Sundar Gohāi and the flight of the rest in the Āhom fort at Rahā. Susengfā soon anticipating a fresh Muhammadan invasion took a compromising attitude and pacified the Kachārī king by giving an Āhom princess in marriage to him. In 1608 Susengfa married Mangaldahi, the daughter of Parikṣit, the Koc king; and in 1615, after the death of Parikṣit, his brother Bali *alias* Dharma Nārāyaṇ was supported by Susengfā. Both the *Padishah Namah* (II, p. 64 ff) and the *Bāhāristān-i Ghaibi* confirm these accounts of the Āhom chronicles. In the meantime a Muhammadan trader was murdered near Kaliābar and his two boats looted on the suspicion that he was a spy.

TENTH MUHAMMADAN INVASION CRUSHED (1615). All this culminated in the tenth Muhammadan invasion of eastern Asam in 1615 despatched with more than ten thousand horse and foot and four hundred large ships. (Gait, *H.A.*, pp. 107-08). They were encountered by the Āhoms at the mouth of the Bharalī. This resulted in total defeat of the Muhammadans and the account of their loss is given by *Bāhāristān-i Ghaibi* as 5,000 Muhammadans killed, 9,000 captured and 3,000 fled, of which about 2,000 were rescued by a relief expedition sent from Hājo. (Quoted by Gait, in p. 108 fn.) Quasim Khan, the Governor of Bengal, was deposed, according to *Padishah Nāmāh*, for this defeat of the Muhammadans.

AGGRESSIVE PART TAKEN BY SUSENGFA IN 1617. In November 1617, Susengfā accompanied by Nārāyaṇ and other chiefs, took an aggressive part and proceeded towards the west to recover the Koc territories which the Muhammadans now occupied. Among the chiefs who made their submission to Susengfā was the prince of Dimaruwā whose ancestors Pantheswar, formerly a tributary chief of the Kachārī king but left owing to the latter's oppression of him and joined Nar Nārāyaṇ who now established Pantheswar on the Jayantīyā frontier as a ruler over about 18,000 subjects. Now these aggressors fortified themselves at Pāṇḍu and attacked the Muhammadan who being inflicted a defeat at Āgiāthutī retreated to Hājo where they were reinforced by fresh troops from Dacca. But they made an ill-advised and unsuccessful attack there so that the aggressors were obliged to retreat to Sarāighāt.

ELEVENTH MUHAMMADAN INVASION IN 1619 FRUSTRATED. In September, 1619, the Muhammadans made a fresh attack and besieged Balinārāyaṇ in his fort, who assisted by an Āhom force fought with the Muhammadans for six weeks, and in the end the Muhammadans were defeated, a large number of them being killed and others put to flight to Hājo, "leaving ten cannon, fifty guns and other weapons as

well as some horses, buffaloes and cattle in the hand of the Āhoms". (*Ib.*, p. 110).

TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH MUHAMMADAN INROADS IN 1635 ROOTED OUT. In 1635 the twelfth Muhammadan invasion began. They were encountered by the Āhoms near the Bharalī river and were defeated, Susengfā once more with the help of Dimaruwā Rajā and other chiefs took the offensive, rooted the enemies out of many of their forts, and at last attacked them at Hājo where the Muhammadans were defeated in several actions and in one of these the enemies "lost 360 cannon and guns as well as other stores." (*Ib.*, p. 112). The Muhammadan army was again reinforced from Dacca by "one thousand matchlock men.... together with two hundred and ten war sloops and brats and a large supply of ammunition, weapons and money". (*Ib.*, p. 113). The first action was fought a little west of Pāṇḍu and after a severe fight the Āhoms were defeated "with the loss of four ships and a few cannon", and subsequently expelled from Āgiāthuṭi and then from Śarāighāṭ. But a reinforcement sent from the Āhom capital not only encouraged them but the same night the Āhoms "with nearly five hundred ships attacked the hostile fleet and gained a decisive victory....and the greater part of the (Muhammadan) fleet fell into the hands of the victor". The rest of the army were compelled to surrender.

FOURTEENTH MUGHAL INVASION IN 1637 DISMISSED. In 1637, a Muhammadan army said to be accompanied by the Koc prince Prāṇ Nārāyaṇ, made another attack on the Āhoms at Yoṣighopā and other places and defeated them, both by land and fleet, the latter running short of ammunition. The victors gradually advanced to Pāṇḍu and other places, killed Bali Nārāyaṇ and his two sons and attempted to consolidate their rule on the west of the Barnādī. In 1638, a detachment of Muhammadan army accompanied by the Koc Rājā Prāṇ Nārāyaṇ crossed the Bharalī, where they were stopped and compelled to retreat to Gauhati. Both the parties being now tired of war, a treaty was made under which the Bar Nadi on the north bank of the Brahmaputra and Asurar Āli on the south, were fixed as the boundary between the Āhom and the Muhammadan territories; and they remained so for the next twenty years. Meanwhile Susengfā died in 1641 after a reign of 38 years.

SOCIAL WELFARE WORKS. Though too engaged in wars to find time for any internal organization, he made many embankments and roads and excavated tanks. The Bhūyās who settled themselves on the north bank of the Brahmaputra between the Bharalī and the Suvansiri rivers, discontinued payment of tribute since Cilārāi's invasions, and Susenfā

published their ring-leader Uday in 1623. He took Census of his people and divided people into clans in sites where it was not already done. Besides this, other works of peace were carried on as before.

JYAYADHWAJ OCCUPIES WHOLE VALLEY. Susenfā was succeeded by his son Surāmfā (*alias* deposed-king) Bhagā Rājā (1641-44) and the latter by his younger brother Sutyinfā *alias* (crooked king) Kekorā Rājā or (sick king) Nariyā Rājā (1644-46). They were naturally weak kings and each was deposed by the Āhom nobles, and Sutamāla *alias* (Fugitive king) Bhaganīā Rājā or Jayadhvaj Simha (1648-63) succeeded them to the throne. In 1658 the Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan fell ill and both the Koc king Prāṇ Nārāyaṇ, and the Āhom king Jayadhvaj tried to avail themselves of this opportunity. The former did his best to throw off their Muhammadan yoke and made raids into Goāl-pār and the latter set out with a strong army to Guāhāṭi only to find the Muhammadan Faujdar flying to Dacca leaving him in possession of "twenty cannon and a number of horses, guns, etc." which in the hot flight they left. Prāṇ Nārāyaṇ proposed friendly alliance with the Āhoms against the Muhammadans; but it was forthwith rejected on review of his past conduct. So the Āhoms marched against the Koces and drove them across the Soṅkoh and became masters of the whole of the Brahmaputra valley. According to *Ālangirnāmāh* (quoted by Gait) the Āhoms also "plundered and laid waste the country to the south of it (the Brahmaputra valley) almost as far Dacca itself". (*H.A.*, p. 123). Here they were not opposed by the Muhammadans for nearly three years.

FIFTEENTH MUHAMMADAN INVASION IN 1662. On the flight of prince Shuja to Ārākan, Mirjumlā was made the Viceroy of Bengal and he presently set out against Prāṇ Nārāyaṇ only to find the latter flying to Bhutān. When on January 4, 1662, he led an expedition against the Āhoms, the Āhom chronicles record this force of Mirjumla as twelve thousand horse and thirty thousand foot; and the Muhammadan historians narrate that Mirjumla's army at Gaḍgāo consisted of "12,000 horse and numerous foot" (quoted by Gait) which are practically identical statements. It was a grand preparation on the side of the Muhammadans, as described by Gait (*H.A.*, pp. 129-30; fn., p. 130).

PORTUGUESE AND OTHER EUROPEAN OFFICERS IN CHARGE. "Mir Jumlah now divided his army into two divisions one of which marched upto the south bank of the Erahmaputra while he himself with the main body crossed the Monas by a bridge of boat and advanced along the north bank. The fleet kept pace with the army. It comprised a number of ghrabs, or large vessels carrying about fourteen guns and about fifty or sixty men, each of which was in toto of four Kosahs or lighter

boats propelled by oars. Most of the gharbs were in charge of European officers amongst whom Portuguese predominated. (An interesting account of the experiences of Dutchman who accompanied the expedition is given in 'The Loss of the Ter Schelling' which has been reproduced in a work styled 'Tales of Shipwrecks and Adventures at Sea' (London, 2nd Edn. 1852, p. 705). A short history of the invasion will also be found in an old work entitled "Particular Events on the most considerable passage after the war of five years or thereabout in the Empire of the great Mogul," Tom II, by Mons. F. Bernier, London, 1671). The total number of vessels of all kinds was between three or four hundred".

TEMPORARY OCCUPATION OF GADGAO. The Āhoms had several reverses in this invasion by land and by water. Their naval defeat is not described in the Āhom chronicles, but some of these make a reference to this fact stating that when Jayadhvaj gave orders of attack on the Muhammadan fleet, the Deodhāis (the Āhom priests) declared the omens unfavourable by testing the legs of the fowls that was their wont; while yet others in subsequent references describe the king as being informed of the defeat of his land and naval forces. But the Dutch author of *The Loss of the Ter Schelling* and the Muhammadan writers are eloquent on this point. At any rate, Mir Jumlā entered the Āhom capital at Gaḍgāo on March 17, 1662.

WEALTH SEIZED WITH ARMS AND AMMUNITION. "Eighty-two elephants and nearly three lakhs of rupees worth of gold and silver were found at Garhgaon and also about 170 store houses each containing from one to ten thousand maunds of rice. During the whole expedition the Muhammadans had taken six hundred and seventy five cannon including one 'Bartop' which threw balls weighing more than two hundred pounds, about 9,000 matchlocks and other guns, a large quantity of gun-powder, saltpetre, iron shields, sulphur and lead and more than a thousand ships, many of which accommodated from sixty to eighty sailors. It is said that Mir Jumlah opened a mint at Gargaon and caused money to be struck there in the name of the Delhi Emperor, (Gait, *H.A.*, p. 134).

PEACE TERMS AND TREATY. With the advent of the rains the Āhoms began to attack the Muhammadans who felt it increasingly difficult to retain their outposts many of which were now withdrawn. The Āhoms began to re-occupy their territories and Jayadhvaj who was a fugitive at Nāmṛūp now came to the Salaguri near Gaḍgāo. Peace negotiations were now opened. *Fathiyah-i-Ibriyah* stated (quoted by Gait) that Mirjumla demanded the cessation of all the country upto Gaḍgāo, the payment of 500 elephants and 300,000 tolas of gold and silver, a daughter of the king for the Imperial harem and annual tribute of fifty elephants. The negotiations broke and the Āhoms started assaults on

Caçgão itself to re-occupy it. Thus Mir Jumla was compelled to agree to the peace terms now slightly changed, namely, Jayadhwaj Singha to send a daughter to the Imperial Harem; twenty thousand tolas of gold, six times this quantity of silver and forty elephants to be made over at once or three hundred thousand tolas of silver and ninety elephants to be supplied within twelve months, six sons of the chief nobles to be made over as hostages pending compliance with the last mentioned condition; twenty elephants to be supplied annually; the country west of the Bharali river on the north bank of the Brahmaputra and of the Kalang on the south to be ceded to the Emperor of Delhi; all prisoners and the family of the Bāduli Phukan to be given up. The treaty was thus concluded on January 9, 1663, when Mir Jumla and his army returned to Bengal.

MIRJUMLA WAS REALLY DRIVEN OUT. Gait presumes (*H.A.*, fn. p. 138) that the girl mentioned in the first condition was the one whose marriage to prince Muhammad Azam in 1668 with a dowry of Rs. 1,80,000 is mentioned in the *Maāsir-i-Alamgiri* (Edn. *Bibl. Ind.*, p. 73). Further, other historians as Guṇābhirām, Robinson and even Bernier, the author of *Particular Events on the most Considerable Passages after the War of five years on those about in the Empire of the Great Mogul* does not confirm this fact of a treaty with Mir Jumla, but mentions that Mir Jumla was actually driven out of Asam and he died on March 30, 1663, on his way to Dacca.

AHOM KING'S PERSECUTION OF VAISNAVAS ON INSTIGATION. Nor did Jayadhwaj long survive. He died in November 1663. His great predecessor Buddhi Swarga Nārāyaṇ or Susengfā (1603-41) took the earliest opportunity (1623 A.D.) to break the power of the Bhūyās for ever and at the instigation of the Brāhmins, who managed to have had immense influence over him, not only to get the Śiva temples built at Dergão and Viśwanāth, and land grants and other gifts made in favour of Brāhmins (inspite of the king himself still adhering to the worship of his tribal god Somdeo with the help of the Deodhāis), but also to get the great Vaiṣṇava preachers much persecuted and even some of them put to death, though on one occasion he also persecuted the Brāhmins themselves and got many of them killed being angry with them for his son's death occurring soon after he distributed valuable gifts to the Brāhmins to prevent the disaster as advised. Jayadhwaj followed Pratāp Siṃha in allowing himself to be ruled by the Brāhmins to persecute and even to put to death the great propagators of Vaiṣṇavism.

JAYADHWAJ EMBRACES BRAHMANISM. It is said that Jâyadhvaj himself later on embraced Brāhmanism and became a disciple of Patāl Gosāi of Kuruābāhi or of Niranjan Bāpu whom he established as the first preceptor of the Āuniāti Satra at Majuli. He is also said to have sent for Banamāli Gosāi of Kocbehar and established him as a preceptor at Jakhalābandhā. The Āhom language which continued till the reign of Pratāp Siṃha as the medium of conversation between the king and his nobles while Hindus were appointed as envoys (Vairāgis and Kaṭakīs) might have gradually become superseded by the Assamese. Jayadhvaj though so badly perturbed by the invasion, yet constructed many public roads such as the Seoni Āli and Bhomorāguri Āli and dug the Bhatiāpārā tank.

GOLD-CARRYING RIVERS, GUN POWDER, CURRENCY AND REVENUE SYSTEM.

Shāhābuddin, a Muhammadan writer, who accompanied Mr. Jumlā in 1663, leaves an account of Asam (Translated by Jadunāth Sarkār, *Journal of the Behar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. I, p. 179) which throws much light on the contemporary history of the country. He writes: "Gold is washed from the sand of the Brahmaputra. Ten to twelve thousand Assamese are engaged in this employment and they pay to the Rājā's government one tola of gold per head per year.... It is said that gold can be procured from the sand at all places on the bank of the Brahmaputra; but the only people who know how to gather it are those Assamese. The currency of this kingdom consists of coins and rupees and gold coins stamped with the stamp of the Raja. Copper coins are not current,.... Silver, copper and tin are also obtained in the hills If this country were administered like the Imperial dominions, it is very likely that forty to forty-five lakhs of rupees would be collected from the revenue paid by the rāiyats, the price of elephants caught in the jungles and other sources. It is not the custom here to take any land-tax from the cultivators; but in every house one man out of three has to render service to the Raja. Locks and bachadar artillery and show great skill in this craft. They make first rate gunpowder... The original inhabitants of the country are of two races, the Assamese (Ahoms) and the Kalita. In all things the latter are superior to the former; but in performing difficult tasks and making a firm stand in battle the opposite is the case.

ĀHOM SYSTEM OF BURIAL OF THE DEAD. "The common people bury their dead with some of the property of the deceased The chiefs build vaults for their dead, and place therein the wives and servants of the deceased, after killing them, together with necessary articles for a few years including various kinds of gold and silver vessels, carpets, cloths and foodstuffs. They cover the head of the dead very strongly with stout poles and bury in the vault a lamp with plenty of oil and one living lamp-attendant to remain engaged in the work of trimming the lamp. From the ten vaults which were opened (by the Mughals) property worth nearly ninety thousand rupees were recovered. One of the marvels was that from the vault of one of the queens of this

country who had been buried eighty years ago, a gold betel casket was taken within which the betel leaf was still green." This statement about the burial custom of the Āhoms is corroborated by Col. Dalton who says that "several mounds known to be the graves of Āhom kings, were opened and were found to contain the remains of slaves and animals and also gold and silver vessels, raiment, arms, etc. (quoted by Gait, *H.A.*, fn., p. 149).

SPECIALITY OF ASSAMESE MUHAMMADANS. Shāhābuddin continues: "As for the Musalmāns who had been taken prisoners in former times and had chosen to marry here, their descendants act exactly in the manner of the Assamese, and having nothing of Islam except the name; their hearts are inclined for more towards mingling with the Assamese than towards association with the Muslims. The Muhammadans who had come here from Islamic lands engage in the performance of prayer and fasting, but were forbidden to chant the call to prayer or publicly recite the "word of God".

ĀHOM AGGRESSORS DRIVE MUHAMMADANS BEYOND THE MANAH. Jayadhvaj had no son or had, according to some Āhom chronicles, two sons who were not considered fit to succeed. So the nobles sent for the Cāringiā Rājā and made him king christening him Supung Mung; but he assumed the Hindu name Cakradhwaj Siṃha (1663-69). He was determined to drive the Muhammadans out of the country at the earliest opportunity and the fire was fanned by a strong letter from Sayid Firuz Khān, the then Thānādar of Guāhāṭī, early in 1667, demanding the balance of war indemnity which was not paid even after repeated reminders. So in August, 1667, Cakradhwaj despatched a strong army under Lācit Barphukan to west Guāhāṭī against the Muhammadans. The Muhammadan outposts Bāhbārī on the north bank and at Kājālī on the south were captured by the Āhoms at the first assault securing large number of prisoners, horses, cannon and other booty. Constructing their own forts in such places they proceeded to Guāhāṭī and save a minor reverse on the bank of the Barnadī they met all success. And thus after a seige of two months, the Āhoms captured Guāhāṭī and Pāṇḍu despite very strong defence of the Muhammadans, and a large number of prisoners and cannon and good deal of booty were won. Early in November, the Muhammadan army was strongly reinforced with a number of warships. They made a fresh counter-attack, but it was of no avail. The Muhammadans were expelled from Āgiāthūṭi and after several defeats were driven to the bank of the Mānāh river, where another battle was fought and lost by the Muhammadans, reducing a large number of themselves to be made prisoners. Guāhāṭī was then made the headquarters of the Barphukan; Pāṇḍu and Śarāighāt were strongly fortified, a survey of the country was made and a Census of the population was taken, and every

necessary arrangement was carried out for the administration of the re-occupied territories.

INSCRIPTIONS ON CANNON CAPTURED FROM THE MUHAMMADANS. Gait's *Report on the Progress of Historical Research in Assam* (Appendix 1) gives an account of inscriptions on cannon. One inscription in Sanskrit on an old cannon found at Śilghāt says: 'King Cakradhwaj Siṃha having again destroyed the Muhammadans in battle in 1589 śak (1667 A.D.) obtained this weapon which proclaims his glory as the slayer of his enemies'. An inscription in Assamese on the Kānāi Barasī Bowā Śil, near the Maṇi Karṇeswar temple at North Guāhāṭī, bearing the same date, records the erection of an Āhom fort there "after the defeat and death of Sana and Sayid Firuz". One old cannon found at Dikom bears an inscription in Sanskrit referring to a victory of the Āhoms in 1668, together with another inscription in Persian mentioning that the cannon was placed in charge of Sayid Ahmed Ali Hussain to conquer Asam in 1074 *Hijri* (1663 A.D.).

SIXTEENTH MUHAMMADAN INVASION IN 1669. The news of these reverses and losses reached Aurangzeb (1658-1707) in December, 1667. He immediately despatched a strong Imperial army under command of Rājā Rām Siṃha, advising it to be made stronger yet with troops of the Bengal command. Meanwhile the Muhammadan army made an assault at Raṅgāmāṭī under the command of Rājā Indradaman and then at Śarāighāt where the Muhammadans were defeated and compelled to retreat. Rājā Rām Siṃha accompanied by Rashid Khān, the late Thānādār of Guāhāṭī, reached Raṅgāmāṭī in February, 1669. *Ālamgir-nāmāh* (Bible. Ind. ed., p. 1068) does not detail the strength of the Mughal army, but Gait, who collects it from the Āhom chronicles state that the army "consisted of 18,000 cavalry and 30,000 infantry with 15,000 archers from Koch Behar." Āhoms, who were not yet fully prepared, took recourse to delaying tactics by making enquiries of Rām Siṃha as to the cause of their proposed assault and when Rām Siṃha asked Lācit to leave off the territories west of the boundary line fixed by the previous treaty the latter replied, meanwhile having completed his preparations, that he would rather fight than budge an inch from their then occupied territories.

RAM SIṂHA DEFEATED AND REPULSED. Early in April, 1669, the war renewed. In the first two battles fought near Tezpur the Āhoms lost, but they soon gained a naval fight and immediately drove away the Muhammadans by successful assault on their fort at Raṅgmahal on the opposite of Guāhāṭī. Rām Siṃha was compelled to retreat to Hājo,

and the Āhoms following up their success captured the Muhammadan fort at Āgiāṭhuṭi.

EVICION OF THE MUHAMMADAN INVADERS. Meanwhile Cakradhwaj died, and his brother Māju Gohāi christened Sunyatfā succeeded him assuming the name of Udayāditya Siṃha (1669-73). Cakradhwaj had little leisure left for carrying out public works, yet he constructed some roads during his reign. Before his death Rājā Rām Siṃha opened negotiations for peace and this continued till the reign of his successor. Rām Siṃha, having the Mughal army meanwhile re-inforced, prepared rather for war and so did the Āhoms. The Āhoms were successful both by land and navy, and consequently in March, 1671, Rām Siṃha was compelled to retreat finally to Raṅgāmāṭi. Hādirā on the opposite side of Goālpār, was made the Āhom frontier outpost. The grandson of Balinārāyaṇ, called Sūryyanārāyaṇ or Candranārāyaṇ, was made the tributary chief of Darang and Gandharva Nārāyaṇ that of Beltolā. An expedition was sent now to subdue the Daflās who in the meantime made some disturbances and refused to pay tribute. *Ālamgirnāmāh* mentions the duration from 1667 to 1685 as the period of Rām Siṃha's stay at Raṅgāmāṭi which was his headquarters.

FORTIFICATION AT GUAHATI AND MAKING OWN CANNON. Udayāditya's brother, who was a fratricide and killed his royal brother at Carāidew, now came to the throne being christened Suklamfā and assuming the Hindu name Rāmdhwaj (1673-75). Udayāditya's reign is specially marked by the eviction of the Muhammadan invaders and by the making of a strong fortification at Guāhāṭi. It is also during this period that the Āhoms made their own cannon which is evidenced by the one now at Guāhāṭi having an inscription saying that it was made under the orders of the Colādharā Baruwā in the reign of Udayāditya in the year corresponding to 1672 A.D. Rāmdhwaj, who ascended the throne in a hot bed of conspiracy, had also to pass off in the same hot bed himself, and through the irony of fate the hand of Deberā or Lāchāi that made him king and for which Rāmdhwaj prized him the post of Barbaruwā on his ascension to the throne, also snatched away his kingship along with his life, and this took place in March, 1675.

SEVENTEENTH AND LAST MUHAMMADAN INVASION CRUSHED. Thus we find that after the death of Cakradhwaj in 1670 and in a span of eleven years there came to the throne no less than seven kings, some of them, like Gobar, being on the throne for barely a month, and none allowed to die a natural death. Availing themselves of this opportunity the Muhammadans re-occupied Guāhāṭi. So when after the murder of

Lārā Rajā (1679-81), Gadāpāni, christened Supatfā, ascended the throne assuming the Hindu name Gadādhār Siṃha (1681-96) with his capital at Barkolā, his first determination was to reconquer Guāhātī. Even at the first attack fell the Mughal forts at Bāhbārī and Kājali, and a great naval fight was won near the mouth of the Barnadī; the complete fleet of the enemies, who now fled beyond the Mānāh river, being captured by the Āhoms and a great booty of gold and silver, cannon and guns, swords and spears, elephants, horses and buffaloes being secured by the Āhoms. This was the last Muhammadan war which though not recorded by the Muhammadan chronicles is eloquently described by the Āhom chronicles and by three still existing cannon inscriptions one at Dikom, one in the Indian Museum and the last at Dibrugarh, to the effect:—“King Gadādhār Siṃha having vanquished the Musalmāns at Guāhātī, obtained this weapon in 1604 śak. (1682 A.D.).”

GADADHAR'S PERSECUTION OF VAISNAVAS. Gadādhār's reign is marked not only by the crushing of the last Muhammadan invasion fixing the Mānāh as the common boundary, but also by his persecutions on his officers and subjects standing on his way, and on Vaiṣṇava preachers in particular, as he was a patron of Śāktism. Gait opines:—“The temple of Umananda, Peacock Island, opposite Gauhati, was built under his auspices and the earliest known copper plates, recording grants of land by Āhom kings to Brahmans, or Hindu temples, date from his reign.” (H.A. p. 170) But a document of land-grant to the temple of Umānanda, discovered of late, shows that Badshah Aurangzeb made land grant to this temple as early as March, 1637 A.D. and it also transpires in this connexion that the Koc king Raghudev (1581-1603) was the first to give land grant to this temple (J.A.R.S. Vol. IX, New series Nos. 1-2; Jan, and Ap., 1942).

INORDINATE GROWTH OF VAISNAVA POWER. Gait observes:—“It is impossible to justify or palliate, the brutal severity of the measures which he adopted with a view to overthrow the Vaishnava sects but there can be no doubt that the power of their priesthood was already becoming excessive; and history of the Moāmaria insurrection in later times shows that the inordinate growth of this power is not only prejudicial to progress, but may easily become a menace to the safety of established institutions.” (H.A. p. 170).

INTRODUCTION OF A NEW SYSTEM OF LAND SURVEY. Time and circumstances were thus favourable for execution of public welfare works during his reign, and so we find immense progress and victories of peace belonging to this period. Not only were many roads like the Dhodar Āli, Akā Āli, etc. constructed, two stone bridges were also built and many tanks excavated. Above all, a detailed survey of the coun-

try introducing a new system of land measurement was started during this period importing surveyors from Koc Behār and Bengal.

THE GREATEST ĀHOM KING AND HIS ACHIEVEMENTS. Gadādhār was succeeded by his eldest son christened Sukhrungfā, but ascending the throne at Gaḍgāo assuming the Hindu name Rudra Siṃha (1696-1714). He is considered to have been the greatest of the Ahom rulers, like Akbar (1556-1605) amongst the Mughal Emperors; and like Akbar, he is said to have been illiterate (Gait's *H.A.*, p. 181). There is no doubt that he was the most enlightened of all the Āhom monarchs, even if illiterate. With him ceased "the isolating policy" of his predecessors and he sent envoys to visit the kingdoms of other contemporary rulers of India in order to inform himself of the progress that was going on around him. With him also ceased the persecution of the Vaiṣṇava preachers indulged in by his predecessors, and he allowed Mājuli (the river island) to be the headquarters for the prominent members of Vaiṣṇavism. Among them the Āuniāti Gosāi was specially honoured, being recalled from his exile and made the spiritual preceptor. Ghanaśyām, an artisan from Koc Behār was imported by him to supervise the various brick buildings constructed at East Rangpur near Śiwsāgar and at Carāidew. He also made many roads and great tanks as the Jaysāgar tank and temple in the brick city of East Rangpur, besides the masonry bridges, over the Nāmdāng and Dimau.

RECONQUEST OF KACHARI KINGDOM. Rudra Siṃha was no less a conqueror. The long period that elapsed since the last wars in which the Kachārīs were subjugated by the Āhoms became gradually effaced from their memory, and this oblivion culminated in assertion of independence by Tāmradhwaj (1706-08). Rudra Siṃha ordered Māibong, the Kachārī capital to be invaded; and the Barbaruwā proceeded to it by the Dhansiri Valley with over 37,000 soldiers while the Pānī Phukan advanced by the Kapilī valley with about 34,000 men about December, 1706. The Barbaruwā after meeting some opposition entered the Kachārī capital and secured sufficient booty with one cannon and 700 guns. Some time later the Pānī Phukan's army also joined him taking 322 prisoners and some booty. The king who was then at Rahā ordered the Barbaruwā to proceed to Khāspur, but the foul climate of the place attacked the army with illness resulting in the loss of the Barbaruwā's own life. So about the end of March, 1707, the king was obliged to give up the idea of conquering Khāspur. He called back his men who after putting the brick fort at Māibong to ruins and erecting pillars for their victory, returned, leaving fortifications and a strong garrison at Demara.

RECONQUEST OF JAYANTIYA. Meanwhile, Tāmradhwaj became a fugitive at Vikrampur in the plains of present Kāchār and asked Rām Siṃha I, the king of Jayantiyā (1697-1708) to join him against the Āhoms. But the latter played a treacherous part, met Tāmradhwaj at Baleswar and took him a captive with a view to rule both the countries. Through a Bairāgī or Hindu envoy, Tāmradhwaj managed to appeal to Rudra Siṃha for forgiveness and deliverance. Rudra Siṃha immediately ordered the officer in charge at the Jagi outpost to ask Rām Siṃha through his tributary chief of Gobha, to set Tāmradhwaj free. On his refusal, Rudra Siṃha stopped the supply of the Jayantiyās by closing the market at Gobha and despatched early in December, 1707, an army of 43,000 men in command of the Barbaruwā *enroute* the Kapilī valley and the Kachārī country, and a similar army under the Barphukan *enroute* Gobha and the Jayantiyā hills. When each army of the Āhoms approached him by two different routes he left all preparations of war and surrendered to the Barbaruwā, and the Barphukan also soon joined him. Rudra Siṃha then ordered the two royal captives to be taken to him, each through his own country along with Rām Siṃha's garments, jewels, elephants, horses arms. This was done in February, 1708.

CASUALTIES AND BOOTY OF JAYANTIYA REBELLION. The news of this annexation of the Kachārī and Jayantiyā countries to the Āhom kingdom was carried to Matiulla, the Muhammadan Fauzādār at Sylhet. This was resented to by the Jayantiyās who were not prepared to submit to foreign yoke, and this rising was put down by Rudra Siṃha after much trouble. This resulted in 2,366 casualties including twelve high officers on the side of the Āhoms; and among these killed "960 came from upper Assam, 1009 from Gauhati, 280 from the Dhekeri country and 105 from Sonapur. But on the other side save the massacre at Jayantiyapur very few were killed; while 700 war prisoners, 1,600 Assamese refugees mainly were brought from Khaspur and about 600 from Jayantiyapur". The booty obtained in the expedition "included 3 cannon, 2273 guns, 109 elephants, 12,000 pieces of silver of the Muhammadan, Ahom, Koch and Jayantiya mints, and numerous utensils of gold, silver and other metals". Certain articles of jewellery were also added.

GREAT DURBARS IN TENTS PITCHED WITH GOLD AND SILVER POSTS. "On the conclusion of the expedition Rudra Singha removed his camp from Bijayapur to Sala while the Jaintia and Kachari kings were kept in separate camps near Bishnath. In the middle of April (1708 A.D.) Rudra Singh surrounded by all his chief nobles, received Tamradhwaj at a grand durbar in a tent supported by posts of gold and silver. The captive chief was conveyed across the Brahmaputra in the royal barge and on landing was placed an elephant carrying a golden howdah.

When he reached the camp he descended from the durbar tent where he dismounted and advancing on foot prostrated himself and knelt down before the king. He was introduced by the Barbarua, who recited the events which had culminated in his detention at Bishnath. The king offered him a seat and addressed him in a speech which was practically a repetition of that already made by the Barbaruā. To this oration Tāmradhwaj made a submissive reply. He was given formal permission to return to his own country and was dismissed from the Durbar with numerous presents. Before setting out he was received at a second durbar. He also paid a visit to the temple of Bishnath, in order to worship the idol of Siva, which it contained. He was given an escort of Ahom troops as far as Demera where he was met by a number of his own people from Khaspur." (Gait's H.A., pp. 179-80).

TWO JAYANTIYA PRINCESSES MARRIED BY THE AHOM KING. The king of Jayantiyā was also received some time later in the same manner, but was asked to make his nobles appear personally before Rudra Siṃha to make their submission, before their king could be allowed to go back to his territories. The nobles being frightened sent their message of submission instead. Rāmsiṃha died meanwhile by a sudden attack of dysentery, and his son Jaynārāyaṇ (1708-29), who was also a captive, gave two of his sisters in marriage to the Āhom king and was probably soon released.

PROPOSED INVASION OF BENGAL FRUSTRATED BY DEATH. Being encouraged by all this, Rudra Siṃha made thorough preparations to invade Bengal. "He proceeded in person to Gauhati and there organized a great army and a powerful fleet, and collected all his available cannon. The Kachari and Jayantia Rajas joined his army with 14,000 and 10,000 followers respectively and 600 Dafflas came from the hills north of the Darrang district." But this was frustrated by his illness to which he succumbed in August 1714, at Guāhātī.

VIII. FAR-REACHING EFFECTS OF MĀYĀMARĀ PERSECUTION

A SUICIDAL IDIOSYNCRASY FIRST RESPONSIBLE. Rudra Siṃha's "Hindu proclivities increased as he grew older and he at last decided formally to embrace that religion and become an orthodox Hindu... Rudra Siṃha could not bear the thought of humbling himself in this way (neophyte prostrates himself before the Guru, preceptor) before a mere subject, however saintly. He therefore sent to Bengal and summoned Krishnarām Bhattacharya, a famous Mahant of the Sakta sect.... The Mahant was at first unwilling to come but consented on being promised the care of the temple of Kamakhya... When he arrived the king changed his mind and refused to become his disciple, and the priest departed

again in his dudgeon. At this moment a severe earthquake occurred which shattered several temples; and Rudra Siṃha interpreting the phenomenon as an indication that the Mahant was a real favourite of the gods, hastened to call him back. He still hesitated to take the decisive step, but satisfied the Mahant by ordering his sons and the Brahmans of his entourage to accept him as their Guru."

THE KING AND OFFICERS FOLLOW AN IDIOSYNCRATIC ADVICE. Rudra Siṃha left five sons Śiva Siṃha, Pramatta Siṃha, Barjanā Gohāi, Rajeswar Siṃha and Lakṣmī Siṃha. On his death, his eldest son Śiva Siṃha, christened Sutanfā, who was with his father, went to East Raṅgpur (near Śiwsāgar) and ascended the throne (1714-44) there. The only warlike event of his reign is the Daflā expedition of January, 1717, and the subsequent construction of an embankment at the foot of the Daflā hills to prevent future raids. Śiva Siṃha following his father's dictation, became a disciple of the alien preceptor whom he not only put in the management of the Kāmākhyā temple but also gave large grants of land at different parts of his kingdom which his successors, all since known as the Parbatīyā Gosāis (preceptors of the Nil hill where the Kāmākhyā temple is situated) are still enjoying though still remaining as alien people. For flattering and satisfying the whims of the king, his high officials, especially the Brahmans, followed his idiosyncratic example and so it is that all the modern Śāktas (worshippers of the goddess) of Asam are generally disciples of these foreign preceptors.

"FEMALE KING" ON THE THRONE. Śiva Siṃha was completely under the influence of the Brahman priests and astrologers; and in 1722 he was alarmed by their prediction that his rule would shortly come to an end. He not only made many and lavish presents for the support of temples and Brahmans in the hope of conciliating the gods and averting the threatened calamity, but also endeavoured to satisfy the alleged decree of fate by a subterfuge which greatly diminished his prestige in the eyes of his people. He declared his chief queen Phuleswari, who assumed the name Pramateśwari (one of the names of Durgā) to be the "Bar Rājā" or chief king; made over to her the royal umbrella, the Āhom emblem of sovereignty; and caused coins to be struck jointly in her name and his.

COINS WITH NAMES OF "FEMALE KINGS". "The inscriptions on the coins of Śiva Siṃha's reign confirm this story. Those issued prior to 1724 bear his name only; those of 1724 to 1731, with one exception, are in his name and Phuleswari's; those of 1732 and 1736 in his name and Ambika Devi's and those of 1739 to 1741 in his name and Sarveswari's. Some coins were issued in Sib Singh's name alone in 1732 after Phu-

leswari's death, and in 1738 and 1739 after the death of Ambika Devi and before Sarveswari became queen.

MONOTHEISTIC MAYAMARA SAINTS BADLY INSULTED BY "FEMALE KING." "To make matters worse, Phuleswari's authority was far from nominal. She was even more under the influence of the Brahmans than her husband, and in her consuming zeal for Śākta Hinduism, such as so often distinguishes neophytes, she committed an act of oppression which was destined to have far-reaching and disastrous consequences. Hearing that the Śudra Mahants of Vaishnava persuasion refused to worship Durga, she ordered the Moamaria and several other Gosains to be brought to a Śākta shrine where sacrifices, were being offered, and caused the distinguishing mark of the Śākta sect to be smeared with the blood of the victims upon their forehead. The Moamarias never forgave this insult to their spiritual leader, and half a century later, they broke out in open rebellion."

NEW "FEMALE KINGS" OF ŚIWA SIMHA. Phuleśwari died in 1731. Her sister Deopadi whom the king married now succeeded her as Bar Rājā (chief king) assuming another name of the goddess, Ambikā. When she too died in 1738, the king married a third wife, Anādarī, renamed Sarveśwari, who became the "Bar Rājā" (of course a nickname for a queen exercising the power of the king when still he lived). Śiva Singh died in 1744.

ĀHOM COPPER-PLATE GRANTS. On examining the inscription of the 48 copper plate grants of Āhom kings, Gait finds out the number against the donors as: Gadadhar Singha, 3; Rudra Singha, 3; Śiva Singha, 19; Pramatta Singh, 3; Rajeswar Singha, 7; Lakshmi Singha, 6; Gaurinath Singh, 4; Kamaleśwar Singha 2; and Chandrakanta Singha, 1. (*H.A.*, p. 184). It is due to Śiva Singha's support in particular that the Āhoms now gave up their tribal beliefs and customs and embraced Hinduism though their tribal priests and spiritual guides, the Deodhai's and Bāilungs, yet tried to adhere to the observance of some tribal ceremonies such as the worship of Somdew and the Chaklang form of marriage.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF ŚIVA SIMHA'S REIGN. Śiva Simha is said to have established such an elaborate system of espionage that he had accurate information of everything that was done, or even spoken, in all parts of his dominions. "He constructed the Dhāi Āli, and the tanks and temples at Gaurisāgar, Śiwasāgar, and Kālugaō and made surveys of Bakata and Kāmrūp. The register or *Perū Kāgaz* based on this survey of Kāmarūp, was still extant at the time of the British conquest. It contained a list of all occupied lands, except homestead, with their areas, and particulars of all rent-free estates."

PRAMATTA SIMHA'S ACHIEVEMENTS. S. S. was succeeded, his sons being passed over, by his next brother Pramatta Simha (1744-51),

christened Sunefā who made a survey and took a census in 1745, besides erecting the temples of Rudreswar and Śukreswar at Guāhātī and making masonry gateways at Gaḍgāo and the Raṅghar, the amphitheatre at East Raṅpur for animal fights.

RAJESWAR SIMHA'S ASCENSION TO THE THRONE. P. S. was succeeded by his next next brother, the fourth son of Rudra Siṃha, christened Suramfā, but known as Rājeśwar Siṃha (1751-69). Immediately after ascending the throne, he exiled his elder brother, Barjanā Gohāi, who was passed over by the nobles considering him unfit to be a king for having marks of attack of small-pox, to Nāmrūp. His tribal priests advised him to have his residence at Tāimuṅ while the Hindu astrologers recommended East Raṅpur. This king approved the latter but built a second palace at Tāimuṅ. Though a man of parts R. S. was more inclined to pleasures than to his royal duties which he left to his Barbaruwā.

KIRTTI BARBARUA BURNING A PYRE OF CHRONICLES. Kirtti Candra Gandhelā abused his power to the great annoyance of the nobles and subjects. It reached its zenith when finding that the chronicle written by the Numali Bar Gohāi recorded his descent as far from pure he got all the chronicles examined, and burnt all those which he did not approve. This culminated in a plot against his life which however was not successful. "The conspirators were caught. Two of the ring-leaders were impaled and one was fried to death in oil. The others were deprived of their noses and ears." (Gait, H.A., p. 86).

OUTWARD PEACE AND PROSPERITY, BUT INTERNAL UNREST AND DECAY. Besides the expeditions sent against the Daflās in 1758, against the Mikirs in July, 1765, against the Kachāri king, Sandhikari, in November 1766, and the last in November, 1768, to re-instate Jay Siṃha, the king of Maṇipur who took the Āhom king's shelter to drive away the Burmese for whom he became a fugitive, his reign was free from all foreign aggressions and the country enjoyed enough peace and prosperity. But this is only the surface, and below this skin there were germs of unrest and decay. The people had already become too priest-ridden. The king himself became initiated to the Parvatīyā Nāti Gosāi whom he gave a temple at Pāṇḍunāth, and spent a long time at Guāhātī worshipping in the temple. R. S. generally indulged in erecting temples and giving immense land to the Brāhmins. The Māyāmarā Gosāi was all the while brooding over the uncalled for mischief done to him and was spreading discontent among his disciples. The martial spirit of the race was already departed as is proved first, by the fact of many high officers finding plea not to go on active service

which was to be visited upon by their dismissal and confiscation of their properties to the state, and, second, by the king's own ease-loving nature. Rennel's *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, (p. 57) informs us that Mānāh was still the western boundary of the Āhom territories on the north bank of the Brahmaputra.

LAKSHMI SIMHA'S ASCENSION AND K. B.'S DESPOTISM. Rājeswar Siṃha was succeeded by his youngest brother Lakṣmī Siṃha (1769-80), christened Sunyeofā, after much difference of opinion among the nobles. He got initiations from a new Śākta priest, Na Gosāi, imported from Bengal, the old one refusing on ground of this new king's rumour of illegitimacy. He banished the two sons of the late king to Nāmṛup and left the management of his kingdom in the hands of Kīrtticandra Bar-Baruwā whose efforts were responsible for his ascending to the throne. Now K. B. became more despotic than ever and fanned the fire of rebellion by assaulting the chief of the Mārān tribe, named Nāhar, of Māyāmarā sect known also as Maṭaks. According to Gait, "Matak refers to the country once ruled by the Bar senapati. When the Singphos began to raid, they found the people of this tract better able to defend themselves than those residing under the decayed power of the Āhoms, and so called them Matak, as distinguished from Mullung, or weak subjects of the Āhoms. The Bar senapati was a Cutiya by tribe." (H.A., fn. p. 190).

BANGA, A REBEL, DECLARES HIMSELF KING OF NAMRUP. The Māyāmarā Gosāi, whose disciple Nāhar had been and who was also personally insulted by K. B. on a previous occasion, immediately took up the cause and broke into open rebellion. He mobilised an army from his disciples who under the command of his son Baṅgā led them into Nāmṛup where he being warmly received is said to have declared himself as king of Nāmṛup. The king's elder brother, Barjanā Gohāi also joined them on the promise of being made a king and numerous other exiles and Marāns and Kachārī joined them. They then triumphantly marched to Tipām where the royalists opposed them successfully, the first fight taking place on the banks of the Dibru river.

ĀHOM KING'S FLIGHT AND CAPTURE. In October, 1769, Rāghaws, a Marān rebel, styling himself Barbaruwā, led an army by the north bank of the Brahmaputra and defeated the royalists in several actions. The king who on the advice of K.B. became a fugitive to Guāhāṭī was caught by Rāghawa at Soṅāri Nagar and confined him at Jaydaul temple. A majority of his nobles already deserted him and many of the others in his company were confined and some put to death. Barjanā Gohāi who hastened to the capital to become a king was put to death under

the Mārān Bar-Baruwā's orders. K. B. and his sons also shared his fate. Baṅgā would now be hailed as king at Raṅgpur, but his father, the Māyāmarā Gosāi, dissuaded him.

RAMAKANTA, A REBEL, INSTALLED KING, AND MINTED COINS. Ramākānta, a son of Nāhar, the Marān chief, was then installed as king, and his other two sons were made chiefs of Tipām and Chāring. Other leaders of the movement were distributed to other high offices of the State and allowed to occupy official residences. Rāghawa himself remained as Bar Baruwā and appropriated all the wives of the king's harem, including the Maṅipurī princess. Coins were now struck in Rāmākānta's name and dated equivalent to 1769 A.D. Many more old nobles were murdered and the deposed king's execution was planned.

RE-INSTALLING OF LEGAL KING THROUGH INTRIGUE. In April, 1770, on the eve of the Biḥu (Biṣuva) festival, when a large majority of the supporters of Ramākānta was out of the capital, the royalists according to a previous intrigue took the false plea of singing the social *Hucari* songs of Biḥu occasion, first surrounded Rāghawa's house, caught him and put him to death. Ramākānta, his father and other nobles, met the same or similar fate, and the deposed king was re-instated; but his reign was far from peaceful. There were fresh risings of the Māyāmarās, fresh conspiracies, which, though partly supported and defeated, only prevailed more bloodshed and less goodwill. Lakṣmī Siṃha excavated the Rudrasāgar tank and constructed many temples and "at the suggestion of the Na Gosāi, the goddess Tārā was worshipped with great ceremony, and immense amount of money was distributed to the Brāhmins." But he died in December, 1780.

ROYAL ORDERS FOR UNIVERSAL MASSACRE OF MAYAMARAS, AND OTHER BRUTAL MURDERS. He was succeeded by his eldest son Suhitpangfā *alias* Gaurināth Siṃha (1780-95) who immediately after his ascension to the throne began to mutilate the other princes for his safety and beheaded the Bargohāi and his near relatives at the instance of the Barbaruwā who himself lost his office and property soon after. His persecution of the Māyāmarās culminated in an attack in April, 1782, on Gaḍgāo and the king himself and the capital was only saved by his Buḍhāghohāi. *The king then proclaimed a general massacre of the Māyāmarās, including women and children, was resorted to, and many suspects and their relatives or followers were either blinded or fried to death in oil.*

THE ĀHOM KING AGAIN TOOK TO FLIGHT. Then occurred a rising the Māyāmarās in the extreme east under Badar Gāobuḍhā, which miscarrying, was succeeded by another on the north bank early in 1786. This

reduced the king to a strait and compelled him to ask the chiefs of Rāñi, Luki and Beltolā for help, which even if lent would not save him. Gaurināth then appealed for help from the Mañipuri, Kachārī and Jayantiā kings. The Māyāmarās infested both the banks and defeated the royalists reducing the king to seek refuge in flight to Guāhātī, his capital being captured once more by the rebels.

UNTOLD SUFFERINGS OF PEOPLE AND COINS OF PETTY KINGS. The Buḍhā Gohāi in spite of these disasters, held the royalist position on the Nāmdāng about February, 1789, and made a fortification at Jorhāt in April, 1790. Suffering of the people knew no bounds and for want of food they were compelled to eat whatever came before them. Meanwhile many petty chiefs were elected as kings in such districts as Mājuli, Sadiyā, and the north bank. The Marās acknowledged Sarvānanda as their ruler while the Māyāmarās in general placed Bharat Siṃha of their throne at Raṅgpur; and both these kings minted coins, those dated 1791, 1792, 1793, 1795 and 1797 are of the latter, and those dated 1794 and 1795 of the former, being still extant.

FUGITIVE AHOM KING LOST ALL SYMPATHY. G. S. as a fugitive was thus wandering about in central and lower Asam where also by his own conduct and by that of his nobles he provoked more disaffection and less sympathy, and Viṣṇunārāyaṇ, son of the late Haṃsanārāyaṇ whom G.S. got treacherously killed, not only drove away Kṛṣṇanārāyaṇ, the king's nominee as the tributary chief of Darang, but also took possession of North Guāhātī and wanted to annex similar portion to his dominions.

IX. FIRST APPEARANCE OF BRITISH IN PICTURE OF ASAM

CHANGING COURSE OF HISTORY. All this drove G.S. to appeal to Lord Cornwallis (1786-93), the Governor-General of India, through Lumsden, the collector of West Raṅgpur, for help; and accordingly in September, 1792, six companies of sixty sepoys each were sent under the command of captain Welsh. This is the first relation of Asam with the British, and the unnerved G.S. could hardly dream that by his appeal he would be instrumental in soon changing the whole course of the future history of Asam. Any way Captain Welsh came to his help, subdued his enemies, and defeated the Māyāmarās in 1794, G.S. himself paying the debt of nature on the 19th December, 1794.

"BLOOD-THIRSTY AND COWARDLY OF ALL AHOM KINGS." Gait styles G.S. as "the most incompetent blood-thirsty and cowardly of all Ahom kings," and Captain Welsh describes this king as "a poor debilitated man,

incapable of transacting business, always either washing or praying, and seen intoxicated with opium," and his corrupt favourites as "a set of villains, all drawing different ways." Gait says:—

"During his reign the people who had hitherto enjoyed a fair measure of happiness and prosperity, were plunged into depths of misery and despair. Where the Moamarias held sway, whole villages were destroyed and the inhabitants robbed of all their possessions were forced to flee from the country or to eke out precarious existence by eating wild fruits and roots and the flesh of unclean animals. In lower Assam the Bengal mercenaries and gangs of marauding banditti who flocked into the province caused similar though less widespread, havoc, while where Gaurinath himself had power all persons belonging to the Moamaria communion were subjected to all manner of persecutions and barbarities."

MONEY VALUE AND PRICE LIST OF COMMODITIES ABOUT THE CLOSE OF THE 18TH CENTURY. Captain Welsh's reports illumine some dark corners of the economic history of Asam towards the close of the eighteenth century. "At the sale of the loot taken at Rangpur (Sibsagor) rice in the husk was sold at the rate of six hundred pounds per rupee, while buffaloes fetched five rupees, and cows two rupees each".... "In a copper plate deed of grant of 1661 sak (1739 A.D.) the prices of various commodities are quoted, viz., rice $2\frac{1}{4}$ annas per maund; milk, $2\frac{1}{2}$ annas; gram 4 annas; salt and oil $3\frac{3}{4}$ annas; gur, $1\frac{1}{4}$ annas, and black pepper Rs. 20 per maund. Betel leaf was sold at 40 bundles for an anna, earthen pots or kalsis at 643 per rupee, and areca nuts at 5,120 per rupee. In other similar records of the same period the price of rice is quoted at 4 annas per maund, gur, Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$; matikalai 5 annas pulse and ghee, 10 annas and oil, Rs. $3\frac{1}{3}$; per maund. Elsewhere again rice is priced at 8 annas and Mātikalāi at ten annas per maund; earthen pots at a rupee for 224, and betel leaf at an anna for 20 bundles of 20 leaves each. Amongst other articles of which prices are given may be mentioned goats, Re. 1 each; ducks, 1 anna each; pigeons 1 pice; dhutis 5 annas and gamachas, 6 pice each". "The money price was three times as great as it is now, while measured in paddy it was more than forty times as great." (Gait's H.A., pp. 216-17).

DANDUA-DROH AND OTHER INSURRECTIONS. G.S. was succeeded by Kinārām *alias* Suklingfā, a descendant of Gadādhār Siṃha who on ascending the throne assumed the Hindu name Kamaleśwar Siṃha (1795-1810) and made his father Chāringiā Rajā. In his reign there broke out a rebellion, since known as Danduwā-Droh, in Kāmṛup led by two brothers Har Datta and Bīr Datta, which of course proved abortive. There were also slight insurrections of Daflās and Māyāmarās (1799 A.D.) and hostilities with the Kachāris and the Singphos and Khāmtis; but they were not enough to disturb the order that was being restored, and the peace and prosperity that was being established

in his reign through the sincere effort of the Buḍhā Gohāi, who really was all-in-all in these matters. It is in his reign that East Raṅgpur was re-constructed and the Bhogdai (formerly Dicai) was excavated to improve the new town of Jorhāt.

FIRST BURMESE INVASION INVITED BY DOMESTIC QUARREL. Kamalés-war was succeeded by his brother Candrakānta *alias* Sudinfā (1810-18) who was still a boy when he came to the throne and was under the evil influence of a boy of his age, Satrām, the son of the Kukurācowā Cowdāng. The Buḍhāgohāi who was really the young king's guardian was much disliked by Satrām and by, Badan Barphukan, the Governor at Gūāhāṭī, culminating in a plot against the Buḍhāgohāi in which the Barphukan might also be suspected as having some part. Satrām was exiled to Nām-rūp and an order of arrest was issued by the Buḍhāgohāi even to the Barphukan on charge of misgoverning etc. Being informed in good time the Barphukan made good his escape and in order to avenge this insult he managed at last to get a troop of 8,000 from Burma swelled into 16,000 being joined *enroute* by the chiefs of Munkong, Hukong and Manipur, by the time it reached Nām-rūp in 1816. The Āhom army, already shattered, offered opposition, but without success. The old Buḍhāgohāi killed himself by tasting a piece of diamond, and his son and successor fled to Gūāhāṭī; and the Barphukan up to this time finding his mission fulfilled retained Candrakānta as a nominal king he himself absorbing all power, and paying a large indemnity and costs sent the Burmese army back in April, 1817.

SECOND BURMESE INVASION AND CHAOS. Fresh intrigues now were on foot, the Barphukan was assassinated and the new Buḍhāgohāi returned to the capital at Jorhat with a foreign force and his nominee Brajanāth for the throne. Candrakānta fled to East Raṅgpur and the officer in charge of the capital was killed, and Brajanāth who was going to be placed on the throne, already minted coins in his name about February, 1818. But on finding that he was rendered unfit for throne by mutilation, Brajanāth's son Purandar Siṃha (1818-19) was seated on the throne. So some followers of the old Barphukan went once more to Burma and got a fresh troop which reached Asam in February, 1819. After the offer of a feeble resistance by the royal army Purandar Singh fled to Guāhāṭī, and Candrakānta who joined the Burmese on their way was reinstated as a nominal ruler. The Burmese brutally killed the Buḍhāgohāi and the Barbaruwā and all their followers, appointed a new Barbaruwā and put him also to death. In this pass, in April, 1821, Candrakānta left the Burmese and fled to Guāhāṭī, for his own safety.

CANDRAKANTA'S LAST EFFORTS TO OUST BURMESE MISCARRIED. The Burmese now set up Yogeswar Simha as the Āhom king, but practically they became the real masters. Some 'pig coins' said to have been minted by the Burmese are figured in Stapleton's "History and Ethnography of N.E. India" (J.A.S.B., 1910, p. 164). The Burmese troops were scattered almost all over Asam to feed, to exploit and to plunder. This gave an opportunity to Candrakānta to make an attempt at Gūāhātī in 1820 to drive away the Burmese, but his small and demoralised army was hardly a match for them. He made a second attempt in 1821 and was partly successful in re-establishing himself. Towards the end of May 1821, Candrakānta defeated the army at the command of Mr. Robert Bruce, despatched by his rival Purandar, won this European to his side after making him a captive, and imposed many defeats on the Burmese and re-occupied Gūāhātī in January, 1822. But in the spring of 1822, the Burmese troops had strong re-inforcement from Ava under the command of Mingi Māhā Bandulā, who later on became the commander of the Burmese army in Arakan; and a decisive battle took place in June, in which, despite great bravery shown by Candrakānta himself and by his army, the Āhoms were defeated for shortage of ammunition and Candrakānta fled once more to Goālpār.

HORRORS OF THE BURMESE INVASION DESCRIBED. Major J. Butler records a few descriptions of the horrors of the Burmese invasion of Asam. "Fifty men were decapitated in one day. A large building was then erected of bamboos and grass, with a raised bamboo platform; into this building were thrust men, children and poor innocent women with infants, and a large quantity of fuel having been placed round the building it was ignited in a few minutes, it is said, by the witnesses of the scene now living—two hundred persons were consumed in the flames... Many individuals who escaped from these massacres have assured me that innumerable horrible acts of torture and barbarity were resorted to on that memorable day by these inhuman savages... All who were suspected of being inimical to the reign of terror were seized and bound by Burmese executioners, who cut off the lobes of the poor victims, ears and choice portions of the body such as the points of shoulders and actually ate the raw flesh before the living sufferers, they then inhumanly inflicted with a sword, deep but not mortal gashes on the body that the mutilated might die slowly and finally closed the tragedy by disembowelling the wretched victims. Other diabolical acts of cruelty practised by these monsters have been detailed to me by persons now living with a minuteness which leaves no doubt of the authenticity of the facts; but they are so shocking that I cannot describe them." (*Travels and adventures in the Province of Asam*, London, 1855).

SUN-SET OF ASAM'S INDEPENDENCE AFTER MORE THAN FIVE MILLENNIUM YEARS. This unhappy state of affairs in Asam was put

a stop to by the British who also were behaved with much insolence, threatening them not to shelter the Assamese fugitives in their territories and then actually encroaching in the then British frontier tracts on the borders of Sylhet, Chittagong and Goālpār. This resulted in certain operations that had to be taken by the British on these borders early in January, 1824, though war was not formally declared against the Burmese till the fifth of March of this year. These operations culminated in the memorable treaty of Yandabu concluded on the 24th February, 1826, by which the king of Ava was compelled to abstain from all interference in the affairs of the country which now constitute the province of Asam. Though the management fell in some way to the hands of the British as early as November, 1823, under David Scott, the agent to the Governor General for the Eastern Frontier, Purandar Simha was recognised as the king of upper Asam except Matak and Sadiyā, early from 1832 to October 1838 when he was deposed and the administration of the whole country was taken up by the British. Thus the drama of a country maintaining its glorious independence for about five thousands years, from the reign of Naraka before the Kurukṣetra war, baffling innumerable strong foreign invasions, at last came to a close after the last stretch of the continuous reign of 600 years by the Āhoms with whom the present name of the province is connected. This name which was rightly spelt as ASAM in the early part of the British rule was, as we have seen through these paragraphs, originally used to connote the territories occupied by these Tāi invaders who first came from somewhere about Siam or Sām and at the beginning inhabited the Saumār division of old Kāmarūpa being called by local people Ā-SĀM or Ā-SĀUM from which, any way, we have the name of the country ĀSĀM or ASAM, and the name of the early invaders Āhom.

X. TENTATIVE COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF THE KINGS OF ANCIENT ASAM TILL 19TH CENTURY

Line of time	Event in Indian History	King of Ancient Asam	His Queen	His Capital
2500 B.C.	..	1. Naraka	..	Prāggyotis̄pur (Guhāhāti)
	..	2. Bhagadatta	..	..
	..	3. Vajradatta	..	..
	..	4. Puṣpadatta	..	..
			
350 A.D.	Candragupta I (320-30)	1. Puṣyavarmā	..	..
	Samudragupta (330-75)	2. Samudravarmā	Dattādevī	..
	Candragupta II (375-413)	3. Valavarmā	Ratnāwatī	..
400	Kumārgupta (413-55)	4. Kalyāṇavarmā	Gandhāwatī	..
450	Skandagupta (455-67)	5. Gaṇapativarmā	Janāwatī	..
	..	6. Mahendra Varmā	Subratā	..
	..	7. Nārāyaṇvarmā	Dewawatī	..
500	..	8. Mahābhūtavarmā	Vijñānawatī	..
		or Bhūtivarmā	..	..
		Candramukhavarmā	Bhogawatī	..
	..	9. Sthita or Sthira	Nayandevī	..
		or Sithiti or Pra- thita Varmā	or Nayanāsobhā	..
550	..	10. Susthita or Susthi- ra Varmā (Mṛgāṅka)	Śyāmā Lakṣmī or Śyāmā Devī	..
600	Rājya Vardhan (605-06)	11. Supratisthita Varmā		
	Harṣa Vardhan (606-47)	12. Bhāskar Varmā		Kamatāpur.
		(594-650)		
650	..	1. Śarastambha	..	Hārūpeśwar
		(Mlecchādhināth)	..	..
		2. Vijay Stambha	..	..
		3. Vighraha stambha	..	..

Line of time	Event in Indian History	King of Ancient Asam	His Queen	His Capital
700	Lalitāditya (724 A.D.)	4. Pālaka Stambha	..	..
..	..	5. Kumāra Deva	..	..
..	..	6. Vajradeva	..	..
750	Dantidurga (753 A.D.)	7. Harṣa Varmā or Śrī Hariṣ (748 A.D.)	..	..
		9. unknown	..	..
		10. unknown	..	..
800	..	11. Cakra	..	..
		12. Arathi	..	..
		13. Arath	..	..
		14. Pralambha	..	..
850	..	15. Harjar (829-30)	Mangal Śrī or Śrīmattarā	..
200	..			
950	..	16. Vanamāl		
		17. Jayamāl		
1000	Sultān Mahmūd (997-1030)	18. Viravāhu		
		19. Valavaramā III (975 A.D.)		
		20. unknown		
1100	..	21. Tyāg Singha		
		1. Brahma Pāl (c. 1050)	Kuladā Devī	Durjayā.
		2. Ratna Pāl		
1150	..	3. Purandar Pāl	Durlabhā	..
1200	Jay and Pṛthvī (1170 A.D.)	4. Indra Pāl (c. 1125)	Nayanā	..
		5. Gopāl	Ratnā	..
		6. Harṣa Pāl	..	Kāmṛup Nagar
		7. Dharma Pāl (c. 1200)	..	
		8. Jay Pāl		
		9. Durlabh Nārāyaṇ Tāmradhvaj.		

Line of time	Event in Indian History	Ahom King	Khena King	Cutiya/Kacari King	Jayanti King
1200	Muhammed Ghori (1186-1206)		Niladhvaj (1204-56)	Ratnadhvaj (1223)	..
1250	Slave Dynasty (1206-88)	1. Sukāfā (1228-68)	Bakhtiyar's invasion (1204)	Badan Cā (c. 1254)	..
		2. Sutenfā (1268-81)	Ghiāsudhin's invasion (1228)	Shākunthā (c. 1256)	..
		3. Subinfā (1281-93)	Ikhtiār's invasion (1256)	..	..
			Cakradhwaj (1256)	..	..
1300	Khilji dynasty (1288-1321)	4. Sukhangfā (1293-1332)	..	..	..
	..	5. Sukhrangfā (1332-64)	..	..	..
1375	..	6. Sufufā (1364-76)	..	..	..
	..	interregnum (1376-80)	..	..	..
1380	Taimur's invasion (1398)	7. Tyākokhāmti (1380-89)	..	..	..
		interregnum (1389-97)	..	..	..
1400	Tuglak dynasty (1321-1414)	8. Sudāngfā (1397-1407)	..	..	..
	..	9. Sujangāfā (1407-22)	..	..	..
	..	10. Suphākfā (1422-39)	..	Dhīr Nārāyaṇ (c. 1513)	..

Line of time	Event in Indian History	Ahom King	Khena King	Cutiya/Kacari King	Jayanti King
1450	Sayid dynasty (1414-51)	11. Susanfā (1439-88)	Nilāmbar (1455-98)		..
	Iodi dynasty (1451-1526)	12. Suhénfā (1488-93)	Sacipātra	..	..
	..	13. Supimfā (1493-97)	Hussain Shā's invasion (1498)	Nītipāl (c. 1523)	..
1500	..	14. Suhūngmung (1497-1539)	..	Khunkara (1531)	Parvat Pāl (1500-16)
	Babar (1504-30)	15. Suklēmung (1539-52)	Viśvasimha (1515-40)	..	Māju gosāi (1516-32)
1600	Akbar (1556-1605)	16. Sukhamfā (1552-1603)	Nar Nārāyan (1540-34)	Jaśo Nārāyan (1583)	Burdhāparvatrai (1532-48)
	Humayun (1530-40)	17. Suséngfā (1603-41)	Raghudev (1581-1603)	Śatrudamar (1606-10)	Bargosāi (1548-64)
	Jahangir (1605-27)	18. Surāmfā (1641-44)	Parīkṣit (1603-13)	Nara Nārāyan	Vijay Mānik (1564-80)
	Shahjahan (1627-58)	19. Sutyinfā (1644-48)	Lakṣmī Nārāyan (1584-1622)	Śhīm Darpa (1637)	Pratāp Rāi (1580-96)
1650	..	20. Sutāmlā (1648-63)	Bīr Nārāyan (1622-33)	Indra Ballabh	Dhan Mānik (1596-1605)
	..	21. Supūngmung (1663-69)	Prāṇ Nārāyan (1633-66)	Bīrdarpa (1644-80)	Yośomānik (1605-25)
	..	22. Sunyatfā (1669-73)	..	..	Sundar Rāi (1625-36)
	..	23. Suklēmfa (1673-75)	..	..	Chotaparvatrai (1636-47)
	..	24. Suhūng (1675-75)	..	..	Yaśomanta Rāi (1647-60)

Sivaji (674-80)	25. Gobar (1675-75)	..	..	Bansingh (1660-69)
..	26. Sujinfā (1675-77)	..	..	Pratapsingh (1669-69)
..	27. Sudamfā (1677-79)	..	Gauradhvaj (1681-95)	Lakshminārāyan (1669-97)
..	28. Sulikfā (1679-81)	..	Makardhwaj (1695)	Ramsingh I (1697-1703)
..	29. Supatfā (1681-96)	..	Udayāditya	Jayanarayan (1708-29)
1700 Aurangzeb (1658-1707)	30. Sukhrungfā (1696-1714)	..	Tāmaradhvaj (1706-08)	..
Nadirshah's invasion (1739)	31. Sutanfā (1714-44)	..	Suradarpa (1708)	Bargosain (1729-70) ^p
..	32. Sunenfā (1744-51)	..	..	..
Battle of Plassey	33. Suremfā (1751-69)	..	Sandhikari (1765)	..
Warren Hastings (1772-85)	34. Sunyeofā (1769-80)	..	..	Chatrasingh (1770-81)
Lord Cornwallis (1786)	35. Sunitpongfā (1780-94)	..	Haricandra Nārāyan (1771)	Jatrasingh (1781-86)
Lord Wellesley (1798-1805)	36. Suklingfā (1794-1810)	..	..	Vījayanārāyan (1786-89)
Lord Minto (1807-13)	37. Sudinfa (1810-18)	..	Kṛṣṇacandra (1790-1813)	Rāmsingha II (1789-1832)
Lord Hastings (1813-23)	38. Purandar (1818-19)	..	..	..
..	39. Yogeśwar (1819)	..	..	..
Lord Amherst (1823-28)	40. Burmese mis-rule (1819-24)	..	..	..
..	41. Yandabu treaty (1826)	..	Govindacandra (1813-30)	Rājendra Nārāyan (1832-35)

ASURAS AND DANAVAS (OR DAITYAS). These names, often used synonymously, are as often perplexing. For instance, an *Asura* means a spirit either good or evil, and does stand for *Daitya*, a demon, a son of Diti by Kaśyapa or *Dānava*, an issue by Danu and Kaśyapa. In *R.V.*, *A.V.*, *M.Bh.*, etc. they are always held to be implacable enemies of the Vedic gods called *devas* with whom they were in perpetual hostility.

And so are the Paṇis described in *R.V.* Are we then to equate the demon known by the three names aforesaid with the Harappans with whom the Paṇis are already identified? Also in the *R.V.* Kṛṣṇa himself is mentioned as a demon in rivalry with Indra, the god of the Aryans. Did Kṛṣṇa then belong to the race of the Paṇis or Harappans? The theosophy of the Upaniṣads, whence came the Gītā, is attributed to that Mediterranean race. So it is not difficult to explain the new civilisation of the Vedānta in that line.

But we are warned that these demons known by those names must not be confounded with the Rākṣasas or imps who animate dead bodies and disturb sacrifices. Nor are they to be misunderstood as the uncivilized people still called Asuras in Central India. And we have to safeguard ourselves against still another anomaly. While the Asura epithet of Naraka is admitted in the above context, it is vexing that the old line of Mongoloid rulers, whom the line of Naraka replaced, should also have had the same epithet Asura and Dānava. In absence of any proof of identity of the two lines, we leave it as a mere confusion.

The establishment of the ancient kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣa (later called Kāmarūpa) is ever associated with the names of Naraka and his son or successor Bhagadatta. But Naraka is in some sense an usurper who with the help of Śrīkṛṣṇa killed the reigning king Ghataka and snatched the throne. Ghataka is said to have had his royal residence to the south of the Śaraṇīā hill in modern East Guāhāṭī, and to have succeeded his father Mahīraṅga (popularly called Mairāwan) who had his capital town at Beltalā, a few miles to the south beyond the limits of the present city of Guāhāṭī. The hill of Marirānka at Beltalā bears witness to this tradition. Mahīraṅga in his turn is said to have succeeded his father Sambar who had his throne at Raṅgāmāṭī, probably outside Guāhāṭī. Traditions about the line of Mahī-raṅga differ.

Naraka is said to have had his capital city to the east of the Śaraṇīā hill and to the west of Beltalā. The locality is now known as Diṣpur or Tiṣpur which must be a popular abbreviation of (Prāg)-jyotiṣpur. In the heart of this locality stands the Narakāsur hill, and to the south of it is the Narakāsur Gāo. In the vicinity of this village there are curious stony objects shown as connected with the residence of Naraka. Chained with the Narakāsur hill are other hillocks with Nilācal at the westernmost extremity on the south bank of the Brahmaputra. On the latter hill is situated the temple of Kāmākhyā. These sites seem to corroborate the strong legend by which Naraka compelled the goddess Kāmākhyā to agree to the proposal of marrying him, but the latter at last managed to evade it by some plea. The legend is quite current here with all details.

THE ŚAMKALS. Persian chronicles specifically mention Śaṅkalādib of ancient Asam as the founder of Gauḍa (Lakṣmanāwatī) that remained the capital of Bengal for two thousand years until it was shifted to Tunda by the Mughals as they came. Particulars of Śaṅkalādib's wars with Āfrasiyāb and his last defeat at Ghorāghāt hills in West Kāmṛup are detailed there. The death of this great king of ancient Asam is said to have taken place in the hands of the Persian Hercules, Rustum; and both these references point to his reign in the seventh century B.C., though Edward Gait would place him in the fourth century A.D. saying that Āfrasiyāb, like Vikramāditya, was a title (conqueror of Persia) which was held by one in this latter period (NLHAL, p. 5).

While we have no point to doubt that such a great king of ancient Asam really flourished, there is no second source to confirm, nor to say to what line of kings he actually belonged. Some would call him a Koc, but the rule of Koc kings really begins with Viśu in comparatively modern times. Could he then belong to the line of Naraka who was probably succeeded by Bhagadatta, Vajradatta and others, not clearly known? Yuān Chwāng stated that sovereignty had been transmitted in the family of Bhāskar for one thousand generations from Naraka. We know only of a dozen generations before Bhāskar Varmā and not more than a quarter dozen of kings after Naraka, at most. What about the rest? Yuān Chwāng's statement puts Naraka about the third millennium B.C., some time before the Kurukṣetra war is supposed to have taken place. No serious attempt whatsoever has been made to find out the rulers of Kāmārupa even in the centuries about the birth of Christ. We may maintain that Śaṅkalādib might flourish in the seventh century B.C. as Ferishta's accounts suggest, until we come across better suggestions.

THE JITARIS AND OTHERS. Traditions seem persistent in stating that 19 generations of kings of direct Naraka line held the throne in succession. We should not confuse them with the kings of Varman, Mlecchādhināth, and Pāla kings of Kāmarūpa that epigraphy clearly gives us lest we make confusions worse confounded. The Epics and Purāṇas do not give us more than a quarter dozen of successors of Naraka, who are also not beyond dispute, including Bhagadatta and his relation with Naraka. Tradition brings in here the names of kings Subāhu and his son Subal who are said to have retired to the Himalayan region, their kingdom in Kāmarūpa having been invaded by one Vikramāditya or so. Legends, optimistic enough, definitely add that Subal shall come down some day from his Himalayan region of concealment and shall rule the whole world. So it is exactly said about the Kalitā king, about whose kingdom in the Tibetan region we shall presently mention, that he shall come in an opportune moment and rule the world.

Jitāri, a Kṣatriya prince from the Dravidian country, is said to have come and held his sway over this country; but when, no one has determined. He is said to have established his royal residence at Rubāyācal (Kuberācāl), and is said to have been succeeded by fourteen princes of his line the last of whom is renowned as Rāmcandra. We find no point in attempting at identifying any of these kings or their line with any of the already established lines of kings, but think it better to leave the question open for future inquiry. Tradition also accounts for the termination of the line of Jitāri, and how it took place. There lived a beautiful damsel in the capital of Rāmcandra who while bathing was kidnapped by Brahmāputra, the river-god, and Ārimatta, so named from the fact that his face resembled that of the Āri fish, was the result of their embraces.

Ārimatta conquered Behar, killed its king Durlabhendra and sat himself on the throne. Thence he led his army against Rāmcandra, slew him and established his new capital at Baidyar Gaḍ, so named from the fortress he built there. Not long after, Ārimatta shifted his seat of government once more to Pratāpapura, north of Viśwanāth on the north bank of the Brahmāputra, where also he erected a fort. For the fourth time he removed his capital to Kāmarūpa, where an incident took place leading to his destruction. Phenguā Kōwar, nephew of king Durlabhendra, whose throne Ārimatta first seized, had an amorous intrigue with the principal queen of Ārimatta through intervention of the royal female florist, Phenguā making good his secret entrance to the queen's apartment through a subterraneous passage. The love-intrigue was soon out and the culprits with the female florist were cruelly put to death. Ārimatta is said to have resigned his breath by invoking the name of God.

Ārimatta is said to have been succeeded by his son Śukrāṅka on the throne and on his death, at Aśwakrānta, in North Gauhati, his son Sūtrāṅka became the king. The latter repaired to the old capital of his father in the fortress of Pratāpapur and leaving his son Mr̥gāṅka to succeed to the throne, he died at Viswanāth. Mr̥gāṅka is said to have ruled the whole of Kāmṛp from the Karatoyā to Sadiyā, but having died without a son, he was succeeded by four princes of the line in succession until that line ceased. (Wade's *Account of Assam*, 1800, pp. 179-81). Another and still stronger tradition names a son of Ārimatta as Joṅgāl Valahu and a fort in dilapidated condition is still there in Nagāo district commemorating this name. King Joṅgāl Valahu is said to have been defeated by the Kachāris, whence he drowned himself in the Kalāṅg river of that district. Still another tradition calls Ārimatta, a son of one Māyāmatta, who was killed by the former while hunting, to atone for which Ārimatta drowned himself in the Dikhau river.

THE NAGAKHYAS AND OTHERS. *Yoginī Tantra* mentions Deveśwara as a king of ancient Assam. He is said to be responsible for propagation of worship of Kāmākhyā, and to have ruled about the beginning of the Śāka era, i.e., 78 A.D. The same work also refers to king Nāgaśaṅkara, said to have been born of the Karatoyā river-goddess about 378 A.D. and to have founded the Nāgākhyā line of kings ruling until about 778 A.D. with their capital above the present Nāgasāṅkar temple at Viśwanāth. (Chaudhury's *History of Civilisation of the People of Assam*, p. 128).

Traditions, living enough, about the kingdom of Bāṇa of Śoṅitpur (Tezpur) and of Bhīṣmaka of Kuṇḍila (Sadiyā) are supported to a great extent by archaeological remains abounding in those and other places; but no serious effort has been made for any scientific research. Śoṅitpur with Bhālukupung and other sites of antiquity may present many things suggestive of some very ancient civilisation. So also Sadiyā and recent NEFA, bordering on Tibet and China, and the Kalitā kingdom, now gone for good, are regions the rulers of which must have had long stories to tell of chapters of the history of Assam remaining unrevealed forever.

Traditions of Ārimatta alone appear endless. One legend asserts that Ārimatta extended his kingdom to Nepal and Bhutan. It is therefore quite likely that all these Himalayan regions including the Kalitā kingdom in Tibet were at one time ruled by the ancient kings of Assam whose lineage has now been untraceable. It may not be entertained that each and every ruler had sway over the entire country. Far from

it. The country must have been divided into pieces almost as a rule, and it is only on occasions that the most powerful among them combined many such pieces and still rarely had sway over the country in its entirety. There are many more names of kings and queens of ancient Asam, like Princess Haramati, about whom we yet know so little, and still less about their lines.

THE KALITAS: EARLY VICTIMS OF THE TIBETAN AGGRESSION. While this work has been in the press, *Where India, China and Burma Meet*, 1962, published by Thacker Spink & Co., Calcutta, makes an interesting suggestion how the Kalitā kingdom in Tibet became an early victim of Tibetan aggression. Like other traditions, however eloquent, the Kalitā Kingdom had been treated as merely "fabulous and legendary", and no attempt whatsoever has been made for any investigation of any worth. One of such traditions mentioned by the learned author of *Purāṇi Asamat Bhūmuki*, 1910-11, says that the sky over the Kalitā Kingdom spread so low that a woman being vexed with it hit it with a broomstick so that the sky went up to where it has been now. To read between the lines of this tradition, we may surmise that it remembers the fact of the Kalitā kingdom being high up in the mountainous regions and the Kalitās having come to the plains later.

Capt. John Bryan Neufville, in his valuable contribution *The Geography and Population of Asam (Asiatic Researches, Vol. XVI, 1828)*, mentions one interesting historical incident to be noted: "In the reign of Rajeswar [1751-60 A.D.]... a sudden and overwhelming flood poured from the Dihong inundating the whole villages and even districts; such is described to be its violence, that the general features of the country and the course of the river were materially altered by it. This flood continued for about 15 days during which time various agricultural and household implements, elephant trappings and numerous articles belonging to a race evidently social and civilized, of pastoral and agricultural habits, were washed down in the stream." (pp. 335-36).

W.I.C.B.M. makes this thought-provoking comment on this point: "The Assamese believe, and Neufville confirms, that the Kolita Kingdom was washed away by the great flood during the middle of the 18th century. Kolita [Kingdom] might have been damaged, but it was very unlikely that the entire kingdom was washed away by the flood. It was, most probably, wiped out by the Tibetans. It is to be noted that during the 18th century, China launched the imperial policy of territorial expansion and the Ahoms at the time were a decaying power. From the Tibetan side, territorial aggrandisement had started its pernicious activity, while in the south the Ahoms, the paramount power of Assam, were helpless to despatch any succour to the detached Hindu Kingdom of Kolita." (pp. 35-36).

As to the exact geographical situation of the Kalitā Kingdom, Neufville wrote: "The country to the eastward of Bhoṭ and northward of

Sadiya, extending on the plain beyond the mountains, is said to be possessed by a powerful nation called Kolitas, or Kultas, who are described as having attained a high degree of advancement and civilization, equal to any of the nations of the East." (A.R., 1828, p. 344). Wilcox describes: "From Sadiya to Kolita [kingdom] is a journey of forty-two days and six hours; in the middle of the way the route lies through hills where the dense jungles make it very difficult to proceed." (A.R., Vol. XVII, p. 456).

Curious as it may appear, one Vaiṣṇavite biography, that of Gopāl Ātā of Bhawānipur, in prose, not only mentions but also describes the way to the Kalitā Kingdom whence the mother of this Saint made good her escape to the plains to avoid some catastrophe. The relevant portions translated literally would stand as: "Now the life sketch of the Ātā (Saint) of Bha(wā)nipur. The Ātā's (forefathers') (original) habitat was in the Kalitā country. His family was called the House of the Kalā Kalitā. (It was) in the village named Cek-khām-Hāt-Jinai. . . . The stepmother. . . . belonged to the family of Hari Bar Kalitā. . . . Finding no alternative, the Mother (of the Ātā) had arrived at the country of Asam in fifteen days having made good her escape and leaving her own country through dense forests, crossing the Carā hīlī, through the Tini Muni Pass and by the Ābar, Miri, Cārimāṭi-Miri (hills)." . . .

Gopāl Ātā, by the same biography, had then been in the ninth month of conception and was born in a midnight of Bāhāg (April-May) of a Wednesday on the seventh day of the bright moon. It is estimated to be Śak 1436 (1514 A.D.), during the reign of Ahom king Cuhummuṃ (1497-1539) according to *Śaṅkardew and Mādhawdew*, (p. 235). So the Kalitā kingdom must have been in a very prosperous condition at least till the sixteenth century. Nay, it was much more, for which we quote authority:

"The power, dominion and resources of the Kultā Rājā are stated to exceed by far those of ASAM (Ahoms) under its most flourishing circumstances, and in former times a communication appears to have been kept up between the estates, now long discontinued. To this nation are attributed the implements of husbandry and domestic life washed down by the flood of the Dihong before mentioned. . . . There is said to be an entrance to this country from upper ASAM by a natural tunnel under the mountains. . . . All accounts agree in stating that a colony of ASAMESE under two sons of a Bara Gohain about eight generations back [in 15th century? D.N.] took refuge in the country of the Kolitas, on the banks of the Srī Lohit, whence till within about two hundred years, they, at intervals, maintained a correspondence with the parent state. They were hospitably received by the Kultā Rājā who assigned lands to them for a settlement, and they had naturalised and intermarried with the inhabitants. Since that period, however, no trace either of them or of the Kultas had been found until the flood

of Dihong exhibited marks of their existence, or of that of a nation resembling them in an acquaintance with the useful arts. The plains to the eastward of the Kulta country, beyond the Mis'mis, is well known as the country of the Lama or the Yam Sinh Rājā, a nation also independent and said to be frequently engaged in hostility with the Kultas." (A.R., Vol. XVI, 1828, pp. 344-45).

W.I.C.B.M. opines: "The Ahom influence extended up to the present Pemako" (the promised land) district of Tibet." (p. 34). Lt. Col. F. M. Bailey came to know "that the upper reaches of the rivers and streams in that area were populated by the Abors in the beginning of the last century and the Tibetans or the inhabitants of Bhutan and other Buḍdhist regions in the Eastern Plateau had migrated to Mipi, a Mishmi village". (*No Passport to Tibet*, p. 84). On the authority of Dr. John Peter Wade, the Sadiyā-Khowā Gohain, in the reign of Suhummuḥ *alias* Dihingi. Rājā I (1497-1539), administered the Mishmi country (*An Account of Assam*, 1800, p. 21) and the Abors were also subjugated by the Ahom kings (Mills's *Report on the Province of Assam*, Moniram Dewan, App.): W.I.C.B.M. regrets: "But then it was too late to claim the area of the Kolita Kingdom for India. Had the British made enquiries into this important fact earlier, India would not have lost such a valuable tract of land to Tibet.... This area is warm, fertile and comparatively thickly populated. According to beliefs and legends prevalent among the Tibetans of the East, the region was named as Pemako and was ordained to be inhabited by them. The Bhutanese, the Monpas and the Tibetans came to colonize this tract.... Bailey's findings confirm that Indian nationals, the Abors, were inhabiting this area." (p. 35).

Lost to India probably for good, as has been the fate of the precious Kalitā Kingdom, through the ignorance of the people and negligence of the earlier rulers of Asam, another tradition about it is still eloquent that the Kalitā king shall turn up once more and maintain his sway over the whole of Asam. Whatever may be the kernel of the truth in this obstinate tradition, let us hope young Asam will at least find out when this kingdom was first founded which must be a fact about three millenniums old.

THE ARYAN KINGDOM OF DURLABHA'S FATHER: The first charter of Indra Pāl refers to his father:

Āsīdudārakīttirdātā śuciḥ kalākuśalaḥ:

Tasya Purandara Pālaḥ sunuḥ sūraśca sukaviśca...

Jāmadagnya-bhūjavikramārjita prājya rājya nṛpavaṃśasambhavām
Durlabheti sa tu loka-Durlabhām prāpya samyagabhavati kalatra-
vān. (vs. 10-14).

Here Purandar Pāl, son of Ratn-pāl, is mentioned as marrying Princess Durlabhā, daughter of a king of the vast kingdom which Paraśurāma once acquired by his prowess. The learned editor suggests that this kingdom possibly stretched about the Paraśurāma Kuṇḍa embracing the tracts since occupied by Mishmis and others. (KS, p. 127, fn. 1).

Paraśurāma is said to have purged the world of Kṣatriyas thrice seven times, and one strong tradition maintains that one race of Kṣatriyas of ancient of Asam disguised themselves as non-Kṣatriyas for fear of Paraśurāma whence they became known as *Kula-lupta* > *Kula-ta* > *Kalitā*. And the celebrated Kalitā kingdom is known to have been located in that part of the Himalayan region. Can it therefore be identified with the Kalitā kingdom?

On the other hand, as we have discussed elsewhere, the line of Naraka and Bhagadata, through Bhāskar Varmā and of the Pāla kings of Kāmarūpa, is alleged to belong to the Alpine race and they are said to be Kalitās. The affluence of the Kalitā kingdom is known to have far surpassed that of the Ahom kingdom by fifteenth century A.D. when some descendants of high officials of the latter went to the Kalitā kingdom and were helped to get themselves naturalised there. This kingdom is now known to have been the first victim of Chinese aggression and was effaced from the surface of the earth about the eighteenth century. It is not yet ascertained when this kingdom was first established there, but the fact already known is not unlikely that about the eleventh century A.D. it was in quite a flourishing condition to acquire the reputation of a *prājya rājya* which produced a princess like Durlabhā to the royal family of the Pālas in the valley.

KAMARUPA EXTENDED EVEN TO THE WEST OF THE KAUSIKA: It is a little too curious that the learned editor of KS had not done full justice to finding of the true location of Candrapurī where Bhāskar Varmā made the historic land-grant. He had said that it was attached to the western boundary of Bhāskar's kingdom, which may mean the Karatoyā as he has not named the Kauśika even once in this connexion, although the text of the grant mentions it clearly and repeatedly. It runs as:

Yadetat Kauśiko pacitaka kṣetram tatfala pratigrāhaka Brāhmaṇā nāmeva. Yattu gaṅginyupacitaka kṣetram tad yathā likhitaka Brāhmaṇai samam vibhajyatūmiti. Simāno yatra pūrveṇa Śuśka Kauśikā. Pūrvadakṣiṇena saiba śuśka Kauśikā...uttara-pūrveṇa...saiba śuśka Kauśikā ceti.

Such persistent references to and mentions of the Kauśika (mod. Kośi) can hardly be ignored. So we find that the land granted

by Bhāskar Varmā was just to the west of the Kośi and was bounded on the east etc. by the dry bed of the old course of the Kośi, earlier forming the western boundary of Mithilā. The logical conclusion is therefore that at least in the reign of Bhāskar Varmā one portion of Mithilā was included in Kāmarūpa.

Nor was it so in the days of Bhāskar Varmā alone. He simply replaced the grant of his great-grandfather, Bhūti Varmā who was actually the original donor of the grant about fifteenth century A.D. The grant in question has a clear reference on this point too:

Candrapuri viṣaye vartamānabhāvino viṣayapatinadhikaraṇāni ca samajnapayati: viditamastu bhavatāmetad viṣayāntahpāti Mayūra Śālmalāgrahāra kṣetraṃ Rājñā Śrī Bhūti Varmarā kṛtam yat tat-tāmrapaṭṭbhāvāt karadamiti Mahārājena jyeṣṭhabhadrān vijñāpya punarasyābhinaṇa paṭṭakaraṇāya śāsanam datvā....

So Mayūra Śālmala, may be the name of the land granted, situated in the area of Candrapuri, was definitely to the west of Pundravardhana as it was to the west of the Kośi. And we know that Bhāskar Varmā issued the renewed charter from his victorious camp at Karṇa-Suvarṇa after the defeat and death of Śasāṅka, king of Bengal, showing that the whole of Bengal came to be under the sway of Bhāskar Varmā for whatever period it might be.

Harṣavardhan came to the throne in 605 A.D. and immediately set out on his expedition against Śasāṅka, when Bhāskar Varmā's ambassador, Hamsabega, met him with the proposal of royal alliance. So the renewed charter must have been issued from Karṇa Suvarṇa in the early years of the seventh century.

Now, if the great-grandfather of Bhāskar Varmā had his kingdom inclusive of the whole of Bengal and part of Mithilā, what happened to it during the reign of Narendra Gupta (Śasāṅka)? Was it then just recovered from the latter, which was also a point why the first inquiry into the existence or otherwise of the grant necessitated?

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