

## Chapter-VIII

### Miscellaneous

#### (A) Aryanisation of the Ahoms and Ahom history:

**Relevance of the topic in this study:** The concept of “Unity in Diversity” regarding Indian Culture propounded by Jawaharlal Nehru being mixed up with the emotion inherited from the independence movement, have been mesmerizing the Indian masses for decades. There arose controversies concerning the approaches to tribal development, which centered on whether they should remain in their “idyllic Past” and be left alone or should be integrated completely into the main stream. The post- independence policy, in this regard is of middle view-“*that the matter cannot be allowed to drift but that the tribes, like all other Indians, have a right to make change and make progress. They cannot be preserved as museum pieces. They and the remaining social minorities should be allowed to develop at their own pace. Central to this policy is Nehru’s stand on the Panchasheel (five principles) of development they were based on the need to be free from all ethno centrism. Respect for all culture of the social and ethnic minorities was the guiding principle....*”<sup>1</sup> A similar concept widely called as ‘multi-culturalism’, with little different connotation, which had originated in Canada and Australia in 1970 and spread later to the USA, UK, Germany and elsewhere, has grown up among new generation of India. It gives less stress on the “unity” in Diversity rather gives stress on the “diversity” in unity. The concept of multiculturalism disfavors the concept of assimilation and opposes any kind of centripetal tendency. Rather, it favors equal respect for all cultural groups of a nation, equal opportunity for their flourish and, protecting and

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<sup>1</sup> Deogaonkar, S.G.-Ed.Tribal Panorama in India, p.20

preserving the minor cultural groups. The multicultural awareness has led to growth of revivalist tendencies among the groups who are in crisis of their identity and striving for that.

The tribal movements and demands for safeguard of ethnic identity and interests in independent India are reared more or less on this concept. If the demands, nature and leaderships of these movements are examined it is revealed that there are several reasons for the growth revivalist tendencies, tribal movements and the above-mentioned concept of multi-culturalism. **Firstly**, the memory of common venture of the Indian masses for Independence has been gradually vanishing among the new generation of India. **Secondly**, it is a reaction to the chauvinistic dominance of a section people in the societies. In such a situation the small tribal units in India have felt suffocation and a sense of insecurity has grown up among them. **Thirdly**, The frustration caused due to competition to meet up the widened material aspirations of modern age has hammered on mesmeric spell of cultural unity in India. **Fourthly**, with the gradual breaking down of the tribal societies for different political, economic and social factors, new middle class has grown up in the tribal societies. Wider and new aspirations of this class of the Tribal societies found expression in the form of movement for ethnic identity and for other safeguards. Of course the seed of this centrifugal concept is not a new one but deeply rooted in the past.

In this background, the question of Aryanization of the Ahoms (and other tribes of Assam), the dynasty, which ruled in Assam for continuous six hundred years and of the Ahom history, has become relevant and important in nowadays. There are mentions in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan, regarding the change that took place in the linguistic, religious and cultural identity of the Ahoms. These mentions are found in the form of sporadic comments as well as in the systematically written

up books and articles. Among these writings, there is elaborate narrative on relevant subject in SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA and in ANGLO-ASSAMESE RELATIONS-1771-1826. Of course, in both of these two books the description on the religious changes that came to the Ahom community is given in context of the Moamaria uprising only. More over among these changes the religious changes has found prominence in his writings. In SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA there are two chapters with the titles 'AHOMAR HINDU DHARMA GRAHAN' and 'ASAMAT SHAKTA MAT PRACHALAN' (in chapter 14 and 15), which have relevance to the subject. Information and Description on the subject are found in the sub-headings of the chapter "DISTURBANCES IN ASSAM, 1769-92" (Chapter-6) in ANGLO-ASSAMESE RELATION-1771-1826.

It has been described in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan, that the religious change, which came to the religious life of the Ahoms, was a gradual process. Initially, they had a different language, mythology, Philosophy and religious rituals. In the first part of the chapter "AHOMAR HINDU DHARMA GRAHAN" in SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA, S.K.Bhuyan has given a brief introduction to this 'Ahom Dharma'. With brief description to the 'Phura Tara Alam', various Ahom deities, 'Kukura Theng' and 'Bancheng', the '*Puthis*' necessary for soothsaying, worshipping of Chomdeo and other deities, importance of Charaideo and with mention of some prayers, a brief introduction to the 'Ahom religion' is given here. It is also mentioned that since the days of Bamuni Kowanr, Hinduism gradually entered into the Kareng, the royal house. It is mentioned how Lakshmi Narayan Shalagram began to be worshipped in the Kareng since the day of Bamuni Kowanr, providing royal avenues to the sons of the Brahmana where Bamuni Kowanr passed his childhood, they were given the royal status of Kowanr. Patronage given to the Vaisnavism during the reign of Suhungmong, and acceptance

of the Hindu Title Swarganarayan by Suhungmong, construction of temple at Negheriting by Pratap Singha, sending of Assamese artist to Koch-Bihar to take training of worshipping earthen idol and of making those idols, appointment of Brahmin messenger (Kataki) keeping in view of their sharp memory and oratory skill, Creation of artificial Brahmins(Aal-Bamun) during the invasions of Chilarai. Taking initiation from Niranjan Bapu of Kuruabahi monastery by Jayadhwaj Singha. foundation of Auniati and Dakshinpat monasteries (Satras), the oath taken in front of 'Tam'(copper) Tulashi, Ratnavali, Shalagram (things of veneration for the Hindus) by the team under the leadership of Atan Buragohain to control Debera Barbarua who created atrocities in the capital in the absence of the senior ministers.(pages 105-112)

In this respect two aspects, which are preserved in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan are mention worthy. Firstly, the efforts made by the Assamese people to preserve their self-dependence in religious affairs (as in other cases also) and secondly, the duality shown by the Ahom rulers in their religious policy- the conservatism and the liberalism. The independent minded Assamese people hesitated to accept an outsider as their 'Guru', the spiritual guide. For that very reason, Udayaditya Singha was assassinated in the hand of Debera Hazarika. Udayaditya Singha showed his inclination toward a Sanyasi named Gokulpuria, who was an outsider.<sup>2</sup> Like wise that the religious rituals conducted by the Deodhais and Bailungs are preserved even till the modern days, which is also mentioned by S.K.Bhuyan.<sup>3</sup>

It is apparent in the writing of S.K.Bhuyan that, the liberal attitude shown by the Ahom Monarchs towards language, religion and culture was guided by several

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<sup>2</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.-Sw.Raj.Singha, pp.110-111

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, pp.105-108

factors. Firstly, it was natural development for co-habitation and matrimonial relation with the older habitants of the region for long time. Secondly, the Ahom rulers had the quality of appreciation for good things in other and they accepted them. Thirdly, Ahom rulers considered it politically judicious, that their culture, religion, language should no longer remain alien to the people to be ruled by them. The culture, religion and language of their subjects who formed the majority would be conducive to the political requirement. Of course, it was their far sightedness. There are ample examples of foreign rule in history in which, the language, religion and culture of the rulers are imposed on the people ruled by them.

The addition of Shaktism (the cult said in Agam Shastra) to the religious rituals of the Ahoms is narrated in the Chapter “ASAMAT SHAKTA MAT PRACHALAN” in SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA. S.K.Bhuyan has mentioned in this chapter that Shakta cult has grown up from the tribal faiths and rituals. S.K.Bhuyan also mentions that Shakta cult was prevalent in Assam from very ancient days. It also narrated in the chapter, how and why different branches of Shakta cult grew up in Assam. As the Vaisnavism, the Shakta cult also gradually entered to the royal family. It became vivid during the reign of Gadadhar Singha. In later years, Rudra Singha, Shiva Singha, Pramatta Singha, Rajeswar Singha and Lakshmi Singha became avowed follower and patron of Shakta cult. The Shakta priest and Gurus received royal patronage. In this chapter, the reasons behind the attraction of the Ahom rulers for Shakta cult are also discussed. Gadadhar Singha became opposed to Vaisnavism and Vaisnava Satras for personal and political reasons. (i) During the fugitive life of Gadadhar Singha, he was maltreated by one disciple of the monastery of Auniati and the pontiff of the Dakshinpat monastery opposed the move to enthrone Gadadhar Singha and favoured the cause of the Lora Raja who was the De-jury ruler of the state at that time. More over, Lora Raja was

his disciple. (ii) Gadadhar Singha envied the Vaishnava monastery for their resources, which he considered a threat to the Ahom monarchy. (iii) He thought that the vegetarian and saintly lifestyle propounded by Vaisnava cult would weaken both the rulers and the subjects<sup>4</sup> Gadadhar Singha did not formally take initiation from any Shakta Guru but he showed inclination towards it.

Rudra Singha was advised by his father Gadadhar Singha in his last days to make atrocities on the Vaisnava pontiffs. Accordingly he arrested some Vaisnava pontiffs, but as per a forbidding by his father in a dream, he released the pontiffs and they were founded in their respective place with honour. It is said here that, Rudra Singha intended to invade Bengal with the aspiration to include the river Ganga, which is holy to the Hindus, into Assam. Here after he intervened in a conflict between Brahman and Shudra pontiffs and hearing the debate participated by both the parties he announced that no Shudra pontiffs would initiate any Brahman there after. Rudra Singha being impressed with the scholarship and wisdom accepted Padmanabh as his Spiritual guide. Dasharatha, the grand father of Padmanabh, came to Assam from Kanauj during the reign of Pratap Singha. Here after the episode of Krishna Ram Nyaybagish starts.

There were other reasons for the attraction of the Ahom rulers for the Shakta cult. The successful propagation of the Shakta Priest that the cult and its priests had of miraculous power and that material power, prosperity, happiness can be acquired by it. Thus the mystic aspect of the cult was an attraction for the Ahom rulers.

Of course, the novelty in the cult (for the Ahoms) and so its freshness attracted the Ahom Rulers more than its mystic aspect. This can be said in regard to the Hindu astrology also. The Ahoms too had their own cult, which had elements similar to Shaktism. Incantation of mystic Spell, cult-sacrifice and so on. Likewise

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<sup>4</sup> *ibid*, p.116

they had their own mystic system of soothsaying. But, the Hindu system of Tantrik - Shaktism was more organized, mystic and mesmeric in its elaborateness and supporting scriptures. This aspect is also applicable to Hindu astrology. The attraction of the Ahom rulers towards these two Hindu-Brahminical systems became so intense, that the fanaticism began to influence the state affairs. (This reflects a kind of immaturity of Ahom monarchy). The Ahom priests, Deodhais and Bailungs were pushed back to a secondary position. S.K.Bhuyan, of course has not compared the mystical aspects of Brahminical system and Ahom systems of worshipping and soothsaying. In some places, S.K.Bhuyan has shown his faith to the Shakta cult.

The aspect of three-folded religious policy (of the Deodhais, Visnavites, and Shaktas) has found mention in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan. He mentions that the failure of the Ahom rulers to maintain equal view towards these three orders led ultimately to the ruin of the rule of the dynasty.

It is seen, that the historians on Assam history, use the terms like Aryanisation, Hinduisation and Sanskritisation in different contexts in their writings. But it demands special attention and examination when there is an hypothetical allegation for distortion of History with a intention to Aryanise the history of Assam, the land which was ruled by some Mongolian dynasties in different times. Such allegations are not rare. In such a recent allegation it is said *“Some intellectuals and politicians with Aryan vanity and wicked intellect of Bar Asam have been gradually dragging the Assamese nation to the way to complete collapse by negating the history of the land glorified with Tibeto-Burman history, formed with admixing of culture and traditions of the aborigine Austric and Tibeto-Burman Bodo-Kachari, Koch, Chutiya, Maran, Matak, Barahi, Deuri, Miching, Misimi, Adi, Dafala, Garo, Karbi, Dimasa, Hazong etc of ancient Assam and with Mongolian amity of Myung-Dun-Chun-Kham since the time when the Brahmaputra*

*valley of Pragar-Juhtish of the most ancient aborigine Austrics was a swamp.*"<sup>5</sup>  
(Td.)

The implicative use of these terms is suggestive of a conscious and devised effort to distort the history with an intention of cultural grabbing. In such a situation it is essential to examine the role of S.K.Bhuyan in this respect.

S.K.Bhuyan had personal attachment for Aryan glory and sentiment of Pan-Hinduism. Sometimes, attribution of Aryan identity upon the tribes of Assam and greater Assam (Bar-Asom) by S.K.Bhuyan are also noticed in his writings. For example, In SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA, the conversion of the Ahom - 106 Chomdeo to Hindu Salagram, Lengdon to Indra, other Ahom deities to Hindu deities,<sup>6</sup> assertion of the Manipuris as the offspring of Babrubahan<sup>7</sup> the epic Character, son of Arjun, Comparison of beauty of Kurangnayani with Chitrangada<sup>8</sup> and so on. These examples of conversions, attributions and comparisons although enhances the literary value of his writings, they are not acceptable from a sociological viewpoint. There are differences between the quality, features, philosophy, mythology and way of worshipping of the Ahom deities and those of the Hindus. The conversion leads to the extinction of the originality. Likewise giving historicity to an epic character of Babrubahan and attribution of Kshyatriya identity upon a Mangolian tribe who ruled in Manipur is also unscientific. S.K. Bhuyan has commented that, it was narrated in every Buranjis the tradition that in long ancient time sage Basistha intended to name the river Dikhow as Basistha-ganga creating a holy shrine in the bank of Dikhow and so the river Dikhow is famous in Assam History and the foreigners thought the Dikhow region as the center of Ahom

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<sup>5</sup> Gogoi, Kiran- Amar Asom, May 3, 2007, page-4. Kiran Gogoi is the President of Sadau Asam Ahom Sabha

<sup>6</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.-Sw.Raj.Singha, pp.105

<sup>7</sup> ibid, pp. 44

<sup>8</sup> ibid, p.53



civilization. S.K.Bhuyan has cited the tradition mentioned in 'PURANI ASAM BURANJI' here in his own words.<sup>9</sup> The comment is exaggerated one. In fact, the Dikhow region is known prominently to the foreigners not for the tradition of sage Basistha but prominent for the capital of Ahom kingdom being here. Like wise, the expansion of Hinduism and its popularity among the people of Manipur and among the Ahoms are narrated elaborately, but the tribal traditions, customs, and institutions are not mentioned here. This is applicable to other tribes of Assam also.

In fact, the idea of conscious and organized cultural grabbing is illusive one. Culture in a society grows up mainly with the geo-economic environment of a society. Some other natural and occasional factors some time play role in molding the culture of a society. But it do not move, grow or change with plans and devices created by any individual or a group of individual. The geo-economic changes. Changes in society get reflection in its culture also. Contact with other culture also can bring change to the culture of a society. Some time, in this process, culture of one society in particular time may extinct completely or get assimilated to other. The culture of India, what is often called Aryan or Hindu is in fact, a conglomerated totality of different cultures. It is something special, created out of admixture and synthesis. There is no any feature to be called 'pure'. The culture, which has grown up with anthropological, linguistic, religious, assimilation, co-existence of different groups of people, contacts with culture of other land in the past thousands of years. if any name to be given, it can be named as great Indian culture. This culture has surpassed the frontiers of Indian Republic.

If, the period of Ahom rule and the dynasty or the Ahom people are taken as example, the acceptance of a religion based on Vedas and Puranas, acceptance of a language evolved from Sanskrit by them were not the outcome of any effort made

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<sup>9</sup> ibid, p.44

by any cultural grabbers, rather it was a natural need and growth. In many cases the Ahom monarchs and the members of the ruling class took initiative in and accelerated the process of this so-called Aryanization or Hinduisation. The conversion of the Ahom mythology of their divine origin to Hindu mythology by the Brahmin priest, or the conversion of the Ahom deities to Hindu deities was done long before S.K.Bhuyan. S.K.Bhuyan simply preserved them in his writings. Moreover the conversion of Ahom legends and deities to those of Hindus cannot be accepted as a part of any devised plan. The imagination of such a complicated process of changing history, culture and identity of a ruling dynasty or of any group of people cannot even be expected to happen by the effort of a class of priests wandering for sustenance and patronage. This assimilation was accomplished through the joint venture of the ancient Hindus living in Brahmaputra valley and of the Ahoms. These changes simply reflect the age-old process of natural amalgamation of cultures in India.

The search of similarity between Ahom God, Deities, Philosophy and those of the Hindus by was made with a view of convenient exchange of ideas and feelings among them. S.K.Bhuyan ignored the sociological aspect. Comparison of the beauty of Kurangnayani with Chitrangada or mentioning the dynasty of Manipur as the offshoots of Babrubahan has a literary flavour, which is a common feature of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan. S.K.Bhuyan compared Charaideo, Queen Phuleswari, Rajeswar Singha, Atan Buragohain respectively with Jerusalem, Queen Nurjahan, Shahjahan, Julius Caesar. And doing so he must not had the intention to Christianise, Moghalise or Romanise the above mentioned Ahom administrators. In the same he was not motivated by such intention to Aryanise the people of Manipur or to Aryanise the Mongolian History of Assam.

Srinath Barbarua (was paternal uncle of Badan Chandra Barphukan. It is known to all that Badan Chandra went to Burma to seek help from the 'Bhai Raja', which led finally to the Burmese invasions in Assam) compiled the Tungkhungia Buranji. From this Buranji, it can be known that, Rajeswar Singha and Keerti Chandra Barbarua became greatly attached for the Khsyatriya Identity. Atan Burha gohain was a devout Hindu and he used the Hindu mythological terms like 'Satya Yug', 'Indra', and 'Brahma' in his Buranji. The Deodhai Buranji, which was translated from the English version of a Tai Buranji starts with the sentences "*SHRI KRISHNAYA NAMO NAMA! AGAR RUPAT! SHRI LA SWARGA DEVA BEERYA NRIPASYA KARTABYANG YUKTANG.*" Of course, here in this Buranji, the Ahom Lakli era of year counting and words like *PUTHAYEK*, *ENAYEK*; *THE LANKURI* god, ancient food habits of the Ahoms are mentioned and recorded. Of course this kind of Aryanisation may be in the original Ahom *Puthi* or it may appear in time of Translation also. In spite of that, this Buranji witness the sign of the transition, which came to the Ahom Historiography and to the life of the Ahom people.

If the common features are kept aside, the assimilation between the so-called Aryan culture and Mongolian culture in Assam has not resulted in extinction of any culture or ethnic identity. Rather a distinct cultural identity of the Assamese people has grown up for this assimilation. The biasness shown by S.K.Bhuyan in his writings was for this 'Assamese Identity' not for the Aryanism or for the Hinduism to which he had personal attachment. He was anxious for the woes and worries of the Assamese people. If noticed to a more microscopic point, S.K.Bhuyan studied throughout his life, the history of the ups and downs of the tribes of Assam and of greater Assam including those of the Ahoms, opened a class of Tai Language under the DHAS, in which he joined as a student, edited and published Buranjis on the

Kacharis, Jayantiyas, Tripura and wrote articles on some other tribes. He did all these till his death. He contemplated to compile a thorough history on Assam covering social lives of the tribes of Assam also, but he could not accomplish this vision. What he wrote, were political history and that too on scattered topics and so a complete picture of the medieval Assamese society is not seen in his writings. Of course, he paved the way and gave guidelines for posterity to work in these areas. It is mention worthy that, 'The Tai Historical and Cultural Society of Assam' Appreciated S.K.Bhuyan with gratefulness for his splendid wok in Assam history, particularly in the History of Ahom period, through the resolution no-11 taken in the meeting held at Sibsagar on June, 18 and 19, 1955. The resolution was signed by P. Gogoi on 26<sup>th</sup>. June, 1955 and sent it to S.K.Bhuyan.

#### **(B) Record Keeping of S.K.Bhuyan:**

History is a branch of the Humanities, which is reconstructed on the basis of records of evidences. Thus History born and grow with records. The health and hygiene of History depend on the nature of records, with which it born and grow. Personal cognitive power of a historian, his rational thinking, perspectives and skill in handling the records, which are added to the information supplied by the records in reconstructing history, determines the nature maturity of his creation. The contact of a student with the original records on the basis of which his area of study is reconstructed, brings him closer to the soul and spirit of the subject he studies. As S.K.Bhuyan had passion for and engaged in historical studies throughout his life from his child hood, it is noticeable how he dealt with the records and it's keeping.

S.K.Bhuyan mentioned about himself that he had a habit of keeping records very carefully from his childhood. An observation on the records preserved by

S.K.Bhuyan and on the way of preserving them justifies this claim of S.K.Bhuyan. Nanda Talukdar, the biographer of S.K.Bhuyan, Dr. Maheswar Neog, Dr. Banikanta Kakati, Bhargumohan Goswami, Hariprasad Chaliha and many others have noticed and have made praiseful remarks with astonishment on the discipline of record keeping by S.K.Bhuyan. S.K.Bhuyan himself has said that he took lesson from the two unfortunate incidents of Carlyle and John Peter Wade's life. The first part of 'French Revolution' and 'History of the reign of King Gaurinath Singha' respectively written by Carlyle and Peter Wade were lost for ever for the carelessness of John Stuart Mill and Mr. Francis Fawke who were friends respectively of Carlyle and Wade.<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Maheswar Neog wrote, "*Dr Bhuyan was a man of plan and method. He planed his own life, laying it out in parts—even though it may be that he could not realise all he wanted to. He stored all that he had written, and all that others had written about him. I do not find a second person who kept copies of certificates and testimonials given to all and sundry and bound them up into a volume because "they enable him to see life in retrospect, recollect old contacts, and trace the fortune of our younger contemporaries."*<sup>11</sup> S.K.Bhuyan had keenly observed the events and incidents, both minor and major, which occur in his personal life and in the surrounds of the society and visualized their historical significance. He recorded whatever happened in his life, whatever he did in his life very systematically. He must have believed that an apparently unimportant act and incident may reveal their importance in different time and situation in future. This belief led him to preserve them systematically. His systematic record keeping not only helped him to write up

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<sup>10</sup> Bhuyan, Jogendranarayan Ed.- BIBIDH PRABANDHA-Bhumika-p.0.5

<sup>11</sup> SKB Comm.Vol. -p.20

several books later on, but also helped others to depict a complete picture of his personal life, activities of his life with minutest detail and to have some valuable information for the historiography of Assam.

S.K.Bhuyan prepared separate files and folders of the records on the basis of different categories of the contents of the records. Most of these records were neatly typed and some are manually. These papers were typed by himself or by person employed by him time to time. The names of the persons engaged by him are also mentioned date wise. Again time-to-time the records were upgraded time to time with new information. The folders and files contained a code number in the front pages, which indicate the Almirah number, the shelf number and content of the folders or the files. Inside the folders or the files are the lists of contents with page number were attached in the front if it was felt necessary. These folders were bound by costly leader or by poly-coated covers for their relative importance of the contents.

He preserved the records so systematically that, they can be published in book form with no or with minor editorial intervention, which will be reading worthy for their biographical, literary and historical value. They throw light important light on the contemporary social, educational, economic, political and intellectual environment of the society in which he lived. Some of them have already been published, are in the press and or are ready for press. These records contain information about his birth, childhood, school life, personal letters, academic career, literary activities, official duties, historical writings, literary activities, his family members, friend circle, circle of scholars, personal Diaries etc. Some concrete examples will give more clear idea about his record keeping. Some of them are mentioned below with their contents in outlines. —

**1. A-2/25/No.-10**

This Type written copy contains the 'Records of Welsh-1792-'94-Vol.-I'. It has 274 pages. These records were collected from India Office Library, London. These were typed part by part in different dates, which are mentioned in relevant place. Miss Florence Broker, Typist of India Office Library, typed these papers under the supervision and direction of S.K.Bhuyan in between Mar. 1937 and June 1937.

**2. A-2/26/No.-11**

'Welsh Records: 1792-94, Vol.-II, Total pages 227, Collected from India Office Library.

**3. A-2/42/No.-27**

'John Peter Wade: Manuscript, 1662-1802 (Signed by S.K.Bhuyan on 1.11.48 at Shillong)

**4. A-2/43/No.-28**

Wades Geography: Typed Copy- signed on 30.7.47

**5. A-2/44/No.-29**

Letters of John Peter Wade, mostly written to Francis Fowke: Type copies collected from India Office Library --Signed on 29.11.48 at Shillong and on 11.12.48 at Guwahati by S.K.Bhuyan.<sup>12</sup>

These above five groups of records are now donated to N.A.I.

**6. Misc. /7**

This file contains the correspondences of S.K.Bhuyan as DHAS Director up to 1953(1951, 52, 53)

**7. B-3/Ms-16**


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<sup>12</sup> Fowke, E.I.C.'s resided at Benares, a reputed Musician, and like his father, Josheph Fowke, a superior of Philip Francis, the rival of Warren Hastings. Francis Fowke returned to England in 1786 with considerable wealth mainly derived from trade in Diamonds and Boats.

‘Members of our family and our Relations-Past and Present’ -Pages-29- It contains marriage days of his children along with other information.-Signed on 20.4.58

**8. B-1/B-1/A**

‘Private and Confidential-‘Family Records’-It contains Horoscopes, Family trees- Personal Letters-originals and duplicates.-Signed on 4rth.April, 1950.

**9. B-4/B.K-17**

‘About others’-It contains copies of 239 no.s of certificates and testimonials issued by S.K.Bhuyan to others on different occasions during the period- 1929-1964.- Signed on 9.6.1964. Helpers in arranging them were Sriman Faizur Rahman and Sriman Udhav Chandra Saikia.

**10. B-3/Misc.**

It contains his L.I.C. policy, records of day to day in sickbed, personal letters, birth dates and marriage days of his sons and other family members etc.

**11. B-3/MS-8**

It contains records of his disease-started from 11.2.48. Up and down of his chest pain, the persons and Doctors visited him, medicines consumed; doctor’s advices etc are recorded here.

**12. Misc/14**

The file contains the yearly reports on the research activities done during 1927 to 1933 by S.K.Bhuyan submitted to the Principal of Cotton College. A few lines on these reports may be mentioned here. -

In the report submitted on 28 March 1928, he has narrated the research work carried by him in the year 1927. He started the report with the facilities and problems for research work in Cotton College. He had mentioned that the then D.P.I., Assam had collected the original manuscript of Dr. J.P. Wade’s ‘Geographical Sketch of Assam’ and had sent to him [S.K.Bhuyan] to compare it with the printed proof copy



of 'ACCOUNT OF ASSAM'. S.K.Bhuyan mentioned that he had compared the both and that there are some disparities in between these two and sent them to D.P.I. Then he reported that by that time he had been busy in editing the Assamese chronicle 'TUNGKHUNGIA BURANJI' and translating it to English. A team along with him carried out an excavation in the locality of Kharghuli, [Guwahati] and recovered some cannon balls of different size [The excavation was done under the then Principal, with government aid.]. In the report of the next year [submitted on 30 April, 1929] he mentioned about his initiative in the foundation of DHAS [through constant representation to Mr. Cunningham, C.I.E., D.P.I., Assam], about his correspondences to Indian Historical Record Commission and that he was appointed as an corresponding member of the commission, that he attended the Fifth session of the All India Oriental Conference as a delegate of the KAS. He also mentioned about the books and articles published by him during the year 1928-29. He mentioned titles of three books and of eleven articles in the list of publications.

In this way until, 10 April 1934 he submitted yearly reports to the Principal. Cotton College. These reports give an idea about the duties of the lecturers of those days to be exerted in addition to their normal duties of delivering lecture in the classes.

### **13. File-27**

This file contains 111 subjects, which are biographical in nature. For example, 1.A Short Summery of Life and career (page-1), -- 3.A list of the reviews of the book (p.6), --5.Academic career (p.14),--15.Dec13, 1935 Application for Study leave (p.53), --26. Work as Inspector of Schools-1941-42 (p.113),-- 27. Works as Principal, Cotton College, July-August 1946(p.117),-- 35.Aug.31, 1936, Farewell address before the Cotton College Union Society (p.174),-- 47. Letter to Sir Guru

Das Benerjee- Jan. 26 1912(p.221), -- 59.To Prof.Tan Shan, Biswa Bharati-15.6.51 (p.244),-- 111. Bibliography of the works of Dr.S.K.Bhuyan (p.333)

This file/folder was completed upto 15.6.1951. A subsequent portion of this Biographical note was prepared later, which is inserted in Vol.-19, labeled as 'Biographic-II'.

14. Likewise he preserved 'The correspondences of Dr. S.K.Bhuyan as Special University Officer, Govt. of Assa-1947', which contains 90 correspondences. S.K.Bhuyan was in the said post officially from 20<sup>th</sup>. October 1947 till the end of the year. This file not only contains the correspondences as Special University Officer, but also contains the story of early initiatives since 1921 to establish in Assam till the foundation of the University of Gauhati in 1948. It even contains the times and contents of the concerned official phone calls and their replies. This reflects the role of S.K.Bhuyan in the foundation of the university and his sincerity in exerting the official duties. These records contain information for the history of Higher Education in Assam.

15. S.K.Bhuyan prepared Transcripts of Nine petitions from Ahom princes and Princesses to British Government for pensions and allowances. S.K.Bhuyan collected them from Assam Secretariat Records. These are the petitions of—

- (i) Rani Kamaleswari Devi-1 no.
- (ii) Maharaja Purandar Singha-3 nos.
- (iii) Rani Lakshmi Priya-1 no.
- (iv) Saring Raja Kandarpeswar Singha-4 nos.

16. In another file, typed copies of recommendation on 26 eminent Assamese Littérateur for literary pension by S.K.Bhuyan to Govt. of India are preserved. He recommended the names of the littérateur, who contributed to original Assamese

Literature. In this list, the names of the prominent Assamese Litterateur like Nalini Bala Devi, Jatindra Nath Duwara, Dimbeswar Neog, Dandinath Kalita, Kumudeswar Barthakur, Saiyad Abdul Malik, Benudhar Sarma, Ambikagiri Raychoudhuri, Ratna Kanta Barkakti, Ananda Chandra Barua, Umakanta Sarma Misra, Kanak Chandra Sarma, Devananda Bharali, Binanda Chandra Barua, Chinta haran Patgiri, Sri Sri Ram Chandra Das, Daiva Chandra Talukdar, Mitra Dev Mahanta, Haladhar Kakati Barua, Dharmeswari Devi Baruani, Debendranath Chakravarti, Janiruddin Ahmed are found.

These Recommendations were made during 1953-55. These recommendations were made in precise but lucid language. They covered important aspects of the literary creations of the persons recommended. That S.K.Bhuyan had been vigilant eyes on the contemporary Assamese literary activities in addition to the historical and other activities can be rationally inferred from these recommendations.<sup>13</sup>

#### 17. A-1-Vol.-5

This folder is labeled as 'Selected Miscellaneous articles and papers by S.K.Bhuyan-Published and Unpublished. He signed the folder on 8-2-1936. In this folder, there is an interesting file, which contains 'A Report on the collection of old Assamese and Sanskrit Puthis in possession of the American Baptist Mission. Gauhati, Assam' within the pages from 19 to 41. This file is signed on 17-2-25. In this report, it is narrated how he collected fourteen manuscripts and prepared catalogue and transcripts of them. This report reflects sidelight on what thrill S.K.Bhuyan felt in his mission of 'manuscript hunting' and on the contributions of the ABM in collecting and preserving the manuscripts. He has written that on 13<sup>th</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> At that time the amount of literary pension was Rs.150/-per month. It was highest amount among similar Govt. allowances of those days.

May 1925, at morning he went to Rev. A.E.Stephen of the ABM at Gauhati to enquire whether there were any volumes of the Orunodoi in the mission library. Eventually he [Rev.A.E.Stephen] referred to a box with the words 'Old Assamese Puthis'.

On the next day morning, (16 May)-*"Mr. Stephen opened the lid of the box. The heart of Lord Carnarvon and of Dr.H.Carter were not throbbing with greater delight and sensation when the first stroke of the hammer was applied to the sarcophagus found in king Tutan Khamun's tomb as did ours when Mr. Stephen removed the nails of the box"*.

#### **18. File no.-22:**

This file contains his correspondences as member of the committee founded by UGC in connection with the foundation of NEHU. This file contains valuable information regarding the history of the foundation of NEHU. In the note dated June 23, 1964 he wrote, *"I have always been in favour of having a unitary type of university at Shillong so that other colleges of the hill areas may remain affiliated to Gauhati university, or may be affiliated to Dibrugarh university, when established. vide my notes dated 10.3.64 and 22.4.64. This will help our national integration which is the need of present day India....."*

It is noteworthy that, last letter of his life, which was written by S.K.Bhuyan to Dr. Philip, Joint Secretary, U.G.C. on 4<sup>th</sup>. July 1964 is preserved in this very file. Another noteworthy record preserved by S.K.Bhuyan in this file is the receipt of the telegraph office, which was received by him at 7-30 PM on 4<sup>th</sup>.July, 1964. This receipt was filed by him in this file at 11.40 A.M. on 5<sup>th</sup>.July, just 58 minute before his demise at 12.38 P.M. at Chatribari Mission Hospital. The receipt bears his initial with date and time.

Some of his books were the result of his careful preservation of the records. 'LONDON MEMORIES', 'RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS', 'MY YEARS IN PARLIAMENT', are good examples of such creations. Nanda Talukdar, the biographer of S.K.Bhuyan utilized these personal records in large extent in writing up the biography of S.K.Bhuyan. 'MY YEARS IN PARLIAMENT' contains information on the parliament of India in those days in addition to the memories of S.K.Bhuyan as a parliamentarian. In addition to the speeches delivered by S.K.Bhuyan in the Parliament, information about the size of the parliament, names of the parliamentarian, discipline maintained in the Parliament, the efficiencies and wisdoms of the Parliamentarians are mentioned in this book. Humanitarian outlook and his sympathy for the depressed class get reflection in the speeches delivered by him.

S.K.Bhuyan had been M.P. from May 13, 1952 to April 1, 1954. During this two years tenure, he addressed the parliament at least fifteen times and asked question.<sup>14</sup> The historian inside and his tendency to play the role of a defender and protector of the Assamese 'nation' in his writings came out in his parliamentary speeches also. Some examples may be cited here-

- (i) On July 14, 1952, taking part in a debate, he draw the attention of the parliament about the problems of railway in Assam and requested to take step to open up railway lines in Assam, to appoint class-III and Class-IV employees in Railway from Assamese people [Chapter-2]
- (ii) On Dec.11, 1953, taking part in the debate on 'Sri Ramarao's resolution for the appointment of a commission to enquire into the condition

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<sup>14</sup> Editor's note- D. Benerji, (GU) My Years in Parliament., going to be published recently by Mittal Publication, Delhi

of the Indian Languages' supported the resolution, but gave an amendment to a comment of Mr. Mahanty, a parliamentarian. He said,-

*"I will begin by referring to point raised by Mr. Mahanty, a few minutes ago. He said that, it was Sir George Abraham Grierson who established the separate identity of the Assamese language. He is correct to some extent and incorrect at the same time. So long ago, as the 7<sup>th</sup>.century A.D. the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang admitted the separateness of the Assamese language from the languages of mid-India. About the year 1663, a Muslim visitor from Delhi who accompanied the Mughal General Nawab Mirjumla, had said that the language of Assam was quite different from the languages spoken in other parts of India' [Chapter-11]*

(iii) In the debate of Aug.7, 1952, he said, *'I rise to say that this Berne convention should be ratified; because the object of this convention...and it appears to me that of all people in this earth the authors have been the most exploited...Homer when lived had to beg for bread; and when he begged for bread he was given only stone; but when Homer died Seven cities claimed to be his birth place....[Chapter-4]*

(iv) On the debate on Tea-bill, May-15, 1953, S.K.Bhuyan along with other points commented on the history of Tea Industry in Assam. He mentioned the names of Robert Bruce and Maniram Dewan in connection with the discovery of tea in Assam. He also mentioned that Maniram Dewan was the first Indian tea gardener in Assam and that he tried to restore an Ahom prince in Assam in the Sepoy mutiny.

Thus, that S.K.Bhuyan utilized every platform, to which he came into contact, to defend and protect promptly the Assamese interest, to the Assamese identity and glory with his knowledge in History also can be known from this set of

records preserved by him. He preserved the appreciations on his works by different scholars in different times during the period from 1911 to 1964 very systematically. The places of publication of these appreciations are also recorded in relevant place of this set of records.

S.K.Bhuyan compiled 'BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ASSAM' which is signed on 27.9.58 by S.K.Bhuyan. This short bibliography contains (a) Bibliography appended to Dr.Bhuyan's 'COPPER PLATE AND STONE INSCRIPTION OF ASSAM' (b) Bibliography of Assam history-Fifteen books written by S.K.Bhuyan. (c) Bibliography of Doctoral thesis in the area of Assam History of Twenty-one (21) Ph.D.-holders [Five were added after 1958 upto 1961], (d) Bibliography of books and articles on Economic product of Assam [It contains list of 36 articles on subjects like Ivory Cutting, Wood Curving, Lac Industry, Tea & minerals, Gold, Muga and Silk, Lime stone—The writers were mostly British and published in 'JASB', 'Indian Forester', 'All India Reporter' etc., (e) Bibliography of books containing general information about Assam, 69 sources, both by British and Assamese writers. (f)Bibliography of Articles relating to Archaeological remains in Assam. (g) Bibliography of the Reports on Earthquakes in Assam-Taken from 13 sources-contains list of 22 articles published mainly in JASB mainly by British writers about earthquakes that took place in Assam during 1839 to 1897, (h) Bibliography compiled from Dr.Bhuyan's London Notes 1936-38 Vol.-I, (I) Bibliography of articles relating to inscription of Assam of pre-Ahom period- List of 32 articles written by Assamese, other Indian and western writers. This compilation is invaluable useful for the researchers in the related areas.

It has already been mentioned that, S.K.Bhuyan preserved the records not only of what wrote but also what others wrote about him. The records of what others wrote about him and his creation have become a book, which has been titled by him

as “THE BOOK OF APPRECIATIONS”.<sup>15</sup> This unpublished book contains appreciations and comments on him and his creations made by eminent scholars both native and foreign, whose creations themselves are spectacular and organizations of his times. There are two hundred and eleven (211) such appreciations, which are arranged chronologically (with the names of the appreciators, date and place of publication), in six systematic groups of decades. The appreciations published in the DHAS Bulletins are given separately in this book. These appreciations were made during the period from 1911 to 1964. The systematic preservation of these appreciations not only reflect his sincerity in record keeping, but also reflect how he valued the importance of the comments of others on his works. These comments made by learned persons and authorities in different disciplines help to evaluate the writings of S.K.Bhuyan. He lived in contact of a circle of the scholars of his time. The intelligentsia of his time had keen observation on his activities.

It is not possible to mention all the records and narrate their contents here. S.K.Bhuyan was a strict disciplinarian in every sphere of his life. This aspect of his personality is simply reflected in his record keeping. His discipline in his works helped him to accomplish his multifaceted engagements smoothly and systematically. It helped him to save time also. But the posterity has been benefited more with his systematic record keeping. It has been possible to avail and access to his works done throughout his life easily.

It has already been mentioned that, his family members have donated the following documents to N.H.I.- A-2/25/No.-10, A-2/26/No.-11, A-2/42/No.-27, A-2/43/No.-28, A-2/44/No.-29. Apart from these abovementioned five sets of papers, the confidential letter written to Cunningham on December 8, 1935, titled as

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<sup>15</sup> List of appreciators is given in Appendix-E



'ASSAM-BENGAL RELATION' is also donated to N.H.I. The letter written by Gurudas Benerji to S.K.Bhuyan on 24-1-1912 is donated to Asiatic Society on 13-5-2005. Guru Das Benerji wrote this letter mentioning his reminiscence on Anandaram Barua on the request of S.K.Bhuyan. Guru Das Benerji mentioned about the sharp intelligence of Anandaram Barua shown in the class. 8. His family members donated huge copies of books to Cotton College Library, which include writings of S.K.Bhuyan and some valuable books of other author, collected by him. Apart from these published books, the set include the following manuscripts-

- i. 'East India Company's Relation with Assam-1771-1826' (Original type written copy of his thesis, which contains pencil marks made by Edward Gait as an examiner of his thesis)
- ii. Bibidh Prabandha
- iii. Asomiya Sahitya Samparkiya Prabandhavali
- iv. Asom Buranjir Katha-Vol.-I
- v. Asom Buranjir Katha-Vol.-II
- vi. Kitapar Katha
- vii. British Relation with Assam 1845-1858, by Bhupendra Narayan Choudhuri.
- viii. The History of Medieval Assam- Doctoral Thesis by N.N.Acharya.

But most of his collections of books and preserved records, manuscripts, transcripts are donated to DHAS. The family members had donated the personal library of S.K.Bhuyan to DHAS on the 35<sup>th</sup>.death anniversary of S.K.Bhuyan in the year 1999. By A letter signed by Sri Bijoy Bhuyan, son of S.K.Bhuyan, on 28-7-98, informed the DHAS authority about this decision. In connection with the donation, some conditions laid before DHAS- that a separate spacious room shall be allotted for the donated library, arrangement of Chairs & tables and light so that researchers

study there comfortably, No books will be lent or taken to outside (except for the purposes like making photo-copy, repairing of the books etc), cleaning the room time to time, the trustee members (family members) will visit the library time to time, and so on. The DHAS authority accepted the donation by a letter signed on 9-10-98 by Dir. in Charge.

In the mid 1950's S.K.Bhuyan contemplated to write on the role of Assam in the Sepoy mutiny and accordingly collected materials from N.H.I. Now these documents are submitted to PBA for publication.

### **©On the name of 'Assam':**

There is a great age-old controversy among the historian scholars on the name of the province of 'Assam'. The controversy is created in settling two kinds of problems entangled with it. The first one is connected with the question of the origin of the name 'axam' as pronounced by indigenous people of the province of Assam. The next one is connected with the transliteration of the word 'axam'. Ethnic emotion has got involved in the scholastic debate on the topic and the problem has thus become more complicated. In endeavouring to settle the tangle, the scholars have presented their arguments mainly from two angles- firstly, from the history of ethnic identities and secondly, from the phonetic analysis.

S.K.Bhuyan had to confront both aspects of the problem, i.e. the question regarding the origin of the word and its transliteration. But in both of the two cases, instead of making effort to present his arguments or to settle the problem by scientific research oriented observation (as in most other cases also), he left the problem unsettled and he himself co-existed with indecision and ambiguity. It is necessary to give an introduction to the problem, to examine the view of S.K.Bhuyan in this respect.

The problem regarding the origin of the name 'axam' has caused basically by the conflict between the Aryan origin theory and Mongoloid origin theory. As per the Aryan origin theory, the word 'axam' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Asama', which means 'uneven' and 'peerless'. There are also some sub-groups in the Aryan origin theory. Some scholar hold that (i) to distinguish the land of Assam from that of the Samatat of Bengal, the term Asam was used to name the land, (ii) The land of Assam is full of hills, mountains, canals, rivers and plains. The name Asam was given to the land for its uneven geographical physiognomy and (iii) it is also said that, the indigenous people of Assam (the Morans and the Barahis) gave the name to the Ahoms observing their superior qualities in the time of the advent of the Ahoms. Likewise, the Mangoloid origin theory also has some sub-groups. For example, (i) The Bodo word-cluster 'Ha-chom', the meaning of which is 'Low-land' is the origin of the word 'axam'<sup>16</sup> (ii) like wise it is also said that the Tai word 'Cham' being prefixed with 'Aa' i.e the cluster A-cham', which means 'undefeated' is the origin of the word 'axam'. Of course, it is a fact that, prior to the widely prevalent use of the word Asam (pronounced as 'axam'), it was spelled and pronounced widely as Aasam and 'Aaxam'. Towards the end of the British rule the word Asam as pronounced by the Assamese people was created and became popular.

In English also, the word was spelled in different form like, Asam, Asem, Assam etc. But among them the spelling 'Assam' became most popular and in the constitution of India also, the legacy of the British form of spelling 'Assam' was retained. Of course, no indigenous people of Assam pronounce as the English pronunciation nor they like to introduce themselves in that way.

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<sup>16</sup> Barua, S.L.-A Comp. Hist of Ass, p., 76, quotes from The Indian Village Community-Baden Powell-

The tendency and effort of a group of scholars of the land to make a correct transliterated form of the name of the province from the form as they pronounce in their own language to English, with a view to remove the phonetic difference became stronger from the pre-independence days. These tendencies and efforts resulted in creation of different form of spelling of the transliterated word like, 'Asam', 'Asama', 'Asom', 'Axam', and 'Axom'. Some scholars tend to explain the tendency to amend the form of 'Assam' to a new one, as a tendency of Aryan expansionism and as a Brahminical wile. In this respect, a recent remark made by Dr. J.N.Phukan may be cited here-

*"The period of Ahom rule that covers long six centuries from 1228 A.D. to 1826 A.D. constitutes the most significant and glorious chapter in the history of Assam Even the name of the land known earlier as Kamrupa got its name ASAM after the Ahom who were called ASAM by almost all the tribes inhabiting the vast region that extends from southern china to India's North East. The name in its Anglicized form ASSAM still continues and is well known today. As this name Assam is derived from ASAM (the Ahom), some Brahminical pundits who find it hard to accept have been trying to trace its root to Sanskrit Asom (meaning uneven or unequal) so as to impose their wily intelligence over the majority of Mangoloid population of the state."*<sup>17</sup>

It is not correct to say that the theory of 'peerless or uneven' for the origin of the word 'axam' is created to impose their wily intelligence by some Brahminical pundits. In the scholastic debate on the topic, irrespective of their caste and race, the scholars supported or opposed one of the aforesaid two theories. For example,

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<sup>17</sup> Phukan, J.N. 'Ahom Script in the Thirteen Century' by Indian Journal of Tai Studies. Vol.-VI October, 2006, Institute of Tai Studies and Research, Moranhat, Assam (India), page-1]

(i) Hiteswar Barbarua, who was an offspring of the famous 'xandhiqoi' family, has given the 'peerless' theory in his 'AHOMAR DIN'.<sup>18</sup> (ii) Padmanath Gohain Barua also in his ASAMAR BURANJI has given the same theory. More over, he opined that originally the word 'axam' was written as 'Asom' in English. But since the introduction of Bengali language in Assam, the English form of Asom or Assam began to be written as 'acham' and 'axam'. In fact, it should be 'axam'.<sup>19</sup> (iii) Padmeswar Naobaisha Phukan explains the origin of the word in the same way. He even has said that the word no way connected with the land from which the Ahom people had come. It is purely a Sanskrit rooted word.<sup>20</sup> (iv) Atan Buragohain also has given the theory of 'peerless' in his chronicle.<sup>21</sup> None of these three scholars were Brahmin; rather they belonged to famous Ahom clans and families. Like wise (v) B.K. Kakati held that, the word Asama (peerless) may be a later Sanskritisation of an earlier form 'Acham'.<sup>22</sup> B.K. Kakati did not belong to any Mangoloid tribe. But, (vi) Gunaviram Barua has tried to find out the root of the word from Sanskrit language.<sup>23</sup> Gunabhiram Barua was a Brahmin by caste.

It is mention worthy that, there are two old and dominant under-currents, in the so called Assamese nationalism. These two streams less conveniently can be termed as Aryan Culture-born stream and the Tribal culture-born stream. But it is a fact that none of the streams, even the Aryan culture-born stream have any ambition to establish Aryan glory in the land of Assam. Rather, dominant aspiration of the general masses of the Assamese population (mainly the middle class) aspire to strengthen the Assamese identity, which is grown up with assimilation of Aryan and non-Aryan culture. It has already been mentioned in different context that,

<sup>18</sup> Barbarua, Hiteswar page-Ahomar Din, pp.21-22

<sup>19</sup> Gohain Barua, P.N.-Asamar Buranji, P.1

<sup>20</sup> Naoboisa Phukan, Padmeswar- Asam Buranji, P.16

<sup>21</sup> DAB, p.101

<sup>22</sup> Barua, S.L. A Comp. Hist of Ass. p.76

<sup>23</sup> Barua, Gunabhiram-ASAM BURANJI, pp.7-8

S.K.Bhuyan was anxious to enhance of this Assamese nationalism. He had feeling of unison with the universal humanism, the Indian identity, the Aryan culture and the Hinduism, but this feeling of unison was comparatively ignorable to that of his feelings of unison with the Assamese nationalism.

Regarding the origin of the word 'axam', S.K.Bhuyan has not presented any information, argument and decision from his side. But, in a way, he has supported the Aryan origin theory. In this respect, his remarks on the subject can be cited here from three of his writings, viz.-(i) 'AHOMAR DIN', (ii) ANGLO-ASSAMESE RELATION 1771-1826 and (iii) LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES.

In AHOMAR DIN:

*"In A.D. 1229 a powerful race came and occupied the Saumar Khanda of Kamrup. These people introduced themselves as the Tai race. These Tais are the people of the Shyan province of Burma. The people of Saumar Khanda were compelled to name them as 'Asam'[axam] observing the valour shown by them in time of conquering Saumar Peeth,- because The Tai race was peerless to them."*<sup>24</sup>(Td.)

In ANGLO ASSAMESE RELATION 1771-1826:

S.K.Bhuyan quoted Harakanta Barua that, *"King Sukapha managed to engage the Mataks [Morans] as fuel-suppliers and orchard-keepers, valets, cooks, store-keepers, casket-bearers, physicians and poultry-keepers. These Barahis went on saying amongst the people, -"Though this prince[Sukapha] and his followers have made us so many servitors, yet we donot feel any resentment in our hearts; on the otherhand, we long for serving and attending on them, and for meeting them as frequently as possible. They are therefore men of devine origin, and nobody is sama or equal to them, and they can be designated as a-sama or unparalleled."*

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<sup>24</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.-Ahomar Din, PP.1-2

S.K.Bhuyan adds hereafter that *“It is believed by some that the word Assam, the name of the province, is derived from this circumstance, and that Ahom is a corruption of the word A-sam, as in the Assamese language the sibilant S in many cases becomes an aspirate H; others hold that Assam is so called because of the uneven character of the province composed as it is of hills and plains”*<sup>25</sup>

In LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES:

*“No place-name has been subject to such variation in meaning and etymology as the term by which we designate our province. But the consensus of opinion is in favour of interpreting Assam or Asama as equivalent to ‘uneven’ or ‘perless.’*<sup>26</sup>

Regarding the transliteration of the word ‘Asam’[axam], to Roman script S.K.Bhuyan confronted confusion, which can be known by his transliterations of the word in different place. Some examples may be cited here. He wrote-

- (i) DEODHAI ASAM BURANJI (1932, 1962, 1990)
- (ii) SATSARI ASAM BURANJI (1974), (It appears as SATSARI ASOM BURANJI in LBS publication –1994, 1999)
- (iii) ASAMA JIYARI (1990) (‘Asam Jiyari’ in Bibliography)
- (iv) MIRJUMLAR ASSAM AKRAMAN (1956, 1994)
- (v) ASOM BURANJIR KATHA (1989)
- (vi) ‘INGRAJ ARU ASSAMAR MAJAT SAMBANDHA.-A brief account of the relations between the E.I.C. and Assam.’<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> idem, AAR, p.3

<sup>26</sup> idem, LBHT, p.171

<sup>27</sup> idem, Bibliography-1951, p.14

- (vii) 'PURANI ASSAM BURANJIL-Two pieces from old chronicles.  
USHA, Vol.-III'<sup>28</sup>

Although, there are variations in the transliterated forms of the Assamese word 'axam' by S.K.Bhuyan, it appears that he preferred the form of 'Asam', which was mostly used by him. Some of the forms may be later amendments by some persons involved in the process of printing and publication.

It is note worthy that, the unsolved problem regarding the etymological origin of the name of the province of Assam and its transliteration has not yet been solved. On Feb.27, 2006, the Congress Government had taken a decision to use the form 'Asom' instead of 'Assam' and on December15, 2006 the legislative assembly of Assam resolved with majority voice-vote to take step to amend the name 'Assam' from the Constitution of India and to replace it with 'Asom'. Soon after it, huge numbers of scholars, littérateurs, Journalists, organizations and conscious observers of Assam have expressed their scholastic views, common sentiments and opinions. They virtually have got divided into two groups of pro-Assam and anti-Assam. Observing the whole information revealed in this debate, it can be accepted that (i) 'Ashaam', 'Achaam', 'Asaam' are not an anglicized form. It was spelled and pronounced since much before the advent of the British into Assam, (ii) The word Asam[axam] as pronounced in Assamese language was a later creation, (iii) But the correct transliterated form of the name of the province as pronounced in Assamese language in English is 'Asam' as used widely by S.K.Bhuyan and later on Asam Sahitya Sabha also decided to write this form and has been writing this form. (iv) The form of 'Assam' with double 'S's in it obviously an anglicized form.

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<sup>28</sup> ibid, p.17



It may be opined here that, the transition of the words from ‘Aashaam’, ‘Aachaam’, or ‘aaxaam’ to Asam [axam] as pronounced now in Assamese is an occurrence in the course of natural changes in history of Assam. There have been taking place of reciprocation of linguistic, cultural, and ethnic elements not only among the tribal and non-tribal groups of indigenous population of Assam but also in between Assamese and non-Assamese societies. Likewise, the scientific and research-oriented study on the etymology of ‘Assam’ or ‘Asam’(as pronounced in Assamese) is comparatively a modern development. This scientific observation cannot be expected in medieval historiography or in the historiography of the days of esteemed Hiteswar Barbarua or Gunabhiram Barua. The role played by S.K.Bhuyan in this subject also, cannot be taken in more different way.

**(D) Some scattered information mentioned by S.K.Bhuyan, which cannot be accepted or which were not supported by valid sources or Contradicted by other sources:**

- S.K.Bhuyan gives the etymological meaning of the Tai-Ahom word “Buranji” as “a store that teaches the ignorant” in STUDIES IN THE LITERATURE OF ASSAM.<sup>29</sup> Dr. Bhuyan simply accepted this meaning of the word as already said by some of his predecessor scholars, without further study and analysis. The new studies have revealed that the meaning, which had been already widely accepted and prevalent is “based on folk etymology and has entered into the writing of scholars due to lack of knowledge of Tai”(J.N.Phukan has quoted from Nomal Gogoi’s article ‘New light of the

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<sup>29</sup>Bhuyan, S.K.- Studies in the Literature of Assam, p.33

History of Assam' in his article 'Buranji as source of History of Assam' -  
Indian Journal of Tai Studies, Vol.IV March, 2004-page 3)

**About Bagh Hazarika:**

The chapter 'ASAMIYA MUSALMAN' (pp165-183) in 'SW.RAJESWAR SINGHA' gives an idea that the Muslim population in Assam lived peacefully with other Assamese people in the Ahom Kingdom. Some of them were employed in important royal services also as per their efficiencies in the concerned field. The chapter also, gives the idea that the Assamese Muslims got cemented in the Assamese 'nationality'. In this context, he has mentioned, "*During the invasion of Ram Singha, a heroic Muslim person, Bagh Hazarika by name lived in upper Assam. He killed a tiger [Bagh] with bare hand, so he became famous with the name 'Bagh Hazarika'. This Bagh Hazarika knew the war tactics and tricks of the Mughals. Accompanying Lachit Barphukan, he revealed war tactics of the Mughals by which Lachit Barphukan found it convenient to fight against the Mughals and to defeat the foreigners. There is a tradition prevalent among some Muslims. The poet of 'Gyan-Malini', Moulabi Mafijuddin Ahmad Hazarika is a descendant of this Bagh Hazarika.*"<sup>30</sup>

S.K.Bhuyan has given a list of sources utilized in writing up the chapter in the Bibliography of 'SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA',<sup>31</sup>

In these few lines about Bagh Hazarika, it is found simply that, Bagh Hazarika accompanied Lachit Barphukan, who revealed the war tactics of the Mughal invaders. His rank as a participant in the battle Sharaighat is not mentioned here. The story of Bagh Hazarika was prevalent firstly as an oral tradition, later it found place as written document. With the passage of time the story bloomed with

<sup>30</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.-Sw.Raj.Singha, pp170-171

<sup>31</sup> ibid, p.280

new information about this person. It is said about him that his original name was Ismail Siddiki. He was a commander of the Ahom army. Some say that his forefathers came from Arabia. Some say that he came from Delhi, a few years before the battle of Sharaighat. Sometime he is said as 'Gargaya Senapati' and sometime as 'Pali Senapati'.<sup>32</sup> It is interesting that, the name of Bagh Hazarika and his activities are not mentioned in 'PADSHAH BURANJI' (KAS-1934), while they are mentioned in 'ANNALS OF DELHI PADSHAHET' (DHAS-1947), which is said to be a 'translation' of the 'PADSHAH BURANJI'. In 'SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA' S.K.Bhuyan said simply that, Bagh Hazarika accompanied Lachit Barphukan in the battle of Saraighat. But in 'ANNALS OF DELHI BADSHAHET', S.K.Bhuyan upgraded the status of Bagh Hazarika to a commander. In page no-11, it is said, "*Important military commands are said to have been given by the Ahoms to Assamese Mohammedans who fought for their land of adoption with zeal and patriotism*". In regard to this statement S.K.Bhuyan has given a note in Page no-231, which goes like this-"*Assamese Muhammadan commanders: -This statement is based on the story of the Mohammedan commander Bagh Hazarika whose military genius was party responsible for the success of Lachit Barphukan's operation against Ram Singh. It was heard from Maulabi Mufizuddin Ahmed Hazarika author of Jnanmalini, and government literary pensioner, Dibrugarh, a descendant of the said Bagh Hazarika.*" Thus he has tried to arrive at an important conclusion without sufficient and dependable evidences. It is noteworthy that, in 'SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA' four articles published in four different issues of 'Avahan' are mentioned in the bibliography, which are said to be utilized

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<sup>32</sup> Sattar, Abdul-Sangmisranat Asamiya Sangskriti, P.20

in writing up the chapter 'Asamiya Musalman'. But it is verified that none of the said articles contain the name of Bagh Hazarika or his heroic activities.

In none of the published Assamese chronicles, the name of Bagh Hazarika is mentioned. In the list of 'Pali Senapatis' given in the LBHT, the name of Bagh Hazarika is not found. More over the question arises, only Six years before the invasion of Ram Singha (1669), The Ahom commanders refused to fight against Mirjumla's army (1663) in the initial stage of the invasion only because of the appointment of a non-Ahom person, Manthir Bharali by name, as a commander of the lower Assam flotilla (as Pani-phukan). Manthir Bharali was very dear to the ruling monarch and an indigenous citizen of the state. Question arises, how this conservative, suspicious and cautious element of the Ahom military administration can be expected to be removed abruptly just after six years and how a newcomer can be expected not only to be a Hazarika, but also a commander of the army. Herewith it is mention worthy that Dr. Maheswar Neog also says about Bagh Hazariaka simply as a warrior of the battle of Sharaighat<sup>33</sup>. After careful examination of all the available sources, it can be opined that, The Assamese Mohammedans, were appointed in important posts of civil Departments. That they got cemented in Assamese nationality is also supported by valid evidence, but that some of them were appointed in important post of military command can neither be established with any valid evidence nor can be accepted by any logical inference.

**About the word 'Gariaya':** In the Book 'SWAEGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA' it is mentioned that a Tailor (*Darji*) is said as '*Gariya*' (as synonym) in Ahom

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<sup>33</sup>Neog, Maheswar- Ed., Sanchayan, p.425

language<sup>34</sup>. But when enquired it can be known that there is no word like *Gariya* in Ahom language. Ahom synonym of 'Tailor' is pronounced like '*Phu-Chang-Yap*'<sup>35</sup>

**First Tungkhungia Monarch:** It is stated in the first paragraph of the chapter-II "*All the monarchs that ruled from Saka 1578 (i.e. 1656) till the end of the Ahom rule, except Chamguria monarch Chuhung, Dihingia monarch Sujinpha, Parbatiya Sudoipha and Chamguria Sulikpha, belonged to the Tungkhungia clan*"(1<sup>st</sup> line, first Para. -Td.) But in the Para-2, page-12, it is stated that Debera Barbarua installed one Tungkhungia prince in Saka 1597 (i.e. in 1675 AD) and he was the first Tungkhungia monarch and his name is not known. Thus there is disparity of information in the same book of S.K.Bhuyan regarding the first year of the reign of the first Tungkhungia monarch. The year Saka 1578 obviously is mistaken. Jayadhwaj Singha who ruled in this year did not belong to Tungkhungia clan. In the 'TUNGKHUNGIA BURANJI', which is utilized by the author in 'SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA' it is stated that Ramadhwaj Singha was killed with poison in Saka 1596, 3<sup>rd</sup> day of 'Aghon'. Then Debera installed one prince from Tungkhung. He was the first Tungkhungia monarch. Date of installation of this Tungkhungia monarch is not given here. He was also killed by Debera. In next, the second Tungkhungia king Gobar was installed in Saka 1596, Puh 18. Thus as per the 'TUNGKHUNGIA BURANJI', the first Tungkhungia monarch was installed in the year Saka 1596.<sup>36</sup> Again in 'KAMRUPAR BURANJI' it is stated that Ramadhwaj Was killed on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of 'Ashar', Wednesday of Saka 1596. Then Debera Barbarua firstly installed a prince from Samguri on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of

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<sup>34</sup> Op cit, p.24.

<sup>35</sup> I consulted the matter with Prof. J.N. Phukan and Ye Hom Buragohain (Ye Hom Buragohain is special officer, tai studies section, DHAS)

<sup>36</sup> ibid, pp.5-6)

‘Ashar’, thursday, Saka 1596. The next monarch was installed in Saka 1596 who was taken from Tungkhung.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, In spite of the controversies, it can be opined that the first Tungkhungia monarch was installed in Saka 1596 and not in Saka 1597 as given in the ASSAM BURANJI-SM<sup>38</sup> and inserted in ‘SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA’. It is noteworthy that although in the footnote given in the page no-5 of ‘TUNGKHUNGIA BURANJI’ (Ass) it is stated that the incident of installation of the first Tungkhungia monarch is found only in ASSAM BURANJI-SM, it is found in a manuscript recovered from American Baptist Mission, a portion of which is inserted in ‘KAMRUPAR BURANJI’<sup>39</sup>

**Battle of Sharaighat:** In Para 3, page 12 of ‘SW. RAJESWAR SINGHA’, it is stated that in the battle of Sharaighat which took place in Saka 1595, the Mughal General Ram Singha, king of Ambar was defeated severely at the Assamese hand. The Saka year 1595 i.e. AD 1673 as given by the author to be the year of battle of Saraighat goes against the established information that it took place in AD 1671.

**About Rajeswar Singha:** In the Third chapter (of SWAEGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA), it is narrated how Rajeswar Singha, in spite of his disinterest, accepted the throne surpassing his elder brother Mohanmala Gohain successor of Pramatta Singha, at the auspice and instigation of Keertichandra Barbarua. The author has emphasized on the act of showing initial reluctance of Rajeswar Singha to be installed in the throne surpassing his elder brother and has made exaggerated comment that this act has shined the character of Rajeswar Singha<sup>40</sup> and after taking the responsibility of Government employed his all power for the welfare of the state:

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<sup>37</sup> Kam. B., pp.97-98

<sup>38</sup> ABSM, p.130

<sup>39</sup> Kam.B. para-172, pp.96-97

<sup>40</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.- Sw. Raj. Singha, para-2, p.22

he did not neglect the state affairs leaving all responsibility upon the officers<sup>41</sup> Although Rajeswar Singha expressed his reluctance, he neither keep himself aloof from occupying the throne nor was able to shake away the unjustified pressure upon him caused by an ambitious officer. Likewise later history reveals that he failed to assert his sovereign power upon a subordinate officer Keertichandra Barbarua and thus to resist his haughty and irrational activities, which produced far reaching negative impact upon the later political scenario of Assam. Again evidence<sup>42</sup> goes against the author's contention that the monarch was not fond of merrymaking.<sup>43</sup> The comment of H.K.Barpujari in this regard may be cited here-“ *Instead, from the middle of the eighteen century, the throne was occupied by a number of rois feignants whose only concern was pleasure and dissipation leaving the entire administration in the hands of some ambitious but unscrupulous ministers and counselors and the latter not un-often playing the role of king makers committed most atrocious crimes to oust or invalidate aspirants to the throne not after their choice.*”<sup>44</sup> Although H.K.Barpujari has not mentioned the name of Rajeswar Singha here, the comment is unanimously applicable to him. The same contention is held by Haliram Dhekial Phukan <sup>45</sup> and Gunabhiram Barua.<sup>46</sup> It is mention worthy that, although Gunabhiram Barua had mentioned that Rajeswar Singha was more interested more in amusement than royal duties, and he could not control the haughty un-farsighted activities of Keertichandra Barbarua, the reign of Rajeswar Singha has been termed as the climax of the Ahom Glory and most peaceful time. The whole perspective of S.K.Bhuyan in depicting the reign of Rajeswar Singha in the book SWARGADEV RAJESWAR

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<sup>41</sup> *ibid*, para-1, p.23

<sup>42</sup> TB, para-86, p.47

<sup>43</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.-Sw.Raj.Singha, p.23

<sup>44</sup> Barpujari, H.K.-The Comp.Hist. of Ass, II, p-290

<sup>45</sup>, <sup>46</sup> Cf Haliram Dhekial Phukan Rachanavali, p.32, Barua, Gunabhiram-Asam Buranji, p.101

SINGHA is noticed in the article 'Agar Din Etiyar Din' (chapter-II) of Gunabhiram Barua, which was published in the first issue of 'Assam Bandhu'.

**About Keertichandra Barua:** The origin of the family of Keertichandra Barbarua is given in the Fourth Chapter of 'SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA'. In this chapter it is said that Keertichandra Barbarua was an intelligent, powerful, skilled and efficient officer. He had strong will power and political farsightedness. But there is no instance in the Buranjis, of using his power unjustly and for his personal interest as was done by Debera Barbarua and Laluksola Barphukan. But he did not have the quality of self-restrain. He was haughty, proudly. He did not have humility and farsightedness. The mistakes committed by him were caused as because the inexperience of handling political power received by the Bakatial family was recent one.<sup>47</sup> Apparently, these comments on the figure of Keertichandra Barbarua are contradictory. The contradiction may be elaborated as follows-

It is said that Keertichandra did not use his power for personal interest as like Debera Barbarua and Laluksola Barphukan did it. But it is said that he favoured the candidature of Rajeswar Singha depriving the legitimate successor Mohanmala Gohain, so that he could make himself more powerful<sup>48</sup> He also could exert his haughty activities during the reign of Laksmi Singha as he supported the supported the candidature of this monarch also.

It is said that he was intelligent, skilled and efficient officer. But it is said that he committed mistakes because of his recent experience in handling political power and his humble origin. But this theory goes against the efficiency of Momai Tamuli Barbarua.

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<sup>47</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.-Sw.Raj.Singha, p.26-27

<sup>48</sup> ibid, p.20



S.K.Bhuyan has deducted the political farsightedness of Keertichandra Barbarua on the basis of his advice to Laksmi Singha at the eve of Moamaria uprising<sup>49</sup>. But S.K.Bhuyan has said in other place that retaliation of the humiliation by Keertichandra Barbarua was the main objective of the uprising.<sup>50</sup>

**Human Sacrifice:** S.K.Bhuyan has mentioned that Narnarayan and Shukladhwaj of Kooch-Bihar offered cut sacrifice of more than hundred men in time of inauguration of the Kamakhya temple after its reconstruction.<sup>51</sup> Probably S.K.Bhuyan took this information from Gait's 'A HISTORY OF ASSAM',<sup>52</sup>. But in an investigation done by K.L.Barua it was revealed that Gait's information was based on a translation of the 'DARRANG RAJ VAMSAVALI' and it is a case of wrong translation of the relevant part of the 'DARRANG RAJ VAMSAVALI'.<sup>53</sup> The relevant part of Darrang Raj Vamsavali, which was wrongly translated is "*Tini Laksha homa dila eka laksha bali | Sata kuri paika dila kari tamraphali* ||"<sup>54</sup>

**The word 'Ahom':** In 'AHOMAR DIN' S.K.Bhuyan has mentioned that the meaning of the word 'Aham' in Ahom language is –sweet-smelling ambrosia. ('Fragrant Nectar')<sup>55</sup> But in fact the word 'Aham' is not in Ahom Language.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*, given under quote, p.28-29

<sup>50</sup> *ibid*, p.28

<sup>51</sup> *ibid*, 114

<sup>52</sup> Gait, A History of Assam, p.58, 2<sup>nd</sup>.edition

<sup>53</sup> JOARS, Vol-VI, No-1, April, 1938, pp.4-11, cf Tripathi, Chandra Dhar-Errors and bias in colonial historiography:....., JOARS, Vol-xxxvii, No 1 & 2, 1998-2000, pp.71-72

<sup>54</sup> Verse –548, p.104, Darrang Rajavangsavali

<sup>55</sup> Bhuyan, S.K., Ahomar Din-p.62