

Chapter-VII

Historical Philosophy and Structural features

(A) Historical Philosophy:

The principles of historical philosophy unavoidably followed by a historian consciously or unconsciously; shape his way of observing the past and the nature of his creations. These principles may belong to one or more typical schools of Historical philosophy or may be innovative one created out of the personal intellect of an historian. These principles again shape the structural features of his writings also. S.K.Bhuyan has not written any books or any articles especially on his ideas regarding philosophy of history. But it is essential to observe the philosophical features of history in his writings to understand them better. In such a situation, sporadic comments and the minute observation of the latent principles in his writings can help to form a synthesized whole of his philosophy of History. Of course there are troubles in this effort to give a physical entity to the scattered abstract ideas. The marginal lines in between these ideas are some times are so thin and indistinct that may lead to confusion. Not only they are contradictory to each other in most cases but also these principles themselves have some limitations. Moreover, the impact of the surrounding present of the historian is another aspect relevant to the topic of this discussion. Like wise some factors in deeper below again are responsible for these principles followed by a historian. So the impacts, the factors and merits and demerits of the features of philosophy of history as mentioned above in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan shall be consciously avoided in this discussion and shall be discussed separately.

It is apparent from the list of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan that the titles of his writings are mostly Character based and thus they are Biographical. Of course, these writings are not the biographies of those characters. These are written with the description of one or more episode or episodes of Assam history centering round some characters. In these episodes many other characters of different category and status, apart from the main one, plays different role in molding the episode. Their activities have given the ends to those episodes. Their (and also of the author) expected “welfare” is achieved for their “good performances” and “unexpected loss” for their “bad or inefficient” activities. In other words human activities are responsible for the motion of history of a society or of a nation. Of course, S.K.Bhuyan has not observed the course and factors of the evolution of the society or the state concerned with. Neither it was his objective nor it is unconsciously reflected in his writings. The characters playing roles in the episodes he dealt with are not the social entities, not the creation of the society; instead, they are the fortune-maker of the society. They are praiseworthy or worthy of condemnation with their individual abilities and disabilities. This is the dominant tune of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan for which the philosophy of his writings may be termed as individualistic.

A more specialized aspect of this individualism can be identified in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan. The subject matters of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan mainly belong to the medieval period of Assam history. The government and the society of this period were feudalistic for which the means of productions were controlled by a small group of nobles. For this reason they apparently glare in their age. Naturally this aspect finds reflection in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan. These people are ‘high’-born; more able and efficient with their training, intelligence, knowledge, wisdom and strength. This ability has importance in history. The ‘progress’ and ‘welfare’ of

the society or of the country are dependent on the ability of these people. These people are responsible person and protector of the society. Many people of 'low-origin' shopkeepers, servants and maids, and *Paiks* etc. appear in the episodes under discussions but their roles are supplementary to the causes of the nobles only. These 'small' people revolve round these noble stars. These noble heroes are the role models to be followed by the posterity. In this respect, S.K.Bhuyan comments, "*it is rightly said that history is the biography of great men*" and in this way his philosophy of history was elitist.

The philosophy of S.K.Bhuyan was normative, Idealistic, and Utilitarian. Historiography of S.K.Bhuyan was not a detached analysis of the facts. It has pre-determined norms, which are idealistic, and these enquired norms are to be and can be utilized in the present time. The norm of the historiography of S.K.Bhuyan is the welfare of the present. To him, history helps in this respect in different way. In support of a quotation from 'GREEK HISTORICAL THOUGHT' of Arnold J. Toynbee he comments "*almost all historians*", says Polybius, "*have eulogized the lessons of History as the truest education and training for political life and the study of others' vicissitudes as the most effective. Or indeed the only, school in which the right spirit for enduring the changes of fortune can be acquired.*"¹ The quest for this 'welfare' is present in pages after pages of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan. It can easily be felt. He writes history in quest of the inspirations for the present crises of the country (of the time of S.K.Bhuyan), remedies for that and to warn his fellow beings against any possible or imminent dangers. In his Philosophy, History has some other usefulness. History is the storehouse of preserved information regarding past. It preserves the past experiences. It preserves the information regarding the culture of a society. Thus History can be used as a bearer and preserver of the cultural identity of

¹ Bhuyan, S.K.-Preface-ABHT-p. -xiii

a group of people. It can even supply materials of music, literature, drama, art, architecture, science and technology etc for the present.

The writings of S.K.Bhuyan is ethical as they directly or indirectly inculcate moral education and in the form of expressed advices or praising the principles to be abided by a ruler, a bureaucrat, a slave, a common man, or as a father, mother, wife, brother, sister etc. On the other hand S.K.Bhuyan condemns unethical activities in his writings. The qualities like Benevolence of a ruler; dutifulness, Firmness of mind, patriotism, credibility, bravery, endurance, honesty, respect for the customs and traditions of the society, chastity are praised and persuades his readers to follow these values by S.K.Bhuyan.

The writings of S.K.Bhuyan are mainly descriptive. Instead of presenting the synthesized theme of the episode or the episodes discussed by him, S.K.Bhuyan describes them with all the branches and sub-branches of these episodes to an elaborate detail. Despite, sometimes he endeavors to extract out the causes below the surface of the phenomena. More-over, while analyzing the different characters of Assam history, describing the events or in other contexts, S.K.Bhuyan puts some analogies, comparisons and examples from the history of different countries throughout the world. In doing so although he is motivated with the tendency to compel his readers to move with the traveling string of his consciousness and to introduce them with these events preserved in the universal storehouse of knowledge, and with the resonance of his enquiry for the commonness in the natures of the phenomena in history and of their 'pattern causes' or the general causes behind these phenomena. In fact the quest for cause and effect relation in analyzing the phenomena is guided basically by the faith that a particular phenomenon in a history of a country of a particular age is not unique and singular. The quest for the causes in the study of history makes the study meaningful and useful social science.

Though dormant, it exists in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan. Of course; how far S.K.Bhuyan was successful in attaining the deep insight necessary for scientific observation is a different topic. Some times he shows misery for the minimum scientific outlook. This aspect will be discussed in a different heading. (Science: Myths, Miracles and Traditions).

One of the conventional methodologies of Historiography, which is easy to accomplish but widely followed is the 'piecemeal Historiography', which is used by S.K.Bhuyan in an extreme form. It has already been mentioned that the writings of S.K.Bhuyan are based on some characters or on some episodes of Assam history that too, again of the political activities of a few people of the ruling class. Thus the viewpoint of total history is severely ignored in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan.

Amendment of own views and narratives was admitted and accepted by S.K.Bhuyan with great humility and this flexibility in his writing may be held as an ultra-modern feature. The passion and depth of seriousness in his studies can easily be felt by observing the great alertness shown by S.K.Bhuyan in collecting, preserving and handling the data and source-materials of history and by observing his tireless penance in the studies of history till his demise. Of course, how far a historian can view the past accurately is a vast subject in the study of the philosophy of history. A historian while dealing with the past he reveals much about himself and his surrounding present. There are other problems also like subjective choices in regard to data and information utilized, emphasis etc. S.K.Bhuyan was obviously aware with these problems of historiography. He even, in his lifetime amended, enlarged and revised many of his writings more than once. If he felt any inability in dealing some context due to inadequate sources or due to other reasons, he openly admitted it and invited the contemporary or future scholars to study and reflect more on those topics. Thus he recognized the possibility of change in material and

perspective aspect. He doubted there might be something in history, which may be called as perfect. In ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES he has mentioned, *"A narration of the outer layer of facts was for long the characteristic of history writing."*² Thus he was conscious there might be change in the perspective in history writing. (Probably, by the term 'inner layer' S.K.Bhuyan meant the description of any incident in an elaborate and minute detail). In connection with the perfection in history S.K.Bhuyan held, *"It may be mentioned that the present book represents the first attempt at an intensive and scientific study of a period of Assam history centering round a leading personality of the time. Imperfections are therefore inevitable; but I have been emboldened by the words of the great Cambridge orientalist, Professor Browne, - "He who would write a flaw less book would write nothing. Even the most imperfect book, if it breaks fresh ground, may, though itself doomed to oblivion, prepare the way for better."*³

S.K.Bhuyan wrote, *"We believe that there is nothing more censured act than to circulate a historical fact exaggerated with imagination."*⁴ He was conscious of the importance of well edited records in support of which he quoted Prof. Allen Johnson from his book 'The Historian and Historical Evidence' in DHAS Bull. -II

" A first-rate historian will wish to go to original sources of information...Historical researches has been greatly facilitated, too, by the collection and editing of records, either by private initiative or by the aid of societies. There is a type of scholar hardly known to the general public without whom the writing of history would be well-nigh impossible. It is he who has separated the chaff from the wheat in ancient and medieval manuscripts, who has established correct texts, who has collected fugitive materials, who has dated and

² Bhuyan, S.K.-ABHT, P.xi

³ idem- LBHT, P.-xiii

⁴ idem- B.V., p.151

located inscriptions and manuscripts, and who has collated and edited those great collections which are indispensable to the historian of ancient and medieval times"⁵.

Like wise he quoted Prof. Frederick J.Teggart from his 'Theory of History' in the same place as, "*Historical work involves, first, the critical examination of the documentary sources of information, and second, history-writing or historiography*".⁶ Again quoted Mr. K.P.Jayaswal's lamentation "...Hence some people rush to reconstruct the past without sufficient evidentiary materials and data at their disposal, which amounts to putting the cart before the horse."⁷. From the views in support of which the above mentioned quotations were cited by S.K.Bhuyan, it can be opined that, he believed that a historian should be careful for the evidential aspect of history and that a historian should give priority to the purity and authenticity of the sources. For such a belief, S.K.Bhuyan gave priority to collection, preservation, collating and editing of the original sources of Assam history than to reconstructing history. If the achievements of S.K.Bhuyan are analyzed carefully, it is revealed that his contribution in editing and publishing the chronicles i.e. the 'Buranjis' is comparatively more valuable.

Dr. Bhuyan was aware of the fact that the circumstances and environment where a historian is born and brought up create impact on his writings. In evaluating the 'Buranjis' written by Srinath Duwara Barbarua, Atan Buragohain, Bisweswar Bidyadhip, and Dutiram Hazarika, S.K.Bhuyan minutely analyzed the family background, social and political status of these 'Buranji'-writers. He referred to the social and political conditions in which these writers lived.

Family background, class characteristics, surrounding socio-politico-economic environment of S.K.Bhuyan also likewise played role in molding the

⁵ Bull.-II, p.34

⁶ *ibid*, p.47

⁷ *ibid*, pp.46-47

nature and perspective of his writings. His forefathers Kaunar Sing was a powerful wealthy zamindar, Mangal Sing served the east India Company as a soldier and later under Gaurinath Singha as a trainer of newly formed armed force and as a faithful commander; Shibacharan served the East India Company in Assam as a police sepoy, Rabilal Bhuyan was educated with western education, experienced with the academic environment at Calcutta at that time, served as teacher and later as a clerk under the east India company. S.K.Bhuyan himself was holder of M.A., B.L., Ph.D., and D.Litt. degrees. And served in many responsible capacities both in British and independent India. He was brought up with close contact and patronage of British officials and government. Such a background was naturally conducive to his conservative political outlook.

(B) Nationalist, Patriotic, Regional historiography:

That the dominating inspiration and motivation of S.K.Bhuyan behind his historical (and other) writings was patriotism is noticed by so many scholars like Benudhar Sarma, Dr. Maheshwar Neog, Pratap Chandra Choudhuri, Nanda Talukdar, Prafulla Datta Goswami, Jogendra Narayan Bhuyan and many more. Patriotism, of course, is not hidden but apparent and vivid in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan, which got expression through his clear patriotic statements in the prefaces or in the midst of his writings and through his mode of presenting the topics dealt with. His patriotism has got expression through his anxiety for the Crises in the national life of the Assamese people in his days (as he held), for their remedies and for the uplift of his country; and in his encouragements, advices and warnings to the new generation. Patriotism not only acted as motivational force but also affected the methodology followed in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan. Some examples may be cited here—

* *“The Assamese people have now fallen on evil days, and their present condition is a poor index of their past achievements. To show the height to which the Assamese mind could soar.... These qualities are in greater demand now than before as their complex political, economic, and social problems waiting for solution by us as Indians in our coming role of an independent nation. The example of Lachit Barphukan and his selfless compatriots of Saraighat will be a source of inspiration not only to my countrymen in Assam but also to my friends in the rest of India.”*⁸

* *“WE want leaders who will rise to the heights of disinterestedness in their services for the uplift of their motherland; who will by example and precept, infuse into the hearts of their countrymen and neighbours those noble sentiments...”*⁹

* *“...I then resolved to unravel the story of his uncommon leadership to Assam and the world so that my brother mortals may draw inspiration from the example of his lofty character and disinterested endeavour.”*¹⁰

* *“The Assamese people are perfectly justified in holding up Jaimati before the world as an example of lofty devotion and unshaken determination, who liked the extremely limited few of her sisterhood, thought “what death can be sweeter than the death for ones beloved?”*¹¹

* *“The story of Mirjumla’s invasion is specially inculcating [shikshaprad] for Assam, because in this invasion both the bad and good instincts of Assamese people found expression...The Assamese patriots should endeavour whole heartedly in resisting these two conflicting instincts.”*¹²(Td).

⁸ Bhuyan, S.K., LBHT, p. xi

⁹ ibid, p.172

¹⁰ idem, ABHT, p. x

¹¹ ibid, p.197

¹² idem- Mir.Ass.Akr., Granthakarar Nibedan-page- (6) (7))

* *“If the events of the Mirjumla’s Assam invasion are analyzed minutely the bad and good sides of the character of the Assamese people can be realized clearly. This realization is the contribution of history and warning and inspiration for the Assamese people”*¹³ (Td)

* *“In remembering Jaimati through same viewpoint a feeling of sameness grows in the minds of the Assamese people. To unite a nation, some common glorious or woeful stories of the people are needed. The past glory and past happiness and woefulness are same for the Assamese people”*¹⁴ (Td)

* *“At last we say that the thoughts and feelings, means and tricks of activities of the Assamese people are preserved in these ‘Buranjis’. If any crisis for the Assamese identity occurs in the passage of time this invaluable asset of the ‘Buranjis’ will provide resource to revive it.”*¹⁵(Td)

* *“Badshah Aurengzeb died in the year 1707. In the wave of the Mirjumla Asom Akraman imminent end of his rule, the ship of Mughal Empire itself tended to drown. In such a situation Sri Sri Maharajadhiraj Rudrasingha lord of the four lakhs unconquerable Assamese soldiers indomitable, well trained, expert in all activities, fearless to death, playful to dangers, tireless, inexperienced of luxury, not tempted to allurements and the united martial might of his accompanying Gohins, Phukans, Baruas, Choudhuris, Hazarikas, Shaikias, feudal lords of Darrang, Kachari, Jayantiya, Rani, Beltola etc. could have diverted the course of the Indian empire to other direction. Consequently the influence of Assamese culture, Assamese civilization could have been seen throughout from Cape Kumarika to the foothills of Himalayas. Such an opportunity, such a glaring possibility was first and last in the national life of Asom.*

¹³ *ibid*, p.145

¹⁴ *idem*, Asom Jiyari-Part-ii p.56

¹⁵ SAB-sampadakar Patani-p.18

But today also after two hundred and eighteen years it is echoed in the hearts of the Assamese....."¹⁶(Td)

* *"If some time in future the nationality of the Assamese extinct, it can be reorganized with this apparatus of Buranjis. These Buranjis are the main scripture of the Assamese, these are our Vedas, these are our Samhitas and these are our Puranas"* ¹⁷(Td)

The number of these examples can be multiplied. There are several aspects of patriotism of S.K.Bhuyan to be noticed. Although there are some variations with the typical Nationalist school of Indian Historiography, from the viewpoint of basic features Dr Bhuyan may be categorized as a nationalist historian. Most important aspect in this regard is that Dr. Bhuyan has not taken the imperialist way of interpretation in studying the native topics of Indian history which is guided by the tendency to present the native things as inferior and that of the British as ideal. Rather, he has not only endeavored to establish the Assamese glory, but also invites all human fraternity to take inculcation from Assam history. Of course, the tendency of the Indian nationalist historiographers to depict every British thing as bad and hatred to British individual and British government was absent in case of S.K.Bhuyan. Rather, he was admirer of British and western civilization. In other respect the merits and demerits of the nationalist historiography are present in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan also. The nationalist historiography in the nineteenth century was inspired by patriotic emotion—at the same time, avoidance of miracles as far as possible, presentation of the subject matters in order, large-scale historical enquiries, preservation and research work was made. On the other hand the tendency to justify all the native affairs and to interpret the native faults, failures and defects

¹⁶ idem, BV, pp.114-115

¹⁷ idem, Sw.Raj Singha-p.32

as accidental polluted the basic ideal of all true history—the objectivity in history. These happened to S.K. Bhuyan also.¹⁸

The patriotism of S.K. Bhuyan was patriotism for Assam. He meant Assam with the term '*Desh*'. His anxieties and endurance in historical studies all were guided by his love for Assam, his motherland. Sometimes he draws attention of the people of other parts of India and of rest of the globe to take directions and learn from the history of Assam but this thin concern for others is subsided by his love for Assam. To Dr. Bhuyan the people of Assam of his time was in dire crisis – they are self-forgotten, lacking in self-confidence, ignorant of their past glory and deprived of other's praiseful eye. Dr Bhuyan has tried to provide remedy to this crisis from the pages of '*Buranjis*'. From the pages of '*Buranjis*' the Assamese people can regain their lost glory, esteem, identity, courage, enthusiasm and inspiration. They can pave out their future course analyzing the past wrongs and faults. As Romila Thapar has observed, "*that a valuable offshoot of nationalist historiography was a growth of interest in regional and local history. This in turn led to the discovery of new source materials in local repositories and to greater archaeological work in the region*"¹⁹ Dr. Bhuyan busied himself in the studies of Assam history.

The aim of Patriotism of Dr. Bhuyan was not merely the self-defense and development of Assam rather it was expansionist. In other word, his Assamese nationalism had a chauvinistic aspect. He invites other Indians and other people to take lesson from the history of Assam. He expected the Assamese culture, glory and might ought to be announced with high sound and be established, be expanded throughout India and rest of world and thus the Assamese can win a cultural victory

¹⁸ In this respect, the observation of E. Sridharan is note worthy here- ""Nationalist historiography in India, as elsewhere, was sometimes guilty of methodological lapses, of deviation from the ideal of objectivity which is the marrow of all true history- A textbook of Historiography-, P.433

¹⁹ QV, Sridharan, E - A Textbook of Historiography- P.436

The basis of this chauvinism is the common historical tradition of the greater Assam, the 'Bar-Assam'. The inhabitants of this 'Bar-Assam' irrespective of hilly and plain region, of religion, caste, creed, and tribe who have grown up a common cosmopolitan culture can materialize this dream. They can achieve it with their united endeavour.

Dr Bhuyan in fact, represents the thought, feelings and aspiration of a section of Assamese society- the middle class of his times in his writings. The Assamese people worn out of the Moamaria uprising and the Burmese invasions got rid of war, attack and tortures with the advent of British force but they were compelled to be ruled under a new ruling power, -the British East India Company. A new platform, a new environment was created. The political history of Assam got connected with the rest of India with further cultural and economic contact. People of Assam as the other Indians, got introduced though in later, with the British, a race having a worldwide colonial empire. The upcoming Assamese middle class with western education and convenient condition became conscious of the new situation in the extended platform. A complicated synthesis of the aspirations and consciousness for Assamese identity in Indian and global world and possibility of new opportunities under British rule in fact, gave birth to the feelings of self-dejection, urge to search glory and aspiration for expansion.

The attraction of Dr Bhuyan for the Indian nationalism is seen to be less intense than his care for Assamese identity and glory. He often announced the glorious distinctions of the Assamese people from the rest of the Indians and of the world. He announced it declaring himself as a member of Assamese nation. It is mention-worthy here that a parallel chauvinistic and separatist under-current was prevalent in the political consciousness of the Assamese people since the British occupation of the land. S.K.Bhuyan, although was a Assamese Chauvinist, did not

endeavoured to disconnect Assam and Assamese culture from the mainstream of Indian culture, rather he sought a dominant and glorious presence of Assam, Assamese people and its culture in the Indian platform.

Patriotism and Assamese Chauvinism of Dr Bhuyan was neither revolutionary nor confrontationist. Dr Bhuyan personally as well as a historian held the view of exploiting all the positives of an existing environment. He pursued the principle and persuaded his readers to develop all the personal skills, collective unity and to serve the nation without coming into confrontation with an established government whether it may be an Assamese, British or an Indian government. In regard to society also, he was not an opponent to the age-old values. To him, a nation can shine avoiding lethargy, complacency, apathy for hard work and inferiority and with active and efficient participation in education, art and cultures, trade and commerce etc by the people irrespective of man and woman.

Bhuyan knew that -History is consists of dry-bones of facts only, to dilute it with taste and emotion is not justified (preface-BURANJIR VANI). But he could not keep himself detached and clean from his class-characteristic in his writings. His emotion and his patriotism were romantic and was a demerit of his writings.

(c) Literary Elements:

It has been already mentioned that the categorization of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan into Literary and Historical writing is a troublesome work. In many cases the dividing lines between these two areas are not distinct and elements of both area intrudes into the area of each other. Sometimes he created literature with historical records and applied literary techniques and ornaments in history .He composed poetry on historical character of Assam like, *JAIMATI UPAKHYAN*, *PRINCESS JAIMATI* etc.), wrote articles on history of literature. Similarly

imagination, emotion, phrases and idioms, other literary ornaments like similes, metaphors etc. and other literary features entered into his historical writings. Thus there may be some purely literary, dominantly literary, dominantly historical and purely historical (and other) categories of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan. 'THE ANGLO-ASSAMESE RELATION' is an example of his purely historical writing while ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES, LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES, SWARGADEV RAJESWARSIMHA, BURANJIR VANI, are examples of dominantly historical writing.

The historical writings of S.K.Bhuyan are mainly informative and descriptive. Instead of assembling huge data, facts and figures compressed in a limited space, critical analysis of the data, and enquiring the cause and effect relation of the phenomena dealt with or discussing the theories of historiography behind them, he followed the simple and straight principle of presenting the past episodes of Assam history. His indifference to brevity, emotion of patriotism, descriptive methodology and being mainly biographical, in addition to the clarity of thought, all these have made his language lucid, simple and literarily flavorful although he frequently mentioned that History is the dry-bones of past facts and to attribute emotion and literary flavour in history is unjustified. For these reasons his writings (keeping aside his theses) are pleasant-reading instead of being a matter of hard intellectual labour and deep cogitation.

The *littérateur* in S.K.Bhuyan came out to surface in his writings in this branch of social science i.e. in History in different times in different way. The art of presentation sometimes creates a literary environment for the readers. The introduction of ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES is started with a quotation from the great drama 'JULIUS CAESAR' written by its great creator Shakespeare. This citation compels its readers to remember the drama and make

them feel the dramatic thrill of the drama at the very outset. More over it gives a prior idea that something to be narrated inside which resembles to the character and fate of Julius Caesar.

Like wise, in ‘SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA’ the starting chapter is SHANTI ARU SAMAR (i.e. peace and war). The title itself bears literary flavour. The starting of the chapter goes like—*“While Swargadev Rajeswar Singha was in power, the condition of Assam was glorious and prosperous.....The monarch has discussed scriptures, Puranas, History, and poetry with the scholars, he himself composed drama, enjoyed drama (Bhaona),.....”*

*“How a lovely scene this is? How beautiful times it was during the prosperous (Bhogali) days of Assam!”*²⁰(Td). In this chapter the comparison has been made between the days of Mughal invasions and that of the reign of Rajeswar Singha. It is said in this chapter that the benefits of the sacrifice of his predecessors enjoyed by Rajeswar Singha. The reign of Rajeswar Singha was prosperous and peaceful. But the way of presenting contains a poetic and dramatic resonance.

It has been discussed about the literary nature and impacts of the comparisons found in, direct speeches, conversations preserved in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan under different heading.

Like wise some times Dr Bhuyan added some imaginary soliloquies or conversation in the mouth of the historical characters in his writings. Some examples may be cited here.

In ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES, a soliloquy of Laluksola Barphukan is given -

²⁰ Bhuyan, S.K.- Sw.Raj.Singha, P.1

"I have put my whole faith in my niece Rahmat Banu Begum, The daughter of Jayadhwaj Singha, and in her husband Sultan Azamtara who alone is capable of destroying my arch enemy Atan Buragohain".²¹

Again it is imagined by S.K.Bhuyan, how Laluksola Barphukan justified his effort to become monarch of Assam with the help of Mughal power and added a very lengthy soliloquy –

"I must become the Raja of Assam, and convert the sweltering summer of my obscurity into a golden autumn of my sovereignty... .."

so this is my time, the meridian of my fortune, my zenith and my heyday and hence, I must rise to the clarion call of my opportunity, or languish in the limbo of oblivion and obscurity. So haul Laluk, Hail to thee, the founder of the Lukhurakhun dynasty of Ahom Swargadeos, hail!"²²

In connection with the sacrifice of Jaimati it is said-

"The Assamese people are perfectly justified in holding up Jaimati before the world as an example of wifely devotion and unshaken determination, who like the extremely limited few of her sisterhood, thought "what death can be sweeter than the death for one's beloved?"²³

In LACHIT BARCHUKAN AND HIS TIMES, S.K.Bhuyan writes, -*If Lachit Barphukan had written his autobiography he would have admitted " "from my father I learnt to be dutiful and love my work and to forget myself in the ecstasy derived from a faithful and conscientious discharge of the trust imposed upon me."²⁴*

Like wise the utterance of Lachit Barphukan uttered in the eve of battle of Sharaighat that "My uncle is not greater than my country"²⁵ [*deshatkoi momai*

²¹ idem, ABHT, p.157

²² ibid, pp.175-177

²³ ibid, p.197

²⁴ idem, LBHT-p.20

²⁵ LBHT, p.37; Lachit Barphukan, p.37. cf- Tamuli, L.N.-BURANJI ARU BITARKA, p.81

dangar nahay] is also a literary statement, although the spirit of the statement is befitting to the situation in which it is said to have been uttered

In **RAMANI GABHARU** also there is a very lengthy imaginary conversation between Ramani Gabharu and Azamtara. The situation is imagined by Dr. Bhuyan what would have happened if the effort of Ramani Gabharu to resist his maternal uncle Laluksola Barphukan from surrendering Guwahati to Mughal to meet up his personal ambition of becoming the Assam monarch with a secret letter. The conversation is very Romantic, ends with deep love of Azamtara for Ramani Gabharu, reveals glory of Assam and its monarchs in the form of praise by Azamtara and arranged in the style of composing a drama. The conversation stretches from page no 38 to 41.

These imaginations reveal the author's personal emotional involvement and attachment with the concerned characters. Of course it is mention worthy that these imaginations have not harmed the facts as Dr, Bhuyan clearly indicated about their imaginary character and so they can be easily separated from the facts. Of course, they may add some imaginary notions about the character of the characters, their thought and personality. However, this may be termed as an innovative way of writing history.

There are phrases and idioms, similes and metaphors in abundance, which are, scattered in every page of his writings, both of English and Assamese. In fact it was a part and style of his expression and it creates such an impact that as if they are spoken in a homely atmosphere and thus the 'dry bones history' becomes pleasant reading. Some may be cited here—

“The history of the age of Atan Buragohain is a drama of paradise lost and paradise regained”²⁶

“Atan Buagohain perished by the orders of Lora raja Ratnadhvaj Singha but everybody knew that it was Laluk Barphukan who had put the sword in the hangman’s hand—the hand was the hand of Esau but the voice was the voice of Jacob.”²⁷

“Gargaor pichal bat, lorako nichini, dekaiko nichini hate pati lakhuti pat”²⁸

“The officers became aware when the soil of motherland was stained with the blood of Sati”²⁹(Td)

“By that very time the sacred forehead (subhra-lolat) of the Laksmi, the Goddess of fortune was stained”³⁰(Td)

“Manuhe koy bayanar gharar bondayo rag diye”³¹(Td). The literal meaning of this sentence is –People says that a male cat also sings modes of classical songs that lives in the house of a Bayan also sings Rag.

“Dui Tini mah dhari gushariya padakiya duyo pakshye tekela boga hati pohadi puhiba lage”³² (means-both of the parties of plaintiff and respondent had to nourish the Tekelas in luxury for two or three months. literal meaning of Boga hati is a white elephant which means an ornamental thing, costly to rear but without any utility.)

Apart from these, the dreams dreamt by the characters, the miracles, the myths, are also preserved in his writings as found in the Assamese chronicles or folk tales, of course with specific mention about their nature of reality. Though they

²⁶ Bhuyan, S.K.-ABHT, p.288

²⁷ ibid, p.185

²⁸ Idem, Mir.Ass.Akr., p.56

²⁹ Idem, Sw.Raj.Singha, p.5

³⁰ ibid, p.7

³¹, ³² ibid, p.36; This Assamese proverb is used to mean an imitation made by the servants or the followers of activities of their masters

fulfills the purpose of history to preserve the customs, traits, beliefs of the past they have literary effect on the writings of S.K.Bhuyan.

‘People says-“*tirotar kopale dhan, purushar kopale jan*”³³This is a popular faith and an Assamese proverb, which means that wealth, comes with the fortune of the wife and off spring with the fortune of the husband.

‘There is a saying in Assamese that “*Egharar pat nad, egharar jari, eghare pani tole ghatang matang kari*”³⁴

“*Every body could understand that the strength of the Ahoms was not firm as mountain, it was a dam made with woods and bambos, which can be washed away by the current of summer flood*”³⁵(Td)

Sometimes Dr. Bhuyan placed the literary characters like Yudhisthir, Arjun, Chitrangada, Ulupi, Babrubahan, Bhagadatta from the two Indian epics in his writings without any hesitation. This has been done widely in SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA. Some sentences may be cited here—“*Thus, Kuranganayani the princess of Manipur descendent of Babrubahan reciprocated the love and affection she received from the Swargadeo, ministers, Barbarua, and from the people of Assam.*”³⁶ (Td)

“*The Swargadeo being impressed with the beauty and quality of Kuranganayani of Manipur, beautiful and lovely as Chitrangada was made chiet consort with due allocation of Raidangia mel*”³⁷(Td)

The literary elements do not harm the historical values of the subjects dealt with till it remains a neutral literary element but some times they are to be reckoned

³³ idem, BV, p.28

³⁴ ibid, p.47

³⁵ idem, kowanr bidroh-page-3

³⁶ idem, Sw.Raj.Singha, p.58

³⁷ ibid, p.53

with. For example, the citing of resemblance of the beauty and qualities of Kuranganayani with that of an epic character, or in saying that Kuranganyani is the offspring of Babrubahan have some significant implications. This resemblance not only indicates the all pervading and expanding pan Indian and Aryan culture throughout India (even in the tribal regions) but also provides historicity to the literary characters in the Indian epic of Mahabharat

Dr. Bhuyan had a deep attachment for literature. He composed huge number of beautiful poems. Some of his literary creations have already been published in compiled volumes. This litterateur in him influenced his historical writings. The literary beauty of the 'Buranjis', which were handled much by S.K.Bhuyan, also left some influence upon his historical creations. He believed that rich literature and rich history of a nation is signs of health of a nation. It not only preserves the cultural and political identity of the nation but also necessary for the future strength and growth. So wherever he had the opportunity to preserve the literary beauty of the Assamese language he utilized that. Finally he was a student and teacher of English literature and he exerted his duty as student and as teacher passionately in this subject. This aspect also left some literary impact upon his historical writings.

(D) Comparisons:

An eye-catching structural feature of the writings of Dr.S.K.Bhuyan is his frequent use of comparisons of the characters or of any episode of Assam history with similar characters or incidents from other history (history of Ancient and medieval India, Greece, Rome, France, England etc.), literature (Indian and foreign) and scriptures of different religion etc. Since the days of writing 'AHOMAR DIN' a creation of his school life, Dr Bhuyan was used to this practice. In later days as his studies expanded quantity and variety of these comparisons and similes increased.

Some examples of Comparison of the Characters and incidents of Assam history may be cited here—

Rajeswar Singha	as	Assamese Shahenshah (SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA- page-234)
Rani Phuleshwari	as	Assamese Nurjahan (AN ASSAMESE NURJAHAN, 1926)
Laluk sola Barphukan	as	Machiavelli (ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES-Page-315)
Atan Buragohain	as	Assamese Julius Caesar (BIBIDH PRABANDHA-Page-98)
Radha-Rukmini(of Assam)	as	Joan of Arc (Jeanne d'Arc in French) (AHOMAR-DIN-Page 5,CHANEKI-Page-11)
Garama Kuanri	as	Assamese Cleopatra (KACHARI BURANJI-Introduction-Page-ix)
Many Assamese Chroniclers	as	Assamese Khaphi Khan (AHOMAR DIN-Page –90)
Narnarayan	as	Bikramaditya, Markas Orelus, Alfred and Akbar of the Assamese. (Asam Sahitya Sabhar Bhasanabali-page-34)

Likewise Popularity of Lachit Barphukan in Assam is compared **with** the popularity of Nelson, Wellington, Cavour, Garibaldi, Maharana Pratap Singha. Shivaji in their respective country.(LACHIT BARPHUKAN AND HIS TIMES p. 1)

Some other comparisons can be cited as follows-

*Death of Lachit Barphukan **with** death of lord Nelson. (LACHIT BARPHUKAN AND HIS TIMES -Page-87)

*Stern order passed by Lachit against the Delinquent soldiers **with** the Spartan sternness (LACHIT BARPHUKAN AND HIS TIMES -Page-46)

*Fighting by Mulagabharu in the battlefield **with** the fighting of Jhanchi Rani Lakshmi Bai.(STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM.-Page-70)

*Wandering of Gadapani **with** that of Odysseus.³⁸ (ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES-Page-213)

*Delinquency of Atan Buragohain in decision-making and in taking action **with** the character of Hamlet, the king of Denmark,³⁹ and his ultimate fate. (ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES -Page-247, 292)

*Humiliation of Moamoria Mahanta by Queen Phuleshwari **with** tortures on saints Latimer, Cranmer, and Ridley⁴⁰ by Mary, queen of England. (SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA, page-146)

*Order passed by Pratap Singha to Assamese women for weaving **with** similar order by queen Elizabeth (SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA, Page-262)

*Taking arms by the Moamarias against the Ahom Government **with** the taking arms by the Shikhs against the Mughals, which weakened the Mughal Empire (SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA, page-164)

*Sternness of the Ahom penalties **with** contemporary British and Maratha penalties. (SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA, page-250)

*The instructions given to Pramatta Singha in time of coronation by Buragohain **with** the contents of the sixth rock edict of Ashoka. (SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA, page-252)

³⁸ The legendary ruler of Ithaca, a Greek hero

³⁹ Legendary history of Danes

⁴⁰ All were protestant reformist, Cambridge teachers

*Again Battle of Sharaighat is said **as** Trafalgar of Assam (LACHIT BARPHUKAN AND HIS TIMES, Page-87)

*Charaideo **as** Jerusalem of the Ahom (SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA, page-107)

*Traditions regarding Jaimati **with** the apocrypha about Shakespeare. (ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES, Page-189)

*The unifying aspect of the annual tribute to the Cachar Raja and worship at the Shadiya temple **with** that of the Olympic games and the temple of Apollo at Delphi. (KACHARI BURANJI-Page-vi)

*The episode of Dihingia Raja and Garama Kuanri **with** that of Antony and Cleopatra. The Ahom genius is compared **with** that of the Romans here. (KACHARI BURANJI-Page-ix)

The examples cited here are the few of the ample found in all kind of writings of S.K. Bhuyan. Adding comparisons to the characters and incidents of Assam history have provided a spectacular feature to the writings of S.K. Bhuyan and this practice has several noteworthy aspects. It is revealed, if examined that these citation of resembling incidents and titles by Dr. Bhuyan were not the outcome of his any critical observation and comparison between them but were made on some sporadic resemblances and some times it is made forcefully. For example, the comparison of Atan Buragohain with Julius Caesar, Laluksola Barphukan with Machiavelly, the tribute to Cachar Raja and worship at Shadiya with Olympic games and temple at Delphi, apocrypha about Jaimati and Shakespeare etc are sporadic and to some extant embarrassing. The image and imageries connected with the personalities, places and incidents compared to those of the Assam are in fact completely different which lead the readers to confusion and disturb the spontaneity of attention in a specific point.

Of course, these leave some positive impacts on his writings and so on the reader's mind. Citation of such comparisons motivate the curious readers to go through the sources like history of different countries of different ages, scriptures of different religion, literature of different places of the globe from which these examples are taken. Frequent movement of the readers' minds with that of the writer breaks and keeps out of the strict narrow boundary of history of the region and connects them to the global phenomena. Attention to and realization of the similarities between the historical figures, their characters, incidents etc of Assam to those of the other parts of world give introduction to the universal and basic human natures (individual or collective) and underlying principles that guides the human achievements and thus the mental horizon of the readers is widened. This widening acts as a remedy to a hesitant consciousness and confined intellectual environment.

The alert mind of Dr. S.K.Bhuyan while dealing with a particular topic of Assam History got swiftly connected with the similar subject matter scattered in a varied and greatly extended period and area from the BIBLE to the MAHABHARATA and the RAMAYANA, PARADISE LOST to ILIAD and ODYSSEY, Rock edicts of Ashoka to French revolution: history of Greece, Roman Empire, England, India of all ages. This reflects his vast area of his studies, which astonishes the readers.

Dr. Bhuyan was aware of his this art of presentation and wrote in the article 'Sahityar Mul Katha' - "everywhere, *whatever I have read or seen Assamese literature, Assamese civilization and progress of the Assamese come to my mind spontaneously. While reading a good poetry, drama, story...any foreign writing with discussion on topic or with any historical topic the thought comes to mind- 'what a pleasant thing it would happen if there had been such a writing on such topic in our*

country'. Whenever come through an inspiring topic, I begin to think if there is any similar example in the history of Assam...

*"I read in the Gibbon's 'Fall of Roman Empire' that with the order of the king of Pontus Mithridatus VI by name, Eighty thousand Roman and Italian men were killed within a day. Here, it came to my mind about the massacre of Ten thousand Assamese soldiers at the battle of Alboi near Hajo in a day at the hand of Rajputs under Ram Singha. In exchange of this noble sacrifice, Lachit Barphukan the Assamese general a day after defeated Ram Singha miserably at the naval war of Sharaighat. When I gave this comparison to the students their eyes twinkled and face brightened with the light of patriotic glory"*⁴¹

Here also, the author's intention to search for Assamese glory and to inspire the new upcoming generation is revealed. Observing the nature of these comparisons may obviously be taken as metaphoric, ornamental and literary, not critical and scientific.

(E) Utterances:

The preservation of the statements of the Characters of Assam History in the form of direct speech and citation of quotations in the writings of S.K. Bhuyan are so abundant that these have produced some noteworthy impact on the structural aspects of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan. It is a usual, and some time an essential act for the writers particularly in their writings, which are prepared on consultation with other sources. But their abundance has given a characteristic specialty to the style of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan.

⁴¹ idem, Tripadi-pp-5-6. This article was prepared on the basis of the summery of the lecture delivered in a meeting organized by ASL club, 30 Sept., 1939, Cotton College/ the article was published in several place in later. (BIBIDH PRABANDHA-page-72-80).

Dr. Bhuyan utilized huge number of different source materials in his writings and most among them were the published and unpublished chronicles written in Assam. In these 'Buranjis' the conversations of different characters were preserved in direct speech. Dr. Bhuyan has preserved some of these intact (though translated to English sometimes) in his writing. In these conversations utterances are sometimes one or two words and some times they are so lengthy that they take several pages to complete.

If examined, the examples of the following four books (i) SWARGADEV RAJESHWARSINGHA (ii) ANGLO-ASSAMESE RELATIONS (iii) LACHIT BARPHUKAN AND HIS TIMES (iv) ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES. the abundance of these utterances and quotation is revealed vividly.

In 'SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA' the number of such statements or quotations is the largest. Out of around 370 such statements less than 20 quotations cited from other scholar. Only a few pages at the end of the book, the sources of these statements and quotations are mentioned in the form of footnotes. In 'LACHIT BARPHUKAN AND HIS TIMES', out of around 273 direct speeches within inverted commas, around 40 are quoted from other reference books and the rest from the 'Buranjis'. Again, 44 important utterances inserted in the appendix-1, some of which are already used in the previous chapters. In ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES, out of around 296 statements, two are soliloquies imagined by the author himself, less than 20 from other scholars and the rest are taken from the 'Buranjis'. In addition to these, 47 important utterances are given separately in the book. Like that in LACHIT BARPHUKAN AND HIS TIMES, in ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES also these statements are mentioned repeatedly in different context in the book. Being a research work, the writing-style of 'ANGLO-ASSAMESE RELATIONS', is different in some respect. In comparison

to the pages and volume of the book, the number of direct speeches is comparatively less in this book. Of course, it contains a very long bibliography of utilized sources. Here in this book, out of more than 500 sentences and phrases within inverted commas less than 100 are taken from the 'Buranjis'. Rests are taken mainly from the British sources and in this part, the conversation and letters of the company-agents, officials, company-government and the home-government are inserted in large number. In total and comparatively, quantity of information converted to author's language is huge one.

Dr. Bhuyan had great attachment and regard for these utterances and he consciously preserved them in his writings because these utterances not only preserve the style of conversation of that time but also the linguistic features of Assamese language spoken on those days. More over, Dr. Bhuyan thought that these utterances help to understand intimately the psychology, the inner personality of the persons who spoke these. These utterances can inspire the present and later generations. Dr. Bhuyan has revealed these views at several places. In ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES, he says—*"We have in the course of narratives, inserted the original utterances as they first came out of the lip of the speakers, because they enable us to obtain an insight into the political ideology of the people of old Assam."*⁴²

In the same book he has quoted from PLUTARCH'S LIVES—*"Plutarch, the prince of Biographers, has said 'often, a man's brilliant action prove nothing as to his true character, while some trifling incident, some casual remark or jest, will throw more light upon the manner of man he was than the bloodiest battle, the greatest array of armies or the most important siege.'"*⁴³

⁴² Bhuyan, S.K.-ABHT, p.xii

⁴³ *ibid*, p.xi

Likewise, in LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES, Dr. Bhuyan has commented that “ *we want leaders who will rise to the heights of disinterestedness in their services for the uplift of their motherland; who will by example and precept, infuse into the hearts of their countrymen and neighbours those noble sentiments, which animated the actions of their patriotic ancestors, as revealed in the utterances and observations recorded and preserved in their national histories for the emulation and inspiration of all future ages*

*“these sentiments did not belong to the domain of political catch-phrases, which decorate the periods of demagogues. They were founded on the bed rock of realities...”*⁴⁴

It has already been mentioned that Dr. Bhuyan has there are huge number of such utterances in the body of the aforesaid four books. In LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES, 44 utterances are separately given in the appendix-1, some of which were already mentioned in the main body of the book. Likewise in ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES, an independent chapter is given with the title ‘REFLECTIONS OF ATAN BURAGOHAIN’, which contains 47 such utterances. Among his edited chronicles, in the prefaces of DEODHAI ASAM BURANJI, TUNGKHUNGIA BURANJI, KAMRUPAR BURANJI, SATSARI ASOM BURANJI, PADSHYAH BURANJI, such utterances are given show the exemplary linguistic beauty of the language in those days. In September 1949, in the exhibition held in Paris, organized by UNESCO, Dr. Bhuyan exhibited 10 such utterances which are inserted in the ‘STUDIES IN THE HIST. OF ASSAM’ Dr. Bhuyan did not content with these only and he published a book with the title ‘SARAIGHATAR SUBACHANI’ in 1963, which contained 73 such collected utterances with the intention to inspire the people for patriotism in time of the Chinese invasion in 1962.

⁴⁴ idem, pp.172-173

In 1964, the book was enlarged with additional 77 utterances (totaling in 150). But this was published long later in 2004.

These utterances are not only cited as examples of archaic Assamese language and of its beauty but sometimes the course of events is presented and proceeds through the conversations inserted in these books. This writing style has created a dramatic and vivifying impact upon his writings for which their literary value has enhanced. Of course, these utterances help the reader to form some idea about the inner feelings and behavior of the characters of Assam history in crucial moment, about the customs and traditions prevalent in the palace, in the court, in the battlefield and give an animated effect on the various episode of Assam history. Thus these writings have become pleasant-reading. The preservation of the conversations makes the readers a feeling of intimacy to their original sources and a feeling of material validity all the moment.

But, the writer had to give more space in presenting the episode or episodes in the cost of their literary and linguistic benefit. On the other hand, the synthesized theme of these writings could have been written in less space. Although Dr. Bhuyan has in some contexts given personal opinions and elaborations of the events narrated in his writings, in many cases the responsibility to find out the necessary theme and message left for the readers. In other words, like those in the Buranjis, Dr. Bhuyan also given a lot of unprocessed raw materials to his readers. There is another noteworthy aspect on the deep-rooted view of Dr. Bhuyan regarding the utterances that they can reveal the true character and personality, is not always tenable in a social science like history, because the verbal revelations of a person can present his personality in a colored manner. In many cases they are deceiving and misleading. In fact, actions and their results are the real tests to examine true character of a

person. Possibility of fraudulence and distortion in writing the Buranjis cannot be denied as it happened in medieval Europe.⁴⁵

(F) Science: Myths, Miracles, and Traditions:

The topic, 'Science in history' covers a multifaceted and wide area. The topic covers the subjects like the way of collecting the source materials, analysis of the collected data, query of the cause and effect relation in analyzing the phenomena dealt with, and the unbiased approach etc. Apart from the methodological aspects, it covers the subjects like the analysis of the myths, miracles, and traditions etc. prevalent in a society. In this discussion, the approach of S.K.Bhuyan towards the myths, miracles etc. prevalent in the medieval Assamese society will be examined. This discussion will help to identify the distinctions between the medieval Buranjis and the writings of S.K.Bhuyan, the impact of environment caused by the study of natural sciences, which was further brought by the modernism and renaissance in Assam, and how far the viewpoint of Dr. Bhuyan caused by that scientific environment whatever finds reflection upon his writings. Here in this context, a general view on scientific viewpoint may be mentioned. The basic cognitive distinction of the human beings is his or her rationality, which itself forms the basic ground and feature of science and scientific viewpoint. This scientific temperament may be perverted with vested interest or with fallacious reasoning. Fallacious reasoning is further may take place due to personal inefficiency or to insufficiency of discovered facts and data. Abundance in proper scientific explanations of surrounding phenomena, discovered facts and figures creates positive impact on the way of observing the surrounding by a person. With the increase of accumulated

⁴⁵ Goswami, H.C., Ed.-PAB, , Bhumika-II

experiences and established knowledge, the environment in society for scientific outlook becomes better. Thus the environment for scientific outlook in a society is progressive and relative to age. Of course, some powerful interests (of any person or class) connected with the superstitions, myths, miracles etc prevailing in society, sometimes creates pressure on freethinking of the intellectuals of a society, and thus their writings may become hesitant and ambiguous.

After the introduction of company rule and advent of the missionaries and thus in the contact with the western culture and education changes occurred in the historiography of Assam. The missionaries took the initiative in recovering the 'Buranjis' and in publishing them in their magazine 'Orunodoi'. At the very beginning they pointed out the miracles and myths in the Buranjis, which are not acceptable for their unreal nature. Of course, even the outlook of the missionaries, who had introduction with the western 'Industrial revolution', 'Age of enlightenment' and with the wide studies in natural science and who came as messenger of civilization, was not free from non-science. In this context, the editorial foreword written before publishing an old Assamese 'Buranji' in Arunodoi is worthy to mention here.

"We have, getting a very old Buranji of the Ahoms, started to write in the Arunoday of this month. All the things there, are not true; still shall be written as they are found; the readers should analyze and consider what is true and what is not.

"Sometimes there are stories in the writings of human being, only the scriptures made written by God do not have fault. After reading such scriptures it is known that God had firstly created a couple of man and woman; all the kings and subjects in the earth are offspring of that couple. But in almost all the native chronicles it is narrated on the basis of ancient stories that those kings were born of

the Gods with a view to make pride. In that way it is held that the Greek monarch Chikandar was the son of Jupiter, Romulus, the first monarch of Rome as the son of Mars or Kartik; Bishwa Singha the monarch of Kamrup as the son of Shiva. Likewise there are some stories in the ancient scriptures of the Ahoms; In some places it is said that man was born from gourd; and their first monarch Khunlung-Khunlai are descendents of Indra.....All these cannot be true; because a senseless gourd, which is a creeper is far distant from the man...Likewise, man cannot be born of Gods...”⁴⁶(Td).

Here in this editorial note the editor of Orunodoi has identified the unreliable portions of the ‘Buranjis’ (and of other native chronicles), but the editor himself was not free from Biblical influence in holding that some scriptures are got written by the God and that the first couple created by the God was the ancestor of all the kings and their subjects in the earth.

In dealing with the various topics of medieval Assam history Dr. Bhuyan had to discuss them in a social background dominated with superstitions, magic, miracles and myths etc. Apart from them he had to reflect upon the sensitive subject like religion, which is basically based on dogmatic faiths.

In this connection the view of S.K.Bhuyan revealed in a few sentences in the article ‘SHANTI KANYA RADHIKA ARU TELIA PATNI’ inserted in BURANJIR VANI is noteworthy. It is apparent that, the two stories preserved in this article are either based on imagination or the miraculous achievements said to be done by the two ladies Sati Radhika and the Telia-patni were some tricky game. These stories were written to show the miraculous power chastity attained by the two above-mentioned ladies. From scientific viewpoint they are not acceptable. The comment of Dr Bhuyan goes like—

⁴⁶ DAB-pp(55)-(56); Neog, Maheswar, Ed.-Orunodoi, p. 461

“To fill water in a vessel with holes is not possible; it is a law of nature. How did the two chaste ladies bring water violating this law? Science say- it is impossible. But the people, who believe in different laws of impalpable world beyond the physical world, will say that men with deep self-confidence and exclusive devotion can perform miracle. It is seen that the saints and chaste ladies of every country are attributed with such miraculous power....

...We shall not say anything on whether the two chaste ladies really brought water in ‘Polo’⁴⁷ or in a copper vessel. But it may be said, that some people a four hundred years back, believed fully in the possibility of bringing water and that some did it in such way, the existence of such faith is the truth for history. It is not necessary for a historian to fell in the mouth of giant tiger of complicated logic. The fact that a chaste telia-patni (wife of an oil-man) had also the right to worship is also important for history.”⁴⁸(Td)

Dr. Bhuyan has not explained why these myths and miracles should be preserved. Of course he is very much true in saying that to examine the truth behind these myths and miracles leads to a never-ending debate. But the latent viewpoint of S.K.Bhuyan as a historian on the myths, miracles and traditions etc. is that they should be preserved in history as they reflect the socio-cultural condition of a society in a particular time and they are significant as they bring serious political consequences some time. Prevalence of such myths and miracles and the amount of the people believing in those reflects the intellectual character of the society and the environment of studies of natural sciences.

Of course, the indifference shown to the need of analyzing them in the balance of reasoning and revealing the truth in these myths and miracles by

⁴⁷ A bamboo device to catch fish

⁴⁸Bhuyan, S.K., BV.-pp.85-86

S.K.Bhuyan is not acceptable. In the lack of such analysis the readers may get confused more and fall in unscientific belief. More over such misbelieves sometimes bring serious political consequences and in analyzing the political phenomena analysis of those myths and miracles become essential. Sometimes these myths and miracles are devised to draw attention, respect and devotion by someone himself or for other. These newly acquired allegiance from the masses become additional force for the concerned person, which may lead to formation of social and political organization under him or her without financial, military or political power.

In most cases S.K.Bhuyan had introduced these myths and miracles as ‘saying among people’, ‘popular beliefs’, ‘traditions’, ‘traditional tales’, ‘people believed in those days’, etc. Some examples are given here—

The very beginning word of historical writings of S.K.Bhuyan (if the ‘AHOMAR DIN is supposed to be his first historical writing) started with a word connected with a popular myth regarding the Ahom dynasty. It goes like —

*“INDRABANGSHI AHOM SAKALE ASEEM PRATAPERE SASHA BASAR KAL RAJATWA KARE”, which means that the Ahoms descendent of Indra ruled Assam for six hundred years with great velour. That he believed in this mythological origin of the Ahom dynasty is not so. It is mentioned, “there are many traditions regarding their first ancestor; but keeping aside the traditions and tales and taking the history from them we find that Khenkam was the first monarch of the Tai race. he is said to be the son of the deity Indra.”*⁴⁹

“This Nyaybagish could influence the monarch and some other people for his great scholarship; more over it was heard that he could make miracles.

... ..

⁴⁹ idem, Ahomar Din, p.2

In those days people easily believed the sayings about such miraculous happenings, and so followed the words of Nyaybagish considering them to be infallible.”⁵⁰

* *There is tradition among the originators of the kal samhati that one day Shankar Dev brought Gopal dev down from the boat while crossing the Brahmaputra as he violated the inculcations of Shankar dev by praying his personal deity at the showering of rains with wind. By that time lord Narayana appeared and in his order, the lohitya made sands in midst of water and Gopal dev was given initiation of emancipation...”⁵¹*

* Another story regarding the miraculous power of Shiva temple at Dergaon is also preserved in SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA. Here also it is said “*the people had faith in the miraculous power of the temple and whenever there occurred any crisis in the country, they offered ritualistic prayers in the temple.*” As per the story Pratap Singha received forecasting of his death before three fortnights through an unseasoned *Nahar flower* (Flower of Indian ironwood) with three petals.⁵²

* Likewise, the HASTI-PARIKSHYA on Jayasimha, the monarch of Manipur,⁵³ many miraculous accidents at the humiliation of *Nyay Bagish*; falling of the golden vessels at the summits of some temples down the ground⁵⁴ sparkling of the hymns while Shiva Singha was enchanting them,⁵⁵ attaining miraculous power of the hymns by Rajeswar Singha and one day getting a Parijat (an Elysian flower!) after completion of his worshipping, making prophecy by Chaturbhuj Dev, the Moamoria pontiff that Queen Phuleswari born a baby like ‘*Komora*’⁵⁶ (a white Gourd melon) transition of the dinner with Porks, Meat, Chicken, Wine, rice

⁵⁰ idem, Sw.Raj.Singha, p.119

⁵¹ ibid, p.127

⁵² ibid, p.217

⁵³ ibid, p.51

⁵⁴ ibid, p.118

⁵⁵ ibid, p.119

⁵⁶ ibid, p.120

arranged for Sri Ram Ata by Gopal Ata into heavenly flower on next day⁵⁷ etc are also preserved and presented with similar introduction.

But some times S.K.Bhuyan has not given clear opinion on the myths and miracles or presented in such a way that it give the impression as if he believed in them. Some examples may be cited—

*“The purpose of Tantrik rituals is Paramartha Siddhi, but all and every people cannot attain that success. If care is not taken for self-restraint, men may fall in immorality and adultery.”*⁵⁸(Td)

This statement is mysterious and needs elaboration and explanation. It is not clear what does the words Paramartha siddhi mean! If it is ‘supreme knowledge’ or ‘Moksha’, then it is not always true and success in material life, fame, wealth are often expected from the performance of Tantrik rituals and the way to reach the expectation is miraculous and cannot be explained with the laws of natural science. The above-mentioned sentences reflect personal faith of S.K.Bhuyan in Tantrik rituals.

* *“By this time in the month of Bahag in Shaka 1691, there occurred many evil omens in the state. The royal residence at Dergaon and Bishwanath burnt with thunder bolt.....having this message, Keerti Chandra Barbarua left for upper Assam leaving Raha stockade at his back.”*⁵⁹(Td)

It is apparent that S.K.Bhuyan has taken this description from some chronicle. But he has cited them in his own language. The evil omens and the death of Rajeswar Singha are merely coincidental, But S.K.Bhuyan presented them in such a way that the common readers will assume that the evil omen brought the pre-

⁵⁷ ibid, p.128

⁵⁸ ibid, p.114

⁵⁹ ibid, p.217

indication of the death of Rajeswar Singha and that Rajeswar Singha was a divinely monarch. Thus these sentences conceive an echo of the divine right and origin of the Ahom Dynasty found in the chronicles.

In LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES Dr Bhuyan has not given clear opinion or opined hesitantly regarding Astrology. S.K.Bhuyan has commented on the appointment of astrologer Brahmin as adviser in the battle of Saraighat and dependence of Lachit Barphukan upon him as *“Astrological calculations in spite of their extensive popularity do not constitute a universal code of action; and a commander should not stake the tremendous issues war on those calculations of dubious practical value.”* Again he said, *“Even if we accept them as scientific prophecies there is the risk of miscalculation; and even though the honesty of Achyutananda is unquestionable, other man of this profession may not share his integrity and rectitude.”* Likewise he said *“Looking at the incident from a distance of two hundred and seventy-five years we can say that whatever may be the scientific value of astrological calculations, people in those days and some even at the present time do consider them as infallible and unchallengeable, and Lachit Barphukan’s adherence to them only indicates the time spirit.”*⁶⁰

The points in the opinions on astrology by S.K.Bhuyan are noteworthy, which go like—

- (i)....do not constitute a universal code of action.
- (ii)...calculations of dubious practical value.
- (iii) Even we accept them as scientific prophecies...
- (iv)...other men of his profession may not share his integrity and rectitude.
- (v) Lachit Barphukan’s adherence to them only indicates the time spirit.

⁶⁰ idem, LBHT, p.131

On the basis of these statements it can be concluded that S.K.Bhuyan was doubtful on the scientific value of astrological calculations. In Fact, his dubiousness is caused due to his way of analyzing the scientific character of astrology. The basic law followed in the enquiries in science is the theory of causation or the cause and effect relation. S.K.Bhuyan has not observed whether this principle is followed in making astrological prophecies or not. Similarly the weaknesses of astrological activities like the risk of miscalculation and possibility of lacking integrity and rectitude in some men in these profession as said by S.K.Bhuyan remain in all human activities. In the service of a physician or of a general in the battlefield such type of human error may occur.

There are some other miraculous incidents, which are recorded in the Buranjis and inserted in LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES. Firstly, on the eve of the fighting against Ramsingha Lachit Barphukan dreamt *“a tall and fair complexioned lady with the upper lip touching the sky and the lower touching the underworld; her tongue pointed towards the Muguls while the Assamese legions with the commanders were stationed behind her.”*⁶¹

Experts explained the dream, as the victory of the Ahom party. This dream helped to create confidence in Assamese camp. At the conclusion of the war it is noticed that the Ahom force really won the battle.

But S.K.Bhuyan commented in this regard *“But Lachit Barphukan was not a man to allow superstition to interfere with his plans of war”*⁶²

Secondly, in regard to the prayer offered to Goddess Kamakhya by the Ahom commanders on the eve of the fighting, S.K.Bhuyan held different views in two different places—

⁶¹ LBHT, P.46

⁶² *ibid*, p.47

*“Lachit Barphukan acted with unrelenting sternness and tact in maintaining the morale of his army. His officers and soldiers prayed to the Goddess Kamakhya to destroy the invaders. As the Goddess, in the deep rooted beliefs of the Assamese, was cherished as the grantor of all desires, the soldiers at once concluded that the destruction of the enemy was inevitable.”*⁶³

That the arrangement of the prayer at Kamakhya temple was a tactful act of Lachit Barphukan to maintain the morale of his army is revealed in the above quotation. But in the article ‘Saraighat Nai Kintu Saraighat Ase’ inserted in ‘TRIPADI’ it is held that—

*“Here after, there is the temple of Goddess Kamakhya at the front of Gauhati. Nearby, in the North is the battlefield of Saraighat. The Ahom nobles and commanders prayed the Goddess ‘mother eat up the Bangals’. The living Goddess has fulfilled the desire of her devotees. The invaders were routed and they flew away. This holy shrine of Kamakhya is also eternal property of the Assamese, the bridge linking with the Hindu souls of India.”*⁶⁴(Td)

Here, in this quotation the personal faith of S.K.Bhuyan on Goddess Kamakhya is revealed. Dr Bhuyan also added *“the bliss of goddess Kamakhya shall be necessary to get rid of the invaders from outside.”*⁶⁵

In SWARGADEV RAJESHWAR SINGHA there is a comment in context of the weaving in Assam, which is noteworthy here. He wrote, *“It is inferred by many that Eve, the first woman spun yarns.”*⁶⁶ Here, many people infer about spinning of yarn by Eve, but S.K.Bhuyan has given historicity to the Biblical character of Eve. The reason behind writing this sporadic and irrelevant sentence by S.K.Bhuyan cannot be

⁶³ ibid, p.127

⁶⁴ idem, Tripadi, p.76

⁶⁵ ibid, p.76

⁶⁶ idem, Sw. Raj Singha , p.262

known. Probably he wanted to convey the view that the practice of spinning yarn is prevalent among men from time immemorial.

Likewise, in 'MIRJUMLAR ASOM AKRAMAN' it is stated "*However much soldiers are gathered or however much the General be efficient, the victory in a battle is dependent on fate*"⁶⁷ Such types of comments is suicidal for a historian because it negates all the rational efforts of a historian in exertion of his duty as a historian to analyze the historical phenomena and find out the material causes behind them. The above comment seems not to be a casual statement; rather it may come out of his personal philosophy. In this respect, a clear view of S.K.Bhuyan is expressed in a statement in the Gwalior speech that, "*I am one of those who believe in the existence of a divine program in all human relations and endeavours.*"⁶⁸

On the basis of the above discussions and examples cited, some conclusions may be drawn. S.K.Bhuyan preserved the myths, miracles, traditions, legends etc recorded in the Buranjis or in other sources in his writings as they reflects the social, cultural, intellectual environment of a society in a particular time. He believed that this act of preservation is a duty of a historian. Some times they are clearly marked as 'Tradition', 'there is saying among people', 'legend', 'people believed in those days' etc. Thus Dr. Bhuyan has either given hint for their unscientific character or left the responsibility to judge the reality in them. He also opined that the examination of the truth in them is not necessary for a historian as it leads to never-ending debates. Whenever the myths or miracles are entangled with some established, organized or widely popular faith system (i) he either give hint about their unscientific character (ii) or took a safe shelter of ambiguous expression or

⁶⁷ idem, Mir.Ass.Akr. p.33

⁶⁸ idem, the speech, para-2, p.3

comments. These ambiguity were caused due to his (a) personal faith in those orders (b) his intention not to hurt the feelings of any community or any section of people and (c) due to his intention not to damage the image of those religious orders (like the new Vaisnavite cult in Assam, the Shakta cult, the Kamakhya temple etc.). which he considered as the icons of Assamese identity and faith system.

(G) Originality:

The common native readers and foreign readers, researchers, writers have greatly benefited with the contribution made by S.K.Bhuyan to the historical studies in Assam. On the basis of the guidelines and the areas opened up by S.K.Bhuyan, a huge number of serious research works have been done in later times and these have helped in reconstruction of Assam history. His writings had influenced immensely the Assamese society of his times also. In the growth of Assamese nationalism, unity and in determining the direction of Assamese nationalism, the impact of his writings also was immense. Among his writings LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES, ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES, ANGLO-ASSAMESE RELATION, SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA and some articles can be said as monumental in the historiography of Assam. But it is necessary to take a detached view in evaluating the originality of his writings and his methodology of studying history. Of course, it is worthy to mention in respect of evaluating originality in historical writing, that a historian do not creates history. History gets reflected in the perspective of a historian. A historian tries to write what the sources and the evidences reveal. Of course, the way of enquiring the sources and the way of analyzing them determines the nature of the writings of a historian. So, in fact, in evaluating the originality of historical writings, the methodology of collecting data, the way of analyzing them and his perspectives of a historian are evaluated. In this

respect, there is another aspect also. The areas selected by a historian and its comparison with his predecessors also may be taken into account in evaluating originality of historical writings.

It has already been sporadically mentioned such aspects of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan in different context of this study. Here, in this place, the topic will be discussed to give a synthesized idea on the subject. In evaluating the originality of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan, the body-texts of the edited works of S.K.Bhuyan can be kept aside at the very outside, as because these texts were merely reproductions of the texts of the concerned chronicles, -the 'Buranjis'. Of course, the prefaces and the introductory notes of the edited books were S.K.Bhuyan's own creations. Likewise, the articles, the contents of which form parts of the contents of the books written elaborately on the same topics and the translated works also can be kept aside in this respect. This aspect has been discussed under the heading 'Repetition, translation and compilation'

If the aspect of source materials of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan is observed, it is noticed that S.K.Bhuyan wrote up his writings almost exclusively on the basis of the literary source. The main area of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan was the Ahom rule of the medieval period of Assam history. For this area and the period, there are abundant literary sources and that too are supplied by the 'Buranjis'-the most important primary sources of medieval Assam history. In spite of his knowledge about the limitations and defects of this class of sources, S.K.Bhuyan had great regard for them. For this regard, S.K.Bhuyan utilized the information supplied by the 'Buranjis' in large extent in his writings. The way of utilizing these 'Buranjis' by S.K.Bhuyan was so simplified that in many cases, he presented the events narrated in the 'Buranjis' merely converting them into modern Assamese language or into English without using inverted commas or without mentioning the source.

S.K.Bhuyan utilized mainly the two sources –‘RAM SINGHAR YUDDHAR KATHA’ of Achyutananda Doloi and ‘ASSAM BURANJI’ recovered from the family of Sukumar Mahanta in writing up LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES and ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES. Likewise the main topics of ‘SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA’ were taken from the ‘TUNGKHUNGIA BURANJI’ and the unpublished Buranji written on Lakshmi Singha. Apart from using the events narrated in the chronicles as it is, S.K.Bhuyan even followed the perspectives of those medieval chroniclers in his writings. The medieval chronicles were written mainly in the perspectives of the rulers. For example, in ‘SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA’ S.K.Bhuyan has used the words ‘our country’ [Amar Desh] and ‘our soldiers’ [Amar Sainya] in connection with the Moamoria uprising following the sentiment and style of using language by Srinath Duwara Barbarua in ‘TUNGKHUNGIA BURANJI’.⁶⁹ Likewise the pronoun ‘they’ [Sihant] is used for the Moamarias and the fighting of the Ahom Government against the Moamaria rebels is said as the ‘war of independence’, [Swadhinata Yuddha].⁷⁰ Dependence on the primary sources has witnessed an important aspect of originality of the historical writings of S.K.Bhuyan. Here with it is mention worthy that, apart from the documented evidences, S.K.Bhuyan realized the importance of oral sources in history. He with great patience collected such sources and carefully preserved them in written form to give them permanence, so that these sources might not lost forever in oblivion. His perseverance and patience in this respect can be realized from the story of collecting the ‘BARPHUKANAR GIT’, from Duliagaon of North Lakhimpur, which is recorded in the editorial note of the

⁶⁹ idem, Sw.Raj.Singha, p.66, 67

⁷⁰ ibid, p.58

book.⁷¹ From the same source of the same village he collected the story of Phopai Pani Phukan, which is inserted in 'ASAM BURANJIR KATHA'.

In respect of accumulation of information in his writings by S.K.Bhuyan can be said to have shown skill and novelty. He wrote up his writings very elaborately taking information from huge number of published and unpublished 'Buranjis' and some times from the writings of other Indian writers. In this respect, the 'ANGLO-ASSAMESE RELATION: 1771-1826' can be said as the best one. In this creation he utilized British government papers, materials collected from the India office Library, London, Journals, Magazines in addition to the 'Buranjis'

Other scholars, prior to S.K.Bhuyan started the act of depicting and presenting the heroic activities of the characters of Assam history. For example, H.C.Goswami wrote up and published about Lachit Barphukan before written by S.K.Bhuyan. The effort to popularize the character of Jaymati had also been started before S.K.Bhuyan. Likewise Harakanta Sadaramin, Edward Gait and some others also wrote up on the subject- Anglo-Assamese relation before S.K.Bhuyan. But his predecessors did not write on Lachit Barphukan, Atan Buragohain, Mirjumla's invasion in Assam, Anglo-Assamese relation and so on so elaborately as S.K.Bhuyan did. Being a Research work, the 'ANGLO-ASSAMESE RELATION: 1771-1826', naturally witness more maturity.

By the art of comparing the characters, events and phenomena of history of the rest part of world with those of Assam in large scale and introducing them to the Assamese readers also, S.K.Bhuyan has shown novelty in the historiography of Assam. In respect of the ruling class perspective- either the pro-British or the pro-Ahom perspective and the search of national glory, some of his predecessors already had set examples. The influences of the 'Buranjis', have already been discussed. The

⁷¹ Sampadakar Nibedan, Barphukanar Git, p.(i)

role of a rescuer from the Burmese devastations and atrocities by the British and the opportunities and privileges exploited from the colonial British rule and economy by the newly grown up Assamese middle class gave birth to pro-British literatures and historiography. S.K.Bhuyan simply continued the course.

In respect of historical studies and research activities in Assam, some predecessor scholars, historical organization and societies had already constructed the way. Collection of Manuscripts, their preservation, editing and publishing foundation of research organization, directing guidelines for future research, were also done before him and these also have already been discussed. In this a concluding comment may be cited that, what he had done for Assam history were already opened up by his predecessor, but S.K.Bhuyan did them more elaborately and more extensively. All these have given comparatively more permanence and popularity to the writings of S.K.Bhuyan.

The ideas like dormant pan-Indian nationalism, chauvinistic Assamese nationalism, a feeling of insecurity for Assamese identity, strengthening the ground of Assamese identity through the unity of the people living with heterogeneous culture and political trends of Assam, anxiety for social, cultural, moral, economic and political maladies in the Assamese society, women-empowerment, and modernization of the Assamese society, which are the under current and inspiration of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan were already active in the intellectual arena of Assam. The contemporary Magazines and historical writings reveal the existence of these ideas.

In regard to external impact on the perspectives of S.K.Bhuyan's historiography the view held by Manorama Sarma can be mentioned here. She has noticed the marked similarity in the aspect of 'Hero-Worshipping' in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan and in the Carlyle's writings and has commented, "*There are many*

other aspects of Carlyle's philosophy of History and it would not be correct to say that all those ideas are reflected in Bhuyan's works. But the importance on personalities as the moving force in history definitely affected Bhuyan".⁷² Though there is similarity in respect of hero-worshipping, it is not safe to held that it was an effect of Carlyle on S.K.Bhuyan. In fact, Indian minds are shaped with the perspective of worshipping individual abilities- talents and velour, which can be noticed not only in the epics, in the voluminous mass of other Indian literature, but also in the general and dominant trend of Indian historiography. In regard to the aspect of biographical writing of S.K.Bhuyan, it is mention worthy that, in his college life at Calcutta, the Assamese students collectively decided to write up a series of biographies with the title 'Ratnamala'. S.K.Bhuyan took the responsibility to write on Gopal Krisna Gokhale, Anandi Bai Joshi, Anandaram Barua, Jaimati Konwari, Gadadhar Singha, and Anandaram Dhekial Phukan.⁷³ Though the venture was not complete, S.K.Bhuyan wrote up some of them by that time and in later period. Apart from this habit of writing biography of great men, S.K.Bhuyan was greatly influenced by the Plutarch's lives. He quoted Plutarch several times in some of his writings in different context. In 'Parallel Lives' of Plutarch, there are hero-worshipping, comparisons between two heroes (in between the pairs of a Greek and a Roman heroes), analysis of character and morality and trifling incidents that can reflect the character and morality of these heroes. 'Plutarch's lives' was 'enlivened by anecdotes and quotations'.⁷⁴ All these features can be noticed in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan also. He made comparison not only between Ram Singha and Lachit Barphukan, but also compared and contrasted the Assamese heroes and heroines to the heroes and heroines of Indian history or histories of the other countries. S.K.Bhuyan quoted

⁷² Sarma, Manorama and Bora, Shiela, *Historiography in North East India*, p.26

⁷³ Talukdar, Nanda-SURYA KUMAR BHUYAN, p.75

⁷⁴ Biography-Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia-2000

Plutarch not only in support of his perspectives in his historical writings, but also quoted to vivify his troubles as a historian of a province like Assam. In Bulletin-2, of the DHAS he has mentioned "*Plutarch, the prince of biographers, whose observations are 'even for modern times, an object of indestructible interest', had so early as the first century A.D., realized the advantages of a big city for the purpose of historical investigation. Thus he writes in the life Demosthenes:*

The first requisite to happiness is, that a man be born in a famous city...As he (the writer of history) has materials to collect from variety of books dispersed in different libraries...There he will meet with many curious and valuable books; ...This will prevent his work from being defective in any material point.

*But here in Assam the research worker is hampered by endless disadvantages. He works single-handed. Half his life is spent in doing the spade work..."*⁷⁵

More over as a student of English literature he had studied the works of Shakespeare thoroughly. William Shakespeare used 'Parallel Lives' of Plutarch as a source book.⁷⁶ S.K.Bhuyan mentioned names of characters of classics of Greece and Rome (like Pericles, Alexander, and Caesar etc) and terminologies (like Plebian, Patrician etc) in different places of his writings. How much S.K.Bhuyan was influenced by Greek and Roman Classics is vivified more by one of his own statement, "*I felt the same way when I began to read Plutarch's lives of Greek Heroes published by Blackie. I had bought a copy in Calcutta in 1915 only for seven annas. The book was lying in shelves unread. While glancing through the pages one day I came across a number of passages, which at once attracted me, and tempted me to go in quest of the treasures, which the book might contain.*

⁷⁵ Bull.-II, pp.16-17

⁷⁶ op. cit.

.....

“I read more of Plutarch, and then the other writers of Greece and Rome, and raised the inhumanity involved in not broadcasting the seeds which will enrich the granary of human thought...”⁷⁷

Thus observing the various aspects of his writings of S.K.Bhuyan, it can be opined that though there are different external influence in the content, perspective and style of presentation in his writings, S.K.Bhuyan had naturalized them to a personal methodology. In this respect, the acceptable observation of Dr. Bhaben Barua can be quoted here-*“As a man he was often rather overgenerous than critical; and as a writer, he had a fervid enthusiasm which occasionally resulted in a kind of prolixity. But on the whole, his writings never lose the precision of firm contours; and although, at times, some of his works appear to be like bags full of variety of materials, yet they show a packing tight and done to a finish.”⁷⁸*

⁷⁷ Bhuyan, S.K.- unpublished-Ch.-4 ‘Recollection and Reflection’, Unread Melodies, Classics of Greece and Rome

⁷⁸ Barua, Bhaben- S.K.Bhuyan: The Poet and the Historian, Bhaben Barua, SKB Comm. Vol. P. -69