

BANIKANTA KAKATI MEMORIAL LECTURES, 1967

STUDIES IN EARLY HISTORY AND ADMINISTRATION IN ASSAM

DR. B. N. PURI

Professor of Indian History & Culture,
National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie



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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY
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MY PARENTS

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Professor Dr. B.N. Puri of the National Academy of Administration Mussoorie, was kind enough to accept the invitation extended by the Gauhati University for delivering the third series of Banikanta kakati Memorial Lectures and gave three thought-provoking discourses on the early history and Administration of Assam, in 1966.

These lectures are now gathered into this book entitled "Studies in Early History and Administration in Assam" on the expectation that the interpretation given here will go a long way to draw the attention of the students of the history of Assam and of India as well as the interesting treatment by this well known historian of India.

September 1, 1968

Chidananda Das
REGISTRAR,
Gauhati University

PREFACE

An invitation from the University of Gauhati to deliver the third Banikanta Kakati Memorial Lectures in 1966 was welcome to me. It afforded me an opportunity to go into the early history of Assam and consider it in a broader perspective. The role of this part in the history and civilisation of our country is unique and important. From the time of the Bhārata war to that of the Pratihāra rulers of Kanauj, the rulers of Assam were occasionally associated with the political affairs in northern India. The interplay of forces, no doubt, shaped its own destiny as well. A fuller view of the early history of Assam in the above context is given in the first two lectures. The third one deals with the administrative part.

In this study I have utilised the sources in original, as well as the publications dealing with the history of Assam, and have given full references in the footnotes.

I am thankful to Prof. S. N. Sharma, Prof. Maheswar Neog and Prof. H. K. Barpujari of the Gauhati University, who made feel at home during my stay at Gauhati and Messrs K. Mahanta, and B. P. Chaliha for looking after these lectures in the press.

June 5, 1968

Baij Nath Puri

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LECTURE I

THE ANCIENT PHASE

Persons having experience of the long labour and concentration in the domain of Indology well realize how difficult it is to set new theories or establish a new fact against the background of patient research work of generation of scholars. The extended area embraced by a set of extension lectures envisage, no doubt, a general survey. Good points, however, emerge with original thinking, and sometimes it is not unprofitable to review what has been studied in detail at different levels. Particular observations might tend to illuminate some of the obscure points in a study which, if undertaken in the context of contemporary happenings in other parts, is bound to be fruitful. In a broad survey of history of any particular region, its relations with the neighbouring states widens the scope of the historical imagination. That should rule out the possibility of studying its history in isolation. Our approach need not to be confined to the survey of political events arranged chronologically, with stress on the contributions of rulers belonging to different families. It has to view and assess the vicissitudes of political fortunes with the changing administrative pattern designed to cushion the shocks of external aggressions or internal disturbances. The history of Assam has to be reviewed from this point of view. As the eastern gateway of India, vulnerable to the forces from the north, the north-east and the south-east which posed problems political and administrative and to no less an extent their assimilation, Assam was never immune from external pressures. The expansion of the Aryan culture from Mithila might have added to the confrontation with the indigenous one. The result was the mingling of different streams—political and cultural—on the banks

of the Karatoyā and the Lauhitya, with the valleys and hilly regions vibrating with the echoes resounded by the movements of the external forces. The integration of these loose units into a strong political fabric was the achievement of Assamese rulers some of whom figure prominently in the political history of Northern India. Disintegrating forces occasionally erupt on the political horizon consequent to weak rulers and the greedy and expansionist attitude of the neighbours. Assam, however, did not lose its political entity. In unfolding the mystery of this process of integration, disintegration and attempts at reintegration, we have to take recourse to chronological pattern. The early history of Assam and its administrative pattern may, therefore, be undertaken with this approach, highlighting the contributions of such rulers as attempted at integrating or reintegrating without undermining the loss sustained as a result of disruptionist forces.

The land with its flourishing passage with a romantic touch enveloping it, Assam as a name does not figure in ancient Indian literature. The earlier inscriptions also do not mention it. The origin of this word remains a mystery. The Mohammadan historians and chroniclers write Asham, and in the early days of the British rule one s is elided. The term might be suggestive of the uneven—*asama*—nature of its contour, contrasted with the even one of Samatata. Since it does not occur prior to the Ahom occupation, it might have its reference to those rulers. According to traditional accounts of the Ahoms, the present name is derived from *asama* in the sense of unequalled or peerless. It is rather difficult to associate this Sanskrit derivative with the tribes conquered by the Ahom kings and conciliated by them. Prāgyotisha and Kāmarūpa are the two terms noticed in ancient literature and in inscriptions. The former meaning the city of eastern astrology², or one which was formerly a seat of jyotisha or astrology was well-known. The Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata ascribe this kingdom as outside the pale of Aryan culture. Its rulers Naraka and Muru are mentioned. It seems

o have bordered on the realm of the Kirātas and Chīnas. Bhagadatta, the king of Prāgjyotisha, is mentioned as an ally of the Kurus in the Bhārata war, and he participated with a contingent of the Chīnas. The Prāgjyotisha kingdom held north and east Bengal. The *Sāṅkhāyana Gṛhasāmgraha*, probably the earliest reference, mentions it as a sacred country associated with the solar cult, while according to the Rāmāyana its foundation was laid by an Aryan chief Amurtarāja. The traditional origin of the name Kāmarūpa is given in the *Gopatha Brahmana*, relating the history of Kāmadeva's revival after being burnt up by Siva. Its association with Kāmākhyā noted for the fall of peudendom from the body of Satī is also traceable in literature. Kāmarūpa figures as a frontier state in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta.

Prāgjyotisha, Kāmrūpa-Kāmākhyā are the three geographical names given to a kingdom which eventually came to be known in later times as Assam, with expanding and contracting boundaries according to the political situations in different periods. According to the *Yoginitantra*, the kingdom of Kāmarūpa comprised the whole of the Brahmaputra (Lauhitya) valley, together with Rangapur and Cooch-Behar⁶. The kindom included Manipur, Jaintia, Cachar, West Assam and parts of Mymensingh and Sylhet. The name Kāmarūpa does not appear in local grants where Prāgjyotisha alone figures with the local rulers called Prāgjyotishādhipati. Kāmarūpa is mentioned, besides the Allahabad Prasasati, in the Belva grant of Bhojavarman, the Silimpur grant of Prabhāsa, Deopārā inscription of Vijayasena, and Modhainagar grant of Lakshmanasena.⁷ In the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva⁸ who was the ruler of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa, there is reference to the Kāmarūpa *mandala* and Prāgjyotishā *bhukti*. These two administrative units figure in numerous records of different periods, sometimes with their conflicting jurisdictions. In the light of Yuan-Chwang's testimony to the Ka-mo-ho-po (Kāmarūpa)

with the extent of this kingdom about 10,000 li in circuit and the capital town about 30 li, it may be suggested that Kāmarūpa was the real kingdom and Prāgjyotishapur, identified by Gait with Gauhati, its capital. In Hemchandra's *Abhidhānachintāmani*, there is a reference to Prāgjyotishah—Kāmarūpah, but in the *Raghuvansa* they are described as two different nations. There is, however, little evidence to suggest that the two represented separate kingdoms with undefined boundaries.

The extent of the kingdom of Pārgjyotisha-Kāmarūpa seems to have varied considerably. The reference to the Chīnas and Kirātas forming part of the military contingent supplied by Bhagadatta has led some scholars to assume that it extended to Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and the frontiers of China. In historical times during the age of Magadhan domination, it might have formed part of the Mauryan empire or at least have been under its tutelage. It is rather strange that no Asokan record is found in Assam. About the first century A. D. this kingdom is supposed to have extended upto the gulf of the Meghana, probably upto Noakhali and Chittagong districts.¹³ The limits were pushed back to the east of Lauhitya in the fourth century A. D., with Kāmarūpa as a frontier state like Samatata and Davaka, acknowledging the suzerainty of the Gupta monarch. With the decline of the Guptas, the kingdom again expanded to include Puṇḍravardhana in northern Bengal, and portions of south-east Bengal including Samatata, Tripura, Noakhali and Sylhet.¹⁴ The *Śaktisamgama* and the *Sammohatantra*, both based on the Chandragarbhasūtra of Narendrayasa (A. D. 566) extend the boundary of Kāmarūpa from Katesvara to Svetagiri and from Tripura to Nilaparvata, with Ganesagiri lying in the heart of this kingdom.¹⁵ Ywan-Chwang's reference to the extent of this kingdom is already noticed earlier. The find of Bhāskarvarman's seal in Nālandā, the evidence from the Nidhānpur grant, and the Pasupati record of Jayadēva III coupled with the

testimony of the Chinese pilgrim and his biographer expand the territorial limits of the Kāmarūpa kingdom under this Varman ruler. It seems to have included Karnasuvarna, Puṇḍravardhana and probably the eastern part of Nālandā. Harshadeva in the eighth century A. D. probably held the largest empire than any previous ruler, possessing Gauḍa, Magadha, Kalinga and Kosala. This extension might have been of a shorter duration, for the Assam rulers received a set back. Vanamāla's kingdom included Puṇḍravardhana, and some portions of south-east Bengal. Under the Pāla rulers of Kāmarūpa, its limits appear to be the same as under Bhūti-varman and Vanamāla. The decline seems to have set in towards the end of the reign of Jayapāla, though Vaidyadeva of the Kamauli grant probably revived its past glory, followed to a certain extent by Vallabhadeva, until the Sena and Muslim invasions of this kingdom.

Having, I hope with these remarks, noted the varying boundaries of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa-Pragjyotisha in the ancient period roughly upto the twelfth century A. D., we might notice the movements of the different tribes that settled here, before passing on to the political and administrative side of the ancient picture of Assam. There is a maze of conflicting theories regarding the character of the people of Assam with the fusion of different racial elements. This might have occurred at an early period, as is evident from the common artistic motifs noticed on some of the ancient megaliths with elaborate rituals connected with them, which may have been worked out differently by different tribes, though the basis was the same. The Mon-Khmers, the Tibeto-Burmans and even the Alpine-Aryans are supposed to have contributed to the art of megalithic builders. Assam is presumed to be a museum of races, consequent to its location on one of the great migration routes of mankind. The various racial elements passing through it between India and South-east Asia, in reverse direction, left their traces in the hills and valleys of Assam. With access

to Tibet, Nepal and Bhūtan in the north, the valleys of the Ganges and its tributaries in the west, through the delta of the Brahmaputra and the Bay of Bengal opening naval communication in the south, and finally the Assam-Burma routes—one in the north-east over the Patkai passes leading from the Lido-Margherita road to China through the Hokawang valley in Burma, and the other through Manipur and Cachar in the south-east-Assam was open to pressure from all directions. The Assam-Burma route was fully utilised for trade purposes as well, and according to Chang-Kien, there was a regular land route between Assam and China through upper Bruma and Yunnan.¹⁸ Kia-tan has given a detailed account of it. Many routes were opened in subsequent periods, through which the people from south-east Asia and China made their way into Assam. I propose confining myself only to the earlier phase with particular reference to the movements from the Gangetic side. In other words, I should like to trace the course of Aryanisation of North-eastern India particularly Assam. Dravidian elements are also traced and some writers like Vasu, ascribe¹⁹ Dravidian origin to the families of Naraka and Bāna, which is equally refuted by other scholars. Certain elements in Khasi culture connect these people with the Sawaras of Madras and the Nicobarese people; while the Koch-Kacharis are connected with the Sumerians and the Dravidians. The Dravidian element in Assam's population appears to be comparatively insignificant on the basis of anthropometry.

Perusing ancient Indian literature for tracing the movement, we find a slow movement of Aryan culture in Assam, which took a steady rise during the early centuries of the Christian era and reached its culmination in the time of Bhāskarvarman. Vedic literature speaks of Eastern India as the land of the Vṛatyas-(Anupdesa), probably having affinity with the Magins of Iran. Spooner referred to Iranian Magian settlements in Eastern India, especially in Videha, Magadha and Prāgjyotisha. The time and manner

of the Aryans entry into Assam from the west is uncertain. In the Vedic literature eastern India is described as a mleccha country; but we do find evidence of a movement of Vedic people in the easterly direction. The very interesting legend in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, pointed out by Weber, refers to Māthava, the Videha king, carrying Agni Vaishanara in his mouth, with the Rishi Gotama Rāhigaṇa as his priest. Māthava is said to have succeeded in Aryanising all the lands from the Sarasvatī up to the Sadānīra. According to Śāyaṇa, Sadānīra was another name for Karatoyā, the modern Kurattas. It is suggested by Dikshitar²² that the Aryanisation of Eastern India had begun in the age of the Rigveda with the credit for this achievement going to Māthava of the Videha country and to his celebrated purohita Gotama. Between the composition of the Rigveda Samhita and of the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa there was a slow infiltration of the Aryan ideas and ideals beyond the river Sadanira. By the time of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, the movement towards the east gained further impetus. (With its richness in wood and some plants in the hilly tracts of Kāmarūpa, Assam attracted members of the Brāhmaṇa community in large numbers, and it came to be known as the land of sacrifices²³.) The unholy ground became the *Pūya bhumi* or the holy land after the defeat of Naraka at the hands of Krishṇa. Whatever might be the origin of Naraka and the truth in the Krishṇa legend, the Aryanisation of Assam appears to have been properly set during the early centuries of the Christian era.

The extent to which Aryan institutions and ideals—political and cultural—were assimilated and adopted in Assam may be evident from the patronage extended by the rulers of different families to Brāhmaṇas in Assam, through gifts and grants. Their imbibing Hindu ideals of Kingship was manifest in their administrative pattern, and the role they played in the history of Aryāvarta as active participants in political struggles for supremacy in different periods. Naraka

who is considered to be the earliest ruler from whom several dynasties trace their origin, was the son of Vishṇu, according to the Nowgong grant, who deprived Indra of his glory, and stole away Aditya's jewels, and having conquered Prāgjyotisha took up his residence there. Along with his two sons Bhagadatta and Vajradatta, this earliest Assamese ruler according to traditional accounts, is mentioned in several records of the ruling dynasties of Assam. The Kālikā Purāna furnishing the genealogy of the family refers to his appointing Hayagrīva as commander-in-chief and Mudu for defending Prāgjyotisha. The latter along with Naraka was killed by Krishṇa, according to the Vishṇu Purāna. Naraka had married Maya, the daughter of the Vidarbha king. According to the Kālikā-Purāna, once again, Naraka was brought up in Videha and was regarded as a Kshatriya, with Gautama, the priest of Janaka performing his Kesavapana ceremony. We are not taking into consideration the association of Naraka with Bāna, father of Ushā, the heroine of the famous romance with Aniruddha, grandson of Krishṇa. In the Śāntiparvan of the Māhābhārata Bāna's capital is located as contiguous with Prāgjyotisha⁵. Bhagadatta, son of Naraka, is definitely an Aryanised name and his history is proved by a number of inscriptions, while the Mahābhārata notices him as an ally of the Kauravas. The Udyogaparvan, mentions Chīnas and the Kiratas forming part of the military contingent supplied by him to his ally. The latter phase of Assam's history based on traditional accounts and the Pauranic and Epic sources, is conflicting, till we come to the time of Pushyavarman⁶.

From the beginning of the fourth to the middle of the seventh century A. D. Kāmarūpa's history is associated with the dynasty of Pushyavarman, the founder of this family, ending with Bhāskarvaman. This is the period of Assam figuring in the political affairs of Northern India. It is equally important for the rise and growth of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa at one

time covering Eastern India, with Assam, Bengal and even parts of Bihar forming part of it. The dusk of decline soon sets in after the death of the greatest ruler of this dynasty, Bhaskarvarman, with the different political elements raising their heads and setting up their independent kingdoms. The origin of this Pushyamitra is wrapped in mystery. In inscriptions he traces his descent from the Bhauma dynasty of Naraka-Bhagadatta. The assumption of the title of Mahārājādhirāja by him and his successors, and the performance of horse sacrifice, twice by Mahendrarvarman and once by Bhūtiarvarman, suggest that he was wedded to the Hindu ideals of kingship and paramountcy. It is proposed by some scholars that he was a central Indian chief who helped Samudra Gupta in his conquest of Eastern India, expelled the reigning ruler of Kāmarūpa, and then established himself on the throne²⁷. This may not be acceptable but the contemporaneity of this Kāmarūpa-Prāggyotisha ruler with the Gupta emperor Samudra Gupta may be agreed to. Curiously enough his son is named Samudrarvarman who married Dattavati. Bhattasali drew a comparative table of chronology bringing out the contemporaneity of the Varman rulers with the Gupta ones. He has also raised certain issues which are worth perusal. The Pushyavarman (Pushyavarmas) of the inscriptions are supposed to represent the Pushyamitras of the Bhitari Pillar inscription of Skandagupta who made the prosperity of the Gupta empire totter. It is proposed by him²⁹ that the rising Varmans of Prāggyotisha, headed by Mahendrarvarman in the east and the Hūṇas from the north-west contributed towards the decadence of the Gupta empire. He has also traced the reference to the Varman rulers in the Purāṇas which speak of the thirteen kings of the Pushyamitra and the Patumitra. He thought that the term Pushyamitra upon which there appears to be a pun (slesha) suggests the descendants of Pushyavarman of Assam who had so long been friends of the Guptas, but had changed into foes by their desire (vijigisha) of conquest, and had invaded the Gupta

empire from the east and made it totter. Two sacrifices by Mahendravarman alone, another by his grandson Bhūtiavarman when the Gupta empire was rushing towards its downfall, again two by Sthitavarman grandson of Bhūtiavarman, indicate the continued prosperity of the Varmans of Prāggyotisha during the period of the disruption of the political power in Bengal and Bihar.

Bhattacharya seems to have picked up only the reference to the trouble created by the Pushyamitras. He has ignored the other reference to their defeat with all the force which the Guptas could muster (*samuditabala kośām pushyamitrāms jivā*). The identification is far from certain. The only established fact is the reference to the kingdoms of Kāmarūpa and Davāka, independent of each other, but owing allegiance to the Gupta monarch Samudrā Gupta through tributes, acting according to orders, bowing down and in attendance (*sarva-karadana, ājñākarāṇa - pranāma - āgaman*). The earlier phase therefore represents Assam splitting up into at least two kingdoms with Samatāta, including Cachar, Sylhet, Tippera and Noakhali, as another kingdom falling in the same category. To what extent the successive rulers of Assam managed to integrate these into a strong power which they vindicated through the performance of horse sacrifice is latter history which we may note. Pushyavarman, the founder, no doubt, lifted Assam (Kāmarūpa) out of obscurity and assumed the title of Mahārāja-dhīrāja, symbolising his independent status, but it is difficult to visualise the extent of his empire, or the attempt, if any, made by him to integrate Davāka with Kāmarūpa making it a unified kingdom.

Samudravarman, the son and successor of Pushyavarman, seems to have consolidated the political power in his peaceful reign, as is evident from the reference to the absence of *matsya-nyāya* in his kingdom.³² Balavarman, his son, had a short reign, although he

had conquered the mighty army of his enemies who are not mentioned. Kalyanavarman, his son, according to the Doobi grant³³ did noble deeds and killed the mighty array of his enemies. It is presumed that he conquered Davaka, incorporating it within the kingdom of Kāmarūpa and sent a diplomatic mission to China.³⁴ Nothing eventful is noticed about Ganapativarman, but Mahendravarman whose reign is placed between 450-485 A. D., is credited with certain conquests and the performance of two horse sacrifices³⁵. It is proposed that he could expand his kingdom at the expense of the Guptas towards the end of the reign of Skandagupta. The Kāmarūpa ruler could not make much headway in north Bengal. Budhagupta's occupation of Pundravardhans is evinced from his Damodarpur record ; but probably it extended to South-Bengal where the Gupta rule is noticed in the time of Vainyagupta, as is clear from the Gunai-ghar grant³⁶ (G. E. 185 = AD 507).

Mahendravarman's hold over portions of Bengal was only the beginning of the Varman scheme of conquest resulting in the expansion of the Kāmarūpa kingdom. Bhūtiavarman, the grandson of Mahendravarman, whose Bādgaṅgā record³⁷ dated in the Gupta year 234 = AD 553 is a chronological milestone in the history of Kāmarūpa, heralds the period of digvijaya. Both the Nidhanpur and Doobi grants describe his achievements. The latter records his victory over an enemy power by dint of his powerful units. The Mandasor inscription³⁸, dated in the Malva year 589 = AD 532-33, describes the extension of the territory of king Yasodharman, to whom homage was done by the Hūṇa ruler Mihirakula, as far as Lauhitya (Brahmaputra). Evidently, this must have involved clash with the ruler of Kāmarūpa. In the absence of any other reference to this Malava ruler, and probably taking into consideration the poetic exaggeration involved in such boasts, the conquest of Assam is not established. According to the Nidhanpur grant, Bhūtiavarman conquered territories in Pundravardhana to the west

of Trisrotā between AD 545-50. The land donated by Bhūti-varman was in Mayūrasalmala *grahāra* in Chandrapurī Vishaya, bounded by the river Kausikā in the east and another stream the Ganginikā in the west. The lands granted in the Chandrapurī are definitely localised as lying to the west of the Trisrotā (Teesta). Scholars have been in disputation³⁹ regarding the identification and location of the land granted by Bhūti-varman. The Nidhanpur grant of Bhaskarvarman, formed in Pañchakhaṇḍa in Sylhet has raised controversy regarding its location. The choice lies between Pañchakhaṇḍa in Sylhet, identifying Kausika with the river Kusiara, and Purnea in Bihar, or in the Puṇḍravardhana *bhukti* itself comprising a great area or at least the whole of north Bengal, in the region of modern Dinajpur, on the border of Bengal and Bihar. Bhūti-varman's conquest seems to have followed the exploits of Yaśodharman. In view of the hold of the Guptas over north Bengal as late as A.D 543—44, it is improbable that the Kāmarūpa ruler conquered it.

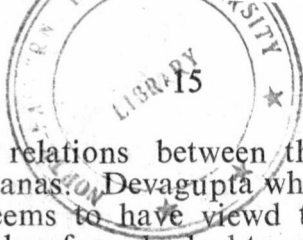
The relations between Bhūti-varman, the later Gupta rulers Jivitagupta and Kumāragupta III and the other state of Davāka has also been a matter of disputation. Did this Kāmarūpa ruler perform horse sacrifice after throwing off the Gupta supremacy, as presumed by Sircar,⁴⁰ or was it the welding together of Kāmarūpa and Davāka into one kingdom with the overlordship of the former that accounted for the performance of the horse-sacrifice as proposed by Bhattasali?⁴¹ The latter also points out that Samatāṭa, including the entire regions enclosed within the lower part of the old Brahmaputra and the hills of Assam and Tripura (i.e., the eastern part of present Mymensingh, an eastern strip of Dacca, and the entire district of Noakhali, Tripura, Sylhet and Cachar) passed on to Bhūti-varman soon after A.D. 508. This might be an exaggeration since there were several independent rulers in southern Bengal during the sixth century A. D.⁴² like Dharmaditya of the Faridpur grant, Gopachandra

of the same, Vijaysena of the Mallasarul grant and Samācharadeva. In view of the reference to the circle of feudatories in the Nidhanpur grant, with his captivating personality, Bhūti-varman seems to have brought about the integration of the kingdom of Assam. Comprising besides Kāmarūpa, Davaka (Nowgong) Samatata, Tripura, Sylhet and Cachar, and portions of north Bengal. All this must have been achieved when the Gupta power was waning and the local rulers in south and east Bengal were not strong enough to check his growing power or even present a united front. That accounts for the horse sacrifice performed by this Kāmarūpa monarch.

Four rulers intercede between Bhūti-varman and Bhāskarvarman roughly between A.D. 555 and 595. This period was of fluctuating fortunes in Assam's history. Chandramukhavarman is credited in the Doobi grant with the extension of the kingdom upto the sea shore. This might imply his clash with Kumārgupta III or his son, or Īśānavarman Maukhari.⁴³ The association of his son in his administration and his abdication in latter's favour reduce his period of rule. Sthitavarman, for the first time consecrated according to the Vedic rites, had a number of feudatories, and he also performed two horse sacrifices. The occasions might have been the extension of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa at the expense of the later Guptas. His son Susthitavarman, called Suṣṭhira in the Nālandā clay seal of Bhāskara and Mrigāṅka in the Harshacharita had to face the brunt of Mahāsenagupta's invasion. According to the Apsad inscription of Ādityasena⁴⁴, Mahāsenagupta claimed victory over the illustrious Susthitavarman, and his fame was constantly sung on the bank of Lauhitya. Some scholars ignore the reference to Lauhitya and consider him to be a Maukhari ruler⁴⁵. This defeat might have resented in the loss of Pundravardhana which was retaken by Bhāskarvarman. It is difficult to fix the date of Mahāsenā's invasion which might be settled in the context of the Chālukya ruler Kīrtivarman's

conquest of Aṅga, Vaṅga, Kalinga and Magadha⁴⁶. It is quite likely that the latter event might have an empty boast or a poetic exaggeration. But the loss of territory which included the land donated by Mahābhūti-varman appears to be a fact since the situation was retrieved by Bhāskaravarman. Before that there appears to have been another invasion by Mahāsenagupta when Supratishṭhitavarman was on the throne with indecisive results. That only made the determination of the Assamese rulers firm to meet external aggression.

With Bhāskaravarman begins a new era in Assam's political and administrative history. The Doobi grant, Nidhanpur grant, the three Nālandā clay seals of this ruler, besides reference to him in the Harshacharita of Bāna, and in the accounts of the Chinese pilgrim Yuan-Chwang furnish source material for the life and achievements of this young contemporary of Harsha. Both Harsha and Bhāskarvarman appear to be affected by the same set of adversities and they had the same mission in life. Afflicted by the premature death of his elder brother in adverse circumstances, Bhāskarvarman immediately faced the task. He had clash with the king of Gauḍa who might have been Saśāṅka or his immediate successor⁴⁷, or even Mahāsenagupta. The complex political situation with changing alliances due to matrimonial relations call for the review of the then political set up. Malwa, Thānesvara; Kanauj, Magadha, Gauḍa and Assam were mainly concerned in these alliances. Mahāsenagupta of Malwa, who according to the Apsad inscription of his grandson Ādityasena is credited with his conquest upto the Lauhitya had matrimonial alliance with the Thānesvara family—his sister Mahāsenaguptā was married to Ādityavarman⁴⁸, father of Prabhākarvardhan. Kumaragupta and Mādhaba Gupta, his two sons, were in the Thānesvara court attending on Rājyavardhana and Rājyasrī possibly suggesting some sort of political alliance. The marriage of Rājyasrī with Grahavarman Maukhari probabyl



alienated the relations between the Mālwa Guptas and the Vardhanas. Devagupta who might have been a collateral seems to have viewed the alliance with distrust. He, therefore, looked to some other quarter for political alliance. to stem the power of the Maukharis which seems to have extended to some parts of Magadha. Śaśāṅka of Gauḍa was the only choice, the relations between Mālwa and Assam were strained. The wounds received by Kāmarūpa from Mahāsena's inroads had not healed up. It is equally true that Kāmarūpa's interests also clashed with those of Gauḍa. While Devagupta and Śaśāṅka joined hands in the extinction of Grahavarman Maukhari as well as of Rājyavardhana, their aim was complete domination of the whole of the Āryavarta region, isolating Kāmarūpa for the time being. Bhāskarvarman seems to have sensed this danger; anxious for a powerful ally, he found him in Harsha and the two joined hands in breaking the Mālwa-Gauḍa alliance consolidating their hold over Northern India, and finally coming to terms they seem to have demarcated the extent of each other's political influence. That accounts for Bhāskaravarman's seal in Nālandā and the confirmation of the grant of his great great grand father Mahābhūti-varman issued from his Skandhāvāra. A review of the relations between Harsha and Bhāskaravarman alias Kumāra, particularly with reference to Śaśāṅka may be made here.

In the light of the Nidhanpur grant issued from the Skandhāvāra of Karṇasuvarṇa identified with Rangamali, 12 miles south of Murshidābad in central Bengal, it is clear that Bhāskaravarman had seized those parts of Gauḍa which belonged to Saśāṅka. The *Harshacharita* is completely silent about the conquests of Harsha after the recovery of Rājyasrī. The question naturally arises: was the conquest of Gauḍa the unilateral achievement of Bhāskaravarman, or was it the outcome of a joint effort? If the latter was the case, did Bhāskara get Karṇasuvarṇa from Harsha for the military services rendered by him as

an ally, or were the areas of political domination and influence demarcated under some agreement ? When and how could Bhāskaravarman retrieve the fortunes of his kingdom which were shattered in the time of Suśhthitavarman ? These are some of the problems that have to be considered. The position and fate of Śasāṅka have also to be noticed. Even after the ghastly crime committed by him, did Harsha forgive him, and appointed him as a mahasamanta to rule over Bihar and Bengal, as is evident from the Rohtasgarh seal ? Was the hold of the Varmans over parts of Gauḍa only temporary or was it a permanent one ? How do we account for the find of Bhāskaravarman's seal at Nalanda ? When and how his influence or domination extend as far as that place, and if so, at whose expense ? These are some of the problems which need consideration.

The relations between Harshavardhana and Bhāskaravarman were much more than that of allies. The interview of Hamsavega with the Kanauj ruler might not be taken as the beginning of their relations. It was actually the fulfilment of a long desire on the part of both. Following the maṇḍala theory of one's enemy's enemy as one's best friend, both Kāmarūpa and Sthānaeśvara—Kanauj rulers had Śasāṅka as the common enemy. While the importance of this alliance is admitted, the nature of the relations between Harsha and Kumāra or Bhāskaravarman is a matter of dispute. The exigency of the situation no doubt demanded Harsha's aid for checking the evil designs of the Gauḍa ruler, while Harsha too was anxious for an ally to meet the league of the Guptas and the Gaudas. Mutual interests, therefore, weighed in the bonds of unity established between Harsha and the ruler of Kāmarūpa, who is called *Paroksha-suhrit*—an ally without an appointment in the *Harsha charita*.

The campaign against Śasāṅka is not recorded in the *Harshacharita* which ends with the recovery of Rājyasrī. According to Yuan-Chwang, Harsha pro-

ceeding eastwards waged incessant warfare until in six years he fought the 'five Indias' or brought them under his allegiance. He was soon able to avenge the injuries received by his brother and make himself master of India.⁵⁰ Śīlāditya Mahārāja, according to the Chinese pilgrim, at that time had conquered the nations from east to west and carried his arms to remote districts. Neither Bāna nor Yuan-Chwang furnish details regarding Harsha's campaign in the east. There are some vague references, as for instances, riders rehearsing the approach of the Gauda war⁵¹ or the reference to the rising of the moon of Harsha's glory. The *Mañiusrimulakaipa*⁵² however, refers to Harsha's march to Puṇḍra in pursuit of Śasānka (Soma) and the latter's confinement within his territorial limits after his defeat. It appears from this account that Śasānka the formidable enemy, for whose blood Harsha was naturally thirsty, should go unscathed after a two pronged attack from the west as well as from the north of his kingdom. Two facts are very clear from epigraphic records : the conquest of Karṇasuvarṇa, which was included in the kingdom of Kāmarūpa and the existence of Śasānka definitely till A.D. 619 as is evident from the Ganjam plates. The question naturally arises, did the joint campaign against the Gauda ruler frizzle out, and secondly when was the Karṇasuvarṇa part of the Gauda kingdom annexed by the Kāmarūpa ruler ? Further, was the success the achievement of the joint enterprise or that of the unilateral effort made by the Kāmarūpa ruler ? Unfortunately, we have no date for the Nidhānpur record but we do find the reference to the whole ring of Bhāskarvarman's feudatories.⁵³ This could not be an empty boast, for the Chinese pilgrim is equally silent about the names of the rulers of the different parts of Bengal. It may, therefore, be presumed that, besides Karṇasuvarṇa in the Murshidabad district, Kāmarūpa's suzerainty extended over other parts also which might not have been annexed to the kingdom of Kāmarūpa,⁵⁴ but were not enjoying an independent status. Such a position could only be visualised when

Śaśaṅka was no more and Harsha was interested in acts of piety and benevolence with his quinquennial assemblies at Prayāga. The military side in his career had given way to his religious disposition. It is equally likely that the expansion of Kāmarūpa's kingdom towards the south and the west happened after the trial of strength between Harsha and Pulakesin II. The extent of Harsha's empire seems to have left out Bengal and parts of Bihar. That area was free for Bhāskaravarman's forage. Some scholars are of the opinion⁵⁵ that some misunderstanding had crept in between Harsha and Bhāskaravarman, probably because of the latter's attachment to the Chinese pilgrim. There does not appear to be any basis for that. It appears that the joint alliance between Harsha and Bhāskara succeeded only in curbing the expansionist zeal of the common adversary who could not be exterminated. The latter seems to have diverted his attention towards Orissa, and it seems that Harsha eventually followed him that side as well. Bhāskaravarman occupied Guāḍa only after Śaśaṅka's death and not before as suggested by some scholars.⁵⁹ The Kāmarūpa ruler was not content with that alone. According to the account of the Chinese pilgrim his territory in the south extended up to the sea.⁵⁷ While to the west of Gauda it included portions of Bihar. That accounts for the three Nālandā seals of this ruler. These could not have been issued in the capacity of a pilgrim in a friend's territory but very probably in one's domain which appears to have included even parts of northern Bihar. His participation on behalf of the pilgrim along with the forces sent from Nepal and Tibet against the Tirhut chief Arjuna was quite natural. He could hardly tolerate Arjuna's expanding power. It does not appear cogent that Bhāskarā received the territory of Kārṇasuvārṇa after śaśaṅka's death, or he occupied it after Harsha's death, or was rewarded with it because of the help he rendered to the Chinese mission. It has been proposed earlier that Śaśaṅka even though he might have continued till A.D. 625 was more interested in Orissa and parts of Gauda where

he was more or less isolated. The Chinese Mission came at a time when Harsha was dead and the power was usurped by the local chief, Arjuna. Even with the assistance from Nepal and Tibet a full scale offensive against a local chief is ruled out. Bhāskarvarman seems to have aided out of humanitarian and political considerations. When the escort of Wang-heuen-tse was killed by Arjuna who took advantage of political confusion, Bhāskarvarman helped the other two powers in avenging the massacre for several reasons—respect for the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang, his own reputation and esteem in the eastern world, and certainly for political consideration, lest the growing power of this local usurper be a source of menace to his own territory which definitely abutted on Tirhut.

Bhāskarvarman's empire included not only parts of south-west and northern Bengal but even portions of Bihar and his authority extended over other states mentioned by Yuan-Chwang but not the rulers. That explains the reference to the ring of feudatories in the Nidhanpur record. It might be difficult to fix the time when Bhāskara extended his conquest as far as Nālandā, but it is admitted that the find of the seals was not an accidental phenomenon. The vastness of the Kāmarūpa kingdom from Karatoya to Sadiya given in the Yogini tantra might contain some truth.⁵⁹

It may be proposed that Bhāskarvarman, after the death of Harsha, wielded considerable political influence not as a localised ruler, but one of eastern India with a hand in the political affairs of Northern India. It is suggested that after Yuan-Chwang's return to his homeland, envoys were exchanged between China and Kāmarūpa representing India. The two envoys Li-Yi-Piao and Wang-Hiuwan-tse visited India (643-46) and cultural contact was established between the two countries.

The first phase of the early history of Assam seems to have ended with this great ruler who brought about the expansion of his kingdom through his own power. It is true that his alliance with Harsha motivated by political considerations curbed the power of the common adversary Śaśaṅka, but it is unlikely that the Kāmārūpa ruler played only a second fiddle. While reference to Harsha's conquest of eastern India, especially Gauḍa, in a decisive manner is wanting, we have evidence of this Kamarūpa ruler, occupying not only Karnasuvarṇa but also other parts in the north abutting on Tirhut in Bihar and portions of Bihar as well. Personally a Śaivite, this enlightened ruler breathed an air of toleration and broad-mindedness. He was attached to the Buddhist pilgrim whose friendship he valued much more than anything else. He gave stability to his kingdom and accorded prestige and honour to his family, standing not as a local and isolated ruler but one who made contributions to the history of Northern India. His relations with the neighbouring states of Tibet and Nepal, and finally with China as told by the Chinese pilgrim Yuan-Chwang, bring Assam out of political oblivion. Unfortunately we have no evidence concerning Assam's political or cultural contacts with Burma and countries in the Mekong Delta. The material progress attained by Kāmārūpa can well be guessed from the lists of presents sent by this ruler to Harsha. The death of Bhāskarvarman, like that of Harsha, ushered in a period of political obscurity in the history of Assam. Sālastambha of the next line, probably representing a collateral branch of the Varmans laid the seeds of another dynasty on the ruins of the preceding one.

FOOT-NOTES

1. According to Banikanta Kakati, *Asama*—peerless— may be the Sanskritised form of some earlier formation like *Acham*, meaning undefeated. The word was given to Shans first and was later applied to the country (*Assamese, Its Formation and Development*, pp 2-3). Its association with the Vajrayana cult, with the Bodhisattvas called *asama* the *Sadhanamala* could also account for the name of this part of the country as *Asama* (Bhattacharya III. 4. 21). It is also suggested that Siam is called *Ashan* or the land of the monks, which is corrupted to Shan, and with the coming of the Shans, this region came to be known as *Ashan* or *Asham* (Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India* II. 59; Barua. *JARS*. II. 102). It is also proposed that the coming of the Tibeto-Burmans who must have entered long before the Shans or the Ahoms, was responsible for this nomenclature derived from the earlier Bodo form *Ha-com* (Quoted by P. C. Chaudhury *The History of the Civilisation of the people of Assam*—henceforth Chaudhury *History* P. 28). In the first of these series of lectures S.K. Chatterji suggested different interpretations for the origin of the words *Ahom* and *Assam* (*The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India*. 1955)
2. It is equally difficult to trace the origin of the word *Pragjyotisha* standing both for the city and the country. Its ethnological association with the Chao Theius of China, who came to be known as *Zuthis*, occupying three centres, with the one called *Pragzuthis*, subsequently changed into *Pragjyotisha* is doubtful (See R.M. Nath -*The Background of Assamese Culture* pp 4-5). The word is connected with the topography of land, deriving its nomenclature from the Austric phrase *Pagar-juh* (jotic c-ch) meaning the land of extensive hills (Kakati-*The Mother-Goddess Kamakhya* -quoted by Chaudhury-op. cit). For references to *Pragjyotisha*, See. B. C. Law *Historical Geography of Ancient India* pp 252 ff. JUPHS. XVIII. p 43ff). See also Bhandarkar's *List of Inscriptions of Northern India* From about 200 A. D.—henceforth *List*, nos 1636&n, 1667, 1677, 1679, 1680, 1681, 2061, 2062, 2063, and for *Kamarupa* see-ibid nos 1109, 1538, 1639n, 1666, 1683, 1690, 1774, 1727. The Kamauli Grant of Vaidyadeva refers to the *mandala* of *Kamarupa* and the *vishaya* of *Pragjyotisha*, implying that the latter was the larger division including *Kamarupa* (Law. op. cit. p 253). We propose considering this fact in the third lecture. Regarding the extent of *Pragjyotisha*, see D. C. Sircar's paper published in the *Journal of Indian History* XLI 363 ff. He questions Pargiter's contention that the early kingdom of *Pragjyotisha* comprised the major part of modern Assam together with *Jalpaiguri*, *Coch-Bihar*, *Rangpur*, *Bogra*, *Maymensingh*, *Dacca*, and *Tippera* districts, and parts of *Pabna* in *Bengal* and probably also the eastern areas of *Nepal* (Pargiter *JASB*. 1897p 106).
3. *Ram* IV. 42, 30-31; *Mah.* II. 26. 9; 33, 9-10-30 26-27; *The Mahabharata* represents *Bhagadatta* as *purvasagaravasin*—dwelling in the eastern sea, while the *Ramayana* states that *Pragjyotishpura*, the city of *Bhagadatta's* father *Naraka* was situated on the *Varaha* mountain in the sea. *Bhagadatta* is also represented as the leader of the *Chinas*, *Kiratas*, *Mlechhas* and *Sagaravanupavasins*.
4. II. 38.
5. *Adikāṇḍa*. xxxv.
6. Quoted in *Imperial Gazetteer*. XIV. p 331 also by Sircar and Law—op. cit.

7. See Bhandarkar's List for references . No 1774 (Belva), 1727 (Sibpur) 1683 (Deopara), 1690 (Madhainagar).
8. EI. II. p 348.
9. See Watter's Yuan-Chwang II pp 185ff.
10. *Abhidhana Chintamani* IV. 22.
11. IV. 83-84. According to the *Raghuvamsa*, the Pragjyotisha country lay to the north of the Brahmaputra river. It seems that the kingdom included not only the Kamarupa country but also a considerable portion of north Bengal and perhaps of north Bihar (Law JUPHS. XV. p 44)
12. See Bhattacharya-*Kamarupasanavali*-henceforth K. S. - Introduction p. 2fn., also quoted by Choudhury. op. cit. Some scholars presume that the other Pragjyotisha was on the bank of the river Vetravat or Betwa, which Barua locates in Eastern Punjab (Law. IC. III. 731 ff Barua. IHQ XXIII. pp 200 ff)
13. Bhattasali. IHQ. XXII. pp 245 ff
14. Bhattasali. IHQ XXI. pp 23-24. The Samatata kingdom mentioned in the Allahabad Pillar inscription consisted of the entire region enclosed within the lower part of the old Lauhitya and the hills of Assam and Tippera, Sylhet, and Cachar. The Varmans were able not only to keep hold over Samatata for four generations from Mahabhutivarman to Bhaskaravarman, but the latter's empire included the whole of eastern India.
15. See D. C. Sircar-*An Account of Fifty-six Countries in and around the borders of India*. IC. VIII. pp 33 ff. According to Yuan-Chwang, Kamarupa lay to the east of the Karatoya, while the *Yoginitantra* includes the country of the Brahmaputra together with Rangpur and Coch Bihar in it.
16. JASB. IX (ii) p 766.
17. The treatment of the Megaliths in a chronological way is difficult and is not attempted so far. The Megalithic culture of Assam not only belongs to a period of undisputed history, but also to a living present, particularly among the Khasis and some Nagas. (Haimendorf. *Naked Nagas* pp 21 ff; Hutton : *Man in India* VIII pp228 ff).
18. Bagchi. *India and China* pp 7 ff. According to Pelliot, from 200 B. C. there was a regular route by land to China through Assam, Upper Burma and Yunan. (BEFEO. III. pp 131ff)
19. *Social History of Kamarupa* (S. H. K) I pp 121ff
20. Choudhury. op cit. p 100.
21. Spooner. JRAS, 1915 (ii) pp 433-36. A few cultural parallels are cited, as for example, the disposal of the dead in the Assam valley by exposure in the past might be associated with the Magian-Iranian practice and its introduction by the Sepines; so also in the practice of lighting a fire by the side of the dead before and after cremation, and the uncleanness of women observed during their monthly periods. (quoted by Choudhury op. cit p. 106).
22. Ref *The Aryanisation of India* (Assam) by V. R. Ramchandra Dikshitar IHQ XXI. pp 29 ff. The gradual advance of the Aryans into eastern

India is described in Vedic and Classical Sanskrit works. The *Satapatha Brahmana* records the progress of the Aryans up to the Sadanira, identified with Karatoya (Sat. Brah. I, IV, I 14-15; S. B. E. XII, xli pp 104ff; Weber. *Indische Studien* I, p. 170ff) The *Aitareya* traces its extension up to Kamarupa, and the *Gopatha Brahmana* records a tradition of the origin of the name of this country (Bloomfield. JAOS XIX, ppl-11) The *Sankhayana Grihasutra* mentions Pragjyotisha as the land of sunrise (II, 38), Kautilya refers to many places of Kamarupa, such as Suvarnakundya, and Paralahitya, as well as the economic products of Kamarupa (Book II xi). Trans PP 82 ff.

23. *Prachyam vai disi devah Somam rajanam-akrinam, tasmāt prachyam disi kriyate A. B. I. 3. 7.*
24. Ref. Doobi Grant of Bhaskarvarman. JARS. XI, PP33ff; IHQ XXVI pp 241 ff; Nidhanpur Grant of the same ruler EI XII pp65ff, XIX pp118ff, 245-50 (contd)The Tezpur Grant of Vanapala JASB IX (ii) pp 766ff; K.S. pp 54 ff Nowgong grant of Balavarman III. JASB. LXVI (ii) pp 285-97; K. S. 54-70; Brargaon Grant of Ratnapala K. S. pp 88 ff. It would appear that all the rulers of the historical times trace their descent from the same dynasty. According to the Kalika Purana, Naraka brought up in Videha, was regarded as a Kshatriya, and Gautama the priest of Janaka performed his *kesavapana* ceremony. A Dravidian and Phoenecian origin is ascribed to Naraka by certain writers (Vasu. S. H. K. I. pp 121ff. K. L. Barua *Early History of Kamarupa*-S. H. K. I. pp 12 9 ff. The association of Naraka with Videha is construed by Spooner as forming part of the Alpine-Iranian culture in Eastern India (op. cit). According to B. M. Barua, Naraka or the Narakas were autochthons, born of *Bhumi* or in a place adjacent to the Varaha peak of the Himalayas (IHQXXIII pp 200ff). There also appear to be more than one Narakas. Kakati placed the last Naraka during the fourth century A. D. with the change of the name of the Kingdom from Pragjyotisha to Kamarupa (*Mother Goddess Kamakhya p. 125*).
25. The story of Naraka's relation with Bana is given in a number of sources. Bana's capital is located by Bhandarkar in north Bengal (Dinajpur) ABORI XII pp 103 ff. The Santiparvan of the Mahabharata makes Banas capital contiguous with Pragjyotisha (Chap. 399 vv90-99). It was proposed that Bana's kingdom must have extended from Assam to north Bengal (JASB (NS) V. pp 17-20)
26. The history of Kamarupa after Bhagadatta's death is uncertain. The successors may have come under the supremacy of the Pandavas of the Epics, and under the Magadhan domination from the sixth century B. C. onwards.
27. R. M. Nath, Op. cit. pp 32-33. Barua connects the Varmans of Kamarupa with those of Trigarta in the Udichyottarapatha Grant (IHQ XXII. pp 200 ff). The Gupta influence seems to have penetrated in the valley of the Brahmaputra, as is evident from the names of Samudravarman and Samudragupta, and those of their queens, and the insertion of the Gupta era in the Badganga inscription of Bhutivarman. Samudragupta and Samudravarman were contemporaries (Ray. *Dynastic History of Northern India* Vol I p 238). While the contemporaneity of the Guptas with the Varman rulers of Assam is an established fact, it is difficult to trace matrimonial relations between the two families as proposed by Vasu (op. cit p 141), or identify Balavarman of the Allahabad Prasasti with the third ruler of this line. The rulers of Aryavarta exterminated by Samudragupta were different from those of Kamarupa and Davaka with whom the Gupta emperor entered into different relations.

28. IHQ. XXI p 22.
29. *ibid.*
30. *Dynasties of the Kali Age* p 73.
31. The location of Davaka, not as old as Pragjyotisha, is a subject of disputation. There is a place called Davaka in modern Nowgong. Smith located it round about modern districts of Bogra, Dinajpur, and Rajshahi to the north of the Ganges between Samatata and Kamarupa (*Early History of India-E. H. I. p 316*). Raychaudhury questioned its location in northern Bengal (*P. H. A. I. p 544*). It is located in the Kapili valley by R. M. Nath (*IC. VI. p. 46*). The king from the Kapili, mentioned in the Shung-Shu sending two missions to China is supposed to be a king from Kamarupa (*Choudhury. op. cit p 146*)
32. Nidhanapur inscription. *op. cit. v 8*. According to a Burmese tradition mentioned by Phayre (*History of Burma pp 3-4*), an Indian king Samuda or Samudra was ruling in upper Burma in A. D. 105. This king must have proceeded through Assam, like the other Hindus leading the Tuhan pass or Shans proceeding the mission of conquest as far as the mouths of the Mekong (*Gait. History of Assam p. 9*). This Samudra of the Burmese tradition is identified by Vasu with Samudravarman of this dynasty in Assam (*op. cit p. 142*) This identification is uncertain.
33. *op. cit IV 14*
34. The unification of Davaka with Kamarupa, and the sending of diplomatic missions to China are also speculative. K. L. Barua proposed that the Davaka region was absorbed by Kamarupa during the 6-7th century A. D. (*E. H. K. p 47*). According to Bhattasali Davāka remained independent up to the middle of the 6th century A. D.
35. Mahendravarman appears to be the first notable ruler of Kamarupa. He probably extended his empire at the cost of the Guptas, and shook off their allegiance, if any. The performance of two horse sacrifices by him is noticed in clay seal of Bhaskara, the Nidhanapur Grant, and the Doobi Grant. D. C. Sircar, however, credits Narayanavarman as the earliest performer of the horse sacrifice about the middle of the sixth century A. D. (*IHQ. XXI pp 143-45*). B.M. Barua supported Sircar, although he considered Mahendravarman to be responsible for the distress of the Guptas towards the east. (*IHQ. XXXI. pp 200 ff*).
36. Sircar : *Select Inscriptions* pp 331 ff.
37. JARS. VIII. pp 138 ff ; EI. 1947 pp 18 ff. IHQ. XXI pp 143 ff. Sircar read the date as 244.
38. Fleet. CII. III. pp 142 ff.
39. Panchakhanda is placed in Sylhet. Kausika is identified with Kusiarā and Chandrapuri with a modern village named Chandrapur in that locality. J. C. Ghosh, however, referred to a place called Bhaskaratangiri in Sylhet, probably named after the Assamese ruler. According to D. R. Bhandarkar, who supported Ghosh's identification the western boundary of the kingdom of Bhutivarman could hardly have extended to north Bengal, or the district of Purnea which was at that time under the occupation of the Guptas. Even in later times, Bhaskara's kingdom did not extend so far as to include Purnea. (*IC. I. pp 136-37*). The separate political status of Sylhet is, however, stressed by P Bhattacharya which to Yuan-Chwang was known

as Shih-li-cha-to-lo, and this is accepted in the *Yoginitantra* and the *Sadhanamala*. (JASB Letters) III. pp 45-51). Bhattasali contended that the present Panchakhanda in Sylhet was the Mayurasalamalagrahara, created by Bhutivarman (JASB Letters Ip 419-27). N. N. Dasgupta, however, believed that Mayurasalamala stands for Madhasalamali of the Khalimpur grant of Dharmapala, and Bhutivarmana's donated land was in the Pundravardhana *bhukti*, a part of which including the Mayurasalamala tract came to be occupied by Bhutivarman, shortly after Buddhagupta had ceased to reign (IC. II pp 37-43). Choudhury, however, contends that the whole region occupied by Bhutivarman shortly after A. D. 543-44 continued to remain under Bhaskara, although there might have been a temporary set back during the life time of his father Susthitavarman (op. cit p. 160)

40. In the Haraha inscription, Isanavarman, son of Isvaravarman and Upagupta claims victories over the Andhras, Sulikas and the Gaudas, and for the first time he assumes the Imperial title of Maharajadraja. He might have come into conflict with Kumaragupta III. (Raychaudhuri. op. cit pp. 604-5). The struggle between the Maukharis and the later Guptas was carried to the time of their successors, as a result of which the supremacy over Magadha seems to have passed into the hands of the Maukharis (CII,III p 210)
41. JARS. X pp 63-67
42. EI. 1947 pp 18-23.
43. Majumdar : History of Bengal pp 50-54. Ref. Bhandarkar's List nos 1723, 1724, 1725, from Faridpur of Maharaja Bhattaraka Dharmaditya, and a gopachandra Samachara deva (Ghugrahati) The Mallasara Grant mentions Vijayasena.
44. CII. III. pp 202 ff. Bhandarkar's List no 1552. It is proposed by Choudhury that Susthitavarman's victory in the Maukhari-Gupta struggle for supremacy culminating in the performance of the second horse sacrifice by A. D. 580, may have prompted Mahasenagupta to invade Kamarupa during the reign of Susthitavarman (op. cit p 171)
45. Ref. the views of Fleet (CII. III. Intro, p 15); Mookerji (Harsha p 25); Hoernle (JASB, LXIII (i) p, 102); Aiyangar (JIH V. p 319), but the conquered ruler, according to others is that of Kamarupa itself (Banerji JBORS. XV pp 252 ff); Bhattacharya K. S. p 15; B.C. Law JUPHS. XVIII p 43 ff)
46. Ref Mahakuta inscription. I. A. XIX. p. 7. The invasion of Kamarupa must have been an event precedent to the conquest of Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, and Magadha which probably happened between A. D. 590-93. According to Choudhury, it does not appear likely that Mahasena actually advanced far into Kamarupa or he crossed the Brahmaputra, since he possibly advanced on a later campaign against the kingdom. The loss of Pundravardhana was temporary since it was reoccupied within two decades by Bhaskarvarman with the western boundary of Kamarupa still remaining the Teesta or the Karatoya (op. cit ppl 74-5)
47. IHQ. XXVI. pp 241ff. The Nidhanpur inscription of Bhasakarvarman celebrates his triumphant entry into the capital of Karnasuvarna after his victory over hundreds of kings and it records the grant made from his camp there (EI. p 66). The conquest of this part of Gauda appears to have happened either in sasanka's time when he switched over his attention and field of exploits from Bengal and Bihar to Kalinga and Orissa and beyond. The Ganjam Plates of the Gupta year 300 accord him the title of *Maharajadhiraja*. According to Basak, Sasanka had his first administrative centre established in Karnasuvarna. He gradually extended

his power by occupation of Puṅḍravardhana the north, and some places in south Biharic Gaya, Rohtasgiri, even up to Banaras in the west, and the country in the south up to Kongada province situated in the modern Ganjam district. (History of North Eastern India p. 140)

48. The intimate relation between the family of Mahāsenagupta and that of Prabhākaravardhana is proved by the Madhuvan Grant and the Sonpat copper seal inscription of Harsha representing Mahāsenagupta Devi as the mother of Prabhakara (Raychaudhury op. cit p.606). The Pushpabhuti alliance of Mahasenagupta, according to Raichaudhury, was probably due to the fear of the rising power of the Maukharis, and a new danger threatening from the east—that of Kamarupa. Political alliances soon changed. Between Mahāsenagupta and Madhavagūpta, a king named Devagupta is to be placed not as a friend but as an adversary who joined hands with Sasanka. He is mentioned in the Madhuvan and Banskhera inscriptions of Harsha described as resembling wicked horses. According to the *Harshacharita* this villain finding the army leaderless decided to invade and seize Thanesaravara as well. (*Uchchhvasa* 6. p. 193)
49. Watters. I. p 343; Beal I. p. 213.
50. *Life*. p. 83
51. Cowell and Thomas (trans) p. 209.
52. Jayaswal. *Imperial History of India* p 50. Sastri. ed. vv 721-26.
53. op. cit. 134.
54. At the time of the issuing of the plates (Nidhanapur), Bhaskarvarman was in possession of the city of Karnasuvarna, that had once been the capital of the Gauda king Sasanka, whose death, according to Raychaudhury, took place sometime between A.D. 619 and 637. B.P. Sinha suggests c625 A. D. as the death of Sasanka. (JBORS XXI Vp.148). According to Raychaudhury, the king overthrown by Bhaskarvarman might have been Jayanaga (Nagaraja samahvayo Gauḍarāja) the king of Gauda, named Naga, successor of Samakhya or Sasanka) whose name is disclosed by the Vappaghosavata inscription (EI. XVII p 60 ff). The Gauda did not tamely acquiesce in the loss of their independence. They became a thorn in the side of Kanauj and Kamarupa and their hostility towards these two powers was inherited by the Pala and Sena successors of Śaśanka (Op. cit. p. 609). See also N. N. Das Gupta *The occupation of Bengal by the kings of Kamarupa* IC II. pp 37ff)
55. Tripathi presupposed Bhaskar's occupation of Karnasuvarna after Arjuna's usurpation of Kanauj when Bhaskara helped the Wang-heuen-tse Mission. He asserted that Harsha would not have allowed Bhaskaavarman to take possession of such a fertile land, and thereby increase his power (*History of Kanauj* p. 103). It is contended by Dr. Majumdar that Bhaskara occupied Karnasuvarna after Harsha's death, and made himself master of Eastern India, fulfilling the grudge which he had against Harsha who treated him as a vassal (*An Outline of Ancient Indian History and civilisation* p 348). According to Basak, there is no evidence of the existence of ill-will between the two rulers until the end of their careers (op. cit pp 227ff).
56. Tripathi. op. cit p. 103. Majumdar. op. cit. According to Bhattacharya Bhaskara was in Karnasuvarna with Harsha for sometime when the grant was issued, but the result of the conquest was enjoyed by Harsha (*Kamarupa Śāsanāvalī* p. 5). Karnasuvarna came into the possession of Harsha after Sasanka's death, as a reward or with it because of the help rendered to the Chinese mission (EI XII PP 66 ff; IA. XLIII. XIX, pp. 278ff)
57. It is suggested by, B. N. Sircar that Harsha's sway never reached Bengal and Sasanka's kingdom passed on to Bhaskara who controlled the sea route to China as revealed by the pilgrim's biographer (IHQ VI. pp142-3)
58. IHQ. op. cit.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Baij Nath Puri (born 25th January 1916) is one of leading historians engaged in interpreting the history of India. His two works on 'India in the time of Patanjali' and 'The History of the Gurjara-Pratiharas' earned him the two research degrees of B. Litt. and D. Phil. from the University of Oxford. His other publications in English and Hindi include 'India as Described by Early Greek Writers : India under the Kushans,' 'India in Classical Greek Writings' 'Indian History; A Review,' 'Cities of Ancient India', 'Bharat aur Kambuja' (U.P. Govt. Prize winner), 'Sudurpurva me Bhartiya Sanskriti aur Itihas,' 'Bhartiya Sanskriti ke mula tathya', 'Puratattva Vijnan'; etc. Dr. Puri was elected President of the Indian History Congress—Ancient India Section, Gauhati, 1959; President, Greater India (South-east Asia) Section of the Indian Oriental conference, Aligarh, 1966. He was also invited to deliver the Banikanta Kakati Memorial Lectures at the University of Gauhati in 1966 on 'Studies in Early History and Administration in Assam'

Dr. Puri has widely travelled. He was invited to deliver lectures in many Universities in Western Europe, and he taught Sanskrit for a year at the University of Oxford. Since January 1961, he is Professor of Indian History and Culture at the National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie.