

**PROCEEDINGS OF  
NORTH EAST INDIA  
HISTORY ASSOCIATION**



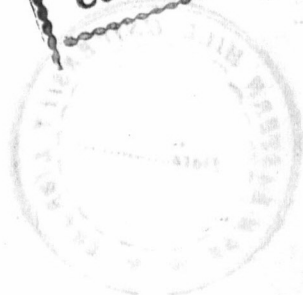
**SEVENTEENTH SESSION  
GOVERNMENT AIZAWL COLLEGE  
AIZAWL**

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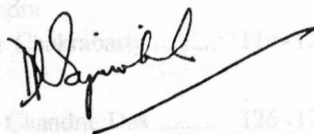
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## Preface

The Seventeenth Session of the North East India History Association was held at Government Aizawl College, Aizawl between 3-5 October, 1996. This was the Association's second opportunity to meet in the Mizoram capital. By all counts the session was a success with large numbers attending the Academic Session, particularly the special session on the History of Mizoram. An added attraction of the Annual Conference was the learned lectures of Professor M.M. Sharma, Vice Chancellor of Dibrugarh University, in the second H.K. Barpujari Endowment Lectures. We wish to put on record the Association's appreciation for the hospitality and organization of the Seventeenth Session to the Principal of the College; to Professor Zochungnunga, Head Department of History and this colleagues and studies.

By now the NEIHA proceedings volumes has become a useful reference to historical research in the region. Young researchers have found in NEIHA a platform to discuss this first attempt in writing history. Other members of many years standing continue to see in our Association the need to foster, encourage and stimulate research of the region as a whole or on select themes. The publication of this Proceedings of the 17th Annual Session has been supported by the efforts of our President - Professor J.P. Singh, Professor A.K. Baruah and Dr. M. Sharma in editing and correcting proofs. To them we acknowledge our gratitude. We are thankful to the Indian Council for Historical Research for its generous financial support to the Association. We also thank the proprietor of Kamala Art Press, Shillong for his concern in publishing this volume.



Shillong  
1 September, 1997

**D.R. Syiemlieh**  
General Secretary  
North East India History Association

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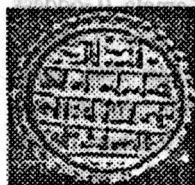
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## An Enigmatic coin of North-East

Vasant Chowdhury

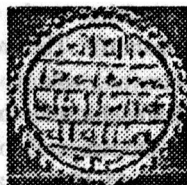
Several years ago, a Calcutta coin dealer met me and wanted a silver coin deciphered. Though a very simple form of the Assamese/Bengali script was used, I could not make any headway. The coin, I was told, was found in Sylet in Bangladesh along with coins of Nirbhoy Narayan and Megh Narayan. I later bought the coin but it remained undeciphered for long. Despite help from friends, I could not make much headway. Only recently, I managed to make some progress and I would like to suggest the following rendering of the issue illustrated below.

Shape - round, Metal - silver, Size - 27mm, Weight - 9.5 gms.  
The legend on each side within a border of dots, as described below.



Obverse  
Sri Sri Ma  
nama Naranarayan  
Kamla

Reverse  
Sri Sri Dimacha  
Hsamacha  
Douva Narayana 1470



On the coin the date is written on reverse. The mistake made by the die cutter was due to engraving the form of the numeral in positive on the die concerned. If the date is in the Saka era (which is usually the practice), then the equivalent is A.D. 1548.

Let us turn our attention to the history of Kachar during the 16th Century. According to early accounts, the Kacharis, also called Dimachas, had settled on the bank of the river Dhansiri and built their capital. There they had installed the stone images of Lord Vishnu and Lakshmi and named the capital "Lakshmindrapur". This place is now called Dimapur. The Kachari tribe was divided into different clans, with names like Hachangcha, Fonglongcha, Hsamacha, Thausendha etc. Members of these clans enjoyed higher status compared to the members of the other clans and they even had the right to the throne. The women were divided by a separate list of clan names which they continued after their marriage.

However, the political situation during the sixteenth century in Kachar was not very happy. The powerful Ahom king Suhummung had attacked Kachar in 1526 AD and forced the Kacharies to give up their territory. Again in AD 1531, the Kachari King Khunkhara lost the battle and fled from Dimapur. Thereafter, Prince Darchongpha ruled upto 1536 AD and was killed in the encounter with the Ahom King. The victors ransacked the capital and took away the queen and young prince Madan Kumar as captives. For another eight years, Kachar remained in chaos till Nirbhoy Narayan (Madan Kumar) was installed as a subordinate ruler of the Ahom King around 1545 A.D. Durlab Narayan protested against this humiliation of the Kacharis and declared himself the king of Kachar. But soon after that, the Koch King Naranarayana invaded the north east, defeated the Ahom King and ran over the Kachari Kingdom. The next ruler Makardhaj died during his retreat and his successor king Megh Narayan ruled from his capital in Maibong.

Now, coming to the coin again, the obverse indicates the invocation to the Naranarayana (Lord Vishnu) and Kamala (Goddess Lakshmi). The reverse talks about the respected Douva (Debi ?) Narayan, who is a Dimacha (Kachari) with the Kachari clan name Hsamacha and the date, which is very likely AD 1548. As there is no Douva or Debi Narayan in the list of names of the Kachari rulers, I would like to attribute this coin to Durlab Narayan. I would also like to suggest that the word Durlab, due to the phonetical presentation of the Kachari dialect in the coin, is corrupted to Douva. It is stated earlier that Nirbhoy Narayan's installation was around 1545 A.D. and the date of this issue is A.D. 1548. This fits in well as the evidence of the protest and declaration of independence by Durlab Narayan. With the evidence of this coin and with other recorded information, I would like to make an attempt to reconstruct the chronology of the Kachari rulers of the sixteenth century.

The Kachari King Derchongpha died in the year 1536 A.D. and after eight disturbed years Nirbhoy Narayan was made the King of Kachar but as a subordinate ruler to the Ahom King Suhummung, around A.D. 1545. After the fall of their capital at Dimapur, the Kacharis had built a new capital at Prasadumdu near Macockchong. It is very likely that this is the place from where Durlab Narayan ruled and had struck this coin of A.D. 1548. He possibly could not resist

the Ahom onslaught for long and was killed after a short rule. His successor, King Makardhaj had fled for a safer place and died at Makelung. This created a vacuum in the Kachari leadership for a period of eight years and Nirbhoy Naarayan, by then a disillusioned ruler under the Ahom, left Dimapur and joined the members of his own tribe and led them to Habdaghat. There he established his capital and struck his coin with the Saka date 1481 (A.D. 1559), and one such silver issue was found in the past in Jamunamukh. Three different varieties of dies of Nirbhoy Narayan coin noticed lately suggest that his rule had brought some stability to the kingdom but his reign did not last for long there. The Koch King Naranarayan had invaded the north east and after defeating the Ahom King around Saka 1484 (A.D. 1562) turned towards Kachar and subjugated its ruler Nirbhoy Narayan. The defeated ruler Nirbhoy Narayan, who was a member of Thausen clan, shifted for a more secure place and founded Maibong. After a period of uncertainty, Meghnarayan, a member of the Hachengcha clan organised the Kacharis again and became the king in Maibong in Saka 1488, (A.D. 1566). He was a powerful ruler and had extended his kingdom and built a large gate in the city of Maibong. The inscribed stone, which was a part of the gate is now in Maibong. This reads "Shuba Mastu Sri Sri yuta meghanarayana Deva Ha/changcha Vangsa iata Raja hai Maibong R/jat Pather Singhduar Bondhilen Sa/Kabada 1498 Bitareekh Ashad 26". The gate was built on the 26th of Ashad in Saka 1498. His reign ended by Saka 1505, (A.D. 1583), which we gather when we notice the coins of the next king Yasha Narayan.

### Suggested dates of the Rulers of Kachar in 16th Century

1. Kunkara - upto 1531 A.D.
2. Darchongpha - 1531 - 36 A.D.
3. Nirbhoy narayan - 1545 A.D. (as a Vassal to Ahom King)
4. Durlabnarayana - 1548 A.D.  
(Douva narayan)
5. Makardhaj - ?
6. Nirbhoynarayan - 1559-62 A.D.
7. Meghnarayan - 1566 - 83 A.D.
8. Yashonarayan - 1583 A.D.



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### Suggested dates of the Rulers of Kachar in 16th Century

1.	Kunkars	upto 1531 A.D.
2.	Dachongpha	1531-36 A.D.
3.	Nirphoy narayan	- 1545 A.D. (as a Vassal to Ahom King)
4.	Dutisnarayan	1548 A.D.
5.	(Dova narayan)	
6.	Nirphoynarayan	1550-62 A.D.
7.	Meghnarayan	1566 - 83 A.D.
8.	Yashonarayan	1583 A.D.

