

External Trade of Early North-Eastern India

B N Mukherjee

The north-eastern section of the Indian sub-continent, now divided into Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, is a territory not only of varieties—topographical, ethnic and cultural,—but also of essential bonds of unities—cultural and material—connecting it with the rest of the country. At the same time, its strategic location, on the borders of *inter alia* China and Burma, alludes to its international importance. These two aspects of its history—its national and international connections—is obvious from various types of data including those relating to its external trade with the outside world as well as with the rest of India.

The fascinating story of the North-East's early external trade (up to c. early 13th century A.D.), which has not yet been recorded inspite of its obvious significance for assessing the importance of the area in the history of the subcontinent, is now recounted for the first time. The monograph, which substantially represents the first series of the H.K. Barpujari Endowment Lectures delivered at Imphal in 1990 under the auspices of the North-Eastern India History Association, is divided into seven chapters (I. Introduction; II. Earliest Datable Routes; III. Economic Products, Crafts and Industries Through the Ages; IV. Articles of Export and Import; V. Mechanism of Trade VI. The State and the External Trade; and VII. Epilogue) and four appendixes (I. Suvaranakudya; II. Samandar; III. The Paglatek Hoard and the Relation between Kāmarūpa and Samatata; and IV. The Coinage of Harikela).

The monograph, which determines the role played by the North East in the early history of commerce in India, is a pioneer work of this nature. It may be considered as a major contribution to the study of economic history of the Indian subcontinent.

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BRATINDRA NATH MUKHERJEE, is well-known in the academic world by his large number of books and articles published in different reputed journals in India and abroad. He is connected with many learned societies and has held responsible positions in academic bodies like the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, the Numismatic Society of India, Varanasi, the Epigraphical Society of India, Indian National Science Academy, Delhi, etc. He has participated in a number of national and international seminars and conferences. He presided over the sixty-fifth session of the Numismatic Society of India and the second session of the Bihar Puratatva Evam Sanskriti Parishad and also over section I of the forty-second session of the Indian History Congress. He was for some time (1978-80) the Director of the Centre of Advance Study in Ancient Indian History and Culture of the Calcutta University. In 1985 he was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of London "for his outstanding services to Oriental Studies". He is also a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, London. He is at present the Carmichael Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture at the University of Calcutta, a trustee of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, and also the Hony. Director, School of Historical and Cultural Studies, Calcutta.

Prof. Mukherjee has made lasting contributions in different fields of Indological, Central Asian and Iranian studies. In 1983 he made a major breakthrough in palaeographical research by successfully deciphering the so-called Sheoll Script of ancient India. In 1989 he discovered an early script consisting of Kharoshtī and Brāhmī letters, probably called in the Lalitavistara as vimisrita-lipi (Mixed script).

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Foreword

We have great pleasure in presenting to the readers the First H.K. Barpujari Endowment Lectures delivered by Professor B.N. Mukherjee, the Carmichael Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University, during the eleventh session of the North East India History Association at the Manipur University, Imphal, on October 25-27, 1990. We are thankful to Professor Mukherjee for the honour he did to the Association by accepting our invitation to deliver the first lectures in the series.

The H.K. Barpujari Endowment Lectures Series has a genesis of its own which is highly inspiring to the objective and purpose of the North East India History Association. The Association decided in 1987 to introduce the series on the basis of the fund provided by the H.K. Barpujari Endowment Trust, Guwahati. This trust was created by Professor H.K. Barpujari in 1984 for the promotion of research in Indian history with special reference to the north-eastern region. The trust raised a fund of about eight lakhs rupees by disposing of the personal property donated to it by Professor Barpujari and distributed this money to various institutions of higher learning and research in the country like Gauhati University, Dibrugarh University, North-Eastern Hill University, Assam Sahitya Sabha, Jorhat, Institute of Historical Studies, Calcutta, Indian History Congress and the North East India History Association. The amount of rupees twentyfive thousand given to the Association was purely for the promotion of research in the history of North East India. The 'Doyen of the historians of North East India,' Professor Barpujari is the first president of this Association which was founded in 1979 for the "promotion and encouragement of the scientific study of the History of North East India, viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, and the adjoining areas historically connected with the region." The Association, therefore, accepted the offer and created a permanent fund for triennial lectures on selected themes of the history of North East India. It was also decided to invite an eminent historian to deliver each series of the lectures.

Professor B.N. Mukherjee's *External Trade of Early North-Eastern*

India is one of the major gap areas in the historical writings in the region. This was selected in consonance with the policy of the Association to identify such areas and to invite acknowledged experts who would speak with authority on the selected area. An internationally acclaimed Indologist, Professor Mukherjee's sustained research over the years has opened up new fields in trade, coinage and economy of the early period. His treatment here is on the basis of primary data drawn from standard historical evidences. We are confident that this slender volume will inspire the historians for a long time to undertake further enquiry in the economic history of North East India for the early period.

J.B. BHATTACHARJEE

General Secretary

North East India History Association

Preface

In August 1988, I received an invitation from Prof. J.B. Bhattacharjee, the Secretary of the North East India History Association, to deliver the first series of the H.K. Barpujari Endowment Lectures. I thankfully accepted the invitation. It gave me an opportunity for offering my homage to Prof. Barpujari, the renowned historian and the inspiring figure behind the modern movement for historical studies in North-Eastern India.

The subject chosen for the lectures was External Trade of Early North-Eastern India. Two lectures were delivered by me on October 25 and 26, 1990, during the eleventh session of the North-East India History Association at Imphal, which was very ably organised by Prof. G. Kabui and his colleagues. These lectures are substantially represented by the present monograph.

The present authorities of the North East India History Association, including Prof. J.B. Bhattacharjee, have kindly arranged for publication of the monograph. The script of the text has been typed by Muhammad Ghiyas. The maps have been prepared by A. Kasyapi. The photographs of the coins have been taken by A. Maitra. I am grateful to all of them.

B.N. MUKHERJEE

Abbreviations

- BEFEO* : *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, Hanoi and Paris.
- CHA* : Barpujari, H.K. (editor), *The Comprehensive History of Assam*, vol. I, Guwahati, 1990.
- CENESI* : Singh J.P. and Ahmed, N. (editors), *Coinage and Economy of North-Eastern States of India*, Varanasi.
- CHS* : Pan ku, *Ch'ien Han-shu*, Tung-wen shu-chu edition.
- DEPI* : Watt, G., *A Dictionary of Economic Products of India*, vol. I-VI, 2nd reprint, Delhi, 1972.
- EHA* : Barua, K.L., *Studies in the Early History of Assam*, Jorhat-Gauhati, 1974.
- EHK* : Barua, K.L. *Early History of Kāmarūpa*, Shillong, 1933.
- HCPA* : Chaudhury, P.C., *The History of Civilization of the People of Assam, To the Twelfth Century A.D.*, Gauhati, 1959.
- HHS* : Fan Yeh, *Hou Han-shu*, Ssu-pu pei-yao edition.
- HIOH* : Elliot, H.M. and Dowson, J., *The History of India as Told by Its own Historians*, vol. I, (reprint, Lucknow); vol. II, (reprint, Aligarh), vol. VII (Lucknow, 1964).
- IAA* : Sharma, M.M., *Inscriptions of Ancient Assam*, Gauhati, 1978.
- JAOS* : *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, New Haven (Connecticut).
- Periplus* : *Periplus tes Erythras Thalasses*, Frisk, H. (editor), *Le Périphe de la Mer Erythree*, Göteborg, 1927; G.W.B. Huntington (Editor and Translator), *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, London, 1980).
- PGCB* : Mukherjee, B.N., *Post-Gupta Coinages of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1989.
- SC* : Ssu-ma T'an and Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Shih-chi*, Ssu-pu pei yao edition.

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- Pl.V Coins of Harikela (Second Series)
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Chapter I

Introduction

A

The territorial connotation of the name "North-Eastern India" is determined by historical as well as geographical reasons. North-Eastern India at present includes by common consent the territories of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. No doubt, the zone concerned is in the north-eastern section of the Indian subcontinent. But since the Indian subcontinent spreads west to east from about 61.5° to 97.5° longitude, the western boundary of the eastern zone should be placed at about 85° longitude. This limit may be placed at about 88° longitude if the west-east extent of the territory of the Indian republic is taken into consideration. But, in either case some areas to the west of the above noted states can be placed in the eastern zone and at least their northern sections (or even all sections of those areas in view of the peculiar configuration of the map of India) may be located in North-Eastern India.

Herein comes the historical reasons. Since the early decades of the rule of the East India Company in Bengal, it became interested in the territories situated to its east and north-east. As late as in 1884 A. Mackenzie observed that "the north-east frontier of Bengal is a term used sometimes to denote a boundary line, and sometimes more generally to describe a tract. In the latter sense it embraces the whole of the hill ranges north, east and south of the Assam Valley as well as the Western slopes of the great mountain system lying between Bengal and independent Burma."¹ In British India such hilly tracts and also the plains to the east and north-east of Bengal, which itself was in the eastern zone of the subcontinent, came to be grouped together in a north-eastern zone.² After the partition of Bengal in 1947, the zone concerned became politically more well demarcated, having a slender overland connection with the major part of the territory of the

Indian Republic to its west and having East Bengal or East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) forming its main western limits. This zone, thus marked out politically or historically as well as geographically, can be called North-East in view of the peculiar configuration of the Indian subcontinent or of the area of the Indian Republic.

The zone concerned (between 29 and 22 N. latitude and 89.46 and 97.5 E. longitude) can be divided into five physiographic units. These are the Assam Himalayas, the Brahmaputra Valley, the Shillong Plateau, the Barak Valley, and the southern and eastern hill regions.³

The basic population of the zone are of Mongoloid origin. People of other racial types have also entered the zone in different periods of history.⁴ Linguistically this zone has affiliations to the Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Aryan groups and, to some extent, also to the Austric family including the Mon-Khmer group.⁵

There are indications of early natural routes in the hilly tracts as well as in the plains—particularly in the valleys of the Brahmaputra and the Barak rivers (Chapters II and V).⁶ Certain types of neolithic implements from the Naga hills (like neolithic “tanged axe” and “wedge-blade”) are connected with similar artefacts from Burma and Yunnan (in South China).⁷ On the other hand, neolithic axes with broad cutting edge, numerous in the Garo hills, have parallel tools at some sites of eastern India.⁸ Palaeolithic implements of certain types discovered at Micnimagiri in the Garo Hills have affinity to the finds in some other sites of the subcontinent.⁹ Such data allude to communications between the zone in question and China on one hand and parts of the Indian subcontinent on the other.¹⁰

B

Thus from early times there had been lines of communication which could facilitate the movements of people, culture and merchandise between the North-Eastern India on one hand and other parts of the subcontinent or South China on the other. The earliest datable evidence indicating commercial contacts between the North-East and other parts of India or even with China is furnished by the *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya, written at least substantially in the Maurya age, ranging from the last quarter of the 4th century B.C. to the first quarter of the 2nd century B.C.¹¹ Thus the recorded history of the North-East's external trade may have begun by sometime of this period.

The 13th century, which is known to have seen obvious change in

the structure of political domination and socio-economic and socio-religious set-up in the subcontinent, is considered as marking the end of the early period of its history. The same periodisation is applicable to the history of Assam, which witnessed the early invasions of the Muslim powers (though these were not as successful as in several other parts of India) and the emergence of the Ahoms, the dominant power of the North-East in India's mediaeval age.¹² So for the North-East as a whole the early period may be conveniently taken to have ended in about the early 13th century A.D. (though the pre-mediaeval history of its several regions is not known or is guessed from scanty data).

None of the well-known periodic names in early Indian history like the Maurya age, Kushāna age, etc., bears much significance for the North-East. Again, the political powers of the territory of Assam did not generally rule over the whole or the major part of the North-East. Hence it will be wise to divide the vast period of the history of early North-East into several smaller periods or sub-periods on the basis of the dates and nature of the major sources of knowledge.

The dates and/or nature of the available sources of economic history may allow us to divide the early period into several smaller periods or sub-periods, the first ranging from about the last quarter of the 4th to the 1st century B.C., the second from the 1st to 6th century A.D., the third from the 7th to about the middle of the 8th century A.D. and the fourth from the last noted date to the early 13th century A.D.

As in other parts of the subcontinent, so in the North-East, and especially in Assam, the last noted period (from about the middle of the 8th to the early 13th century) witnessed the continuity of many early traits, but also experienced the germination of several mediaeval features and ideas. So this period or sub-period may be called proto-mediaeval and not, as it is often done, early mediaeval.¹³

C

So far no attempt has been made to write the history of commerce, including external trade, of early North-East. No doubt, a few scholars have touched upon commercial activities in course of dealing with economic history of an important area of this zone, viz., Assam, during the ancient period.¹⁴ But their writings suffer from two major flaws. They have often utilised later (mediaeval or even modern) sources to fill up various lacunae in information relating the early period,

without justifying their relevance to the age concerned. Thus the 17th century account of the travels of Tavernier has been used almost as an independent source by P.C. Chaudhury and S. Chattopadhyaya for writing history of a much earlier age.¹⁵ They have not realised that such sources which are much later than the age of their study can at best be quoted as pieces of corroborative information. Moreover, some writers have wrongly applied to Assam various data relating to certain territories outside the North-East. Thus P.C. Chaudhury located Serica, which must be placed in Chinese Central Asia,¹⁶ in Assam and incorporated several accounts of Serica in Greek and Latin texts for reconstructing the ancient history of Assam.

Such defects in writings impair their reliability and vitiate history. Thus it has become imperative for serious students of early Indian history to reconstruct the different aspects of the ancient history of Assam as well as the North-East on the basis of critical and impartial assessments of data relevant to the zone and period. The writings based on such assessments may not supply the readers with all desirable details. But they will be enlightened with relevant information and not misled with imaginary narratives.

One of the areas in which such a critical assessment can be made is related to the external trade of the North-East. The subject is still largely neglected, and whatever study of it has been done is plagued by the above noted shortcomings. However, its apparent importance is indicated by the above mentioned evidence of the area's early communication with China as well as other parts of the subcontinent. Such a study is, in fact, a desideratum to understand the importance of the zone concerned in the history of South Asia. An attempt has been made in this monograph to fulfil this need.

NOTES

1. A. Mackenzie, *The North-Eastern Frontier of India*, New Delhi, 1979, (originally published in 1884 as "History of Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal"), p. 1. Chittagong hill tracts were included by Mackenzie within the territory of "North-east frontier of Bengal".
2. For an example see the publication of the early 20th century entitled *Gazetteer of Bengal and North-East India*, by B.C. Allen, E.A. Gait, C.G.H. Allen and H.F. Howard. See also D.P. Chaudhury, *The North-Eastern Frontier of India 1865-1914*, Calcutta, 1978, p. XII.
3. *The Land of Seven Sisters*, 1976, p. 2.
4. G. Sharma (editor), *Asamīyā Jātira Itivritta* (in Assamese language), Jorhat, 1974, p. 203. Among other ethnic types are Austroloid, Mediterranean, Alpenoid, etc. (B.M. Das, "Ethnological Background", *The Comprehensive History of Assam*, vol. I, (edited by H.K. Barpujari), Guwahati, 1990, (cited below as *CHA*), pp. 9f.).
5. M.M. Sharma, "Language and Literature", *CHA*, vol. I, p. 263; G.A. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. II, reprint, Delhi, 1966, pp. 1f. The language spoken by the people of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills belongs to the Mon-Khmer group (N.C. Basham, *The Origin and Early History of the Khasi-Synteng People*, Calcutta, 1981, pp. 51f).
6. There is no valid reason to support the attempt to trace the origin of the name of the Barak river to that of a river called Vara-vakra (U.C. Guha, *Kāchhārera Itivritta* (in Bengali), Guwahati, 1971, p. 6). The latter may have been invented to explain the meaning of the former. The name of the Barak river may better be related to the term *Varaka* ("excellent water") or to *Voraka* occurring in the names of some ancient villages in eastern India (D.C. Sircar, *Epigraphic Discoveries in East Pakistan*, Calcutta, 1973, pp. 73 and 76). In the latter case the term *Voraka* may refer to the cultivation of *boro* rice on the bank of the river concerned. But a more appropriate name would have been *Varaka*. This name is also alluded to in some coin legends (Chapter V).
7. A.H. Dani, *Prehistory and Protohistory of India*, reprint, Calcutta,

- 1961, p. 54.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 76; see also N.C. Basham, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20; *Ancient India*, no. 16, pp. 51-55; etc.
 9. T.C. Sharma, "Problems of the upper Palaeolithic in North-Eastern India," *Recent Advances in Indo-Pacific Studies* (edited by V.N. Mishra and P. Bellwood), New Delhi, 1985, pp. 171f. In this connection we may also note the discovery of a pebble-tool industry in the Garo Hills. (See the article by H.C. Sharma and S.K. Ray in *ibid.*, pp. 89f). In this connection see also B. Ray, *Ancient Settlement Patterns of Eastern India—Prehistoric Period*, Calcutta, 1987, pp. 149f.
 10. Datable palaeolithic implements of high antiquity have recently been found in Tripura. See also T.C. Sharma, "Prehistoric Situation in the North-East India", *Archaeology of North-Eastern India* (edited by J.P. Singh and G. Sengupta), New Delhi, 1991, pp. 41f.
 11. Kautilya, *Arthaśāstra*, II, 11, 107-114; B.N. Mukherjee, "A Note on the Date of the *Arthaśāstra*", *Vājapeya: Essays on Evolution of Indian Art and Culture; Prof. K.D. Bajpai Felicitation Volume*, edited by A.M. Shastri *et al.*, vol. II, New Delhi, 1987, p. 304.
 12. D.C. Sircar, "Political History", *CHA*, vol. I, pp. 168-171; N.K. Bose, *Assam in the Ahom Age*, Calcutta, 1970, pp. 17f.
 13. B.N. Mukherjee, "History and Archaeology—The Problem of Correlation in Periodisation", *Historical Archaeology, A Dialogue between Archaeologists and Historians*, (edited by A. Ray and S. Mukherjee), New Delhi, 1990, pp. 23-25.
 14. K.L. Barua, *Early History of Kāmarūpa*, Shillong, 1933, p. 189; P.C. Chaudhury, *The History of Civilization of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A.D.*, Gauhati, 1959, pp. 358f; B.K. Barua, *A Cultural History of Assam (early period)*, 2nd edition, Gauhati, 1969, pp. 103f; S. Chattopadhyay, "Economic Condition", *CHA*, vol. II, pp. 245-246; etc.
 15. P.C. Chaudhury, *op. cit.*, pp. 368-69, 371 and 386; *CHA*, vol. I, p. 261.
 16. Ptolemy, *Geographike Huphegesis*, I, 11, 4; VI, 16, 1f; E.H. Bunbury, *A History of Ancient Geography*, reprint, New York, 1959, pp. 166-167, n. 7.

Chapter VII

Epilogue

The commercial activities in the early North-East (up to c. first half of the 13th century) and its external trade are not known in all desirable details. The main reason is the paucity of data. Nevertheless the discussions in the earlier chapters lead to certain interesting conclusions.

Some sort of an organised trade began in parts of the North-East by the late centuries B.C. By about the same time the silk and aloes-wood, produced in the North-East, became known in other parts of India. In conducting the trade in certain materials, the basic items or raw materials of which were produced in the hilly forests, there was co-operation between the people of the hills and the plains. Thus the black aloes-wood was procured from the trees in the forests in the hilly tracts and supplied to the people of the plains and exported through the valleys to other parts of India and the outside world.

The trade of the North-East with south China commenced by c. 2nd century B.C. It could have been initiated even earlier if the *Chīnapatta* or Chinese silk, mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra*, was used to be imported into the subcontinent through the North-East. It was not impossible for the North-East to learn the technology of sericulture from some persons coming from China, which had mastered it in a much earlier period.²

Trade and industry reached a complex and sophisticated stage by c. 7th century A.D. Several of the raw materials and salable items had to be imported from other parts of the subcontinent and south-east Asia. Several industrial products were results of the skilful use of indigenous and sometimes imported materials by trained workers under competent management. No doubt, the industry and trade offered alluring profit to the rich industrialists and traders, who would not have otherwise pursued their vocations. Their money-power earned for them a high social status. We, however, do not know whether workers (including

the skilled ones) enjoyed any substantial benefit from the commercial activities in the Zone concerned. The real profit in cases of small-scale traders might have been only marginal.

The state was, however, an important beneficiary in the trade of the North-East. Successive administrations in different areas could have imposed taxes on articles of commerce. The interest of the kingdom of Kāmarūpa in external trade became manifest with the assertion of Bhāskaravarman's authority over the coastal area of Samatāta in the 7th century A.D. The kingdom of Kāmarūpa attained a position to control the profitable maritime trade conducted through that territory.

The proto-mediaeval age witnessed the ramification of industry and commerce (in terms of production of and trade in various new varieties of items). Cowries formed the base of the medium of exchange, which was occasionally supplemented by coins. In the Barak Valley area coins were used regularly and were connected with a currency system followed in the contiguous territory of Harikela.

The latter region (including the greater portion of Bangladesh to the east of the Meghna and parts of Tripura) provided the channels for export of the products of the North-East to outside world. Preeminence of coastal Harikela in maritime commerce attracted attention of several political powers including the ruling authorities of Kāmarūpa. The attempts made by Kāmarūpa to control Harikela may be interpreted as the results of its desire to influence the maritime trade of that area. Such a control was imperative for a land-locked Kāmarūpa for maximum exploitation of the maritime commerce to its benefits, particularly when through the port of Samandar (Chittagong) in Harikela some highly priced commodities (like aloes-wood and girdles of horns of rhinoceros), supplied by Kāmarūpa, were exported to the outside world.³

However, the political quarrel over Harikela did not endanger its commerce, the continuation of which was to the benefit of all concerned.⁴ The inner strength and importance of the trade in Harikela was demonstrated by the fact that it was sustained by a currency system, which was in use also in a part of the North-East and which was not controlled by any political administration. Obviously the political authorities did not want to disturb the trade.

The situation in the North-East and in the contiguous territory of Harikela in the post-Gupta age (c. A.D. 600-750) and in the proto-mediaeval period (A.D. 750-1200) do not indicate any decrease in the rate of trading activities or absence of a medium of exchange. The

available data do not support the theory of a decline of trade in different parts of the subcontinent at least from c. A.D. 600-900.⁵

For the North-East commercial activities and external trade continued throughout the period concerned. The same situation continued to a great extent in the mediaeval age.⁶ Producers, traders and state remained conscious of the supreme importance of external trade.⁶

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Arthaśāstra*, II, 11.
2. G. Watt, *A Dictionary of the Economic Products of India*, vol. VI, pt. III, reprint, Delhi, 1972, p. 55; *Ancient China's Technology and Science*, Beijing, 1983, pp. 520f. "According to recorded history, sericulture was practised at least 4000 to 5000 years ago in China".
3. Al-Idrīsī observed that "Samandar is a large town, commercial and rich, where there are good profits to be made". Al-Idrīsī also indicated that this port had a vast hinterland (H.M. Elliot and J. Dowson, *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians*, vol. I, reprint, Lucknow, p. 90).
4. *Indian Museum Bulletin*, vol. XVII, 1982, p. 67. In a later period a sultan of Bengal (Alauddin Husain Shah, 1493-1519) allowed the merchandise of the enemy kingdom of Tripura to pass through the port city of Bengala=Samandar=Chittagong (Tome Pires, *Suma Oriental*, book III).
5. R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism, c. A.D. 300-1200*, 2nd edition, New Delhi, 1980, pp. 102, 200-201 and 221; "How Feudal was Indian Feudalism" *Social Scientist*, February, 1984, vol. XII, no. 2, p. 36. For other references and a critical review of the relevant theory see the *Indian Museum Bulletin*, vol. XVII, 1982, pp. 82-83, n. 150. It is interesting to note that M.R. Tarafdar, who also believes in the theory of the decline of trade, apparently thinks that this happened in Bengal in the period from the 11th to the 13th century A.D., while according to R.S. Sharma, there was a revival of commerce in these centuries (*Indian Feudalism*, p. 203). This type of contradiction also betrays the weakness in the theory of decline of trade in the proto-mediaeval age.
6. N.K. Basu, *Assam in the Ahom Age*, Calcutta, 1970, pp. 162f.