

Man and Environment in Northeast India

Volume II

Essays in Archaeology and Anthropology



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Dilip K. Medhi

The book, second in the series of *Man and Environment in Northeast India* addresses some anthropological and archaeological issues. The series itself destines to explore undivided Assam, currently known as the Northeast India or the Assam Region that experienced human migration from China, Southeast Asia and the mainland India. The writer therefore, calls it *the Great Indian Corridor* in the east. The book comprises eight essays on man and expanse. It stresses upon needs and urges of teachers, researchers and students in anthropology, archaeology and planning.

Dilip K. Medhi is currently a popular persona in the entire Northeast India for his works to bring the region to the focus of the academic world. His works to conserve the culture heritage of the region have recognized him as a proficient expert in the field. Besides his continued effort to conserve the Megalithic Culture of Karbi Anglong, he presented a Majuli Action Plan at the UNESCO Conference/Workshop held at Lijiang, Peoples Republic of China in October 2001 in association with a group of Sattriya devotees including a Sattradhikar from Majuli, the World's largest heritage island. Apart from his interest in anthropology, archaeology and culture history, Professor Medhi along with his wife Anjali dedicates his research more on culture heritage of the region. He masters good knowledge on Southeast Asia through extensive travel into the region and is learning the Chinese culture as well. He is a Senior Faculty of Department of Anthropology, Gauhati University and a heritage expert in the region.

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Man and Environment in Northeast India

Volume II

Essays in Archaeology and Anthropology

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Man and Environment in Northeast India, Vol. II is second in the series of a project aims at acquainting the academic world with knowledge about Assam Region or the Northeast India. The Volume contains eight articles written and presented by Dr. Dilip K. Medhi on various issues in archaeology and anthropology. Dr. Medhi, a Senior Faculty in Anthropology initially conceived the project and edited the Vol. I published in 1993.

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This Volume is dedicated to

Late Sorojini Medhi

My mother

Late Bharat Chandra Medhi

My father

and

Late Surendra Nath Medhi

My third elder brother

Foreword

Wilhelm G. Solheim II

It is with pleasure that I write this brief foreword for Dr. Dilip Medhi's 2nd volume of a collection of his previously published papers. It is obvious that besides being an excavating archaeologist he is very interested in Ethnoarchaeology and explaining to a general audience the purposes of Ethnoarchaeology in assisting the archaeologist to interpret what he uncovers in his excavation. His summaries of his ethnoarchaeological research with the Garo and other ethnic groups in northeastern India are both very interesting and valuable not only to the archaeologist but to the ethnographer as well.

In reading several of these papers it is obvious that one of Dr. Medhi's objectives is to explain the intricacies of archaeological research to the general public. He shows the importance and need for extensive training in scientific, archaeological method before undertaking any archaeological excavation. His surveys, with his students, for megalithic sites in Karbi Anglong and other areas has not only turned up the vast number of such sites in northeastern India but through his three "Megalithic Monument Conservation Days" with visiting dignitaries in attendance he has impressed the local people in the importance of saving these sites for proper archaeological investigation. In addition to this advancement for the

understanding of the importance of megalithic sites he has shown even further the importance of these sites to the general public by organizing the development of two Megalithic Parks adjacent to major roads, ensuring for them a large audience.

Dr. Medhi's paper on "Research Methodology in Prehistoric Archaeology" is a valuable presentation for a new student who has completed his or her course work with distinction, had had experience in the field with survey and/or excavation and has completed a careful and detailed description of the materials recovered, but then does not know what to do with the data now available.

The researcher started with a problem to examine and developed a plan of action to arrive at a solution. Just on visual appearance while doing the fieldwork it may be obvious that the results will be totally negative. This can be very important, though disappointing, so the student should not despair but report this in order that other researchers will not waste their time studying the same problem. Medhi here has presented a procedure to follow, from developing the problem and the plan of research through to the final resolution of the problem.

This second collection of his published articles will further his success in explaining prehistoric archaeology to the local people. It will also further his ambition to demonstrate to the archaeologists of the world that these northeastern provinces of the former Assam were the gateway between prehistoric Indian and Southeast Asian and Chinese cultures. I wish him continued success in these endeavors.

Preface

I do not know precisely why I did choose anthropology and archaeology as my career. At the present state of my academic life, it is ridiculous to do a postmortem of that decision of mine. But with all my commitments to these disciplines and to my personal career as well, I do believe that I was not wrong at all at my approach and attitude of my life and career. I remember a few words of my most respected teacher Late Professor M. N. Saloi, former Head, Department of Anthropology, Cotton College, Guwahati who advised me to study the subject seriously with his observation that the subject required some promising students. May be those words of caution made me to secure the first class position in B. Sc. Honours in Anthropology in 1970 after a gap of six years. Unfortunately, Professor Saloi did not live to witness my success and died almost immediately after his retirement. In a most humble way I would like to confess that I owe a lot and also missed a lot owing to my close association with Professor H. P. Misra who was another teacher in my life and who wanted to see me in the best academic position in my life. Later on I came to the association of number of teachers and out of those, I must remember Professor S. N. Rajaguru of Department of Archaeology, Deccan College, Pune and Professor W. G. Solheim II of the Department of Anthropology, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii, U. S. A. Professor Rajaguru was my Ph. D. supervisor. He is a pivotal teacher of exceptional merit and competence and influenced me in my academic life to the largest extent. I can never forget his help and guidance despite of all sorts

of pit falls I faced during my Ph. D. project. In fact, he made me! I knew Professor Solheim II at Hawaii and could join him during 1989-90 in a research project on Southeast Asia Pottery and Ceramics. He is indeed a fine teacher ever I met in my life. Professor Solheim II and Professor S. N. Rajaguru are very much down to the earth. I learnt many lessons from them and could see and understand the status and dignity of a 'Professor' in them. Professor Saloi and Professor Misra were no less than they were.

During the entire courses of graduate and postgraduate education, I could see the paucity of literature towards our studies in anthropology. When we were cited some examples in our teachings, I was much wonder to hear them from all the distant places. For example I want to mention only a single instance; when barter and trade was concerned, the references were cited on *kula ring* trade in Pacific Islands, silent trade from Africa and also a situation of the Sinhalese and Veddas from Sri Lanka and other areas of the Old World.

A little I could get from the former Assam or Assam region or the present day Northeastern India. But I could perceive at that time that such type of references and examples may very well be cited from our own areas. I knew there was no written literature in this regard. Today I understand that our predecessors did write only a little about the people and the land of this region. A few did commendable job in this regard are a teacher like Late Dr. D. N. Majumder and wanted to guide us in this direction. I very well understand our region is an excellent area for anthropological and archaeological research and for producing best type of literature on these two disciplines. I do not like to criticize or condemn or appreciate any one for such a situation. But one thing becomes clear after we hear the Nobel Prize winning subject of Dr. Amartya Sen that such a work was indeed possible in this part of India. Nevertheless I do believe, it is not too late. Our teachers and we teachers can do a lot today on these two disciplines in this region, which I have termed to be the 'Great Indian Corridor' in the east since the early part of nineties.

In 1993, I could bring out the introductory cum first volume of **Man and Environment in Northeast India**. On December 06, 1993, the Volume was released with a fine speech delivered by Shri Madan Jha, I. A. S., Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Arunachal University.

The volume I could complete within a period of about seven years, and, on that day, the *Babri Masjid* was demolished. None can deny the true spirit involved in bringing out the volume and also the cause behind the entire project, but I could see any positive attitude on the part of some important people who were present on the occasion of releasing the volume.

Fortunately, I was never downed, and concentrating seriously to bring out the second volume in this series. Almost all the articles published in the first volume could receive a good response of the academic world.

This time I have paid much attention to the need of the students of Anthropology and Archaeology. That is why, in this volume I have decided to publish some of my articles those I do consider useful to the students and researchers in anthropology. One of the articles I feel would be useful to the planners of the city of Guwahati! I would like to introduce the articles of the present volume to the readers in the following.

'Pragiyotishpur' is an article based on a personal research project of mine. It says about the existence of an urban centre with a significant culture in the Assam Region, and, on completion of my first phase of research, I have identified that the present day city of Guwahati was the actual location of the 'City of Pragiyotishpur'.

'Ethnoarchaeology in Northeast India' is another article of mine, which was presented in course of a lecture at a Refreshers Course in anthropology in 1999. I have aimed at discovering the prehistory of the Assam Region on the basis of ethnoarchaeological research in this part of India and have identified a number of areas, which I believe worthy enough to study for this purpose. In the absence of excavated materials, those topics will provide us enough clues to reconstruct the prehistory of the area. In fact, it is my desire to see how many archaic traits the Northeast Indian agrarian societies have! I said. 'present reflects the past' and to me, it is the basic principle of ethnoarchaeology. The issues and the areas I identify will provide us hundred of examples and instances from this part of India for reference in cultural and social anthropology, archaeology and prehistory.

'The Garos of Meghalaya' is another article of mine, which I presented at the 15th International Congress of the Indo-Pacific

Prehistory Association held at Yogiakarta, Indonesia in 1990 on the principle of 'present reflects the past'. Therefore, it is my desire to show how the different characteristics of the dynamic Garo society do characterize their static 'past'.

'Prehistoric Fashioning of Stone Tools' is another article of mine, which has been included in this issue of *Man and Environment in Northeast India*. I was keen on writing since my school days and the article was based on a favourite subject of mine. It appeared in 1968 in the '*Cottonian*', a magazine of Cotton College, Guwahati, but it was revised later to befitting the need of the students of anthropology. The revised article was published in 1996 in a premier book- '*And The March Goes On*', which was released by Dr. Shankar Dayal Sarma, the former President of India. It deals with the different techniques of making stone tools in the prehistoric days.

'Archaeological Research in Karbi Anglong (1991-2000)' is another article of mine, which incorporates the different research findings of mine in archaeology and anthropology in the district of Karbi Anglong during the period of 1991 to 2000.

'Research Methodology in Prehistoric Archaeology' is a need-based production of mine. I could find many of our postgraduate students studying the special papers in prehistoric archaeology/anthropological archaeology find it difficult in getting information about research methodology; in fact it often happens due to the non availability of books on the subject. Therefore I have written the article with a view to helping the student communities in general and researchers and teachers in prehistory/prehistoric archaeology/anthropological archaeology/palaeoanthropology in particular. Apart from its use in the prescribed subject, I feel it is meritorious to be used in other disciplines of social sciences with a little change in topical nomenclature.

'An Assamese Health Calendar' reveals the traditional ways of maintaining a good health in the Assamese society. I wrote this article long back with my involvement in medical anthropology, and now consider it worth publishing in the present volume.

'Calendar Guwahati 2000' I justify to include in the volume. Guwahati is the gateway of Northeast India but can never have better roads and other infrastructure towards this need. I remember the approach of the British administrators towards the

development of infrastructure although they were not engineers. British civil servants were always keen to develop an area where they were posted. I know the prevailing situations were never conducive to them for that purpose. In one example, when the British administrators faced hostility from the local tribal communities in the construction of the present day Guwahati-Shillong road, they completed it with the assistance of a labour force that was sent to them by the Manipur King at the request of the former. Stillwell Road in Assam Region is one of the examples in this respect. With my experience of different tours in Southeast Asia, Japan and Hawaii I have prepared the article, which I feel it will help planners in the development of the City of Guwahati in the present millennium besides reflecting the competence of anthropologist in the field of planning and development.

Now, the qualitative value of all the articles in respect of data and presentation are some of the important factors that go to the readers to judge. I am prepared to hear about their reaction and shall wait to receiving their appropriate counseling on the present production.

I acknowledge my deep sense of gratitude to Late Dr. H. J. Taylor who inspired me in this publication project on **Man and Environment in Northeast India**, and, who wrote the 'Foreword' to the Introductory-cum-volume I of the series and also to my elder brother Late Surendra Nath Medhi who remains an all time inspiration in my academic career and researches.

Finally I most sincerely express my gratefulness to Professor W.G. Solheim II who kindly writes the 'Foreword' of this book. He is always another source of inspiration to me. My wife Anju and two sons Pol and Dol are also the constant sources of inspiration and I thank them all. I owe a great deal to the Kumar brothers of Omsons Publications, New Delhi for their invaluable help in generating the publication of the book second in the series i.e. Volume II of Man and Environment in Northeast India series. I thank Mr. Satish Kumar for the production and also Mr. Ramesh Kumar for his equal interest in it. The volume is open to readers and I will be happy to receive their comments for future addition and alternation in all the articles with citation of American Anthropological Association's mission statement that says 'To advance anthropology as a discipline that studies humankind in

all its aspects, through archaeological, biological, ethnological and linguistic research; and to foster the use of anthropological knowledge in addressing human problems'.

Sorojini-Bharat

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Dilip K. Medhi

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Pragjyotishpur

In India, the world famous ruins of the Harappan culture/civilization are the only evidence of the earliest urban centre in entire South Asia. It was the British administrators who dedicated themselves to the excavation of Indus Valley Civilization, which was first exposed during the railway construction in the northwest region of undivided India. We proudly but gratefully remember the services of Sir John Marshal and Sir Mortimer Wheeler along with Shri N. G. Majumdar and Shri R. D. Banerjee for the works they carried out to retrieve the evidence of this culture/civilization. Currently, its ruins are extended over a large area beyond its initial location in Punjab and Haryana.

Besides this famous urban culture of archaeological world, we often speak of another urban centre or a civilization in the Brahmaputra valley in the east of Indian subcontinent. The subtropical Brahmaputra River system has a vast network much similar to the arid river Indus. The first belongs to the former state of Assam, which is currently known as the Assam Region or the Northeast India. However, the term Northeast India is in common use and comprises the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya and Assam proper. This enchanting landmass has borrowed many characters of racial and cultural significance from the mainland India and the Southeast Asia and China. The hills concentrate the tribal population from the latter and the non-tribals occupy the plains

of the Brahmaputra and the Barak valleys. Archaeological evidence can be much easily retrieved in the hills, which is very difficult to locate in the plains because of huge deposition of flood silt every year. Therefore, the question of the autochthon, according to this writer, remains unresolved.

The archaeological ruins, discovered in 1969, at Ambari, Guwahati, provided the initial clue of an urban centre in the Brahmaputra valley. The writer was a graduate student at that time and participated in the excavation at Ambari. The entire excavation programme brought a festive mood to all walks of life in Assam. There appeared prominent news of Ambari in the *Statesman*, a national daily and everyday, people visited Ambari quite frequently. The excavation was a joint venture of the Department of Anthropology, Gauhati University and the Directorate of Archaeology, Government of Assam, and experts from Archaeological Survey of India and the Deccan College, including media man from the *Statesman* participated as an amateur archaeologist. Professor M. C. Goswami was the Director of the excavation and Dr T. C. sharma was his deputy. Susanta Kumar Mukherjee, Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Eastern Circle, Dr M. K. Dahavaliker and Dr Z. D. Ansari of the Department of Archaeology, Deccan College and Hamdi Bay, a famous media personality from *Statesman* prominently took part in the excavation. Dr. Zakir Hussain, former President of India, visited the site and the Late Mahendra Mohan Choudhury, Chief Minister of Assam, inaugurated the second phase of excavation at the site. People of the then Assam knew about the city of *Prajyotishpur* from the great Indian epics of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and the *Puranas* and in the *Pracya Sasanavali* published by the Publication Board, Assam. Therefore it was everybody's desire to see the exposure of this urban centre at Ambari situated at the heart of Guwahati.

A huge number of stone idols and icons including wheel turned kaolin pottery of buff colour discovered from inside the brick walled compartment at Ambari were the prized items to successfully think about an urban life at Guwahati. Since the writer felt at that time that he would be able to learn about the city of *Prajyotishpur* on the basis of the archaeological ruins at Ambari, he very carefully kept everything in his mind at that time

and wanted to do some serious research on the existence of *Pragjyotishpur* in Assam, in future. However, on every suitable opportunity, the writer did not forget to mention and discuss about *Pragjyotishpur* in seminars and symposia in India and abroad. He did seriously mention about the city of *Pragjyotishpur* in the 7th Spring Symposium on Science and Society in South Asia at Center for South Asian Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa in 1990 when he visited Hawaii from Dibrugarh University as a Visiting Fellow of Asian Cultural Council, New York. Similarly, the writer discussed the issue of the existence of *Pragjyotishpur*, an urban civilization in the Brahmaputra valley at Deccan College, the place of his doctoral research.

Finally, writer decided to work on the topic 'In Search of the City of *Pragjyotishpur* as a Ph.D. research project assigned to one of his doctoral students and presented a research paper on it at the 16th Congress of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association held at Melaka, Malaysia in 1998. This was more or less a successful venture to highlight the *Pragjyotishpur* in such a reputed international academic forum and it could draw attention of the academics to the issue.

After the presentation of the paper, Dr. Ian Glover, Institute of Archaeology, London, who is working on the emergence of urban culture in Southeast Asia, observed that for the first time important information on the existence of an urban centre in the easternmost part of India has come out. Dr. Glover appreciated me much on my effort to start with this research in the Assam region. Another appreciation came from another group of scholars from India headed by Dr. Vasant Shinde of Deccan College. Dr. Shinde who is involved in the research of Harappan and Post-Harappan culture asked me to keep up my research on *Pragjyotishpur*.

In a recent article, the writer (Medhi, 2002) presented some information regarding the city of *Pragjyotishpur* and its location in the following lines. "Most of the archaeologists believe, an ancient city in the name of *Pragjyotishpur* (*Pragjyotisha* means 'eastern astrology' and *pur* stands for 'place') mentioned quite often in the Indian epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and the *Kalika Púrana* did exist in the Lower Assam. I strongly feel, the city was possibly situated - i) at Guwahati or at Tezpur or at

Phulbari or at *Surya Pahar*, ii) or was located at Guwahati and extended to Tezpur, *Surya Pahar* and Phulbari. But its location at Guwahati is more acceptable because almost everywhere in and around Guwahati, kaolin pottery remains become available at a few strokes of a spade and most commonly during foundation work of a number of buildings. In addition to kaolin wares, the geographical position of the Brahmaputra River (a narrow valley bordered by hills) at Guwahati is much suitable for the growth of an urban centre. Also the location of a 'temple of planet-worship' called *Navagraha*, meaning an abode of nine planets of the solar system and its connection with ancient research on astronomy and also astrology, which also literary means *Pragjyotishpur*, comport much to its possible location at Guwahati city. Another temple complex called *Madan Kamadeva*, situated near Guwahati on the North bank of Brahmaputra, comprising nine temples in a series that represents a mini eastern version of Khajuraho temple appears to be another possible extension of *Pragjyotishpur*. Further, beautifully worked stone blocks of large size appearing almost everywhere at Guwahati are considered without any doubt to be the foundation stones and stone blocks that form part of a building/temple structure of the city of *Pragjyotishpur*. Ambari site as an entry port on the bank of *Dighalipukhuri* tank connected to the Brahmaputra River and to the *Sola bil* is another positive evidence of it. In the past, Brahmaputra River was connected to the *Dighalipukhuri* tank and to *Sola bil* that flows through Guwahati."

Besides the quotations in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, a detailed account of *Pragjyotishpur* is available in *Kalika Purana*. The site of Ambari that dates to around the 7th Century AD to 13th Century AD was considered as an entry port. Assam had excellent river transport system in the past and the connection of Ambari to the Brahmaputra River via the *Dighalipukhuri* tank and also with the *Sola bil* is important in this regard. In all probability, Ambari was a dockyard to the city of *Pragjyotishpur* and stone figures including pedestal, iron slugs and nails and the different types of ceramics were the cargoes transported here from different sources. We know that a factory site of stone curving with a temple foundation is situated less than half a kilometre away from the archaeological ruins of *Deo Parbat* beside

the Kamargaon-Numaligarh Highway (R. Borthakur: Personal Communication, 2001). It is called *Alongpira* on the distant bank of river Along little away from the National Highway, amidst a tea garden. The writer stated Tezpur in Sonitpur, Phulbari in Garo Hills and *Surya Pahar* in Goalpara as three other possible locations of this city. Also he said about the city extended to these three localities instead. The writer has reason to believe that all these localities connected to the urban centre at Guwahati and different cargos from those areas arrived at Ambari. Besides that kind of connection, the writer has also strong reason to believe that Guwahati was the proper location of the city of *Pragjyotishpur*, which is also supported by the geography of the Brahmaputra River. The strong reason towards the support of this conjecture is the presence of the Navagraha temple at Guwahati. The temple of *Navagraha* was a famous centre of research on astronomy and astrology in ancient India and a number of Indian exponents in these fields including Varaha Mihira visited the temple. It is further written in *Kalika Purana* that *Brahma* did thrown away a star (*Nakshatra* # 24) called *Abhijit* out of the solar system from this place in 2000 B.C. and this is later proved in the science of astronomy, which finds the number of stars to be 27 in place of 28 originally. *Pragjyotishpur* means 'centre of eastern astrology' and this temple was the principal attraction of the city. Therefore, the writer personally feels that the city was situated at the present day Guwahati and was contemporary to the Harappan Civilization.

Kaolin pottery that occurs almost everywhere in and around Guwahati is another important evidence, which tells us about an urban centre at this place. Moreover, evidence of kaolin earthenware manufacturing at Marakdola supports another view of the urban centre's requirement of earthenware from the outskirts of the city. The ethnoarchaeological evidence of a similar periurban habitation of potter communities at Guwahati today further supports it.

Social, political and trade relationships are some of the important bases of development and survival of an urban centre. On the national and international, social and trade relationship, Ambari provides some important and much relevant information. First the stone figures found at Ambari represent the Indian mythological heroes and heroines like the god *Surya* and goddess

Durga and many others reflect a social relationship in the national sphere. On its international trade relationship, the *rouletted* (?) and *celadon* pottery at Ambari suggest its possible links with Roman and Chinese empires. The former has doubtful authenticity but the latter confirms a Chinese relation with our existing knowledge of a 'trade route' with China via Arunachal Pradesh. Moreover the visit of Hiuentasang through Assam to the kingdom of Harshavardhana is important since he wrote interesting accounts of his travel to different places and their people. Besides all these connections, it had links with the East India Company, which is confirmed by the discovery of coins of that company at Ambari. Again the writer refers to some ethnoarchaeological data and mentions about the annual visits of the Sherdukpen and Monpas, two Buddhist communities of Arunachal Pradesh to Odalguri and Hajo. The first comes with their trade commodities to sell and latter comes on pilgrimage to the Buddhist temple at Hajo. It is an inter-community relationship in the spheres of trade and pilgrimage and vividly suggests similar coherence of different communities with the city of *Pragjyotishpur* in the past. Incidentally these two communities live close to the Tibetan territories.

A stone inscription from Ambari shows for the first time a note written in Assamese prose, which is indicative of the beginning of new style of writing epigraphy in prose in Assamese literature. Therefore Assamese language dates quite ancient.

When the writer talked much about the relevance of the site of Ambari and its finds in connection with the location of the city of *Pragjyotishpur*, he also finally wants to examine the environs of present day Guwahati in order to fit it to the urban context of *Pragjyotishpur*. *Navagraha* temple has been mentioned already. Other temple complexes in the vicinity of Guwahati comprise the *Ugratara* temple at Jorpukehuri, *Chatrakar devalay* at Uzan Bazar, Lord *Vishnu* and Lord *Shiva* temple complex of Sukreswar, famous *Kamakshya* temple at Nilachal hill, *Umananda* temple at the mid-stream island of Brahmaputra River, *Ashwakranta* temple at North Guwahati, *Gopeswar* temple at Doha-Kahara and *Madan Kamdev* temple complex further north, *Vasisthashram* at the confluence of Sandhya, Lalita and Kanta streams further south of Ambari. These temple complexes, the writer believes developed during the urban life of the city of *Pragjyotishpur*. Therefore, the

writer likes to substantiate that the present day Guwahati developed on the strong foundation of the ancient city of *Pragjyotishpur*.

Those apart, there are a number of traditional and social aspects on the existence of the city of *Pragjyotishpur*. There is a mention of *Pragjyotishpur* on a copper plate presented in 18th Century by Rudra Sinha, an Ahom King. Further it also figures in the stone inscription of Dunantra Rai at Ganeshguri *Ganesh* temple of 15th century AD. All these information point at a possible location of the city somewhere in ancient Kamrup i. e. the Lower Assam.

In conclusion, the writer likes to reiterate his contention of an absolute location of the city of *Pragjyotishpur* at the present-day city of Guwahati. Frequent occurrence of pottery ruins and beautifully decorated stone blocks almost everywhere in and around Guwahati and the location of *Navagraha* temple tell us with certainty about an urban centre at Guwahati in the past. As the writer stated already, Ambari ruins give us enough information about the existence of this city at Guwahati. Apart from the status of Ambari as an entry port (the writer also stated it to be a dockyard with cargo facilities), it might also have been an architectural school where training was given to the local artisan in the work of stone carving and sculpturing. It is true the resource artisans came from outside the city since there is no evidence of stone carving artisan groups living in the undivided Assam. Nevertheless, this idea does not suit to this observation since chisel and hammer are absent at Ambari till today (which might appear in future with a full-fledged excavated Ambari). For authenticating this statement, look for quarry sites of granite, the raw material of the stone figures and pedestal must be made.

The writer believes the hidden city of *Pragjyotishpur* lies under the present day building structures and road networks of today's Guwahati and many of our senior citizens and administrators are acquainted with the ruins of this hidden metropolis. An architect who draws and designs a building for any citizen at Guwahati knows about the existence of some kind of underground structures like a well, a brick wall, few stone blocks and also pottery at any part of Guwahati city. However

information about this kind of discovery is never passed to the administration nor to the archaeology department and they are buried again under the new construction resulting huge loss of information about the archaeology of the city. Further the pottery ruins that appear frequently in digging graves at the Athgaon Kabarthan situated on the ancient edge of the *Sola bil*, also equally escape academic attention. More apart what is written in the *Kalika Purana* is about an ancient cultural centre with an advanced life style of the people. In fact this ancient literature is a thesis on Assam that gives all kind of information about Assam and its people. The writer suspects, the entire description of *Kalika Purana* is a well-written discription of the lost city of *Pragjyotishpura*. However the writer wants to examine the sociological interpretation of this *Purana*, which has to be done with some authoritative research on it including all historical references regarding *Pragjyotishpur*.

A research into the existence of the city of *Pragjyotishpur* the writer considers being a much serious issue involving lots of money and manpower and, therefore, international attention in this regard is indeed a strong requirement. Mention may be made here of the involvement of UNESCO and other agencies and their works at *Abu Simbel* in Egypt and *Borbudur* in Indonesia. Search for the remains of the city of *Pragjyotishpur* at a number of areas in Assam and its adjoining states with a group of interdisciplinary researchers is required. The writer feels that the involvement of a group of strongly dedicated scholar is the need of the hour. The work has started already with the data collection as the writer is currently doing it. The data-analysis and writing and presentation of report will come at the final stage of this research. The writer is certain that, sooner or later, a culture that could be called *Pragjyotishpur Culture* would emerge, similar to the Harappan Culture in terms of its riverine character, which may be as old as the latter, if not older, provided we could reach the virgin soil in course of excavation at *Ambari*, in particular and elsewhere, in general.

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