



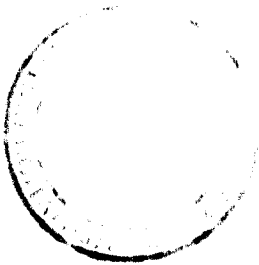
history and archaeology
of
ITANAGAR

DR. D.K. BORA



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**HISTORY
AND
ARCHAEOLOGY
OF
ITANAGAR**



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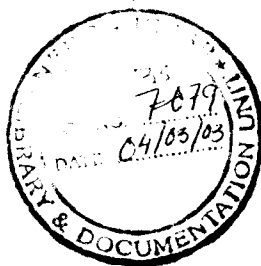
**DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH
GOVERNMENT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH
ITANAGAR**

HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF ITANAGAR : Written by
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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this book is to throw some light on the past of a place which has grown into a lively mini metropolis practically from nowhere. This is Itanagar, the capital of the 24th State of Indian Union viz. of Arunachal Pradesh.

The name Itanagar is undoubtedly of recent origin, which means the town of bricks. Nagar in ancient Sanskrit literature implies a city or town. Such nagar of those days were undoubtedly smaller in size in comparison to today's and even some of the nagars were perhaps no bigger than a Taluk headquarters.

What was the original name of Itanagar is not known. The Nishings, a schedule tribe of the State of Arunachal Pradesh are the autochthon of the Itanagar area. They speak a language, which is distinguished by the tribe name Nishing. No specific name ascribed to this place, before the shifting of the capital, by the Nishis, has come to light as yet.

It would be rather a futile exercise to try to find out the originator of the name Itanagar and any attempt on this is not going to serve any gainful purpose. He could be an insignificant Government official, who was perhaps one of the members of the scouting team assigned to locate a suitable site for the capital of the would be born State. With one's natural instinct of perceiving things, the first sight of the huge 'bricks ruin' roused his enthusiasm so much so that without a wink of his eyes perhaps thought what more better name could there be than to name the place Itanagar, whose history might be lying buried under these bricks. The history thus believed to have been lying buried he perhaps thought better be left to the historians and archaeologists to debate upon.

It is almost now over twenty years since the first Government Department of Veterinary was shifted from Shillong to Nirjuli, the debate is still on as to the authorship of this massive 'brick ruin' as well as to the veracity of the 'brick ruin' to call it a fort.

Indeed, this 'bricks ruin' represents a fort peculiar to the demand of the topography of this part of the country. There are descriptions about different types of fort in our ancient literature. Thus we find 'vana durga' (Forest Fort), 'giri durga' (Hill Fort), 'ishtika durga' (Brick Fort), 'panka durga' (Mud Fort) etc. This 'brick ruin' here represents a 'giri durga', 'vana durga' as well as 'ishtika durga'.,

Itanagar may not have a continuous history as such like Delhi or Lucknow but nevertheless it had witnessed historic past - may be short and that uneventful in the long roll of events that swept North-East India about six hundred years ago.

Here in this small book the author has carefully examined all the available materials that he could lay his hands upon - historic as well as legendary, with a view to put a lid on the various controversies as to the origin of the 'brick ruin' now called Itafort. While going to write about Itafort, the author has not only given various conflicting views as to the authorship of the fort put forward by different people but he has also dwelt at length about the circumstances that lead to the birth of the new State and its capital Itanagar. At the end, a small chapter has also been added which gives some idea of Itanagar as at the time of writing this book.

The author is grateful to Shri J. M. Tangu, IAS, presently the Commissioner to the Honourable Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar for having agreed to give a 'FOREWORD' to the book. The author feels that there can be no other better person than him being himself a Arunachalese and one of the senior civil servants of the State, who has been intimately connected with the growth of the State and of the capital, Itanagar.

I gratefully acknowledge the help and guidance of Shri Ashok Bakshi, IAS, Secretary (Research), Government of Arunachal Pradesh, who apart from being an administrator is also a man of letters. His constant reminder to bring out a book on Itanagar was instrumental in completing this book.

The author is also thankful to Professor J. N. Phukan, Head of the Department of History (now retired), Gauhati University,

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I am thankful to Shri Aduk Tayeng, Director of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar, for giving me the opportunity to complete this book.

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Itanagar, A.P.
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