Chapter V
Vowel Mutation

67. Vowel Mutation is 'the modification of a vowel through the influence of another vowel or semi-vowel of a different quality occurring in a following syllable' (A. F. D. 249). In the dialect the epenthetic vowels -i- and -u- in a following syllable coming after the vowels of the preceding syllable of a word change them in the following way. A nasal sound in the original word also changes the preceding -a-, -ä- and -i- to -e-.

68. Examples of vowel mutation:

(i) ā > e /i/, sorhāt - iā > sorhātā 'belonging to Jorhat'.
   upār - iā > upēirā 'senior'.

(ii) ā > o /i/, u in certain cases;
   bhādā - iā > bhoidā 'one born in the month of
   Bhadrapada'.
   ādhā - urā > ādhuārā 'have done'
   pathār - uā > pathourā 'running through a field'.

(iii) a > e /i/ in certain instances;
   rāikkah - i ni > rāi kkei nī 'a female demon'.

(iv) o > e /i/;
   hāso - ilā > hāseilā 'belonging to Hazo'.

(v) 0 in a monosyllabic stem > u/i;
   ot - iā > uītā 'idle'.
   khol - iā > khuilā 'one playing on a khol'.
   dhol - iā > dhuilā 'one playing on a dhol'.
   goph - iā > guiphā 'having moustache'.

(vi) e > e /i/, u
   barpetā - iā > barpeitā 'belonging to Barpeta'
   pet - ulā > peutlā 'pot - bellied'.

(vii) a > e /nasal.
   lez 'tail' (lañja).
89. Harmonic mutation "is a kind of vowel change by which the high or low
quality of a vowel in a following syllable conduces to a similar modification in a
preceding one" (A. F. D. § 259). In this section the raising of a preceding vowel
under the influence of a following high or vowel has been considered. This
phenomenon is highly characteristic of the Kamrupi dialect.

70. The types of vowel harmony from the historical point of view are the
following:

(i) \( a > o / i \).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>otithi, othiti</td>
<td>'guest'</td>
<td>(atithi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oti</td>
<td>'much'</td>
<td>(ati)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koli</td>
<td>'the kali age'</td>
<td>(kali)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koli</td>
<td>'bud'</td>
<td>(kalikā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khoti</td>
<td>'loss'</td>
<td>(kṣati)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goti</td>
<td>'manner, the end'</td>
<td>(gati)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ghori 'clock'  
ghoti 'a water jar'  
soli 'offspring'  
söhi 'signature'  
zori 'rope'  
sudi, zodi 'if'  
thogi 'betel-nut tray'  
dokhin, dokkhi 'south'  
dhoni 'rich'  
noli 'tube'  
noti 'a dancing girl or woman; prostitute'  
possim 'west'  
poitnā 'name of a female'  
bomi 'vomiting'  
bori 'pill'  
boli 'stout and strong'  
boli 'oblation especially slaughtering of animals in the name of gods and goddesses'  
bonis 'trade'  
bohi 'a writing book'  
bhori 'foot'  
soni 'jewel'  
rosi 'rope, string'  
lokṣhi 'the goddess of wealth'  
xeni 'saturn'  
xoti 'chaste'  
xoril 'body'
(ii)  a > o / u 

okhur 'naughty, a very strong and courageous person' (asura).
sotur 'clever, expert, swift' (catura).
solu 'a paineful of water' (calluka).
sos 'edge of a split bamboo' (cāncu, beak).
sokhu 'eye' (caksu). cf. PA. cakkhu.
potu 'expert' (patu).
bokul 'a kind of flower' (bakula).
bekhu 'name of a person' (vasudeva).
legun 'the sacred thread' (nava + guna).
xohur 'father-in-law' (evasura).
xogun 'vulture' (sakuna).
xoru 'small' (saru).
xomui 'in total' (samudāya).

(iii) Penultimate  a > e / i 

śākadehi 'the eleventh day of a lunar fortnight' (ekādasī).
tulekhi 'a small shrub venerated by vaisnavas' (tulasī).
pipeli 'long pepper' (pippali).

(iv)  ā > e / u 

xelukh 'root of the water lily' (sāluka).

(v)  o > u / i 

gui 'a kind of snake' (godhikā).
puthi 'a kind of fish' (proṣṭhī).
duli 'a big basket' (dolikā).
dunl 'a small basket containing some auspicious materials used in a marriage ceremony' (dronī). cf. dun 'a basket containing a certain measure'. cf. W. dōngē 'a wooden trough'. cf. Janā 'a small vessel made of plantain sheath' cf. W. dōnā 'a vessel made of leaves'.
71. In a few cases in the initial syllable $a > u/i$ and $a > e/u$, e.g.

- mūnih 'buffalo' (mahiṣa)
- muniḥ 'husband' (*manissa, manusya). cf. PK. munisa.
- dhenu 'bow' (dhanu).
- neul 'mongoose' (nakula). cf. nokul 'one of the five pandavas'.

72. With the addition of suffixes to Kamrupi verb or noun stem, the following types of vowel harmony without epentheses take place. The high vowels $-i-$ and $-u-$ in the suffixes generally conduce harmonic change of the vowels of the preceding syllable of the stems. These are also quite characteristic of the dialect.

(i) $a > o$ before feminine and conjunctive $-i-$ and adjectival $-i$; e.g.

- bagā 'white' but bogi
- par $- i >$ pori 'falling'
- ka $- i >$ koi 'saying'
- raj $- il >$ roṣi 'coloured'

(ii) $a > e$ before $-ti$, $-ni$, $-ri$ and feminine and adjectival $-i$; e.g.

- khusā $- ti >$ khuzeti 'itching'
- zirā $- ni >$ zireni 'rest'
- xanā $- ri >$ xaneri 'goldsmith'
- pāgāl $- i >$ pāgeli 'mad woman'
- boihāg $- i >$ boihēgi 'one born in the month of Vaisakha'.
- kūār $- i >$ kēri 'princess'.
- bāt $- i >$ bēti 'consisting of a yard'.
- bīlāt $- i >$ bīleti 'foreign'.

but.

- dāktār $- i >$ dāktāri 'given by a medical practitioner'.
- pātnā $- i >$ pātnāi 'coming from Patna'.

(iii) $ā > o/u$ in the final position, e.g.

- boihāg $- u >$ boihogu 'one born in the month of Vaisakha'.
- dabhāg $- u >$ dabhogu 'one born in midnight'.
tikhā - ru > tikhoru  
"one easily getting angry".

āhār - u > āhoru  
"one born in the month of Asadha".

maṣāl - u > maṣolū  
"one born on Tuesday".

(iv) ē > e / i.

xēr - i > xeri  
"having the weight of a seer".

tel - i > tei  
"oil man".

Vowel Assimilation

73. "Vowels of different qualities are assimilated to the sounds of neighbouring vowels" in Kamrupi also. For example:

- i - kirpin  "miser"  
  (krpaṇa).
  biriṣ as in biriṣ guti  "expert in all, hence naughty"  
  (vidāṅga).

- u - kundu  "a kind of jasmine"  
  (kunda).
  dustu  "wicked"  
  (dustā).
  ḫussu  "sun"  
  (sūrya).

74. The vowel of the negative particle na - which occurs before conjugated verb is assimilated to the vowel of the initial syllable of the root which drops afterwards, e.g.

na - kar - ā > nākrā  
"you (hon) do not do".

nā - sān - ā > nāsnā  
"you (hon) do not know".

ni - sin - ā > nisnā  
"you (hon) do not recognise".

nu - xun - ā > nuxnā  
"you (hon) do not hear".

ne - sēl - ā > nēmlā  
"you (hon) do not open".