Archaeological relics so far discovered in Arunachal Pradesh are not as prolific as in most other parts of the country. This, however, in itself should not be held as any direct proof regarding absence of human habitation in this region in the early days of Indian history. Much of what had been were obviously lost owing to the inclemency of nature which is particularly a characteristic phenomenon of the area. The destruction thus caused has again been supplemented by human wantonness. The difficulties of communication have also impeded the progress of exploration in the territory. Still, whatever little have come to light especially in recent years, deserve intensive examination from various angles and inter-disciplinary studies are likely to resolve many a knotty problem relating to the pre-history of Arunachal Pradesh.

In spite of the paucity of remains we do get here evidences relating to different phases of human civilisation indicating that it never remained totally isolated from the adjoining parts of North-East India or the bordering countries of Tibet, Burma, South China and South-East Asia. Rather it formed an integral part sharing in similar vicissitudes of human fortune and race movements, showing an identical development of art and culture more vivid in the earliest stage, gradually contributing no doubt its own tinge in the broad spectrum commensurate with the development of its special personality with progress of time details of which in every stage will be palpable.
only in minute inspection and are likely to elude the superficial observer, especially in this early phase of exploration with very few materials at our disposal.

Geologically Arunachal is situated in the eastern part of the Himalayas which is of comparatively recent origin in contrast to the peninsular India which formed part of the continent called Gondowana by the geologists. It was originally submerged like most other parts of North India in an Ocean known as Tethys which covered the entire Central Europe, Asia Minor, North India and Burma. Affinities in fossil remains in regions wide apart like China, Central Himalayas and Burma may be traced back to free migration in the Ocean. The sea-bed ultimately rose to form the Himalayas and in this process the northern parts of peninsular India were folded into mountainous ridges noticed in the Central Himalayas. The growth of man is said to have taken place simultaneously with this geological transformation around the close of the Miocene Period, more than a million years ago.

As yet we are not in a definite position to assert that any kind of primitive man autochthonous to the land evolved on Indian soil. Unequivocal proof in the form of perfect skeletal remains is yet to be found. But increasing indications regarding hominid evolution in the subcontinent are forthcoming. Till very recent times paleolithic men were not known to have inhabited east of Chotanagpur area. But lately a number of discoveries have shown the invalidity of earlier conclusions based on non-availability of relics which was due to lack of proper exploration in this region
and stretched the boundary of palaeolithic culture to the north-easternmost limits of the country. Habitation of early stone age people here is no longer a wild concept. Rather a further remote horizon is opened up recently by the geologists. It goes a long way to modify considerably prevailing notions of lateness of culture of Eastern India and also indicates the importance of more intensive investigation in the area which may reveal in time clearer clues to explain properly the different aspects of culture of the region necessitating a rethinking about the comparative significance of different ethno-cultural elements in the broader context of the entire subcontinent.

In this context it is worth remembering that as early as 1875 H.H. Godwin Austen noticed post-glacial action in the Naga hills which may perhaps be indicated as the beginning of research in Pleistocene geology in North-East India. Recently, as if to mark the centenary of the research, first-ever vertebrate fossil, viz., the molar of Bos, has been noticed by the Geological Survey of India from the upper tertiary horizons of Eastern Himalayas within Arunachal Pradesh. The evidence, found in the Ramghat area of the Lower Subansiri district, is immensely significant establishing the continuation of the Western Siwaliks, where similar finds are noticed, to the Eastern Himalayas. The latter may now be called Arunachal Siwaliks, to substitute the earlier designations like Tipams and Dihings, bearing similar palaeoenvironments as its western counterpart.

2. RGSI, 109, I, 1982, p.120.
The upper tertiary of Arunachal now can very well be recognised like the Western Siwaliks as the probable habitation area of hominids and paleolithic men. Siwalik fossil was first reported from Garo Hills in 1828. Surma Series in Tripura also yielded mammalian fossils. These evidences of Siwalik fauna in different parts of North-East India have now been taken together to suggest migration of these elements from Arunachal Siwaliks to those places or vice versa towards the end of the Miocene period. Weidenrich's hypothesis regarding migration of fauna to China and South-East Asia from this area also gets additional confirmation from this discovery.¹

Regarding stone age tools, artifacts and other remains in North-East India the discoveries made by the scholars of Gauhati and Dibrugarh Universities are quite illuminating.² Stone Age sites were located in Garo hills between 1500 and 2500 feet above sea level. Lower, Middle and Upper Palaeolithic tools were collected by Sharma from Garo hills. Here pebble-tools, hand-axes, cleavers and choppers represent the Lower Palaeolithic period. The Middle Palaeolithic period is characterised by flake-tool industry based on Proto-Levalloisian and Levallaisian traditions. Blade-tool industry based on fluted core tradition represents here the Upper Palaeolithic period. Discoveries in other adjoining states like Manipur and West Bengal also indicate that more details of pre-historic settlement sited in the entire North-East India including Arunachal Pradesh may be revealed in future with more intensive investigation. Neoliths and

potsherds have also been found as surface finds. Well-stratified gravels and Microlithic industry are also detected although the latter was not well developed owing perhaps to absence of suitable material. Evidence was also noticed of the presence of stone-axe industry based on unifacially flaked axes characteristic of Hoabinhian culture of South-East Asia and Late Sohanian flake-tool industry based on the utilisation of chert.

Against this perspective of palaeolithic culture in its close vicinity and the fossil remains of Arunachal Siwaliks indications of early stone age sites inside the territory can no longer be lightly ignored. The broad outline in North-East India is established. It is now only a question of time to fill in the details.

B.P. Bopardikar in his report of exploration in Daphabhum area of the Lohit district on behalf of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1969-70 recorded discovery of stone age artifacts and neolithic implements, mentioned river terraces and indicated that intensive search may lead to discovery of industry sites.¹

S.N. Basu of Dibrugarh University claims to have detected in 1971 some seemingly palaeoliths in the Kamlang valley of Lohit district.

Y.A. Raikar discovered chips of semi-previous stones like chalcedony, jasper, etc. from Vijayanagar in the Tirap district in 1971 which according to him suggests existence of microlithic industry in the valley of Dyun or Noa Dihing river. This may be viewed against

the wider context revealed by the evidence from Garo hills noted above.

Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford preserving a large collection of Stone Age antiquities also reveal Mesolithic tools of Hoabinhian tradition found from Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. ¹ Stratified sites of the Garo hills establishing Mesolithic and Microlithic sequence after Upper Pleistocene may roughly be accepted for Arunachal Pradesh too, pending further discovery from within its boundaries. The beginning of Mesolithic period has been roughly dated back in this context to c. 10,000 B.C.

As already indicated we do not have any definite knowledge about the authors of this palaeolithic culture as to their relation with other contemporary peoples. However, proximity, ecological identity and similarity of remains suggest that they belonged to the same racial stock as were responsible for the contemporary cultures of North-East India, Burma, South China and South-East Asian countries. These could have been the Austro-Aleutic-speaking people who are supposed to have lived here till their dispersal or miscegenation with later Mongoloid immigrants of North-East India who penetrated from China and South-East Asia in the Neolithic period. ²

Neoliths are much more numerous than the palaeolithic tools. These have been collected from all parts of the territory. These are, however, mostly found without stratigraphic context. The tribal

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¹ T.C. Sharma, 'North East India in Pre-historic Times', The Tribes of North East India, pp. 7ff.
² Ibid., pp. 10ff.
people cherish them as charms and occasionally use them as amulets to ward off different kinds of evils and calamities. They have no other use with these objects. The collectors believe them to have fallen from sky with thunderbolt. Generally these are said to have dropped on the ground in the vicinity of the dormitories or struck the houses. Perhaps these myths developed through ingenuity of story tellers who thus attempted to explain their occasional discovery by the tribal people obviously in and around their habitats, either in course of some building construction or digging ground for various purposes including the requirements of agriculture. Here may also be recognised an interesting way to remember the original discoveries of the tools through beliefs made popular and thus becoming an integral part of the oral tradition of communities having no literary records to incorporate such important evidence and documents. At the same time the nature of the stories indicate their primitive and rather extraneous origin from the point of view of the present tribals who do not have any direct link with the culture represented by the objects.

Beginning from about the middle of the nineteenth century a number of European Officers and archaeologists as well as their Indian counterparts have collected neolithic tools and implements from various parts of the present territories designated Arunachal Pradesh as a result of cursory interest or regular endeavour in course of their official duties compelling them to stay in here for a considerable period or undertake extensive tours through this

1. ARASI, 1924-25, p. 102. Similar beliefs are found to prevail in Burma, China, other parts of Asia and Europe, vide JASR, New Series, 5, Part I, 1909, pp. 300f. 
region thus generating in them a liking for and association with the land and people. The records of their attempts and resultant discoveries have appeared in scattered journals and reports most of which have been synthesised by A.H. Dani on the basis of a large collection of these relics in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, where they found entry through presentation by the British Officers and otherwise. As is, however, natural, many more similar objects have been discovered even after independence of the country through the efforts of different individuals. Still further finds are likely to be reported in future with the extension of scientific research in this region.

Here we may give a brief chronological account of the discoveries made so far and short details of the objects themselves so that their affinity with the relics of the related peoples and cultures of contiguous regions may be brought out in sharper outlines to dispel the prevailing ambiguity and haziness that pervades the early history of Arunachal.

In 1867 John Lubbock noticed a light green jade celt collected by E.H. Steel from Namsang in the Tirap district.¹

In 1870 Lieut. E.H. Steel himself described three more celts from the same area.² One of them collected by W. Haly from the Nootes is made of greenish jade, somewhat mottled, with high finish,

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giving appearance of being rust-stained in some parts. Another piece collected by Lieut. W. Barron was of same material but smaller in size with marks of use. The material of the third is a different kind of soft white friable stone appearing brownish yellow on its outside.

Captain Gregory found one curvilinear rounded butt axe from the Mishmi Hills towards the close of the nineteenth century.

Around 1917 Healy collected a curvilinear facetted tool made of streaked and mottled jadeite probably from within the boundaries of the present Arunachal Pradesh.

R. D. Banerji noticed in 1925-26 one stone adze discovered in a Padam village in East Siang district by T. P. M. O'Callaghan which according to H. C. Dasgupta was of the type described by J. C. Brown.

J. P. Mills found a curvilinear facetted tool and three rounded butt axes from Ningru, north of Noa Dihing river in Tirap district in 1933.

Two years later J. H. Crace collected from Sadiya Frontier Zone three facetted tools, three rounded butt axes and two miscellaneous type long implements, one made of gneiss and another of jadeite,

1. 'Note on Stone Implements from the Naga hills', JRAL, I, 1872, pp. 161.
2. ARASI, 1924-25, p. 102.
3. RGSI, XLII, p. 244.
the latter procured from Ningru near Noa Dhing river.

In 1937 J. P. Mills found a rounded butt axe from Tigra (Minong) hills.

Almost all the above specimens along with another curvilinear facetted tool made of dolerite and a rounded butt axe made of gneiss obtained from Sadiya Frontier Area have been preserved in Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.¹

In 1962-64 N. Sarkar noticed two triangular and two shouldered axes in possession of villagers in Singpho and Aka areas. Besides these he collected chisels, axes and damaged pieces of axes from different parts of Arunachal Pradesh.²

One polished chisel found before 1960 from West Bokar area of Siang is now in the Central Museum of Arunachal Pradesh.

M. C. Goswami collected three neolithic celts from Rupa in West Kameng district which are preserved in the Anthropology Department of Gauhati University.³

In 1969-70 Y. A. Raikar found three triangular ground axes and one bar type polished broken celt during excavation at Bhismaknagar in the Lohit district without stratigraphic context. Now these remain in the Central Museum, Arunachal Pradesh.

So far only one scientific expedition for pre-historic remains has been undertaken in Arunachal Pradesh under the leadership of B. P. Bopardikar of Archaeological Survey of India jointly with the Geological Survey of India in 1969-70.¹ Daphahum area of Lohit district was explored with a view to tracing habitation sites of primitive man and determining relation between Western and Eastern Himalayan glacial and glacio-fluvial phenomena and formation of terraces of the stone age industries. An area, 300 kms. long, was explored in the Kamlang, Lati and Tellu or Upper Lohit valleys.

As a result, river sections and terraces were detected at Chowkham, Alubari, Wakro, Cheebra, Kale, Teehun, Glow and Chakhro. The finds comprise here various artifacts like cleavers, ovates, cores, flakes, points, proto-hand-axe, unifacial and bifacial choppers, side scrapers and neolithic tools like chisel, shouldered and triangular sylayed axes. Lati and Tellu river valleys also were subjected to investigation. The regional adjoining Hawai is found to have broad and well developed terraces. Similar terraces could also be detected between Tawling and Hayuliang. One unificial chopper and quartzite a flake resembling a unifacial/chopper type of Kangra Valley in Himachal Pradesh have come to light at Tawling. Bopardikar stressed the need and importance of study of terraces between Hawai and Hayuliang in search of the relics of early man. Thus, new different sites yielding materials of stone age and neolithic periods have been detected inside Arunachal. The results of the exploration along with the later discovery of vertebrate fossils now strongly

¹ E. P. Bopardikar, loc. cit.
suggest habitation of pre-historic man inside the territory.

In 1979 D. K. Duarah reported two ground axes and one working part of an axe and a probable neolithic site from Parachi-Polo area of the Damin Circle in the Lower Subansiri district, situated along the Kamla river.¹

Neolithic pottery has not yet been detected inside Arunachal Pradesh. But a number of varieties of sherds of the period have been found from surface and stratified deposits along with polished stone tools from different parts of Assam and North-East India.² These objects revealing affinity with Chinese and South-East Asian pottery suggest possibility of future finds in Arunachal belonging to the same cultural zone.

Comparative study of materials and technology exhibits close affinity of the neoliths of Arunachal with the objects of Chotanagpur, Assam, Burma, Indo-China, Malay Peninsula and China which suggests identity of craftsmanship.

We do not here come across any direct proof of iron or copper age either. However, the technology behind the manufacture of certain neolithic tools are thought to involve use of metal implements and thus the neoliths themselves were perhaps products of a chalcolithic period.³

¹ 'Neolithic Celts from Subansiri District', Arunachal News, Shillong, August 1979, pp. 13f.
³ Dani, op. cit.
Another important discovery in this respect is that of a megalithic site at Jamiri in the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.  

Burial practice of certain tribes of Arunachal such as covering the graves with stones and raising of small tablets as well as presence of stones arranged in the fashion of dolmens, however, were noticed even earlier in Kameng and Subansiri regions. Megalithic culture is known to exist in India in living form among the Khasis of Meghalaya, Nagas, the Gonds of Bastar, the Oraons and Mundas of Chotanagpur and the Bondos and Gadabas of Orissa. Elsewhere, i.e., in South India it is a thing of the past with only ruins and historical relics to bear testimony to its prevalence in bygone ages. In Arunachal we find it in a state of gradual decay with the most of the present people no longer continuing in the stage of culture represented by the relics. The megalithic culture is believed to have entered India from both the north-west and north-eastern corners, perhaps in later part of neolithic or post-neolithic period. The megalithic complex of North-East India with which the site in Arunachal must be correlated is perhaps a creation of the south-East Asiatic wave of Austronesians that penetrated through that corner of the country. Thus inspite of paucity of materials the very existence of neolithic implements found from a fairly wide area covering almost all parts of the territory along with the megalithic find surely indicate an early wave of people entering and residing in the territory for quite a

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2. V. D. Krishnaswami, 'Megalithic Types of South India', Ancient India, No.5, January, 1949, p.36.
Even the beliefs and practices of the present tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh in relation to these pre-historic stone tools call for an analogy with the Burmese and other peoples in South-East Asia who are also known to cherish similar curious ideas regarding their origin and use them for identical purposes.

The combined evidence of ethnology and archaeology, in other words, a clear correlation between distributions of a particular variety of neolithic celts, viz., the shouldered and polished variety with Austro-Asiatic languages is held to demonstrate that no other wave of people than the Austronesians were responsible for the development of neolithic culture in peninsular India characterised by the use of the long polished celts with quadrangular section. Megaliths of North-East India, the very region through which it entered naturally were product of this cultural wave.

But the suggestion of the Austronesian authorship has been challenged on the ground that the theory is not based on archaeological evidence. In its place an alternative theory has been postulated suggesting a new wave of neolithic culture in North-East India sometime around the first millennium B.C. ascribing the authorship to an early band of mongoloids entering from the direction of Burma, practising a rudimentary type of agriculture.

Accordingly third century B.C. is roughly held as the earliest limit for South Indian megaliths. The alternative propositions would suggest a much earlier beginning around the seventh-eighth centuries B.C. The difference between the megalithic industries of southern and north-eastern parts of the sub-continent has been explained as being due to difference in origin, the former owing its inspiration to the Dravidian and the latter to the Austro-Melanesians. Final word in the matter will have to await further discovery of concrete facts.

Coming to the historical period we have here monuments, inscriptions, coins, weapons etc. starting from roughly the latter half of the first millennium A.D. Nothing is definitely known at present relating to the earlier period.

Monuments of both secular and religious types are known. Secular structures comprise remains of forts, palaces, wells etc. Religious monuments include Brahmanical Hindu Institutions and also Buddhist shrines and monasteries of Vajrayāna and Theravāda schools.

Secular structures and Brahmanical shrines and institutions are to be encountered mainly along the foothills near the southern boundary adjoining Assam.

These, in a way, seem to reflect a cultural penetration from the adjoining areas of Assam or the broader field of East India.

1. Ibid., p. 163.
This is evident from the impress of the traditions of Assam, Bengal, Orissa and Bihar wrought deep into the remains. As is obvious, in olden days, especially prior to the advent of the Ahoms and even in their early period of immigration, there was not much restriction of movement across the different territories in these areas where political authorities of different reigning powers seem to have been anything but very rigorous in the modern sense. Thus the territories seem to have formed part of various adjoining kingdoms that arose in the nearby regions of Assam. Occasionally, princes and dynasties in their dark days found refuge in comparatively remote areas inside Arunachal. Cornered by stronger powers many a potentate extended their authorities in this direction of less opposition. Powerful kingdoms of Kāmarūpa and Assam also at times appear to have included lower reaches of the territory. Myths and legends growing around the ruins and Assamese tradition embodied in folklore and the Ahom Buranjis also indicate such penetration which explains similarity of the remains with the Assamese monuments.

Let us now have a close view of the objects themselves, which may be discussed sitewise to bring out their peculiarities as well as mutual similarity or affinity with the monuments of Brahmaputra valley and thus put them in proper perspective.

To start with the secular structures we may note that a number of old forts, cities and pukhuris or artificial ponds have come to light some of which have been excavated. But all the sites
present single layer of habitation and stratigraphic evidence has not been of much help in dating them with any amount of accuracy. The objects exhumed also are not indicative of any significant association in this regard. However, on analogy of the bricks used and pottery found as also certain bas-relief stone figures and other objects with Assam sites as well as the general architecture and traditional accounts help roughly locate them variously between the latter part of the first millennium A.D. and the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries A.D.

The so-called forts of Arunachal are mostly fortified strategic points built up for defence against the onslaught of casual invaders not perfectly accustomed with the terrains but were not comparable to the medieval forts of the Mughals or the Rajputs intended to withstand large-scale operation. These were best suited for the territory and the means of local potentates and overlords who had obviously to depend more on hide-outs and strategic guerrilla warfare. The hilly tracts and valleys, numerous nallas and torrential rivers not suited for navigation and the forest lands with little resources to provide large hordes, tortuous tracks through dense forests, lofty and rugged mountains infested with poisonous snakes, elephants and other ferocious animals and insects of every type, heavy rainfall together are in no way suitable for pitched battle. For any outside power fighting local people in such an arena had to face literally an uphill task in which they had every reason to be outwitted at any point and were consequently always in
The experience of the British adventurers and invaders against the tribal peoples in more recent times will indicate the magnitude of the problems before the invading armies of earlier period with even less amenities and resources at their disposal. Consequently, the local rulers had little to be afraid of in the form of such pitched movement of long-endurance and, therefore, the most suitable type of military operation in these areas was guerrilla tactics. This may be somewhat glimpsed from the story of the conflict of the Ahoms with the Mughal invaders in which large Mughal armies were more often than not put to discomfiture by light troops of the Ahoms.

Therefore, we find here only small fortified outposts or vantage points to watch the movements of the enemy and hit them at the most opportune moment or remain in hide-outs and properly guard the lines of quick retreat at the time of debacle. This is probably why here we do not come across any imposing structure of the sort found elsewhere in Northern and Western India of the medieval period. Earlier date of some of the sites also requires consideration in so far as they may indicate an earlier stage of fortification and town planning especially in this part of India and South-East Asia with similar ecological pattern. The structures may be compared with similar fortifications of early period like Nalrājārgarh in West Bengal or Śiśupālagarh in Orissa, where, however, more elaborate structural remains have been unearthed, whereas, in Arunachal, the remains in most cases afford little access to the details of the
inner buildings or rooms which are either damaged beyond recognition or appear more likely to have been of very rudimentary nature suited to the type of the structural complex.

A number of these sites were explored and recorded since the second quarter of the nineteenth century by British officers like S.F. Hamnay, Hamilton Vetch, G.W. Beresford, E.A. Rowlett, E.T. Dalton, T. Bloch and B.C. Allen.

Obviously the early efforts were often amateurish in nature and specialists and technical experts took over the responsibility only in later years after initial discoveries made by enthusiastic adventurers brought home the immense prospect for serious work. None of the reports are at all negligible from our viewpoint primarily because still in many cases they provide the only detailed evidence and also indicate the nature of the sites prior to the ravages of nature and damage done by human activities in later times. Further, archaeology in this region has not yet made progress much beyond the elementary stage so that even non-technical reports are quite significant as highlighting the broad characteristics if not the smallest details with or without the analysis of the specialists and even technically speaking often the methods applied by these explorers were flawless and their achievements quite admirable.

Exploration by full-fledged archaeologists started from the beginning of the present century with the expedition of T. Bloch. After independence the activities gathered further momentum, both on the local and central levels.
As a result, a number of sites of the territory have been known to contain historical monuments and remains which will go a long way to restore the forgotten story of its past. Total number of the sites may even exceed hundred if living monuments are also included. Out of them published materials are available only about some twenty sites.

Definite dates regarding each of the sites cannot be postulated till further evidence is available. But some approximation is possible on the basis of comparative study of the material remains. In a very few cases, however, dated records also render some help. Traditional accounts, legends as also occasional indication in the records of Assam, to some extent, dispel total uncertainty. In case of the living Buddhist monuments we are more fortunate in so far as the monastic records and known facts of Tibetan, Bhutanese or South Asian history come to our aid.

The earliest limit of chronology of the remains is now difficult to determine any more than a vague line drawn somewhere around the close of the first millennium A.D. Some Puranic accounts or traditions appear to push it back still further but archaeology has not yet been of any help to confirm such possibilities. The latest monuments are known to have been constructed even in the present century and the activities are still continuing in the sense. The historical moments representing roughly the Brahmaputra valley culture, however, seem to have been erected last around the middle of the second millennium A.D.
Some of the sites from the nature of their construction appear to owe their origin to proper and consistent planning and effort by somewhat powerful political authorities or well settled communities, while others might have been due to stray activities or construction made sporadically on some emergent occasion. This is more evident along the southern part of the territory and is perhaps indicative of the uncertainty and political turmoil that allowed little respite to local people during the long period of rivalry between numerous local chiefs and potentates as well as their struggle with the invading Ahom, Muslim or British armies.

In construction of the forts along the southern frontier more attention was paid to communication with the Brahmaputra valley as well as to sufficient water supply, geographic vantage, land suitable to support the army and other people inside and secret routes for escape.

These forts stand in fair comparison with the ancient accounts and prescriptions contained in Sanskrit literature. They may thus have more closely followed the texts than other later structures and thus reflect survival of the older traditions in this respect in the remote hilly tracts away from the area of their origin. The distance may explain late arrival and survival of the earlier heritage which had by the time undergone substantial modification in the heart of the subcontinent.

To start with we may mention the fortress at Bhalukapung in the West Kameng district. As early as 1905 B.C. Allen described the fortress as situated above a hill of 300 feet altitude near the place whence the Kameng or Bharali leaves the hills inhabited.
by the Hrussos. The hills were surrounded on three sides by brick walls. On the fourth side, the fortifications continued across the hills up to a nearby hillock from where the gradual descent towards the plains commences. Some portions of plinths and hewn stones found within the rampart as also the pathway paved with stone ascending the eastern face of the hills demonstrate elaborate planning and occupation. Unfortunately the remains have been damaged beyond recognition in course of road construction activities in the area. The bricks of the site are, like those of most other forts of the territory, quite different from the Ahom bricks (infra, Ch. V).

Traditions associated with the ruins to some extent suggest antiquity of the structures which are otherwise to be determined only through scientific analysis of the remains and comparative study with Assam monuments. The name given to the site itself reflects the legend connecting it ultimately with the Puranic king Sak Bali. According to Assamese tradition, embodied in the Buranjis, Bali ruled in the Tezpur region identified in local tradition with Sonitapura. His descendant Bāna was a contemporary of Naraka, hero of many stories of the Purāṇas and Tantras and described as the father of Bhagadatta, king of Kāmarūpa, mentioned in the Mahābhārata. Bhāluka, a grandson of Bāna, is believed to have established his capital at Bhālukapung near Balipara below the Hrusso hills. The Hrussos also claim the king to be their progenitor.

Whatever be the truth of the legend it seems to indicate
otherwise at least the loss of memory of its construction at the
time of the development of the region. In the absence of further
examination of the site, which now hardly seems possible, it is
difficult to determine the authors of the construction who appear
in all probability to have been pre-Ahom settlers of the region.
The dominions of both the Sālastambhas and the Pāla rulers of Assam seem to have included the region. It is possible that the
site owes its origin either to them or some other local rulers
driven to the hills from the plains by some stronger enemies.

The fortification at Naksāparvata is a somewhat later
construction. It is situated in the Seijosa circle in the foothills
of the East Kameng district and is within the Namura Forest Range
of the Khasha Parvat Ruins.* The fortification at Haksaparvata is a somewhat later
construction. It is situated in the Satijosa circle in the foothills
of the Bast Kameng district and is within the Namura Forest Range
of the Khelong Forest division. It was excavated during 1980-82.

The mound or hillock is three kilometres upstream on the
right bank of the Bargang river from the Forest Rest House at
Namura. The hillock has an area of 240 square metres and height
of 8 metres. The site is oval in shape and enclosed in the south,
west and north by the Bargang river and in the north-east by the
Kalpong nalla. There are no villages nearby and the Nisis are the
local tribals.

1. Y. A. Raikar and S. Chatterjee, *Archaeology in Arunachal Pradesh*,
Shillong, 1980, p.46.
2. D.K. Borah, 'Archaeological Ruins of Naksaparbat', *Resarum*, IX,
No.1, 1983, p. 26ff. For earlier reports on the site, see R.M.
and PI. XXIV; G.C. Talukdar, 'The Naksha Parvat Ruins', *Arunachal
News*, Shillong, August 1973, pp. 3ff.; C.R. Samaddar and R.D.
Choudhury, 'Archaeological Objects from Bargang T.E.', *Bulletin of
The Assam State Museum*, Gauhati, No.2, 1976, pp. 76ff.; J.C. Dutta,
'Notes on the ruins of Naksaparvat in Arunachal Pradesh', *Resarum*,
VIII, No.2, 1982, pp. 30ff. etc.
The ramparts represent a total length of 766 metres of construction enclosing a flat space inside. There are two gaps, one in the north-east, 125 metres long and another in the south being 18 metres in length. No regular entrance exists at present. 166 metres of the wall to the west of the southern gap is of dressed stones, the rest is of earth. The stones do not have any binding material. From the western end of the stone wall starts an 184 metre long bund. It runs parallel to the wall for 140 metres at a distance of 30 metres from it. From the western end the wall bends to the north-east and runs for 280 metres. Average height of the rampart is 1.60 metres. It is sloping on either end and no ditch exists beside it.

Nine house sites have been noticed within the enclosures. One of them, the biggest in size, has a floor space of 5.60 metres x 4.10 metres. The floor was smooth being made of stone blocks of different sizes one of which has been found to measure 1.30 metres x 0.40 metre. Other houses do not reveal stone flooring. Roofing materials like tiles are absent.

Broken pieces of chiselled stone pillars are strewn all over the hillock. The longest of them is 1.40 metres in length. The pillars now remaining at the site have plain hexagonal shafts except one having a niche with caitya like seven-arched carving at its top surmounted by a kalasa or vase above. Eight such pillars were formerly collected from the site and are now preserved in the Assam State Museum at Gauhati. These pillars are square in the middle.
There is a pond outside the rampart 60 metres to the south-east of the hillock. It measures 276 metres x 54 metres. It is filled by a streamlet from the north-west and drained by another in the east flowing into the Kalpong nalla about 73 metres away from the pond.

The land around the pond is low and protected by a bund which starts from the south-west corner of the pond. It continues for 140 metres to the south and then turns eastward and runs for another 110 metres. Accumulated rain water was drained to the east from across the bund by a small nalla. The bund apparently protected a habitation site as suggested by scattered pillars found there. A small pit with a diameter of 4.15 metres has also been noticed there.

Two ring-wells have been found. The first is situated in the hillock itself. It is made of dressed stones of equal sizes with a line of burnt bricks at its top. Sherds of bricks are also noticed around it. The bricks are flat and are different from those of Ita fort.

The second well is a little away from the mound near the river-bed. It is somewhat smaller and made of burnt clay rings.

A square stone block containing a short inscription written in Tibetan language and script was also found from the site. It is now in the collection of the Assam State Museum. It
records funeral rites of a Buddhist person.

Attempts have been made to identify the authorship of the remains of the site on the basis of the known facts of Assamese history. R.M. Nath would connect the ruins with the Vārāhīs of Bodo-Kachari origin, while D.K. Borah suggests Gutiya association for the structures. Both these groups of Mongoloid people ruled in the upper parts of Assam adjoining Arunachal Pradesh roughly between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries A.D. and may have occasionally annexed southern parts of the union territory. But both the views are mere conjectures and further enquiry alone will reveal definite facts. At this stage, however, the ruins of Itā fort and Bhalukapung in the two adjoining districts afford some insight into the possible course of developments. The site could have originally formed part of some frontier territory of Assamese rulers of medieval age. Some such frontier chiefs as those of Mayapura, identifiable with Itanagara, find mention in the Ahom Buranjis even in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries. These rulers could occasionally rise to independent status in the days of temporary turmoil or decay of the suzerain power. Alternatively, may other petty local chiefs have also occasionally been referred to in the Muslim and Ahom records relating to the region. They gained prominence from time to time and could have been responsible for the present construction.

The ruins themselves exhibit an extension of the Brahmaputra valley or rather East Indian culture with a strong Mongoloid tinge.

palpable in the physiognomy and execution of the sculptures.

The assertion of Borah\textsuperscript{1} definitely assigning the remains to a period later than the sixteenth century A.D. has little basis to be accepted as final. Rather a date roughly between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries A.D. suggested by Samaddar and Choudhury\textsuperscript{2} appears more realistic. The iconography and style of execution of sculptures of the site also evince affinity with some of the sculptures of the Tāmresvari temple and the coarser variety of relief figures of Mālinīthāna suggesting a date not far removed from the later period of life of these monuments.

Borah has tried to establish Buddhist connection of the site on the basis of uṣṇīṣa relief and tree symbol on the pillars. These motifs, are, however, too common in Indian art to have any much significance. Rather, the Tibetan inscription clearly demonstrates existence and activities of some Vajrayāna Buddhist people there. This may, however, relate to a stray incident such as a short stay or visit of some people at a later period. In view of its contiguity with the habitats of the Vajrayāna Buddhist people of West Kameng this is quite understandable.

In a way, the relics of the site may be held to exhibit the nature of political developments and inter-relationship

\begin{enumerate}
\item Op. cit., p. 33.
\item Op. cit., p. 84.
\end{enumerate}
of different cultures in the region. Extension of the Brahmaputra valley culture from the south ultimately decayed due to lack of sustenance during the days of degeneration of the culture in its land of origin in later period. On the other hand, the vigorous pressure exerted from the north and west by the waves of Buddhist elements with Tibeto-Bhutanese affinity, which may more broadly speaking be designated Indo-Tibetan culture, completely overwhelmed it and led to a total change in the life pattern of the territory.

Next may be mentioned the Ita fort situated at Itanagar, the present capital of Arunachal Pradesh. Although known to the British explorers as early as the beginning of the present century it could not then be thoroughly surveyed owing to thick forest cover. It has been variously described as an old city or a hide-out located on a plateau near the foothills of the Mishmi area 20 kilometres away from the Hármatí Station of the North-East Frontier Railway. The site is on the confluence of the Dikrang and Badapani, the latter coming from the old site of Ratanapura. The rivers are locally known as Par and Pachin.

The site has been excavated and an interim report has been published. But the three dimensional recording system has not been followed here nor the modern scientific techniques of analysis of the strata, sections and the finds and as a corollary specific dating could not be suggested from the results. Rather on the basis of a less definite evidence of comparative study of the relics and the

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site with those of adjoining areas of Assam as well as known facts of Assamese history and traditions a date around the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries has been suggested as the period of its construction. In the absence of other evidence the suggestion seems to be not unlikely in view of the tumultuous condition prevailing during the period. The construction may thus very well represent a hide-out erected for defence against Muslim, Ahom or Cutiya invasions.

The structure has also been identified by some with Mayapura, which according to a local tradition represented the capital of Ramacandra, a scion of the Jitari dynasty founded by Dharmapala in the eleventh century. The said king is supposed to have ruled over a kingdom extending from Bhalukapung to Majuli with his original capital at Ratanapura in Majuli. Ramacandra had a second name, Mayamatta. He is variously placed in the thirteenth or fourteenth century A.D. After his reverses in his conflict either with the Ahoms or the Cutiyas and the Vārahid kings, he is said to have fled from his kingdom. In course of his sojourn he came into contact with the Nisis, residents of the Subansiri district, and with their help established a powerful kingdom having a brick-built city named Mayapura. Another tradition would suggest a third name Kalyanapura for Itanagara ruled over by a powerful king named Jhao. Both the traditions mention Hāramatī as the queen of the founder ruler of Itanagara named Ramacandra or Jhao who was killed by his own son Arimatta or Majhi.

The hill preserving the ruins is locally known as Hitā or Itā because of the scattered cut-stone blocks and bricks noticed.
here long before the excavation was undertaken. The fortified area is irregular in shape surrounded by brick ramparts and natural ridges. Two brick walls and three gates have been found. The western wall is 1.40 kilometres long with two gates. The eastern wall is a little over half a kilometre in length and has only one gate. The walls are in average 1.5 metres wide and appears to have been originally 5 metres high according to the nature of its specific position. The walls continue across the undulated valleys, ridges and streamlets with ruins of culverts and steps noticed at places. Natural calamities like earthquake, rains and rapid growth of vegetation have conjointly damaged the original structure and transformed it beyond recognition.

It is defended by natural ridges in the north and south with the walls protecting it on the other two sides. The entire area is about a square kilometre in extent with a gradual descent from south to north. Streamlets and gorges serve as sources of water supply, means of communication and escape routes at the time of debacle. In the north-west, the currents flow into the Mowb nalla and the north-eastern currents join the Papu nalla. Finally the Mowb joins the Senkhi river and the Papu with the Pachinriver which ultimately combine and is called Badapani.

Three gates were built at strategic points. The eastern gate has been greatly damaged. It is principally made of stones. Situated at the highest level within the fort (512 metres above mean sea level) it is facing Doimukh in the valley of Dikrang and the most
advantageous for invigilation and defence of the route from Haramati.

The southern gate is better preserved. Primarily made of bricks it reveals, however, restricted use of stone slabs with animal and vegetal motifs in the doorways. Located 480 metres above mean sea level, it was intended to resist any southern invasion from the direction of Gohpur or Ramghat.

The entry to the area was perhaps mainly through the western gate facing the Senkhi river. It has got lesser protection owing presumably to little chances of outrage in that direction. No idea of any residential building inside the area is available. These could have been thoroughly destroyed leaving only brickbats and stone slabs scattered here and there.

Variety of bricks found may have been locally produced for which suitable soil was readily available. Sandstone, though not rare in the region, is not found at the site, gneiss of granite being the local stone. The construction is a well planned work requiring clear grasp of the topography and control over human and material resources.

In the Lohit district we come across more such ruins of cities and forts chief of which is popularly known as Bhamakanagara. It is an old hill fort constructed most probably in pre-Ahom days although any definite record about its period of construction is

not yet known. This site has also been excavated but the old techniques applied did not help much in arriving at any definite conclusion regarding specific date of authorship. The latter, however, may be guessed on further analysis of the finds and cross checking of other archaeological and literary evidences. At present, however, palaeography of the legends on some inscribed brick-tiles found from the site, although amid ruins scattered on the surface, suggests some religious activity roughly around the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries A.D. furnishing approximately a lower limit for the complex. However, the possibility of the tiles being manufactured by some late devotees visiting the area in pilgrimage long after desolation of the historical site cannot altogether be excluded. But some affinity of the motifs on the brick-tiles with those on the others found in situ fixed into the walls of the rampart, noticed in the beginning of the century, suggest their contemporaneity. If, however, the Tāmresvarī temple, situated in an adjoining area across the river is considered as having been associated with this palace or fort in the form of family chapel of the ruler’s antiquity of the fort can be definitely pushed at least prior to 1442 A.D., the date of an inscription found there. Puranic testimony about the central deity of the Tāmresvarī temple and Assamese and other local traditions centring round the sites would suggest, however, a far more early date for them. The simple architecture and material remains also seem to indicate them to be older than the medieval forts of India. Most probably the authors were some pre-Ahom monarchs of the area. Whether they are to be identified with the Cutiyas, Kalitas, the Pāla rulers of Assam or
some even earlier kings of Assam we are not in a position to specify pending further discovery of more definite clues.

The fort is associated in popular tradition with Bhismaka, a legendary king of the Bhagavata Purana who is said have ruled in Vidarbha with his capital at Kundina and had a daughter named Rukmini. Rukmini was betrothed to Sisupala, a prince of an adjoining kingdom, but was carried away by Krishna on the day of her marriage. After the defeat of the pursuers they were married amid popular rejoice in the very capital of Bhismaka.

The Puranic and Epic stories have been provided local sites in Assamese tradition possibly with the progress of Hinduisation of the Ahoms, similar process often being noticed elsewhere in India as well as in the South-East Asia. The traditions, however, in a way prove comparative antiquity of the sites thus described, the authorship of which was no longer in the memory of the people, who were themselves obviously in no way associated with their construction. From this viewpoint even some definition regarding a period prior to the Cutiya rule, which was almost coeval with Ahom penetration, also does not seem fallacious. Further specification will be possible with the availability of clearer indication regarding the date of origin of either the Puranic stories or the local legends. That these areas were possibly included in the domains of early kings of Kamarupa like Bhaskaravarman and his successors may be perceived from such accounts as are provided by Huien Tsang or Puranic description of the different parts of
Kamarupa as well as the records of the Pala rulers of Assam. A date around the close of the first millennium A.D. has also been suggested by the explorers and the excavators on the basis of wheel-turned pottery akin to those of the Gangetic basin, terracotta art and advanced knowledge of metallurgy. Art-motifs and their execution also reveal similarity with the relics of Assam, Bengal and other parts of Eastern India.

The fort is situated about twenty four kilometres east of Roing on a plateau-like land in the foothills of Mishmi area two kilometres east of the point where the river Diphu emerges from the hills.

The mountain provides natural defence on three sides so that the construction was mainly intended to prevent any southern aggression and took an elongated semicircular shape. The earthen rampart is about 4.5 metres high and 5 metres in width and continues for 5 kilometres with occasional gaps in between. The fortress has an extent of 10 square kilometres.

The central structure of the complex is a heavily ruined palace of brick facing east with a plinth area of 1860.52 square metres. It has three halls, two extension rooms and six entrances. A wall of stones 287 m. x 193 m. with a maximum height of 1.5 m. surrounds the building brick walls of which remain upto 1.80 metres at the most. Loop-holes in the brick walls might have been meant for shooting or arrows and spears. The base of the exterior of the building is covered with an off-set of two bricks, while the walls
stand almost on natural soil. Tiles often with decorative motifs were fixed on the inner side of the boundary walls and might have been also used on the roofs. No brick soling is found on the floor made of hard soil.

On the two sides of the fort there are two gates. Both are nicely built of bricks having identical designs. Two rooms are attached with the western gate, which is bigger in dimensions, while the eastern gate has only a single room. The eastern gate is in a better state where the walls remain upto a height of 4.5 metres which appears to have been its original size. The western gate is facing the north and the eastern gate the south. In both cases straight entry is prevented by a leftward turn.

The complex reveals good planning and meticulous construction. Evenly chiselled sandstone blocks, 20 inches long, 1 foot broad and 10 to 8 inches wide were regularly laid. The bricks are of a superior quality eight to five inches long and six to four inches broad with an width of 1/2 to 2/2 inches.

Next may be mentioned the hill fort extending over two Idu villages known as Chidu and Chimri in a nearby area to the north of Roing. The earthquake of 1960 has totally obliterated the remains at Chidu, while two brick-built rooms have been unearthed at Chimri in course of excavation in 1973-74. A number of remains of bricks noticed in the region are locally known as Rukmini Nati (i.e. bricks

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1. Y. A. Raikar and S. Chatterjee, op. cit., p.23.
of Rukmini) or Rukmininagara, reminiscent of the legends centring round Krsna and Rukmini mentioned before. Pottery and bricks also suggest identity of authorship and contemporaneity of the sites with Bhismakanagara.

Another fort in the same region has been traditionally ascribed to Sisupala, to whom Rukmini was betrothed. It has been described as an extensive complex with double defence. On the outer side there is a rampart of stiff red clay below which is found a terrace, twenty yards broad. Beyond this the hill is very steep and ten to thirty feet high. The main entrance and portions of the defence on two sides are made of bricks, remains of which were noticed in different spots in the interior, too. The northern side of the fort was defended by the hills requiring no man made protection.

A mud fort on the Sadiya-Tezu road, 6 mks away from Tezu also deserves mention. The earthen rampart, 2.44 metres high and equally broad, enclosed an area 366 metres in length and 350 metres in width. It has slopes on the sides with two ditches, each 6 metres wide, inside and outside the rampart. The ditches have protective bunds, 1.22 metres in height, on both sides. No entrance has been noticed.

The enclosed area is higher than the surrounding region. A circular mound at its centre, somewhat nearer its south-eastern

corner containing potsherds indicates antiquity of the site. Diameter of the mound is 30 metres which is at present 3 metre high, although its original height was about 4.5 metres. An earthen platform, 16.50 x 10.40 x 1.5 metres, to its south seems to indicate the approach. Tin Dolong Nallah, a branch of the Lohit river flows to the south of the fort.

The complex seems to represent a defensive mud-fort or redoubt of a modest dimension unlike the fortified city of Bhīsmakanagara. It was suitable for a small band of soldiers to maintain vigilance against the enemies from their hide-outs inside jungle, especially in guerilla warfare, the normal practice in the region. Scarp and counter-scarp provided by the rampart and ditches immensely strengthened the defence in the topography of the country.

Strategic considerations are palpable from the situation of the fort on principal route from Sadiya and Bhīsmakanagara to Parasurāma Kūnda facing the Lohit river, perhaps to keep watch on the enemy from its left bank around Chowkham and hence the position of the mound meant for this purpose nearer the river. The fort has been assigned roughly to a period about the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries A.D.

Stray remains of other constructions have been reported from other parts of the territory. Earthen works at Pratāpagarh indicating an embankment of 20 feet width was found to continue for above two miles along with north of trunk road and join the Majuligarh ending in the foothills.
Two masonry walls on two sides of the Burai river near Ramagada or Ramghat in the Lower Subansiri district have been noticed. The walls are made of dressed rectangular blocks of stones which do not show any sign of mortar or cement. One of the walls is about 300 yards long and 10 feet in height, while another is 15 feet high. No structure nearby is found at present. Only a sacred cave and stone carvings are known to exist in the vicinity which is also said to yield unglazed, baked potsherds. Apparently the walls represent some defensive construction of medieval period.

The forts in Arunachal seem to follow the rules of fort architecture regarding varieties of forts, choice of sites and construction as are found in old texts like the Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Manusmriti, Kautiliya Arthasastra, Sukraniti, as also treatises on architecture like Manasara, Silpaśāstra, Māyāmata, Mānasollasa, Akṣabhairavakalpa etc.¹

It is not possible at present to specify any particular text followed by the builders in Arunachal which is, however, not very essential since fundamentally they differ little from one another except indicating certain regional variation and evolution over the ages.

Types of forts have been variously described by early writers as vana durga (forest fort), giri durga (hill fort), istika durga (brick-built fort), panka durga (mud fort) etc. according to their characteristics. But from the extant specimens it appears that

sometimes a fort could have combined different characteristics. Bhismakanagara, Rukmininagara and Ita fort can thus very well be described as giri durga, vana durga or istika durga. Bhismakanagara having also the additional characteristics of panka durga. Mud fort of Tezu falls into both the categories of vana durga and panka durga.

Classical texts further distinguish between the forts according to their shapes. Thus the forts having regular prescribed shapes fall into a separate category from those of irregular shapes. Bhismakanagara have a semicircular form, Mud fort is rectangular, while Ita Fort, Chidu-Chimri and Bhulukapung and Naksaparvata ruins do not demonstrate any such regular shape.

The Akasabhairavakalpa, a text of the 16th century A.D., gives details of a semicircular durga which should be of medium height and have wet gorges. This account fits in with Bhismakanagara.

The Yuktikalpataru, a medieval work, asserts that forts near hills or rivers can have both regular or indefinite shapes. Natural forms require building of ramparts and moats and also the existence of forest cover to render the forts impenetrable. Ita Fort comes under this category.

With regard to the choice of the sites the Akasabhairavakalpa suggests that a forest fort is to be constructed with defensive ditches around it at a place inside dense jungle full of lofty trees, thickets of thorns and creepers, infested by tigers, lions, bears and other wide animals and ferocious tribes where sunshine never reaches.
the ground but potable water is available. All the forts of Arunachal demonstrate these considerations. Bhīsmakanagara having five component parts of the ground floor and the palace comprising three parts as well as the gates, the eastern gate facing south and the western facing north, honestly follows the injunctions of Kautilya.

So it seems that the architects of the forts in Arunachal were well-versed in classical Hindu tration and guided by the principles laid down in literature in this regard. This is evident from the construction of the period roughly between the 12th and 18th centuries where little influence of tribal architecture is to be seen. Rather they exhibit extension of politico-cultural impact of the Brahmaputra valley inside Arunachal as a result of imperialist advances or search for place of refuge and better defence by princes put to discomfiture in their struggles on the plains of Assam.

Other remains of buildings, tanks, roads etc., occasionally noticed in different areas afford us some idea of townships, palaces, and habitation sites as well as communication routes which have long since gone out of use due to shifting of population for political or natural causes.

In the locality around the altar of Buda Budi, situated in the Doab of the Mikrang and Dibang, there exist a number of tanks and brick structures which have been conjecturally associated with the Tāmāresvarī temple or rather the broad complex of Bhīsmakanagara, Sīṣupālagada and Rukminīnagara. Similarity of materials used and
mode of construction suggest link between all these sites which may well represent parts of one and the same township or kingdom, though definite assertion will be possible only when fresh evidences are available.

Three brick-built tanks of the shape of parallelogram were found. Their length was thrice the width. Each had two bathing ghats on two opposite sides at the mid-point of the embankments. Bricks of superior variety were used without or soorkee for gukkathe embankment built in three steps or ledges reaching the water.

One of the tanks was 280 yards in length and 96 in breadth roughly having a north-south alignment. Hewn blocks of sandstone were used to build the ghats and the sideways. Battle axe and other marks comparable to those of the Tamresvārī temple were engraved on blocks of stone. Existence of large Banian trees, fine Nahor, Neribi & (canarium strictum), Tapor (Xanthochymus pictorius) and other fruit trees amid the surrounding jungle near the ghats is also significant suggesting human habitation at the site.

The second tank was found on the right bank of the Dikrang. In its vicinity could be seen a high earthen rampart and ditch which continued in the direction of south-west, west and then north-west where a brick-built gateway and a tank existed. A road towards west was found to proceed from here to the Dibang. An water-course on the remains of the ditch was visible before the gateway. Buttresses of hewn sandstone on both sides of the ditch and large stone slabs lying around apparently indicate the existence of a
a bridge over the ditch at this point.

All the tanks were enclosed by the rampart which along with other evidences and accounts, such as reports of other tanks, brick and stone structures, mounds, cultivable lands etc. as well as the similarity of stone and brick masonry works between the different sites, seem to suggest that the entire country from the Dibang to the Kundila river about 10 to 12 miles apart from each other was quite populous at one time and perhaps belonged to a single kingdom wielding authority over Bhismakanagara, Sisupālagada etc.

A carved block of sandstone, 7\(\frac{1}{2}\) feet long, 18 inches broad and 10 inches thick was noticed within an enclosure of bricks measuring 96 x 84 feet. Neither lime nor mortar was used in the enclosure. Some of the bricks in the doorway, as in the case of a buttress on the western side, measured 18 x 12 x 3\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches. The wall was 4\(\frac{1}{2}\) feet thick and above 6 feet high including the coping of bricks.

There was a wall of tile rings (used in Bengal) in a corner of the enclosure and a brick terrace near the eastern wall and on it the stone was found placed parallel to its face. From its make (its inner side being the uppermost divided into 3 compartments by an 1\(\frac{1}{2}\) inch high ledge and the central compartment having three cavities, the others having two each) it has been regarded as a stone used for pounding rice but originally forming part of the door of a temple. Its sculptured face and dimensions have been taken to suggest that it originally formed part of the door of a temple.

B. C. Allen also recorded discovery of brick foundations of
some old structures as well as four tanks near Bhīsmakanagara in 1873, one of them being almost equal in size as the famous tank of Sibsagar.

Numerous such artificial ponds are still found in the lower Dibang valley. These are locally known as pukhuri, an Assamese variation of Sanskrit puskarini. Generally these are earthen works having square, rectangular or V shapes. Occasionally bricks of Bhīsmakanagara variety have also been used. Not less than ten such pukhuris, viz., the Jeng, the Kānyi Nat, the Kampo Nat, the Eyom Nat, the Itā or Rukhumoni Pukhuri near Ithili, the Ahom Pukhuri near Koronu, the Padum Pukhuri near Jia, etc. have been noticed near Roing. Among these the Itā Pukhuri has a rectangular shape, while the Padum Pukhuri is shaped like V, both showing use of bricks. These as well as portions of man-made canals near Bolung represent irrigation system of historical period.

A road known as Rajagāda Ali proceeding from Sadiya to Bhīsmakanagara via Bolung, which is connected by another road with Rukminīnagara, also reflects life and activities of the region apparently during pre-Ahom and Ahom periods.

Religious structures of Arunachal broadly exhibit three distinct traits. In the foothills we come across the ruins of temples and shrines which were products of Hindu inspiration and belonged to the school of Eastern Indian art. This tradition obviously penetrated the hills and flourished there during the period of advances made by different ruling dynasties of Kāmarūpa.
or other parts of Assam representing similar culture. But in spite of survival of fewer relics a gradual decline is noticed in later years with the growing impact of a different tradition. The Brahmanical tradition thus seems to have been slowly supplanted by a tribal culture of Mongoloid origin. Political and physical changes in the areas perhaps led to a shifting of population and the resultant void was filled in by new immigrants from across the eastern frontiers or other remote parts of the territory itself.

On the other hand, the western and north-western parts of Arunachal demonstrate Buddhist architecture of Vajrayana school of art, while Theravada shrines predominate in the eastern zone. Circumscribed by these rich traditions the simple tribal culture prevails amid remote hills.

Of the first school the most notable specimen is the temple of Maliniithana apparently representing the earliest phase wherein the impress of the Assam-Bengal cultures is the strongest.

Maliniithana is situated in the lower part of the Siang district about one kilometre east of Likabali. The temple site is located just at the edge of the foothills on a hillock, about 21 metres high, overlooking the plains. It was exclusively made of stones but is now found in ruins. There is no river nearby except a nulla that has only seasonal flow during monsoon and the Brahmaputra is about 8 kilometres away. The site is still visited by people from far and near in pilgrimage mainly from the plains of Assam.

The site has been supposed to be the same as pithasthāna in
the east of Kamakhya referred to in the Kalika Purana, a text probably composed in Assam towards the close of the 1st millennium A.D. Head of Sati or Parvatī, dissected from her corpse by Viṣṇu's discus, is said to have fallen near Akāśī Ganga. Local legends would identify the site with a place near Likabali, at a short distance from Mālinithāna, where pilgrims go for holy dip. A temple nearby also finds mention in the legends and the ruined temple of Mālinithāna is regarded to be the same.

The name Mālinithāna has been explained in the tradition with reference to the Kṛṣṇa myths. Kṛṣṇa and Rukminī, on their way from Bhuṣmakanagara to Dwārakā, are said to have been received here by Śiva and Durgā, the latter offering them garlands. Kṛṣṇa addressed Durgā as Mālinī in jest and hence the name Mālinithāna. The story reveals an attempt to explain the origin of the site and give it a hoary antiquity.

The ruins, on the other hand, demonstrate the temple to have been constructed perhaps in the palmy days of temple construction in India when the classical architecture attained its full fledged form. It may well owe its origin to the constructional activities of the period of the Pāla rulers of Assam ruling between the tenth and twelfth centuries A.D. The sculptures adorning it closely resemble those of Tezpur and also contemporary sculptures of other parts of Assam and Bengal (infra, Ch.V).

At present only the basements of the temple remain in situ, the walls and roofs having completely crumbled down. From an examination of the platforms and the surviving pieces of the architectural
components it appears that the temple followed the Orissan style of the medieval period which had extended to Assam.

The platforms indicate that the temple perhaps consisted of a pitha or sanctum sanctorum with curvilinear sikhara, a mandapa or jagamohana having pyramidal roof of horizontal tiers and a third lesser mandapa or portal before which on a pedestal a figure of the divine bull Nandin was placed. The temple was west facing with the different components built on the same axis extending from east to west. The basements of both the sanctum and mandapa (jagamohana) are rectangular cruciform in shape with five layers of mouldings revealing beautiful engravings of leafy and floral designs. The maximum height of the basement (pista) is 2.44 metres. A huge āmalaka found among the ruins possibly formed the crowning member of the sikhara of the sanctum along with kalasa or vase. The length of the sanctum (deula) is 10 metres. The sculptural exuberance and engravings visible on ruined parts of entablatures, friezes, pilasters, brackets, pillars, lintels etc. afford us a clear idea of the rich adornment of the facade and sides of the exterior of temple with numerous figures of divinities, sages, vaksas, vidyāchāras, dvārapālas, apsaras, enchanting damsels, erotics, dwarfs, rampant animals, floral and vegetal designs as well as auspicious symbols like vase and foliage with two lions on two sides. Thus a rekha shrine (deula), a cruciform on plan, with a square cela, plain inside and curvilinear sikhara with projected pagaś on all sides was possibly the highest member of the temple complex having a rectangular jagamohana of lesser height.
similarly astylar on plan and a smaller hall or portal before it.

Divine bull, Śivalinga, Tāntrika figures like Mahāmāyā in union with Śivalinga, figure of Durgā etc., along with legendary traditions referred to above together seem to indicate the temple to have been perhaps a Śaiva shrine with Tāntrika inspiration. Leanings of certain Pāla rulers towards Tāntrikism also provide significant pointers in this regard.

Tāmresvari temple of Lohit district is another important shrine belonging broadly to the same cultural group. Situated 8 miles east of Sumpura, on the right bank of a river called Dolpani or Deulpani, a streamlet receiving accessories from the Dikharoo or Dikrang river, it stands in latitude 27°56', longitude 96°21', 5 miles away from the Tebangkhunti air strip on the Sadiya-Tezu route, which is about 7 miles distant from the Paya Inspection Bungalow. The temple is surrounded by dense forest and at present remains hidden amid inaccessible marshy land.

The name Tāmresvari is generally supposed to have been derived from copper roof of the temple which, however, was never seen by the modern explorers of the temple. It has also been suggested, on the authority of Yogini-tantra, that the goddess represented the presiding deity of Hayatāmsra Pitha of northeastern region and hence came to be known as Tāmresvari and the copper temple was constructed in conformity with her appellation.2

On the other hand, T. Bloch's arguments appear to be the

2. B. K. Kakati, Mother Goddess Kamakhya, p. 65.
most convincing in this matter. It has been pointed out that the epithet really meant that the goddess was established by Tamra, a son of the mythical king Naraka mentioned in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. This is quite understandable against the background of the Indian custom to designate the temples and deities after the names of the founders. So here also we come across a legend growing around the story of its origin.

Nothing definite is known of the period of its construction. However, an inscription dated 1364 Saka, i.e., 1442 A.D., found from the site furnishes some important information. Therein the deity has been described as Dīgaravāsīṁī which along with similar references in the Kālikā Purāṇa and Yoginī-tantra seems to suggest that the temple was long known to have been located near some river called Dīgara or Dikkara, identifiable with modern Dikharoo or Dikrang. At the same time, it also recorded construction of the brick enclosure around the temple. The evidence is quite interesting and confirms the surmise of Colonel Hannay, as early as 1848 that the temple was possibly rebuilt about the middle of the fifteenth century.1

It may also represent a shrine originally built during the reign of the Pāla rulers of Assam or even in an earlier

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period which seems to have attained importance in the days of the Cutiyas and the Ahoms justifying renovation or repair of the sacred construction. Human sacrifices are said to have been offered there till very recent times, when finally the Burmese invasion disrupted and put an end to the practice.

The temple was made of granite and sandstone blocks with a brick enclosure. The compound wall was roughly 208 feet by 130 feet. The wall was about 4 feet thick and rose to a maximum height of 3 feet built on a foundation of sandstone blocks. It had a stone gateway and door on the western side which was probably the main entrance. The lintel with lotus designs carved on its edge as well as decorated small pillars and an elephant figure, perhaps placed on them before the gate, were found among the ruins. Another stone gateway with similar carvings leading to the stream seems to have been constructed at the south-eastern corner, ruins of which were found in the river-beg. The inner face of the enclosure in the east and west was adorned with brick tiles measuring approximately 14 inches square with high relief figures of divinities as well as floral and animal motifs like warrior on caparisoned horse, Hanumān, horse and tree, two fighting peacocks, lotus, cempa, Nāgāsura etc.

The temple itself was 8 feet square inside. Its walls were about 4½ feet thick. In the front there were recesses on

1. The nature of reference in the Kālikā Purāṇa narrating Naraka's conquest of territories extending up to this temple strongly suggest high antiquity of the original shrine, which certainly became prominent at the time of composition of the work or the portion containing the reference and, therefore, certainly existed even earlier.
both sides of the door. On one side of the door was carved the image of Siva acting as a dvārapāla or guardian of the temple. Excepting the lintel and doorway the walls were plain both inside and outside. At a height of 10 feet outside there was a projection of stone, a little fluted below, which formed a cornice. The wall continued for about two feet above this on which perhaps the roof rested, but there was no remnant of it even at the time of exploration in the first half of the last century. However, some 5 or 6 feet long pieces of stone levelled below, found inside the temple, may have served as groins of support to the roof. The roof could be flat with a curved vase-shaped block found in the river-bed forming the centre of the dome. Inside the temple two śivalingas were seen in the middle of a large stone which could be approached by a few steps going down from the doorway which appear to have had a folding-door. Traditions record worship of Jñāni in the temple. The evidence of the remains, however, were taken to suggest joint worship of Linga and Jñāni. There were a number of round plates of granite sunk on the ground outside the door of the temple. These were believed to have been used to contain offerings. Beyond these stood a small brick terrace with low walls on three sides.

The walls of the temple followed the cardinal points its door facing the west. It is supposed to have been originally
a nāturāvatana temple comprising four shrines. It was situated at the south-eastern part of the rectangular enclosure which was constructed just above the stream in the east. But gradually the temple appears to have decayed due to such causes as migration of its votaries owing to political turmoil, earthquakes, rapid growth of forest etc. and became submerged in marshy land.

The Kalika Purana and Yogini-tantra as well as local traditions seem to indicate the site to be an important Saktapitha and a centre of Tantrika worship of medieval Assam. Its simple architecture and appearance have been regarded as indicating its high antiquity. Although the temple bore signs of repair in later times its original form seems to have been maintained. In the absence of further records it will be safer to ascribe it roughly to a date prior to the Cutiya rule in Assam and Arunachal. Its location suggests a possible connection with Bhismakanagara, whose rulers might have built it as a family chapel growing in importance afterwards. It is, however, difficult to determine whether it predates Mālinī-thāna which is not unlikely in view of its more simple form of architecture which could, on the other hand, be also due to naivety of its builders.

Another temple or place of worship known as Buda Budi was

1. Sculptures of Sūrya, Ganesa, Kāli etc. found from the site (vide R. M. Nath, op. cit., Pl. XXV) suggest some similarity with the Mālinī-thāna temple regarding cult and worship.
situated near the mouth of the Deopani, on the left bank of the Dikrang river, about 10 miles away from Sadiya. It was popularly regarded as a very holy and ancient site, older than even Tamresvari temple, enshrining Siva or Śiva and Pārvatī along with their Ganas.

Its altar is hexagonal with each face about 8 feet in extent inside. The walls are two feet in thickness having five rows of sandstone blocks, 10 to 8 inches thick, bound by iron clamps with the inner side of the walls covered with bricks. The floor is covered with rough slabs of sandstone. A large slab at the centre lying in the north-south position contained the Līṅga. On the west of the altar, there is a terrace in front of it, upon which the devotees were to place their offerings. The roof of the shrine has not been found in position.

Remains of two ramparts were noticed, the inner being lower in size and the other one found at the distance of 180 feet in the north-east. No gateway was visible in the ramparts, but a raised path proceeded from the west of the altar. There was a tank in the north-west within the first enclosure and an upright sandstone block with moulding on its edge placed near the terrace. The altar bore indications of repair, possibly following Hinduisation of the Ahoms and revitalisation of these cults.
About 8 miles north-east of the Paya Inspection Bungalow, near the thirty third kilometre post on way from Sadiya to Tezu, there is a śivalinga temple on the bank of the Haju river. In course of excavation at the site in 1965-66 two brick-built structures were unearthed. A solid cube of 0.915 metre enshrining a huge śivalinga made of granite, 1.06 metres high and a little away another cylindrical foundation of 1.20 metres diameter were found. Together they have been taken to represent a temple complex of the medieval period constructed roughly around the fifteenth century. No details of the style of its architecture is available. The bricks used at the site are well burnt and quite large in size, different from those of Bhīṣmakanagara which are smaller. One piece measures 38.10 x 38.10 x 7.6 cms. The present temple is located within a few furlongs from the Tāmresvārī temple and about 4 or 5 kilometres away from Bhīṣmakanagara. Probably represents a somewhat later construction belonging to the same cultural complex, indicating continuation of the heritage till the upheavals of medieval Assam led to a shifting of population when the sites were abandoned and ruined.

Another site in the Lohit district visited by pilgrims as a sacred place may also be mentioned in this connection. It is known as Brahmakunda or Parasurāmakunda, represented by two adjoining reservoirs of water near the head of the river, Deopani, thirteen miles to the north-east of Tezu. Although, here we do not come across any structural temple or shrine, there are certain chasms and niches in the rock where offerings are made. One
smaller kunda about 3 feet in diameter and a larger one about 70 feet long and 30 feet wide adjoining it were noticed there as early as 1826. Nothing is definitely known of the antiquity of the site although the carvings and formations of rock are suggestive of an old Gothic ruin, according to J. Bedford, who visited the site in that year. Legends found in the Kalika Purāna connect Brahmā and Parasurāma with the site. Brahma, a son of Brahmā through Amoghā, wife of a sage called Sāntanu, is said to have lived in a kunda, which therefore came to be known as Brahma-kunda. This kunda was later visited by Parasurāma, who made a passage for the water of this upper kunda to come down with a blow of his axe and bathed in the water. As a result his axe got detached from his hand indicating expiation of his sin of matricide. Hence the lower kunda is called Prabhukuthāra or Parasurāmakunda. This latter kunda was damaged due to earthquake in 1950, but has again been restored by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh and an annual fair is held there on the day of Makarasamkrānti. The Puranic stories indicate an earlier tradition regarding the origin of the river Brahmaputra source of which in Tibet came to be known only in recent past after scientific exploration of its entire course during British rule in India. Here we also get a confirmation of antiquity of the site.

In the Subansiri district, at a place near the confluence of the Subansiri and Menga rivers a rock inside a cave has been noticed to have two tunnels. It has some steps in its front for
approach. The front tunnel starts at the height of 6 feet from its base and continues for more than 30 feet having three sections like apartments of gradually diminishing sizes. The other tunnel towards the left has a small Śivalinga inside. It is made of black stone, 3 inches in height and 5 inches in circumference at the bottom. The cave is 29'3" wide near the opening and 32'1" near the back wall. The depth is 23'3", while the height is 20' at the front and inside it is 17'9" on the right and 14'6" on the left. It is regarded as an old Śivalinga cave of unknown antiquity.

A stone structure near Nari village in Pasighat Sub-division in the East Siang district may also be recalled in this connection. Period and authors of the construction is not known. Legends and mysteries associated with it, however, suggest it to be a Vaisnava shrine. The place is also called Vāsudevathāna.

As against this Assamese-Bengali tradition of the southern fringes, the western and north-western parts of the territory exhibit living monuments of the Vajrayāna Buddhist tradition in the West Kameng and upper parts of the West Siang and Dibang valley districts.

These demonstrate visible impact of Tibetan and Bhutanese architecture which appears to have penetrated these areas as a part of the religio-cultural waves from those quarters since at least the eleventh-twelfth centuries A.D. Varieties of Buddhist
structures originally evolved in India as modified in Tibet and Bhutan are to be found in plenty all over these regions of Arunachal.

Most important of them are the Gompas or Buddhist temples and monasteries. The earliest group of extant gompas are represented by those at Urgyanling, Sangeling and Tsorgeling, near Tawang, originally built by a Minmapa monk named Urgyan Sangpo sometime between the middle of the eighth to the third quarter of the eleventh century A.D. These were damaged due to Mongol invasion in the middle of the seventeenth century. The Urgyanling and Sangeling Gompas were rebuilt afterwards, while the Tsorgeling Gompa is still in ruins. A little later in date is the Kimne Gompa, situated near Jang, to the east of Tawang. It was constructed under the orders of Rang-ch'ung Dorje (1109-1192), who introduced the Karmapa sub-sect. The place is said to have been associated with Padmasambhava.

Some other Gompas were built on various sites, believed to have been visited by Padmasambhava. First may be noted the Taksang Gompa in Pangchen area situated in the northern part of the West Kameng district, where the Master went with a tiger and is supposed to have meditated for some time. (Tak means 'tiger' and tsang stands for 'place' in local Monpa dialect.) Next may be noted the Sarong Gompa at Jiktsang to the east of Tawang. The place name is held to indicate that the Master came here with a leopard, lik being the local word for leopard. The Baggajang
Gompa in the south-east of Tawang, the Terma Bungan Gompa in the village of Poidar, about 4 miles south of Tawang, the Bigha Gompa, about two miles south of Tawang etc. were also hallowed by memory of Padmasambhava. The Gompas were, however, certainly built at a much later period than the time of the visit of the great teacher but predate the construction of the famous Gelugpa monastery at Tawang in the seventeenth century.

The Brakar Gompa situated about two miles north of the Blau village, eight miles east of Tawang on the Tawang-Bomdila road, the Ariakdun Gompa in its vicinity, the Langaten Gompa, four miles east of Tawang, the Sanglamphe and Tadung Gompas, two miles east of Tawang, the Taidung Gompa near Thongleng, the Surchung Gompa near Lumla, the Talung Gompa in the Monpa village of Sanglem in the south-western region—all were constructed by Tanpei Dronme, who introduced the Gelugpa sect in Arunachal in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries A.D.

The Gangardung Gompa, situated three miles east of Tawang, was originally a small Karmapa temple. However, now it is controlled by the Gelugpas or Tawang. The Khingiangme Gompa, two miles to the north-east of Tawang is a Nimapa temple erected by Thechpa Rimpoe. Both of these existed before the construction of the Tawang Gompa by Lote Gyatso in the seventeenth century A.D. The latter was enlarged by Lopsang Thaphe and given its present shape.

The Kharsodung Gompa of Dirang as well as the gompas of Lish and Phudung villages of the Central Monpas represent some later construction. The Gompas at Rupa and Shergaon among the
habitats of the Sherdukpens were somewhat contemporaneous with these buildings. Among these the Rupa Gompa is known to have been erected in 1742 A.D., which sets the lower limit of this entire group.

Apart from these buildings in West Kameng a number of Gompas were also established during the last few centuries among the habitats of the Membas and Khambas, two other Vajrayana Buddhist peoples living in West Siang and Dibang valley districts. Most important among these being the structures found at Mechukha, Tuting, Geling, Mankhota etc. The tradition is still in the state of living among all these peoples and as a result numerous similar structures may be seen all over their villages.

The buildings in general follow the broad principles of classical Buddhist monasteries or Saṅghārāma noticed in ancient Indian examples. A central place of worship surrounded by residential buildings of various monks as are noticed in the bigger monasteries seem to be an elaboration of the numerous cells built around the central hall or altar of ancient vihāras. The architecture, plan and embellishments of the buildings, however, closely follow Tibetan and Bhutanese Gompas which have served as prototypes for the devotees drawing religious and cultural inspiration from these countries. Thus here also we find an admixture of Indian and Chinese art as in the case of the Tibeto-Bhutanese architectural tradition. As is but natural, in all these regions including Arunachal local topography, climate, availability of materials and also gradual development of local
bias led to minor alteration and modification of the broad principles.

Most of the gompas, here, have a single square or rectangular building generally with two or more storeys having the altar at the end of a central hall on the lower storey and a portal in front covered on three sides. Quarters of resident monks are constructed in adjoining compound. The colour scheme, window frames, roofs, mural paintings - everything resembles typical Tibeto-Bhutanese works. Plain massive walls made of stone blocks painted white rise upto the roof offset by coloured wooden columns, balustrades of portico and verandah of upper storeys, exquisitely carved and painted window frames, cornices, metal pipes, a painted border continuing all over the building near the top give a typical outlook of the structures. Barring the walls, almost the entire construction is wooden including the floors, windows, doors etc. with roofs covered by wooden blocks and metal sheets and having finials and emblems of precious metals atop the buildings. More important varieties also have additional structures like kakalinga or free standing portals, libraries etc.

Most outstanding specimen with elaborate design of architecture and decoration is met with at Tawang constructed in the seventeenth century A.D. The date of its construction has been given by Ram Rahul as 1680-83. T.S. Murty in an official work has also recorded a similar date based on some unpublished
documents. N. Sarkar, on the other hand, arrived at an earlier date between 1643 and 1647 on the basis of known facts of Tibetan history and the dates of two Mongol invasions of the area between which the Gompa is supposed to have been constructed by Lote Gyatso. It is, however, possible that the different dates relate to the original construction of a modest structure and modification and elaboration at a later period.

It is a large fortified complex constructed at a strategic point connected by three routes with Tibet, Bhutan and East Kameng. The magnificent structure, located above a high ridge overlooking the Tawangchu valley on one side and, on the other, lofty hills separated from the site by deep gorges affording it a protective cover, is visible from far away places shining like a gem amid the emerald green environ extending to the last limits of the horizon bounded with sparkling snow peaks.

The fortified area covers 135 square metres with a compound wall, 610 metres long. Altogether 65 residential buildings inhabited by monks of this Gompa as well as by those of many other Gompas of adjoining areas controlled by the Tawang Gompa, who often visit the Gompa for various purposes. Ten other structures like kitchen, office etc. are also to be found. The chief entrance to the complex is from the north-east. There is a māne in its front. Then we are to proceed through a kakalinga and two gates. Near the first gate are also to be seen an office and miniature shrine. Beyond the second gate lanes and bye-lanes paved with stone blocks and having stairways lead to the different buildings, while the main road continues up to the Central Gompa.
The central complex comprises the main Gompa and the library building built on two adjacent sides of the inner courtyard also paved with stone-blocks. There is a school building, a later addition to the complex to the north-east of the Gompa. The library is a store house of the old scriptures, other records and antiquities. It is a two-storeyed building with places of worship on both the floors. The upper storey preserving the books has a rectangular pillared hall with the altar at its back and scriptures being kept on racks near the walls leaving some space near the altar and the wall on its opposite side which has the windows and openings for light. The doorway to the hall is at the left corner adjoining this latter wall. There is a wooden portico projected from the building outside the door and the access to it is afforded by wooden stairs from the ground below. The ground floor also has a decorated portico.

The library faces south-east and in that direction across the courtyard is the main kitchen with a high wooden post at its side. In the south of the library is situated another building which houses the office and the store. Opposite this is the main Gompa facing south-west. There is a rear gate at the south-west of the complex. Certain gaps in the compound wall afford exits in the north-west where beyond a narrow path there is a deep gorge.

The Central Gompa is a three-storeyed structure with a number of rooms on the first and second floors. The ground floor has a rectangular portico with wooden columns and low wooden walls with railing on two sides of the entrance in front. From the two ends
of these wooden walls stone walls start covering the portico partially in front and completely on the left, right and back with a door at the back leading to a rectangular pillared hall which is the central hall of worship. From the right side of its rear wall a doorway leads to another smaller room enshrining a colossal Buddha image at its centre rising up to the second floor with three inscribed kudungs or stūpas including one of the founder monk Lote Gyatso popularly known as Mera Lama placed on altar on the right side of the image. From the right corner of the room near the doorway wooden stairs lead to the upper storey. Another staircase is also there just at the front of the Gompa from outside to the left of the portico. Numerous stucco figures and metal images of different divinities, sages, Lamas etc. adorn the lower and upper storeys which are worshipped, while there are also others manufactured for interested devotees. The portico is beautified with mural paintings, while the walls and columns inside are also painted and Thānkās hang from the pillars of the central hall of worship on the ground floor. The quarters of the Khenpo, i.e., the chief monk or abbot, the incarnate Lama of the monnastery, is situated on the second floor to which stairs at the front directly leads. A smaller third storey above is finally covered by the roof sloping on the sides from the middle. The exterior walls of the Gompa also show a slight inward bent. Wooden cornices cover the portico and the windows. A number of mānes or prayer wheels to be turned by the devotees circumambulating the Gompa are fixed on the lower part of the exterior of the walls of the Gompa.
Another category of characteristic Buddhist shrines found here is known as **chorten**, the Tibeto-Bhutanese term for the solid **stupa**, enshrining relics (**dhātu**), usually constructed near the roads. A **stupa** containing corporeal relics (**śārira dhātu**) of the departed is called **kudung**, while on preserving his or her personal possessions (**paribhoga dhātu**) is a **dunsten** or commemorative **stupa**. The cenotaphs assure good rebirth for the departed. But the **chörtens** are principally set up as votive objects by the lay followers of the faith who put only sacred images and scriptures inside them for the welfare of the community. Miniature metal and clay **chörtens** are offered to temples and placed on altar or occasionally adorn the niches of **māne walls**.

The hemispherical dome of the Buddhist **stūpas** of Maurya period is believed to have evolved out of the funeral mounds (**śmāṇa**) of the Vedic Aryans. It was gradually modified over the years giving rise to different forms including the two principal shapes of Tibeto-Bhutanese and Nepali architecture which in their turn served as models for the **chörtens** of Arunachal.

In one variety the hemispherical dome still dominates the composition. The other has a square or cruciform platform highly elevated in metal miniatures. The **hemikā** and the **chatrāvalī** or thirteen conical umbrellas representing thirteen heavens are modified into a spire of thirteen rings at the top of which are to be found a solar disc (indicating **Śrī Śivala**) on a lunar crescent with a circular device on the disc. The dome here is relegated to a secondary position compressed between the base and
the spire and is often square in shape.

The largest structural chörten of Arunachal Pradesh is encountered at Gorcham in the Zimithang circle in the northeastern part of the West Kameng district situated on the bank of a stream beside the path connecting Lumla and Zimithang. It was constructed presumably in the seventeenth century some time after the Tawang Gompa by a Monpa Lama known as Lama Pradar and designed after the Bodhnath stūpa of Nepal. The construction is said to have been completed in twelve years. Materials used are stone and mud plaster. The square base is 175 feet long on each side and the entire stūpa is about 100 feet high. Each face of the base has wooden prayer-wheels called māne within niches. The plinth has three tiers of gradually reduced sizes. On the four corners of the lowermost tier there are four miniature chörtenes. A paved path exists for circumambulation by the pilgrims. The hemispherical dome above the plinth has a square harmikā and a spire of thirteen segments with an umbrella above. The harmikā appears to have been originally endowed with a pair of painted eyes on all sides like those of the Bodhnath stūpa which have been completely covered under cement plaster during repair work in recent times.

Next important variety of architecture is the dzong or fortress, a type derived from Tibeto-Bhutanese examples. These are in general situated at strategic points which are provided in this topographical context by the slopes of lofty hills overlooking
valleys with numerous streamlets flowing down. Facilities of communication and political importance of the site were also certainly vital consideration behind their construction. The type was evolved in Tibet and Bhutan in and around the seventeenth century A.D. and naturally spread among the Monpas of Arunachal Pradesh belonging to a kindred cultural stock having close socio-religious connection with those countries.

Among the Monpas, however, we do not have many specimens of the dzong. But the one at Dirang in central part of West Kameng is an imposing structure deserving mention. It was erected according to local records in 1831. The fortified area having a four storeyed building could provide refuge for the entire village around it in times of emergency. Around the central building other minor structures are also found within the complex having a gateway in front with stairs descending to the road. Inscribed stone tablets are noticed in niches on two sides of the gateway. The entire construction is of stone block used for the walls, other parts like the floors, windows, doors, stairways etc. being made of wood. Steep mountain walls protect it from behind, while the location above an extensive valley guarded by a ridge, on which is situated the Kharsodung Gompa mentioned before, was highly suitable for watch and defence against any possible advance from the direction of Tawang or across the frontiers on that side.

The other zone of Buddhist influence in the eastern part of the territory also has its characteristic monuments of a different
Here live the Khamtis and Singphos inhabiting the Lohit and parts of the Tirap districts profession Theravada Buddhism. They immigrated to India from their earlier habitats in Burma and Southern China mainly during political troubles they faced there in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Naturally in their present homeland we come across structures and shrines originally evolved in Burma and South-East Asia.

The earliest surviving monument of this group is a Kangmu, the Khamti name for stūpa, excavated in 1971 at a place locally called Vijayanagara.\[1\]

Vijayanagara is an administrative circle established in 1961, situated in the easternmost corner of the Tirap district. Surrounded by Burmese frontiers on its three sides the circle has an area of 800 square miles. It is a beautiful plateau, 4200 feet above mean sea level enclosed by hills ranging from 5500 to 1260 feet and peaks which remain covered with snow for the major part of the year. A number of passes through the mountains served as communication lines with Burma since time immemorial. Chief of these is the Chaukan Pass in the valley of the Noa Dihing river through which the Khamtis and the Singphos appear to have immigrated to India from their original abodes, namely, Bor Khamti situated in Burma and South China.

The site of the stūpa now wearing a desolate outlook has been tentatively identified with Khomong, the first settlement of the Khamtis and also the Singphos in India. The place could have

\[1\] Y. A. Raikar, Vijayanagar, the Forgotten Khomong, Shillong, 1974; Y.A. Raikar and S. Chatterjee, op. cit., p.22.
been deserted by them afterwards as they shifted elsewhere in course of vicissitudes of their fortune. The present population of the area comprises the Lisus and other tribal folks having apparently no cultural link with the site and its remains. Vijayanagara has air-link with Mohanbari and 105 miles long road running beside the Noa Dihing river connects it with Miao. It is 145 miles away from Margherita in Assam which represents an early communication route.

The stūpa was situated at the centre of an area enclosed by stone walls ruins of which still survives representing the compound of the stūpa or the colony. No residential buildings, however, have been found which could have perished being made of less permanent materials as are used by the tribal people even now.

Hundreds of burial mounds are scattered over the place one of which revealed a burial urn, fragments of bones and terracotta pieces. The postherds seem to indicate that the stūpa and the mounds belong to the same cultural period. The mounds suggest that the inhabitants partially buried the bones of venerated persons after cremation.

Although no absolute dating is possible, the evidence regarding immigration of the Khamtis and Singphos, the style of architecture and other antiquities found from the site help

1. Alternatively, the stūpa could owe its origin to Burmese intrusion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries A.D. Anyway, the architecture closely resembles Burmese stūpas.
locate the stūpa roughly in the eighteenth century.

Sherds of handmade pottery have been noticed on both sides of the river showing that extensive areas of Vijayanagara had human habitation in past there being at present no people practising the art.

Chips of semi-precious stones like jasper, chert and chalcedony answering the requirements of microliths discovered during exploration of the site have been regarded as reflecting high antiquity of human habitation at the place. The period of probable Khamti-Singpho habitation in the area, however, falls in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries A.D. as the Buddhist settlement Khomong continued to exist even in 1833 when Piyindin Sirado, a Burmese monk visited the place. It is also quite significant to note that Sirado is said to have reintroduced true Hinayāna creed among the Khamtis and effected conversion of a large number of the Singphos.

The stūpa is situated on the right bank of the Noa Dihing at a distance of less than 3 kilometres to the west of the Circle Headquarter. Only the base is remaining. It is a brick-built structure with lime plaster outside. The bricks are of different types. The base is octagonal with a height of about 7 feet. The corners of the base concur with the cardinal points of compass. It is slender in the middle and broad above and below. The middle

section has 5'4" broad sides. The lower portion has five tiers of diminishing sizes the broadest tier at the bottom having 8 feet wide faces. The upper part again has three tiers gradually widening upwards. On the top of the platform there are miniature solid domes at the edges. Low relief rosette designs of two different sizes with 9 and 4\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches diameter adorn the faces of the stūpa barring the three lowermost tiers of the plinth.

The superstructure has entirely fallen down and numerous bricks have been found around the stūpa. The spire could very well be a solid brick-built campaniform structure of the late Burmese or South-East Asian variety of stūpas which seem to have served as its proto-types. The stūpa apparently represents a memorial or uddesika type symbolising Buddha himself. A number of Buddha images found from the site bear its replica on the reverse.

Present Khamti and Singpho habitats do not yield any other surviving stūpa although tradition avers existence of two stūpas at Chowkham and Lathao in old days.

Of another type of Buddhist architecture, namely, the vihāras, we have numerous examples in the Khamti and Singpho villages in the Lohit and Tirap districts. These are in general, built in the shape of pagodas. Most notable example is the one at Chowkham. These are largely made of wood on raised platforms in order to avoid dampness due to contact with the soil. A central congregation hall with place of worship at its one end, covered
portico in front approached by steps rising from the ground, other
adjoining rooms in case of bigger monasteries including living
rooms of the monks, kitchen etc. together represent characteristic
arrangement inside while painted roofs and decorated cornices add
to its external grace.

Less important vihāras in smaller villages naturally
represent more simple structures though retaining the broad
characteristics of the same architecture. In most cases the
officiating monk resides in an adjoining building while the temple
house only the images for worship, other sacred objects and
antiquities including manuscripts. In this group of architecture
obviously we cannot expect very old specimens since all the
settlements are set up roughly within last two centuries. Smaller
shrines preserving single images are also noticed as the one at
Impong.

Here reference may be made en passim to many other stray
traces of the past noticed here and there inside the territory
revealing the necessity of systematic and intensive exploration.
A zig-zag canal about one metre wide and continuing for two kilometres
dRAINING OUT WATER FROM MARSHY LAND HAS BEEN FOUND AT DESALI IN THE
Dibang valley. This may have been excavated by some group of Khantis
taking refuge in the area after massacring the British soldiers in
1839 at Sadiya. Stockades of ruble masonry near Dambuk known as
Yabgo Ling Kum erected by the Adis during their struggle with the
British in the 19th century are still existing. Carved stones have
been noticed in Long-veh and Teng-pum villages in the Tirap district. Engravings on a rock in the same district near Burmese frontiers are generally believed to be related to some agreement arrived at between the Ahom ruler and his Burmese counterpart through their plenipotentiaries who held a conference at the site. But the designs, namely, representation of male and female sexual organs and symbols of progenies, however, more plausibly indicate performance of some fertility rite according to an alternative suggestion put forward by N. Sarkar who personally visited the site. Local people often claim to have noticed many other old structures hidden inside forests, e.g., one below the historical structure at Itanagara.

A number of wells are found near the Tomo fisheries, 8 kilometres from Daporijo. Remains of villages deserted by tribal people may be seen at places which furnish useful materials regarding movement of different tribes. Stones arranged in a semi-circle found near Pulung village in the Tirap district are said to be relics of the site of conference between the Ahom and the Nocte chiefs.

Majority of the tribal folk, viz., the Nisis, Miris, Adis, Mishmis, etc., however, do not habitually construct permanent structures, both their residential and religious buildings being made of less durable materials like wood, bamboo and dried tree-leaves. Concrete buildings enshrining their deities have also been constructed in recent times through government and public efforts. These are more utilitarian in nature than products of mere artistic
zeal. Still, the artistic trend of the tribal mind naturally found expression through them.

Epigraphic treasures of Arunachal so far known are very meagre. These, again, are cryptic in nature and belong to quite a late period. Still they do offer some variety as regards the languages and scripts employed, materials used for engraving the legends as well as the objects behind writing them. Dated records are also available which are obviously important as furnishing concrete evidence regarding period of certain events of local history and also serve as useful materials for building up a chronological framework through comparative study. As in the case of monumental remains, here, too, some classification is possible regionwise, since these records also vary in script and language like the monuments depending upon the difference in their findspots and authorship. Again the same three regions, namely, (a) the west and north-western parts, (b) eastern and (c) southern regions have so far yielded the records possibly owing to greater archaeological activities in these areas and also perhaps due to larger concentration of the tribes and folks with literary tradition in these zones.

The records have been variously written in relief or by incision on stone plaques or slates occasionally containing engraved figures of divinities fixed into temple walls, monasteries, shrines or water wheels. Engravings are also found on the pedestals of metal images and miniature stupas or dungs.
containing relics of important personages. They often record some construction work by devotees or mantras and religious formulae as well as description of divinities etc. Brick tiles used presumably for some religious structures are also found to bear short devotional legends. Weapons containing inscriptions are known to record significant events of military and political history of the region. A stone pillar inscription has also been noticed from Assam in an area adjoining the southern boundary of the territory which relates to an interesting fact of socio-political transaction with Assam. While the records from West Kameng and upper parts of East Siang districts are written in Tibetan language and script, those of the eastern and southern regions, namely, Chowkham and Bhismakanagara in the Lohit district have employed Sanskrit language and Bengali-Assamese script of the medieval period. The stone pillar inscription referred to above is written in Tai language and script.

Two of the records are found to bear dates in Saka era while palaeography indicates probable dates for some. In case of the Tai and Tibetan inscriptions the circumstantial evidence and comparative study with known facts of history constitute so far the only bases for periodisation.

The earliest known epigraph is the one found from the Tamresvari temple in the Lohit district in 1958. The inscription

is dated 1364 Śaka, which is equivalent to 1442 A.D. It is written in Sanskrit language and Bengali-Assamese script of the fifteenth century A.D. The epigraph is purporated to record construction of a brick enclosure around the temple.

As regards palaeography of the record the palatal sa still has the older Gaudīya form and not the modern shape of the letter. The sign for the letter ya is used also for ha. The letter ra has been written in two ways indicating a transitional phase. It is generally written by the sign for ya, but seems to show a slanting stroke near its lower lift limb. The latter recalls the forms of the letter having dots outside or inside the triangle form which originated the modern Assamese ra with slanting stroke inside. The letter i is also characteristic of the period.

The epigraph consists of five lines of writing as follows:
1. [Śiva]-caraṇa-prasādāta(dāt) Vṛddharaśa-tana-
2. ya-srī-srīmata(srīman) Muktādharmanārāyana
3. srī-srīmati(tvā) Dīga(kka)ravāsīna īstak-ā-
4. dī-viracita-prākara-nibaddhah(prākaraḥ nibaddhah) kr-
5. teh//Āgrahāyaṇi(ni)ke Śaka(Śake) 1364 (//**)

It may be translated as:

By the grace of Śiva's feet the illustrious Muktādharmanārāyana, son of Vṛddharaśa, caused a brick-built enclosure to be constructed around the illustrious Dīgaravāsīnī, in the month of Agraḥāyaṇa in the Śaka year 1364 or 1442 A.D.

Nothing at present can be definitely asserted as to the
identity of Muktādharmānārāyana, mentioned in the record. His appellation, Vṛddhāravatatanaya, indicates him to be a prince of some royal family, himself also presumably wielding some authority at the time due to old age of his father. But he may have very well belonged to the Cutiya ruling dynasty of the region which dominated over Sādiya and the region around the Tāmisvarī temple till the beginning of the second quarter of the sixteenth century A.D., when they were finally overwhelmed and subjugated by the Ahoms. Muktādharmānārāyana belonged to an earlier period when their power was in a flourishing state. The name of the king also has got a similarity with other known rulers of the group. Cutiya tradition connects their royal family with the legendary kings of Bhīsmakanagara. The Tāmisvarī temple may have been a family chapel of the rulers of Bhīsmakanagara, as pointed out earlier.

The record opens with obeisance to Śiva. This is in consonance with known accounts of popularity of Saivism in this region from fairly early times. This when viewed against the existence of the Sivalīṅga temple of Tezu of a somewhat contemporary period and the temple at Mālinīthāna in the Siang district belonging to an earlier period enshrining Sivalīṅga and revealing characteristics of Tantrikism leaves no doubt regarding prevalence of Śiva and Śakti worship with Tantrika inspiration throughout the southern boundaries of Arunachal imbibing the culture of the Brahmaputra valley. The temples, however, mainly represent the creed of the rulers or the
dignitaries responsible for their construction. Nevertheless, in a way the number of such shrines and the necessity felt for their construction and maintenance, as also the traditional accounts of their popularity reflect dominance of the pantheons among the common folk as well. The Tāmresvarī temple itself also enshrined Śivalinga and Yoni and belonged to the same creed.

Dīgaravāsini is to be identified with Dikkaravāsinī, mentioned in the Kālikā Purāṇa and Yogini Tantra. The name may have been derived from the name of the river Dīkrang flowing nearby. Whether Dīkrang is a modification of an original name Dikkara, or the latter nomenclature is an attempt to Sanskritise the local name Dīkrang of non-Aryan origin is yet to be determined. The word Dikkara may be explained as referring to the direction of sunshine or rather something like the land or direction of sunrise, i.e., the easternmost point of the country to which, in fact, it belongs. But the enshrining deity of the Tāmresvarī temple, situated in its vicinity, and rather on the bank of a streamlet finally joining into the river can very well be described as Dikkaravāsini, the term used in the Purāṇa and Tantra, which reflect a fairly accurate knowledge of local topography. In both the works, the temple is said to denote the easternmost limit of Kāmarūpa. Thus the area was geographically speaking known as included in the old kingdom of Kāmarūpa referred to in literature and old inscriptions.

Here the goddess Śiva is said to have been worshipped in her two forms, Tīkṣṇakāntā and Lalitakāntā, i.e., both in her fierce
and peaceful forms. Tikṣṇakāntā is also called Ugratārā or Ekajaṭā. She is black in complexion and is described as Lambordari. Lalitakāntā has a second name Maṅgalacandikā. The allusion in the Kālikā Purāṇa to the worship of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā in their symbolical forms, understandably signifies the worship of Śivalīṅga consisting of three parts associated with them, such as Brahmā-βhāga, Viṣṇu-βhāga and Rūdra-βhāga or Pūjā-βhāga. The extant temple is found to enshrine two āṇgaśa. The god Śiva also appears as the guardian-deity or dvārapāla at the entrance. Although Vaishnava cult was also popular in the region as evident from the legends associating various sites like Bhīṣmakanagara, Rukminī-nagara or Mālinīthāna with Kṛṣṇa and also some fragmentary legends on bricks to be mentioned below, no remains of the god or Śalagrama-śilā have been discovered at the site. The same Purāṇa associates Brahmā with the Brahmakunda, situated not far from the site. Otherwise, nothing more of Brahmā worship is definitely known. The temple was proverbially famous in medieval Assam both during the Cutilya and Ahom rules as an important Sāti-pitha or centre of Sakti worship. Human sacrifices are also said to have been offered to the goddess and hence she came to be identified with Kesal Khati of the Cutilyas. A particular group of people used to supply the victims for the purpose. The practice continued till the political turmoils associated with the Burmese occupation of the region and consequent Anglo-Burmese war led to migration of the people devoted to the faith from the site and decay of the shrine.

The boundary wall around the temple referred to in the record is still in situ, although the entire temple complex is
submerged in marshy land. The very construction of the wall indicates its popularity justifying the work and, at the same time, its existence before that period.

The evidence of the Kalika Purana, a work belonging to circa tenth century A.D., also seems to indicate its antiquity. Simple architecture of the temple with the walls built of plain blocks of stone might even be held to indicate a date much earlier than that of the shrine at Malinithana when the temple architecture had not still reached the stage characterised by luxurious decoration and exuberance. In the absence of further examination of the actual remains no more specification in this regard is, however, possible at this stage.

The epigraph bears testimony to the prevalence of Sanskrit language and Bengali-Assamese script in this area indicating its clear cultural affinity with the Eastern Bengal and Brahmaputra valley in early times.

Next may be mentioned a number of brick tiles found from Bhismakanagara bearing short legends. Three such places have so far been found all from amid the ruins lying on the ground. As already noted some other tiles without any such writing on them but bearing similar decorative motifs have also been found.

The present brick tiles also could have been originally fixed either in the walls of the city or fort itself or some shrines or votive structures in the same way as the tiles of the Tamresvari temple.
The bricks are of various sizes and have been found in worn out condition obviously due to age. One of them found in 1954 is 15 cms in length and 12 cms in breadth. It is now preserved in the Central Museum of Arunachal Pradesh at Shillong.¹ The bigger pieces were collected later on in course of excavation at the site. These were also deposited in the same museum.

None of the pieces contain the complete legend but together indicate that something like a religious formula or mantra was repeated again and again on all of them. The piece found earlier is in a somewhat better state of preservation than the others.

It has on its obverse and reverse animal motifs in low relief at the centre within a rectangular area demarcated by bordering lines. On the one side, which is better preserved, are depicted two combatant tigers or maneless lions. The reverse side has two elephant figures similarly facing each other. Elephant is well known in Assam sculptures. Figures of lions and even maneless lions or tigers are also known to occur frequently. The tiger is, again, the totem of the Bodos,² a dominant ethnic group of Assam and North-East India to which the Cutiyas also belonged.

The language of the legends is obviously Sanskrit and the script employed is Bengali-Assamese characters of the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries A.D.

¹ Central Museum, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Shillong, Accession No. 408.
Although no date is mentioned, the palaeography indicates a period in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries A.D. The palatal ṣa has the same Gaudīya form noticed in the Tamrēśvarī temple inscription while the other characters are suggestive of a later date. ṇa and ṭa, particularly, are more developed and closer to the modern Bengali-Assamese forms. The vertical stroke of ṭa connecting it with the horizontal mātrā above is not completely straight, but has, at its lower end, a curve. The line downwards from the right end of the straight stroke of the letter ends midway. ṇa is written with the sign for va, without any dot outside or slanting stroke inside. The latter characteristic of the older form of the letter led to the development of its present form in the Assamese script in the late medieval period. The script shows affinity with the fifteenth and sixteenth century Assamese records of the region.

On both the faces, the legends were continuously written around the animal figures as is evident from a comparison of all the bricks. The letters are in normal position above and upside down below the figures. Above the tigers the legend on the brick under discussion reads Japata śrī-śrī .... Below the figures is written śrī-Lakṣmī-Nā .... On the reverse, .... Lakṣmī-Nāra .... is visible below the elephant figures. Other parts of writing are totally obliterated. These fragments as well as those on the other pieces together suggest that the complete expression was perhaps Japata śrī-śrī-Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇau meaning, chant the names of Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa, the well known deities.
The way of writing the legend recalls Vaisnava practice of repeatedly chanting and writing names of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma. The contents also suggest popularity of Vaisnavism in the region which is known from other evidences, too. Kṛṣṇa legends of the locality and relief figures of Lākṣmī at Mālinīthāna also are important pointers in the same direction. The name Lākṣmīnārāyaṇa may also indicate the particular form of Nārāyaṇa having his spouсе Lākṣmī beside him. No representation of the image, however, is met with in the territory so far.

Two pieces of inscribed cannon of the time Gadaḍharasimha, found from Chowkham in the Lohit district are quite important relics for local history. First of them, found by the Khamtis of Chowkham, in the Lohit district, while fishing in the Berengpani river has been noticed earlier by S. Katak and M. Neog. The second piece came to the notice of the author in January 1977 in course of his tour in the area. It is reported to have come out of the earth along with other weapons at the time of digging in connection with building construction in the vicinity of the monastery at Chowkham and is now preserved there. Possibly it was left there at the time of some battle or skirmishes. It represents only the broken part of the muzzle measuring 40 cms. in length. Diameter of the muzzle near its mouth is 7.5 cms. and the circumference of the mouth is 25 cms. The metal has not been determined but could be either brass or bell metal as in the case of similar other pieces noticed earlier from different parts of.
Assam. Compared to the earlier specimens the present broken muzzle of Chowkham represents a smaller gun.

The present piece is patinated but the inscription engraved on its central part consisting of two lines of writing is clearly readable. The inscription is written in Sanskrit language and Assamese script of the medieval period. The script is much more developed than that of the Tamresvar temple inscription and the epigraphs on the brick tiles of Bhismakanagara. Especially, na of the cannon inscriptions presents invariably the modern Assamese form of that letter, i.e., the one having a slanting stroke inside. The palatal ga is, however, still written in Gaudiya way without the double loops. Instead, it consists of two curves joined at the middle. The left part resembles ga which ends at the middle and joins with another curve continuing to right. Finally the vertical line touches the ground. It resembles cerebral na without its loop. Jā shows the transitional phase its vertical line still showing curve. Anusvāra is written both by a small circle in the old fashion continued in Devanagari script and by a circle and a separate slanting stroke below it, as found in modern Bengali and Assamese. Dental ga still bearing some old characteristics also indicates a transition from older script to the modern form in Assamese and Bengali.

The record is dated in the Saka year 1604, i.e., 1682 A.D.

The writing is partly obliterated. But, it can be restored with the help of similar cannon previously found, since the epigraphs on all the pieces are almost identical. The other cannon which are much larger in size also bear Persian inscription mentioning names of the Mughal emperors, during whose reign these were manufactured, makers of the cannon, weight of the pieces, names of the officers in charge of them etc. But no such inscription is noticed on the smaller piece from Chowkham.

The text of the inscription consisting of two lines of writing runs as follows:

1. Śrī-śrī-Svarga/nārāyaṇadeva-Saumār-śvara Gadādharasiṃhena

2. Āya/ya)vanam jītvā Guvākā-/attiyam-ida/m-āstram pa/s/aaptam

Śāke 1604

This may be rendered into English as: Doubly illustrious Svarga/nāyaṇadeva Gadādharasiṃha, lord of Saumāra, having vanquished the Yavanas (i.e. the Muslims) at Guvākahattī, obtained this weapon in Śāke 1604.

Svarga/nāyaṇadeva represents a royal title which, along with its variant Svarga/deva, has been used by several Ahom monarchs since Suhungmung (1497-1539). ¹

Saumāra refers to the Saumāra/pīṭha of the Tāntrikā literature which has divided Kāmarūpa into a number of such pīṭhas or

¹ E. Gait, A History of Assam, Calcutta, 1967, p. 27.
sacred regions. According to the Yogini Tantra, Kāmarūpa extended from the Karatoya river to the temple of Dikkaravāsini, apparently referring to the Tāmresvari temple and the Dikrang river.¹

The boundaries of Kāmarūpa have been described as follows:

Nepālasya Kañcan-ādriṃ Brahmaputrasya sangamam //
Karatoyām samāśrītya yāvaDikkaravāsini //

Kāmarūpa is here described as bounded by the mountain Kañcana of Nepāla, confluence of the Brahmaputra river, the Karatoya river and Dikkaravāsini, meaning the temple of Dikkaravāsini, identified with the Tāmresvari temple near the Dikrang river.

Again, the same work supplies a more detailed account.

Uttarasyāṃ Kañja-girih Karatoya tu paścime //
Tirtha-sreṣṭhā Dīksu-nadī purvasyāṃ Girikanyake //
daksine Brahmaputrasya Lāksyāh sangam-āvadhiḥ //
Kāmarūpa iti khyatāḥ sarva-sāstrēṣu niścitaḥ //

According to this description the region extending to the mountain Kañja or Kañcana in the north, the river Karatoya in the west, the river Dīksu in the east and the confluence of the Brahmaputra with the Lāksa river in the south was known as Kāmarūpa.

The said country has been divided in the work into Kāmapītha, Ratnapītha, Suvarnapītha and Saumarapītha. Kāmapītha was the

division between the Karatoya and the Sankosh, Ratnapīṭha was that between the Sankosh and the Rupahi. From the Rupahi to the Bharali the division was called Suvarṇapīṭha. The easternmost division extending from the Bharali to the Dikrang was known as Saumārapīṭha. The names and extent of the divisions vary in other works, but all seem to agree regarding the name of the easternmost pīṭha. The name Saumāra was often used in a broader sense to designate entire Assam or a large part of it, as pointed out by R. D. Banerji.

The epithet Saumāresīvara indicates Gadādharasimha's suzerainty over Saumārapīṭha.

Guvākahatī, literally meaning a market of areca nuts, is the same as modern Guwahati or Gauhati.

The word Javana, correct form of which Yavana, was derived from old Persian term Yauna. It signified originally the Ionian Greeks and subsequently all people of Greek nationality. In course of time the word came to be regarded as synonymous with mleccha and likewise denoted foreigners at large.

It is well known that the Ahom rulers of Assam had a long drawn struggle with the Mughal emperors. In this conflict Gauhati fell several times into the hands of the invaders. Lastly, during the reign of Sudaipha or Parvatia Raja some of the disaffected

1. E. Gait, op. cit., p. 11; P. C. Chowdhury (The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam, 1966, p. 44) mentions the name of the river as Bhairavi instead of Bharali.
nobles of Assam invited the Mughal administrator of Bengal to send a fresh expedition thither. This appeal being conceded the Bengal army invaded the Ahom territories under the leadership of Prince Muhammad Azam and captured Gauhati in 1679 A.D. Sudiapha was ultimately ousted from power by the nobility. The next king Lara Raja (1679-81) had very short reign and was replaced by a new ruler named Supatpha in 1681 A.D. On his accession Supatpha assumed the Hindu name Gadadharasimha. His reign marked a regeneration of Ahom prestige. Having established his capital at Barkola he prepared for a final confrontation with the Mughals. The forts of Bansbari and Kajali were easily subjugated. At last, following a naval victory of the Ahom forces near the Barnadi and fall of Itakhuli the Faujdar of Gauhati fled without further resistance. He was pursued as far as the Manas river which formed the new boundary between the two powers from now on. The Muslim chroniclers never mention this final recovery of Gauhati by the Ahoms. But the victory of the Ahom king has been vividly depicted in the Buranjis which find corroboration from the inscribed cannon under study.

These guns and cannon really formed part of the booty captured by the victorious Ahom army. The king is said to have distributed these spoils among his officers. This fact accounts for the discovery of these cannon from different sites.

The defeated Muslim general has been named in the Buranjis as Mansur Khan, which, however, as Gait has pointed out, might...
have been derived by the Buranī writers from the administrative epithet Mansabdar through confusion.

Though the contents of the inscription on the cannon have greater bearing upon the history of Assam, discovery of the two guns from Chowkham area of Arunachal Pradesh suggests some sort of contact of the Ahom rulers with that region. It appears from the evidence of the Buranīs, as well as the Sadiya pillar inscription, to be discussed below, that in the period under study, Sadiya and the adjoining areas of the Lohit district formed part of the Ahom territories administered by the Sadiya Khowa Gohain of the Ahom kings. The common Ahom royal title, Saumāresvara, used on the cannon, too, and the Puranic and Tantrika accounts, referred to above, locating Dikkaravāsinī's temple on the eastern border of Kamarūpa or within Saumārapitha also point in the same direction.

We may now refer to the broken stone pillar discovered in the early twenties of this century by O'Callaghan, Political Officer, Sadiya Frontier Tract. It was found in two pieces in the bed of the Deopani, tributary of the Dibang river, amid ruins of a town, seven miles away from Sadiya to its north-east. The pillar was brought to Sadiya and the broken pieces were fixed together. Now it is preserved in the State Museum of Assam at Gauhati. The base of the pillar is square in shape on which the hexagonal shaft is tapering upwards with a vase at the top, above which is found the hood of cobra its body being depicted round the shaft in prominent relief.

The inscription is engraved on the shaft in vertical position. It has three sections. The main content of the epigraph is an agreement reached between the Dihingia Bar Gohain, on behalf of the Ahom king and the Mishmis. Next comes a postscript of one line forbidding succeeding kings to discontinue the arrangement. This portion is written in Ahom language and script. Another strip of writing appears in mixed characters.

The inscription was deciphered by Golap Chandra Barua who summarised its contents as follows:

"I, the Dihingia Bar Gohain, do engrave on the stone pillar and the copper plate these writings (on the strength of which) the Mishmis are to dwell on the hills near the Dibong river with their females, children, attendants and followers. They will occupy all the hills. They will give four basketfuls of poison and other things as tribute and keep watch over the body of the fat Gohain (Sadiya Khowa Gohain). If anybody happens to be in possession of and wishes to remain on both sites (of the hills), he is prohibited from encroachment. If anybody should dwell by the side of the hills, he will surely become a slave (of the Mishmis).

"I do proclaim wide that if anybody sits exalted (i.e., comes in power, i.e., becomes a ruler) he should not break (the agreement) and break the stone".

Thus it represents a proclamation on the part of the Dihingia Bar Gohain engraved on the stone pillar an official copy of which had also been preserved on copper plate.
By the proclamation Misimis, i.e., the Mishmis were officially permitted to settle on the hills near the Dibang river. None else, whether earlier settlers or newcomers, could encroach upon their possession. They would have complete authority on anybody living in their hills, who were to become their slaves. In exchange for this autonomy they were to pay regular tribute including four baskets of poison and look after the welfare of the person of the fat Gohain, which meant possibly that they were to act as bodyguards of the Sadiya Khowa Gohain and assist him in times of necessity by supply of troops etc.

The tribute of poison referred to here was presumably the Mishmi Bih or a variety of aconite, collected from the snow clad areas in the outlying fringes of the Eastern Himalayas by the different groups of Mishmis. It was highly valued by them who used it both for medicine and for application on arrow-heads as deadly poison. After their own use they offered only small quantity of it for sale.

The date of the record is not mentioned. But it may be guessed tentatively on the basis of the contents. It has been roughly assigned to the first quarter of the sixteenth century A.D., when the Sadiya region was occupied for the first time by the Ahoms under the leadership of the Dihingia Rājā or Suhungmung (1497-1539 A.D.). Bar Gohain of the record, in that case, acted as his representative. But, on the other hand, the settlement with the Mishmis may also refer to an arrangement made afterwards during the reign of Suklampha or Rāmedhvaja (1673-1675 A.D.).
Although the findspot of the record was perhaps strictly speaking situated outside the present boundaries of Arunachal Pradesh, the record, the sole remaining stone inscription written in Ahom language, furnishes very interesting information regarding the history of Arunachal. The extension of Ahom authority over southern parts of Arunachal Pradesh reflected in the record confirms the testimony of other sources in this respect. The settlement with the Mishmis indicates in a way the nature of relationship existing between the various tribes of the territory and the Ahom rulers of Assam which more or less continued till the end of their sovereignty. The tribute of poison affords us further insight into the items of transaction between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh which was right in medicinal herbs.

This reminds us of early Indian literary accounts of the Kirātas, a general appellation used to designate the non-Aryan tribes living in the mountains particularly the Himalayas and North-East India presumably of Mongoloid origin. The tribal people of Arunachal obviously belong to this broad group.

In the Atharvaveda (X, 2, 2, 14) a Kirāta girl is described as digging on the ridges of the mountains in search of medicinal herbs.

In the habitats of the Vajrayāna Buddhist population, viz., the Monpas and Sherdukpens of the West Kameng and the Membas and Khambas of the East Siang and Dibang valley districts, we often come across inscriptions written in Tibetan language and script
incised on stone plaques. These often form part of the walls of temples or monasteries. Occasionally such plaques are placed near entrance of the dzongs or forts, chortens or stūpas, mānes or water wheels etc. A proper survey of these records is still a desideratum. But they are known to record construction of Gompas and other structures. Commemorative and votive inscriptions have also come to light.

A square stone block bearing a short inscription written in the Tibetan language and script was found from amid the ruins of Naksāparvats situated in the East Kameng district, as noted before. It was handed over to the Government of Assam by J.P.W. Leitch, the General Manager of Bargang Tea Estate on 15.3.1976 and is now preserved in the Assam State Museum at Gauhati. The date of the record is not known any more than is apparent from its association with the site datable between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries A.D. The tablet, however, may have even been engraved at a much later period by some people during their visit or short stay at the site after decay and destruction of the original structure.

The inscription is a commemorative one and the tablet was perhaps placed on some māne as are generally raised in memory of departed relatives and monks by the Vajryāṇa Buddhist people like the Monpas and Sherdukpons. The inscription thus indicates the site to have been inhabited at least for some time by some Buddhist people of this group.

The text of the inscription has been translated into English
By G.G. Gatsov as follows:

"Oh Thou who wast born in the Bull-wood year in the era of the king of the sky. The employer of the man who engraved this six-letter-stone is the lady Wangyal Jhamu, the incarnation of the Goddess of wealth. The life of Jo-Jo-Rie has passed away. The beneficence of this writing will cause the gate of the hell to be closed against him and bring prayers that he may be born in the heaven where Chengrezi resides. The suppliers of funeral liquor are Sanghu Shari Bhuti and Ama Tinpang Jam Dhou with her sons Rinchen and Lasemo and her daughter Gagso ...."  

A stone tablet has been noticed by the author in the Mechukha Gompa in the East Siang district. The tablet, broken into two pieces from the middle portion, is said to have been stuck in the wall of the original Gompa which was destroyed by fire. The inscription could not be fully deciphered. However, according to the resident Lama of the Gompa, who could partly read the epigraphs, it referred to the time of construction of the Gompa.

Inscribed plaques are also found near the entrance of Dirang Dzong. Near the mane or water wheel before the entrance of the Tawang Gompa is also found Tibetan inscription containing religious mantras. Often the mere well known formula Om Mani

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2. The last line of the record could not be deciphered.
Padme Hüm is found engraved on store.

Metal dungtens of Mera Lama and other monks inside the Tawang Gompa are found to bear inscriptions in Newari script. Miniature metal images and shortens in other Gompas have also been noticed containing Tibetan inscriptions on pedestal or back. Incised figures of divinities on stone slabs or slates with short devotional legends in Tibetan like Rinchin mera name are also noticed in Mechukha Gompa.

Metal Buddha images belonging to the early part of the present century containing inscription and dates written in Burmese language and script are available in Bordumsa area of the Tirap district among the habitats of the Teravada Buddhist tribes.

These records together throw light on socio-cultural pattern of the inhabitants of the territory testifying to their cultural contacts, religious life etc. They occasionally revealing interesting details of political developments and transaction. The contents, languages and scripts again corroborate, as noted above, the information culled from other evidences. Like the relics of art and architecture they also do reflect three major cultural strains, namely, the influence of Tibetan and South-East Asian cultures penetrating in the west, north-west and east, while in the south the developments of Indian culture dominated. Naturally the language and culture of Arunachal gradually developed through interaction of these forces. The central part of the territory was less affected by the developments near the borders and here was preserved the
pristine tribal culture in its primitive state.

Numismatic remains of the territory are even fewer than other relics found so far. These comprise only three pieces of silver coins discovered from the Tirap district, one of them in course of excavation at Vijayanagar, although as a surface find. All the coins represent well known octagonal issues and are identical with similar varieties noticed by V.A. Smith bearing dates and legends in Sanskrit language and Bengali-Assamese characters of the late medieval period.

First of them is an issue of Rudra Simha or Sukhrungpha (1696-1714) and the other two belong to Siva Simha or Sutanpha (1714-1744). The coins, as is well known from the specimens found elsewhere, bear only the Hinduised names of the kings.

Rudrasimha's coin is almost identical with a specimen of Smith's catalogue. It is dated Śaka 1622, i.e. 1700 A.D. The legend on the obverse starts with Śrī Śrīmā in stead of Śrī Śrīmad of the Indian Museum specimen and in place of amṛta on the latter the former reads ambula.

Sivasimha's issues (of Śaka 1641) are also identical with similar issues described by Smith with minor deviations.

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2. V.A. Smith, op. cit., p. 299, Serial No.4.
One of them is dated Saka 1641, i.e., 1719 A.D. ¹
Another is a joint issue of the king with his queen Sarvesvari dated in the regnal year 25, i.e., circa 1739 A.D. ²

The coins of Sivasimha are quite interesting as they, like other similar issues of the king, confirm a curious development during his reign. Sivasimha is said to have been very much influenced by Brāhmaṇa priests and astrologers so much so that he declared his chief queen Phulesvari to be the chief, Bar Rājā, and handed over royal authority to her in order to avert calamity and appease gods in accordance with the advice of the priests. Henceforth the coins of the king were also struck jointly in the names of the chief queen and the king. After the death of Phulesvari in 1731 he married Ambikā Devī. She died in 1738. Then another queen Enādari, renamed Sarvesvari, became Bar Rājā. Some coins of the king alone are known of the years 1732, 1738 and 1739. The specimens of Arunachal belong to the two different phases of the developments. The first of them belonged to the period before joint issues, while the second belonged to the last part of the reign when Sarvesvari acted as Bar Rājā.

1. It is identical with the specimen mentioned by Smith, op. cit., p. 300, Serial No. 3.