PREFACE

The work is a humble attempt to trace the different aspects of the history of Tezpur (from the 5th century C.E up to the end of the 12th century C.E) based on the archaeological remains that have been unearthed till date. The material remains lying in and around the region of Tezpur are unmistakable evidences of a developed civilization that emerged in the past. However the dearth of corroborative evidence, uninterrupted human encroachment of the land bearing the material remains of the past and lack of proper initiative to bring all the sources of information to light are some of the basic hindrances in carrying out the study. In this work, an attempt has been made to include all the archaeological sources that have been unearthed till date relating to the area of the study and to re-examine and re-assess the older interpretations in the light of the available sources. This has been corroborated by literary evidence to observe all the information and possibilities relating to the study in order to present a fruitful picture of the past. Proper care has also been taken at the time of utilizing the historical facts from the sources.

The scheme of the work has been organized into the following chapters: Chapter I is the introductory chapter which is divided into two sections. The first section comprises an introduction to Tezpur, its land and population and the importance of Tezpur in the history of the region. The second section provides a historical background and discusses the rulers of Assam in the pre-historic and historic period which includes the traditional account of the legend of King Bana of Sonitpur, king Nagasankar of Pratapgarh as well as the historical dynasties. Chapter II examines the growth of Tezpur as a political centre during the rule of the Salastambhas and Palas and attempts to trace the various factors which
helped in its emergence, besides discussing the nature of the administration of the state. Chapter III is a discussion on the social life that existed during the period under study. It re-examines the *varnasramadharma* and discusses the land relations that existed in the society. An attempt has also been made to study the position of women during the period under study based on the available sources. Chapter IV examines the economic life. It studies the state policy directed towards the improvement of cultivation and collection of taxes yielding in greater control of the resources by the state. It also studies the utilization of the natural resources by the people, craft specialization and the development of trade and exchange in the region. Chapter V studies the religious life of the people on the basis of the remains found in the region. It discusses the popular religious faiths of the people and the gradual Aryanisation of the land with the coming of the Brahmanas, though retaining some non-Aryan aspects. Chapter VI, i.e. the last chapter summarizes the findings of the earlier discussions.

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Tezpur Sweta Mahanta

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