CHAPTER IV

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

A. PRE-HISTORICAL REMAINS

Archaeological evidence belong to the pre-historic period are not found in the Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley. It has been discussed that persistence of neolithic tradition and evidence found in the hills contiguous to the Valley indicate migration of some pre-historic racial elements during neolithic period. Archaeological evidence however, are lacking to trace the pre-historic picture of man in the Valley. As such, discussion on neolithic remains, not to speak of palaeolithic remains of the Valley, at this stage of inquiry is irrelevant.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:


B. HISTORICAL REMAINS

1  EPIGRAPHY

Epigraphical records found in the Doiyang Dhansiri Valley vary from individual letters engraved on lithic pieces to somewhat long literary inscriptions on stone slabs or on bodies of stone or bronze images or on burnt clay seals, which may be paleographically ascribed to a period ranging from c. 2nd century A.D. to c. 18th century A.D.

The importance of the epigraphical records as source of history of civilization of a region, a country, more particularly relating to a period to which we have little or no authentic chronological account, can hardly be emphasised. Viewed from this angle, these epigraphical records surfaced so far are of immense value in respect of reconstructing the chronological and cultural history, not only of the Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley of our study, but also of Assam and, for that matter of the whole of north eastern India. These records, although scrappy at times, throw a flood of light on the spread and advancement of Vedic-Brahmanical culture, and furnish valuable data on socio-economic, religious and cultural life of the people of the Valley from very early times. However, no concerted attempt has been made so far to explore the area exhaustively for systematic exploration and excavation.

In the basis of palaeographic study, these records may be classified into three groups:

I  Brāhmi

II  Early mediaeval and

III  Mediaeval
Interestingly, the earliest epigraphic records of Assam date back to circa A.D. 400 - 500 as is evidenced by the Umachal Rock Inscription (ascribed to the early part of the 4th c. A.D.\(^1\)) which is further substantiated by the recovery of the Nagajari Kani kargaon Fragmentary Stone Inscription ascribed summarily by some scholars to 5th c. A.D. \(^2\). But the discovery of a few inscribed lithic pieces bearing Brahmi letters of earlier phase, as unearthed in Duboroni (pl.I, a,b,) located in this Valley may push the date further back to c. 2nd - 3rd c. A.D., at the least, if not earlier.

CLASSIFICATION

The epigraphical records recovered till date are of mixed character - both secular and religious (ritualistic), and are found to have been engraved on stone or metal, and sometimes on clay (terracotta seal). On the basis of the medium used the records may be classified in the following categories:

Inscribed Stone Pieces

This group consists of individual letters incised on small chiselled stone pieces. The Duboroni finds are the representative of this group belonging to the ancient period. The specimens are palaeographically datable to c. 2nd - 3rd century A.D. The Numaligarh and Negheriting finds may also be bracketed in this group. But in the latter case, the stone pieces are comparatively bigger in size and some times more than one letters are found incised on a piece which may be ascribed to c. 11th century A.D. and afterwards.
Stone Inscriptions

This group consists of the literary inscriptions engraved on the surface of stone blocks/slabs. The Nagajari-Khanikargaon Fragmentary Stone Inscription and the Alichiga-Tengani Stone Inscription fall in this group. Here, chiselled stone blocks/slabs either round or flat in shape are found to have been employed for engraving the records.

Inscriptions on Images

In this category are included the stone or metallic sculptures bearing some inscriptions. Quite a few of them bear some details about the identity of the concerned deity along with the name of the donor or the issuing authority while the others are connected with the making of the image, installation and worship of the deity. The inscribed syncretistic Hari-Hara images fall in this category. Some inscribed metallic sculptures recovered from the Valley and bearing some short inscriptions in the pedestal portraying the name of the sculptors of the deity may be included in this category. These short inscriptions on the body or pedestal of the concerned deities function somewhat as labels on them. Interestingly, most of the inscribed images are syncretistic in character.

Clay Seal

Only one burnt clay seal bearing a fourlined legend is recovered so far from this area. It is very significant, since this is the only such specimen recovered within the boundary of modern Assam.

Copperplate Inscriptions

The copperplate inscriptions mostly are landgrant charters issued by
the rulers from time to time. These copperplate charters constitute a class by themselves. As many as five such copperplates charters issued by the Ahom kings during mediaeval period have been noticed so far from the Valley. It may also be noted that at least three of these copperplate charters are bilingual i.e. Assamese and Tai; one of the group is tri-lingual, i.e. Sanskrit, Assamese and Tai. These copperplate charters are of great historical value, both technically and literarily.

Inscribed Bhṛṅgāra

Another interesting find is an inscribed bhṛṅgāra obtained from Jaidurgā-devālaya of Doigrung in Golaghat district.

Some of the literary records from early times are found engraved on stone surfaces in the late Brahmi characters current in Northern India up to the 6th century A.D. belonging to the Eastern variety of the late Brahmi alphabet. The inscriptions from early mediaeval period are found mostly on the body of images of syncretistic character, e.g. the Deopani group and those on non-syncretistic image, e.g. the Surya from Titabor. The characters employed in these image inscriptions belong to the (siddha)-Māṭkā or kutila belonging to the period ranging from c. 7th to 11th century A.D. The individual characters on stone pieces obtained from Deoparvat and Negheriting, Siva temple forming a variety of the māṭkā alphabet, referred to above, bearing certain Nagari elements in it and may be called proto Assamese belonging to mediaeval period. The epigraphical records surfaced so far show that, during the period ranging from c. 2nd - 3rd century A.D. onwards epigraphical activities attained high pitch of development in the Valley.

Epigraphical records so far found are mostly of votive and donative character. The donative records, again, appear to be royal grants, made from time to time to individuals or institutions patronised by the royalty. The
individual notings are represented by letter/letters incised on stone pieces.

Here in the paragraphs below we are holding a somewhat detailed discussion on the records classified above.

1 Inscribed Stone Pieces:

(a) Inscribed Stone Pieces from Duboroni:

In 1978, P.C. Saikia, unearthed a number of inscribed stone pieces together with a stone plate bearing a figure of a scaly fish lying at a depth of 120 cm from Duboroni in Borpathar. These stone pieces bear individual Brahmi characters, and identified as \( \text{अ} = a, \text{आ} = \bar{a}, \text{ि} = i, \text{व} = va, \text{ग} = ga, \text{ज} = ja, \text{म} = ma, \text{य} = ya, \text{र} = ra \), and different types of \( \text{त} = t \) and \( \text{च} = c \), which are supposed to bear numerical significance. P.C. Choudhury noticed a particular letter which either looks like \( \text{सु} \) or \( \text{a} \) and wants to explain to stand for the sun, for the letter either look like \( \text{सु} \) for Sūrya or \( \text{a} \) for Āditya.

Our inquiry at Dibrugarh University resulted in finding only a few pieces from the group. (pl.Ia,b). The palaeography of some of these individual letters bear the characteristics of North Indian Brahmi alphabet that was current during c. 2nd-3rd century A.D., and seem to indicate numerical figures. Because, the twenty five consonants from \( \text{क} = 'ka' \) to \( \text{म} = 'ma' \) indicate numericals from one to twenty five respectively, while the eight letters from \( \text{व} = 'va' \) to \( \text{स} = 'sa' \), indicate numerical figures of \( ज = 30, \text{च} = 40, \text{छ} = 50, \text{ट} = 60, \text{ठ} = 70, \text{ड} = 80, \text{ढ} = 90, \text{ण} = 100 \). The letter \( \text{सु} = 'su' \) or \( \text{a} = 'a' \) might as such indicate a figure of \( 1000 = 1000^2 \). Smooth and flat surface of the individual letters on the other hand seem to indicate probable use of these inscribed pieces as individual seals for stamping the owners name or as seal impressions for maintaining records of some commercial nature. The animal
like figure with the letter su' found in a stone piece as such might represent a deity to be counterfeits on seals.

(b) Inscribed Stone fragment from Tengrajan:

A piece of round stone (15X9X6 cm) inscribed with numerical figures in late Brahmi character (pl.III,a) has been recovered from Tengrajan in Boropathar Mouza of Golaghat District. The numericals have been identified as २ = Two ३ = three १ = one २ = two ० = zero ७ = seven and ८ = eight by Dr. Dharmeswar Chutia the date of which, however, cannot be determined. The specimen from Duboroni and Tengrajan are possibly the earliest examples of epigraphical noting so far obtained. It seems possible that trade and commerce were in full swing in the Valley in the early centuries of the Christian era under a politically organised society. It is pointed out that the setubondha at Alichiga-Tengani (supra) was possibly a commercial port or harbour (pattana).

(c) Inscribed Stone Slab at Deoparvat:

As early as 1936 T.N. Ramachandran noticed a slab bearing an amalaka design inscribed in late Nagari characters reading dhi, U, ma vyaa or (pha) datable to A.D. 1100. The present author has found two inscribed stone blocks in Nagari character which possibly read अग्नि = agni गठ = math (pl. III,b) and साधस and छ = ha (pl.III,c) respectively.

(d) Inscribed stone slab at Negheriting:

A number of individual Nagari letters are also found inscribed in stone blocks used in the alignment of the stairway of the Negheriting temple. These
detached stone blocks appear to belong to the stone temple structure (infra) at Sital Negheri. The Ahom architects removed these stone blocks from the original site and utilised in building the pathway leading to the present temple. These letters appear to represent both alphabetic form as well as mathematical figures. Dr. Dharmeswar Chutia tentatively identified some of these letters as रि - रि(? भो - भो?) क = ka and ॥ = three (pl. III, d). The other characters have been identified as न = ma; को = ko; and ॥ = three; ऋ = ca; छ = vc; भ = dha, च = va, and र = two; र = pu and भ = ॥; ग = ga, च = va. There are some other characters which seem to represent ज = ja, and ॥ = three which are datable to c. 1100 - 1200 century A.D.14.

Palaeographical similarities between the characters of Deoparvat and Neghering may be noticed. It seems probable that these inscribed symbols on particular stone slabs are markings employed to indicate the specified space where they should be placed in the temple structure.

(e) Nagajorikhanikargaon Fragmentary Stone Inscription:

The NKFSI15 two fragments of which are recovered so far16 (pl. II, c,d,) earlier dated to the early part of the fifth century A.D. is ascribed to c. 4th century A.D.17. The record is severely damaged. The stone piece bearing the record is broken vertically in the middle thereby causing the loss of the whole right end portion. It is also broken horizontally at the bottom side thereby causing the loss of at least two lines of writing, if not more. A big slice at the top also peeled off horizontally thereby causing damage to some lines of writing. This fragment appears in all probability the left-end half portion of a larger inscription, while the text described immediately below formed the right end half of the same record.18

This part of the inscription has been studied by several scholars and its report published19.
The text as emended by M.M. Sharma is as follows:

माहत्रो ब्रह्मदत्तः वाजिरेहाभि —उ— /
पूर्वेण दिब्रुमुक्खः सोमान प्रक्रमतो — /
न्यग्रीधपादतक्षाम्यावलीवर्तिः उ उ — उ — /
याहिकोर्तिम्मानुष्ठय /

The second part of the NKFSI as described earlier, has been recovered from the compound of Sri Putul Ali, of Sarupathar town.

This record (50 X 22 cm) is damaged due to the peeling off of a slice of the stone at the top and broken both vertically and horizontally, respectively towards left and bottom. This record which seems to originally contain at least seven lines of writing has only three lines in readable condition, of which again a few letters of the third line (the fifth line according to our assessment) are mutilated. The first two lines at the top are completely gone except two or three letters to the right and, while the sixth and seventh lines (or any other line after that) at the bottom are also gone.

The record consisting of these two parts (with the possibility of a missing third part in between besides the missing lines above and below) appears to be a royal landgrant charter and in inscriptional prose. The first fragment mentions the eastern and western boundaries of the donated land, while in the second fragment the reference to the northern and the southern boundaries are made. The first fragment contains the names of village officials e.g. mahattara Brahmadatta and Vaji 4 while in the second fragment the name of the locality of the donated land ‘Gourivātaka’ and that of the donor Vasundharavarmana are given.
The term *Dibrumukhadatā* found in the third line of the first fragment seems to imply the mouth of a river called *dibru* with the prefix *di* for water (supra), stated to have been the eastern boundary of the donated land. T.P. Verma noticed a quarter of a verse "yāvat kīrttir manusyasya" which he claims to be from the *Ādi-parva* (chap. 202) of the *Mahābhārata*²⁶. *Mahattara* Brahmadatta and vāji appear to be village officials. *Mahattara* Brahmadatta seems to be the village headman who might have apparently been connected with village administration (supra). The second fragment of this inscription, seems to refer to the gift of an *agrabara* Gourivāṭaka to some brahmanas along with another field therein. It is said to be a very richly fertile land producing all kinds of crops. The text of the record as read by Dharmeswar Chutia¹ is as follows:

1.1........द;
1.2........(व)सुन्दर;
1.3........सु व अग्निनिम दत्ता विषेष्ये गोरिवाटके
1.4........तु: क्षेत्राद्वां विभूषितां सर्वविश्वस्यफलप्रदम्
1.5........नम् दः [स*] रें[ण] पनसविश्वाश बृहदः [मरक*] दाशीः[न*]

In this fragment, the surviving letters (*su-ndha-ra*) towards the right end of the damaged second line might have been the part of a naming word, like *(va)sundhara*. The reconstructed word *(va)sundhara* implies the name of the donor, king since the name Vasundharavarman could also be read in the ATCS (infra), and the donative nature of both the epigraphical records³⁷ viz. ATCS and NKFSI. In case, *(Va)sundharavarmana* was the ruler (king) he might have belonged to a hitherto unknown royal house holding their sway over this region, since his name is not to be found in the genealogy of the house.
of the Varmans founded by Puṣyavarmanā of Prāgjyotisa-kāmarūpa. As such, it may be surmised that Vasundharavarmanā was a scion of the family of Vajradatta (the brother of Bhagadatta) who had obtained the lordship of Uparipattāna which seems to be the region of Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley with the contiguous Upper Assam region (supra).

II (b) Alichiga-Tengani Stone Slab Inscription:

The ATSI (pl. II,a) lying buried under the brick ruins at the smaller setubbondha fortified by square waterditch (parikbhā) measuring 60X60m at Alichiga-Tengani (Fig.5) was recovered by the present writer (Supra). This inscription, (79 X 4 X 13 cm) is found engraved on a stone slab on one of its long thinner sides measuring 79 X 12 cm. The record, it seems, is divided into four sections, each measuring about 17 X 12 cm there leaving a gap of about 3.1 cm in between each section. There are four lines of writings lengthwise from left to right in each section. The inscription has been engraved in four groups very carefully and executed artistically. There are four impressions of manuṣapadas on the surface of the broad side of the slab facing each section. Palaeographically as suggested by Dharmeswar Chutia the record may be assigned to the middle of fifth century A.D. The script employed belongs to the Eastern variety of the Northern Brahmi that was current during the Gupta regime. Interestingly, the letters both in size (2.5/3X3 cm) and shape are akin to those of the Kahaun Stone Pillar Inscription of the time of Skandagupta, a scion of the early Guptas of Magadha. The same form of letter is found employed, it may be recalled, in the NKFSI found in the same region wherefrom the present record is obtained. The record of which many a letter are superficially damazed or mutilated, is yet to be deciphered fully and confirmatively. The record bears the name of Sri Ratnavarmanā in the line 4 of the first section who might perhaps either be the donor himself, or the ancestor of the donor of the record. The brick ruins under which the present
inscription with impression of four mānuṣapada” was found buried, seem to be the site of a brick temple erected on the raised plateau surrounded by square ditches. The record probably relates to the construction of the setubondha at Alichiga-Tengani, described here as paṭṭana (Fig. 5).

Incidentally, the antecedents of Sri Ratnavarmana mentioned in this inscription (who or whose descendent possibly had built this setubondha at Alichiga-Tengani) is not known. His name is not found in any other record of the time. If he was at all an independent ruler, Ratnavarman seems to belong to a collateral branch of the ‘Varmans’ of kamarupa, as the surname ‘varman’ shows. It has been already discussed that, as his name as also that of Vasundharavarman of the clay seal (infra)is not found in any of the genealogical lists of the Varman royal houses, both Sri Ratnavarmana and Vasundharavarmana of the seal appear to be lineal representatives of Vajradatta, (the brother of Bhagadatta) the ruler of Uparipattana, which could be well identified with the region of Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley and the adjoining region (supra). If this conjecture is accepted, it may confirmatively be said that the Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley was ruled by an independent line of Varman rulers (not belong to the line of Pusyavarman of (Kamarupa) to which Sri Ratnavarmana belonged.

II (c) Clay seal of Vasundharavarnan:

An oval shaped burnt clay seal (pl. II, b) has been found by this author (Supra) together with a bronze vase at Alichiga-Tengani (Fig. 5) near Borpathar in Golaghat District. The seal bears a fourlined legend in relief in Eastern variety of the Northern Brahmi alphabet similar to the one employed in the NKFSI, as well as the inscription of Ratnavarmana described above.

The terracotta seal is partly damazed towards the left, so much so that at least one letter each in the beginning of the second and the third lines in the
left border seem to have been lost. The surviving letters are also obliterated due to wear and tear of time. The seal contained the name of one Vasundharavarmana\(^4\). The name \((V)a)sundhara can also be read in the NKFSI (supra). Since, the palaeography of the name in both the records appear to be similar it may be surmised that \((V)a)sundhara of NKFSI and Vasundharavarmana of the present seal was one and the same person who might have issued this royal seal.

The text of the seal legend as deciphered by Dharmeswar Chutia\(^5\) is as follows:

1.1 अक्षय
1.2 [ॗ] ति खण्डाण( ́)
1.3 [श्री]वसुम्भर–
1.4 चर्म्भर [४]

This short legend seems to refer to a perpetual endowment \((a)ksaya vṛtti\) comprising of some eight plots of land\' \((khaṇḍaśaṁ = aṣṭaśaṁ; khaṇḍa = a plot of land\) made by Sri Vasundharavarmana.

Stylistically, the sunken oval shaped -seal differs from the seal of the Kamarupa kings, which contains the countersunk elephant figure enface, the emblem of the royal house of the Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa Kingdom. Since the seal of Vasundharavarmana does not contain the elephant emblem and his name was not to be found in any of the genealogical charts of the ruling houses of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, if he was at all a ruling prince having the surname 'Varman' it is in the fitness of things to hold that Vasundharavarmana was the descendent of a royal house other than the Varmans of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.
It may be that, both Vasundharavarmana of the present seal and Ratnavarmana of ATSI described above, belonged to the same royal house. However, the fact remains that no royal titles are prefixed to their names. The omission of royal titles in such short inscriptions/legends as in the present seal legend, is, however, not uncommon in ancient Indian context.

III Inscription on Stone Images:

(a) Viṣṇu Image Inscription from Deopani

A caturbhuja36 Viṣṇu image (pl. IV, a) in samapāda sthānaka posture was recovered from Deopani. It bears an inscription (pl.IV, b) in four lines on its back. This inscription incised in mātrkā alphabet datable to eighth century A.D. The inscription has been variously studied17 and was finally edited by M.M. Sharma38 as follows :

1. २. हरिमलेकिनम् इशरेखुर्ष्वर्त्तम् ब्रह्माधिकारः... (नौमिल)से (श्यातु देवी)
2. भगवती तु गुड़ा। सत्या तु देवी भूविष मत्वलोकेः तस्थः(ष्ट्र)
3. २. श्री-शुद्ध-हिंजवण्णा-नारीस्वयं तु देवी भगवती तु गुड़ा। पि...
4. नाम मातपति। भगवतो नारायणस्य शैली प्रतिमा भक्तानाम।

Interestingly, the inscription of this Visnu image pays homage to Iśara, the lord of the three worlds (ḫaraḥ-trilokinaḥ) which bears an unquestionable testimony of the spirit of syncretism39. This inscription indicates the possibility of the development of regional iconographical features in the Valley showing single image in composit character. It seems that the orthodox brahmanical doctrine was relaxed in order to bring the lower order of inhabitants of the region into the brahmanical fold thereby ushering in an era of religious
catholicity and tolerance. The term ‘bhakta’ or devotee found in the inscription is of great significance in this context. The inscription records a proclamation that the goddess (Devi) who in association with Siva is worhippable for the sudras, the twice born classes and women. The inscription records the name of the priest (māthapati) in charge of the temple; he is one with the prefix ‘pi’ as the initial of the name. It appears that the non-aryan inhabitants of lower strata of the society were encouraged to follow Hinduism through liberalised syncretistic doctrine. This fact is warranted by the recovery of a number of composit Harihara images in the Valley, which otherwise is rare elsewhere in Assam.

III (b) Saṅkara-Nārāyaṇa Stone Image Inscription from Deopani:

The syncretic Harihara image (pl. IV, c.) from Deopani and the occurrence of name Saṅkara-Nārāyaṇa in the text of the inscription (pl. IV, d) give a clear picture of the development of Harihara cult in the Valley. The inscription engraved on three lines in Eastern variety of North Indian mātrkā alphabet of eighth century A.D. has been variously studied. The text as amended by M.M. Sharma is as follows:

1. महाराजाधिराजश्री जीवार (राज्येः)
2. आदि नाम श्री जीवारायण
3. बलाहिति नामके श्रीलटेन लिखितम्

This inscription reading "Mahārājādhirāja Sī jīvarā (rājye)" literarily means in the kingdom of Mahārājādhirāja Sī jīvarā may point to a seperate kingdom. The royal epithet ‘Mahārājādhirāja’ is indicative of the status of a
paramount sovereignty of the kingdom Śri Jīvāra ruled. The Inscription also refers to the existence of a class of kulaguru. In the present context, the kulaguru is the son of an accomplished siddha (ascetic), and was the preceptor as well as priest (mathpati) of the family temple.

Remarkably, this inscription records the chanting (kīrttana) of the nāma of Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa before (ādau) the consecration of the image of the deity in the concerned temple. M.M. Sharma who rendered the text of the inscription into somewhat chaste Sanskrit, thinks that the expression “ādau śaṅkara-nārāyaṇa nāma-kīrttana”, which implies, according to him, chanting of prayers to Śaṅkara and Nārāyaṇa performed before the consecration of the idol of the temple concerned.

III (c) Harihara Stone Image from Deopani:

This is the third inscribed Harihara stone image to be recovered from Deopani site (pl.v,a.). The image on its back contains three lines of writing in the mātrkā characters current in the eighth century A.D. (pl.v,b.) and has been studied severally. M.M. Sharma who noticed some influence of the local prākrit in the inscription, emended its text as follows:

1. ॐ नमः स्वातिः महाराजाधिराजश्रीदीन
2. र्लेखयमरणेष्य क्राकयुजय सतहरिततमि (= सत हरितामभिः)
3. हरिहराग्रिमार दलेति (= दल इति)

Mahārajaḍhirāja Sri-Diglekhavarman of the text above is not found mentioned in any other record of the time. P.C. Choudhury and M.M. Sharma have attempted link Mahārajāḍhirāja Diglekhavarman to a scion of
the Salastambha dynasty, of Kamarupa kingdom, and supposes that the political sway of Prāgjyotisa - Kāmarūpa kingdom extended upto the Deopani region during A.D. c. 800.

However, on the basis of evidence collected from recent epigraphical discoveries, it seems probable that the region entering round Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley, was ruled by an independent line of kings since early times. This is quite evident from the names of kings like Sri Vasundhara Varmana in the ATCS, and NKFSI, and Sri Ratnavarmana mentioned in the ATSI. These names do not appear in the genealogy of the Varman rulers of Prāgjyotisa Kāmarūpa. This factor makes it almost clear that an independent line of kings was ruling in the region of Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley which could be well identified with Upariṣṭana, outside the pale of Prāgjyotisa Kāmarūpa kingdom (supra) which is also corroborated by other archaeological remains found in the Valley. It seems likely that Mahārājādhiraṇī Jīvarā and Mahārājādhiraṇī DiglekhaVarman belonged to the same ruling dynasty to which Sri Vasundharavarmana and Sri Ratnavarmana belonged. As such the river Borganga, on the bank of which the Rock Inscription of the time of the Kamarupa king Bhutivarmana is located, might had formed the easternmost boundary of the Kamarupa kingdom.

III (d) Inscribed Harihara Stone Image from Kasomaripathar:

In the year 1983, the present author recovered a stone image of Harihara from Bisnupur in Kasomari pathar bearing a few letters at the pedestal which seem to stand for some numerical figures. (pl. v.c.)
III (e) Inscribed Bronze Sūrya image from Titabor:

A bronze Surya icon was recovered\(^5\) by the present author, in the year 1988 from Amgurikhat in Titabor (pl. v.d.). The pedestal of this image contains a short inscription in characters datable to c. 900 - 1000 century A.D. This inscription was deciphered by Dharmeswar Chutia which he read as “Śiśvakunḍasya kīrtī”\(^5\). This Viśvakuṇḍa perhaps was the name of the artist who sculptured the image.

III (f) Kṛsna-Durga Stone Image Inscription from Bisrampur:

A stone image (pl. VI, a.) bearing a two line inscription datable to eighth century A.D. (pl. VI, b.) engraved in mātraka alphabet, was recovered by the present author from Bishrampur (infra) in Kasomari pathar in the year 1988. The record seems to serve the function of a label to the figure of the deity. The inscription datable to c. 8th century A.D. and as deciphered by Dharmeswar Chutia\(^4\) is as follows:

पशोस्थ-गणिकृष्ण [ * ] नाकिक्षेन \(\|\)
जिवस्व काले च हविय | \(\|\)

Literary translation of the text as has been rendered by Dharmeswar Chutia is that. Amongst the animal-riding (pāsoṭha) gānas (gana; gana = Sivas (attendants) Kṛṣṇa (Durgā) be offered oblations (haviya) as it were by the destitutes, (even) during the time (of reign) of Jivara.

Jivara, who seems to have caused the making of this image and installing it in a temple was perhaps the donor king. No royal title is however, prefixed to the name Jivara here. However, such examples are not uncommon in short inscription of private nature. It may be that, Maharajadhārāja Sri Jivara
of the Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa stone image inscription, discussed above is identical with Jīvara of the present inscription and seem to be one and the same person. We have, so far, had two epigraphical records from the Valley referring to the name of Jīvara. It thus seems apparent that Jīvara was a king ruling in the Doyang-Dhansiri the Valley during c. the eighth century A.D.

It may be recalled that the heavily damaged Fragmentary copper plate Inscription from Nagaon records the name of one Maharajadhiraja Jivaraja,35 Dharmeswar Chutia identified Maharajadhiraja Jivaraja of this copperplate charter with Maharajadhiraja Jivaraja, Jivarā of the Śaṅkara Nārāyaṇa Stone image Inscription. But in the light of the present Bisrampur Image Inscription, it appears likely that Sri Jivarā or Jivarā of the two inscriptions viz the Śaṅkara nārāyaṇa Image inscription and the Bisrampur image inscription and Maharajadhiraja Sri Jivarā of the Nagaon Fragmentary copper plate Inscription seems to be two different persons Sri Jivarā(Jivara) was possibly a scion of Vajradatta and was ruling in Doiyang Dhansiri valley who caused the two inscribed images and issued the present record, while the latter Maharajadhiraja Sri Jivarā might be a scion of the Salastambha dynasty, ruling in the kingdom of Kamarupa from Hadappesvara, around modern Tezpur. The oval shaped seal with the counter sunk enfe elephant symbol, the royal insignia of Pragyotisa-Kamarupa, - along with the legend “Maharajadhiraja-Sri Jivaraja attached to the Fragmentary copper plate from Nagaon lends support to our contention. If this was so the assumption of Dharmeswar Chutia36 that Maharajadhiraja Sri Jivarā (Jivara) of the Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa Stone Image Inscription is a scribal error for Maharajadhiraja Sri Jivarā of the Fragmentary Copperplates from Nagaon, and that Maharajadhiraja Sri Jivarā (Jivarā) and Maharajadhiraja Sri Jivarā were one and the same king of Kamarupa, ruling up to the Deopani region in the Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley may not be justified.
Donative Charter on Copperplates:

In the present study, the ATSI, ATCS and the NKFSI are found to be the earliest landgrant charters obtained from the Valley. Besides these, five copperplate landgrant charters belonging to mediaeval period are recovered so far. These are discussed below:

IV (a) Copper plate Inscription of Negheriting Siva Temple:

Ahom king Siva Singha and his queen Ambika issued this charter in śaka 1656. The Charter records the event of installing brahman Banesvara as deputy to his father Agamacaryya of Devargaon (sic Dergaon) and engaged him in the performance of daily worship of both Uma and Mahesvara. It also states that Banesvara and his descendants would enjoy that privilege successively.

The charter further records the event of making the gift of both land and attendants to both the father and the son on different occasions. It states that in the year 1626, king Rudra Singha made a gift of 56 purās of land along with six families of servitors to the brahman Agamacaryya as daksina on the occasion of laying the ceremonial foundation (pratishtha karma) of a Siva-temple. The location of the donated land is said to be at Phutukatoli. The names of servitors are also given.

In the Saka year 1646, the record states, the king Siva Singha gave Banesvara, as gift, 20 purās of land at Betiyoni on the occasion of performing the propitiatory rites. Baneswara was also given 80 purās of land at Lahan-Bacha on the occasion of his marriage ceremony got performed by the king and the queen. On a third occasion, Baneswara was given by Siva Singha 20 purās of land at Betiyoni in the Saka year 1660, on the occasion of the performance of obsequies of the Bor Raja (sic Phuleswari Kunwari). The charter further records the giving of as servitors of three paiks and six boys as
family servants. It is also said that the king had engaged two bralmanas for supplying water from the Vjaysagar pukhuri at Dergaon replacing the two outcaste persons engaged earlier.

Thus the record is important from several points of view, inasmuch as it throws a welcome light more particularly on the socio-religio conditions of the time apart from the economic, revenue and political factors current at the time.

This charter contains an implecatory verse at the end urging the future kings to honour the charter and the contents therein.

(b) Copperplate Charter of king Lakshmi Singha:

A copperplate charter (49 X 27 cm) issued by Ahom King Lakshmi Singha is found at Sri Sri Na-Gosain Sattra at Dergaon. This charter contains 26 lines of writings in obverse (pl. VI,c.) and 5 lines Assamese in reverse (pl. VI,d.). King Lakshimi Singha became a follower of Ramananda Puspacharyya whom he conferred new name 'Na-Gosain' or 'Pahumari-gosain'. This charter records a proclamation of establishment of a Sattra installing an idol of Vāsudeva for worship therein and records the grant of land in favour of Śrī Śrī Pahumariāgosain at Thekuagram in Darrong for maintenance of the regular religious practice of his priest and also placed altogether 6 thousand and 6 gots of pāik as bhakats under him (Na-Gosain).

(c) Trilingual copperplate charter of king Lakshmisingha from Kacharihat:

This is an appointment cum land grant copperplate charter (30 X 20.5 cm) issued by the Ahom king Lakshmi Singha, and was inscribed in three languages - Sanskrit, Assamese on one side and in Asomā kṣhara, i.e. Ahom language and script on the reverse. This inscription, found in the possession
of Gunakanta Sarma, a descendent of the original owner, at Gabharu village, Kacharihat, about 6 km. to the east of Golaghat town by Dr. Mohini Kumar Saikia was studied by J.N. Phukan. This charter was issued at the prayer of Cataialia Moranmorajana Bodgonhain through GanakMajundar. This charter records the appointment of a brahman family to serve water to travellers at Borgohain's tank at Kacharihat in Saka 1701. The water server was granted two plots of land measuring 6 purās of cultivable land (ruvotimāti) as vṛttimāti i.e. land granted as means of occupation for serving guests at the house built for the travellers on the bank of the tank (pukhurit alohi poha bāhor). The concerned water tank 60 X60 m. is still in situ near Kacharihat Tiniali.

(d) Copperplate Charter of the Devighar at Morongi:

This is a bilingual charter (pl.VII,a.) issued by the Ahom king Gourinath Singha. This charter was published by Dr. Moheswar Neog in his Prāchya Sāsanāvali in the Appendix.

This copper plate charter inscribed in Assamese language and script records grant of 4 purās of land at Kalugaon and 8 purās of land at Mubahup in Morongi by king Gourinath Singha in favour of Sri Madhuram Brahman in saka 1706. The land is said to have been gifted for regular performance of rituals at the temple of dasabhujā Durgā. This inscription has been authenticated in the reverse by a seven line inscription in Asamāksharam i.e. in Ahom language and script (pl.VII,b.)

The charter contains three implicatory verses praying other rulers of the present and the kings to be in future to honour this charter issued by the king in favour of brahmana mentioned, therein, and not to charge and collect revenue from the donated land. One who does otherwise against the prayer, such kings would be regarded as destroyer of dharma, the charter declared.
(e) Copper plate Charter of Gourinath Singha, Dergaon:

Another copper plate charter issued by Ahom king Gourinath Singha is found at Srī Śrī Na-Gosāi Sattra at Dergaon\(^6\).

This charter has 20 lines of writings in Assamese language and script (pl.VII,C.) authenticated by 6 lines of writings in Āśamāṅgaram i.e. in Ahom language and script (pl.VII,d). This inscription records the grant of a plot of land in favour of Srī Śrī Na-gosāi Sattra.

(f) Inscribed Bhṛṅgārā from Doigrung:

A six line epigraph (pl.VIII,a,) inscribed on a horn shaped silver water spout called bhṛṅgārā (30.5 X 7 cm), is found at Panikora village in Morongi' in Golaghat district. This inscription associated with Halowathan Joy Durgā dewālaya of Doigrung and has been studied by Dr. Dharmeswar Chutia\(^6\) and the text of his reading runs as follows:

\[ Śrī Śrīgōvindya-padarvindya\]
\[ वन्द्यति रजजे-मने-वाङ्खयगह- च (?) \]
\[ निकासय-श्री-ब्रह्म-चौरियान-वुश (?) \]
\[ श्रीपुजचरि (?) संज्ञा -श्रीसर (?) \]
\[ द्राधिपन-दत्-रजत-स्वणी- \]
\[ निवत-भुगारपद \] १९१८ साके

This charter records the gift of this bhṛṅgārā to be used in the worship of Sri Sri Govinda. It is stated that some silver and gold coins were also given along with this bhṛṅgārā. The name of the donor of this inscription cannot be identified properly since the letters indicating the name of the donor king are partly missing after Śrī Sar because of the artificial joints.
NOTES AND REFERENCES:


2 Palaeographically and stylistically, however this record may be forwarded further back to a date around 400 A.D. Dharmeswar Chutia. op. cit., p. 34.

3 P.C. Saikia, op. cit., p. 33.

4 Ibid.

5 These inscribed stone pieces are now preserved in the Anthropology Department Dibrugarh University, photograph of which obtained per permission of the Head of the said Department.

6 Vide personal communication from Dharmeswar Chutia, dated August 23rd, 1996.


8 Ibid.

9 This could be affirmed, on the basis of the classification of epigraphical records. R.B. Pandey, Indian Palaeography, 1957, p. 33.

10 Ibid.

11 This inscribed stone piece was recovered by this author from Sri Lecham Turung teacher Sarupathar on 4-10-84 and collected go the Directorate of Archaeology Assam, Jorhat Branch and now handed over to the Jorhat District Museum, This stone piece was originally with one Sri Padmeswar Gogoi of No. 1 Tengrajan Gaon, P.O. Tengabari, Borpathar Mouza, Golaghat District.

12 Vide Personal communication from Dharmeswar Chutia dated August 23rd, 1996.
13 T.N. Ramachandran, ARASI, reprint, 1990, p 60

14 Vide Personal communication received from Dharmeswar Chutia dated August 23rd, 1996

15 The NKFSI appears to be a larger record engraved on a block of stone with semi top now broken into fragments. It seems that, some of the more fragments of this inscription are still to be recovered.

16 It is reported by Sri Bhabendranath Saikia, village headman of Nagajari Khanikargaon that the original Inscription at Nagajari Khanikargaon was broken in to fragments by local people some time back around 1950. Bhabendranath Saikia knew about the existence of another which was found recently in 1994, during our exploration.

17 M.M. Sharma, dates NKFSI to the early part of the c. 5th cen. A.D. But opinions vary about the time limit and Dharmeswar Chutia holds on earlier date of c. 4th century A.D. Dharmeswar Chutia "A Fragmentary Stone Inscription from Golaghat District", JARS, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1996, pp. 32-40.

18 Ibid.


20 Ibid.

21 During field exploration at Nagajari Khanikar gaon, Sarupathar, by the present author Sri Bhabendranath Saikia, (the son of late Luduram Saikia of the earlier part found in 1978) found out this second part, jointly with Sri Lecham Turung and Rebakanta Gogoi of Sarupathar in the residential compound of Sri Putual Ali, Sarupathar on November 23, 1994. This fragment (pl. II, d) is now in the Directorate of Archaeology Assam.

23 M.M. Sharma, in one place suggest that the composition was probably in verse form. However the recovery of another section of record (described immediately below) proves otherwise.

24 M.M. Sharma, op.cit., p. 305.


26 T.P. Verma: "Fragmentary Stone Inscription from Khanikargaon", paper read at Indian Epigraphical Society Seminer in 1987 at Guwahati, p. 3

27 Dharmeswar Chutia op.cit. 1996 pp. 32-40

28 Ibid.

29 The ATCS (pl. II, b) is an epigraphical records complete in itself, give indication that Vasundharavarmana might have been the donor king who had issued the ATCS and the NKFSI.

30 According to T.A. Gopinath Rao (Elements of Hindu Iconography Vol. I, pt. I, 1991, p. 85) for manusapadas may have relation with protection of habitual sites or cities He holds that such cites are covered by the four central squares called brahmapada, daivikapada, manusapada and paisa pada, which signify to the Chara-rasi "the varying signs of the zodiac i.e. the first, fourth, seventh, and tenth" which are mesra, Karkataka, tula and makara. However readings found as "Sri Ratnavarmana padou" in the line 4 of the first part of this inscription may also indicate that, the foot prints might have belonged to Sri Ratnavarmana, the donor of this inscription, which were possibly revered (infra). It may be that, the foot prints might have some relation to the township of Alichiga-Tengani, where a brick temple was possibly constructed.

32 ATSI has been tentively studied by Dr. Dharmeswar Chutia, personal communication dated 23-9-96.

33 It may be referred that the Chiaruton rock inscription of king Purnavarman on a huge boulder in the stream at Chiaruton in West Java are engraved a pair of foot prints of the mighty king Purnavarman "the lord of the city of Taruma". The four-line Sanskrit inscription in Pallava-Grañtha script (derived from Brāhmi is datable to c. A.D. 400. B. Ch. Chhabra, "Epigraphical Research", *Hundred years of Indian Archaeology*, 1961, facing page 46-47.

34 This clay seal has been studied by Dharmeswar Chutia and personal communication dated August 23rd, 1996.

35 Vide personal communication dated August 23rd, 1996 received from Dr. Dharmeswar Chutia.

36 As early as 1905 T. Bloch noticed the existence of this inscribed Viṣṇu Image at Deopani, which was shifted to the Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti Museum by K.N. Dikshit during 1923-24, and now preserved in Assam State Museum Guwahati (ASM.8)


This inscribed Harihara image is now preserved in Assam State Museum, Guwahati (ASM. 41).


This inscribed Harhara image was recovered by the present author from Sri Kushram Chetia of Bisnupur in Kasomari pathar, with help of Sri Padmeswar Gogoi, Rupkolia gaon, Golaghat.

This inscribed Sūrya icon was collected by the present author from S.K. Nurul Hussain Amgurikhat, Titabar, in 1988, and donated to the Jorhat District Museum.

Vide Personal communication of Dharmeswar Chutia, dated August 23rd, 1996

Vide Personal communication from Dharmeswar Chutia, dated August 23rd, 1996

Ibid.

A detailed study of this charter may be found in Moheswar Neog (ed) Prāchya Śāsanāvali, 1974, pp. 20-21.

Ibid.

This copperplate charter of Lakshmi Singha is found with Sri Rohini Vallav Goswami of Śrī Śrī Na-Gosāin Sattra, Dergaon.


During our personal inquiry, the charter was not found with its caretaker.


This inscribed is preserved by Sri Keshab Sarma, Morongi, in Golaghat.

Moheswar Neog, op.cit. pp. 186-87

This copperplate charter is found with Sri Rohini Vallabh Goswami, of Śrī Śrī Nagosāin Sattra Dergaon.

This inscribed water spout (bhrugāra) is found with Sri Sagar Chandra Thakur (Priest of Halowa Than Joy Durga dewalaya, Doigrung) Panikora village, Morongi, in Golaghat.

Vide Personal communication from Dharmeswar Chutia dated August 23rd, 1996.
Megaliths

In the Doiyang Dhansiri Valley Megaliths are confined to two sites viz. Dimapur and Kasomaripathar.

**Dimapur Megaliths:**

The megalithic complex (pl. VIII, b) at Dimapur is located within the Dimapur town by the side of Dimapur Imphal Highway. The entire megalithic complex erected in rows was enclosed by a brick reinforced earthen rampart flanked by a solid brick built gate way on the eastern side. More than a century earlier Major Godwin Austen gave the length of the enclosed wall as 369 metres1. The complex is found consisting of three separate groups of megaliths. Of these, the principal group which covers an area of 78m x 18m is flanked by two subsidiary groups to its south-west and north-west and cover areas of 40m x 23m and 55m x 6m respectively. To the west of the principal group of megaliths and between the subsidiary groups exist two tanks measuring 60X53m and 36X35m.

The principal group of megaliths consist of four rows in north-south alignment with a total 18 columns in standing position. The south-west group has five rows of megaliths, while the north-west group has two rows. Structurally, the latter groups of megaliths are comparatively smaller in size and of inferior workmanship than those found in the principal group. Each group of megaliths seems to have been associated with a large isolated column. One of these columns stands intact (pl.VIII,c). The rounded top of the largest column in the south west group has a diameter of 74 cm. Of the ten erect megaliths of this group the highest column is of 2 metres. The north-west group has two rows of megaliths, of which seven columns are found in erect position. The largest one of them is 3.40m high and 2 metre in diameter.
KASOMARIPATHAR MEGALITHS:

The megalithic complex at Kasomaripathar, consisting of two rows, is located on an elevated region locally known as Rajabari, about 10 km to the east of Jamuguri in Golaghat District. The site, facing a dead course of the Doiyang, covers an area of 65 X15 m. The remains of the total 51 megaliths are found at this site in east west alignment facing south. The eastern part of this complex is found with a number of menhirs. However, those in the west are carved megaliths facing south and these are taller than the menhirs in the eastern part. The tallest ones are in the centre. Not a single carved megalith is now in erect position. An Isolated large cylindrical column, like the ones in Dimapur megalithic site, lies broken at this site, at a distance of 18 m from the first row of megaliths.

TYPES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MEGALITHS OF THE VALLEY:

The Megaliths of the Valley are basically new types of structures on account of their shapes and ornamentations. Instead of being rough-hewn, these megaliths are products of a well-disciplined chiselled work and are elaborately carved with reliefs of numerous floral and geometrical designs. The builders, by erecting carved megaliths, appear to have discarded the primitive tradition of megalithism of erecting large-sized slabs or blocks of stone either in natural form or quarried and roughly trimmed. As such, structurally the megalithic types found in the Valley can be attribute to an independent origin which, however, seem to bear functional similarities with some local primitive traditions of erecting wooden effigies of the dead of the Angamis, the Y-shaped forked posts prevalent among the Sema Nagas who dwell on the bordering hills. From functional point of view these megalithic structures appear to be sepulchral, but the practice seem to have assumed more a form of memorial column of certain individuals or the celebration of certain community festivals, rather than any burial ritual.
It was major John Butler who, in 1841, reported the existence of megaliths at Dimapur. But an account of these megalithic remains with detail sketch of the site has been given by Major Godwin Austen, and on the basis of his account, studies on these megaliths have been made by T. Bloch in 1906-07.

T. Bloch also studied megaliths of Kasomaripathar on which K.N. Dikshit also published a report in 1923-24. Later on, primarily on the basis of the observation of T Bloch, P.C. Choudhury, M.M. Sharma and P.C. Sarma have studied these megaliths during subsequent period.

All the later scholars followed the nomenclatures given by Godwin Austen and T. Bloch to these megaliths as archaeological terminologies. T. Bloch refers to the existence of four types of megalithic structures at Dimapur and Kasomaripathar:

viz. The Chessman column
The V-shaped column
The Buffalo-Horn column
The Sword blade column

In addition to what Godwin Austen and T. Bloch have observed about the structural differences and functional purposes of chessman column and sword-blade columns, our field studies have brought fresh data. Another group of menhir is also found at Kasomaripathar. While retaining the major classification as above, we propose to place the megaliths and menhirs at Dimapur and Kasomaripathar under a revised list on the basis of structural features as follows.
The Chessman Column

The Isolated Chessman Column

The V-Shaped Column

The Buffalo - Horn Column

The Ficus-Tree Column

The Menhir

THE CHESSMAN COLUMN :

The nomenclature of Chessman pillar was given by Godwin Austen to those megalithic columns found erect in the first and second of the principal avenue at Dimapur\(^{16}\). This group of megaliths has a hemispherical canopy at the top having a constricted neck with a beaded band followed by concentric foliated carvings on the shaft below (pl. VIII,d). The only object represented is a dagger or sword as found interposed in vertical tassels. In minor ornamentation no two are precisely alike, but all are of one general form found in geometrical and floral carvings.

The Chessman Pillars seem to have certain remote similarities with the erection of "life size wooden effigies of the dead, in the ornaments and garments of the deceased, and decorated with trophies recording his prowess and achievement in life and war" as found among of the Angamies\(^{17}\). Use of stone is a work of respect to the soul of the dead and Hutton records its use as a means of promoting the fertility of the earth, and as such, stones were put up for the glorification of some individual erected perhaps, during his lifetime, but intended to perpetuate his name when he is dead\(^{18}\). Further primitive people might have observed that corpses provided manure for good crops; and that cornfields contiguous to burial grounds yielded better crops may have been also a pointer to this theory\(^{19}\). As such, the use of stone in glorification of
some individual may have been closely associated with a fertility cult in which the souls of the dead are utilized to fertilise the soil and promote good crops of man, stock and cereals. There is therefore a good reason to connect the Chessman Column for glorification of some dead individuals or of some members of the royal and noble families or chiefs whose souls were venerated for receiving good harvest. Might be for this reason Chessman Columns do not bear carvings of animal figures, but are profusely ornamented with floral motifs and designs. The only object found carved is the dagger or sword which was possibly used by the individual during his life time. It may be inferred that carvings of sword, the typical decorative waist band and carvings similar to "Ostrich feather" type chang tattoo marks incised vertically on the thighs and stiff neck, as found among the Konyaks, may also have connection with the carved Chessman Columns. Moreover, as John Butler records, the Rengmas and the Angami Nagas inter their dead and place the spear and shield of the deceased in the grave. P.R. Gardon records that the Dimapur stones are remarkably similar in shape to the carved wooden Kima posts of the Garos erected to commemorate deceased ancestors.

The erection of megaliths were thus a widespread tradition in this region, and to this day megaliths are erected by a section of the Karbis and the Khasi hill tribes in north eastern India. The Chessman Column thus can be safely said to have represented a human being. The entire decorative style and structural feature of the Chessman Column gives one the impression that these are stone versions of non-permanent prototypes made of such materials as timber, bamboo textile etc. Wooden human figures might have been their archetypes which through abstraction in course of time assumed the present shape of Chessman Column.
THE LARGE ISOLATED COLUMN:

Godwin Austen records the existence of large Isolated Columns at Dimapur as identical to the Chessman Columns of Dimapur is contradictory because the large Isolated Columns of Kasomaripathar (Pl. IX,a) bear animal carvings, which are conspicuously absent in Chessman Columns.

Structurally too, Isolated Chessman Columns are larger and different in form from other Chessman pillars. Further because the hemispherical canopy of Isolated Chessman Columns are less protruding, giving it the overall shape of a cylindrical contour. The canopy, as in case of the Kasomaripathar Isolated Column is adorned with 13 ribs flowing down from its top. Though the horizontal arrangements of the details are similar to the other such columns such as the neck, the waist band binding the bunch of tassels in the middle, the bottom tassels in this case are replaced by a number of swords carved on a number of vertical ridges which merge on the lower shaft. This Isolated Column has height of 3.47 m and its diameter is 74 cm at the top, 84 cm at middle and 47 cm at bottom.

Such an Isolated Chessman Column at Dimapur (pl. VIII,c.) stands at a distance of 41 m to the west of the principal group. This Isolated Column has a height of 4.42 m having the diameter of 2.50 m with a total circumference of 7.01 m. This Isolated Column has a cylindrical feature, and its neck and waist band are depicted in low but larger relief work. Remarkably, this column is surmounted by a finial or crest at the top, which are not to be found in other chessman pillars. Evidence of similar large isolated Chessman Column is also found associated with the subsidiary groups of megaliths at Dimapur. The Isolated Chessman associated with the south western group, now broken, had a diameter of 1.40 m at bottom and the one associated with the north eastern group had a diameter of 1.10 m. From north eastern group the Large Isolated Chessman Column exists at a distance of 43 m, from the first row in west.
The fact is that each group of megaliths structure has a large Isolated Chessman Column. Structurally, Isolated Chessman Columns are larger and bear animal carvings. These large Isolated Columns are located apart from the main megalithic alignment. As such, functionally too, these columns seem to have a different meaning. Existence of a large stone called Kipuche found near the gate of a village occupied by particular clan of Angami Naga may be pointed out in this regard. It seems that, the Isolated Chessman are associated with the belief of a guardian providing a safe journey of the soul to heaven, after death, and connected with Negrito belief in an afterdeath path to paradise which was guarded by an Avenging Demon. Megalithic sites at Dimapur and Kasomaripathar being associated with soul matter the Isolated Chessman Column were perhaps featured as figure of 'Avenging Demon' guarding the afterdeath path of the dead to paradise. They have been as such carved large in size to represent their demonic feature of a guardian of the afterdeath path. Thus, as an Angami village believed to be guarded by a venerable 'Kepuche' during life time, the path of the soul to heaven after death is believed to be guarded by this Isolated Chessman. The group of megaliths at Nartiang in Meghalaya is associated with some idea of giants who performed marvellous feats of strength. Erection of memorial stones in a line with taller stones being sometimes in the centre by the Karbis in memory of important personages such as village headman may also represent similar primitive belief. The large isolated Chessman Column may thus could be termed as the column of Avenging Demon to distinguish them from the other Chessman Columns of the Valley.

V- SHAPED COLUMNS:

Structurally, V-shaped Columns have a single basement at bottom, wherefrom two arm like beams fork off in the shape of V. At Dimapur, these columns exist next to the Chessman type columns in the third and fourth row. The ruins have only one V-shapped columns erect (pl. IX,b). The
Column has a diameter of 1 m at its bottom. The diameter of the left intact arm at the top is 60 cm, at the middle 53 cm, and at bottom 43 cm. Both the arms are symmetrical and tapering downward. The entire outer profile of the V-shaped structure except the inner faces between the columns have been used as fields for ornamentations.

The top end of each of the two stone beams making up the V is found with a mortice hole which T. Bloch believes to be a provision to hold additional structure over them. But it seems that the Y-shaped columns are structurally complete units and like those of the Kasomaripathar columns, the holes were intended to be used as repositories where relics of the ancestors were retained to bring down rain for good harvest. Such a tradition is found among the Rengmas and similar cavities are also found in some megaliths of North Cachar.

Some V-shaped columns were large, as indicated by the broken beams of 4.38 m X 97 cm of such columns found at the site. The width of this beam measures 1.14 m at bottom, 97 cm at middle and 75 cm at its top. Similar broken arms of 4.79 m X 1 m X 90 cm and 5.39 m X 83 m X 84 cm also exist at the site.

Structurally V-shaped columns are prototype of the Y-shaped forked post showing carved mithan head erected by the Angami Nagas during festival. V-shaped forked posts are also found protruding from the roof of house of wealthy Angamis, which is said to represent a female symbol and the bulbous topped post found among the Ao Nagas associated with mithan sacrifice represent a male symbol.

The Angamis on occasion entertain the entire village with feast, and memorial columns are set up in front of the house of the giver of the feast. The houses of the chief and the rich men of the Sema Nagas were adorned with carved fork-posts while other were set up on the ground to which mithan were tied and slaughtered at festival. The V-shaped columns may have remote connection with such ceremonial celebration of certain festivals related with
fertility cult. The Y-shaped wooden prototypes (of V-shaped columns) are found to be erected under phallic concept by the Sema Nagas and Angami Nagas and are revered by them as vehicle for fertilizing the soil, promoting good crop of men, stock and cereals\(^9\) for creating better economic condition for the population to thrive. It seems that, prototypes of Y-shaped were possibly erected at this site initially, which were subsequently given the present shape under a sumptuous style of living possibly maintained by the Kacharis in the Valley.

**Buffalo-Horn Column:**

The Buffalo-Horn Columns only differs from V-shaped columns in their two bifurcating stone beams slightly curved inward and somewhat resembling the horns of the buffalo thus:

Not a single Buffalo Horn type column is to be found erect, and none of them, even the one photographed by T. Bloch\(^{40}\) found in situ. These megaliths are conventional forms of Buffalo-horn type wooden post, possibly developing out of the custom of putting up the horn of the slaughtered buffalo as an offering to deity\(^{41}\). Such a ritual-oriented belief in the carved figure of mithan head or slaughtered head of buffalo also prevailed among the Nagas; and Buffalo Horn-like motif were used as fertility symbol\(^{42}\). We have pointed out about erection of massive Y-shaped carved forked posts, to which mithans (\(bros\ frontalis\)) are tied when slaughtered at festivals. T. Bloch however associates the origin of Buffalo-Horn

Column from the bifurcating wooden posts, put up for commemorating some meritorious act and celebration of festival such as killing of mithun or bison and ceremonial feasting of a village\(^{43}\).

Buffalo-Horn Column may have totemistic significance, and the buffalo or the mithan might have been venerated either as food totem or clan totem of primitive societies under totemic belief that "all creatures are produced from food, live by food pass into food"\(^{44}\).
Buffalo as an animal much more of the swamp must have entered Naga tribes as domestic animals in recent times, and is found to be slaughtered by the Rengmas at feast as cult or fertility rituals. Dimapur must have been a resort of buffaloes and buffalo sacrifice associated with fertility cult seem to have assumed a popular belief or cult, Buffalo Horn columns may indicate celebration of such festivals associated with meritorious act like sacrifice of 'buffalo which suggests the co-existence of belief and practice in the Doiyang Dhansiri valley similar to those existing in bordering regions.

**Ficus Tree Column:**

This type of megaliths exist at Kasomaripathar has been described earlier as “Sword Blade or Dagger Column by T. Bloch” and K.N. Dikshit (pl. IX,c,d). Of this group, the megaliths found on the southern part of the site are taller and gradually recede towards north. The tallest megalith with 3.18 m in height has diameters of 74 cm at top, 70 cm at middle and 63 cm at bottom indicating a downward tapering. This taller megalith lies almost at the central region along with a few other taller numbers. The lowest megalith measures 2.31 m in height with diameters of 59 cm at the top, 55 cm at middle and 53 cm at bottom. Existence of a four armed human figure, wearing a crown and earings at the southern part of the avenue is remarkable.

But it has been found that these megaliths bear carvings apparently of trees, with reliefs of sword or dagger within their profile. Similar tree profile with motifs of dagger or swords are also found in the Buffalo Horn Column of Dimapur. T. Bloch found their ornamentation to be remarkable for the groups of three rosettes and record placing of a dagger or sword, and a few animal figure between the triangular bands which develop, as it were, out of the three spirals that encircle the rosettes on the upper end. Sword or spear head found carved in those megaliths may have some significance as symbols or trophies related to head-hunting, because, a custom of spear head thrust.
through human skull still exists among the Nagas. Also the Rengma and Angami Nagas inter their dead and place the spear and shield of the deceased in the grave. The occurrence of such sword or dagger in megalithic ornamentation are commonly found both at Dimapur and Kasomaripathar.

Megaliths at Kasomaripathar in addition to its structural feature like sword or dagger which T. Bloch and K.N. Dikshit observed bear in reality an embossed profile of tree (pl. IX,c,d) with the relief of sword and dagger within its profile. The tree is shown in two vertical spirals flanked by two concentric lotus carvings upward each side and surmounted by a heart shaped panel looking more like a leaf of ficus. This panel is often found either with vertical or concentric lotus or with figures of birds, or animals like stylized lion.

It seems that, each of the megalith of this category displays profile of a scraggy ficus tree, believed as “Priest of Trees” by the Angami Naga and also venerated as corpse tree (ficus religiosa) under which the dead are disposed of and are finally covered with a flat stone. A ficus is also revered as “Head tree” under which sacred stones were buried and worshipped.

A scraggy specimen of *arythrina arborescens* revered as ‘Head tree’ by the Ao, the Lotha and the Sema Nagas, and the Garos always prefer a ficus to plant on the spot where enemies are buried. The Kacharis of Dimapur too seem to have held the megaliths with religious significance some of which eventually were lying against ficus tree. A popular prayer in North Cachar, refers to a huge pipal tree growing near the confluence of the Dilao (Brhamputra) where the Kacharis were believed to have been born. As such, there is ample reason to believe that the Dimasa Kacharis came under the influence of primitive tree cult, and the Bodos still revere *shiju*, a cactus type plant or tree with five ridges as *Shiv-Barai* symbolically meaning their supreme God Siva. Remarkably, both *ficus* and *shiju* have one thing in common: they exude a white milk-like juice to which they attribute the power of fertilization. The Bodo also keep a round stone, an egg and place a *shiju* plant and worship them, which relates to ancient fertility cult.
S.K. Chatterjee associates the primitive origin of ficus tree-cult with the Negritos. Strain of Negrito is to be found among tribes in the Nagahills. Numerous tree motifs as found used as ornamental motif in megalithic structure indicate that during mediaeval period the cult of tree worship assumed importance as cult of fertility in the Valley under the Kacharis, and the megaliths of Kasomariopathar are evidence of that tradition and belief associated in ficus tree cult evolved by primitive Negroids. It may therefore be inferred that, the Sword blade columns may more meaningfully be described as Ficus-Tree Column, since structurally and functionally they are more close to the ficus tree cult which has been stylistically depicted in an embossed fashion in profile of these megaliths (pl. IX, c,d)

**Menhir:**

A group of menhir consisting of upright pillars planted vertically on the ground are found still erect at Kasomariopathar. This group constitutes the northern part of the avenue in the same alignment of the Ficus Tree Columns. The height of these menhir ranges in between 1m to 1.50 m, and some of them are found with cavities. These menhirs are chisselled upright stones, and possibly were memorial columns.

**Historical Chronology of Megaliths:**

It has been discussed that megaliths of the Valley are structurally new type of monument. As such, they represent development of regional style in megalithic art and structure of mediaeval period. J.P. Mills and J.H. Hutton found some adze-heads resemble to the iron hoe use by the Yimtsunger Nagas and Khasis, throughout the megalithic area of North Cachar. No such tools or pottery have been so far found from the megalithic sites of Dimapur and Kasomariopathar. This gives an indication that megaliths of Doiyang-Dhansiri Valley associate more with certain sepulchral tradition rather than megalithic
grave. Evidence of those earthen mounds which T. Bloch believed to have contained remains of old buildings have not been found existing at Dimapur now, which could have offered authentic data in determination of their age and authors. As such, at present, no evidence associate these megalith with a remote antiquity.

On the other hand, artistic exhuberence and structural features connect these megaliths to a late period of A.D. 1300-1400. Y-shaped wooden fork posts similar to V-shaped columns of Dimapur found at Mongnyu and Chare in Naga Hills (pl. X,a.) suggest these megalithic structure as mediaeval stone immitation of their wooden prototypes found in bordering regions of the Valley. Costumes, garments, ornaments worn by the Angami Nagas dwelling between the Diphu Pani, the chief feeder, and the Dhansiri and the Siju, a large tributary of Doiyang are reflected in many respects in Chessmen Pillars of Dimapur. Enormous ornamentations of these megaliths deliberately represent a decadent phase of megalithism that continued in the Valley till late times under the concept of fertility of primitive tribal belief to which subsequently provided the Hindu view of art. All the rituals governing the erection of these megalith, together with their types in certain cases, could be found among the Nagas. Carvings of floral, geometrical and animal figures however seem to represent some tradition of Kachari-Hindu symbolism, executed by kachari sculptors. Variegated stone arts found since ancient period indicate the development of a strong tradition of stone art in the Valley. Reference of U. Sagar Nangli, a khasi expatriate, who was a sculptor and artist, and who seems to have erected these megalithic structures is found. U. Sagar Nangli, a brother of the Jaintia king, had fled away with some of his followers to the kachari Raja of Dimapur and then to the Angami hills for shelter in 1375 A.D. It seems not improbable that, with elements drawn from the cultural life of the Angami Nagas, megaliths of Dimapur and Kasomaripathar were erected and ornamented with kachari-Hindu art tradition by this khasi expatriate sculptor during 1400 A.D. as a mark of gratitude to the kachari Raja for giving him shelter. Absence of such carved megalith in
any other region in North Eastern India is also indicative of an unconventional approach to the carving of megaliths in this Valley, which perhaps was incidental. As such, the carved megaliths of the Valley represent an isolated instance of megalithic ornamentation.

However, to connect them with *Siva linga* and *Siva-Sakta* forms, as believed by some scholars, may possibly be far-fetching because the megalithic art and structure of Dimapur and Kasomaripathar are associated with Negrito belief of life after death and therefore utilized as vehicle for worshipping for economic prosperity by the Kacharies, at their capitals at Dimapur and Kasomaripathar, emphasising possibly a policy of co-existence with the native Naga tribes. Because, although relations between the Angamis and the Kacharis were strained, at times, relations between them seem to have been normally amicable.

**Process of Erection:**

Godwin Austen records that blocks of sand stone for megaliths of Dimapur were quarried at least 15 Km away from Dimapur. Stones for Kasomari pathar megaliths were quarried at least from 20 Km away and were possibly transported through the river Doiyang. Extracted blocks of stones were carried on wooden sledge and the bearers used cans for ropes to pull the sledge on. For raising memorial stone the entire male population of the village performed the stone-dragging in many rounds of ceremonies. The task for bringing the stone to the positioned vault was done by means of ropes and lever, and mortice at cardinal point are hewn to fastened them at top. It seems probable that, blocks of stone were set up in the rough and then carved in situ, which could be presumed from the intact ornamentation. Otherwise these could have been damaged in such process of erection.
NOTES AND REFERENCES:

9. Ibid.
12. H.K. Borpujari, (ed.) op.cit. p. 303
14. ARASI, 1906-07, (1909) pp. 18-24; Major Godwin Austen, op.cit, 874, p. 4
17. J.H. Hutton, op.cit., 1921, p. 227
20. J.H. Hutton "The Use of Stone in the Naga Hills" p. 82.
22 John Butler, op.cit., p.125.
27 Ibid., p. 20.
28 J.H. Hutton, The Sema Nagas, 1921, p. 43.
31 Ibid. p. 140.
33 ARASI, 1923-24, (1990) p. 34.
34 P.C. Choudhury, op.cit., p. 71.
38 Ibid., p. 36.
39 Ibid., p. 82
40 ARASI, 1905-06 (1909) Plate-VI (b), facing p. 20.
41 Ibid., p. 24.
In order to distinguish the Kasomaripathar megaliths from those of Chessman and V-shaped columns, T-Bloch name them as Sword blade or Dagger Column. ARASI, 1906-07 (1909) p.23. (pl. VII).

ARASI, 1906-07, (1909) p.20, plate-VI (b)

J.H. Hutton, "Diaries of two Tours in Naga hills" p.5.


Ibid., p. 6.


J.H. Hutton, "Diaries of Two Tours in Nagahills" p.30.


S.K. Chatterjee, Kirata Jana Krti, p. 5.

Ibid., p.4

Sankar Sengupta, Sacred Tree Across Cultures and nations, 1980, p.14, p.31.

S.K. Chatterjee, op.cit., pp. 4-5.


ARASI, 1906-07, (1909) p. 22

Ibid., p. 23.


It is said that U. Sagar Nangle, being enamoured of his own niece, forcibly seizing her, fled to the residence of the Kachari Raja, and then to Angami hills with some Kachari followers in A.D. 1375, Hamlet Bareh, Nagaland District Gazetteers, Kohima, 1970, p. 22.


Major God win Austin, op.cit., pp. 1-6.

Ibid.

ARASI, 1923-24, (1990) p. 34.

E.A. Gait, op.cit., p. 302.
3 TANKS AND RAMPARTS

Tanks and ramparts of the Valley are found to have withstood the ravages of time in a better way than other monuments. As such, tanks and ramparts serve as the primary clues for investigation of the archaeological remains, most of which have by now, become almost obliterated owing more to the destructive hands of man, than of nature. The structural features of the tanks and ramparts of the Valley provide valuable data for tracing the patterns of human settlements. Investigations reveal that the tradition of tanks excavation and raising of ramparts continued in the Valley from ancient period till the mediaeval period. A chronological discussion on the subject is attempted below.

Rahdhalapukhuri in Dhekial:

The iron extracting and smelting site at Rahdholapukhuri in Dhekial (supra) is found with infrastructure of three ancient water tanks. (Fig. 6) The largest of these in east-west alignment measures 130 m X 80 m while each of the other two measure 60m X 60m. Each tank is found with an outlet for flowing out water from the tanks. The water streams flowing northeast from the small tanks are jointly called loā-dong (supra), while the southwest channel from the large tank is called Dariājān. This large tank is found further connected with the intermediary tank, by a canal which is 33 m long. Possibly the site had a large bed of ferrugineous clay. Large scale extraction of which seem to have connected the site with ground water which had to be drained out by means of a flushing system for continuing the extraction of iron mixed clay.

Some believe that rah or para (mercury) was poured (dhalā) into the tank for keeping its water clean for which these tanks came to be known as rahdhalāpukhuri1. The infrastructure of these tanks surrounded by scattered
of slag iron, however, indicate the existence of an iron extracting and smelting site at the locality. Smelted iron (lo), called rab in liquid form was possibly poured into water. This technological process was possibly known as lo-dhala or rahdhalā for which the place came to be known as rahdhalā, and the tanks as rahdholā pukhuri in later times.

**Water ditches, Ramparts and tanks at Duboroni:**

The habitational site at Duboroni is found with a layout of water ditches and cannals connecting it with the Dhansiri. Brick reinforced ramparts, swamps and tanks, water ditches (*parikhā*) and brick wall together with watch tower (*attālaka*) constitute the salient features of fortifications at Duboroni. Water management and navigation through inaccessible water ditches which are girdled by reinforced ramparts and open to the river Dhansiri by a system of canal as found at Duboroni, go to support our contention that the site was developed as a fortified capital of the kingdom. The ground plan of the site laid in rectangular form in north-south alignment is connected with the Dhansiri in the south by a series of navigable canals. The planning of fortifications at Duboroni recalls rectangular ground plan, either of a *Auduka* or *parikhā* fort, referred to in the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya.

The water ditches (*parikhā*) although rectangular in plan the canals in south connecting with the Dhansiri are laid in a zingzag pattern (Fig. 7, D.1). The present width of the ditches is found to be 30m at bottom and about three times wider at their surface. The water ditches possibly remained filled with rain water or possibly by irrigated water from the Dhansiri, a flushing system of which seem to have existed. Separate berths, of water ditches of 50 X 20 m size are found which emerged from the principal ditch to the interior of the habitational sites at intervals, which possibly served as docks for boats. The planning of the water ditches shows the layout of an advanced ground plan of *parikhā* fort at the confluence of the Dhansiri. It indicates the development of a full fledged science of defensive architecture in the valley during ancient period.
A series of ramparts along the rectangular water ditches are also found at Duboroni. The rampart on north and western boundary are reinforced with brick (Fig. 7, R.1). The outer facade of the northern rampart, aligned in east-west direction, is girdled by a water ditch in its eastern part and by a deep swamp in western part. The height of this northern rampart is 11m and it width is 21 m near the Duboroni L.P. School. The outer face of the western rampart in north-south direction is ringed by ditch now reduced to swamp (Fig. 7, R. 2). One rampart emerges from the western rampart to the interior of the site, which is found with evidence of an watch tower (attālaka) (Fig. 7, A. 1) and a circular terracotta ring (Fig. 7, TR.1) of 90cm width. The eastern rampart in north-south direction is almost obliterated (Fig. 7, R. 3). The southern part of the site has a number of undulated highland through which the canals connecting the Dhansiri are laid.

The surface of most of the ramparts are wide and plain. Their exterior aspect is steep. They gradually descends inward and merges with the water ditches, making the bottom of the ditches approximately one third of the total width of the surface of the ditches. This aspect is noticed in case of the western rampart. The western region of the habitational site with brick remains is also found waning towards the ditches.

Evidence of two water tanks are found at the eastern part of the site at Duboroni. One is known as Rajapukhuri (85 X 85). Its banks are about 10 m wide. The other tank, called Ranipukhuri has lost its features.

**Tanks and Rampart at Alichiga-Tengani:**

The Existence of a fortified harbour (pattana) on the confluence of the Dhansiri at Alichiga Tengani has already been mentioned. This site is found with two setubandha's (embankment and passages) and connected with the Dhansiri by a navigable canal (Fig. 5). Such planning of setuband has which simultaneously serve as fortification to the centrally elevated embankments, are referred to in the Arthasastra of Kautilya. The site seem to have developed
into an *ārāma* or pleasure garden surrounded by square ditch which look like a large reservoir of water or lake⁶. The fortified *setubandha* plan, laid down at Alichiga-Tengani by controlling natural water system and raising embankments by taking full advantage of the natural lay of the land at the confluence of the Dhansiri, show ingenuity of the architects and high degree of architectural and engineering planning. The site has a dock (130 m X 35m) connected with the canal leading to the Dhansiri. On the basis of the ATSI, and ATCS. tanks and rampart of Alichiga Tengani may be dated to c. A.D. 400-500.

The perfect geometrical planning of *setubandhas* water fort at Alichiga Tengani and water fort at Duboroni confirm that these were laid down under the supervision of class of expert in tank excavation. The lay out of these large ditches constitute a salient defensive feature, developed in ancient period in the valley. In ancient India, a class of *sarah saṁsthāpane vidvān* supervised the excavation of water tanks⁷. Possibly a similar class of experts were employed for excavation of lakes, water ditches and canals, in the Valley during ancient period.

Evidence of a good number of water tanks found nearby brick temple ruins belonging to the early mediaeval and mediaeval period, suggests that tanks in the Valley were excavated near temples to enhance the scenic beauty of temple premises as per principle of Indian *śilpaśāstra*⁸ as well as for ablution. Temples were built with an artistic background on bank of excavated tanks, and flower garden were made to render the place beautiful⁹. Possibly with such objectives the temples in the Doiyang Dhansiri valley were built either on the bank of tanks, water streams, or in front of broad sheet of water.

Evidence of a tank exist to the north-west of Ahomgaon *nāmghar* at Rajapukhuri in Sarupathar. The eroded banks measure 28m east-west and 27m north-south. To the west of the tank exists a brick mound wherefrom a *ṣivalīga* was recovered. It is said that the water of the tank was utilized by the people of *pāṅchghonā* village located at a distance from the tank. The tank thus served the double purpose of abolition as well as utilization by the nearby villagers for their day to day needs.
Large tanks appear to have been dug up in depressions and their banks raised with the earth from the excavated tanks. E.g. the Visnu pukhuri, Telisal and Jagya pukhuri at Jagyapur in Kasomaripathar. The Visnu pukhuri is a large rectangular tank measuring 480 X 240 m in east-west alignment. Brick and sculptural remains of early mediaeval period are located nearby. The Jagya pukhuri measures 264 m east-west and 192 m north-south. Evidence of brick temple structure with a figure of Gana (pl. x, b) is found nearby this tank. On the basis of the date of sculptural relics the Visnu pukhuri and Jagya pukhuri could be dated to c. A.D. 900-1000.

Evidence of large water tanks found at Bongaon in Naojan. Two tanks measuring 300 X 150 m and 105 X 80 m are found with brick remains nearby.

Perennial inflow of ground water was possibly maintained in some tanks by connecting its bed with ground water with the help of wooden pole inserted in the centre of the tanks which is called naghundha. Rajapukhuri and ranipukhuri tanks at Rajapukhuri, in Sarupathar probably belong to this category of tanks because both the tanks have been found to retain high water level almost upto their brims throughout the year. Both the tanks are contiguous to each other. The large tank (220 X 102 m) is known as Raja pukhuri and the smaller tank (75 X 55 m) as Rani pukhuri. Tank excavation constituted a distinct feature that developed in the valley since ancient times. During the mediaeval period too the Kacharis enthusiastically carried on excavation of large tanks evidence of which exist in and around Dimapur.

To the east of Dimapur town at a distance of about 3 km, at a locality called Naharani, there exists a large tank called Padum pukhuri. It measures 329 m north-south and 204 m east-west. Its banks are well built and water is clean. Another tank called Rajapukhuri is located near Purana bazar at Dimapur town. It measures 425 m east-west and 282 m north-south. Its banks are as high as 15 m.

The megalithic site at Dimapur is found with two tanks measuring 60 X 53 cm and 36 X 30 m. Megaliths are always associated with large irrigation
tanks for holding rain water under the belief that water of the tanks create condition for population to thrive. Possibly under the same belief, the megalithic site at Kasomaripathar, is found with a tank measuring 120 X 120m at a village called Duboroni.

A number of tanks exist within Nambor Reserved Forest. To the south of Duinoimukh, the confluence of the Dhansiri and Doiyang, a square tank (150 X 150m) called Raja pukhuri, is found under coverage of forests. To the east of the Raja pukhuri, at a distance of about 300m a square tank measuring 30 X 30m exists. A pair of tanks called Juria pukhuri of equal size measuring 45 X 35m each exist at a place called Naharkhola. Both the tanks are covered by forests and of them one is believed to have been excavated by the Ahoms and the other by the Kacharis to settle the dispute regarding the occupation of Morong; and could be dated to c. A.D. 1600.

The Dergaon Siva temple copperplate charter records that king Siva Singha (A.D. 1714 - 1744) excavated the Vijay sagar tank, now within the Negheriting Tea Estate, and employed brahmin pāik to draw water to the temple in Śaka 1660. King Lakshmi Singha (A.D. 1769-1780) excavated a tank (60 X 60m) at Kacharihat Tiniali near Golaghat, for the purpose of serving water to travellers. A Brahmin family was appointed as water servers who served travellers with water from this tank and a guest house was constructed on its bank. Kacharihat was a market place, as indicated by the term bat which stands for market or fair, and water was possibly served to the people who came to attend the market or fair.

Numerous water tanks are found in the lower part of the Valley. King Pratap Singha (A.D. 1603-41) excavated a number of tanks for the public use. Missamora, Bossa, Birinsoek, Aideukhat, Kotohagurithan, Dhekargorha Kamargaon, Rajabari (Bokakhat) were some villages where tanks were excavated and exist in situ. Two tanks known as Joy pukhuri and Vijay pukhuri exist at Naharjan in Bokakhat.
Two tanks called Borborua pukhuri (35 X 35m) and Rani pukhuri (16 X 16m) with prominent banks exist at the residential premises of the Momai Tamuli Borbarua, an Ahom royal official in the 17th century at Charingia pathar in Dhekial.

Ramparts:

In the section on brick architecture, brick reinforced ramparts have already been discussed. In this section earthen ramparts are taken up. Traces of earthen rampart of ancient period are few. An earthen rampart surrounded the megalithic site at Kasomaripathar but eroded subsequently.

Several ramparts of the Ahom period are in existence. King Suhungmung erected a fort called Morongigarh in c. A.D. 1531, which seems to be this series of ramparts existat Rajagarh (Fig. 8), located at the confluence of Doiyang-Dhansiri in Nambor Reserved Forest.

Preliminary observation of this forest covered site reveals that, the fort had a series of defensive ramparts. The base rampart which is in east west direction, is interlaid by four ramparts at interval of 150 m. Each of the ramparts is 150 m long and 11 m wide. Morongigah has another rampart, which runs along the west bank of the Doiyang and takes an angular turn to west. It passes by the Raja pukhuri and turns north along the course of the Dhansiri (Fig. 8).

Several earthen ramparts are seen around Numaligarh. These ramparts were possibly constructed by the Ahoms as defensive measures. A rampart known as koliyonigarh emerges from the brick reinforced Numaligarh rampart and continues towards the hills of karbi Anglong. Another rampart, Raj garh, emerges from the Bihara Tea Estate and mergesat Kuruwabah with another rampart called Lokhou garh. Lokhou garh, emerges from Rajagarh and runs south ward through the Naharjan Tea Estate and Kakachang and touches the hills of Karbi Anglong. Lokhou garh is possibly the longest and strategically
TANKS AND RAMPART (MORONGIGARH) AT DUINOIMUKH — THE CONFLUENCE OF DOIYANG AND DHANSIRI IN GOLAGHAT. (NOT TO SCALE)

FIG. 8.
most important rampart in the Valley, and is believed to have constructed in saka 1562
by Borborua Momai Tamuli during the region of Ahom king Pratap Singha.

The residential premise of Ahom official, identified with Momai TamulyBorborua, is located at Charingiapathar in Dhekial mouza. It covers an area of about 200 acres and is surrounded by an earthen rampart (dhâp) and water ditches. Only the western rampart and water ditch of the site are intact. The width of the rampart is 5m and that of the water ditch is 3 m.
NOTES AND REFERENCES:


2. By pouring low grade liquid iron 'rah' in water, high grade iron was possibly obtained. The cultural impact of rahdhala pukhuri in Dhekial seem to have been wide. Tradition has it that, Dhekial covered a large region bounded by the Kakodonga (Dilsiri) in the east, the Doignung in the west, the Gelabil in the north and Hamdoipathar in the south, apparently, the region, where iron slag occur commonly.

3. The *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya lays down that “the king may have his fortified capital city in a locality best fitted for a vastukā (vāstu-kā-praśastadesa) on the confluence of rivers, on a tank or a lake” T. Bhattacharyya, *op.cit.*. PP, 74-77, P,212.

4. Both these tanks are recorded in the revenue map of Ino. Duboron village, Borpathar, of the Dhansiri sub division, Golaghat District.


6. *Ibid.*. PP.70-71; , 212


8. T Bhattacharyya cited from Kasyapas work quoted by Bhattotpala that, “A place where tanks are full of sweet and transparent water, thronged with birds where forest and pleasure garden are in numbers, where trees always blossom, where swans and karandava birds live in flocks and where peocock dance ... there the Gods always remain and enjoy pleasure” *Ibid*. pp.212-13.


11. “The Assamese, when digging a new water tank, marry the tank with a knob-headed pole erected in the middle of it with the object of maintaining the water supply and for
providing an abiding place for the godling of the tank” J.H. Hutton, “The use of stone in Naga Hills” P.80.


18 Residential premises of Momai Tamuly Borborua known as Borborua bari, is located in Dhekial Mauza, Dag no., 489 and 495 of Golaghat Revenue circle.

19 *ARASI*, 1906-07, (1909) p.23


22 A “dhāp” in Assamese is a residential enclosure raised by cutting the earth around the residential area. The resultant depression outside the ‘dhāp’ is called “khāwoi” (ditch). This practice is more or less still in existence in the countryside in Assam.