CHAPTER VII

LITERATURE AND FOLKLORE

A. Written Tradition: Introduction

(1) From the point of the origin of Assamese written literature some scholars point to the aphorisms of Dākpuruṣa as the earliest specimen. Although his origin is veiled in mystery, it is almost unanimously held in Assam that Dākpuruṣa was a native of Lēhidangara near Barpeta.¹

Bezbarua claimed that "the Dākar-puthi (Dāk's book) was composed in Assam as far back as either the fifth or the sixth century according to our belief."² This is considered by most scholars as too early. It has been suggested by Pandit Hemchandra Goswami that the aphorisms of Dākpuruṣa were reduced to writing in the eighth century A.D.³ According to Dr. S.N. Sarma the aphorisms of Dākpuruṣa were composed before the fifteenth century and their influence on the life of the Assamese people, specially on the peasant life has been wide and deep.⁴ D. Neog is of the opinion that Dākārnava was

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¹ Dandinath Datta (ed.): Dākar Bachan, Introduction, p.15
² Atul Ch. Hazarika (ed.): Bezbaruar Granthāvali, Part- II, p. 1764
³ Jatindra Nath Goswami: Asamīyā Sāhityar Chamu Suranj, p. 45
⁴ S.N. Sarma: Asamīyā Sāhityar Samikṣātmak Itibritya, p.53
written in Assam during the period of 1000-1100 A.D. and preserved in Nepal as Vajrayana work. From the occasional interpolations of words of Arabic and Persian origin in the aphorisms of Dak scholars have opined that Dakpuruṣa belonged to a much later period.

From the above views it appears that there had grown a corpus of didactic literature the authorship of which is ascribed to Dakpuruṣa of Barpeta region though the date of this literature has not been finally ascertained as yet. Even then, the literature ascribed to Dak ranks among the earliest specimen of Assamese literature and the fact that Dakpuruṣa is believed to have belonged to the Barpeta area bears the testimony to the antiquity of the literary tradition of Barpeta.

(II) Apart from Dakpuruṣa, other notable pre-Vaiṣṇavite Assamese writers are Hema Saraswati, Haribar Bipra, Kabiratna Saraswati, Rudra Kandali and Madhava Kandali with whom Assamese written literature existed. To quote Hem Barua, "Strictly

5. Dimbeswar Neog: Yuqanāyak Saṅkaradeva, p. 286
speaking, it is with Hema Saraswati who according to S.A. Gait lived and wrote in the 13th century, that Assamese literature came to exist in its written form. Hema Saraswati started his career under the patronage of King Durlavanarayana of Kamatapur, in the pre-Vaiśṇava period with his work the Prahlād carita which, in fact, opened up an era of recorded history in Assamese literature. Haribar Bipra translated Asvamedha-parba of the Mahābhārata. Other noted works of Haribar Bipra are the Babruvahana-yuddha and Lava-Kusār Yuddha. Another noted poet of pre-Vaiśṇava period is Rudra Kandali. He translated Sātyakir Yuddha jātra from the Droṇaparva of the Mahābhārata. Madhava Kandali is the name of pre-Vaiśṇava period that stood as a prominent landmark. The language and narrative technique used by Madhava Kandali in his rendering of the Rāmāyana into Assamese verse created a long standing tradition in Assamese language and literature. Scholars including Dr. M. Neog ascertains that the literary creation of the above writers should not go beyond the fourteenth century as it appears from the historical and linguistic points of view.

7. Hem Barua: Assamese Literature, p. 32
8. M. Neog: Purani A samiyā Samāj Āru Saṁskriti, pp.119-122
(III) Kabiratna Saraswati, a native of Chot-sila village near Barpeta was the son of Chakrapani Shikdar. According to Dr. M. Neog he belonged to the time of the first Durlavanarayana of the 13th-14th century. He may rightly be regarded as the precursor of the Vaisnava literary dawn that followed subsequently for whom Barpeta region can take pride of him next to Dakpurusa. It appears from his benedictory verses that his father Chakrapani was a Pandit-tilaka (greatest among the scholars) of that period. Kabiratna composed Jayadratha-Vadha in the form of a kavya taking the content from Droṇa-parba of the Mahābhārata. He is considered another milestone of the Barpeta region as a creator of Assamese written literary tradition whose creative art and skill are in no way less than those of his contemporary poets of pre-Vaiṣṇava era.

In short, credit goes to them for extending the frontiers of literary materials and initiating a literary tendency which covered nearly two centuries.

9. S.N. Sarma: AS31, p. 66
10. M. Neog, op. cit., p. 116
Writing in verse:

The verse writing tradition of the Barpeta group of satras may be divided into three for the benefit of discussion: (a) Period prior to arrival of Šaṅkara, (b) Šaṅkara-Mādhava's era and (c) post-Šaṅkaradeva era.

a) Period prior to arrival of Šaṅkaradeva:

Prior to the arrival of Šaṅkaradeva and his disciples in the Bāusī pargana no distinguished literary work was available except that of the rendering of the Bhāgavata book into Assamese by Pitāmbara Kavi. When Šaṅkaradeva was at Gūnporā (Pālengdi) of the Bāusī pargana he enquired of Bhavānanda (Thākur Ātā) about distinguished persons and families living in that locality. In reply to Šaṅkaradeva, Bhavānanda told about himself along with other three of whose Pitāmbara Kavi was one. He recited few verses of Pitāmbara's composition before Šaṅkaradeva. When Šaṅkaradeva found Pitāmbara Kavi rendering simple Bhāgavata-purāṇa word 'Jugupsitam' on the lips of Rukminīdevi as 'blemish in the limbs thus violating the whole concept of the character, the

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11. M. Neog (ed.): GCK, p. 82
saint reacted violently. Therefore, Śaṅkaradeva was reluctant to bring him to his fold considering him incompetent to be a Vaiṣṇava proper. Even then, Pitāmbara Kavi remaining outside the Vaiṣṇavite order composed Uṣhāparinaya, Bhāgavata- X, Mārkandeya Candi and Nala-Damayanti among which Uṣhāparinaya has been published. According to Dr. S.N. Sarma Pitāmbara Kavi composed Uṣhāparinaya in 1533 A.D. and after that he received patronage of Cilarāya Dewān. He was a scholar as well as a poet of that period. Though detail information of his birth place is not available definitely, yet it is probable that he settled somewhere in this area as it appears in the G.C.K. during above mentioned conversation between Śaṅkaradeva and Bhavānanda.

b) Śaṅkara-Mādhava era:

Vaiṣṇava literature, specially in verse, is witnessed a deep and extensive development in people’s language under the auspices of Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhabadeva which is the most excellent and essential literary product of the 16th century. They together laid the foundation of Vaiṣṇava literary movement

12. Ibid : Introduction to GCK, pp. 144-45
13. S.N. Sarma : नामितां ताहितार सामीयां सामिक्षात्मक इतिबर्ता, p. 116
in which Saṅkaradeva had the lion-share. "He formed the centre as well as the ideal of all literary activities of the age so much so, that the period is best known as the age of Saṅkaradeva.\textsuperscript{14} But here in this region the literary activities of Madhavadeva is in no way less than that of his master. Moreover, his literary style and technique of Nāmaghoṣā is a bit higher than his guru. Hence, it may well be described specially here in this region as the era of Saṅkara-Madhava. It should be worth mentioning in this connection that "Saṅkaradeva received a literary form of language with 'poise and beauty' and few verse forms as a legacy from his predecessors\textsuperscript{15} about whom mention is made earlier in this chapter.

Now, a detailed account of literature produced by them in the Barpeta region within the religious atmosphere of the satra institution will be discussed independently and separately.

1. The literary works of Saṅkaradeva:

The great saint passed nearly twenty two years of most valuable period of his ripe age from 1545-67 A.D. staying at

\begin{footnotes}
\item[14] M. Neog: Saṅkaradeva and His Time, p. 151
\item[15] Ibid, p. 151
\end{footnotes}
Cunpora, Kamarkuchi and Patbaisi where he produced the largest portion of his literary works. His works on literature may be studied under the following groups:

(1) **Drama**:  
For the elevation of the mind of the people to a spiritualised level was one of the fundamental aims of the Vaishnava school of classical drama. It attained its high watermark of excellence under the auspices of Šaṅkaradeva who had the opportunity to fulfil the great mission of his life here. It should be borne in mind that Šaṅkaradeva himself called his dramatic composition nāt and nātaka after the Sanskrit terminology. The other titles used by the Vaishnava poets for this type of plays are Yātrā, nṛtya, ańka, bhāona, ańkiyā nāt etc. which were written in Brajābali (the spoken language of Braja).

(a) **Kāliya-damana**:  
According to the G.C.K., Rāmarāya, cousin of Šaṅkara requested the latter to compose a drama on the story of the serpent Kāliya while they were at Patbaisi Satra.  

16. Ibid. GCK, p. 95; Rāmacarana, p. 735
this play was written by the saint at Pāṭbāusi. L.N. Bezbarua has stated that Kāliya-daman was the work of the saint at Pāṭbāusi Satra. The same opinion, as mentioned above is held by the local people.

(b) Keli-gopāla:

The episode of Lord Kṛṣṇa's nightly sports with the Gopis (wives of Braja cowherds) is depicted in this play depending on the Bhāgavata-purāṇa. This was written and produced on the stage at Pāṭbāusi under the request and direction of Rāmarāya.

(c) Rukmini-harana:

As it appears in the G.C.K. the drama was composed at Pāṭbāusi after his second pilgrimage and it is stated that the drama was produced on the stage by Śaṅkaradeva under the initiative of Rāmarāya. This drama was, perhaps, written depending on the Rukminiḥarana Kāvyā from 'Harivamśa' which he was stated

17. L.N. Bezbarua : Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva Āru Mādhavadeva, p. 90
19. GCK, p. 174
20. GCK, p. 520
to have been composed earlier at Bardowa before receiving the Bhāgavata from Jagadis Misra. As stated by Dr. M. Neog, the date of composition of this drama is round about 1560 A.D. (d) Pārijāt-harāṇ and Janmayātra:

As stated by Rāmacarana and Bezbarua, Pārijāt-harāṇ nāṭā seems to be composed at Pāṭbāusī, because the former gives the information of writing the nāṭā after Śaṅkara's second pilgrimage. On the other hand, the GCK tells us that the drama was produced on the stage at Pāṭbāusī under the financial initiative of Rāmarāya. The other one—Janma-Jāṭrā is no longer available, though Rāmacarana claims that both Janmayātra and Pārijāt-harāṇ were composed in the same period i.e., just a little after arriving at Pāṭbāusī from the pilgrimage. This drama is considered to be his last one at Pāṭbāusī.

Regarding Śaṅkara’s Rāmvijaya nāṭaka there are difference of opinions. According to Bezbarua Śaṅkaradeva wrote all

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21. GCK, p. 30
22. S.A.M.T., p. 206
23. Rāmacarana, p. 733
24. Bezbarua: Śrī Śrī Śaṅkara Ānanda Madhavadeva, p. 90
25. GCK, p. 521
his dramas at Pāṭbāusi. But Bardowa-carit states that Śaṅkaradeva wrote six dramas at Pāṭbāusi where the name of Rāmavijaya nāṭ is not included. The GCK tells us that the said nāṭ was composed by the saint on the request of Cilārāya at Koch-Behar nearly in 1568 A.D. before the saint's death warrant.

2. Bartits, Bhatimā, Totaka-hymn etc. :

These are devotional songs, typical forms of Vaiṣṇava poetry, hymns etc. which are composed in an artificial speech known as Brajābuli, 'a mixed Maitheli-Assamese language.' This type of language is traditionally considered to be the language of Vraja (Vrindāvana) in which Kṛṣṇa and Gopis spoke. In the words of Dr. B.K. Barua, "Śaṅkaradeva's Bardita are woven with strands of religious experience, philosophical reflections, secular and ethical broodings, poignant, introspection of the self, agony of spirit and saintly humility. Some of them are speculative." These songs, hymns etc. were composed at

26. M. Neog (ed.): Bardowa Carit, pp. 164-65
27. Bezbarua, p. 90
28. G.C.K., p. 179; M. Neog: Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva, p. 119
S.N. Sarma: Asamiya Sāhityar Samikṣhātmak Itibrititya, p. 137
29. Dr. B.K. Barua: Śaṅkaradeva, the Sanit of Assam, p. 55
different times and places throughout the course of Śaṅkara's religious movement. The other type of poetry is known as Bhatimā. Comparatively these are long poems of eulogic and descriptive in character. The bhatimās that speak of divine qualities, divine deeds and of God's grace are known as Devabhātimā and the bhatimās addressed to Śaṅkaradeva are known as Guru bhatimās. The devotional songs set to tunes of various classical rāgas are sung with scrupulous care the cultivation of which have been carried on in the satras from medieval period. While Śaṅkaradeva was at Pāṭbāusī he composed a book of 240 Bārgitas collecting all his songs together. But unfortunately the book was gutted with the house of Kamalā Bāyan of Barpeta who borrowed the same to commit it into memory. Therefore, Śaṅkaradeva painfully asked Mādhavadeva at Pāṭbāusī to compose few Bārgitas as he himself was reluctant to do so perhaps, due to his old age or mental affliction.

3. Kāvyas and other theological works:

These works are based on some of the Purāṇas but developed by the saint's own imagination. In these Kāvyas

30. GCK, pp. 177-79
the saint-poet has revealed his originality and poetical
genious to the highest degree where stories of divine love,
devotion, adventures etc. were depicted. Śaṅkaradeva's written
works of the above subjects in the Bāusi Parganā specially,
in Pāṭbāusī Satra, are given below through the medium of which
he made Barpeta region the most reputed centre of Assamese
literature as well as a centre of Assamese culture. Dr. B.K.
Barua in his work - Śaṅkaradeva, the Vaiṣṇava Saint of Assam
(p. 86) remarks - "that Sankara's writings have been for the
last five centuries a source of delight, inspiration, conso-
lation and wisdom to the Assamese people."

(a) Balichalana :

This kāvyā was written at Pāṭbāusī Satra\(^{31}\) taking the
story from the Bhāgavata-purāṇa, Book- VIII giving a lively
description of the coronation of Vāmana as Yuvarāja of the
three worlds under Devarāj Indra with victorious march to
the heavenly world ending with Bāli's departure to Sutala.

\(^{31}\) M. Neog : S.A.H.I., p. 184
(b) Kurukśetra is his another kāvya written at Pāṭbāusī the content of which is taken from the Bhāgavata Book- X (Uttarārdha)

(c) Ajāmilopakhyān: This had been already adopted by Śaṅkaradeva as a story in section-V of his Kīrtapa-ghosā though the present work maintained a separate identity with separate style.

(d) Anādi-pātan was written at Pāṭbāusī before his second pilgrimage taking the contents of the story from the Bhāgavata purāṇa, Book- III and Pāmana-purāṇa.

(e) Nimi-Nava-Siddha-Sambāda: This work is a verse-rendering from the Bhāgavata Book- XI where the conversation of king Nimih of Videha with nine siddhas (accomplished sages) are represented nicely. As stated by Bezbarua the work was completed by Śaṅkara while he was residing in Pāṭbāusī Satra.

(f) Bhakti-Ratnākara: This doctrinal treatise, compiled by Śaṅkaradeva in Pāṭbāusī Satra, exhibits the saint’s

32. Bezbarua: Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva Āru Mādhavadeva, p. 90
33. M.N. Datta Barua(ed.): Kīrtapa Āru Nāma-ghosā, p. 35
34. Neog: S.a.H.T., p. 185
35. L.M. Bezbarua: Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva Āru Mādhavadeva, p. 90
36. GCK, p. 147, Bezbarua Ibid.
wide learning in Sanskrit language and literature. The materials collected from various sources mostly from Bhāgavata-purāṇa are set in a systematic manner. The work reveals the fundamental principles of Bhakti through which Śaṅkaradeva ascertains the form of worship to Lord Kṛṣṇa. In the words of Dr. Neog, "in giving an analysis of the contents of the Bhakti-ratnākara the topics can be grouped under the names of four principles or real (cāri-vastu) of Assam Vaiśnavism, namely deva (worshipful deity), nāma (the celebration of the worshipful deity's names and attributes as the way unto him), bhakata (the devotees of the Lord) and guru (spiritual preceptor). 37

(g) Kīrtan ghoṣā : The Kīrtanaghoṣā is the monumental poetical works of Śaṅkaradeva which contains 26 long poems describing various episodes for religious teachings. These poems were composed in different places at different times throughout the course of his Bhakti movement as mentioned earlier. His final period in Koch-kingdom (1543-69) was passed in the Bāusī pargana mostly at Pātbāusī (18 years

37. M. Neog: S.A.H.I., p. 215
6 months according to local people) for a long period. In Bāusī parganā the following sections of the Kīrtanghoṣā are stated to have been completed. 38


(h) Renderings of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa: Bezbarua 39 ascribes that Śaṅkaradeva rendered the following skandhas of the Bhāgavata-purāṇa into Assamese verses while he was in Pāṭbāusī Satra.

(a) Ādi-daśāma (Bhāgavata, Book X, (b) Bhāgavata- purāṇa Book- I, (c) Bhāgavata-purāṇas, Book- II, IV, VII, VIII, XI, XII. Among all the renderings "Śaṅkaradeva's Ādi-daśāma is the most popular Vaiṣṇava scripture by virtue of its sustained story interest, rich poetry and fine versification." 40 These are the treasure house of stories and

38. M. Neog: SAHT, p. 161
39. L.N. Bezbarua: Śrī Śaṅkaradeva Āru Mādhavadeva, p. 90 (1963 A P)
40. Neog: SAHT, p. 186
incidents which provided and would have been providing materials for songs, kāvyas and dramas for the Assamese in all years to come.

i) Rāmāyaṇa, Uttar-kāṇḍa: we have come across in the GCK\(^{41}\) that Ananta Kandali is found attempting to demolish the Rāmāyaṇa of Mādhava Kandali. In response to that incident Śaṅkara and Mādhava discussed the matter deeply and decided to render the final and initial books of Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa into Assamese verse respectively. As a result of joint ventures two kāṇḍas of the Rāmāyaṇa were translated into Assamese the final kāṇḍa (Uttarakāṇḍa) of which was rendered by Śaṅkaradeva at Pāṭbāusī over and above these literary works of Śaṅkaradeva. It is locally stated that during his long stay in Bāusi parganā he wrote thirty seven books on various subjects and composed two hundred and forty (bāra kuri) Bārgītas there.\(^{42}\)

2. Literary works of Mādhavadeva:

It is already mentioned in the Chapter III that Mādhava took his pen in hand in the Bāusi parganā under Koch-kingdom

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{41.} GCK, p. 101
\item \textbf{42.} A.K. Misra; 'Asamiyā Bhāṣa Sāhityaloi Barpetār Avadān' in Sāhitya Samskriti Āru Barpetā edited by Prof. Ramesh Das, p. 83
\end{itemize}
where he passed nearly 44 years (since 1543 A.D.) of his life founding different satras in this region. The literary contribution of Mādhavadeva like his Guru to the treasure house of Assamese literature that flooded the entire region may be summed up in the following manner.

Except few ghosā couplets and Nāma-Malika rendered into Assamese verses at the request of Virupākṣa Māzi in Koch-Behar, the entire literary works of Mādhavadeva are considered to have been written in different satras of Bāusī parganā, specially in Ganak-kuchi, Sundaridīyā and Barpetā Satras.

(a) Rāmāyana Ādi-kānda: This work of Valmīki Rāmāyana was rendered into Assamese verses on the advice of his Guru-Śāṅkara while he was residing in Ganak-kuchi Satra.

(b) Bhaktiratnāvalī: The Bhaktiratnāvalī of Viśṇupuri Sanyāsī was rendered into Assamese verses at Sundaridīyā remembering the earlier advice of Śaṅkaradeva. In this way (c) Rājasuya kāvya and (d) Janmarahasya were also written at

43. S.N. Sarna; ASSI, p. 154, Dr. Neog, SAHT, p. 126
44. GCK, p. 101
Sundaridiyā. As stated in the GCK, Mādhavadeva composed 191 Bārgītas as was advised by Śaṅkaradeva. According to K.R. Medhi - "so far 157 Bārgītas and 11 Bhaṭimās of Mādhavadeva have been brought to light."  

(e) The monumental work of Mādhavadeva is the Nāmghoṣā or Hājari ghōṣā (1000 ghōṣā couplets) which he started composing at Sundaridiyā got completed at Bhelādaṅgā of Koch-Behar. This work embodies the teaching of his Guru, his own findings in life and the truth he realised in his own heart.

Dramas (ānkīyā nātās):

There is a controversy among the scholars regarding Mādhava's drama writings. According to K.R. Medhi and many others, the genuine plays are - (1) Arjun-bhanjan yātrā, (2) Cordharā jumurā, (3) Bhūmi-lutiyā, (4) Pimparā-gucuā, (5) Bhojana-vihāra and (6) Govarddhana-yātrā.

Excluding the above six dramas, other three dramas viz., Bhusana haraṇa, Rāsa-jumurā, and Kotorā khelā have been

45. S.N. Sarma, ASSI, p. 154
46. GCK, p. 176
47. Kali Ram Medhi: Studies in Vaiṣṇava literature and Culture of Assam, p. 96
48. Ibid, p. 96
included in the name of Mādhavadeva which are suspected to have been spurious. It has been coming across in the GCK that Mādhavadeva had another drama namely Nṛsingha-yātra which he produced on the stage in Dīśnu Ātā's Jamariya Satra along with Thākur Ātā where Mādhavadeva himself acted as nṛsingha (man-lion).\textsuperscript{49}

So far, we have discussed regarding literary works of Śaṅkara-Mādhava in verse it can be ascertained that the foundation of Assamese literature was laid in the Barpeta regions. This region undoubtedly can claim not only as a centre of Assamese literature rather a treasure house of Assamese literature that has given Assam as a whole a new lease of life.

\textbf{C) Post-Śaṅkaradeva literature :}

Now, we may consider another group of distinguished scholars whose literary contributions added much to the traditional literature in the Barpeta area after Śaṅkara-Mādhava. This group may be termed as post-Śaṅkara scholars with whom

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{GCK}, p. 205
biographical writings in verse developed. Their works will be discussed in the succeeding pages on the basis of seniority as far as possible.

(1) **Literary contribution of Gopāl Ātā:**

Gopāl Ātā of Bhawānipur wrote the following dramas and produced on the stage in his own initiative at Bhawānipur and Kāljār Satras. (a) *Janmayātrā* is considered as the first work from his pen which was written and produced on the stage at his Bhawānipur Satra. This was followed on the next day by the performance of *Bokā-yātrā* or *Nandotsava* where he composed five poems in order to celebrate the function. (b) *Uddhava Sambād* is another drama written by Gopāldeva at Kāljār Satra and was produced on the stage with financial assistance of the devotees from Baranagar. His *Bargītas* are now, collected and published under the title of *Keoliā-ghoṣā* and *Gīta-ghoṣā*. In this connection the name of his daughter Padmā Priyā may be mentioned that she composed few devotional songs. From the point of seniority she was contemporary of Daityāri Thākur.

50. GCK, p. 319; Dwija Purnānanda: *Gopālādwar Carit*, V.791
51. Dwija Purnānanda, VV. 329-31
52. A.C. Das: *Mahāpurusīyā Dharmar Paṅcaratna*, p. 310
Bhattadeva's verse literature:

The most renowned scholar of post-Śaṅkara era is undoubtedly Vaikunṭhanāth Bhattadeva better known as Bhaṭṭadeva. He passed his whole religious life in the Būsi Parganā and wrote the following valuable books both in Assamese and Sanskrit. His Guru Dāmodaradeva seems to be instrumental after his literary works.

(a) Bhakti-Viveka and Bhakti-sāra are the two compilations of Bhaṭṭadeva on religious ethics. His other two works in Sanskrit are Sarāṇa-mālikā and Bhāgavata-adhikarana.

(b) Prasāṅga-mālā, Viṣṇur-sahasra-nāma and Sarāṇa-saṅgraha are the important works in Assamese verse towards laying the firm foundation of the sub-sect, so that the lay disciples could understand easily. The other contributions of Bhaṭṭadeva will be discussed in the succeeding pages in connection with prose-literature.

Gobinda Misra is stated as the disciple of Bhaṭṭadeva who translated Vakti-viveka into Assamese verse. He also

53. Jogesh Das: 'Asamiyā Sāhityat Bhaṭṭadevar Sthān' in Śrī Śrī Bhaṭṭadeva edited by Nagen Kalita, p. 37
54. S.N. Sarma: ASSI, p. 194
composed *pada-gitā* in simple Assamese. Misradeva of Bāusī parganā was a contemporary of Bhaṭṭadeva.

(4) **Rāmacaran Thākuria's works:**

Rāmacaran wrote a voluminous biographical work under the title of *Guru-carit*. Perhaps Rāmacarana is the first poet who laid the foundation of biographical writings at Sundarīdiyā. His *Guru-carit* in verse does not supply only historical data of the Gurus' lives but also supplies materials of social, political, economical and cultural aspects of that period. He rendered the *Bhakti-ratnākar* of Śaṅkaradeva into Assamese verse. He composed *Bhakti-ratna* (messages of Śaṅkara-Mādhava) as a mark of devotion to Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhavadeva. His another work is a drama namely *Kāṁsavadha* in which he tried to draw the attention of the people to Kṛṣṇa's miracle activities.

(5) Puruṣottama, the grand son of Śaṅkaradeva founded his *satra* at Janīā and during his stay there he composed a theological work namely *Na-ghoṣā* in the style of *Nāma-ghoṣā* and also a few devotional songs (*gītas* and *bhaṭīmās*). Other two works namely *Budhā-vāśya* and *Santa-sāra* are also ascribed
(6) Daityāri Thākur, son of Rāmacarana, wrote a biography on Śaṅkara-Mādhava under the title of Mahāpuruṣ Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva-Mādhavadevar carita while he was at his Bāmunā Satra. It is stated that Daityāri Thākur wrote an ankiya nāṭ namely Nṛsiṅgha-yātrā and a few Bargītas. The Śyāmanta harana-nāṭ is also ascribed to him.

(7) Bhusana-Dwija is another biographer of Janīā Satra. Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva is a short biography of Bhusana Dwija which is stated to have been written at Janīā in the year 1630 A.D. approximately. Ajāmilar-upākhyān and Śyāmanta-harana are two dramas written by him.

Besides these above mentioned works, Gurulilā is another important biography of Rāmarāya (Dwija). Dāmodar Dās of Barpetā, a disciple of Bhaṭṭadeva, translated Sāilya and Drona-parvas of the Mahābhārata into Assamese verse in the early part of seventeenth century. Santa-mālā of Vaikunṭhanāth Dwija is worthmentioning among the other poetry works of this

55. R.M. Nath (ed.): 'Introduction' to Śrī Śaṅkara-Mādhava Carit, p. 5
56. Ramesh Das (ed.): Sāhitya-Saṃskriti Āru Barpetā, 36, 1985
57. S.N. Sarma: ASSI, p. 203
region which is supposed to be composed after 1650 A.D.  
Śrīrām-Kīrtana and Premalatā of Hīdayānanda Kāyastha received attention as literary works of the seventeenth century.

(2) **Prose literature:**

(a) **The origin of prose writings:**

The old Assamese prose evolved and developed from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries which can be divided more precisely into satra (monastic) and buranji (chronicle) style of prose. Side by side, other categories of Assamese prose like that of Carit puthis (biography of saints) and mantra-sāstra (books on incantation) come in between the above divisions. Here in our study we shall be dealing with the satra style of prose which evolved and developed centering round the Neo-Vaisnava movement started by Śaṅkaradeva and his associates and successors, specially in the cultural zone of Barpeta, which may be considered to be the birth place of prose writings.

59. Ibid, p. 212
60. Ramesh Das (ed.): Sāhitya-samskriti Āru Barpeta, p. 36
61. Hem Barua: Assamese Literature, p. 104
Speaking about the origin and originator of prose literature H. Barua is of the opinion that "Prose as an accepted literary medium made its debut in the ankiya-natasa, the one act play of S¹̄ṅkaradeva, this constitutes the starting point in the history of old Assamese prose."62 According to Dr. Neog "the dramatic prose employed in the dramatic dialogue by S¹̄ṅkaradeva, M¹̄dhavadeva and Gopal Ata of Bhawanipur in their dramas are the first type of symbolic Assamese prose literature."63 It is noticed on the other hand, that though there is sufficient proofs of employing dramatic prose dialogue in the dramas of the above saints it can be hardly claimed to be the real Assamese prose as the language used in Maithil mixed Assamese.64

(b) It is unanimously accepted that distinctive Assamese prose-style literature started with Bhaṭṭadeva and Gopālacarana Dwija in the real sense of the term. In the words of Hem Barua, "the real father of Assamese ethico-religious prose like that of Italian prose Giovanni Boccaccio is Bhaṭṭadeva."65 though

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62. Hem Barua : Assamese Literature, p. 105
63. M. Neog : Sri Sri S¹̄ṅkaradeva, p. 152
64. S.N. Sarma : ASSI, p. 185
65. Hem Barua : Assamese Literature, p. 106
from the linguistic point of view the remarks of Dr. B.K. Kakati may be noted, "while admirable as presenting a specimen of prose style so far back ---. The diction is overloaded with Sanskrit words and the language far less homely than the language of the verse writers which occasionally betrays colloquialism." Even then, the Katha-Bhagavata, Katha Gita and Katha Ratnakali of Bhattadeva and the Bhakti ratnakara of Gobinda Misra are the first works of complete Assamese prose literature in distinctive style whatever their language might be.

In respect of Assamese prose literature of Bhattadeva, Dr. B.K. Barua gives his remark thus - "He (Bhattadeva) created a surefooted expository prose style with an eye to grammatical perfection. His aim was to explain religious matters in a logical and clear manner, and in this Bhattadeva succeeded to a large extent. His conversational and argumentative prose-style of the Katha-Gita served as a model and pattern to the Vaishnavite prose writers of philosophical matters of later years and his simpler and clear style of

66. Dr. B.K. Kakati : 'Introduction' of Assamese, its formation and Development, p. 15
Kathā-Bhāgavata greatly influenced the writers of Carit puthis.

Regarding the biographical works (Carit-puthis) written in verse have been discussed in the foregoing pages so far produced in this region. The only fullfledged biographical work written in prose is the Kathā-Guru-Carit or Guru-Carit Kathā (GCK) edited by Upendra Lekharu in 1962 and Dr. Maheswar Neog (enlarged edition) in 1987 which appears not only voluminous and complete but also very trustworthy and authoritative as it is considered to have been compiled within the sacred precincts of satra. The manuscript of the book was obtained from Caturbhuja Misra, Satriya of Barpeta Satra, containing one hundred and fifty folios written in strips of sacipāt (sacibarks), each folio, measuring 6½" x 18" and bearing as average of seventeen lines per page. But Dr. M. Neog edited it with an addition to the same discovering the lost folios and enlarged it with his valuable introduction regarding the features and value of the Guru-Carit-Kathā which is published by the Gauhati University. Neither name of the author nor the place of writing is available in this voluminous book containing

67. B. Dr. B.K. Barua : Assamese Literature, p. 37
68. U. Lekharu (ed) : Katha Guru Carit 'Forward', pp. i-ii
almost all the informations beginning with Śaṅkara's birth and his Neo-Vaiṣṇava movement down to Caturbhuj Thākur.

Dr. Neog considers that it may have been written in the Barjahā Satra of Nowgong district in the early decades of the 18th century. While Dr. B.K. Kakati and Dr. B.K. Barua considered the period of the work in their 'forward pages' to be "the end of the seventeenth century if not earlier."

But regarding the place of writing of the work it is locally considered to have been written and preserved in the Barpeta Satra. Of course, their demand may not be totally discarded as maximum words employed in this work are spoken words of this region. Moreover, they say that the description of the places of this area is so elaborate and distinct that one cannot do so unless one has been residing here. Above all, Barpeta Satra owned it physically which reminds us the system of Carit tola (telling guru's biography) in the bāhās (abodes) of elder monks (Budhā-bhakats). They also say that some one started the writing at the time of telling biographies in

69. M. Neog : SAHT, p. 20
70. Ramesh Das (ed.) : Sāhitya Saṃskriti Āru Barpeta, p. 85
71. The dwelling house of elder celibate monks known as bāhā, Barbāhā is distinguished one among the bāhās.
bāhās and hence they consider that the author of the work may be more than one.

Leaving aside its devotional exaggeration and superstitious descriptions of the work is undoubtedly a treasury of informations based on facts and figures, regarding religious activities and practices, customs and manners, social, economical and historical conditions of medieval Assam and Assam Vaiṣṇavism. There is another prose work written in sācipāt and is preserved in the Sundarīdiyā Satra which is known as Muthā satra. This is a theological work in the form of questions and answers where Mādhava is shown asking questions to his Guru Śaṅkara on religious matters. Accordingly Śaṅkara-radeva has been giving substantive answers to each of the questions of various śāstras (religious books). This work is written collecting sum and substance of almost all religious complex matters. Perhaps, that is why this work is called mathā (acquired substance) or muthā (small in size) śāstra.

Nearly a hundred years of turmoil owing to various reasons, such as the Barmese atrocity, annexation of Assam by

the English, implementation of Bengali instead of Assamese etc. created a stagnancy in Assam specially in respect of literature and culture. Almost the period up to three quarters of the nineteenth century beginning from the last quarter of the 18th century may be considered the 'darkdays' of Assamese literature. But "the years succeeding the British occupation of this land corresponding to turning point in the history of Assamese literature"73 as a whole.

Here we shall deal now with covering all kinds of Assamese literary works, irrespective of prose and verse developed after the above mentioned period, whatever its literary role, which we may term as modern literature. So far modern literature is concerned, it is ipso facto free in style, thought and form.

(a) The monthly magazine Orunodoi was published from the missionary press of Sibsagar in 1846 A.D. Kimārām Satriyā of Barpeta was one of the writers of the Orunodoi.74 Then, in the meantime, the Asamiyā Bhāṣā Unnati Sādini Sabhā was

73. Hem Barua: Assamese Literature, p. 123
74. S. N. Sarma, ASSI, p. 298
founded in 1888 A.D. in Calcutta under the auspices of Assamese students reading there. A branch of that organisation was established at Barpetā in 1889 under the initiative of Lohit Chandra Nāyak. In one sense, this was the landmark for Barpetā to take organisational initiative for the development of literary works.


In the early part of the 20th century Shyamlal Couthury, father of Prasannalāl Couthury, wrote and published four books namely Khatāsūr Vadha, Kurmāvalir-Yuddha, Aśwakarna-Yuddha and Jaṅgāsur-Vadha.75 A theological work named Mālāprakāśā was composed by Gobinda Mīśra, Budhā Satriyā of Barpetā Satra and was published at Satra Prakāś press, Barpetā along with the Prasānga Pranāli, Nīmi-nava-siddha-samvād and a collection of Bārgīta. Sehorām Bāpu alias Lākṣmi Kānta Rājmedhi (1951-1926 A.D.) wrote the

75. Ramesh Das (ed) : Sāhitya Samskriti Āru Barpetā, p. 89
following dramas in order to produce on the stage on various occasions. He was such a dramatist who could write out a drama within a night when necessary. It is stated that he wrote nearly twenty three dramas. Such as (1) Duṣāsanar-raktapāṇ, (2) Jarāsandha-Vadha, (3) Karna-Vadha, (4) Aśvakarna-Vadha, (5) Abhimānyu-vadha etc.

He wrote almost all of his dramas taking the contents from the two great epics- Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata. Sehorām Bāpu was the introducer of the item of 'Bol-Valana' in the holi festival of Barpeta Satra. Formerly the Brahmans are honourably called 'Bāpu' here in this region. Moreover, he was the last ( <Ass. SES = Seho ) issue of his parents. Perhaps, for this reason (Laksikānta Rājmedhi was popularly known as Sehorām Bāpu, a mysterious name of this region.

Later contributions may be mentioned as follows:

Halirām Dās and Mallanārayan Sirastādār published the Hari-prasānga-pranāli collectively, Kīrtana-ghoṣā and Nāma-ghoṣā, were edited and published by Manahari Dās and Pitāmbar. Kantirām Budhā Bhakat compiled Narayanadas Thākur Ātār Fokarā and

76. Akshay Kr. Misra (ed.): Jivani-mālā, p. 23
77. Which means the episode of oral dispute between Krṣṇa and Lākṣmī and reference is available in Jivani-mālā p. 25
composed the *Hari-bhakti-tatva* and the *Prasangar-nirvandhapatati*. Jagannath Medhi Atoi of Barpeta Satra wrote the *Mathurādāś Budhā Ātā*, a biography in verse. In this connection the name of Praneswar Dās, a regular article writer in the *Puri-bhraman* and Dr. Harekrisna Das, a regular article writer to the *Assam Bānddhava* should be mentioned for their literary contributions that represented Barpeta in the early decades of the 20th century.

(b) **Distinguished writings in pre-Independent period:**

This is an age in which the minds as well as senses were in revolt and was a period of an uprising of long trammeled desire. The literary works naturally, was influenced by that atmosphere but yet, the literature of this region had inherited a rich legacy from the ancient classics.

1) If we consider the time factor of the created literature, in that case we should mention the name of the *Miri-jīyārī* of Rajani Kānta Bardoloī written and published by him at Barpeta in 1894 A.D. while he was serving here as Sub-Deputy Collector.78

78. Ramesh Das (ed.) : *Sāhitya-Saṃskriti Āru Barpeta*, p.89
2) The works on literature coming from the pen of Ambikāgiri Rāichoudhury is the Bandini Bhārat, a drama written in 1906 A.D. while he was a student. Then he wrote Kalyānmayi (drama) and produced on the stage at Barpeta in 1910 A.D. He composed two kavyas namely Tumi and Bīnā in 1915 and 1918 A.D. respectively. He edited a monthly magazine called the Cetanā in 1918 A.D. in collaboration with Karmāvīr Chandra Sarma. In non-co-operation movement, while Rāichoudhury was in jail custody in 1921 he composed many nationalist songs; English rendering of which is the 'songs of the cell'. In 1926 he established an organisation namely A sam Sangrakṣani Sabhā which was transformed into A sam Jātiya Mahā Sabhā in the later period. He went on writing various kinds of books one after another. His nationalist mind could not tolerate the performance of Bengali dramas at Barpeta which was a set-attradition of Tithirām Bāyan during 1860-65. So, he wrote his Assamese drama Jayadrath-vadha taking the plot from Mahābhārata under the instruction of his mother and the same was produced on the stage at Barpeta in 1912 A.D. in order to replace

79. B. Datta : In Rāichoudhuri Smritigrantha, p. 149
80. S.N. Sarma : ASSI, p. 350
81. Atul Ch. Hazarika : Mañalekhā, p. 250
Bengali drama performance. He also composed another musical drama namely Bhakta-gourava under the pressure of some distinguished persons and put on the stage at Barpeta in 1914 A.D. These two dramas were able to win the artistic minds of the people as a result of which a new flood of Assamese drama knocked at the door of Barpeta region to dismiss the Bengali drama\textsuperscript{82} performances. His other works of literature are\textsuperscript{83}

(1) Anubhuti (1954), (2) Sthāpan-kar-sthāpan-kar (1958),
(3) Āji vando-ki chandere (1958), (4) Bedanār-Ulka (1964)
(5) Deśeī Bhagavān (all in verse), (6) Ahuti, (7) Dekā dekerir-veda, (8) Mor-dādā, (9) Viśwa-Nātya, (10) Śrīrāma Chandra āru Tārā, (11) Viplavar-śeṣa. Moreover, he wrote many more poems and articles to different reputed newspapers and magazines through which he not only represented Barpeta but also the Assamese people literally, culturally, socially and politically.

The other distinguished scholars and artists like Prasannalāl Choudhury of Barpeta who is better known as Bidrohī kavi. He passed his whole life in the services of Assamese literature and culture. His most valuable literary

\begin{footnotes}
\item[82] A.C. Hazarika: Mañcālekā, p. 266
\item[83] N. Talukdar (ed.): Raichoudhurir Smritigranth, p. 247
\end{footnotes}
contributions in Assamese are:

(1) *Agnimatra* in 1950, (2) *Cāneki* (1965). He was a reputed actor and dramatist too. His works of drama are the *Nilāmbara* (1933) and the *Apeśwarti* (1901). Besides the above mentioned books, the following books written by him are worth-mentioning, such as (1) The *Jātir-phul*, (2) The *Raṅge-holi-khele* (edited a collection of holi-songs) in 1977. He edited a newspaper namely the *Prakāsh*. He also edited and published the *Rāmāyana* of Madhava Kandali. He contributed to the store of Assamese literature by writing various articles to many reputed newspapers and magazine.

Ganeshlāl Choudhury, brother of Prasannalāl Choudhury, was a regular writer of articles, poems etc. to the *A sam Bāndhava*, the *pāhī*, the *Āvāhana*, the *Cetanā* etc. He also wrote few works namely -(1) the *Murcarṇā*, (2) *Balakani* and *Daṅgar-mānuh* which remain unpublished.

Braja Sarma (1993-1969), a born artist and playwright of village *Sīlā* near Barpeta organised the *Kahinur Opera Party*,

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84. S.N. Sarma, *ASSI*, p. 364
85. Ramesh Das : *Sāhitya, Saṃskriti Āru Barpeta*, p. 92
a moving theatre party about whom will be discussed in
Chapter VIII.

Bhāgavata Bāgis Narayanadeva Mis'ra (1877-1963) of
Barpeta was a great scholar specially in Sanskrit. He wrote
Sanskrit Vyākaran Paddhati (1904), Mahāpurusīyā dharmar-
Sankṣipta-Paricaya and the Nāma-ghoṣā-Vyākhyā. His articles
on theological and cultural aspects are published in his
Smritigrantha which are valuable contribution to Assamese
literature and culture. Another notable scholar of Barpeta
town is Sañāpati deva Sarma who wrote the biography of
Dāmodaradeva giving the title Deva Dāmodara Guru and Sāhityar-
sāja, a brief prosody.

Śrīrām Chandra Dās (1905-89 A.D.), notable collector
of folk literature of Sundarēdiyā Satra devoted his whole life
moving from place to place in order to collect various data
regarding folklore. His collection in the name of Mor-air
Prāṇar-git is a good contribution to folklore and folk litera-
ture. His other works are Asamīyā Jana-Sāhityar Pārijat, the
Kāturi and the Fokarā-Jojaṇā. Hariprasad Brahmachari and
Dr. Amritlal Sarma of Barpeta should be mentioned here for
their literary contributions. Brahmachari wrote the Jātir
Unnati and the Paramātmār Svarup. Dr. Sarma's works are Satya-Sāṅgra, Galpa-manjari, Hindur-pāpa āru Prāyacitta, Yadupati-krṣṇa. Leceri-botalā is a book written by Bhagavān Chandra Dās.36 A biographical work of Arjun Ch. Dās is the Mahāpuruṣīyā Dharmar Pañcaratra (1966) where the author describes the life history of five staunt devotees of Śāṅkara and Mādhava of Barpeta area. His another biographical work is Budha Aṭā published by H.N. Datta Barua in 1957. His articles are on the 'Barpeta Satra' published in the souvenir of Asam Sāhitya Sabhā, 36th Barpeta Session, 1969 and 'Pañcāc Bachar Āgar Barpeta' published in the monthly magazine Prakāsh, 6th edition April 1987. He devoted himself to the task of re-establishing the satras of Barpeta area that were existinguished.

Another reputed writer of pre-Independent period is Tilak Ch. Dās who has been representing Barpeta through his literary works such as the Silpi, the Milanar Patha-Ruddha Kari, the Ākou-jonāk Āhe, the Sāgare Kallol Kare, (all novel), the Ambikāgirir-jivan darshan, Bishnurāvā Ṛtiyā Kimān Rāti ? etc.

86. Ramesh Das (ed.): Sāhitya, Saṁskriti Āru Barpeta, p. 83.
Sadananda Das, a writer of the Abahan era composed the Kāvyā-īnā' and the Denyatār Dāna whose service is to be recognised gratefully. 'Ramadasar Śreṣṭha Galpa' and 'Barṣā Yetiyā Nāme' are famous works of Ramā Das of Barpetā. Girish Choudhury's the Manipur-Yuddha, the Sivāji-Mahārāja. Ātaur Rahman's the Bhārat-bhramilo, Jadab Das's the Niṅqui bāoriyār Rahasya are important works of contribution to Assamese literature from Barpetā region. The theological works of Istādeva Nabish, Dekā Satriyā of Barpetā Satra, are the Durlava Manusya Janma and Śrīkṛṣṇar Sidhyāntat Śāṅkaradeva. The contribution of Jitendra Nath Das to Assamese literature is not negligible.

Moreover, many writers and their contributions to Assamese literature of the post-Independent period may be stated briefly: (1) Sri Gokul Pathaik editor of the Rupāntar and the Āmārdesh (bi-weekly) has written many books on various subjects. Some of them are - (1) Abisār, (2) Nava-Jāgaran, (3) Barpetā Sattrar Itiḥās, (4) Beki-Nadir Bekāpath (Novel), (5) Biṣṇu Rābhā. Besides, being a writer, Sri Das is also a reputed actor and songstar. Whatever their literary value may be, we may consider them successful attempts of the writer
Another distinguished scholar of Barpeta town is Dr. Harinath Sarmadoloi whose service to Assamese literature occupies a conspicuous position among the reputed scholars of the twentieth century. His works of great repute of Assamese language and literature are - (a) Sāhitya Āru Sāmskriti, (b) Bhārat Koṣa, (c) Śaṅkaradevar Sāhitya Pratibhā, (d) Gītā-paricaya, (e) Bhāgavatar sādhu (children book), (f) Akanaloi Devi Mahimā (children book). He also edits the Kathā Bhāgavata Skandhas - II, III and V, the Rāma Vijaya-nāt, the Pārijāt-harana nāt etc. Reasons of space do not allow us to give here more details about many more modern works of different writers of this region, both man and woman, who have been contributing to the store of Assamese literature.

The news papers and journals published from Barpeta have been playing a vital role representing Barpeta in the broad field of Assam from time to time. These are catering news and articles revealing Barpeta in respect of her language, literature, socio-religious and cultural aspects with the changing pattern of taste and temperament of the society. We should also take the opportunity to mention here that the
3rd and the 36th Annual Conferences of the Assamese Sahitya Sabhā were celebrated at Barpeta in 1919 and 1969 A.D. under the Presidentships of Kali Ram Medhi and Ananda Ch. Barua respectively. Thus Barpeta has been contributing much in bringing national unity and integrity in respect of the Assamese language, literature and culture since the days of neo-Vaiśnava movement.

B. Oral Tradition: Folklore

Assamese literature remained in a state of unwritten condition till a few centuries ago. The literature of that period was oral or folkspeech which had been handed over from mouth to mouth from one generation to another. It was by and large preserved in people's memory in the form of songs and rhymes, folktales and legends, riddles and proverbs, folkspeech curse and abuses, lamentation, benediction etc., which would depict a picture of folklife of this region. The discussion of the following branches of folklore will be helpful, as considered, to have a clear and specific understanding of oral literature that created a set-tradition.
A. **Songs and Rhymes**:

At the early stage of literature, folksongs are not included in the history of literature. These songs are the spontaneous outburst of the mind and spirit of conscious creation. In connection of Assamese folksongs Dr. N.P. Bardoloi may be quoted "Assamese folksongs are in essence the mirror of mind and character of the Assamese people. These songs are part of a rich heritage of Assamese folk literature which is characterised chiefly by its anonymity, its dynamic or growing character and its uncertain historical origin or composition."

On the other hand, the spoken language of the people under its influences constitutes to draw a sap from the soil as a medium of literary expression. These oral or folkliteratures do not constitute a particular area or areas but get transmitted crossing its boundary and they are well acquainted everywhere i.e., the wider boundary of Assam. Of course, the medium of expressions may vary from place to place. Even then, there are certain reasons owing to which certain identical oral languages may grow in a particular area. For example

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87. N.P. Bardoloi: "Assamese folksongs" in the *Brahmaputra beckons* ed. by D. Kakoti, 1982, p. 188
Nāo-khelar-git (boat-race-songs), Kamrupi loka git, bāramāhi git of Barpeta, bhotheli songs of Nalbari area etc.

1) Nāo-khelar git (boat-race-song):

Boat-race is a sort of traditional custom of Barpeta. This type of song is specially conducted in the boat race held in connection with the tithi mahotsava (death anniversaries), popularly known as Kīrtan of Sāṅkaradeva, Mādhavadeva and Mathurādās Budhā Ātā. The boat race is held on the day of ceremonial consumation either in the Marānadi or in the khaṭ-khaṭir jān depending on sufficient water-level.

The competitors of both Hindu and Muslim took part in the boat-race. In order to encourage the rowers this type of songs are composed on the basis of some incidents of the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata mostly, where religious influences are seen present. The following verses of such melodious parts of songs are noted below as specimen:

(1) From Mahābhārata

'O Ki Hari he
Arjunar rathar sārathi Nārāyana
Hari he, e he . . . .''

(O God, what thou art: Nārāyana (God) is the charioteer of Arjuna's chariot)
(2) From Rāmāyana

'Ki cāi āchilā bhāīti-e-he-
Rāvane hari-niye Sitāke-e-he . . . ?'

(O, what were you watching over brother, Rāvana stole away Sītā)

(3) Locally composed

(a) "O mor moluwā he
O mor moluwā kone mārilā
hāy mor, hāy mor, moluwā he . . . ."

(O my moluwā (male monkey) oh ! O who have beaten
my moluwā, alas ! my moluwā oh.)

(b) "O hari-e-Sundarī thān,
pātilanta Mādhava deve nāmar dokān,
he Sundarī thān,

(Addressing - O Hari 'he' (calling) Sundarī satra,
Mādhavadeva founded it the shop of names (nām),
O 'he' satra of Sundarī (Sundarīdiyā).

The burdener of the song (Kanā-kātā) will start singing
and rowers follow him. The above songs bear a sense of melo-
dious lamentation. But each burden of the songs is noted for
their expression and inspiration drawn from Vaiṣṇava themes.

It is a matter of great regret that the set tradition
of boat-race is no longer in practice at Barpeta except the
songs. Boat-race, now-a-days, is produced on the stage but not
in the Marānadi. Generally nāo-khelar gīts at the beginning are
sung in a low tune but gradually it rises up to the highest
tune, so that it can speed up the strikes of the oars of the

88. Śrīrām Ch. Das : Mor Āir Prānar Gīt, pp. 25-27
rowers.

(2) Kamrupi Loka-git:

Another distinction of great importance of Barpeta is a class of typical composition known as Kamrupi Loka-git. Jogesh Bharali of Barpeta is considered the founder of Kamrupi Loka-git who gives a modern shape setting a new melody to it. Rameswar Pathak of village Nagaon near Barpeta helps much in bringing this typical folk-song to the broad field of India. Now, the popularity of Kamrupi loka-git reaches the high mark of folksongs to which the contribution of Barpeta is unique absolutely. At present, the tunes set in many of the loka-gits, identified as Kamrupi loka-gits, are seen influenced by the Hindusthani среng-rāgas while in case of some others there are admixture of tunes of other rāgas. Perhaps, due to inherent dynamic character of folksongs it appears refreshingly modern which is not a healthy atmosphere for such a typical folk-song.


90. B. Datta: Asamiyā Sangitar Aitihya, p. 63
A few verses of Kâmrûpî loka-gît composed at Barpeṭā are given below as specimens without equivalent English meaning:

I

'O mor āi oi
Bholâṅkhar bhedar kathā
Kale lāge dâyā -- --
Murât Kûbe mûriba
Tatehe bhakati pâya' (Jogesh Bharali: Dwip Sikha, 1961)

II

Parbate parbate bagâba pâro moi
Lâta bagâbalîr tân -- --
Tât koliyo tîtâ ache
Sâhu nanandar mât etc. etc.

The contents of loka-gît are blended mostly with the stories of the Râmâyana e.g., Maiyo bane jâo swâmî he-(Husband, I also go on exile), the Mahâbhârata, e.g., Kânde vîra Abhi- mânûy behura bhitare -- -- (Here Abhimanyu laments in the phalanx of troop) and Purânas etc. whereby the inspirations of Vaiṣṇava themes are noted. Very often such songs are ascribed to Mâdhava, Kabiratna, Gopaladeva etc., inspired by neo-Vaiṣṇava Bhakti cult. The history of Assamese folksongs and that of Vaiṣṇava poetry often times present a history of mutual

91. Babul Das (ed.): Loka Gîtar Anjali, p. 15
influence and such influences are noticed in various rhymes. Some folk songs, current in this region, are sung for the same purpose having similar religious, philosophical contents etc. with the other parts of Assam save and except the dialects and tunes employed in those songs. In our discussion, each of such folksongs will be noted below with specimens in Barpetiya, dialect,

1) Ai-nām : This is a sort hymn sung in praise of the goddess of small pox which run thus :

"Sipāre kone jāi-e nāwariyā lok, 
dāngar āir nāmak jaung pār kārā mok e. 
Sipāre kone jai-e nāwariyā lok, 
Saru āir nāmak jaung pār kārā mok-e" etc.

gist: Who will go to that end O boatman, ferry me also as I shall go for the prayer of the goddess of poxes like small-pox, chicken-pox etc.

In this way description of each name of poxes like bar-āi (small-pox), Saru-āi (chicken-pox), pānčāmri-āi (measles) etc. are sung through hymn.

2) Biyā-nām (marriage song) : This is one of various types of folksongs (Nāmas) sung in connection with the rites of passage the specimen of which has been given in Chapter- VI.
3) Cradle song (julnā or dulnā git): Julnā song is also a kind of nursery rhyme and is noted for its haunting music and tender feeling naturally associated with theme like other nursery rhymes e.g.,

\[ jule \text{ (dhule) julan (dhulan or dulan) khāi pare,} \]
\[ julnār bhitre bagri jugri kuwa kuwa kare. \text{ etc.} \]

(b) Another type of nursery rhyme is jīt-karā git in which a crying child is solaced e.g.,

\[ pheŋchu-chu, pheŋchu dālā, \]
\[ māmer bārit hāgbā geichila \]
\[ māme bole chi-chi, \]
\[ māme bole katikhan dhuwadi. \]

Again, thāi thāk thuki, māre māch kuki
duwār mukhat bāche; thāk thuk-kōi nāche;

(English equivalents are not given of some such songs like the above one given as specimens in the succeeding pages as they appear difficult to translate properly).

(c) The proper nursery is one in which a child is solaced to sleep which is called ghunti-khedar git in this cultural zone and in standard colloquial, it is known as nicukani git (nursery rhyme). The Vaiṣṇava poetry of Śrīdhar Kandali's Kāṇakhowā poems (a rhyme of ear-eater) is noted for creating the nursery sentiment and the popular conception of imaginary ear-eater i.e., "ghumati jāore ore kānāi, ore kāṇakhowā ase (sleep, o ye Kānāi, o, the ear-eater is coming
etc.). A specimen of local nursery rhyme runs thus:

"hāpā e nāhibi rāti, 

_tore kān kāṭi lağāme bāṭi."

"thāi thāi nāče, nāktō nilā barāli māče, 

_tāre biḥate āmāre bāpāi kāndī-kāṭi ghume āče."

(4) Game song (khelar git) : There are varieties of game-songs in this area, for example:

a) Hāukhelar git :

_Hāumārī lāu khaun̄g, pir-pirā care, 
lejāt bhāri dīlī, kāi-kut kare 

hāure hāmal, bāṭā kāṭi, dāmal, 

bāṭār ṭāle parbat jvale-jvale .."*

b) Umā gits or umala gits : These songs are confined among the children and hence, it is called children's game-songs (umā gīt). The specimen of a such song runs thus :

 участь 2

Kharkitto markitto bar pirākhen pāri tho 
Rāpār ghachat hāpuwā moke bule kekuwā 

El kāṭi bel dim ghairālār bhai

... . . . . . . . . .

Khedi-guri manicak khāi

Khedante khedante bhāri hal kharā

kālipuwa dim tok boītā māchar thārā 

El-bel hāṭate tīni kil gel, etc.*

(5) Maho-ho git (songs ceremony) : These songs are sung on the day of masquito driving ceremony conducted on the full-moon of the month of Āghon (November-December). A specimen of

92. Sriram Ch, Das (ed.) : Mor Āir Prāmar Git, p. 92

* The star mark indicates songs and rhymes collected locally.
Maho-ho songs runs thus:

Thupri ho re, thupri ho,
Mah khedba jaung cho.

Thupri ho re khelar bhai,
Ajir khela erbär nai.
Mah mārīlu chayata
ghare ghare ekata etc.*

Again,

O Hari, maho-ho, mah khedba taken lo,
Ami jauṅg aći aći, man jai bari di
Anicho bhakat marihu khati
Neda meni nājahq guchi, etc.*

In some places maho-ho songs is called bhāul diyā songś.

(6) Dehbichār gīts: These songs points to their spiritual affinity with philosophical contents where some bhatimas are ascribed to Mādhavadeva. In dehbichār-gīts the human body is compared sometimes with boat, sometimes with the house and cāki etc.93 A specimen of two verses of such songs runs thus:

"Sarure parahe māi garu cārilo
Murare pakāilo culi,
marībar belāhe tāni bāhir kare,
ghar chuwā jāba buli of Rāma Rāma.
Bhādiyā railo-i tor ghare
kahaya Mādhava suna bandhusava,94
erlo bisayar dhānda — — " etc.

Gist: From the boyhood has herded the cattle till grey hair, but at death the body is taken out considering the impurity of the house. Mādhava, therefore, advises not to give importance on worldly property.

93. M. Neog: Asamiyā Gīti Sāhitya, p. 22
94. Sriram Ch. Das: Mor Āir Prānar Gīt, pp. 98-99
(7) **Bāramāhir git** : A song narrative of the twelve months of the year starting from the month of Āghon sung by a lady feeling deeply for the absence of her beloved.\(^{95}\) A rich legacy of this song is experienced in the Barpeta area. Few verses of such a song is noted here as specimen of sāntibhāramāhi -

"Āghonar māhate Sānti dutiyāre jon;
calāhāya bāchārate Sāntir bhāllanta jouvan
āthara bāchāre Sāntir bayase dīla bhāthi
budhā bhāillā bāthā āhā āhā hāte lailā lāthi"

Again,

Caitar māhate Sānti pake sare bel
sel bela laiya saude bānijake gel;
banijake jai saud kībā pālā nidhi
bhāl dālim paki āche khāite nede bidhi" etc.

This song narrates the physical growth of Sānti along with the massage of her mind to her beloved who is away from home for trade and commerce.

(8) **Ballad** : This kind of story telling folk poems may be divided into three classes\(^{96}\) viz., (a) historical, the contents of which is taken from history, (b) traditional, that is not originally written composition, but was transmitted orally from generation to generation, (c) imaginative,

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95. M. Neog : *Asamiya Gīti Sāhitya*, p. 23
96. S. N. Sarma : *ASSI*, p. 33
which has no basic elements but composed out of imagination.

Dr. P. Goswami says, "looking to the various angles it has been found adviceably to classify the Assamese ballad in this manner -- (a) historical built around more or less authentic historical incidents or figures, (b) ballad of magic where the marvellous predominates and which use ancient and universal folklore themes; (c) realistic, which are more or less transcripts from life; (d) satirical, which satirizes; or caricatures an event or a person." 97

But, so far this region is concerned, there are popular ballads of **Bilemurir git**, which satirizes an event occurred between husband and wife leading a rustic life; **Rādhikāsāntir-git** which describes the unique character of a quasi-historical figure with religious zeal of Vaishnava movement. There is another ballad known as **Kalir-kālār git** which has been blended with imagery narrative reflecting religious impact. A few verses of **Bilemurir git** run thus:

Hāl bābā jām mai, hāy hāy Bilemurie
bhat rāndhi thābi tai, hāy hāy Bilemurie,
hāl bābā jābi tai, pīrā jāre ghumam mai hāy hāy Belemurie;
pīrā jāre ghumabi tai hāulār laru chīṅgim mai hāy hāy — — — —
hāulār laru chīṅgbi tai āṭhe景德镇 jām mai 98 — — etc.

97. P. Goswami : Ballad and tales of Assam, p. 11
98. Sriram Ch. Das (ed.) : Mor Āir Prānar Git, p. 54
gīts: (O, Bilemuri, I shall go to plough, you will cook food for me. If you (husband) go to plough I shall remain sleeping. If you remain sleeping, I shall beat you by the plougher stick (hāulār laru) and in that case, Bilemuri will go to her mother's house and so on). This nice piece of poem is most popular among the village people which satirically depict a quarrelsome picture between husband and an arrogant wife of a peasant family. Perhaps, this type of composition is as old as peasant society.

(9) a) Holi-gīt : Formerly there were suwerir or phākuwār gīts associated with deul-utsav. These songs owe their origin as a sort of religious devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa manifested in a popular festival of deul-utsav. This festival has been celebrated with profound devotion at Barpeta and its neighbouring satras as a result of which few phākuwār gīts were composed by Mādhava-deva such as -

Phāgu khele karunāmaya, e Nanda kumār, devara durlabha keli phāgura bihār etc.

Gracious Lord, son of Nanda, plays sprinkling red powder (phāku-guri) such amusement connected with sprinkling of phāku is a rare play among the gods.

In the later period a new name emerges with the suweri
git known as holi-gît. This holi-gît is a modern composition of people like Ambikagiri, Prasannalal Choudhury, Puruṣottam Dâs etc. who make it most popular song associating with the phâkuwa-utsova as for example -

Shyâma khele holi,
Gopa gopi mili Vîndâvane,
Mayura mayuri nace bâne bâne
khele holi Vîndâvane,99 etc.

(Shyâma plays holi with milkmen and women in Vrindâvana; the pea-cocks and pea-hens dance from forest to forest, (Shyâma) plays holi at Vrindâvana).

These songs are composed mostly in couplets spontaneously in devotional passion and thought drawing inspiration from Vaiṣṇava theme. Perhaps, Barpetā is the only place in Assam to introduce holi-song first, ( <Hind. holi <Sansk. holîkā = Hindu spring festival).

b) Another notable typical song of Barpetā is bhâwariyâ-gît (humorous song). This is also known as Ningni-purânar-gît and has been sung purely in Barpetiyâ dialect. The origin of this type of song owes to Ningni Bhâwariyâ, a native of Barpetā town about whom will be discussed

99. Prasannalal Choudhury (ed.): Raṅge phâgu khele., p. 25
somewhere in the succeeding pages, specimen of his song is thus -

"bitāṅg bitāṅg mahābitāṅg,  
bakalī muktāṅg  āṭhīyā kālāṅg. 100 etc.

(Ripe 'āṭhīyā' banana without peel is most tasteful and valuable thing). The dialect employed by Niṅgī Bhāwariyā is pronounced like Sanskrit while the words are originally Assamese composed humorously. Almost all of his compositions and modes of speaking were parts of humour. Niṅgī Bhāwariyā is better known as a humorist and Barpētā is proud of him.

(B) Tales and Legends:

The literary types of narratives like myth, legends, and tales constitute a significant portion of folk literature. The myths are intimately connected with religious beliefs and practices of the people. The contents of which are drawn from the epic like the Mahābhārata or some old Purāṇa. So, it has nothing exception in Assamese folk literature.

"There is no language without tales and legends, there is no society without tales and legends."101 The stories and legends constitute an important branch of folk literature. The

100. Jadab Ch. Das : Niṅgī Bhāwariyār Rahasya, p. 95
101. Atul Ch. Barua : Asamiyā Loka Sāhitya, p. 53
old traditions are also falling within the group of tales. 102

To quote Dr. P. Goswami, "Tales current among the Assamese are traditional, derived from an old-world atmosphere, and have conformed to types which are usual in a more or less comparatively primitive social setting." 103 According to Bezbarua folk tales are of two types - one is the tale told mounting on imagination only to give simple amusement and the other is told to give some moral lessons. 104

On the basis of recommendation of Dean Thomption Dr. P. Goswami makes the classification of different types -

(1) Legends and (2) tales in the following manner 105 -

(1) Legend: is a story event believed to have taken place to tell the truth. The following are the types of legend -

(a) place legends, (b) legends about persons, (c) nature legends, (d) legends on supernatural belief, (e) legends of events.

(2) Tales: Their purposes are to tell a fictional tale. The types of folk-tales are - (a) Animal tales, (b) trickster (tentānārṣādhu kathā), (c) Humorous tales,

102. Dr. B.K. Barua: Asamar Loka Samskriti, p. 53
103. Dr. P. Goswami: Ballads and Tales of Assam, p. 84
104. L.N. Bezbarua: 'Introduction' to Budhi Ār śādhu, p. 11
105. P. Goswami: Ballads and Tales of Assam, pp. 83-84
(d) chain tales or tales of supernatural agents, (e) Formula tales or cumulative tales.

From the above it appears that there is no definite set formula of telling the tales rather it depends upon the person's own imaginative power and language. Moreover, except the skeleton everything may be changed. It also can not be kept confined within a specific area. Ningni Bhāwariyā, the born poet of Barpeta created so many miraculous incident each of which is most interesting and amusing. For instance there is a work on Ningni written by Jādab Dās namely the Ningni Bhāwariyār Rahasya (mystery of Ningni Bhāwariyā) and each of them bears an independent and separate tale. e.g.

'Budhā ātoir Dāsa'\(^{106}\) : Ningni had good terms with one Budhā Ātoi of Barpeta Satra. Budhā Ātoi generally used to come to Ningni Bhāwariyā's house to pass leisure time almost every day. This was an item of Budhā Ātoi's daily routine to attend Ningni's house atleast once a day when Ningni was vailable at home. One day few cowherd boys cautioned Budhā Ātoi in merry-making way not to go to Ningni's house otherwise, he would be taught a good lesson by Ningni. Unfortunately Ningni's wife

\(^{106}\) Jadab Das : Ningni Bhāwariyār Rahasya, pp. 69-74
was not at home on that day. So, Niñgni was to sweep the courtyard eventually and as a result of that, Niñgni was angry with his wife. In the meantime Ātoi arrived at the gate of Niñgni's house and he was ashamed that the religious soul (Ātoi) was to welcome through the uncleaned (Vāhi)107 courtyard; so he was much angry with his wife. And hence, Niñgni uttered "āji bānnidi kubam" (shall strike with the sweeping brush). Ātoi remembering the warning of the boys thought that Niñgni would strike him by the sweeping brush. So, out of fear Ātoi ran back towards the satra. On noticing Ātoi's turning back, Niñgni rush after Ātoi with the sweeping brush and saying "āji bānnidi kubāihe cārim" (today would be strucken by sweeping brush). Repeated words of Niñgni made Ātoi more frightened. So, on the course of his running back Ātoi requested Niñgni not to do such illegal act. ........

Actually Niñgni's uttering of 'bānnidi kumbam' was not meant to Ātoi but to his wife'. In general the sweeping task of courtyard is done by the woman folk in this area. So, the incidents had to be happened which is a humorous episode from the life of legendary entertainer.

107. which is considered impure by the Vaisnavas and householder and is prohibited to cross the Vāhi cotāl (unswept courtyard).
In another story Ningni defeated some poets of Bengal putting before them few verses in order to give its meanings. The verses run thus -

"Salya raṅgam dhap-dhapāyaṇcam
Khundanti batikā krita
Kalkli madhye prabesitam
agni angāre sthāpaye
hpāyey dhumra nirgāte
put-turaṅg sabda karoti kalyānam
iti janma sārthakam-etc.

Gīts: (the purport is dried tobacco leaves should be grinded and then it would be mixed with liquid molasses. The prepared tobacco would be put in the earthen bowl of the hookā along with burning charcoal and when the hookā would be puffed a sound like 'tur-tur' comes out which is joyous moment of a tobacco smoker). His self-style verses are neither standard Assamese nor Sanskrit with proper grammatical employment though sound like Sanskrit. Ningni Bhāwariyā was himself a poet of great wit and wisdom and a living mystery for whom Barpetā could earn the name of creating tales of her own.

Barpetā parganā can boast of having of creating legend in her own soil in the name of Dāk-puruṣa. He has been claimed to be born in the village Lehidangarā, a place nearly eight

108. Gokul Das (ed.): Amārdesh, Feb., 1969, pp. 30-32
miles away from Barpeta town. Though nothing is known more precisely about this great popular scholar and poet of wit and wisdom, yet he is supposed to have been born by the blessings of a great scholar and astrologer — Mihir, one of the nine jewels of the court of King Vikramāditya through a wife of Kumār (potter). The sayings is:

'Svāsuri bole sarujani āi
tor lagat eko cha-chali nāi,
gharār kamak pāche kara
Atithē bāpēr āl dhara,
. . . . . . .
tusta haiyā Mihire dilā bar,
putra eka hāba mōrā samahār.'

(The mother-in-law asks the younger daughter-in-law, you have no child with you.

Do the domestic chores and afterwards,

Take care of the dear guest,

. . . . . . . . . . . etc.

Being satisfied Mihir gave the blessing "you will have a son equal to me").

Accordingly Dāk was born in due course of time. From the birth of Dāk-puruṣa till his death, there are so many legends and semi-legends relating to him which are the

sources of the people to create legends out of veiled mysteries. Born poet Dāk-puruṣa is a symbol of wisdom of this geographical region. The nature of legends are of his birth, play-way days, cowherd days, events relating to death etc.

C. **Riddles and Proverbs:**

Riddles, according to Chambers 20th Century Dictionary is an obscure description of something which the hearer is asked to name puzzling questions.\(^{110}\) In local dialect it is known as sāstar or distān (\(<\text{Sans. distānta}\) but in standard colloquial riddle is called sāthar. Whatever is called it is true that it has a set form i.e., a riddle does not go any change owing to its time and space. This poetical figure of speech is considered one of the oldest branch of folk-literature the answer of which comes not from within but from outside the figure of speech.\(^{111}\) It is the result of the primary mental process of man regarding the ideas of similarity and dissimilarity. It may grow anywhere and everywhere irrespective of contents whenever an obscure description

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\(^{111}\) B.K. Barua : *Asamar Loka Samskriti*, p. 41
has arisen. Therefore, the importance of regionalism is to be considered whatever its representative dialect might be. Many riddles of this region is perhaps the gift of Vāiṣṇava movement. Some specimens of riddles current in this area are given here under:

(1) rajather kali gāi, ek piyān di mari jāi = kalgačh.
(The black cow of the king's house dies after one course of delivery = banana tree).

(2) bhaktenir murat kutā, uparat dekhi kibā duţā,
talat dekhi kibā ekhen, cengrā cali, hān dili tap-tape pare pāni, bhiji jāy mēkhār kāṇi = telpērā or ghāni (ghakteni, a woman disciple, has a piece of straw on the head, there are somewhat two on its upper portion, there is somewhat one towards the lower portion, when young man stresses, water oozes drop by drop and wets the skirt = an oil-mill)

(3) rāngā rāngā pakhitmi kalā kari hāge (the red bird ejects blackish) = fire (jui)

(4) Kāsāte tāl-tul, pakile garam, jiye kaba nore tār gālat caram (It is soft when it is green (immature) and becomes hard when it is ripe (mature) = earthen pot (caru).
(5) **Sarute kāpor pindhe dāngarat lāngtā haye** (that puts on dress in childhood but becomes naked while it is grown up) = bamboo-offshoot.

(6) **Saru saru gasdāl bhari bhari lāge,**
Raghunāth ṣhipāli sari sari pare = niyar
(The small tree bears fruits fully and, when Raghunath (Sun) arrives all the fruits fall down) = dew-drop.

These riddles (distān) are more popular with the children specially which help them to develop their wit and reasoning.

There is another type of figurative speech or enigmatic statement which is better known as phokara (Yavanik-phikara) such enigmatic statements are noticed in the GCK extensively which are current in the mouth of the people of this region too. e.g.

(1) **pasū nakaribā sār, marāo nānibā jiyo nānibā,**
sudā hāte napasibā ghar.¹¹² (Do not shoot at beast; do not bring dead or alive and do not enter the house with empty hand).

¹¹². **GCK, p. 89**
(2) enei maro rishir sāpat, tate dei juir bhāphat
(about to die due to the curse of the sage, moreover, wants to put heat of the fire) etc.

The proverbs are the guiding force of folk life in every society as an unwritten variety of literature. They are composed in such a decent rhythmic way which help people to keep them in memory for long duration and has been preserved orally for the coming generation. It is said, "this popular poetry represents the art of people and constitutes a literature transmitted through generations with its roots deep in the soil."\textsuperscript{113}

In this respect, the sayings of Dāk-puruṣa is supposed to be the earliest collection of popular literature dating his birth back to nearly ninth century or so. It is undoubtedly ascertained that the origin of Dāk's aphorisms is the Barpeta region. Then again, from the half of the 16th century the neo-Vaiṣṇava movement consolidated its footing in the Bāusī parganā and as a result of which people like Thākur Ātā, an instrumental of Vaiṣṇavism (1495-1598 A.D.), Gopāl Ātā of Bhawānipur etc. were considered treasure house of proverbs.

\textsuperscript{113} Hem Barua: \textit{Assamese Literature}, p. 11
It is stated earlier in the chapter III of this project that Narayanadās Thākur Ātā was an efficient merchant and a born poet. He imparted necessary religious instructions to Badulā Ātā with the help of three hundred and sixty proverbs as the latter was asked by Mādhavadeva to have acquired the significance of majiyāli-sukha from Thākur Ātā at Janīā. Even Thākur Ātā's wife also asked question to Madhai Ātoi through proverb and the reply to the question was given by the latter through the same medium of proverb. e.g. nakoi nārjo, purāṇī khāo, bhikṣā diya māwa, gharaloī jāo. This proverb indicated that Ātoi was a beggar. Gopāl Ātā, the Kathār-sāgar could compose poetical verse instantly where necessary. A specimen from Thākur Ātā's proverbs is as such -

\[
\text{Mudhai mudhāi ghar sudhibar nāpālo par,} \\
\text{sudhote sudhote gal ded-bachar.}
\]

(Ridge to ridge are the houses, yet can not make time to ask; one and a half years are elapsed in repeated asking).

Nīṅgni Bhāwariyā (1815-1896 A.D.) as mentioned earlier, was famous for his parody and proverb. He could express his

114. GCK, p. 428
115. GCK, p. 90
thought in terms of verse. Examples of his parody and proverb,\textsuperscript{116} are as follows:

\begin{verse}
Swargat a\textsuperscript{c}hil pu\textsuperscript{s}pa p\textsuperscript{a}rij\textsuperscript{a},
martat ahi hal mal\textsuperscript{a}-dhap\textsuperscript{a},
s\textsuperscript{a}dhu sakale l\textsuperscript{a}g p\textsuperscript{a}i,
lalir lagat mali kh\textsuperscript{a}i. etc.
\end{verse}

('P\textsuperscript{a}rij\textsuperscript{a}' - flower was in the heaven. It comes to the earth in the form of tobacco leave. The devotees (s\textsuperscript{a}dhu) come into its contact and smoke it mixing with liquid molasses)

\begin{verse}
K\textsuperscript{a}\textsuperscript{a}it b\textsuperscript{a}s, Bih\textsuperscript{a}rat r\textsuperscript{a}s,
Asamar holi, Barpet\textsuperscript{a}r cali . . . etc.
\end{verse}

Simple meaning of the proverb is that one should live in K\textsuperscript{a}\textsuperscript{a}i, a holy place of India. The r\textsuperscript{a}gutsav in Cooch Behar is as famous as the holi of Assam; in the same way the boys of Barpet\textsuperscript{a} are well-known.

The didactic aphorisms of D\textsuperscript{a}k-puru\textsuperscript{s}a cover almost every aspect of man's life in society and is popularly known as 'D\textsuperscript{a}kar-vacan vedar b\textsuperscript{a}n\textsuperscript{a}i'.\textsuperscript{117} Because, they tell the peasants in general how to conduct their lives themselves

\textsuperscript{116} GCK, p. 90
\textsuperscript{117} M. Neog: Asamiy\textsuperscript{a} G\textsuperscript{i}ti S\textsuperscript{a}hitya, p. 86
and when they are to perform certain rites, task relating to agriculture, marriage, general health, nature of man and woman, social relation, astrological calculation and what not.

On the other hand, the Vaisnava proverbs have been giving necessary instructions to the people in general and devotees in particular pertaining to religious matters. The proverbs originated in the people like Nīṅgī Bhāwariyā seem to be satirical in language, but they tell people the codes of conduct prevailing during that period of time in the region concerned. All these proverbs have been considered as the social codes of conduct which are followed word by word even to-day and Barpeta has been a fertile ground of producing such aphorisms, perhaps since the 9th century as many of the scholars believe so.

D. Folk speech :

(1) *Curse and abuses*: The importance of curse and abuses in any society should be acknowledged as they are the means of expressing anger, hatred, discontentment etc. In case of anger or discontentment one may wish misfortune of the other and persons concerned may curse each other uttering
words like marāṅgat mārā (death of cholera), tīrī-bārī hōwā (wife would be widow), sāpe khōwā (bit by snake), āthūr mūrat cumā khaīty (having no issue), bhāyer mūrā khāwā or khaīty (wish of brother's death) etc. In curse and abuses there are significances of religious, moral and social thinking of general mass people where folk-belief and superstitions etc. are embodied in the history of Nation.118

Curse in Assamese society as well as in the society of Barpeta area does not differ much except the dialects employed and that may be studied under the following circumstances:

(a) In respect of social casteism e.g., Gairār bhāt khābī (married to a Muslim), (b) relating to religion e.g., rou-rou narkat parībī (be in flood of hell), Guru gosāintej khābī (will drink blood of preceptors), rasa tale jābī (will go to under earth = ruined) etc., (c) Curse relating to occupation e.g., pakā lāgi marībī (death caused by worm), kukurar peṭat janmībī (will take birth in womb of dog), (d) Curse relating to verulent disease e.g., marāṅgat marībī (will be dead of cholera etc.), bhīthāt dūbri gājak (none will

118. B.K. Barua: Asamar Loka-Samskriti, p. 123
remain alive) etc., (e) Curse specially relating to woman e.g., biyār rāti bārī habi (be widow on the marriage night), kāth bāji habi (will be barren) etc.

The language employed in curse is in inferior second person (toī) of future tense commonly used through local dialect.

In case of abuses (gāli) some important incidents are seen happened in this area along with some absurd local dialectical words. The incident of abuses is known as dan lāgā. The abuses of two words addressing to father, mother, brother, sister etc. are common such as, bhāyer tīrī, māyer lālek (wife of brother, husband of mother etc.) and obscene remarks such as having prohibited sexual contact with sister, mother etc.

Formerly, all over the area dān continued for long-duration. But now-a-days, the number of such dān decreases perhaps, due to educational development, yet in the rural area and some places of Barpeta town area specially in Joganiyār pārās (Bhakat and Rāyat pārā) still such dāns have been continuing. As is reported, the dān in Rāyat pārā and Bhakat pārā even upto few years back was an amusing scene.119 In

119. Information received from Prof. G.N. Das and Gokul Pathak, natives of Bhakat pārā.
such dans both parties involved, employed filthy language, words etc. to the maximum possible. Side by side they exhibited their secret argans (guptānga) which we need not name them. Sometimes, if the dan was not subsided in one course of time then each party preserved the dan for the time being by putting up side down a basket or a winnowing fan (kula) and after finishing domestic works they started again in the same manner. In case, the dan was not coming into end due to approaching of the night, then they preserved it for the next morning to resume it again removing the materials so preserved by both parties. Generally, it so happened in case of women folk, It is to be noted here that each party stroke artistically over their mekhelā (skirt) by hands making a peculiar sound which is known as dhāpli-diya. The causes of the dan is the same as it is in curse but dan is the extreme form of dispute, owing to unbearable anger or discontentment. Sometimes, they started the act of pulling one another by the hair. It is known that such dan occurs in rare cases, now-a-days. The language and words used in dan like genital, coition etc. are most indecent, yet the phrases and idioms employed in course of dan are valuable contribution to the oral
language and literature. Their type of tune employed in dan is as melodious as in the songs. Some specimens are given below used according to circumstances:

(a) In course of discussion, specially the teenagers irrespective of sex utter some obscence words and phrases. In this area the commonly used terms are 'betā' and 'betī' (son and daughter), the meaning of which are not usual and these are employed irrespective of age group. Thereby it is indicated that the speaker is the husband of the mother or vice-versa, of the person to whom the word is used. Such other words are dhemni (concubine), ghaiyā (person residing in father-in-law's house), gāi (female cow obscenely used); bhāyer tiri (wife of own brother), bāiner lālek (husband of own sister) are phrases of two words obscenely used etc.

(b) In respect of casteism and occupation some words or phrases are employed. Even in the GCK, such words have been noticed in some pages occasionally such as putkhā madāhi koc (drunker koc, eater of son), katārpo (son of slaughterer) Bāmunirpo, Barārpo, golāmar jāt (offspring of slave), kukurar

120. GCK, pp. 270, 84, 153
jät (offspring of dog), candālar jät (offspring of carāl, a low caste) etc. Sometimes the word 'sac' is used instead of 'jät'.

(c) Some abuses occur due to deformity of people e.g., behimuwa (having pointed mouth), kā-coukhā (eye like glass), phesā-nākā (having flat nose like an owl), kān-phūṭā (having hole in ear), bhetā-ala-kānā (blind), kujā (hump-backed), kerā, kerī (squint eyed) etc.

(d) Sometimes thumb finger or little finger is shown with saying certain obscenities, lifting of hand and leg saying gālat-caram, kāpālat lāitham (slapping on cheek, kick on the forehead respectively).

Considering every aspect of abuses (gālis), perhaps, it may be said that Barpeta area may occupy a strong position having a rich stock of obscene words, phrases and idioms.

(2) Lamentation : While there is man, there is a mind and as there is a mind, there is inherent feelings of joy and grief also. The expressions of sorrow is an innate tendency of human life. We term it as lamentation when such sorrow is expressed in audible cries. Perhaps, lamentation is the most earliest folk-speech as all the new born babies cry in the
same manner everywhere. But in case of grown up people the expression of grief differs in manner from place to place due to custom and dialect. There are certain conditions of lamentation that occur as such, (a) on the death of near and dear relatives, (b) on temporary or permanent separation, (c) due to excessive physical or mental torture, (d) due to loss of valuable properties etc.

So far lamentation is concerned in the Barpeta region it should be borne in mind that the way of expressing does not differ much with other places of Assam save and except her folk speech where the presence of musical tune is a bit more delicate.

(a) Lamentation on death: Death is a heart-rending event that spares none. In this event the expression of grief is unbearable specially for the woman folk who are virtually tender hearted in comparison to man. They at the death of their near and dear whom they have lost forever, burst into tears expressing their grief through audible cries and describe all qualities, physical appearances, memorable events in such a narrative manner as if it is a type of mournful song. This act of expressing grief continues for months together when the plot of death peeps in the mind. The way of expression
for example (1) "my dearest husband, son, daughter, father-mother, brother-sister, whatever the relation may be, where have you gone leaving me or us alone in this world (sangsār)."

How do I or we pass the days in absence of you? Who will supply me or us with such and such things? Why the blind God (Kāṇḍā Īśwara) has not taken me or us with you? Who will call me or us addressing such and such etc.?" This sort of narrative cries touches and strikes the soft corner of every heart who are attending the incident. Even an unlessoned people either in literature or music can narrate the biogra­phy of the deceased in such a rhythimic way without any break of the narrative speech e.g.

O mor bukare kaliyā oh; O Tai kak eri geli oh;
Moko tor lagate nenili kiya O etc. (O my heart of heart where you have gone leaving me; why you have not taken me with you etc.)

(b) In Marriage of girl: The marriage is an insti­tution of joy and cheerfulness for all alike. But in the midst of such a joyous institution there is a moment for lamenta­tion when the time of separation appears beyond the knowledge of the bride and the members of her family. That is the moment of the bride and the members of her family when she is to
leave her dearest members of the family, kith and kin etc. At that moment the bride and other members of the family burst into audible cries and express their grief narrating the moments of bliss and sorrow of one another where residing together so long. Specially the bride and her father and mother bid farewell through the medium of audible cries expressing their lamentation. The bride's blended cries express her doubts about the unknown house of her bridegroom. This sort of lamentation is experienced much in the rural areas than that of the urban areas. Many lokagîts have been composed on the basis of bride's lamentation e.g., Āi mok kene biyā dilā bâpe—(O mother, why does father put me in marriage). Sāhu Āi nandinî duyō kāl bâghinî—(Mother-in-law and sister-in-law both of them are like hungry tigresses) etc.

(c) Physical and mental tortures are other causes of lamentation. Such incidents are seen happened in the peasants family very often where physical torture is the day to-day incident. It is perhaps, due to financial crisis and illiteracy i.e., lack of education. Dowry system is also another cause of such incidents, for instance the following few verses of Kâmrûpî Loka-gîts may be cited.
(i)

Ata dukhe nājāya prāṇa more
kino nidāruni hiyā O'

(why does my soul not go out, O how cruel is the heart!)

(ii)

Kānde vīra Abhimāṇyu behura bhitare
saptā-rathī berī māre anyāya samare."

(Hiro Abhimāṇya laments in the phalanx, seven warriors kill
surrounding me in the unlawful fight) etc. The last piece of
lamentation gives us a picture of painful condition of
Abhimāṇyu, a hero of the Mahābhārata who was wounded dreadfully.

(d) Lamentation for loss of valuable property: Here
in this region there is a popular belief relating to missing
of some property, like gold, clothes etc. which are considered
bad signs to the persons concerned. Such incidents create sensa-
tion to the village people mostly. The case of plundering
property of huge amount is also a cause of lamentation. All
sorts of lamentation bring some valuable contributions to the
store of folk speech which are resourceful refrain of this
region. Another important contribution of lamentation is that
it leads to compose loka-gīṭ, biyā-nām etc. which is a sign of
rich language, literature and culture.
3. **Benedictions**:

Both benediction and curse are two contradictory aspects of folk-speech which have been employed in all stages of human civilisation. According to linguistics they are closely related with the evolution of language. In order to fulfil the longing of the heart benediction is treated as the vehicles of it. Benediction conferred by an individual like *kuśal-hak*, *maṅgal-hak* (be happy) etc. are business of day to-day life. But community benediction is an ever-longing occasional appearance in the house-hold life. Moreover, the influence of the *satras* over the entire area makes people religious minded. *Nāma prasāṅga* or the community reading of *Bhāgavata purāṇa* is conducted by a family at least once in a year to have community benediction for the welfare of the family. So, we shall be dealing here with the community benediction which is considered a festive one. In general, the following are the important festive occasions on which community benediction has been conferred on.

(a) **The occasion of birth**: On the monthly ceremony of a new born baby, the community of devotees (*bhakatsavas*)

121. B.K. Barua: *Asamar Loka-Sāmskriti*, p. 122
has been invited to conduct nāma-prasāṅga. Here in such function the Bhāgavata purāṇa is placed on the chapel (thāpanā), Cāki-vanti (earthen lamp) etc. being lighted, incense and resin (dhupa-dhunā) are being burnt, mounted tray (sārāi) with offerings (māh-prasād) is being placed in order to celebrate Hari-nāma-kīrtāna. Hereby any crime or fault committed in the baby's birth and pre-birth would be refuted and also would bring prosperity to the household. There may be any negligence in hosting the invited community of bhakats either way or there may be fault in offering oblation. So, by the grace and bless of the two Gurus (Śaṅkara-Mādhava) and community of bhakats all defects or negligence would be refuted and God would keep the house-holders in peace and prosperity and the baby would possess all good qualities and shine in future. What do you say O bhakats or bāpusakal (devotees) regarding the household's well being. The bhakats will say in reply - well, well. O Hari, O Rāma etc. The specimen of such benediction in satrīyā dialect runs as follow -
In local bhakatīyā language - "Aji eti kechuwar janma upalakshe āponāsava bhakta-brindak āmantran kari āni bahuwā haiche. ei kechuwar janma upalakshe Hari-Kīrtanar uddeshyā thāpanā pāti vanti jvalāi sarāi thagi āg-badhāi tāt dhup-dhunā di Hari-Kīrtan kariche. Iyār dvārāi kechuwar janma-janmāntarar doś khandan karibo, grihasthāro maṅgal sādhan karibo. bhakta brindak nimantran kari āni āsan basan, bākya-bacan, diyā-thowā ᣡdit kibā yadi aparādha haichil bā habā pāichil, drabya khīni āg-badhāote kibā yadi doś aparādha haichil, bā habā pāichil, tene dujanā Guru āru bhaktasavar āshirbāde samsta doś khandan kari cīrakāl Gobinde (God) kusāle rakshā karibo, bāpusava kene bolā ? bhāl-bhāl, O Hari, O Rām, O Rām, O Hari, grihasthār kusālar arthe Hari 0)"

(b) In case of nāma-prasānga conducted for the purpose of marriage ceremony the benediction is conferred on wishing the long conjugal life having boys and girls of the newly married couple. The rest of benediction remains same as mentioned above.

122. Collected from Mohan Ātoi Buḍhā Bhakat, Pukhuri Pārār Bāhā, Barpetā Satra.
In the same way other occasions like (c) prasāṅga conducted for recovering illness, (d) entrance to a newly constructed house, (e) birth day celebration, (f) funeral ceremony etc. the speeches of benediction remain same as above except the wishes in which it varies from occasion to occasion.

There are some other occasions in which worship of different gods and goddesses are conducted in order to fulfil yearning results. At the end of worship so conducted, the speech of benediction is conferred by the priest on the person or persons to fulfil the desired goal accordingly. The priest adds only the name of god or goddesses to whom the oblation is offered, in his benedictory speech and pray to forgive all faults done knowingly or unknowingly. The rest of the speech is the same as mentioned earlier except the words 'two Gurus'.

This portion of folk speech is seen employed in a setform traditionally, perhaps, from the days of Budhā Ātā as the words 'two Gurus' are included herewith. One thing is needed to mention here that the people of the sub-sects of Dāmodaradeva and Harideva specially add the name of their
respective Gurus to the benedictory speech in place of 'two Gurus'.

The tradition of this type of folkspeech has been transmitted mouth to mouth through generations. It has ground to believe from the mode of expression of this type of folkspeech that there is influence of the dialect originated in the satra institution and it has been maintaining its absolute identification as a radiating centre of oral literature.

C. Language:

(1) Dialect based: The history of oral literature of this region by and large is the history of people's literature which is based on dialect. That is why the spoken language of the people under its influences continues its vocabularies from the own soil as a medium of expression. Therefore, it can be said in the words of Charles Hokett, "everyone speaks one dialect or another"\(^\text{123}\) and hence, "the origin of various dialects of a language grow centering round the basis of geographical area, social class, caste, community, religious group etc. As such, according to investigation carried on by

\(^{123}\) Charles Hokett: *A Course in Modern Dialect*, 1973, p.322
the linguists, the regional dialects have been receiving more 
importance among these dialectical basis."¹²⁴ But in spite of 
so many dialects, "a dialect which imposes itself upon the 
speaker of another dialects is called a standard language."¹²⁵ 
At present the dialect of Sibsagar area is considered as the 
standard language of modern Assamese literature though few 
dialectical diverses have been noticed hither and thither of 
that region.¹²⁶ Considering the pros and cons it may be 
said that these types of dialects have been occupying a promi-
nent position in any language and literature. From this point 
of view it can undoubtedly be said that oral literature based 
on dialect has been playing an important role in Assamese 
language and literature. So also is the contribution of 
Barpeta dialect to the treasure house of Assamese literature 
that has been occupying a conspicuous position.

(2) A note on Barpeta dialect: Before we proceed to 
discuss about the dialect of our Zone of study it will be 
necessary to give an account of the geographical position of

¹²⁶. B. Datta: Bhāṣā Sāhityar Jolāṅgāidi, p. 90
Assamese dialects with special reference to Barpeta town and surrounding areas. The following chart of dialectical divisions of Assamese will show its diversified position.

The above chart can be explained in the following manner: (1) Eastern Assamese - The language from Sadiya to the easternmost areas like Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Sonitpur exhibits certain homogeniety and hardly exhibit any notable points of differences.

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127. B.K. Kakati: *Assamese, Its Formation & Development*, p. 18
(2) **Assamese of Middle Assam:** The language of the present district of Darrang comprising Mangaldoi, Sipājār etc. exhibits heterogeneity of dialect from (1) above.

(3) **Western Assamese:** The undivided Kāmrūp and Goalpara districts possess several dialects locally spoken and sharply differ from one another. The two broad divisions differ from the standard colloquial of the eastern Assamese.\(^{128}\)

(4) **North bank of Brahmaputra:** The present district of Barpetā and Nalbari comprise the North Bank of Brahmaputra with diversified dialects.

(5) The south bank of Brahmaputra consisted of palāsbāri area and Soālkuchi with varied intoCnation of dialects.

(6) **Barpetā district:** The entire geographical areas of the district are consisted of different ethnic groups and the immigrants who speak different dialects of their own.

(7) **Nalbari district:** The language of the district is more or less same through out the entire area except few tribal dialects.

(8) **Cultural Zone of Barpetā:** The language of this Zone may be divided into three heads on the basis of dialects

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128. Dr. B. K. Kakati: *Assamese, Its Formation and Development*, p. 18
spoken by its inhabitants. In one sense it may be termed as 'dialect complex' - like that of 'Satra-complex'. The divided areas under heads of (12) Satra campus (13) Rāyat pārā and Bhakat pārā which is known as Yoganiyār hāti collectively and the rest area of the Zone which has almost homogenous dialect. The dialects of these groups will be discussed in the succeeding pages with their divergences of intonation and pattern which will throw some new light of dialects in different localities.

In this respect of uniformity in dialect we may quote Bloomfield, "common government and religion, and specially custom of inter-marriage within the political unit, lead to relative uniformity of speech." Inspite of such uniformity there are certain reasons of diversity in dialect for which regional dialect resorts to certain peculiarities that may be asigned. These are class - trades, caste and sub-caste, communinity etc. on the basis of which we shall discuss the heterogeneity of dialect in our 'cultural zone' under three specific divisions as mentioned in the chart in the preceding page of this chapter.

Satra campuses: The satras either in the core-area or in the periphery of Barpeta Satra constitute a homogeneity of speech, perhaps, due to common religious atmosphere and regular practice of religious rites. The satras of the area keep contact with one another specially with Barpeta Satra. The devotees locally known as satrīyā bhakat who have less contact with the outsiders. The satra is their better world. As a result of which a common dialect develops within the campus of the satras and it is termed as satrīyā language. They are not seen speaking in the first person singular number in as much as it indicates egoism. It is a matter of great surprise to hear their uniform use of sentences in passive voice in mutual discussion or conversation. There is a class of vocabulary highly polished in nature, the use of which is mainly confined within the circles of the satras.

To illustrate their vocabularies the following specimens are given:

(1) Sentences in passive form:

(a) Bhojan karā hal (meal has been taken)

(b) Ṣamār tene karibaparā nahabā (such can not done by us)

(c) ūrah Yowā habane? (Will his going be possible?)
(d) **Kamtc karā habane?** (will the work be done?)

(3) **Kariba parā haba** (It can be done) etc.

In case of dire necessity they may use we or our instead of I or my. The **GCK** is the evidential authority of such employment of speech.

(2) **Use of words in satriyā style**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satriyā form</th>
<th>Standard colloquial</th>
<th>English equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ārāsava</td>
<td>eolok</td>
<td>these people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phurā-ha</td>
<td>souc karā</td>
<td>Respond to the call of nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gā-tiowā</td>
<td>gādhowā</td>
<td>bathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tomrā</td>
<td>tumi</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terāsava</td>
<td>teslok</td>
<td>They</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dar</td>
<td>jarimanā</td>
<td>a fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utar</td>
<td>uttar</td>
<td>answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jima</td>
<td>jin</td>
<td>digestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āṅguthi</td>
<td>āṅgathī</td>
<td>ring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yavan</td>
<td>Musalman</td>
<td>Mahamedan etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dialect of Yogoniyār hāti**: Formerly these localities (Bhakat and Ḡayat pārā) were to supply fish to the satra traditionally and fishing is their common business. They are
also inter-related with common custom and religion. They belong to same caste. As they are to deal with all kinds of people for carrying on their business of fish so, they are to be more polished in language. Perhaps, for these reasons they maintain a separate identity of intonation in speech so that the people cannot be displeased by their behaviours. They speak in such a lenient way where long tuned speech is experienced e.g.

(a) An abusing tune, e- beṭī, tor lāile mok ki-
Karbā pāre-e-? (O daughter (bad sense), what can your husband do me ?)
e- beṭā, mek cinā nāi - māy bāiper biyā dekhām-e-
(O son, do you not know mother (me), I can show the marriage of your father and mother).

(b) When asking alms -

(1) O, māwa - - ek muṭhā bhiksā dibinā-e.

(O mother, will you give me a handful of alms).

(c) In case of lamentation -

O mor, bukare kaljā,
O tai, kok eri geli O-o ?
(O my heart of the bosom, where have gone leaving me)
They also employ some such words which are not used by others. The following are few specimens:

dialectical words of Joyaniyar para | St. Coll. | English

| Itã | eito | it |
| siyãk | tãk | him |
| Bàipe | deutã | father |
| sene | senekuwã | like that |
| ãlcã | ghin lagã | hatred |
| mui | mai | I |
| soilla | solla | sixteen |
| ãisunã | ãi | mother |
| silâkhãn | seibor | those |
| emãn | Ímãn | so much |
| rãikceni | rãkshasi | gorgan |
| bhikhnimlã | bhikšãnimilã | one who is not fit to get alms. |

From the above materials it appears that there are syllabic change in some places i.e., instead of monosyllable dysyllable is used and in some other cases there are changes of vowel either prefixes or suffixes.
In some other hātis of Barpetai Town a few divergences of speech are experienced which are not employed in other parts of this cultural zone. For instance, Gāyan hāti, Bāyan hāti including some parts of Na-hāti and ghorāmārā-hāti speak some pieces of uncommon dialects e.g., (1) Ō kākā, Ōk-āhā (O brother, come here), (2) ei bilāk gāhan kāk sunāichā-e- (whom have your herk the concocted story (gāhan), (3) kīnu sisapā bājnā mārbā āichā-e-? (why have you come to harp in one string), (4) capatke karbā nori nahai (can not be done immediately) and the tune is lenient everywhere in the town area known as dhekdharā. The spoken dialects of the Assamese gold-smith (Baniyā), Kumār, Hīrā (Potters) etc. are a bit different from the others though they are residing closely with other caste. Of course the tune is almost same with other parts of the town, e.g., (1) Rāticaddār roi-māthak geluj (where are) etc. of Baniyās speech. The Kumārs and Hīrā's dialectical speeches are narrative and comparative. e.g., (1) luhā-hen māti (iron like soil), (2) than thainā kalah (well matured water jar), (3) Māti-sapā khucate khucate bikcānā lāgcche (get lidious on mixing up the soil), kāemar pākhi hen megh (cloud like the wings of kāem-bard) etc.
Some uncommon dialectical words are seen used in Sundaridiya area of which few specimens are given here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sundaridiya form</th>
<th>St. Coll.</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ek-dābar</td>
<td>ebar</td>
<td>once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ḍ̄hīmān</td>
<td>alapmān</td>
<td>few, little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dābeḍāla</td>
<td>hācati</td>
<td>small knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phic</td>
<td>ponddh</td>
<td>that end of a waist clothe tucked in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sephle</td>
<td>seipine</td>
<td>towards that side etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rest area of the cultural zone

Now, keeping aside the exceptions of speech mentioned above we shall be dealing with spoken style of words of the entire area of our zone of study including Barpeta town that possess common special features in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary etc. as compared with the standard (st.) colloquial (coll). In respect of this area the remark made by Dr. Kakati is worthmentioning, "the dialect that caused stress-shift in the forms that stand out as exceptions to the theory of penultimate stress is the Kāmrūpi dialect of western Assam." 130

(a) **Barpetiya**  |  **St. Coll.**  |  **English**
---|---|---
kgi | kongba | Some one
khutkuita | khutkutiya | quarrel some
kuma | komor | white gourd
kukra | kukura | cock or hen
bali | barali | a kind of fish
bekli | bekuli | frog
pakhele | pakhale | wash off
pahre | pahare | forget
mare | maraya | cause to beat
ughle | ughale | root out

(b) In **Barpetiya** it becomes two 'a' sounds side by side while it is 'a' or 'e' in standard colloqual e.g.,

| **Barpetiya** |  **St. Coll.** |  **English** |
---|---|---|
angra | engar | charcoal |
ath | etha | gum |
bata | baata | tray with foot |
caka | caka | wheel |
dama | dam | drum |
kana | kan | blind |
kala | kal | deaf |
raja | raja | king |
tara | tar | star etc. |
(c) The last 'Qi' and 'Ou' of standard colloquial appears as 'e' and 'o' in Barpetiya e.g.,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barpetiya</th>
<th>St. Coll.</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>āme</td>
<td>āmoi</td>
<td>mother's equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āte</td>
<td>ātoi</td>
<td>grand father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āro</td>
<td>ākou</td>
<td>again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dùre</td>
<td>dùroi</td>
<td>distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dine</td>
<td>dinou</td>
<td>daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gare</td>
<td>garoi</td>
<td>a kind of fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kenke</td>
<td>kenekoi</td>
<td>how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kābo</td>
<td>kābou</td>
<td>request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tāe</td>
<td>tāoi</td>
<td>father's equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tako</td>
<td>takou</td>
<td>a kind of palm etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) In disyllabic words it is 'a' or 'a' in Barpetiya while they are 'o' or 'a' in standard colloquial e.g.,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barpetiya</th>
<th>St. Coll</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bakā</td>
<td>bokā</td>
<td>clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calā</td>
<td>colā</td>
<td>shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>catāl</td>
<td>cotāl</td>
<td>courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gharā</td>
<td>ghora</td>
<td>horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kalā</td>
<td>kolā</td>
<td>lap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khapā</td>
<td>khopā</td>
<td>hair lock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mallā</td>
<td>mollā</td>
<td>muslim priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>macā</td>
<td>mocā</td>
<td>rub etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malā</td>
<td>molā</td>
<td>mixed up with hand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(e) In the dialect of Barpeta there is a predominance of high vowels as opposed to the mid-vowels of the standard colloquial e.g.,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barpetaiya</th>
<th>St. Coll.</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>āpunār</td>
<td>āponār</td>
<td>your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āpun</td>
<td>āpon</td>
<td>own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āmul</td>
<td>āmol</td>
<td>reign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cūn</td>
<td>com</td>
<td>a kind of tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indur</td>
<td>endur</td>
<td>rat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dum</td>
<td>dom</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>itu</td>
<td>ito</td>
<td>it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kāpur</td>
<td>kāpor</td>
<td>cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tumār</td>
<td>tomār</td>
<td>your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ultā</td>
<td>olotā</td>
<td>opposite etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(f) Barpetaiya prefers 'l' to 'n' or 'r' of standard colloquial e.g.,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barpetaiya</th>
<th>St. Language (Coll)</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lot</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>rupee note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lum</td>
<td>nom</td>
<td>hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lānglā</td>
<td>nūngalā</td>
<td>gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lāngtā</td>
<td>nāngath</td>
<td>naked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lurā</td>
<td>nurā</td>
<td>bundle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lumāl</td>
<td>rumāl</td>
<td>handkerchief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Considering the dialect spoken in different parts of the Barpeta region, it is undoubtedly maintaining the tendency towards denationalisation, though comparatively less than before where as standard colloquial is in favour of nationalisation e.g.,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barpetiya</th>
<th>St. Coll.</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lepani</td>
<td>repani</td>
<td>harping upon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>landabhandha</td>
<td>randabhand</td>
<td>disordered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linglingiyę</td>
<td>ringringiyę</td>
<td>pale and thin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lupit</td>
<td>rupit</td>
<td>law rice land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lomharśa</td>
<td>romharśa</td>
<td>horripilation etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barpetiya</th>
<th>St. Coll.</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nare</td>
<td>nowäre</td>
<td>can not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nājaṅg</td>
<td>nāyāo</td>
<td>will not go or do not go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>māikār</td>
<td>mākar</td>
<td>mother’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>māiran</td>
<td>māran</td>
<td>act of striking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gātā</td>
<td>gat</td>
<td>hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kākrā</td>
<td>kekorā</td>
<td>crab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baglā</td>
<td>bagali</td>
<td>hereon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pāthār</td>
<td>pathār</td>
<td>field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pāglā</td>
<td>pagalā</td>
<td>mad etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(h) Some echo words of Barpeta area which are separated partially and the first part of which carries a meaning while the second has hardly any meaning independently e.g.,

Barpetiya - carpetiya (people of Barpeta)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barpetiya</th>
<th>St. coll.</th>
<th>English equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cali-tali</td>
<td>(children)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elāg-silāg</td>
<td>(this and that)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āpā-cāpā</td>
<td>(boy etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āpī-cāpī</td>
<td>(girls etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>betā-cetā</td>
<td>(son etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bikār-cikār</td>
<td>(sickness)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kālā-cālā</td>
<td>(deaf etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kalā-malā</td>
<td>(black etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(i) In this region there is tendency of adding 'u' in the verbs of present and past tenses specially in the first person in place of which the standard colloquial favours 'o' e.g.,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barpetiya</th>
<th>St. coll.</th>
<th>English equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mai bhāt khālu</td>
<td>mai bhāt khālo</td>
<td>I have taken rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mai bhāt khāichilu</td>
<td>mai bhāt khāichilo</td>
<td>I had taken rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mai iskulak gelu</td>
<td>mai skulaloī galo</td>
<td>I go to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mai ār nāhu</td>
<td>mai ākou nāho</td>
<td>I do not come again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mai gelu</td>
<td>mai galo</td>
<td>I have gone e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etu mai kacchu</td>
<td>eito mai kāricho</td>
<td>I do this etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some old words of Barpeta region, a few of which collected from *Amār Desh* and elsewhere, are hardly seen employed in local dialect or noted in the Assamese dictionary. It is perhaps due to the development of educational tendency towards nationalisation of language. But in the realm of literature those words are of great value as the dialects are the vehicles of any language and literature. Some such words are enlisted herewith.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Words</th>
<th>Meaning in St. Coll.</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ephi</td>
<td>epheri</td>
<td>a few or a little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gilān</td>
<td>bor</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ther</td>
<td>hatar</td>
<td>suffixing words in possessive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ekāchi</td>
<td>ekadharanar</td>
<td>some type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dādā thet</td>
<td>dadāi deurtāt</td>
<td>in the place of uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ādrā</td>
<td>kāṣ</td>
<td>side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dak</td>
<td>raṅg</td>
<td>colour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theprā</td>
<td>āg-bhotā</td>
<td>flat or blunt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Words</th>
<th>Meaning in St. Coll.</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>diyak</td>
<td>dei</td>
<td>word of honour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>penkā</td>
<td>alapate kandā</td>
<td>easily carry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thepā</td>
<td>ladā</td>
<td>lump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phich</td>
<td>ponddh</td>
<td>that end of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>clothing lucked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>in waist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tālim</td>
<td>ākharā</td>
<td>rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puwan</td>
<td>ponā</td>
<td>young fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhuihmā</td>
<td>bhikācan</td>
<td>put an end of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phailethi</td>
<td>cepetā lathi</td>
<td>flat stick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhiye bhiye</td>
<td>bāre bāre</td>
<td>again and again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saidhādiyā</td>
<td>cipajari lagā</td>
<td>to take slip knot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hukār</td>
<td>sanmati janāī yowā</td>
<td>giving consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>makahu</td>
<td>sakat</td>
<td>fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mekā</td>
<td>gondha olowā or</td>
<td>getting soured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tehā howā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>majalu</td>
<td>elehūwā</td>
<td>idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhihur</td>
<td>dama</td>
<td>heap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cakhla</td>
<td>cāl</td>
<td>skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lakrā</td>
<td>korokā</td>
<td>shel of coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caklā</td>
<td>cakal</td>
<td>slice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhaṅglā</td>
<td>dāṅgar surungā</td>
<td>big hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Words</td>
<td>Meaning in St. Coll.</td>
<td>English Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cālkā</td>
<td>Pani kecuwā</td>
<td>Top young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāddhā</td>
<td>Ākankshā</td>
<td>Longing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghapke</td>
<td>Hathāt</td>
<td>Suddenly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bāita</td>
<td>Batiwā</td>
<td>Vomit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hura</td>
<td>Khinowā</td>
<td>Growing lean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thethlā</td>
<td>Thetelā</td>
<td>Bruised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dāur</td>
<td>Dour</td>
<td>Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagalat</td>
<td>Bhitarat</td>
<td>Among between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bepeāi</td>
<td>Byavasāya</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lālu</td>
<td>Giriek</td>
<td>Husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tāṅgkhu</td>
<td>Dhapāt</td>
<td>Mixed tabaco</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this connection Bloomfield may be quoted, "the origin and development of the standard language can be understood only in the light of local dialects. So, a nation's progress in literature mostly depends upon its regional dialects."

From the foregoing materials it becomes clear that the foundation of Assamese literature both oral and written specially, written prose literature were laid here in the Barpetā region. Secondly, Barpeta is the birth place of Kāmrūpī loka-gīt, holi-gīt, nāo-khelar-gīt etc. which lead us to travel in the vehicles of Assamese literature and culture that were built.

132. Bloomfield: Language, p. 343
at Barpeta.

Of course, it must be admitted that some traditional aspects of culture like  nāo- khelar-git, satrīyā- nā, literary style and standard etc. are gradually losing their strong hold that had been developed once under the influence of the Vaiṣṇava movement.