CHAPTER- III

SANSKRIT GRAMMAR

IN ASSAM :

ITS TRADITION
(1) INTRODUCTION:

It is difficult to say when the Sanskrit and Sanskrit studies reached Prāgjyotiṣa or Kāmarūpa i.e. the ancient Assam. The approximate date goes back to the Vedic age. It may be presumed safely that, like the other parts of India, Sanskrit was assiduously studied in its all branches in this region also, particularly in the areas of ancient Assam. Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland were parts of ancient Assam. After independence Arunachal Pradesh was under the direct administrative control of the Governor of Assam. These territories were given the status of separate states in the seventies.

The high-flown and well developed Sanskrit prose and verses in the Copper-plate inscriptions of seventh century by the kings of Prāgjyotiṣapūra prove that Sanskrit was in use for centuries together in Assam.

In early medieval period, works like the Kālikāpurāṇa (9th Century AD.) and others were composed here. Since that time many more works on Tantra, Jyotiṣa, Dharma śāstra and Grammar were written in Assam along with various commentaries on grammar, literature and Scriptures.

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The Kāmrūpa school of Dharmasāstra was enriched by the Kaumudīes of Mahāmahopādhyāya Pitāmbara Siddhānta Vāgīśa. The rulers of Kamatā kingdom followed by the koch-kingdom in the west Assam; Mahāmāṇikya and his descendants in the middle of Assam and the Āhom kings in upper Assam were all patrons of Sanskrit study.

In 14th century the Rāmāyana of Vālmiki was rendered into Assamese by Madendra Kaṇḍali, which is the first translation of Rāmāyana to regional language in North-India.

**TRADITIONAL CONTRIBUTION:**

The contribution to the Sanskrit grammatical literature by the Sanskrit Scholars of Assam though not huge in number has its significance. A brief survey is presented below:

**(A) PUNḍARIKĀKṢA VIDYĀŚĀGARA (1450-1500 A.D)**

Son of Śrikānta Paṇḍita, cousin brother of Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma; a native of Navadvipa. The following works are attributed to him. (1)

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**FN. (1)** - (A. L. Thakur, Jaor of Oriental Institute, Baroda XXV.3 and 4, PP. 256-67)
(i) **Vaktavya-Viveka**, commentary on *Kātantraparīśīṣṭa* of Śrīpatidatta.

(ii) **Kātantrapradīpa**, sub commentary on Dūrgā's commentary on *Kātanya-Vyākaraṇa*.

(iii) **Kātanya-Kaumudi** and some other works has also ascribed to Puṇḍarikākṣa.

(B) **ABHĪRAMA VIDYĀLAṀKĀRA** :

He belongs to the Gayāghara section of the Vandyaghatiya family. Author of the *Kaumudi*, a commentary on the Kārakapada of Goyicāndra's commentary on the *Saṃkṣiptasāra* (Kārakapāda) (FN1).

(C) **GOPĀLA CHAKRAVARTY (17TH CENTURY A.D.)**:

He belongs to the Vandyaghatiya family of Gayāghara and a disciple of Kavicandra. He wrote a *Sārārtha-dipikā* on the *Saṃkṣiptasāra* of Kramadīśvara.

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FN(1)  (Des. catalogue of skt. Mss. in Govt. collection under the care of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta).

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(D) PURUŚOTTAMA VIDYĀVĀGIṢĀ : (16TH CENTURY)

(i) In sixteenth century a new school of grammar came into being with the composition of a new Sanskrit grammar Pravoga Ratnamālā-Vyākarana by Mahāmahopādhyāya Puruṣottama Vidyāvāgiṣā practically replaced Pāṇini since its composition and is taught in most of the tols of Assam valley. Kalāpa and Mugdhabodha Vyākarana are taught in the Bengali speaking Barak Valley. The alphabet, given in this grammar, is in accordance with the system of Tantra. He completed this work in 1490 Śaka, corresponding to 1568 AD.

Besides Pravoga-ratnamālā Vyākarana, we get five other creations of Mahāmahopādhyāya Puruṣottama Vidyāvāgiṣā. They are as follows-

a) Śabdabheda-Prakāśa.

b) Uśmabheda.

c) Vakāra Nīrṇaya.
d) Ankurāvalī-Kośa, and

e) Hārāvalī.

(E) PT. ŚIBANĀTHA BUJARBARUAH : (1880-1964):

He composed a grammar named 'Laghu Ratnamālā'. He wrote one commentary 'Probodhini', on the 'Dāyakaumūḍī' of Pitāmbara Siddhāntavāgīśa. He also composed 'Āchāravijñāna', Hinduṇiṣṭi' etc.

(F) CHANDRAKĀNTA VIDYĀLAMKĀRA (1870):

He wrote three books on grammar

(i)  Śabda Maṇjūrī
t

(ii) Pada Maṇjūrī
t

(iii) Dhātu Maṇjūrī
t

He also composed 'Mandalādhyāya'.

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(G) NĀRĀYANA CHANDRA VIDYĀBHUSĀNA:

He composed a book on grammar, named, 'Āśubodha-Vyākaraṇa.'

(H) SAURIDATTA BHATTACHARYA:

He composed two books, one is Ratnamālā Vyākaraṇasya āśṭika and the other is 'Gitāyāh Tattvasārah.'

(I) MAHĀMAHOPĀDHYĀYA VEDĀNTA VĀGĪŚA BHATTACHARYA:

He was also famous by the name Vidyāvāgīśa Chakravarty. He composed a book on grammar named 'Bararuchi Vyākaraṇa' in 1687 Śaka, corresponding to 1765 AD.

(J) RĀMABHADRA SARVABHUŚĀNA BHATTACHARYA:

He composed a book on grammar, named 'Samāsāvivecanam', in which we get a critical study on samāsa in the light of Navyanyāya.
Dharma Das:

In 1670 Saka, corresponding to 1748 AD, Dharma Das composed the book 'Vidagdha Mukhamandana' which is a text with commentary on Sabda and its Sakti. In this book we get a vivid description about number, gender, compound and terminations etc.

Sri Gaṅgā Nath Deva Sarma:


The Name of the Author is Unknown:

'Dhatupatha' on Akhyata prakaraṇa is not a commentary. The writer of this book is still unknown to us.

Translation Works:

The translation from Sanskrit to Assamese and other regional languages during this period covers a wide range of literature from Nāṭakas to Kāvyas, from alaṅkāras to grammar. The number of
translated works, which are already published, will make a long list. However, in the field of grammar, mention may be made of recently published translation of the Paspasāhnika of the Mahābhāṣya by Golak Ch. Goswami. Late Jitendra Nath Bhattacharya, translated the Prayoga RatnamālāVyākaraṇa to Assamese and published by Hemkosh Prakasana in 1989. The Laghu Siddhānta Kaumudi of Varadarāja is translated to Assamese by Late Ramani kanta Devasarma and published by Rohini Prakasana, Guwahati, in 1998. Still, there are no Assamese translation of Siddhānta Kaumudi or of Āstādhyāyī etc.

(4) CONTRIBUTION OF UNIVERSITIES OF ASSAM:

Of the five Universities in the state including the Agriculture University, only two Universities have post graduate Sanskrit Department. The Assam University, a central sector University at Silchar, has introduced post- graduate Sanskrit course, a few years back.

The University of Gauhati, established in 1948, has fullfledged Sanskrit department with a strong stuff. There are three groups - A- Literature; B-Veda and C-Darsana. Though there is no Grammar group, the deptt. of Sanskri, Gauhati University, has organised
some seminars from time to time on grammar and the seminar papers are published. A few research scholars have been doing research for Ph.D Degree on grammar.

Prof. Apuba Chandra Barthakuria wrote a book on grammar “The Philosophy of Sanskrit Grammar (Kāraka)”, which has been published by Puthi-Ghar, Calcutta, in 1996. He has also composed a book named “India, in the age of Kasikāvṛtti”, which is recently published by Puthi-Ghar. His another book on Grammar is “The Prayoga Ratnamālā of Puruṣottama Vidyāvāgīśa : A Study. Dr. Srutidhara Chakravarty has completed her Ph.D work related to grammar—‘the impact of Sanskrit grammar on Sanskrit poetics’

(5) CONCLUSION:

Thus, Sanskrit literature has been blossoming in Assam with contribution made by both traditional and modern Sanskrit Scholars in post independence period.

It may be expected that in coming years there will be more developments in the field of Sanskrit grammar and other field of Sanskrit Literature.

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