CHAPTER VI

HITESWAR BOR BOHUAR'S MISCELLANEOUS LYRICS:

(1) Dhopā-Kali (Buds) : (Second Part) : (Lyrics)

(ii) Tifock Prabās : (Stay in Tifock) (Lyrics)

(iii) Santantar Hāmrāo : (The Lamentations of An Agrieved Person) : (An Elegy-Sequence in Assamese)
HITESHWAR BOR BORUOH'S MISCELLANEOUS LYRICS:

(1) **Dhopi-Kali** (Buds) (Second Part) *(Lyrics)*
(11) **Tifook Prabas** (Stay in Tifook) *(Lyrics)*
(111) **Santaptar Hamrāo** (The Lamentations of An Agrieved Person) *(An Elegy-Sequence in Assamese)*

(1) **Dhopi-Kali (Buds) (Second Part) (Lyrics)**

Having gone through the masterpieces of Hiteswar Bor Boruah in the domains of the Epics and the Sonneteering in Assamese, we propose to discuss in this Chapter his attempts at lyrics and an Elegy-Sequence in Assamese.

Bor Boruah's first venture in the field of Assamese poetry is his 'Dhopi-Kali', a collection of Sonnets and lyrics, which were composed round about 1899 and published in 1902. Though 1899 is stated to be the probable date of composition, all the fifty-one sonnets of the First Part and the Fourteen lyrics of the Second Part cannot be the products of one year. It is almost certain that Bor Boruah took to the poetic vocation when he was in his teens, and this observation of ours has been authenticated by remarks, both oral and written, made by the close-associates of the poet. Sri Uma Kanta Gohain, the eldest son-in-law of Bor Boruah, opines: "His (Bor Boruah's) first production was **Dhopi-Kali** written at the Tifook Tea garden when he was probably within his teens, serving as a clerk in that garden."¹

From our discussions with the other relatives of Bor Boruah, particularly with Sri Sachi Bor Boruah, the eldest son of Hiteswar Bor Boruah's elder brother - Dharmesvar Bor Boruah,

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¹ Uma Kanta Gohain's 'Brief Accounts about Late Hiteswar Bor Boruah's Life' (in manuscript) sp.6.
it transpires that Bor Boruah was too much absorbed in the study of the world’s classics as well as in writing sonnets and epics in an experimental way in Assamese; and this might probably be the cause why Bor Boruah did not appear at the Entrance Examination. Hiteswar Bor Boruah was only twenty-three years old in 1899 when his Dhopā-Kali was ready for publication. It becomes clear from our reading of his poem Tifook Prabās (The Stay in Tifook) how several major works such as Birahini Bilān Kāvya (1896-1912), Tirotār Ātmodān Kāvya, Kamatapur Dhyāna Kāvya (1903), - Mālita (a historical novel) - (1903) and his Sonnet-Sequence Mālac (1902-1912) were completed either in full or in parts round about 1902, the year in which Dhopā-Kali saw the light of the day. All these major works were, therefore, produced by the poet when he was quite a young man, and the process of writing sonnets and epics started, almost to a certainty, from his teens. It will not be a logical proposition to draw a line of demarcation between Dhopā-Kali and the other major poetical works mentioned above, as all of them belong chronologically to the same period of production.2

The Dhopā-Kali (Buds), a collection of sonnets and lyrics, contains two parts; the first part includes 51 (fifty-one) sonnets, and the Second part includes 14 (fourteen) lyrics. Almost all the sonnets of the Dhopā-Kali had been snatched away and re-arranged with some additions in Mālac, (1902), sonnet-poetry of Bor Boruah we have already "Some poems of this book discussed.

2. Dr. Mahendra Bora in his essay 'Dhopā-Kali and Birahini Bilān' published in the commemoration volume entitled 'Hiteswar Bor Boruah Saritimalay' in connection with the centenary celebration of Hiteswar Bor Boruah wants to prove by quoting a few lines from 'Tifook Prabās' that Dhopā-Kali is a much later production of Bor Boruah (p. 111), a contention which is not borne by facts. This also becomes clear from the Preface of the 'Mālac' written by Bor Boruah.
Of the fourteen lyrics six - 'Jīvan Nāo' (The Life Boat), 'Jevā, Mai Nējāo Tālai' (Go, I do not go there), 'Maru-bhumit Phul' (Flowers in the Desert), 'Maru-bhumit Maricīka' (The Mirage in the Desert), 'Santāp' (A) (Lamentation) and 'Santāp' (B) (Lamentation) constitute the conception of the romantic poet's vision of life and earth. Six others - 'Janambhūmir Sneh' (Love for the Motherland), 'Nuli' (The Cuckoo) 'Āmar Bhitarat Pek Dekhi' (Seeing Worms inside the Mango), 'Golāpat Kālī' (Thorns in the Rose), 'Eti Bacherekā Larār Mṛtyut' (On the Death of a One-Year Old Child), and 'Ausadh', (Medicine) are written in the light of the lyrics by the English Romantic poets like Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Byron. The rest two - 'Lakṣman Barian Kāvya' (On the Abandonment of Laksmana by Rāma) - Cante One and Cante Two - constitute the parts of a proposed longer epic, which is left incomplete.

Let us now delve deep into the romantic vision of Hiteswar Bor Boruah on earthly life through an analysis of the first six lyrics grouped together. In the heyday of the romantic regeneration in the Assamese literature through the channels of the

2. A. S. Bhuyan: Mālac : p. 3.
Jonak and Bijul Hiteswar Bor Boruah's romantic longings ushered themselves in lyrics. The impact of the romantic thoughts and ideas of the English poets like Walter Scott, William Wordsworth, P.B. Shelley, John Keats, Lord Byron and Charles Lamb is felt in and through these lyrics of Bor Boruah. The romantic poet looks on himself and the world around him with awe and wonder, and his interpretations on the mysteries of the life and nature and the world result into lyrical utterances. "In the earlier literature, spiritual salvation is an absolute condition to which the individual soul aspires and which he can achieve with finality; it is a state of being. In Romantic literature personal salvation is attained so long as the individual self continues to find a basis for affirmation; it is a state of constant becoming. There is for the Romantic thinker, unlike his predecessor in the Enlightenment, no such thing as an absolute goal or achievable perfection, but only the continual act of seeking, a process itself. . . . . . The paradox of imperfection, by which man believes that though he can never achieve perfection he must continually move toward it if he is to find self-realization, is an essential aspect of Romanticism. . . . . . In its positive forms Romanticism has accepted the human dilemma for what it is, paradoxically making man's imperfection the basis for continual act and affirmation; in its negative form it has left man without certitude. The principal manifestation of Romanticism in literature is to be found in those works concerned with the search for reality by means of the quest for self-identity or full self-expression."

This lucid explanation on Romanticism and the romantic approach help us in the study of the lyrics under investigation.

In 'Jivan-Nâo' (The Life-Boat), the first poem in the series, the poet gives an idea of his romantic quest which is eternal and mysterious. The human life is compared to a boat that sails endlessly in the sea of mystery through various waves of earthly turmoils. The human life is also like a desert blown by the waves of time. Inspite of earthly odds man's relentless quest continues, and in the extreme moments of despair he may take the spiritual support of God, Who is behind all the mysteries of the Universe. Man's quest should, therefore, be a patient and continuous process of 'becoming' by means of 'self-realization'.

So the poet sings:

"Pälar upari päl ghane ghane telā,
Batâhar dhâl cāi, lâhe lâhe balâ;
Ananta sâgar hî! 
Bulilâ taranî nâî
Lâhe lâhe nâokhani guridhari diyâ
Elâh bhâgar eri dâth kâri hiyâ il"

"Kâlar dhumuhâ bale jîvan-marut
Bijuli-camake bhay dekhâi cakut l
Covâchon, guriphâle
Dâvarei dhâri lalâ
Lâhe Lâhe nâokhani guridhari diyâ,
Elâh bhâgar eri, dâth kâri hiyâ il"
sea. Row the boat steadily, forsaking lethargy and strengthening your heart. The storms of time blow on the desert of life, and the flashes of lightning cause fears in eyes. Look towards the horizon and see how clouds have enveloped it. So row the boat steadily, forshaking lethargy and strengthening your heart.

In the lyric - 'Jovā, Mai Nājāb Tāloi' (Go, I do not go there) the poet is afraid of the worldly life:

"Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,  
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;  
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
And leaden-eyed despairs;  
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow."

The fear of the earthly life as shown by Keats is beautifully drawn by Bor Boruah in his own characteristic way in this poem. The endless thirst for the worldly pleasures can never be quenched. The earthly life is devoid of any laughter; it is full of cries. The flowers that bloom are without any real fragrance. The earthly flowers and the earthly situations excite fears in him:

"Cingile golāp tāt,  
Kāṭe bindhiba hāt  
Ketsē pārile sāpe dākib dehāt l  
Akālat jāba prān phular lagat lī  
Mānuhar prāṇ mor l  
Lāge bōr bhay l  
Jovā, mai nājāb tāloi lī"

5. John Keats : 'Ode to A Nightingale' : 3rd Stanza.
In 'Marubhūmit Phul' (Flowers in the Desert) the poet compares the human soul to an innocent flower endowed with heavenly virtues and the earthly life to a dry sandy desert. Being innocently born the human soul tries to grow in a beautiful form, but soon it withers away. The only garden that is the fit home for the innocent flower of the human soul is Heaven:

"Hāi!
Udyān tiyāg kari
Phulanī endhāre-bhari
Marur mājāt āji kiya phulā, phul ?
Pāhari nijar dharma
Karihā je ki akarmma

Nājāno, ki ichāmate ? ne ki māthē bhul ?
Yadi hay bhul tumī
Āhilāi marubhūmi
Kābau karicho tumī puru guchi jevā l
Jadiobā maru-māje
Tomāk sundar sāje,
Tathāpi alap tumī bhabisyat cova l"

(Why have you forsaken your garden in darkness and why have you been blooming in the desert? I do not know what will has led you to forget your own nature and to act unwisely. Or is it your error? —— If you have come to the desert through an error, I implore you to go back to your own place. Even if you appear to be beautiful amidst the desert, you should think something about your future.)
In the lyric 'Marubhumit Marícikā', (The Mirage in the Desert) the poet cautions his insensible mind not to run after the mirage like hopes in the desert of life. And he wants to have self-realization:

"Piyāh guchuvā thāi
Marícikā! tot nāi,
Tai mātho 'mahābhram' marur mājat l
Nirbodhar dare, hāi!
Kīmān bhūgim tot?
Nupajib nekī āru jnān hṛdayat?"

[Oh Mirage! you cannot quench the thirst. You constitute the great error in the midst of the desert (of life). Like a fool how long shall I suffer from you? Will there be no awakening of knowledge in (my) heart?]

In the twin lyrics 'Santāy' (A) and 'Santāy' (B) (Lamentations) the poet laments on the failure of his high poetic vocations in life. The poet's rosy dreams of life have been shattered and the poetic bud (Dhopā-Kali) withers away before its flowering and fruition. Through lamentations the poet accepts the will of the Destiny:

"Nau phulotei
Sarile kalītī!
Phulate marahi gal l
Bidhatar icchā
Novāri khandāb
Jīte haba lāge hal lī" ('Santāy' - A)
"Dagdha hrdayar jui āru nunumāi,
Nugucheje āru, hāi! cakulo cakur l
Janmāvadhi kandā dekho āru je nagale,
Hrdayar dukh mor, jātanā dorghor lī" ('Santap' - B)

('The bud has failed and withered before its flowering. The will of the Destiny cannot be checked. What is inevitable must come. The fire of the tortured heart will not be put out; tears of the eyes will not be swept away. The crying that has started since the beginning of my life will not cease; the pain and sufferings of my heart will continue.') A note/dejection and a philosophical self-realization pervades in and through all the six poems discussed above.

Of the other six lyrics - 'Janambhumir Sneh (Love for the Motherland) and 'Kuli' (The Cuckoo) may be called the Assamese versions of 'Breathes there the Man with Soul so dead' by Sir Walter Scott and 'To the Cuckoo' by William Wordsworth respectively. The idea behind the poem 'Āmar Bhitarat Pok Dekhi' (Seeing Worms inside the Mango) is taken from Sanskrit. The lyric - 'Golāpat Kāit' (Thorns in the Rose) is of a deeper romantic longing. The rose stands for hope or aspiration in life and thorns for earthly impediments that hamper the realisation of hope.

"Kāyetiya gache tai phulīli golāp!
Mukhar hāhire tai karīli pagalā!
Tor hepāhate mai, toke asā kari
Kāyetat phuṭī phuṭī halo jvalā kalā l"

(Rose! you bloom on a thorny plant. But you madden me with your laughter. While aspiring after you I get pierced with thorns)
The lines remind us of Shelley's immortal lines: "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!".

The short lyric entitled "Eti Bacherekīyā Larār Mṛtyut" (On the Death of a One-year Old Child) reminds us of the lyric - 'On An Infant Dying As Soon As Born' by Charles Lamb. The lyric, though of four lines, strikes the note of a deeper philosophy:

"Nau pāotei, hā! Sāmsārar dukh -
Nughurote Sāmsārar kutil o克拉, -
Gāiche mainākani, prān parihari, -
Ananta sāntire-bhārā Svaragā maṣāt"

(Before experiencing the worldly miseries and moving on the wheel of fire in the world the dear baby is gone back to heaven which is full of eternal peace.)

The poem 'Anadha' (Medicine) is of a lighter vein.

The 'Dhopā-Kali' (Second Part) contains two Cantos of an incomplete epic entitled 'Laksman Barjan' (The Abandonment of Laksman). In the first Canto the poet invokes the blessings of the Muse - Goddess Bīnāpanī to sing of the abandonment of Laksman by Sri Rāma Chandra. In the last stanza of the Canto the poet sings:

"Ahā, ṯene ahā hā! Karuna cakure
Kṛpā kari cōvā hā! ei adhamak
Baidhabya-juvālāt āji Urmilā Devīk
Kanduvāo mahāsōke, barji Laksamanak."

(Come, then, O Goddess! bless this fool with your kind eyes. I shall make Urmila weep in pain for having a widowed life at the abandonment of Laksmana.)

6. P.B. Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind'; 54th line.
In Canto Two there is a beautiful picture of the Indra's Court in Heaven. Amidst the celestial light heavenly music is going on. The fairies like Rambhā and Tilottamā are singing in the tune of the celestial music, while other fairies like Urbasi and Mśrakesi are dancing to the tune. But all grandeur of heavenly beauty, song and dance have failed to charm Indra who sits sorrow-striken in his court. The fairies at last stop their songs and dance. The wife asks Indra the cause of his melancholy. And then Indra reminds his wife of the painful tales of Rāmāyana.

"Jānā tumi, priyatamā ! tridaś īśvarī !
Ki kārāne gal Sītā pātāl purat
Kāndi kāndi dukhe soke hāi ! akālat
Kanduvaśi Ayodhyāk dārun sokat il"

(You are my beloved, and the Goddess of the Heaven. And you know why Sītā has gone to the nether region under the earth, weeping bitter tears and leaving Ayodhya in great sorrow.)

And at this point the kāvyā is left out incomplete. A critical approach to all the kāvyas of Bor Boruah did not complete the planned epic on the abandonment of Lakṣamana. Bor Boruah's mastery in the epic poetry is rooted deeply into his appreciation of the national history surcharged with a strong sense of patriotism. By attempting an epic on a religious theme from the Rāmāyana Bor Boruah seemed to have lost his real vocation, and so he ultimately left it incomplete. Moreover, the regular payar rhymes that were sought out to be the vehicle of
his epic thoughts failed to fulfil his poetic mission. This seems to be quite an early attempt on a religious epic which was perhaps abandoned in favour of historical epics to be written in blank verse. This unfinished epic of Bor Boruah reminds us of an unfinished epic poem 'Hyperion' by John Keats.

(ii) 'TIFOOK PHABÈS': This poem, appended to Dhopā-Kali is interesting in itself. The poem, containing fourteen stanzas in all, may be called a brief autobiography of Bor Boruah's poetic vocation. It tells us how the poet lost his freedom to devote himself to poetry when he came to Tifook as a servant. Prior to his Tifook-life the poet roamed freely in the garden of poesy and worshipped Goddess Bināpāni with the various garlands of poetry. And these garlands are:

'Tirotār ātmadān', 'Moinā', 'Mālītā'
Birah byākula dīnā 'Birahini' nārī,
'Dhanadā-kamal' nāt 'Dhyāsa Kamatār'
'Mālac' nāmere sei phulanir-bārf

It shows that Bor Boruah's early works are - Tirotār Ātmadān Kāvya, Moinā, Mālītā (a novel), Birahini Bilāp Kāvya, Dhanadā-Kamal Nāt, Kamatapur Dhyāsa Kāvya and Mālac (A Sonnet-Sequence); and these were completed round about 1902 when Dhopā-Kali was published.

The poet laments for the loss of that happy time which saw the creation of some of his valuable works. The poet feels that his stay in the Tifook Tea Garden and the nature of his service there are not at all congenial to his poetic vocation. The poet
also informs us that he even gave up his study for the sake of his mission in poetry, but his stay in Tifook stands on the way of fulfilling his mission. So in utter lamentation the poet sings:

"Sarile akāle tār 'ākāś-kusum'  
Manār kēmanā āl! nahal pūran!  
Si kārane kānde āji ei prabāsat  
Abhāgā Hītās dhari tomar cāran 1"  
(The dream of his life has been shattered untimely. Oh Goddess! his ambition has not been fulfilled. So Hite cries to-day in his stay for service, touching your feet.)

But it is equally interesting to note that inspite of the uncongenial Tea-Garden atmosphere and the boredom of the Tea-Garden service life poet Bor Boruah could weave several garlands of precious gems: Abhās kāvyā, Desdemona kāvyā, Aṅgilā kāvyā, Ruddha-Kṣetraṭ Īhōr Hāmaṇḍ and Camulo kāvyā, which were the later productions of Bor Boruah.

(iii) SAMTAPTAR HĀMRĀO : (Lamentations of the Agrieved one): as appended to 'Birahinī Bilāp kāvyā.' (An Elegy-Sequence in Assamese.)

It has been evident from our previous discussions on the life and works of Hiteswar Bor Boruah how a series of bereavements created turmoil in the life of the poet and how it acted as a shaping influence on his poetic vocation. Upto the time of the publication of his kāvyā - Birahinī Bilāp in 1913, Hiteswar Bor Boruah had the experience of 'saddest thoughts' due to as many as five bereavements in his own family. The process started with the death of Ratnā, the poet's younger sister
in 1903 and continued unabated through intervals up to 1912 when his beloved wife died, giving the poet the greatest of the blows. Between these two events occurred the death of the poet's dear brother - Sureswar in 1906, the death of his dear mother, and the tragic end of the poet's second son Jiten in 1910. On all these saddest and most unfortunate experiences the poet composed a series of elegies and wanted to publish them in a separate book entitled 'Santapter Hemāre' (The Lamentations of the Agrieved one). But being unable to do so he appended them to his Birahiṁ Bilāp Kāvyā.

The five elegies - 'Bhanīti' (Sister), 'Bhāti' (Younger brother), 'Ātā' (Mother), 'Prānar Jiten' (Dearest Jiten), and 'Priyatamā' (Beloved) may be called an 'elegy-sequence' that deals with the theme of death and its accompanying pathos, culminating in a philosophic vision of life.

In all literatures the elegy constitutes one of the very important branches of personal poetry. The elegy may be written on the death of a relative or a dear friend or a great personality. What was once purely personal in an elegy has been expanded to cover up deeper and more intricate problems of human life. "Often, too, the philosophic and speculative elements become predominant in it, sometimes even to the total sub-ordination of the purely personal interest; the poet, brooding upon his subject, being moved to meditations over questions immediately raised by it, or over the deepest problems of life and destiny; as in Shelley's 'Adonais' and Browning's 'La Saisias'".

Judged by this standard we come across many a beautiful elegy in English such as Milton’s ‘Lycidas’, Matthew Arnold’s ‘Rugby Chapel’ and ‘Thyrsis’, Tennyson’s ‘In Memoriam’ and Gray’s ‘Elegy in a Country Churchyard’.

We shall try to judge the elegies of Bor Beraiah in the light of the above remark.

The poet dedicates the collection of his elegies to those who have lost their dear and near ones in life.

In the elegy entitled ‘Bhanítí’ (Younger Sister) the poet expresses deep pathos at the untimely death of his dear younger sister Ratná in 1903. While recalling the pleasant associations with Ratná the poet questions her where she has gone. The poet then imagines the peculiar charms that seem to distinguish the Land of Death from the human earth. Diseases and sorrows of the earthly life are not there. Tears and cries of men have no sway in the Land of Death.

"Si désat radenéki phul musukái?
Sadá basanta tät, jér neki nái?
Kul kul kari nai
Tät ki dhíre bái?
Daká dhan, dhalánfr pání tät nái?
Párar phulání tät niniye utái?"

(Is it that the flower does not wither in that land? Is it that there is eternal spring and there is no winter? Is it that the river flows steadily without any furious waves and currents of overflowing floods. Is it that the garden of flowers on its bank is not eaten up there?)
That is a land of eternal peace and the God of Death has no devastating role there:

"Kālar karāl mūrti nāi si rājat
Napare ki hone tāt rogar-mukhat?
Si des sukhar thāi,
Sīra sānti tāt pāi,
Kāleki nicinge tāt dol maramar?
Kṛtante nahare tāt lāhari prānār?"
(Is there no fierce presence of Time in that land? Is it that none falls a prey to diseases there? Is it that eternal peace reigns in that kingdom? Is it that Time cannot sever the bond of affection there and the God of Death cannot snatch away the dear ones?)

The following lines express deep pathos of the poet's heart:

Kataje hepāh kari
Nasvar jīvan eri
Jāba khojo si rājat gaichā jalai -
Saṁsārar māyā-moh saṁsārate thai lī
Kintu āhā! sonkani!
Jānichā nijei tumī
Mānavaṁ arṭyu thāke kālar hātat l
Icchā arṭyu mānavaṁ nāi jagatat!
(I wish very much to go to that very land, where you have gone, by forsaking the perishable earthly life and its illusive desires. But O Dear! you know, man's death lies in the hands of Time and man cannot die at will.)
The elegy entitled 'Bhaiśī' (Younger Brother) came to be composed on the death of Sureswar, the poet’s younger brother in 1906. The poet’s lamentations and brotherly affections have an intense expression in the poem. In this elegy also the fact tries to arrive at a deep philosophical truth. The love and affections of the human heart that are wedded to the human soul are eternal and they cannot perish along with the human body. The poet tries to establish a bond of intimate relationship between souls through eternal love:

"Nahay nahay, son!
Bhai bhanītir prem
Dehā sate saṁsārat binās nahay 1
Saṁsārar bhālpovā
Ātmār lagat gathā
Ātmā sate thāke prem, atmā premāmay 11"

(0 Dear! affections and love among brothers and sisters do not perish with the perishable body on earth. The earthly love is wedded to the soul and it lives with the soul; and the soul is full of love.)

'Ātā' (Mother) is an elegy written on the death of the poet’s revered mother, whose loving care and untiring fortitude helped the poet immensely to overcome the chill penury of his early childhood. The poet’s very soul is shaken at the death of his mother. But he arrives at the conclusion that the earthly life is an illusion, and he appeals to his Mother’s Soul not to come back again to the earth:
"Enuvā sansār
Sansārar bhog
Sansār bheleki bājī l
Sansārar āśā
Ikaś kusum,
Phure bālighar sāji l
Jitoke pātibā
Sitei bhāgiba
Pukhuri Khanere khanā l
Bīsamoy sansār
Bīsamoy mūrti
Ugāre bihar kanā ll
Ene sansārat
Āru jen āi
Āhiba nālāge ghūri;
Jata din jim
Iyāke bhābim
Prabhur pāvat dhari l"

(The earth and earthly desires are like illusory magic. To fulfil the earthly hope amounts to building a casle of sand. Whatever you want will crumble down. The earth is full of poison, and the cells of poison pervade everywhere. So long I live I shall pray to God not to send you back to this earthly life.)

The most touchy and appealing of all the elegies in the sequence is 'Prānapar Jiten' (Dearest Jiten) written at the most unfortunate and tragic death of the poet's second son Jiten in 1910. The poet in an autobiographical note speaks of the tragic
end of his son:

"I kept at home a phial of quinine;
Jiten ate up some of the tablets accidentally;
and his life could not be protected at all costs."\(^8\)

This particular elegiac lyric has already had its due place in the history of Assamese literature. In the words of Pandit Dimbeswar Neog: "Indeed some of his lyrics as 'Prānār Jiten' (Jiten, dearer than life), an elegy on the death of his second son, are almost unparalleled in modern Assamese literature, but they are rather too long to be quoted."\(^9\) And this elegy may be called the most 'unparalleled' among the whole lot from the simplicity of expression and the spontaneity of pathos.

Bor Boruah quotes eight elegiac lines from Lord Byron at the head of the poem. And then he opens up the lyric woven in the simile of a garden with the following oft-quoted lines:

'Phulanir mor
Gaāp jupit
Dharili cāriti kali;
Cāriti eti
Kiya, ai Jiten!
Thitāte marahi gali?
... ... ...
Kiya dharichili
Golāpar kali!

\(^8\) Taken from an autobiographical note written in the poet's own hand-writing, and it is preserved by us.

Nāpāli phuliba dehi!
Akālate gali,
Dhopāte sukāli,
Thitāte parili khahi!"

(In the rose-plant of my garden four buds have appeared, and
0 Jiten! you are one of the four, And why have you withered
so suddenly? ... ... ... Why have you appeared,
0 Rose-Bud, if you could not bloom? Why have you perished
untimely in the bud and fallen down?)

The poet recalls the sweet words spoken by Jiten, his pure
laughters, his habits and his all pleasant associations. But
his dear Jiten has left this earth and freed himself from the
wheel of time, without any taste of bitter tears of human life.
And he, being the soul of Heaven, has gone to Heaven which is
the land of eternal peace. The following enchanting lines excite
deep pathos of the poet's heart and have universal appeal:

"Krili samsār
'Asāntir tāthā
Bhāle bhāle sonkāni!
Swargar jīva!
Pāli punu svarga,
Ananta sukhar khani il
Deba kanyā sabe
Nīte kolā laba
Atije sādar kari
'Subar belikā
Kāsat suaba,
Diṅgit sābaṭi dhari II
Kāndība khujile
Nicukāba tāt,
Āche Jagatar āi;
Bhokar belikā
Annadā khuvāba
Dukh konoṭite nāi!"

('O Dear, you have left this earth, full of troubles, quite safely. As a soul of the Heaven you have gone back to the Heaven, which is the abode of eternal peace. The daughters of the gods will always endear you, by taking you to their laps, and make you asleep in time lovingly. The Mother of the Heaven will console you if you want to cry, and Goddess Annadā will feed you if you feel hungry.)

But inspite of the other-worldly consolations the poet is subject to worldly limitations and human weaknesses. He wants to see his the image of his Jiten at least in dreams; and the following is a superb expression of the pathos:

"Svapnate ekolā
Lam sonkāni!
Svapnate ecumā khām!
Ekhantek jāno
'Sānta hai, Šon!
Bāpekā mākar prān!!"

(I shall take you to my lap, O Dear, in dream, and I shall kiss you once in dream, and it will pacify the troubles of your parents' hearts for a while.)
The pang-ridden poet thinks at times if Jiten was his enemy who, being born in the shape of a son, came to hurt him. But inimical thoughts, resulting from human weaknesses, soon subside and the eternity of love and affection comes to predominate. Towards the close the elegy turns into a devotional song interspersed with human emotions and thoughts. It may be called the spiritual regeneration of the poet:

"Jâno mâtho âmi
Jagatar pitâ!
Mûl sakalore tumi!
Srajetâ mârotâ
Dîtâ niêtâ
Pâlotâ sakalo prânfâ
Sakalore âdi,
Anâdi kâran,
Tomâr bibhûti bhava,
Tomâr aisvarya
Tinio trailekya
Tomâre sakalo jîva

[We only know that You (God) are the Father of the world, and You are the root of everything. You are the Creator and Destroyer, giver and Taker and Rearer of all creatures. You are the Beginning and the End of all creatures, and the Wealth of the three Worlds belongs to you.]

The last of the series - 'Priyatamâ' (Beloved Wife) is the most lyrical of all and it was written on the sad demise of the poet's beloved wife in May, 1912. We notice a mark of
difference between this and the other elegiac lyrics hitherto
discussed. In the other lyrics the poet seems to be conscious
of the human life and the human earth, but in this lyric his
very poetic soul seems to have crumbled down and his lyrftc
seems to have broken for ever. After quoting a few elegiac
lines from Alfred Lord Tennyson at the head of the elegy the
poet starts to sing:

Iru ki bājiba
Lāharī biṇāt
Prānār amīyā sur?
Bājiba khojote
Cīgīlī jē tār-
Iru ki lāgība jor?
...

Hāi!-
Jī amulya dhan
Herāl hātate
Hitēsē āru kī ābā?
Hitēsē prān
Hitēsar man
Āru kī āgār habā?
Ārunē Hitēsē
Hāhība mīcīkī
Prānār amīyā hāhī?
Bājibane dhīre
Āru Hitēsar
Prānāt madhur bānhī?
"
Will there be again the playing of the enchanting music of heart on the dear lyre? While the tune is about to be set, the string of the lyre is broken; and can it be rejoined again?

Ah! the invaluable treasure that has been lost from the hand will Hites regain again? Will the heart and mind of Hites take their former shapes again? Will Hites make again the former enchanting laughter of his heart? Will his pleasing lyre be harped on again steadily?

But the poet resolves not to shed tears as he retains the hope of his soul’s eternal union with that of his beloved wife. The string that has been severed in the earthly life will be eternally rejoined in the heavenly abode and an eternal symphony will be played on it. The poet links up the human play on the earth to the eternal play of the Heaven, and the human love, affection and desire can never perish:

“Bhagā bīṃākhāni
Punu jorā khāba
Uthiba madhur sur!
Prānar sangīt
Prānat mālība
Asānti karība dūr 1
- Michā kathā, Priye!
Mānavor 1īlā, -
(Ākānṣā tōmā r mor !)
Nahay niscay
- Samsarate ses, -
Napare iyāte or 1”
(The broken string of the lyre will be rejoined, and an enchanting tune will be produced. The music of the heart will mingle in the soul, forsaking all earthly troubles. O Beloved! it is wrong to say that the play of human life and the desires you and I cherish come to an end here in the earthly life.)

The poet concludes his elegy sequence with a devotional prayer. He quotes some famous lines of Alfred Lord Tennyson before the prayer starts.

The poet seeks God's forgiveness for his human ignorance that fails to make out the endless mystery of the Creator as well as for his human weakness, its foils and feibles, cries and tears. The poet submits himself to the will of God and concludes the poem with a note of divine optimism:

"Prabhu! mok kṣaṃ karā
Ajinān endhār harā
Antarat diyā jnān
Pabitra nirmal,
Mānāv janām mor
Nakara "biphal'ī""

(O Lord! forgive me, and remove the darkness of my ignorance, and give me pure wisdom so that my human life may not go in vain.)

Bor Boruah's spiritual achievement is more or less the same as has been with Lord Tennyson in and through his long philosophic poem - 'In Memoriam', which is not only one of the most frankly personal of elegies, but also a spiritual autobiography. The following comment made on Tennyson's 'In Memoriam'
is equally appropriate in case of the elegy-sequence of Bor Boruah that we have discussed in this Chapter:

"Sorrow in varying degrees of poignancy serves the poet as the inspiration of some of the loveliest pictures in 'In Memoriam'. Here is the mood of the mourner after the first sharp agonies have passed away, and calm resignation has stolen over his senses."

That Bor Boruah was under the impact of Tennyson's spiritual rebirth can be clearly testified by the quotations given from Tennyson's poetry.