CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE ASSAMESE KĀVYAS

Assamese kāvya has a long tradition beginning from Śaṅkaradeva's Rukminiḥarana kāvya, written as early as in the fifteenth century. Śaṅkaradeva did not maintain all the requisites of a kāvya, as prescribed by the Sanskrit Ālāṅkārīkās; and his sole purpose in the composition of a kāvya was to preach Vaiṣṇavism. To him the content, rather than the form, mattered much. Still, the Rukminiḥarana kāvya tells pleasantly the love and devotion of Rukmini to Kṛṣṇa and her final elopement with Him. The dominating sentiments in this kāvya are Vīra and Śṛngāra and the occasional appearance of Hasya is also worth-mentioning. The characters of the kāvya were modelled after Assamese men and women; the words he used and the atmosphere he created, were purely Assamese and hence the kāvya could well impress the Assamese readers. Following the example of Śaṅkaradeva, Madhabdeva wrote Rājasūya kāvya; Ananta Kandali wrote Kumarharanā and Mahirāvandadhā kāvyas, and Rāma Sarasvatī wrote a large number of kāvyas. Most of the Rāma Sarasvatī's
kāvyas are vadha kāvyas, i.e., they narrate the killing of a person (man or asura) who has no devotion to hari. Khaṭāsura vadha, Baaghāsura vadha, Kulāchala vadha, Jaṅghāsura vadha, Jaṭāsura vadha, Bhojakūṭa vadha and Kālakubja sūṣaka vadha are the heroic narratives in the kāvyas form, done by Ram Saraswatī from Mahābhārata sources. Vīra, Adbhuta and Raudra are the principal sentiments in these kāvyas and the presence of Hāsyā is also not too infrequent. These vadha-kāvyas were written in a simple technique and detailed descriptions of wars and adventures were presented therein. Laughter was occasionally incorporated. The kāvyas, therefore, became lively and inspiring. The grandeur of a religious experience ran throughout these kāvyas, as they chiefly propagated the ultimate success of a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Dr. B.K. Kakati has compared these vadha-kāvyas with mediaeval romances. But there were also kāvyas outside the circle of the typical vadha-kāvyas. Towards the concluding period of the Vaisnavite-renaissance three remarkable kāvyas, were written. They are: Mahāmoha kāvyā by Rāmānanda Dviṭa, Gāhāparī Upākhyān by Dvīja Rāma and Madhu-Malāti by an unknown poet. Mahāmoha kāvyā is an Assamese rendering of Kṛṣṇa Misra’s Sanskrit drama Prabodhacandrodaya, in verse. The influence of Sufistic thought on Madhu Malāti and Gāhāparī Upākhyān is easily discernible.
With the advent of Romanticism into the nineteenth century Assamese poetry, new forms and ideas sprang up in the domain of kāvya also. Bholanath Das and Rama Kanta Chowdhury pioneered in respect of the new form and spirit of Assamese kāvya poetry. They were followed by Padmanath Gohain Barua, Hitesvar Barbarua, Chandradhar Barua, Dandinath Kalita and others.

The word kāvya in Assamese denotes the same thing as Mahā kāvya (i.e., court epic) in Sanskrit and epic in English. In Sanskrit the term kāvya included all literary productions; but in Assamese, kāvya is a class of poetry by itself. The new Assamese kāvyas, written in the Romantic period, saw the happy blending of English and Sanskrit-ic approaches to epic poetry. While in selection of the plots and the distribution of cantos the kāvyas were nearer to Sanskrit Standards, in the use of metres and internal treatment the kāvyas followed the English ideal. A keen distinction, however, is not possible. Most of the kāvyas of this period are either heroic or lyrical. These kāvyas, with their abounding richness of style and narration climbed to the height of excellence. The lyrical introductions to the horrors of war, the ecstasy of love, the heroism of the characters built a starlit dome of uncommon beauty and grandeur.
The two dominating aspects of the Sanskrit kāvya, Candobaddhāta (Framing into metrical sequence) and Sargabaddhāta (Division into cantos) were welcomed by the Assamese kāvya poets too. Dandin in his Kāvyadarśa has prescribed certain prerequisites for a kāvya. According to him a kāvya should be in sargas and should begin with benediction or salutation before representation of facts. It should be based on historical facts or on some true facts and should incorporate ways of attaining the four fold goal of life. Dandin further suggests that a kāvya must have descriptions of the city, the sea, the hills, the seasons, the rising of the sun and the moon etc. A kāvya having all these qualities and the qualities of Rasa and Alāṅkāra in it lasts long. He advocates that a kāvya should be couched in desirable words producing beauty. The Assamese kāvya poets usually maintained most of the tenets prescribed by Dandin. Rama Kanta Chowdhury, Bholanath Das, Hitesvar Barbarua, Chandradhar Barua and Dandinath Kalita tried to follow most of the directives of the Sanskrit Alāṅkārikas. But in one aspect these poets failed, i.e., they could not maintain the five dramatic junctures as suggested by Viśvanātha in his Śāhitya-darpana. According to Viśvanātha the kāvya also should
maintain all the junctures (sandhis) of the drama (aṁśāni 5 sarvepi rasāḥ sarve nātakaśandhayah). But the Assamese kāvyā poets did not strictly follow this directive. It is interesting to note that even the English narrative poems of epic type of Wordsworth (Excursion, the Prelude), Shelley (the Revolt of Islam), Keats (Endymion), Tennyson (Idylls of the King) and Browning (The Ring and the Book) failed to maintain the constructional loveliness of the drama.

The delineation of Rasa in these kāvyas is worthy of attention. Vīra, Śṛṅgāra and Karuna rasas are the principal rasas of these Assamese kāvyas. In most of the kāvyas Vīra rasa is seen to be followed by Karuna and Śṛṅgāra. The great heroes are great lovers too; and the occasional flickerings of love, therefore, is undeniably necessary. In the Mahākāvyas (like the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyanā and the epics (like the Iliad and the Odyssey) the hand in hand running of Vīra and Karuṇa or the sentiments of heroism and pathos is very frequent. The scope of Vīra rasa in these kāvyas is wide and hence we find here the representation of the different types of Vīras. Thus we have the illustrious yuddha vīras like Abhimanyu and Mūlāgābharu and the dayāvīras like Dadhīcī. The Vīra
rasa of the battle field is often followed by 'Raudra' and 'Karuṇa' arising out of the death of a certain person. While the Sanskrit Ālamkāriks prescribed Śṛṅgāra or Vīra or Śanta as the principal rasa for the kāvyas, in some of the Assamese kāvyas like Kāmarūpa Jiyāri of Chandradhar Barua even Karuṇa was delineated as a principal rasa.

Ramakanta Chowdhury (1846-1889) was the pioneer of Assamese kāvyā poetry of the modern period. He wrote his Abhīmānīyāvadha kāvyā as back as in 1875. Ramakanta was the son of Lakhsmikanta Chowdhury of Kamrup. He completed his schooling at Gauhati and after passing the Entrance examination had joined the Deputy Commissioner’s office at Gauhati as an office assistant. Later he was transferred to Goalpara. He composed his kāvyā during his stay at Goalpara. One Priyalal Barua had encouraged Ramakanta in the composition of this kāvyā; it was he who had suggested some corrections in the manuscript copy of the book. Being a pioneer in the field Ramakanta had no model for his work and as such he had to work with less confidence in himself. In the prefatory note to his Abhimanyuvadha kāvyā the poet has said: “I am a novice poet (garlander) and like playing with dumb dolls I am writting this book of poetry with a desperate courage. I hope that you will excuse this dwarf’s
attempt at the moon and at your leisure hours you will have a reading of this book".

But Ramakanta's book was a success. It was for the fact that he had selected a very popular epic theme for his kāvya. The heroic deeds of Abhimanuyu and his death at the hands of the cruel Saptarathis (The Seven heroes) of Kaurava's side evoke sympathy and admiration. The heroic deeds of this adolescent hero as well as his love for Uttara are things of great appeal. The poet Ramakanta has well utilised this epic material in his kāvya. The kāvya begins with Bhīṣma's death and the 1st part of the kāvya ends with Abhimanyu's departure for the war leaving Uttara with consolation. We could trace only the first part of this kāvya in the personal library of Prof. Atul Chandra Hazarika. Regarding the second part of the work, nothing can be told with authority. Perhaps the second part of the work too came through the press. The first part of the work finishes with Abhimanyu's departure for the war with the great Kauravas. The book upto this event is divided into three sargas or cantos. In conformity with the Sanskrit tradition the poet has named the Sargas with individual names. Thus the first canto goes by the name of Abhiśāpa Sarga (which literally
means the canto of curses) wherein there is the description of Gaṅgā's curse for Arjuna to loose his dear son (in the same way as she lost her dear son Bhīṣma in the Kurukṣetra war). The second canto is named Balabhāra Sarga (The canto of impulsion) wherein the Kauravas have made a new arrangement for the Kurukṣetra war under the commanderyship of the illustrious Dronācāryya with new inspiration and hope. The third canto is termed Milan Sarga (The canto of Union) and here the blissful union of the happy lovers Uttara and Abhimanyu is narrated with grace and dignity. The poet within his limited compass has narrated the events of the Mahābhārata in a pleasing manner for a more vivid delineation of the characters immediately concerned with his own theme.

Ramakanta Chowdhury was largely inspired by the Bengali poet Michael Madhusudan Dutta in the construction of his Abhimanyu vadha kavya. Madhusudan Dutta who was a contemporary poet of Ramakanta earned an unique distinction for his Meghnāda vadha kavya. Meghnada's heroic deeds and his ultimate death at the hands of Lakshmana were narrated by Michael Madhusudan with a newer approach and to a newer perspective, Michael Madhusudan employed blank-verse as means of communication in his kavya. Ramakanta
Chowdhury too arranged his kavya in the blank-verse form which goes by the popular name amitrāksarī chanda. The poet could aptly utilise this new metrical pattern and it became an ideal metre for the future workers in the field.

Ramakanta followed a pure Assamese diction. His descriptions are clear and forceful and at the same time they are full of grace and imagination. We quote here a few lines to illustrate the poet's power of description. Abhimanyu had left for the war leaving behind his wife in Hastinapura to suffer the pangs of separation.

Hastinā nagare Satī Abhimanyu priyā
Kānta avihane halā malin śrikānti
Yeī galā Abhimanyu samar sāgare
Eri sīto malinīk hiyā darpanat
Hari teōr manomay murti lalit
Ksane murschā halā ksane kāndilek satī
11 Uvari hai pātīt. ***

The absence of Abhimanyu had aroused an irresistible pain in the heart of Uttarā, much similar to the pains of Pramīlā in the absence of Meghnāda in Michael Madhusudan's kavya.
The pure Assamese dietician has made his kavya very much interesting. The expressions like :

(a) vipad gaṅgho (p 24)
(b) sōk hutāpana sōk karaya dahan (p 29)
(c) andhalār latī ( p 29)
(d) dat bhagā sāp yen (p 72)

are homely and entertaining. Ramakanta has aptly used a big number of epic allusions in his kāvyā. The allusion to Lakshmana and Meghanāda (p 25), Krsna (p 72, 85) and Sītā (p 107) has added grace and majesty to his kāvyā. The kāvyā has run on some curse motifs. Two major curses of Durvāsā and Ganga control the chief theme of the kāvyā.

Chandra and Bohini, the celestial lovers were cursed by Durvāsā to go down to earth and hence they came to earth in the shape of Abhimanyu and Uttara. Abhimanyu was destined to die and return to heaven in the shape of the Moon-God. This is an interesting curse-myth on the Moon-God. Astronomically the moon changes on the sixteenth day and Abhimanyu's retirement from earth to heaven on the sixteenth year has great significance in this respect. The other curse is, as narrated earlier, on Arjuna by Ganga, mother of Bhīma, the celebrated hero of the Kurukṣetra war.
Bholanath Das (1858-1929), a contemporary of Ramakanta Chowdhury, joined the kavya movement with his Sita-harana kavya. Sita harana is built on the Ramayanic theme of Ravan’s abduction of Sita from the Dandaka forest. This kavya is built in seven cantos. The story of the kavya starts with the Surpanakha’s visit to Sita in Dandakaranya and ends with Ravan’s abduction of Sita from her forest cottage in the absence of Ramchandra and Lakshmana. The kavya ends with a tragic atmosphere of Sita’s bewailing requests to the birds, beasts and trees to inform Sitakanta that his dear Sita is abducted by Ravana.

The poet has given a faithful representation of the Ramayanic story. Only in the sixth canto the poet has shown some innovations in the form of the Gods’ apprehensions on the possibility of Ravana’s further torture on the denizens of heaven. Bholanath’s portrayal of characters is bright and interesting. He could often portray the inner personality of the characters. He knew well the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the characters he depicted. The first reaction of Indra to the news of Sita’s abduction by Ravan is interesting. This led Indra to fear
that if Rāvana proceeded on abducting the pious women like Sītā, some day, he might abduct Indra’s dear wife Sachi also. Mārica’s conflict of ideal is also very effectively delineated. Though Mārica proved to be one of the principal participators in Rāvana’s heinous crimes, yet, at heart Mārica was a good man. He first tried to dissuade Rāvana from his criminal attempts but finally he himself had to approve of Rāvana’s misdeeds. He was a great patriot too, as we gather from his farewell message to mother Lankā, while flying over the city with Rāvana in his golden chariot.

Bholanath’s descriptions are often lovely and picturesque. But in his attempt to follow Michael Madhusudan’s poetic genius, Bholanath sometimes took recourse to studied artificiality. In such artificial attempts of description Bholanath shaped a confused diction of mixed language. The general beauty and majesty of the kāvyā are often destroyed by his artificial diction. The expressions like, ‘कहरि नकी लाखेस्बहागिनी’, ‘क्षणिता बसाने घना बोधि कहिले’, ‘तकली कहिले कोंगो रसाल राखिर नार नायि रे’; containing a juxtaposition of typically Assamese homely words to Sanskrit words make his descriptions less attractive, dull and prosaic. Closely following
Michael Madhusudan, Bholanath has used a large number of Sanskrit words which in fact has lessened the ease and grace of the kavya. The obsolete Sanskrit words (like āsrap, agir, rātimat, kilalap to indicate a ḍaṇḍa) have often been used by the poet so as to demonstrate his command over the Sanskrit vocabulary but to serve no poetic purpose. In the metrical scheme of his work, Bholanath had handled successfully the amṛtākṣari ḍhanda like his guru Madhusudan Datta. Upama, Yamaka, Anuprāsa, Atisāyokti and Ṛpaka are his popular rhetorical devices. Bholanath used epic allusions too in his 

Sītā haran kavya. We quote below a few lines from his kavya containing a description of the evening to illustrate the poet’s gift of description and power of rhetorical ornamentation.

Sūryapraṇa Sātī,
Sūryyasukhi, patimukh rahilā eahiye
Śūtale vimarsamane, sapatni malini
Nailā malini dhani sarasi salile.
Lamphe jamphe kridaman vatsagan saba
gabhīdal dhīre dhīre gaja abhisukhe,
Calilā udāyā dhūlī. Dekhiya cādhūli
Urila vihaṅgakul ni j ni j niđe
Puri kalarabe dis. Saśāṅka āsiyā
Sobhilā ambaratale, kāmini kapāle
Sobhay tilak yathā. Saśāṅka vāsana
Suhāsini kumudini hasilā haraše.

But Bholanath could not earn a high popularity from his contemporary readers. Āśām Vilāsini a contemporary magazine, for instance, was extra-critical of the Sitaharana kāvyā. Gradually the readers and the critics could see the merit of his work and he was accepted as a pioneering poet with talent and tradition. Sitaharana has now earned the distinction of becoming a text-book for the post-graduate studies in Assamese at Gauhati and Dibrugarh Universities.

III. PADMANATH GOHAIN BARUA

In the last decade of the nineteenth century Padmanath Gohain Barua made a bold experiment in the domain of modern kāvyā with his Līlā (1898). It is a kāvyā in twenty-five sargas (cantos) and the theme of the kāvyā is drawn from the poet's personal life. The poet himself is the narrator of the kāvyā—he tells his joys and sorrows at
the gain and subsequent loss of his beloved wife Līlā. The poet declares the kavya to be a poetic picture of a family life; and really it is so. Judging from the viewpoint of Sanskrit poetics, this kavya may be regarded as a Khandā-kavya. The Khandā-kavya is also something like a Mahā-kavya but it lacks certain qualities of the Mahā-kavya. The Meghanadāta of Kalidāsa is also a Khandā-kavya dealing with the personal grief of a yaksā at the separation from his wife. The very theme of the story in the Meghanadāta deprives itself of its claims to a Mahā-kavya. Its plot has no relation with the Purāṇas or Itiḥāsas. It is completely a personal affair of a yaksā. Likewise, in Līlā too, the theme is personal; it grows out of a personal grief. Moreover, in Līlā the poet and the hero are identical. The poet appears personally in the kavya. The poet has narrated in a pleasant manner the pleasant company of his newly wedded bride Līlā on his journey to the Naga hills. The journey was full of thrills and adventures. The descriptions of the natural beauties are entertaining and lovely. The kavya is interspersed with pictures of conjugal bliss and domestic happiness. The concluding sargas are pathetic because of Līlā’s untimely death after a brief illness. The delineation of
Karuna rasa in the last sarga is masterly. Following Ramakanta and Bholanath, Gohain Barua also constructed his kavya in amitraksari chanda. His metrical craftsmanship seemed to be more accurate and free from artificiality. Padmanath did not like to adorn his kavya with rhetorical ornamentation. We do not find the abundance of artful rhetorical constructions in the Lila kavya. The poet preferred a non-artificial, non-ornamented style. Though the Alamkara school of Sanskrit poetics maintained strictly the necessity of alamkaras in kavya, the Dhvani and other schools did not maintain alamkaras to be indispensable. Specially, "in the dhvani theory alamkaras do not generally occupy a very honourable position. The alamkara's are adored and appreciated only when they are depicted with the intention of suggesting rasa and bhava, etc. Cf.

rasabhavādītparyamāsritya vinivesanam /
alamkṛtīṁ sarvāsāmalamkāratvasādhanam //
(Dhv.II. P. 197)

The poet must not indulge in depicting an alamkāra for alamkāras sake. There should not be any special effort for depicting an alamkāra. Alamkāra's occur automatically
in the composition of the poet infused with sentiment. 
(cf. Dhv. II. 16). Hence, if any alāṁkāra is found to 
be detrimental to the depiction of rasa then it should 
be condemned. Hence, yamaka is to be totally discarded 
in case of śrūgāra rasa. (Dhv. II. 16).

Excess of the employment of the figures of speech 
particularly the figures of sound (Sabdālaṁkāras) was a 
sign of decadence of the late (Sanskrit) kāvyas beginning 
from Bhāravi's Kirātārjunāyan which developed an incorri-
gible mannerism. A kāvyā, rich in sentiment, does not indeed 
require to be rich in figures. That is why Nāmata in his 
Kavyaprakāśa says in the definition of kāvyā that it may 
sometimes (i.e., when rich in sentiment) occur without any 
figure at all. Applying this principle we may very happily 
justify the absence of figures in Līlā which is so rich in 
sentiments. The poet's clear perspicuous narrations (presen-
ting bibhāvas and anubhāvas) very admirably lead to the 
realisation of the sentiments. The absence of figures in 
Līlā is rather a mark of sincerity and the absence of artifi-
ciality leads the readers to an intimate sharing of the 
poet's feelings. It is, however, true that due to the 
absence of a rich rhetorical craftsmanship Padmanath Gehain 
Barua's Līlā kāvyā does not achieve the grandeur of the
kāvyas of Chandradhar Barua or Hitesvar Barbarua. This lack of grandeur, while maintaining a superb sentimental appeal may allow us to put Īliā on a par with Asvaghosa's Buddha Carita or Saundarananda.

IV. HITESVAR BAMBHARUA

The most conspicuous writer of Assamese kāvyas is Hitesvar Barbarua. He belonged to a family of Ahom nobles and possessed a strong sense of history. It is Hitesvar who for the first time selected materials from Assam's history as themes for the kāvyas. He wrote not less than three historical kāvyas of distinction. They are:

1. Yuddhaṇāstrat Ahom Ramani (An Ahom woman in the battle-field, 1915; abbreviated here as YKAR)
2. Tirutār Aṭmādān Kāvya (The Epic of a woman's self-sacrifice, 1913; abbreviated here as TAD)
3. Kamatāpur Dhvāmaṇa Kāvya (The epic of the destruction of Kamatāpur, 1912; abbreviated here as KFD).

All these three kāvyas bear the unfailing stamp of genius of the poet. Both in form and content these kāvyas exhibit
a super excellence of the poet.

YKAR deals with the romantic story of the heroic deeds of an Ahom lady Mūlāgābharu. She was the wife of Chāo Frāchēng Moong Bargohāin (early sixteenth century), a noble general of the then Ahom King. Chāo Frāchēng lost his life in the battlefield in the hands of the invading Mughals. Mūlāgābharu ran "to the battle field to revenge the death of her beloved husband and to defend freedom of her country. She fought bravely in the battlefield near Duimuniśilā and killed with her own hand two Muḥammadan commanders Bangāl and Towji, together with a large number of common soldiers. Although, however, in a subsequent engagement she was slain by the Muḥammadans, the latter could not be victorious. Subsequently, the Ahoms under the command of Kancheng Barpātragohāin defeated the Muḥammadans near the Bharalu river. Sir Edward Gait says that", a number of elephants and horses on the Mūssalman side got bogged in a morass and their line of battle was thus thrown into confusion. Turbak tried to save the day by leading a cavalry charge in person, but in vain. Kancheng Barpātragohāin severed his head with his own sword, though there are conflict of opinions as to the manner of his death. The death
of Turbak, however, turned the tide of the battle and threw the Muhammadan soldiers into disorder; and the Ahoms followed hard on them, as far as the Karatoya river where (as the history says) Kancheng Baratragobain had a temple erected and a tank excavated as a sign of victory in this battle and also to commemorate the name of that illustrious lady. It may be that the course of time had thrown this tank and the temple into oblivion, which is the common lot of many things on earth but the memory of the heroic deeds of Mulagabharu, which she displayed for the sake of her country and at the cost of her own life, is yet fresh in the minds of all Assamese, and it, surely feels no erasure."

The historicity of the Mulagabharu episode, therefore, is beyond doubt. Poet Hitesvar has described this heroic lady in his Year with sincerity and grace. In his narrations the historicity of the Assam-Mughal relations in general and of the heroic deeds of Mulagabharu in particular is not maintained with strict mathematical accuracy, but some easy deviations from the original are made. The poet in his prefatory note to the Year admits of the deviations, "Although the subject of this poem is purely a historical fact, slight deviations have been made at some
points in order that it may suit the convenience of the author, who, on his part prays that the generous readers will excuse him for such deviations”.

But these much needed deviations have not killed the beauty of the kāvya, rather these deviations have added grace to it. The writer of a historical kāvya has a twofold loyalty; firstly, he should be loyal to his art, then to history. If he tries to present a cent percent loyal picture of history, then art is castigated and if he pays his devoted attention to art alone, history is sure to suffer. Naturally, therefore, the poet of a historical kāvya is to follow the golden path of compromise between history and art. And really, in the YEAR we find the happy blending of history and poetic art.

Milāgabharu is the heroine of this kāvya. The other principal characters are Chāo Prāchhe Nāmoī Bargohāin, Turbak the Massalmañ commander, Tovji and Bangāl the two Muslim generals; Chuklen, Chureng, Chukreng, Chuteēg, Kancheng Barpatra Gohāin and Mahilā. There is no hero but the heroine dominates the kāvya all throughout. Milā loved her country as well as her husband very dearly. So, at the news of the death of her husband, the heroic being in her
woke up and she vowed to go to war to revenge the death of her husband and at the same time to free the country from the clutch of the Muslim invaders. Mula had immense faith on herself. While preparing herself for the war she remarked:

We have no fear, 
We are Ahom ladies, 
We are the mothers of heroes 
We are the daughters of heroes 
We are the beloveds of the heroes.

These heroic utterances and her bold determination to go to war give Mula a fine resemblance with Pramila of Chandradhar Barua's drama Meghnadavadha. Pramila was the wife of Meghnada and she was too eager to see her husband in the battlefield. She was ready to enter the war-field which was not an easy affair as the main entrance to the war-field was surrounded by Kama's soldiers. When her friend Basanti tried to dissuade her by pointing out the possible difficulties, Pramila replied that she had no fear.
Boldly she declared:

When the river comes out to join the sea,
Has anybody any power to obstruct it?
I am the daughter of a Darava,
And the daughter-in-law of a Bakya.
The heroic blood runs throughout my body,
Am I afraid of that Rama
Who is none else but a beggar.

Surely the braveness of these two ladies (Pranîla and Mūlā) match nicely. With undaunted courage and determination Mūlā fought with the invading Mughals but could no longer resist the mighty attack.

Kintu hay ḍande prān. Valile dhumuhā
akalāriyā gache pāre kata veli
24 vāḍhāḍiba gati tār?
= Alas! our hearts weep.
When the storm blows
How long can the lone tree
Resist its force?

Mūlā was slain. But her ideals boldly inspired the Ahom soldiers and the generals to fight more courageously. They fought again and won.
Apart from the theme, the kāvyā has distinctive merit in diction and treatment. In the choice of words the poet exhibits an unique excellence. The words are so full of expressive power that as soon as the words are heard our hearts catch a vivid glimpse of the narrated scenes and objects. We quote the following illustrations from YKAR which bespeak of the poet's mastery over words.

(1) Danujadalani Durga Bhīmā Mūrtidhāri (p 64)
(II) Tarukālimi thakā mādhavī latāi (p 5)
(iii) Cātakinī cātak vihane (p 20)
(iv) Kālarūpi sarpatumi kālajihvā sate
    Dāmsilā Mūlāk hai bātari viṣere. (p 28)
(v) Phulāpāhi utuval dhalani pānit (p 91)
(vi) Milāo paṇinī pratihīmsā parāyanā Kalbhujāṅgini
    (p 98)

The above quoted words gain their strength of communication much more for the poet's artful arrangement in a metaphoric and alliterative manner. But his greatest achievement in the art of diction lies in his successful handling of the tadbhava and tatsama words in abundance. He had a keen fascination for the words of Sanskrit origin. In his prefatory notes to the YKAR the poet has remarked: "Most
writers of present age hold that the use of the simplest words of our language is of universal accept-
tance. The author so holds the same view, but in some cases, especially in writing poems in epic form and
having regard also to the nature of the plots, neglect of such a strict observance of the rule becomes necessary.
Moreover, in the opinion of the author, our mother language will get poorer in time if we leave out of use, in places,
where it seems fit to use the words of Sanskrit derivation. Under the impression the author has used in this present work of his, some such words of Sanskrit origin, however he is not quite confident as to how far this view is correct. We are convinced of the author's arguments for the use of the tadbhava and tataśma words and at the same time we are delighted to find his expert handling of such words throughout the kavya. Padmini, Durgam, Bhimarūpī, Nrmanḍamalini, Ardhaṅgini, Udyānar taru, Samar prāṅgan, Grāsa, Danujadalani, Kālajihva, Prāktan, Saumitri, Rakṣakula kula Lakṣmī, Svāmīgata praṇā, Kṣudra mrgaśīṣu are some of the examples of his frequently used words of Sanskrit origin. These forceful Sanskrit words heighten the effect of Ojah-guna inherently belonging to the contextual heroic sentiment (Vīra rasa).
Hitesvar Barbarua's rhetories are lovely and done in the ideal of classical Sanskrit kāvyas. He makes less use of puns, but he is rich in similes and metaphors and occasional allusions. Turbak at the eve of his going to the battle says.

Vināśīṁ śatrusenaḥ yuddha prāgānāt
vilat padum van bhāṅge yenaśāv
madamatta karivar (p 18)

= I will destroy the enemy soldiers
In the war-front,
Like a strong elephant
Crushing the lotus plants
in the pond.

Some other specimens of his artful rhetorics are given below:

(a) Ki rāhurūpe āji
Karile akāle grās svādhīnatā veli, p 8
(Stock simile)

(b) Kintu tirījati
gachak āliāgi thakā mādhavīr dare
yadi lare gachajupi kape akasmāte, p 8
(Stock simile)
Hitesvar Barbarua had made active attempt to bestow epic grandeur and to create an epic atmosphere in his kavya. Apart from the allusions, he uses ancient legends and episodes to enhance the majesty of his kavya. The following are the allusive, episodic, historical and legendary references commonly met with in KAYA.

(i) Uttara Abhimanyu, pp 26-36, pp 9-10
(ii) Arjun—Subhadra, p 16, pp 32-33
(iii) Madan—Rati, p 16
(iv) Chāmundā, p 17
(v) Pramīlā, p 22, pp 32-33
(vi) Valmiki, p 37; Kālidāsa, p 96
(vii) Homer (his legendary blindness) p 96
(viii) Bodōciā (of British history) p 26
(ix) Joan D, Arc, p 97
(x) Trojān War, pp. 98-99
The non-Indian references show the catholicity of the spirit of the poet. YEAR bears certain strong resemblances with Michael Madhusudan's Meghnād vadha kāvyā. The news of the Chāo's death in the beginning of the kāvyā can be compared to the similar news of Birabāhu's death. Birabāhu's death-news aroused the heroic being in Meghnād and Chāo's death news shooked the whole soul of Mūlāgabhāru. Chāo's death in the hands of the armed soldiers stands comparison to the death of Meghnād in nikumbhilā yajnaśālā. Meghnād as well as Chāo were killed in unprepared moments. Meghnād was killed while in worship and Chāo while in bath.

Judged from the viewpoint of the technique of a kāvyā, YEAR has a short-coming; it contains only seven sargas while the minimum prescription is eight. The traditional Bāgdevī Bandana is there; he invokes Bhāratī to chant the glories of heroic adventures (Vīra Kīrti yasa). The poet makes an eulogy of Devī Kalpanā (the Goddess of Imagination) and requests her to help him. The flight of imagination of a poet in the Romantic age was too high. So, the eulogy of a goddess of Imagination is befitting to the atmosphere of a kāvyā. Happy are the casual reflections made by Hitesvar on the different objects and
aspects of life and earth. These reflections testify to the poet's wisdom about man and life around him. We present here a sample-illustration of his nice observations from YKAR.

I. ON WOMAN

Yadio tirutā sacā jīvansāmāgini
nityapriya sahacāri, sarvatre sahāy
nohe kintu samarat, tapasyā, dhyānat. (p22)

= Though a woman is a life's company, an everloving attendant, a helpmate everywhere yet, she is not so in war, penance and meditation.

II. ON DESTINY

(a) Kār sādhyā khande sakhi vidhatār likhā ṭ(23)

= Friend, who can outdo the writings of the Lord?

(b) Kırmaphal jagatāt novāre khaṇḍāb /

Suikh dukh dātā kono nāi mānavar /// (p29)

= Nobody can avoid the results of his own action; there is none who could dole out happiness and sorrows of man.
III. ON LIFE

Visvabhāonat, bhāorīyā āmi mātho
āhichō, gaicho, hāhichō vā ketiyābā
Kāndichō punar. (p 30)

= We are simply the actors, in this great drama
of the universe. Coming and going, laughing
and weeping we are playing our roles.

IV. ON DEATH

Mrtyu mānāvar cira priya sahacar
Vandhu priyatam. (p 57)

= Death is man's close associate and a dear friend.

V. ON LOVE

Novāro muchiba cabi pratham premar
Hṛdaya pātar parā tiri jīvanat.

= I cannot erase the picture of my first love
from my heart, I am a woman.

VI. ON LIBERTY

Svadesār Svādhiṇatā tār arthe yīte
Jīvan utsargā kari mare samarat
Mrtyu tār hai śānti, mahānidrā tār
Ananta viśrām mātho jananī kolāt. (p 62)
= One who dies in the battlefield, fighting hard to uphold the liberty of the country, for him Death itself becomes peace, a pleasant sleep on the lap of the mother. (These lines might have had a suggestion for the poet's countrymen too, because Assam by that time was under the foreign yoke of the Britishers.

VII. ON OPIUM

Yi Asamvāṣi (ki lājar kathā)
prakhyāt kāniyā naṁe, ghṛnaniyā jāti
Alas, vīratvahīn, udyamvihīn. (p 79)
= Lo, what shame it is!
The Assamese pass by the name 'OPIUM EATERS'
They are a hateful people,
Idle, devoid of courage and inspiration.

By the time of Hitesvar Barbarua, opium had become a great menace for the country and a conscious poet like Barbarua could not but pinpoint the attention of the people to their own follies.

VIII. ON THE VAGUENESS OF LIFE AND ON FAME

Asāṛ svapnar dare ṛpani jālat
Anitya sakalo āṁi, anitya martyat,
Sakalo anitya kintu anityare māje
Āche eti nitya sakhi, siti kirti yasa. (p 104)

= Like a vague dream in a sleep
We all are all unreal and subject to decay in this
wide world. But amidst the decay
and destruction, there is one thing
permanent, which lasts for ever
and that is fame, my friend!

This observation of Barbarua on fame reminds us of the
similar teaching of the Mahābhārata:

Sa jīvati guṇah yasya, kīrtiryasya sa jīvati /
Gunādharmavihīno yaḥ nisphalam tasya jīvatam //

The principal sentiment in YKAR is the heroic sentiment or
Vīra rasa. The heroine herself is a yuddha vīra. This hero-
ic sentiment is closely followed by Karuṇa vipralambha
śṛṅgāra (i.e., the sentiment of love in separation fraught
with pathos).

Barbarua was not very much confident about the merit
of his YKAR. On the cover page of it there is the quotation
of a stanza from Lord Byron's: Don Juan, Canto XV.

"I perch upon an humbler promontory,
Amidst life's infinite variety;
With no greater care for what is nicknamed glory
But speculating as I cast mine eyes
On what may suit, or, may not suit, my story
And never straining hard to versify,
I rattle on exactly as I'd talk
With anybody in a ride or walk".

This is no doubt an explanation for the supposed demerits of the kāvyā, YKAR. We can possibly assure the poet that, if it is a rattling at all, it is a sincere and successful rattling.

Hitesvar Barbarua's another historical kāvyā with same technique and precision is Tirutar Ātma Dān (TAD) kāvyā or Jaymatī. Written in free verse and complete in twelve sargas the TAD kāvyā is based on the popular historical theme of Jaymatī's devotion to her husband and the consequent suffering and death for him. The course of events as narrated in the kāvyā is as follows: Since the death of Chakradhvaj Singha (1670) as many as seven princes were assassinated within the span of eleven years. Larārajā had mutilated all the possible aspirants to the throne excepting Gadaṇāpāṇi, of whom he was seeking a chance. It was the convention by that time that no person with mutilated limbs
could demand an ascendancy to the throne. Apprehending
danger Gadāpani left the capital and concealed himself
along with his wife in the forest. Larārajā sent his men
to apprehend Gadāpani, who in the face of such a danger
left his hut in the cover of darkness, on a strong insis-
tence from his wife. Larārajā's men could not arrest
Gadapani; he fled to the neighbouring Naga hills. The
King ordered for Jaymati's arrest. She was taken to the
royal court but in spite of repeated interrogations Jaymati
did not speak anything regarding the whereabouts of her
husband. Even in the face of very serious threatenings her
only reply was: "I will never tell anything of my man".
The king ordered a heavy torture on her person to extract
a definite clue of her husband. The royal prosecutors tied
Jaymati to a thorny tree and imposed heavy tyrannies like
beating, slapping, cutting and burning on her person and
finally Jaymati succumbed to the tortures on the fourteenth
day. Gadāpani, in the meantime, successfully maneuvered a
section of the people to his side with the common inten-
tion of dethroning the tyrannical king. A few high offi-
cers too joined Gadapani against the puppet king Lararaia.
This combined strength led by Gadāpani successfully over-
threw the king and Gadapani brought the reigns of govt. to
his hand. Ascending the throne he took the title of
Gadādhār Singha and reigned for several years. His son Rudrasingha later on excavated a big tank near the capital and erected a big temple as an epitome to the memory of his illustrious mother Jaymati. The tank and the temple which go by the names Jaysāgar pukhuri and Jaydal still declare the glory of sacrifice of this honourable lady.

This story of the kavya is supported by historical evidences. Gadāpāni is the hero and Jaymatī is the heroine of the kavya. They are followed by a host of other characters of whom the puppet king Larā Rajā and Baruaphukan play significant roles. The personality of both the hero and the heroine is cast in bold relief. Barbarua has spared no pains to give due representation of the sacrifices of these two noble souls. The heroine is committed to the husband and the hero to the nation (or the kingdom). One had sacrificed her life for her husband's life and security, the other had sacrificed his wife and personal happiness for a greater national cause. The tragic strain of Jaymati's sacrifice is very poignantly depicted.

The kavya opens in the forest, in a grave and serious atmosphere under the cover of a dark night. In the second sarga the poet introduces Gadāpāni and Jaymati to
the readers in a pathetic atmosphere in the forest. From the third to the twelfth sargas it is long narration of the historical events embodying the devotion of Jaymatī to her husband and the bravery of Gadapani. One marked characteristic of TAD kavya is that the conventional maṅgala verse is absent here. This departure from the Sanskrit tradition is of great moment. It is very likely that under the influence of Michael Madhusudan and some English poets Barbarua developed a 'Pro-English taste', which might have discouraged him to pay benediction to Vāgdevi in a traditional style.

TAD kāvyā exhibits a more mature handling of characters than his other kāvyas. With an expert hand the poet has shaped and fashioned the personalities of his characters. Gadāpāṇi's diplomatic inertia and Jaymatī's patriotic sacrifice are aptly illustrated by the poet. Barbarua's understanding of the inner soul of the characters was accurate. To Gadāpāṇi his wife meant no little but the country meant much. So, even on the face of his wife's sufferings, he waited and waited for an opportune moment. That is how we have to find a justification for Gadāpāṇi's temporary inertia. The poet has given a nice exposition to the spirit of self-sacrifice of a woman for her husband and the country.
The poet maintains a pure Assamese diction in this kāvya. He uses the maximum number of idiomatic Assamese words which are rich in their own loveliness. Unlike in the YKAR the tadbhava and tatsama words are rare in this kāvya. On the other hand, the beautiful words of Assamese home-life flow in abundance. The words are picturesque and full of colour. We present below some such expressions from TAD to illustrate the poet's preference for the typically Assamese idiom.

(i) Mar ausir nisā,
(ii) Ducaku thākio kana,
(iii) Kalimali picāsinī,
(iv) Nītal vanar pakhi,
(v) Karo kolākuli,
(vi) Māikī covālī buli jagate nindiva,
(vii) Luturi puturi,
(viii) Paranar patidhan nayanar mani,
(ix) Pāri ekājali āni diēhi mukhat,
(x) Pari āche jagākath aranya mājat,
(xi) Tinisāj nāi khowā.

The Assamese idiomatic diction is quite in consonance with the sentiment of the TAD kāvya which is all karuṇa. YKAR having the sentiment of Vīra demanded hiṣh-
sounding Sanskrit words. TAD is the story of the sacrifice of a simple devoted house-wife; and in such context, the home-spun, silky-soft words are suitable and not the gorgeous words of Sanskrit vocabulary.

Of course, sometimes Barbarua's simplicity amounts to occasional vulgarity, as in 'Saraṭā tarā mai, tai topākahu' (p 136). The popular beliefs and superstitions of the rural life are duly accommodated in the kāvyā. The fear from the ministers of darkness are advocated; the popular belief that the early morning dream suggested Rām's exile is confirmed in the line: 'Puvatir saponat Rām ga'li aranyat' (p 38). Like YKAR, TAD is also rich in legendary and allusory references both from Indian and foreign sources. Such references are:

(a) INDIAN

(i) Exile of the Pāṇḍavas,
(ii) Exile of Rāmohandra,
(iii) The Nala-Damayanti episode,
(iv) Saibyā-Ḥarischandra episode,
(v) Savitri-Satyavān episode,
(vi) Draupadi,
(vii) Lava-Kusa of Rāmāyana fame,
(viii) Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a reliever of sorrows.
(b) CONTINENTAL

(ix) Macbeth-Duncan,
(x) Romeo-Juliet,
(xi) Hamlet-Ophelia,
(xii) Desdemona-Othello, (all from Shakespeare).

Some common imageries in the form of poetic conventions also found place in the TAD kāvyā. This indicates the poet's sincere respect to his predecessors and also their influence on him. We note below some such poetic conventions.

(a) Cintā-piśāci: Worry personified as a she-devil;
(b) Cintā-Samudra: Worry compared to an ocean;
(c) Nirāsār Vīn: Dejection compared to a lyre;
(d) Sonar putalā: A beautiful child compared to a golden doll.

In the beginning of each sarga the poet quotes lines, which directly resound his own thoughts, from Shakespeare, (his most favourite English author), George Eliot, Voltaire, Moore, Fletcher and Homer. But the poet's excellence lies in his profuse rhetorics and the selection and arrangement of expressions. The glowing imagination of the poet passes through the words and penetrates deep into the readers' hearts. Rhetorical device and picturesque representation
match nicely in the stanzas like the following:

(a) Dekhote dekhote gal Sandhiya sundari
    Kalā riḥa mekhelāre āhi niśā āie
    Dilehi martyat dekhā, teōr kolāt
    Sule jaṅatar prāṇī sukomal pāi (p 51)

(b) Śālikīye tiyāgīb pāre śālikāk
    Anāyāse hariṇiye tiyāge hariṇ,
    Tiyaṅene Satī tiri svāmī hen dhan,
    Prāne prāne gathā yār ṛḍay abhin. (p 41)

A personal note of dejection of the poet also pervades throughout the kāvyā. Barbarua also lost his wife, while young and so he discovers a comparison of himself with the hero Gadāpāṇi. The poet lamentingly says:

    Rānīr śokat tumī kāndichā vināi,
    Vikal Hiteśo āji patnī heruvāi. (p 155)

= You are weeping pitiably at the loss of your wife, O King! This Hiteś too is restless, losing his dear wife.

This intimate understanding between the poet and the hero is too natural for a poet like Hitesvar Barbarua. Incidentally, it may be observed that Hitesvar had to witness a
large number of bereavements on the loss of his near and dear ones including his wife and children. These personal sorrows led Barbarua to Indian Philosophy wherein he sought relief and refuge. His writings are often interspersed with philosophic maxims. The emptiness of life and the vagueness of human relations as reflected in śaṅkaraśāryya's pañjarīkās appealed to him much. Hitesvar quotes in TAD kāvyā śaṅkaraśāryya's 'Ka tava kāntā' maxims to console the bereaved king at the loss of his wife. (p 157).

Barbarua has introduced a dream-suggestion to speak the future malady of the hero and the heroine. In the initial sarga Gādāpāṇi narrated a dream to his wife, the theme of which was separation. This might be regarded as some form of auto-suggestion. The art of indicating the future events with the help of a dream was a popular method with Hitesvar's contemporaries. Chandradhar Barua in his drama Meghnād vadhā secured suggestions for Lākṣ̣manā in a dream; likewise Rajani Kanta Bardalei in his novels Bāundai Kigiri and Nirmal Bhakat utilised the scope of a dream to speak the future events of the particular characters. The second dream that Gādāpāṇi dreamt in the tenth sarga visualising his wife's stay in heaven serves no serious purpose than consoling the hero in his bereavement. The dramatic elements
in the conversations within the kāvya are not negligible. The conversation between the suffering hero and heroine (one suffered in the body while the other suffered in the mind) in the torture ground assumes so much of dramatic beauty that TAD may be called a verse drama instead of a kāvya. These lines of abundant dramatic beauty testify to the love they bore for each other. The love of one tried to supersede the love of other. Gadāpāni and Jaymatī rank as an ideal of conjugal love. Jaymatī knew well that the survival of her husband was a great necessity as because a person like him would be instrumental in restoring peace and tranquility to the state, so she persuaded him to stay away and stay alive.

The dominating sentiment in this kāvya is Karuṇā rasa, often followed by Sānta and augmented by Bipralambha śyāgāra. The torture on Jaymatī is an affair of deep tragedy and Gadāpāni’s wailings at the loss of his dear wife are too pathetic and they duly lead the readers’ mind to be seacked up with deep pathos.

Like his other kāvyas the TAD also records the poet’s reflective wisdom on the things and objects around him. These observations bear testimony to the fact as to how deeply reflective he was and with what rapt attention and
apt sincerity he took the world.

(a) **ON HEAVEN**

Nāi tāt dukh śok virah vicced krodh,
Svarga bole cirasukh milanar thāi (p 33)

= There is no sorrow and suffering, no pains of separation, no anger in Heaven; it is said to be a place of all bliss, all happiness, a place of union.

(b) **ON TEARS**

Vipadar vandhu tumī, tumī ati Dayāvatī,
Bar sneh karā tumī vipad kālat, (p 29)

= You are a friend in distress. Really you are kindness incarnate. In the hours of sorrow you bestow much affection.

(c) **ON NIGHT**

Nahay pisāchī niśā eie niśā kaviprān,
Nāi eko śantimayā eie niśār sāman. (p 5)

= This night is not a witch, this night is the very life of a poet. There is none else, so much consoling like this night.
This reflection of the poet on the tranquility of the night leads us to presume that the poet often used to meditate in the tranquil hours of the night on the art of poetry-making. Vāmana in his Kāvyālaṃkārasūtravṛtti suggests that the fourth quarter of the night is the most suitable time for the poet to make poetry.

Hitesvar's KPD kāvya also is built on a theme taken from the Assam history. Kamatāpur comprised of the modern Goalpara district and parts of the modern Kamrup district. Its king Nīlambar had to witness great perfidy and conspiracy of his officers. Nanda a trusted general could convince the king that his queen had certain illicit relations with the prime-minister's son, which in fact was a pure concoction. The king being notoriously guided by Nanda ordered for the death of the prime-minister's son and managed to feed the Prime-minister Sachiṣṭra with his son's flesh. Sachiṣṭra later discovered the conspiracy and to take revenge joined with Hussain Shah of Gauḍa (the modern Bengal). Hussain Shah's army invaded Kamatāpur and after a fierce fighting and also with a long planned conspiracy conquered the kingdom. The theme is built on a drama-like sequence and a sense of tragedy covers the whole kāvya. These historical facts are supported by the eminent
Historians like Sir Edward Gait and Buchanan Hamilton.

The most interesting character in this kāvyā is Nanda, the villain who had an inglorious birth but by dint of merit could secure a noble position in the Kamatāpur kingdom. Nanda had deep love for Golāpī, a Brahmin girl, who too reciprocated. But there was a serious social bar against their union as they belonged to different castes. (Nanda was a Sudra and Golāpī a Brahmin). Thus, their love did not have the consummation in the form of a marriage. The Nanda-Golāpī episode occurs like a sub-plot in the kāvyā. The other important personalities in the kāvyā are Nilāmbar, his queen Sādari, Sāchipātra and Hussain Shāh. The range of conspiracy is great and the chief conspirators are Nanda, Sāchipātra and Hussain Shāh. Nilāmbar lacked in the kinglike shrewdness and he took the world with utter simplicity; he often failed to make proper judgement and he trusted Nanda more than his wife.

Karuna is the principal sentiment in KPD kāvyā. A tragic atmosphere is writ large on the whole kāvyā. Three different types of tragedies have converged here. Firstly, there is the tragedy of love (between Nilāmbar and Sādari and between Nanda and Golāpī), secondly the tragedy of
personal lives (of Sachīpātra and his son) and thirdly the
tragedy of the kingdom. But the poet has failed to make
the best use of the historical and quasi-historical mate-
rials and of the tragic potentialities of the same. In the
art of narration also the poet could not climb to the
height of the YKAR or TAD kāvyas. It is most probably beca-
use of the fact that the KPD was his first venture in writ-
ing a kāvyā. KPD is over burdened with quotations from
English poets. In each sarga he has cited stanzas from the
poetry of Shakespeare, Cowper, Dryden, Oliver Goldsmith,
Longfellow, Byron and Alexander Pope. A powerful feeling
and a rich imagination, however, dominate the KPD kāvyā.
The poet quite capably delineates the forceful powers of
love and liberty. We quote below two stanzas to illustrate
the poet's feeling and understanding.

(a) ON LOVE

Golápi tells her beloved Nanda about the powers of love:

Prthivir bhalpovā dudiniya matho
Nahay cirakaliya prem samsārar.
Kintu Nāth, āche tāt sipāre meghar
Svarga nāme des ek ananta sughar
Nāi bhīn, si des, bāmūn ūdir,
Nāi tāt jāṭikul, dhanī, dhanhīn,
Virah vicched tāt nāi sok tāp
Ki rājā kī prajā nāi bhīnhāv.

(b) ON LIBERTY

Sadārī makes a clarion call to her countrymen to protect the liberty of the country:

Svādhīnātā mahādhan corak vilai
Kīvā lai āru hāy, ēharat thākivā?
Edinār svādhīnātā saragar sukh
Parādhīnātāt kintu dukh narakār.
Sei dukh tosmāloke kirūpe sahibā?
Kenekāi padānat havā yavanār?
Parādhīnātātkai marāi maṅgal
Uddhārim nīj rājya, āponār rājā
Natu sakalove prān tyajim yuddhat,
Janambhūmir arthe tiyāgi prān,
Samukh yuddhat pari yām svargalai.

This call for defending the liberty of the country is significant, because by Hitesvar Barbarua's time Assam (as well as India) saw a national re-awakening accompanied by an urge to regain independence.
Avas (The Introduction, 1914), Angila (Angelia, 1917), Desdemona (1917) and Virahini Vilap (Lamentation of a disappointed lover) may be called misnomers so far as the title kavya is concerned. Though termed so, these books of shorter lyrical verses do not have any claim to be called kavyas at all.

V. CHANDRADHAR BARUA

Another illustrious kavya poet of the period under review is Chandradhar Barua. Barua was a master artist so far as dramas and kavyas are concerned. He excelled in writing dramas in blank verse and employing the samemetrical device he wrote his two famous kavyas — Kamrup Jiyari (1938; The Daughter of Kamrupa) and Vidyut Vikas (1938; The Birth of Lightening).

Kamrup Jiyari made its first appearance in the pages of the Avahan (vol. ix-11,12; vol. x-1-4). This kavya has arisen out of the legendary tale of 'Beulâ-Lakhindâr'. The story of Beulâ and her bold adventures in bringing back to life her dear husband who expired through snake-bite, have appealed to the hearts of the Assamese people for centuries and the poets like Manakar, Durgâbar and Sukavi Narâyana Deva were inspired to depict the adventures of this pious lady in the works of the Manasâ school.
In writing this kāvyā Chandradhar Barua has followed the track of the Sanskrit kāvyā poets. He has arranged the kāvyā into fourteen sargas. The graceful Bāṇī Bandana: 'Bīnāpānī Sarasvatī Subhra Ābharaṇā' etc., is found as the auspicious beginning. The poet is proud of the heritage of his mother land and hence begins the kāvyā with an eulogy also of ancient Kāmrūpa (Amar vañcita ek visāl sāmrājya etc.,) : 'A vast kingdom highly cherished by the Gods'. The maṅgala verse in praise of Kāmrūpa is significant in view of the facts that the theme of the kāvyā is based on a folk-tale of the Kāmrūpa region and the entire incident is located in the ancient land of Kāmrūpa, characterised by its snake-cult and magic and belief in the supernatural. The principal characters in the kāvyā are — Chandradhar, Manasā, Soneka, Kāmarūpesvara, Saṅkha Ojā, Beula and Lakhindār.

The story in brief is as follows : Chandradhar the rich merchant of Campak nagar had no regard for Manasā Devi, the legendary goddess of snakes. As a result of his disregard for her Manasā caused Chandradhar's all seven sons to be bitten by snakes to death. The last and the youngest son of Chandradhar was Lakhindār; he was, however, spared for a considerably long time and attained the marriagable age.
Lakhindar was very handsome and he was very dear to the parents. The poet has described him as "a little lamp in a dark-room as it were" (Andhar gharat yen egaci salita). Beula, a girl of exceeding beauty, was married to Lakhindar but sadly on the very wedding night Lakhindar was bitten on sleep by a venomous snake at the command of Manasa. This sudden death of Lakhindar on the wedding night greatly hurt the merchant, his wife Soneka and the bride Beula. Beula out of her devotion to her husband took the dead body in a raft (made of banana plants) and sailed for the unknown lands, where, she believed she might get some anodyne to restore her dead husband to life. In spite of the many obstacles on the way Beula arrived at Kailasa, the abode of Lord Siva. She had the privilege to come to Kailasa through the favour of Netai, the washerwoman of Kailasa. Beula made entreaties to Lord Siva for the recovery of her husband; Siva was highly pleased with Beula and on the insistence of Lord Siva, Manasa returned Lakhindar to life. The two lovers, thus united, returned back to Campak nagar.

There is little need to speak that Barua has nicely narrated this gem from ancient legend through his rich and picturesque presentation. 'Fostered alike by beauty and by fear' the kavya Kamrup Jiyar stands unparalleled so far as
the unity of the natural and the supernatural is concerned. The association of the supernatural Gods and Goddesses has bestowed a classical grandeur to the kāvyā.

In diction too, Chandradhar Barua's Kamrup Jiyari has certain distinct merits. Barua has used with mastery the Sanskrit words in abundance but at the same time the idiomatic Assamese diction is not neglected. We quote here some Sanskrit as well as some Assamese idiomatic expressions to bear testimony to his word-craftsmanship.

A. OF SANSKRIT ORIGIN

(i) sundar śakat cale,
(ii) śubhrākāya phulla deh,
(iii) apār jaladhi,
(iv) viśuddha anil,
(v) nilāmbu,
(vi) nayana raṅjankar,
(vii) jalakeli, etc.,

B. IDIOMATIC ASSAMESE EXPRESSIONS

(i) lāni lāgi ghūri yāy (jay),
(ii) viyali melāi culi,
(iii) ujani bhātiye jovā,
(iv) tolāo kariva laṅka,
(v) ahakate mānuhar nathai vilai,
(vi) pāltara hāte-bovā
var saru anek taraṅī.

Sometimes, in the interest of metrical sequences Barua used archaic and artificial words like vyākhyichile (p 1322) instead of vyākhya karichile. Barua through his rich power of description has been able to draw picturesque scenes of high excellence and superb beauty. Describing the water-carrying maids (p 1322) the poet says:

Edhāri phular mālā / Sudh mālatīre gatha //
= (The maids carrying water) are but a garland Composed solely of white Mālatī flowers.

The Mālatī flowers (Jasmine) are famous for their white yet simple radiance. The unsophisticated simple village maids shone with their physical beauty and simplicity. The verse presents a pretty successful image of the row of girls and their flower-like delicacy, beauty and loveliness. The force of the words is further augmented by their rhetorical potentiality. There is śleṣa in the word Sudh which means solely and also pure or white. Barua draws an analogy between the boats sailing in the blue seas with the swans flying in the blue-sky (p 1413).
Chandradhar Barua had a great power of using figures which make his descriptions all the more lovely and delicate. Frequent punnings, cunning similes and occasional metaphors are some of his figurative devices to capture the readers' mind. The play of words is entertaining in the lines like the following:

(a) Cāndar āharat ājī apar ānanda, (p 75)
(b) yāpan kariva tāte pratham yāminī, (p 75)
(c) viśam beqere vise sarīr vyāpīle, (p 76)
(d) bhāṭi dile bibhākare ābelī belikā,
(e) Lakhsmī–Sarasvati duyo virodh pāhari
lagere vasati ahi lāle hṛdayat. (p 81)

The setting out of Beulā in her voyage narrated by Chandradhar Barua, is a picture of unique craftsmanship and understanding.

*** Calil dhirere bhūr, anukul anil valil,
avimē nayanere thākīl nirekhi
nedekhā nahaymāne sakalo jānei,
Vahal nadir sei agadh jalat
Jivante utai thai sonar pratima
Nirjiva pratima yene dasamir din;
Ubhatil se' sat sakalo,
Samapi smasam kriya smasam yatrye,
Sokakul manere yirupe. (p 3278)

= The boat sailed smoothly,
The winds came to its favour;
All gazed constantly
Till its departure from the sight.
On the deep waters of the vast river,
They floated their golden image,
Like the image of Dasami.
All returned dejected,
Like the cremators returning
From the cremation site.

This scene is sufficient to arouse the sympathy of any reader.

Drawing a fine picture of Beula's eyes, the poet says: 'Saral nayan heri, lajat harinikul aranya somal',
(Noticing the simple yet beautiful eyes of hers (Beula's)
the she-deers, ran deep into the forests, out of utter
shame (i.e., failing to stand comparison). This line is a fine example of Vyatireka Alamkāra and it stands comparison with similar expressions from Śaṅkaradeva. Śaṅkaradeva in his Rukminiḥarana kāvya has eulogised Rukmini’s physical beauty (especially of the face and the eyes) thus:

Ki kahava Ramanīka rūpa paracur  
Vayānika heri canda bhelā dūr  
Nayanaka pekhi pāi bara lāja  
Kayal jāmpa kamala jala-māja.

= How much shall I speak of the physical charms of that tender-lady? Having a glimpse of her face, the moon in the sky fled-away to a safer distance. And viewing her graceful eyes and feeling badly ashamed (of their own inferiority) the lotuses in the lake sank deep into the waters.

Thus, in narrating Beulā's bodily charms Chandradhar Barua could not avert the influence of the classical Vaisnavite Assamese kāvyas and the classical Sanskrit kāvyas. With due regard to the theoretical prescription for insertion of beautiful descriptions of the forests, mountains, seas,
Barua made some very touching scenes. Such descriptions are abundant in pages 1412 (on nature including mountains), p 199-200 (on Kailāsa), p 1413 (on sea). He makes a fine impression of the sea in a simple but lovel y manner.

\[\text{Nilvaraniya jale dinar velat} \\
\text{Durat milita hai nila gapanere} \]
\[\text{Bistare bipul sobha diganta viyapi. (p 1413)} \]

Beulā is undeniably the most charming and the most adventurous of the characters. She had high faith in her own capacity. At the time of her voyage for returning her husband to life, she boldly asserts:

\begin{quote}
Though the golden age (is) no more, 
Still the devotion of chastes are there; 
In no age the power of chastity ever freezes;  
If I am a Sati \[\text{With utmost effort, I shall bring back my husband to life; }\]

I shall never be a widow,  
I was born in an auspicious moment  
Which belies widowhood;  
Surely, my husband will come to life. (p 77)
\end{quote}
Beula took courage from the Savitri-Satyavan story and in all ages it has become an inspiring story for Hindu women. It may be stated here, that the endeavour of Savitri and Beula to bring back their husbands from the death-land is an expression of the human-urge to conquer death and to achieve a ceaseless continuity of lives. Chandradhar, the merchant-hero of the kavya is bold and true to his faith. Being deprived of his sons and treasures, he loses no courage and never deviates from his path of enmity with Manasa.

\text{\vspace{2em}}
\begin{align*}
\text{Dur ha pisaci tai,} \\
\text{Jaok sampad mor jaok paran,} \\
\text{Mahe\text{\=}ak se\text{\=}a kar\text{\=}a unnat mastak} \\
\text{Nodovao tot kadapito (p 1416)}
\end{align*}

Unlike his Vidyut Vikas kavya and the kavyas of Hitesvar Barbarua, Kamrup Jiyor is not rich in the poet's personal observations. The only gifted observation is on chastity, wherein the poet says:

\text{\vspace{2em}}
\begin{align*}
\text{Sat\=inar\=i yadivao bhuban ranjini /} \\
\text{Sparsiva khujile loke kalbhuja\=ginii // (p 198)}
\end{align*}

= A chaste lady though a source of delight to the world still she reacts like a venomous snake, when any one wants to have a touch of her body.
The comparison between a snake and a woman is really praiseworthy. A snake is no less a beautiful creature than a woman and a woman is no less venomous than a snake on the face of a trial for chastity. In order to make his kavya popular, the poet makes reference to astrology also; narrating Beulā's claims to avoid widowhood, he remarks:

Saubhāgyaśālinī kanyā sulakṣṇā ati
Nāi kono pāpa graha,
Lagnar saptam kimdā aśtam sthānat,
Sugrahār samāves āche susthānata
Ele kanyā kadāpito nahay vidhava. (p 173)

This belief of the characters of the kāvyas in astrology is in full conformity with the fact that the land of Kāmarūpa has been highly rich in astrological scholarship. The popular and glorious figures of ancient Kāmarūpa — Bāna, Bhagadatta, Naraka, Bhīmāka, Usā, Rukmini, Citralekha, Citrangadā are all brought here. The oft-quoted legend of Madana Bhasma (Burning of Madana) is referred to (on page 75).

Chandrādhar's journey to Lanka for a merchandise is perhaps based on the Assamese people's age-old recognition of Lanka as a good business place. To bestow classical colour and grandeur to the kāvyas the poet has used some conventional
The rich merchant Chandradhar is like 'a big tree bending with fruits'; the six daughters-in-law of Chandradhar are like 'soft creepers'; Sonekā, the merchant's wife, grew sad at the delayed coming of her husband like the lily lamenting over the late arrival of the moon.

Chandradhar Barua's another kavya Vidyut Vikās (1938) dwells chiefly on the Purānic story of sage Dadhici's self-sacrifice to save the denizens of heaven. Vṛtrāsura the king of the demons once grew so powerful that he captured even Amārāvatī, the capital of the king of heaven, Indra. The gods being driven out of their heavenly abode took shelter in the caves of Sumeru. To get a possible way to free their dear Amārāvatī from the devons they solicited the help and advice of Lord Śrī Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu suggested to them to seek help from Lord Śiva, "Who is the sole authority in matters of destruction". Lord Śiva dictated a very difficult solution. He said that if the sage Dadhici voluntarily adores death and leaves back his backbone to be
utilised by Indra to make an war instrument, only then the
demon Vṛtrāsura might be killed. The gods with much hesi-
tation approached Dadhīci. They failed to express the sugge-
stions of Lord Śiva, directly to the sage; but the sage by
his power of meditation knew all things and he readily and
voluntarily agreed to sacrifice his life for that noble
cause.

Dadhīci sat in a pleasant posture in a yogic mood
and made his life leave the bodily frame. The gods collec-
ted his back-bone and with the expert skill of Visvakarmā
a fine war weapon was made. Being equipped with that power-
ful weapon, the gods declared war against Vṛtrāsura. A
heavy fighting ensued and king Indra picked up a chance to
throw his mighty weapon upon Vṛtra. With a large sound the
weapon dashed Vṛtra to death. Lord Viṣṇu appeared on the
scene and shared the rejoicings of the gods and as for the
weapon He said that from that day onward the weapon be
named as 'Vidyut' and it would live always in the compani-
onship of the clouds in the sky and at a single call from
king Indra it would come to his help. From that day onward
Vidyut or Lightening had become a permanent consort of the
clouds. As the birth of lightening has dominated a major
portion of the kavya, so, the kavya goes by the name 'Vidyut
Vīkāś' or the 'birth of lightening.'
The kāvyā is built in eight cantoes of moderate length. The style is racy and a drama-like sequence runs throughout the kāvyā. The poet was perhaps a bit influenced by the Vṛtrasamhāra kāvyā of Hemchandra Bandopadhyaya (of Bengal), so far as the delineation of characters is concerned. The metre is the same with that of the Kamrūp-jiyārī kāvyā, i.e., blank-verse. The principal sentiment is Vīra, accentuated by inklings of Śanta. One interesting point to note is that we find two kinds of heroes here: Yuddhāvīra and Dayā Vīra. While Vṛtrasūra and Mahendra are yuddhāvīras, Dadhīcī is a dayāvīra. Dadhīcī's unparalleled sacrifice creates an atmosphere of Śanta throughout the kāvyā. The love for his mother-land inspired the sage to make the maximum of sacrifice. The other interesting personalities in the kāvyā are Mahendra, Vṛtrasūra and Śrīhari. Vṛtrasūra's heroicity and Mahendra's powerful resistance and tactful efforts for the recovery of the lost kingdom are very nicely described. The part played by Indrānī, though brief, is entertaining. She is courageous and firm in her purpose. In her attempt to meet her husband at the war-field, she resembles Pramaṇā of the Meghnāda Vadha drama of the same author. The diction here is neat and forceful. The art of description too is noble and
evocative. In his descriptions of Golak and Kailās the poet exhibits superb craftsmanship. Vidyut Vikāś kāvyā is rich in rhetoric and the commonly used figures of speech are Upamā, Rūpaka, Atisāyokti and Yamak and Anuprāsa. The artful Anuprāsas like, 'kuñjai kuñjai pati puñja puñja kanak dhutūrā'; 'meghar sangini ha'īl raṅgini vijuli'; 'ānandere nandan kānane āgar vinanda saj lahere pindhile', betray the poet's powerful command over the language and we may observe that Chandradhar Barua's poetry is rich in Padalālitya. The poet was careful in choosing beautiful words to add grace to his kāvyā. Daṇḍin in his Kāvyadarsa has said that the form of a kāvyā should be characterised by and couchèd in desirable words producing beauty. This suggestion of Daṇḍin was closely followed by Chandradhar Barua. And we may, perhaps, rightly form an opinion that Assamese kāvyā earned its maturity in the hands of Chandradhar Barua.

VI. UMAKANTA TAMULI

Laylā (1929), based on the Laila-Majnu theme of ancient Persian literature is the only contribution of Umakanta Tamuli towards the Assamese kāvyā poetry. It is a lyrical
kāvyā in ten sargas. The traditional Bagdevī vandana is nicely done in the beginning. Whole of the kāvyā is done in blank-verse. The purpose of the kāvyā is to portray the nobleness of love and its never failing powers. The principal characters are Lailā, Majnu and Ābu. The theme of the story is the same with the Persian original. The beauty of love as reflected in the lives of these ideal lovers, is nicely drawn here. To make the kāvyā easily accessible to the Indian readers, the poet has added some distinctive Indian features to the construction of the kāvyā. In the delineation of the physical beauty of Lailā the poet uses traditional poetic conventions and makes her nearer to the Indian readers.

*** Laylā nāmere eti sarva sulaksanā
    Sarvagun adhikāri saundaryyar rāṇī
    āchil cenehi kanyā.
Kanyār rūpar kāsat, lāj pāva,
    Tilottama, Urvasī, Menaka ādi kari
Devabālā, gandharva vālikā āru
Usā Citralekha,
    Lauhityar sipārar Sonitpurar
raba adhomukhī hai. (p 11)
Because of the Vyatireka Alamkāra of this stanza, Lailā loses her outlandishness and her comparison with Tilo-ttamā, Urvasī, Menakā, Uṣā and Citralekhā makes her nearer to the Indian readers. The presumably deliberate inclusion of a number of Indian epic allusions creates an Indian atmosphere around the theme, basically set in Persia. The 'Satī-Dakṣa' episode is also nicely dealt with. When Kayech was accused as a sinner by Ābu, Lailā broke forth violently like Satī of ancient legends, who being unable to swallow the rebukes against her husband voluntarily ceased to live. Lailā was devoted to her father, while Satī was loyal to her consort, Śiva. One fought for her father, the other for her husband, but in both cases the refusal to listen anything against the dear one was the principal motif; and hence the comparison. Lailā's devotion to her father is announced in the following lines:

Pitā svarga, pitāhe param dharma,
Buli bhābo aharnise pavitra bhāvat. (p 79)

This stanza is the replica of the Indian wisdom:

"Pitā svargaḥ pitā dharmmaḥ, pitā hi paramantapaḥ /
Pitari prītimāpanne priyante sarvadēvataḥ //

There is the deep romantic charm of a love-lorn heart in the words of Majnu. His every utterance is deep and
penetrating to the heart.

Laylā, Laylā! mor prānar laylā!
Ki dosat dilā āji cira abhāgāk
Sāntvāna nopoā ek ākul yātanā. (p 108)

= Laylá, Laylá my dearest Laylá,
my heart's heart!
For what fault of mine have you
imposed upon me, this wanton, unfortunate,
irresistible pain, which frustrates
all consolations.

"We are shaped and fashioned by what we love", says Goethe,
and it is true of Majnu also. His tragic end is the result
of his deep love for Lailā. Majnu's love for his dear girl
Laila was not only sensuous but it had a deep spiritual
foundation too. The principal sentiment of the kāvya is
Karuṇa Vipralambha ēṅgāra.

VII. Raghunath Chowdhury too attempted to portray an
Arabic story in his small kāvya work Karāvalā. Built in the
popular amitrāksara chanda, this kāvya describes the heroic
wars and the tragic sacrifices of the heroes of the Karāvalā.
This kāvya divided into five sargās, however, could not attain
the height and the usual grandeur of a kāvya proper.
Jaymatī upākhyān by Dr. Suryya Kumar Bhuyan and Milan Chanda by Devendra Nath Chakravarty are also two long-narrative poems of kāvyā type. These two books make a pleasant reading; yet, they lack in the richness and constructional loveliness of a kāvyā proper. The themes for both these works are taken from the history of Assam.

VIII. DANDINATH KALITA

Another historical kavya of repute is Asam Sandhyā (The Dusk in Assam) by Dandinath Kalita. This kavya covers the period of Burmese invasion, which ultimately caused the sun-set of the Ahom Kingdom. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the 'sun-set' of the Ahom kingdom had inspired many a writer to record that national disaster in their writings. Lakhsminath Bezbarua in his drama Belimar (The sun-set) and Nakul Chandra Bhuyan in his two dramas Badan Barphukan and Chandra Kanta Sinha have portrayed this pathetic disaster very sympathetically. In the area of novels too, Rajani Kanta Bardaloi has represented the Burmese invasion and Assam's loss of freedom very nicely. Manomati, Rahdai Ligiri, Nirmal Bhakat and Raigili all these novels deal with the Burmese invasion and its after effects. Thus, Dandinath Kalita may be said to have chosen
the right material for his kāvyā. He was guided by the historical writings of Dr. Suryya Kumar Bhuyan in the arrangement of the story and the historical facts and eventualities are very faithfully represented by him even in the kāvyā form.

The kāvyā is built in 22 sargās and runs on the amitrāksāri metre. The kāvyā begins with a Janani Bandana (An eulogy of the mother-land) instead of a 'Bāgdevī Bandana'. The most important characters are Chandra Kanta Sinha, Badan Barphukan, Pūrnānanda and Satrām. Of them, the personalities of Pūrnānanda and Chandrakānta Sinha have received greater sympathy from the poet. Pūrnānanda's political shrewdness and diplomacy is a matter of great interest. This prime-minister of the Āhom kingdom tried his best to save the country from a possible disaster but could not. He had a great respect for the king, Chandra Kānta Sinha, and when the other ministers demanded an enquiry upon the king, Pūrnānanda refused to impose anything on the king and he assured them to correct the king personally. Of the woman characters, Rupāhī is the most entertaining. Her courage and devotion to her husband Satrām are worthy of praise.
Dandinath's art of narration is nice and his power of description is unique. We quote here a few lines from his description of the Burmese capital:

Manorama puri Abha Brahma rajdhani,
Bihariche kusumita pramod vanat,
Bahumulya abharan kari paridhan,
Iravati pravahita praksali caran.
Mukta path, mukta vayu, mukta naranari,
Caupase pagoda sobhe tuli uccha sira,
Samukhat prakrtir saundaryya sambhar,
Lungi pindhi phungi dal kare vicaran,
Buddhar mahima kari satate kirtan.
Bihare bihare bahu bhiksu samaves,
Krsak, krsak-vadhu sasyar ksetrat;
Ure puspa-kananat vala puspavati
Asamyat kalpanar sonali rathat,
Khedi khedi pice pice mrdu malayat. (p 81)

Asam-sandhya is rich in diction and rhetorical beauty. The following examples should suffice to warrant this impression.

(i) maje maje nijarar amrt kallol (p 1)
(ii) saurabhere bandi kari mugdha madhulobhi (p 1)
Dandanath Kalita often used homely words of ease and simplicity which enhanced the richness of the kavya. The words like,

(a) bhāvanāt tej-māńsa sakalo sukāl (p 4)
(b) ācalat jīva bāndhi phuricho sadāy (p 17)
(c) ājiyei māri loā sukhar ghumaṭi (p 23)
(d) nacāle bāndarī nāc kobāi-kīlāi (p 27)
(e) si ye larār dhemālī nahay dośar (p 60)

are capable of creating an atmosphere of homely simplicity. On the other hand the poet could handle aptly, the tadbhava and tatsama words with equal grace and dignity. We quote below, for instance, the powerful description of the danseuses in the Ahom court.

Prabesl cărįjani ākuńcita keśi
Sundarī śodāśi bālā kurańganayanī,
Cańcal gatişre suksma ańcal kapāi
Ujjalāi sarvāṅgat ucchal yauvan
Mohan bhańgire juri madhur saṅgīt.
The descriptions like this lead us immediately to the height of the Sanskrit kavyas, where such sensuous descriptions of women’s beauty abound. It may also be observed that these lines are also rich in Padalalitya of a type that we have noticed in case of Chandradhar Barua. (Due to repetition of conjunct consonants containing a nasal letter as the first member.)

The principal sentiment in the kavya is Vīra, followed by Bhayānaka and Karuṇa. It may be pointed out here that Assam Sandhya is the only kavya in Assamese, which deals with the sentiment of Bhayānaka. The delineation of this sentiment is vividly clear in the 21st sarga, where the atrocities committed by the Burmese soldiers are described. The Burmese invaders ransacked the whole country. Arson, loot, rape, killing and other brutal atrocities were the order of the day. The life of the people became unbearable. The Karuṇa rasa, depicted here, is founded on two tragic happenings. There is a twofold tragedy in the kavya.
The tragedy of the personal life (of Chandra Kanta Sinha) and the tragedy of the political life of the country. The king as well as the kingdom lost their ancient glory, had to embrace defeat and destruction and a veritable darkness of dusk came down to it.

IX. INDRERWAR BARTHA-KUR

Ban-jeuti (Glorious of war, 1955) by Indreswar Barthakur is a neat and lovely kavya dealing with the Mahabharatic story of Ghatothkaca's heroic deeds in the Kuruksetra war. The poet has regarded Ghatothkaca as a national hero of Assam on the ground that the seat of this ancient hero was in the modern Dimapur town, which, though now transferred to Nagaland, belonged to Assam through the centuries and also in the time of the composition of the kavya. Ghatothkaca was the son of Bhima, the second of the Pandavas. Bhima in his wild sojourns met Vidumbi and married her and after the birth of Ghatothkaca Bhima left for Hastinapura. Ghatothkaca grew up and later when the Kuruksetra war began, he joined it and fought against the Kauravas. After a valiant fight Ghatothkaca was killed by Karna.
The heroic deeds of Ghaṭotkaca as well as his devotion to his father is the main theme of the kavya. The kavya consists of five sargas and its metrical skill is 'yaugie pada chanda' and as such it is a marked deviation from the tradition of blank-verse kavyas.

Ranjuti is very rich in diction and ornamental rhetoric. The poet makes cunning and beautiful expressions throughout the kavya. He uses both homely and 'tatsama' words. The gift of expression is well-illustrated in the following verses, where Hidimbā's physical beauty is nicely described.

***** Suchi sei punyar pratimākhani,
Mātrr aśī pari care snigdha jilikani,
Haridrā rāgere rañjā rūptire lakhimīr
gita gandhe bhari yen kari āche tīrbir.
Nāi kone anulep, nāi tene ābharaṇ,
Svabhāv sundar nārī eneye sī vitopan.
Son yen varanere ketakīr phulpāhi
Maujole bhārā ὣth, tāte ki misiki hāhi
Aṅgar āvani kino lekhaniye sāḍhi lekhā,
Sajāle yauvane tāte thāye thāye til rekhā;
Nārī mūrti antara vīringi pariche tāt,
Suvāg cariche phuti mukhar surīyā māt. (pp.21-22)
Bhima gazed constantly at that veritable image of virtue and piousness. She dazzled much receiving the blessings of the mother (Kunti). The girl looked like goddess Lakshmi in her golden curls and by the sweet song and the still musketer fragrance from her body, she charmed all. She did not have cosmetics, nor did she use any ornament. A lady naturally beautiful she was and hence she needed not any make-up. She sparkled like a golden coloured ketaki flower. Her lips were honey-sweet and a nice smile played on them. The pen has failed to record all the loveliness of her limbs. Youth had arranged some beauty spots in her body, in the form of sesame. The happy grace of a woman shone forth from her body and her sweet voice added further grace to it.

Vira is the principal sentiment of the kāvyā, the subsidiary sentiments being Śringāra and Karuna. Further, a strong sense of patriotism runs deep in the kāvyā.

X. Ban Jeuti is the last kāvyā of the period under review. After 1955, no kāvyā nor any long narrative poem was written. Kāvyā is a legacy of the past and it is remarkably classical in form and content. By 1955 most of the poets of the older
generation have ceased to write. The most modern trend is more in favour of brevity and fastness, the earlier, in fact, being the result of the latter. Hence, the long and languid kīvya has ceased to be favoured by the poets as well as the readers.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The influence of Mañgā's Sīsūpālavadha on this kīvya is easily ascertained. The author seems to collect ample materials from Canto XIV of Mañgā's work, where in rich and elaborate descriptions of the yajña proper is given.


3. Dr. B.K. Kakati: Purani Asamiya Sahitya, p 23

4. K.D. Chapter I, 14-19

5. S.D. VI. 317

6. Ibid., III. 234

7. 'śrīnāravīraśāntānām ekōṅgī rasa iyate'. S.D. VI. 317

8. As reported by the poet in the Preface.

9. Ibid.,
10. Meghnâda's heroic personality was much admired by Michael Madhusudan. Meghnâda had to die as a result of the tripartite conspiracy of the Gods, his uncle and Lakshmana. He was killed in a helpless state and perhaps, he was more sinned against than sinning—this was the total thesis of Michael Madhusudan.

11. Abhimanyâ Vadha kavya, Goalpara, 1886; p 87

12. The curse-motif was a major device of creating conflict in ancient Indian kavyas.

13. Sâthakarana kavya, Gauhati, 1967; p 125

14. Ibid., Canto IV

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p 33

17. For details, see the Preface to Sâthakarana kavya.

18. Cf. "khandakâvyâm bhavat kavyasyaikadeśānusāri ca", S.D. VI, 329

19. S.D. VI, 303

20. Dr. M.M. Sharma: Dhvani Theory in Sanskrit Poetics, Chovkamba, 1968; p 121

21. Cf. "anâlayartha pumâh kâvâpi".

22. Kî bhavâmar âni, âhôm ramani 
Bîramañâ, bîtâ kanyâ, Bîrâr prayâsi.

24. YKAR, p 99
25. Ibid., p 33
26. Meghnad Yadha, pp. 68-81
27. The historic self-sacrifice of Jayatî is a popular theme in Assamese literature and arts. Several poems kavyas, stories, dramas and films were made on this theme.
28. The Sanskrit Alâmkâris say that a kavya assumes its super excellence, only when the poet, the hero and the reader join equally in the experience of sentiments. Abhinavagupta's teacher, Bhattachauta says: "nâyakasya kavoh srotah samâno 'nubhavastatah".
29. Meghnad Yadha, p 28
31. The Nilambar episode of Assam's history is a popular theme for Assamese writers. Apart from KPD kavya, the best production, on this theme, is Prasannalal Choudhury's drama Nilambar.
32. KPD kavya, p 67
33. Ibid., p 43
34. This legendary story, perhaps, was meant for propagating and popularising the snake cult. Snake-worship is still prevalent in Assam, mostly in the districts of Kamrup and Goalpara.

35. The comparison between a woman and a snake is very old. We often come across the phrase, "kowābhātaryā othar talat phetī gom", which means a venomous cobra lies asleep under the coral lips of a woman. L.N. Bosbarua has also used this simile in his poem, 'Priyatamar Saundaryya', vide Kadamkali.

36. According to astrological calculations an evil star on the 7th and the 8th places from the centre invites widowhood. Cf.,

'lagne vyayepi pātale yāmitre cāṭame kuje / kanya bhartu-vināśay, bhartṭā bhāryyāṁ haniṣyati //

37. Kamrup was a seat of astrology. Its oldest name Pragjyotishapura indicates the astrological scholarship of the people of this region. See, B.K. Barua: A Cultural History of Assam, 2nd edition, p 12

38. Cf. Pāṭ paebhala labhat khāba / laṅkār vanij mātete pāba // An aphorism of Dēka, or Dēk carit, Bhattacharyya Agency, 1948; p 19
39. Kamrup-Jiyari was not printed in book form. It appeared in the pages of the Avahan, the page numbers therefore refer to the Avahan and not to any book.

40. The glory of the Dayavira Dadhici outweighs the glory of the yuddhaviras Indra and Vytrāsura.

41. Meghnād vadha, p 20

42. In all these examples of alliteration we have Anuprāsa based on the Upanāgarikā or Lalitā vyrtti. Such a variety of Anuprāsa depending on the repetition of conjunct consonants containing a nasal letter as the first member is explained as the so called Padalālitya. See, Dr. M.M. Sharma : Upanā Kālidāsasya, pp. 132-34.

43. 'Śarīrām tāvadiśārthāvyavacchinnāpadāvalī', K.D. I. 10

44. Its theme is the sacrifice of Jaymāti.

45. It deals with the love and the heroic deeds of Manamati, an Assamese damsel, in the time of the Burmese invasion.

46. Purnānanda is a controversial figure in the history of Assam so far as the Burmese invasion is concerned. Benuddhar Sarma in his book Dūrbin (Assam Jyoti, Gauhati, 1963) has analysed the personality of this Purnānanda Buragohain with a clear perspective.