CHAPTER - II

Historical Background

Kāmarūpa is situated at the North-Easten centre of trade routes. It is the eastern gateway of India. It is accessible from the West, North, North-East and South-East. Not only from the point of view of trade and commerce, but also from the military point of view this region bore the weight of sword of many valourous kings of ancient India. This region experienced not only political upheavels but also assimilated the different waves of people coming to her lap through the processes of invasions, the trade connections, kings settlements (for religious and social merits or as mark of victory in conquests) and social movements during the period from 4th to 12th century A.D. The assimilation took place in different forms.

Political and cultural processes in this respect was engineered by the great kings of Kāmarūpa by inviting Brāhmaṇas and their associates for performance of sacrifices for augmenting religious merits; also as a mark of victories on political aggrandisement.

With its fertile soil, the area of Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana have always been a source of attraction to the intruders who got mixed with the local people and not only lost their individual
identity but also contributed for its overall growth. Kāmarūpa was never free from pressure from the west, north and south. In the later Vedic period the Aryans from west (Mithilā) in their bid of expansion invited confrontation with Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. The inevitable result being the inter-mixture of Aryans from west and non-Aryans from the east. Thus, the civilisation of Kāmarūpa (Assam) is a bi-product of political and cultural synthesis. It is a blending that determined the future culture of Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana starting from Karatoṣa and extending upto Sadiyā, i.e. the valley of the Lauhitya or Brahmaputra, inclusive of the hilly region that was also traversed by the aggressors.

The synthesis is the result of the assimilation of Aryan and the Austro-mongoloids in Assam. It was given a great impetus and an ideal form after the Aryans arrived at the Indian scene. The Aryans gradually developed their own philosophy and ethics. The latter was represented by the moral code and the idea of ahiṁsā or non-injury as advocated by the Buddhism and the Jainism. The former in so far as it took cognizance of an unseen reality behind life expressed itself in the terms of the Vedānta with its different schools. The Aryan world of myth and cosmogony, legend and history was a loosely gathered selection
of materials. From the tradition of the different races to which a coherence was attempted to be given to the purāṇas and partly to the epics, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* emerged from this attempt. The whole of India was brought within the pale of purānic philosophy including that of the *Mahābhārata*. The Brahmaputra was not initially recognized as one of the seven sacred rivers of India (Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Godāvari, Saraswatī, Narmadā, the Sindhu and Kāveri), but the land of Assam as Prāgjyotīsa or Kāmarūpa was early (probably sometimes during the second half of the 1st millennium A.D.) recognized as a center of both Buddhist and Brähmanical (Śākta) Tāntricism. The special character of Kāmarūpa and Prāgjyotīsa, as the holy land of India, has been accepted by Hindu sentiments of our day. In early period, the river Sadānīrā or Karatoya was taken to be a holy river in the Purāṇas. It was situated in north Bengal, i.e. Puṇḍravardhana. In the Purāṇas and Tantras Assam had been incorporated as an integral part of India. Right from the beginning Kāmarūpa was associated and linked with Kāmākhyā, the Śākta shrine which was associated with the purānic Naraka who was born in Kokāmukhatīrtha due to the union of Viṣṇu and Bhūmi. He was the pioneering figure in making Aryan settlements in Kāmarūpa. The next king Bhagadatta has earned immense fame
as a ruler. He participated in Kurukṣetra war and his kingdom was having extension in the north up to the borders of China and to the sea-shore of Bengal. In context to the reference to start with Kāmarūpa was associated with the mother earth, Kāmākhyā, whose shrine was one of the 51 pīthas as the part of Sati’s body fell here. It was due to insult to her husband Śiva by her father Dakṣa in the sacrifice by the latter. Satī left her life in the sacrificial altar. Śiva then in frenzy spoiled the sacrifice of Dakṣa and in grief carrying Satī’s body roamed around whole of India; seeing the anger of Śiva the Gods of Heaven requested Viṣṇu to stop Śiva’s fierce anger to come down cool. Viṣṇu cut with his discuss the body of Satī which fell in different parts of India, which came to be venerated as the 51 pīthas or holy seats. The Hebajra Tantra, c. 8th century A.D., the Kālikā-purāṇa (earlier than c. 9th/10th cen. A.D.) and the Yoginītantra (composed in Assam about c. 16th cen. A. D. as a work on Tantra) has already extolled Assam as a land where Śākta-Tantricism was fully established. The temple of mother Goddess Kāmākhyā near present Guwahati in Assam came into prominence in Kāmarūpa in eastern India in particular and in whole of India in general. The site of Kāmākhyā came to be

1. Daughter of Dakṣa, Kalikāpurāṇa
recognized as the most holy pīṭha where the Pudendum from the body of Satī, cut into pieces by Viṣṇu’s discuss, had fallen and this led to the spot being called the Yoni-pīṭha and it became a great place of pilgrimage for Hindu India. Thus the Hindu and purāṇic tradition that developed or were established in Kāmarūpa (Assam) from the period of the first Aryanisation of Assam and the settlement of Brāhmaṇs may well go back to second half or even to the first half of the first millennium B. C. Sage Vasiṣṭha was also the great devotee and worshipper of mother goddess Kāmakhyā.

In this regard reference can be made of the Aryan contacts between the Kuru-Pāṇḍavas of Hastināpura (now New Delhi) and Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa, the Mleecha country.

We find Assam mentioned as Prāgjyotisa and also as Kāmarūpa in the Udyoga- and Sabhā-parvans of the Mahābhārata where the various nations and kings took side with the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas for the Kurukṣetra battle. The Sabhāparvan is a narration of the exploits of the Pāṇḍava brothers of Indraprastha (modern Delhi) who conquered kings and people of the north, the south and of the east and the west to levy tributes on them to celebrate a great sacrifice and a gathering of kings and sages with such festivity which they wanted.
Name of various states, people and rulers who were conquered and who were invited to the feast by the Pāṇḍavas are given in the Sabhāparvan of the *Mahābhārata*. These names as well as other names in another list in the Udyogaparvan of *Mahābhārata* as given and the various nations and kings who took side with the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas for the Kurukṣetra battle form a charter for antiquity and high prestige. Both in Sabhāparvan as well as in Udyogaparvan, Assam is mentioned as Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa.

Prāgjyotiṣa (*MB. II, 12-14*) is called a Mlechha kingdom (*Mb. II, 47. 12*). It was ruled by Bhagadatta who was mentioned with respect. Prāgjyotiṣa was placed in the north (*Mb. II, 23. 19*) but was also considered to be in the east.² There must have been mountains near his kingdom called *sailālaya.*³ Bhagadatta recruited his troops from the Kirātas, Chinas and the soldiers who dwelt in the sea coast (*Mb. II, 23. 19*). He is said to have lived with the confederacy of the kings on the Bay of Bengal (*Mb. V. 4. II*).

The Prāgjyotisa extended all four boundaries of Assam and also included or extended over some portions of North Bengal

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2. *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*, VII, 44
3. *Strīparva*, XXIII, 644
or Pundravardhana. Thus Prāgjyotisa is represented by Assam and probably some parts of North Bengal.

Bhagadatta, the king of Prāgjyotisa, presented fleet horses to Yudhiṣṭhira (Mb.II, 47.13) and vessels made of Asmasāra (which is semiprecious stone, either amethyst or Jade or Jadeite).

Bhagadatta’s other presents were handles of swords made of pure ivory (śuddha danta-tasarun asin / Mb. II. 47. 14), sword handles (tsaravah) made of horns of rhinoceros, buffaloes, the elephant tusks and bamboo roots or wood were common in Kautilya’s time.⁴

Prāgjyotisa could present ivory handles as the kingdom was full of elephants and was in abundance in Assam at ancient times. The reference of elephants in the force of Bhagadatta is also found in Mahābhārata. So, it is not unnatural that Prāgjyotisa could present ivory handles. If the jadaite came in the shape of vessels, then their manufacture should be attributed to the Chinese.⁵ It speaks of the extension of Kāmarūpa towards north.

Assam being situated in the trijunction, i.e. India, Burma and south West China (Yunān and Szechwān) formed not only high

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4. Arthasastra, p. 111
5. Dr. Moti Chandra, Geographical and Economic Studies in the Mahābhārata Uttarāyaṇa Parva, the U.P. Historical Society, Lucknow 1945
way for trade but also linked with the exchange of ideas. Nepal and Bhutan were also in the fray, the word China as Sanskrit word (c. 10th cen.) has been derived from TSIN Dynasty through Assam. The Tsin dynasty was in power from c. 211 B.C.

The Mongoloids and the Kirātas were well known to the Vedic Aryan. Their reference is evident in *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda*. They came in touch with the Aryans in later Vedic period. It is evident that the army of Bhagadatta comprised the Kirātas and Chinas. Taking them along with he participated in *Mahābhārata* war.

The tale of the heroic deeds of Bhagadatta featured very broadly in the *Mahābhārata* as an epic hero who fought by riding his elephant and was killed by Bhīma, the Pāṇḍava hero.

The entire episode is a fusion of Aryan—non-Aryan culture of North India and that was an established fact. Bhagadatta was symbolical of a Kirāta or Mongoloid chief who came within the fold of Brāhmaṇical world in the closing part of Vedic age.

The entire non-Aryan world accepted the composite religion and culture of Gangetic India and its way of life led the ruling classes embark upon fusion of entire non-Aryan tribe or people with ever expanding Brāhmaṇical Hindu fold which led to the acceptance of Sanskrit as a lingua franca of the then India and
the resultant Sanskritisation. Thus names of rivers, trees and places were Sanskritised. The name Lohitya, Prāgjyotīṣa and Kāmarūpa are nothing but approximation to that extent. Prāgjyotīṣa may be Sanskritisation of Austric words like path (Hill) + Gel (=Hill) + Jo (+ high) = tic (long) + land of high mountains.

The Austric base of the words Kāmarūpa and Kāmākhyā meaning a “Grave” a corpse is found linked up with the legend found in Purāṇa of Sati’s dead body being cut up and a part of it falling in Nilāchala (Kāmākhyā) hill in Kāmarūpa as referred earlier. The word Lauhitya is of course Tibeto-Barman “Luit” the meaning of which is lost.’ The scholar Sri Bishṇu Rabha has proposed to find the deflection of the Boḍo word “Bhullam butthur” meaning making of gurgling noise in the word Brahmaputra. Thus both Austric and Mongoloid place names were Sanskritised.

The Boḍos were dominant in Assam, in North Bengal and also in the adjacent hills and also spread in East Bengal and North Bihar linking simultaneously with the Niṣādas and Austric Khasis and Dravidians and other tribes of Kirāta origin extending from the Vindhyas to Kāmarūpa.
In the attempts of synthesis of these non-Aryan families, as of Bhagadatta, was linked up with some previous heroes etc. of the Brahmanical fold, e.g. Naraka was born of Viṣṇu and mother Earth and Bhagadatta was his son. This tradition links Assam with the Aryan India. Here the mention is necessary so far the extension of Aryanism in Kāmarūpa and to that context in Puṇḍravardhana and in Bengal are concerned. We find some evidence of the penetration of Aryanism in Bengal in the course of the eastern march of the Aryans. Here by Bengal it may mean modern West Bengal and erstwhile East Pakistan having part of Assam in Sylhet.

In the stories of Videgha Mādhava in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa we find the reference of Videha (North Bihar),\(^6\) as the earliest easternmost Aryan settlement.

From Videha it is noticed that Aryan culture gradually spread over the nearby or adjoining countries of Vāsudeva Puṇḍra (North Bengal) and also of the country of Jarāsandha, i.e. Magadha (South Bihar). Through Puṇḍra Aryan culture spread over to Prāgjyotiṣa\(^7\) (Assam). The origin of the name Prāgjyotiṣa might

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We find the story of Videgha (older form of Videha) Mathava carrying the sacred fire from Saraswati towards the east in the land of Videha.

7. Sabhīpaṇava where reference of the three names, Puḷa [za, Magadha & Prāgjyotiṣa are found.
have been derived from Prāgjyotisā, i.e. the early light or dawn. This seems a very clear indication of the easterly course of expansion of Aryan culture from North Bihar. At that time the condition might have been of semi-Aryanised nature and Prāgjyotisā might be under the Puṇḍras as there is no other specific reference of the existence of any powerful king other than Puṇḍra Vāsudeva, who was defeated by Jādava Kṛṣṇa, who married Rukmini from Sadiya later and there was marriage between Uṣā, the daughter of Bāṇa of Tezpur, and Aniruddha, the grand son of Kṛṣṇa of Dwārakā; thus Aryanism extended.

After the fall of Jarāsandha of Magadh it was Karṇa who fought against Puṇḍras and Vaṅgas. He was probably the pioneer to give shape of the future kingdom, of Prāsii and in course of time this area came under the kingdom of Prasii i.e. the empire of the Nandas and subsequently of the Maurya as of Pāṭaliputra (near modern Patnā in ancient Magadha) who ruled from the beginning of the fourth to that of the second century B.C. Greek writers discussed the emperor as the lord of Prasii, i.e. the Prācyā indicating the people of Bihar and probably of North Bengal and also it may be that Prāgjyotiṣa may be very much within the Prasii. As after the fall of Naraka-Bhagadatta there is no evidence of any important king in this area. It might be under the suzerainty
of the Prāśii. Further the Gangaridae (the people of south and south-east Bengal) another constituent kingdom of the area described by the Greeks, derived its name from the Metropolis, the city or Gaṅgā at the junction of the Gange and the sea (Bay of Bengal).

We find the reference of Puṇḍras as Dasyus in about the seventh century B.C. while another literature, i.e. *Aitareya Āranyaka* (II.1.1.) mentions the Vaṅgas and Vagdhas (Magadhas), apparently as non-Aryan people. This indicate that Puṇḍras, Vaṅgas and Magadhas came in contact with the Aryans as early as the seventh century B.C. although they were not aryanised to the fullest extent; similarly it may be surmised from that at the 7th century B.C., subsequently, people of Magadha and Aṅga is referred to having some Aryan blood, i.e. few partially Aryanised (*saṅkīrṇa-yoni*). But those of Puṇḍra, Vaṅga and Kaliṅga (Orissa) were outside the pale of vedic culture. It prescribed expiatory rites for the purification of the Aryan people visiting those areas and staying for short spell. But during *Mahābhārata*

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8. The Gangaridae of the *Periplug* and Ptolemy’s geography was situated in the lower course of the Ganges where Kālidāsa in later period placed Vaṅga; culturally Prāśii and Gaṅgāstra appears to be different basing on the degree of aryanisation. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII. 18.

9. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*

10. *Aitareya Āranyaka*

11. *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*
period Aryans started considering them pure along with the rivers of Bengal and Puṇḍradeśa. During this period Aryan culture was established. Manu also supports this:

Further Mahābhārata, the Vanaparva (8) tells thus:

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\text{"atha sandhyāṁ samāsādyā savedyaṁ tīrtham uttamam /}
\text{upapṛṣya nara vidyāṁ labhate atra samāstayah //}
\text{rāmasya ca prabhannatīrtham rājan kṛtampura /}
\text{tai-lauhityaṁ samāsādyā vidyad bahusuvarṇakam //}
\text{karatoyaṁ samāsādyā triṇātrapasito naraḥ /}
\text{aśvamedham-avāpnoti prajāpati //"}
\]

This verse indicates in broad about the fruits of visiting Lauhitya, Karatoya and Gaṅgāsāgara were the holy places of non-Aryan areas. Owing to bathing of Rāma the water of the river Lauhitya was purified. Whoever visited the area along with earning merit also received gold. If people took bath after fasting for three days they achieved merit equal to the merit earned at Aśvamedha sacrifice. If any-body takes bath in the western bank of Ganges he is freed from all sins. Aryans can visit those areas for pilgrimages only. These places were frequently visited by the Aryans even before considerable Aryanisation of Bengal and Orissa. In old Dharmasūtra Vaṅgadeśa was outside the pale of Āryāvarta. But in Manusāṁhitā the area of Āryāvarta was
from the western sea to the Eastern sea. So it included Bengal. *Manusamhitā*’s period is within 2nd cen A.D. So it was in between the period of *Mahābhārata* and Baudhāyana *Dharma-Sūtra*. The Aryanism was not fully established in Bengal during that period. Same is the case with the Puṇḍras as is evident from the verse:

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śankaistu kriyā-lopādimāḥ kṣatriyajātayaḥ /
vṛṣalastvaṁ gatāloke bṛahmaṇādārāsanena //
pouṇḍrakāścaudra dṛāvidāḥ kambojā yavānāḥ śakāḥ /
pāradāḥ pahlavāścīnāḥ kirāta daradāḥ khaśāḥ //
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*(Manu-Samhitā, Chap. 10. 43-44).*

In Pāli *Vnaya-Pitaka*, the easternmost area of Āryāvarta was Rājmahal. But in the Sanskrit *Vnaya-Pitaka* of later period Puṇḍra was included in 4th century A.D. in the Aryandom.

It is evident from the *Mahābhārata* that the third Pāṇḍava, Arjuna attained victory over the Prāgjyotīṣa king Bhagadatta having occupation over the Chinas and the dwellers of the sea-shore areas. The 2nd Pāṇḍava, Bhīma attacking Lauhitya and Brahmaputra Valley defeated the Mlechha king\(^{12}\) and the dwellers of sea-shore. Thus the kingdom was included to the political supremacy of the Pāṇḍavas and the successors. In the old age Inscriptions of Assam the Brahmaputra is told to be a sea having

\(^{12}\) Bhagadatta
pure water. The sea mentioned in the Bhätera Inscription of Sylhet is the water area of Slhet and Maimansing.\textsuperscript{13}

The earliest reference to the country was made by Ś."\textasciitilde{}khy"yana \textit{Grhyaśaṅgṛaha}. Brāhmaṇas refer spread of Aryan culture to the east of Karatoṣṭa but did not mention Prāgjyotiṣa.

In the period of history of Śoraśa-Mahājanapadas where we find the gradual march of the Janapada or kingdom of Magadha towards supreme ascendency, we do not find the name of Kāmarūpa as one of the kingdoms\textsuperscript{14} but we find Vaṅga along with Aṅga as twin states of the eastern zone. Buddhist works do not mention Prāgjyotiṣa; Nikāyas, however, mention Lauhitya.

It appears that in its gradual march Magadha, probably incorporated the entire zone in the north and north-east as we do not notice any other kingdom in the east save Magadha.

But it is required to mention that before the period of Śoraśa Mahājanapadas we find Vaṅga, Puṇḍra and Suhma as eastern states. Puṇḍra was not only North Bengal but being easternmost state covered further eastern areas. In the Sabhāparva (Chapter

\begin{footnotes}
\item Baudhāyana (1.1.2531), sixth-fifth century, B.A.
\item avantayonyamagadha surāṣṭra daksināpathah upṛta sindhu sauvire, etc.
\end{footnotes}
30.16) of the Mahābhārata Pāṇḍavas are credited to have subverted the Paunḍras and Vaṅgas and led their victorious army to Suhmma. In the Raghuvānśa of Kālidāsa a Suhmma or Sahmma is distinguished from the sea coast and the country of the Vaṅgas which Raghu attacked after crossing Suhmma and thereafter went to Utkal after crossing Kāsāi river in the west. In the Kavyamimamsā of Rājaśekhara the Suhmma country along with Brahma (to the north of Vaṅga) and Punḍra were included in the list of Janapadas of the east. The country was once conquered by Pauṇḍu and at another by Karna (Mahābhārata, Karṇaparva, chapter 8.19). It is placed between Vaṅga and Kaliṅga. In the Brhat-Sahmita it is stated that Suhmmadeśa was situated in the north of Medinipur and the adjoining areas. As referred earlier in the Mahābhārata (2/30), in the description of conquests of Bhima, it is stated that coming in the east Bhima after subduing Banga, Tāmrālipta, Kharbat and Suhma came to be known as the land of Sāgarānupavāsin and Lauhitya or in the region of Brahmāputra. There is reference of Prasuhmmas there close to ‘Samyukta Nikāya’ (5/89) and in Telapatta Jātaka (No.96) there is reference of Sutak or Deśak, city of Suhmma.

15. Raghuvānśa, 4, 35-36
16. aṅga-vāṅga-kaliṅgeśu-sauraṣṭra-magadheṣu ca
17. Mahābhārata, Adiparva, Chapter 113.
18. Tirthayātṛā Section of Vanaparva (III 85).
Although there was a controversy between Paunḍra and Puṇḍra as two races living in east and west of Bihar, but it seems to be one tribe. From Gupta edicts of Baigrām and Dāmodarpur Copper plate inscription it is found that Puṇḍravardhana was under the Guptas and in subsequent period its area included Bagura, Dinajpur and Rajshahi and boundary extended further. As far as Khalimpur inscription Vyāghrataṭī-manḍala, (probably) tiger inhabited Sundarvan area), was part of Puṇḍravardhana. So far evidences gathered from Trikāṇḍaśēṣa or as per Silimpur and Madhainagar Inscriptions Vārendrabhūmi was part of Puṇḍravardhana. If the evidence supplied by Sandhyakaranandi is believed than it may be -taken that the boundary of Vārendri was from the bank of Ganges in the west to Karatoyā in the east. From this it is proved that the north and south Vārendrabhūmi's extension was less than Puṇḍravardhana. According to Dr. Nihar Ranja Roy, Bagurā, Dinajpur, Rajsāhi and Pābnā contributed the old Vārendrabhūmi of which Kantānagar of Dinajpur district and Nātor of Rajsāhi district were two prominent towns. From the above discussion it appears that the area beyond Karatoyā in the east formed parts of Kāmarūpa.
Hiuen Tsang also visited Puṇḍravardhana termed by him as Pun-no-Tan-na-fa. (Capt-VI). Tāmralipti or Damalipti (modern Tamlok of Midnapore) is described as a city of Suhmmas; although Matsyapurāṇa and Raghuvamśa differ on this point. But according to Jaina Pannavāna, Tāmralipti was included in Vaṅga. Suhmmas are associated both with Mahāvīra as well as the Buddha. In the Āyāraṅga Sutta which is one of the sacred books of the Jainas it is stated that Mahāvīra travelled in the pathless countries of the Lādhas, in Vajjabhūmi and Subbhabhūmi where he was very rudely treated by the people. The Subbhabhūmi was the country of Suhmma people and Lādha later on came to be known as Rādhā. Lord Buddha delivered the ‘Janapada-kalyāṇi-Sutta’ while dwelling in a forest near the town of Deśaka.\(^{20}\) The area covered from south of Bhāgirathi to the north of the river Ajay was the Bajjabhūmi; sometimes it has also crossed the Bhāgirathi. Before the Senas it was part of Bardhamān-bhūkti. But during Lakṣmaṇsena it was part of Kaṅkagrām-bhukti or present ‘Kāṅkjle’ or (Kājaṅgala) the portion of the Murshidabad and Kāndi Mahkuma was part of the same. Besides this both Kātoa, northern portion of Birbhūmi Dist. and south paraganā was under Bajja. We get the reference of Bajja

in the Tāmil Book *Silappadikurhum*. As per commentators 'Bajja' was by the side of the river Son. Peculiarly enough we do not find the reference of 'Bajja' in Aśokan inscriptions. It may be that the area might either be under Kaliṅga or was under Kāmarūpa regarding which also there is no separate reference in Aśokan edicts.

Southern portion of Bajjabhūmi was Suhmma. It was not the Ajay but the Khādi was in between Suhmma and Bajja. But different inscription when analysed it appears that Bhurisristri (Present Bhurshut). Nabagṛām (Howra and Hugli district) and Damunyā (West of Damodar in Bardhamān district) were part of it. Its western boundary outcrossed Hugli and extended up to Ārāmbag sub-division. In *Mahābhārata* in the conquest of Bhīma, it is proved that, one corner of it was very near to the sea; undoubtedly it will be the southernmost end. It may be noticed that during *Mahābhārata* period Tāmralipti was near Suhmmabhumi and during Daṇḍi (eighth century) it became part of Suhmma. In this regard *Daśakumārakaritam* may be given same importance as a witness. The river Kāśāi may be in the borderline of Utkala and Suhmmabhūmi. But nothing definitely and stressing can be told of this fact. During the period of

Kalidāsa also the southern end was upto the sea. But Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy opined it to be upto the Rupnārāyaṇ river. Neither Kāvyamimāṃsā nor Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa throw light on this aspect except the statement that it is situated in the eastern end of India. But to them Tāmralipti was not a part of Suhmma as both Suhmma and Tāmralipti was referred to separately. From Matysyapurāṇa it is evident that present Howra, Birbhum, major portion of Bardhamān and north-eastern portion of Medinipur was within ancient Suhmmabhūmi and later on during 10th and 12th century A.D. Bajjabhūmi and Suhmmabhūmi jointly formed the ‘Rārhadeśa.’

Except the northern portion of present Bānkura dist. of Bengal the entire area was part of old ‘Vaṅga’. Even its west Border was upto the Kāsāi river of Medinipur. As per Jaina Prajñāpāṇa Tāmralipti was a city of Baṅga.\(^{22}\)

During Pālas and Senas its area got reduced further south and south-western part of Medinipur dist. and some parts of the district of Baleswar comprised Vardhamānabhukti. Mahābhārata states that Tāmralipti was not a part of Vaṅga. In the Deśavībhāga and in Kāvyamimāṃsā Rājaśekhara did not mention Vaṅga. As per Brhatsarīhita Vaṅga is in the east and south-eastern end of

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\(^{22}\) Indian Antiquary, 1891, p. RX-375
India. In the *Markandeyapurāṇa* there is reference of the term ‘Rangeya’ which is a mistake and the correct form will be ‘Baṅgeya’. Pargiter opined that present ‘Birbhum, Murshidabad, Bardhamān and Nadiyā comprised Vanga which was not accepted by others. In Idilpur inscription Bikramapura appears to be a part of Vaṅga. According to Binay Chandra Sen starting from the eastern side of Bhāgirathī it covered Maimansing, Kumillā, Tripurā, Noākhāli and probably Chattagrām. ‘vaṅga-lauhityāt pūrveṇa’ (Lauhitya-river = Brahmaputra) if it can be accepted in totality then it may be stated that gradually Vaṅga extended from the Mid-Bengal to the East Bengal. During that time Jasohan (Jessore), Khulnā and the adjoining area came to be known as ‘Upa-Vaṅga.’

At one time and according to many scholars Samataṭa and Vaṅga comprised the same tract of land. The former name got extinct but the later name was prevalent for long. By Samataṭa it meant the tract of land close to the sea. Hiuen Tsang also meant that. The extension of Samataṭa was five hundred miles. There is no doubt to the fact that starting from 24 Parganās and Khulnā Samataṭa extended up to the eastern end of Tripurā. According to Hiuen Tsang Karmāanta of Tripurā was the capital of Samataṭa. According to Ferguson it is Dhākā and as per Watters it was
Faridpur. In the Allahabad Prasati of Samudragupta there is reference of Samatata but there was no reference to its capital city.

We cannot avoid the term ‘Gauḍa,’ specially ‘pañca gauḍa’ as referred by Pānini. In his ‘Aṣṭādhyāyī’ there is reference of ‘pañca-gauḍa’. Both Kautilya and Pānini have referred to Gauḍa. It appears that since third century A.D. the fame of Gauḍa spread far and wide. Even the Rarh-deśa was also engulfed in the name of Gauḍa, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the eighth century Karṇasuvārṇa (Kānsonā of Murshidābād) was the capital of Gauḍa, present Māldah (Lakhanāvati) was part of Gauḍa. So it appears that Murshidābād, Māldah, Bīrbhum, Bardhamān and Harikela was under Gauḍa. So far location of Harikela nothing definite can be told. As per I-tsing and Rājaśekhara Harikela was in the eastern border of India. Noākhāli and Chattagram may be part of Harikela. As per Promode Paul Śrīhaṭṭa was the old Harikela. In this regard he cited two manuscripts of Arya-Maṇjuśrī-Mūlakalpa. But as per the Belava-lipi of Bhojavarman the site of Harikela is not in Śrīhaṭṭa as opined by some. So some are stressing on two Harikelas.

There is another land part of which was small in the area, and that was known as Chandradvipa. H. Beveridge opines that
"Chandradvipa was the name of a small principality in the distrist of which the capital was at first at Kachiā and subsequently removed to Mādhavpāsā. Dr. Roy Choudhury, Dr. R. C. Mazumder and Nanigopal Mazumder dealt on this subject. Madhavpārā Anusāsan of Biswarūpsena is also an indicator of Chandradvipa to fill up its vacant parts.

Thus the entire area right from Sadiya in the east to Karotoya in the west, the Himalayas and the Chinas in the North to Bay of Bengal in the south comprises the areas of Kāmarūpa and Puṃḍravardhana with their respective extension.

Bengal is not referred in Vedic hymns. Aryan Singers area extended as far as Bhāgalpur. In the Brāhmaṇas23 there is reference of people living in large numbers beyond the frontiers of Aryandom who were classed and known as Dasyus of whom we find the reference of Puṃḍras. Puṃḍranagara was the capital city of this ancient people. In the Aitareya Āranyaka24 there is reference of another early Bengal tribe, ‘Vaṅga.’ The text contain the word ‘vaṅga vagdhascrapada.’ The expression ‘vagdhah’ has been amended to Vaṅga-Magadhah’, i.e. the people of Vaṅga and Magadha. But it appears difficult to build any theory on the antiquity of the Vaṅgas.

23. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
24. II. I L Keith Alt. 191, 200.
The *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* divided the land into three ethnic or cultural belts as regarded with varying degree of esteem: the holiest being Aryavarta, the zone lying between the Himalayas and Western Vidhyas, watered by the Yumuna and the Ganges. The next one is the zone that stood in regard to veneration are Mālwā, east and south Bihar, south Kathiāwar, the Deccan and the lower Indus Valley. The last one, the outermost belt was that of the Arattas of Punjāb, the Puṇḍras of North Bengal, and the Kaliṅgas of Orissa and the Sauviras of south Punjāb and Sindh. Vaṅgas of central and east Bengal and the adjoining tracts; these people were regarded outside the pale of vedic culture and Aryans were to go through expiatory rites if lived temporarily among these people. Gradually the scene turned, the Vaṅgas were no longer avoided as impure and barbarous. The book *Rāmāyaṇa* referred them in a list of people that have intimate political relations with the high born ones, particularly Kṣatriyas of Ayodhya. The parties which were sent to search Sitā abducted by Rāvaṇa, the king of Lanka, in the south, were asked to search the land of the Puṇḍras and Māndāra. The mentioned place is probably Māndāran in western Bengal or Mandan Hill near Bhāgalpur.

26. II 1. L.V.
In the Epic Bhīma's exploits were described where he undertook a hurrícan campaign in the land of Bengal. Having crumbling and killing king of Modagiri probably Mongyer, he fell on the mighty Punḍra lords and those potentates who were on the banks of the river Kośī. Having defeated them he also attacked the Vaṅgas. Tāmraliptakas were also subjugated along with the Karvatas (apparently a neighbouring place) and the Suhmmas of present Hoogly district i.e. those living in the adjoining region and also the barbarians (Mlechhas).

To trace the geneology of Bhagadatta the reference is to be made of Nāraka, a prince from Videha who supplanted Ghaṭaka of Asura dynasty, the earliest of which was Mahiraṅga Dānava. Ghaṭaka was probably 4th in descent from Mahiraṅga.

Both Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata refer Nāraka. Also both Harivamsa and Kālikapurāṇa has detailed the event of the life of Nāraka. The legendary account is found reference in Viṣṇupurāṇa and Bhāgavatapurāṇa.

Naraka was born to Bhūmi (Mother Earth) by Viṣṇu and the child was found deposited in the sacrificial altar of king Janaka, its head being placed on the skull of a dead man. Till Nāraka was sixteen years old king Janaka made Nāraka to bring up along with other royal princes. Naraka was also taken care by
the mother earth who impersonated herself by a nurse named Kātyāyanī for his upbringing. Janaka had some misapprehension that one day Naraka may usurp his throne as Naraka superceded all other royal princes in the arts of war and peace. From the discussion from king Janaka and his queen Smt. Kātyāyanī, the nurse of Naraka, became perturbed and got alerted. On the pretext of pilgrimage Kātyāyanī took Naraka out of the capital and narrated to Naraka the real story of his birth that Janaka was not his father whom he will meet if Naraka further accompany Kātyāyanī to the river bank. She further told Naraka that Janaka was his foster father only and will not give any share of his kingdom to Naraka. Both Naraka and Kātyāyanī came to the Ganges from the Court. Learning the story of his birth Naraka came to recognise his putative father Viṣṇu. They came by water to Prāgjyotisha accompanied by Viṣṇu. Naraka became victorious in the fight that ensued with Kirātas from whom Naraka occupied Prāgjyotisha and was installed as king by Viṣṇu.27

Naraka, the forster son of Janaka, might have taken the advantage of the attention and weakness of the then prevailing situation and have established himself as a paramount power; he did not remain subservient to his paternal kingdom but made

27. Kalikapurāṇa, Ch. 37 ff.
Pragjyotishpura independent and established a separate line of kingship similar to the Janakas of Videha. The story of Naraka in *Kalikapurana* contemporary of Janaka made him linked with the event of *Rāmāyaṇa*. The Naraka royal house constituted many Narakas who ruled for a considerably long period. Last of the Narakas adopted non-Aryan habits and due to his turbulent nature was killed by Kṛṣṇa. *Kalikapurana* and *Yoginītantra* and other works make profuse reference of Naraka who was credited to have heavily Aryanised Kāmarūpa. His name is associated with the introduction of the Devī worship in Kāmarūpa, (B. K. Kakati, *Mother Goddess Kāmākhya*, pp. 35ff) having links with pre-Aryan Austric culture. Naraka dynasty is the first political dynasty of Assam.

It is very pertinent to mention here that even during the last of the Narakas the Pragjyotisha kingdom, as a matter of fact, as understood later on during the time of Bhagadutta, was not fully consolidated. Separate dynasty of Bāṇasura established himself in Šoñitpura area (i.e. Darrang district and North Lakhimpur sub-Division of the present time).

So far determination of the age of Naraka is concerned Dr. Kakati determines the age of Naraka of Mithilā. As a political adventurer Naraka established himself in Pragjyotisa between
200 A.D. and 500 A.D.

In several copper plate grants\textsuperscript{28} as well as in the Kālikāpurāṇa, Bhagadatta is mentioned as the son of Naraka. Also \textit{Herṣacarita} refers, Bhagadatta as being in the \textit{anvaya} line of the succession of Naraka.

In the \textit{Mahābhārata} Bhagadatta is repeatedly mentioned as powerful warrior. Bhagadatta helped the side of the Kurus and his daughter Bhānumatī was married by Duryodhana. He is called the mighty king of the Mlechhas\textsuperscript{29} and a warrior king and the best wilder of the elephant good among the kings assembled in the Kaurava side of the Kurukṣetra war. Bhagadatta had a long contest with Arjuna.\textsuperscript{30} He settled many Brāhmaṇas in Kāmarūpa.

According to some inscriptions Bhagadatta was killed by Arjuna in \textit{Mahābhārata} war and was succeeded by his son Vajradatta (Also brother according to some inscriptions).\textsuperscript{31}

\textit{Haragaurī Sambāda} along with other ruling king, stated that they will rule over \textit{pithas} of Kāmarūpa for 125 yrs. in the beginning of Kaliyuga succeeded by Dharmapāla. Number of rulers will rule Kāmarūpa after him. So far the racial feature of the people of ancient Assam is concerned we find an admixture

\textsuperscript{28} Doobi grant, Nalanda Clay, Sec. 1
\textsuperscript{29} Sabhāparva, P. I.
\textsuperscript{30} Udyogaparva, XVI
\textsuperscript{31} Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvalī, p. 10-11
of Caucasic Alpine and Aryan. The element of the Alpine is present among most of the tribes spread to the confines of South-East Asia in prehistoric time having origined from the Caucasian stock. 32 Subsequently they came down to the river valleys of Assam and Burma. Caucasian admixture is present among the Nagas who along with Mishmis, Khasis, Lushai and others, being of Hoo Mongolian 33 of Tibeto-Barman family came in contact with the Caucasian stock in central Asia as evident from their special features. This Caucasian strain is present among Ao, 34 Angamis and Mishmis; the Aryan features are present in all of them and note that might be purely Aryan. 35 Thus the absorption of Caucasian blood by some of the Mongoloid tribes of Assam cannot be ruled out.

The presence of the Alpine element is noticed as early by Indus valley civilisation. 36 Scholars like Hoernle and others have presumed two waves of Aryans of which one of them came earlier than vedic Aryans. This is on the basis of their contention of inner and outer band of the Indo-Aryan Languages. The Rgvedic

32. H. C. Chaklader, Man in India, XVI, pp. 183-89
34. Ao Naga Tribe, pp. 154f.
35. The Angami Nagas, pp. 20 f.
36. Marshal, Mohenjodaro and Indus Civilisation, II p. 643; Vedic Age I pp. 193 f
Aryan, being a branch of the Indo-Aryans entered India in about 2nd millennium B.C. The first entry of the Alpines although shrouded in mystery but it appears that they entered India through Pāmir region\(^\text{37}\) before the entry of the Rgvedic Aryans who dashed against Indus valley civilisation. The view of earlier migration of the Alpines is supported by Haddon,\(^\text{38}\) T. A. Joyce and others. A branch of them entered in Punjab as is evident from Indus valley finds. Another branch of the Alpine might have entered the east and became the ancestors of those speaking in languages of the outer band such as Oriya, Bihari, Bengali and Assamese. The origin of the Vrātya culture to the Aryan speaking Magians or Aryans allied to the Alpines was traced by N. N. Chosh. The Alpine settlement in Eastern India and Assam is supported not only by the presence of brachycephalic leptorrhine features among the higher classes to the extent that the Austric and Dravidian speech were long superceded by the Aryan speech of Alpines. The cultural trails of the Alpine Aryans are still present in people of Assam.

The Mediterranean-Aryan spread up in Punjab and Madhyadeśa and probably got mixed up with Alpine Aryan culture of Eastern India of later period and the result was Neo-

\(^{37}\) CRI, 1931, 1,1, pp. 368, 445 f.

\(^{38}\) Races of Man, pp. 60 f. The Wanderings of Peoples, p. 27
Aryanism. Although Alpines sufficiently contributed in Eastern India but later on the cultural trails got mingled to an indistinguishable extent with the coming of Aryans.  

The Vrātya culture, having close similarities with that of the Magians of Iran suggested by the association of the names of Prāgjyotisha-Kāmarupa famous for its magical practices and planetary worship is having affinities with the Alpines. The language of Assam is having some distinct tune having similarities and traces with Indo-European language words, e.g. ‘batar’ (stands for weather in English and ‘wetter’ in German); ‘Bagā’ is ‘white’ having Slavonic ‘bogue’, ‘kalla’ (cow calf) in Assamese is ‘kalb’ in German and calf in English etc. The disposal of the dead by exposure in the past in Assam was a Magian Iranian practice introduced by the Alpine. The practice of uncleanliness of women menstruation and the lighting of fire by the side of the dead before and after cremation are having similarities with Magian practices.

The anthropological studies have more or less confirmed that the higher classes of Assam and Bengal having an Alpine origin, which is a predominant class. They are having very close affinities

with the people of Eastern India and also of outer provinces of western India as well. This Vrātya culture associated with the Mlechhas, as called by the Vedic Aryans, had the same Alpine origin.

Sri B. S. Guha has shown the Nagar Brāhmaṇas of Gujrat, Khos and central, Oriya and Kanarese Brāhmaṇas, Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas of Bengal are close to the basic Alpine stock. Epigraphic evidences of Nagar Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas with their surnames Datta, Deva, Dhara, Nandi, Sena, Vasu etc. both in Western India and as found among the donees of Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskara of the seventh century A.D. points to the influence of the Alpines in Kāmarūpa. The political history of Assam is wrapped up in legends which are linked up with the kings of Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa. The connected history is scanty, confused and scattered and lacks corroboration from archaeological evidences. Attempts are made to search out a continuous history from the unconnected account. The names of the early kings and the capital of Prāgjyotiṣa (an Aryan or an Aryanised one) find mention as early as Śāṅkhya-yāna Grhyasamgraha\textsuperscript{42} and the Rāmāyaṇa.\textsuperscript{43} These are clear indication of the Aryan and non-Aryan contact since earlier times. The

\textsuperscript{42} Chapter II. 38.

\textsuperscript{43} Ādikāṇḍa, 35.
legends depict the contact of the non-Aryan chief with the Aryan.

Among these contacts the non-Aryans Naraka and Videha king Janaka needs reference. Even before Naraka legends, connected with political history, are found the Kirāta chiefs of Mongoloid origin, having an admixture of Alpine blood, during the Alpine settlements in Eastern India, the Kirāta group of people came first. The earliest of the Kirāta king was Mahiraṅga-dānava having his capital at Mairāṅka, associated with Moirāṅka-parvata in Beltolā near Guwāhati but the period of establishment is not known. Mahiraṅga-dānava was succeeded by Hāṭaka, Sambara, Ratna and Ghaṭakāsura. The last one Ghaṭakāsura is said to have been killed by Naraka (his details was given earlier) with the help of Kṛṣṇa when the former established his kingdom at Prāgjyotisa. Bhagadatta followed him succeeded by Dharmapāla, Kāmapāla and others ruling for generations. This was followed by the dynasty of Mādhava who came from West. His son Lakṣmīpāla invaded Gauḍa. His another son Sabāhu retired to the Himalays succeeded by his Minister Sumati followed by others including 21 kings. No epigraph of Assam refer the Kalitās who were of Alpine origin. But the early Indian and classical sources narrates their early settlement in Assam. In this regard

44. K. L. Baruah, *JARS*, VI, pp. 67-71
classical sources deserve reference. Hecataeus’ reference to Kakatiai 45 and Herodous’s reference to Kalitai 46 —both the references mean the Kalitās. In this regard the contention of Shri P. C. Choudhury deserve mention........”. If Benfey is right in deriving the gold coin ‘kaltis’, mentioned in the ‘Periplus’ from the Kalitās,47 it may be held that these coins recall the ruling family of the Kalitās probably of Bhagadatta. Kudutai of Ptolemy, taken from Koluta48 may also mean for the Kalitās. Colubae, referred by Pliny, the Roman economist, beyond the Ganges in the east, identified with Kalitas, may also mean the Kalitas.

So far the early Indian sources are concerned the Epics, the Purāṇa and the Mudrārākṣasa refer to the Kolutas and on the basis of their geography there is good amount of possibility of their identification with the Kalitās who has a great contribution in Assamese culture and this culture of the Kalitas is one of the oldest in Northern India. B. K. Kakati believes that there were early settlements of the Kalitās near Sadiya (Kalitādeśa) on Gopal Ātā’s geneology, a sanskrit treatise, this assumption is

45. Mc Crindle, Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature, Intro. - XIV
46. Megasthenes and Arrian, p. 6 (fn)
48. Gerini, Researches on Ptolemy’s Geography, p. 356
based. Besides the Alpine Aryans there were also Kalitās in Assam. Dalton\(^49\) considers that the Kalitās were the earliest Aryan colonists of Assam and they were not Koches held by Hodgson.\(^50\) Weddel contends that they were the mixed descendants of the Indian Kāyastha\(^51\) origin of the Kalitās.\(^52\) The ancestors of the Kalitas entered India from the West, settled in Upper India, and entered Assam and they were the Kṣastriyas.\(^53\) The theory of the Kṣatriya origin has been ascribed by many, e.g. A. C. Agarwalla, R. K. Bordoloi and L. N. Bezbaruah whereas Sri K. R. Medhi differed but opined that the Kalitās entered Assam before the Vedic Aryans and were non-Vedic Aryans. Possibly they entered through north,\(^54\) according to him. That these non-Vedic Aryans were present in Assam is accepted by many and it is believed that central and lower Bengal was aryanised long after the Aryanisation of Assam Valley. So far the name Kalitā is concerned a theory of a ‘kula-luptā’ (concealment of caste) is ascribed by some to this group of people. S. C. Goswami holds views that they were high class Kṣatriyas. Different purāṇas project their nomenclature differently. Śāntiparvan of the

49. *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 32f.
50. *Aborigines of India*, p. 141
51. *JASB*, 1900, III, p. 49
52. *Descriptive Account of Assam*, pp. 262-263
54. *JARS*, III, pp. 75-88
Mahābhārata (49) helps supporting the theory. A class of people called ‘koluta’, ‘kulutā’ or ‘koltā’ and a country called ‘kulutu’ are stated in ancient work. According to Brahmāṇḍa- (49), Vāmana- (13) Padma- (3) and Garuḍa-purāṇas (55) this ‘koluta’ lived in the foot hills of Himalayas and some of them were known as Vrātya Kṣatriyas. In the Karṇapavan it is found that a Koluta king fought against the Pāṇḍavas. Kolutas or Kulutas also find reference in Harṣacarita, the Mudrārākṣasa and in other works. S. C. Goswami contends that this ‘kolutas’ once lived from Kāshmir to the foot hills of the Himalayas and that the Kalitās of Assam were their descendants.55 The connection of the Kolitās with the Kolutas and with Buddhist Koliyas appears almost certain but this does not indicate the racial origin of the former except their Kṣatriya connection which is doubtful. The Kalitās are also similar to Kabatikās of Viṣṇupurāṇa56 and Kariti.57 This points to the southern habitat of the Kalitās. This surmise is based on cultural affinities between Assam, Bihar and the south.58 But only cultural affinity may not be that definite with regard to the original home of the Kalitās in the south; possibly the Kalitās represent a wave of the Alpines and that they are the torch bearers

55. JARS, 1933, p. 68
56. Viṣṇupurāṇa, XIV, 128.
57. Bhismapurāṇa, IX 44.
of the Vrātya culture of Eastern India. They were the origin of the Kalitās of Assam and also of Sadiya. Anthropometry also indicates the Alpine origin of the Kalitās having their entries not only from the west but also from the North and the Assam-Burma route is perhaps supported by the resistance of a people with Caucasian strain as appears from their present broad features and tall physique or allied people in Nepal or in Sadiya region. It also appears that they originated from the Alpines of a priestly order. Allied to this are the Nāgars of Gujrat and Kāyasthas of Bengal. The Khāsa tribe is often described as Khāsia in that book. There are two hundred and eighty sects of Rajputs in list but the great mass of these are simply Khāsias called after the villages inhabited by them. "The Khasa present in various writing to denote a tribe inhabiting in the Himalayan zone including the easternmost part specially of Kāmarūpa. This nomenclature Khasa being very much similar to the word Khāsia, the inhabitants of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. In Sanskrit literature, the tribal people, are often described specifically by their tribal name like Khāsa, Puṇḍra and so on.

59. Himalayan Gazette.
The word Kirāta indicate a person with a pig or mountaineer who travels upto the last limit of a mountain. The word Mlecha⁶⁰ expresses the idea about person having indistinct tongue having the habit of life, i.e. Varṇa and Āśrama, dharma and believing in four castes in society and believing in the eternity and rebirth of soul and on the Veda. The name of tribes as of the Paunḍras, Audra, Drāviḍa, Saka, Pahlava, Darada, Cina, Kirāta, Khasa etc. are often mentioned in Sanskrit records as fighters and the vast land inhabited by them was known as Mlecchadeśa, i.e. the land of the tribals. Manusamhitā recorded that the above tribes were at first accepted as Kṣatriyas by the Aryans being fighters; but for their non-acceptance of the Aryan style of life they gradually sank in the world to the condition of the Śūdras. They did not follow the Varṇāśrama Dharma as of the Aryans.⁶¹ Baudhāyana defines -

\[
\text{“gomāṁsakhaḍaka yastu viruddham bahu bhāṣate /} \\
\text{sarvācāravihinaśca mleccha ityābhidhiyate //” p. 182.}
\]

-Prayaścittatattodhṛta Baudhāyana vacanam, Śābdakalpadruma, p. 1549, i.e. Mleccha (Tribals) are the

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⁶⁰ Mlecha (A) the derivation of the word in Sanskrit stands thus; mlechayati assamskṛtam vadati, śiṣṭācār vihino bhavati : Baudhāyana. The people who speak confusedly or indistinctly or who did not follow the rules and regulation of Aryan institutions.
consumers of beef and they do not speak in conformity with the Aryans and they do not follow the manners and customs of the Aryans.

(The Students Sanskrit-English Dictionary). 450.

A. Mlecchadeśa:

bhāratavarṣasyāntataḥ sīḍṭācārarahita kāmarūpa-
upavaṅgādīḥ caturvāryavarṣṭaḥ yasmin deśe
na vidyate mleccha desasataḥ / sa vijñeyah āryāvartta
tataḥ paramiti ... (p. 182).

-Baudhāyana, Radha Kanta Dev Bahadur (ed.) Śabda-
kalpadruma, p. 1549.

Kāmarūpa and Bengal and other parts around (kāmarūpa-
vaṅgādī). Situated in the extreme corner of Northern India
(Āryāvarta) were people who do not follow the rules and
regulations of the caste system of the Aryans was called
Mlecchadeśa, i.e. the country of the tribes. Manusamhitā (Comm.
Kulluka and Medhātithi).

“paunḍrakāścaudra-drāvidāḥ kamboja-yavanāḥ śakāḥ /
pāraḍaḥ pahnavaśceināḥ kirātāḥ daradāḥ khasāḥ //
sanakaistu kriyālopādirnāḥ kṣatriyajātyāḥ /
vrṣalatvaṁgatāloke brāhmaṇadadarśanena ca //” - 43 (p.182)

- Manusamhitā (Comm. Kulluka and Medhātithi),
The Mlechhas named Paundra, Audra, Drávida, Kamboja, Yavana, Śaka, Părada, Pahnava, Cina, Kirāta, Darada and Khasa are at first considered as Kṣatriyas but in consequence of the omission of the sacred rites and their non-consulting the Brāhmaṇs the above mentioned tribes of the Kṣatriyas have gradually sunk in the world to the condition of the śudras. Manusamhitā, B. āgama virātasesan ye mata pratipādakah / vedamantravihinastu caturvarṇavivarjitam // 26 , p. 182. Pancanan Tarkaratna, Kālikāpurāṇa, v. 28. p. 841.

The Tantric teachings which would make explicit the greatness of Kāmarūpa became obsolete and the system of four Vedic institutions were also not followed by peoples of Kāmarūpa. In Sanskrit literature there is reference of vast tribal belt or kingdom to the north and north-east of India which extended upto the Eastern ocean or Southern Ocean.  

Khasas were the martial tribe of India and that they were the aborigines of India living in eastern part of the Himalayas.

61. Kādambari, edited by M. R. Kale, p. 164 :
"Then as he who subdued in due course the whole surface of the globe wandering having circumstanced the earth, he once conquered and seized the city called Suvarṇapura which was not very far from the eastern ocean and was the residence of the Kirātas who dwelt on mount Kailāsa."

62. Manusamhitā, vide note at p. 3 (i)
In the Rgveda there is frequent reference of the strong-built cities of the aborigines, their cattle, their wealth, land and jewels. These prove the existence of a flourishing civilisation of these non-Aryans, viz. the Muṇḍās and the Drāviḍian who maintained a considerable culture through trade both inland and foreign.

These primitive Muṇḍās and Drāviḍians and other people of Austric origin are described very often by the name Kirātas in the earliest records of India; these Kirātas were dwellers of eastern part of India.

The reference of the Kirātas for the first time was found in the *Yajurveda*. In the *Atharvaveda* also a Kirāta girl digging a herbal medicine on the mountion is recorded. The Kirātas are described as island dwellers in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The Ganges and

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63. The Kirāta is for the first time found in the *Yajurveda*, Śukla-Yajurveda, Vājasaneyī Samhitā, XXX, 16; also in Kīśṇa-Yajurveda, Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa, III. 4.12.1. Suniti Kr. Chatterjee, *Kirāta-jana-kṛti*.

64. In the *Atharvaveda* (X.4.14) there is reference to a 'Kirāta girl.' (Kairatikā) who digs a herbal remedy on the ridges of the mountains. (kairātikā kumārīkā saka khaṇāti bheṣajam hiraṇyabhīr girināṃupasāneṣu), p. 183

In the *Atharvaveda* it is recorded that Kirāta women exchanged with the Aryans medicinal herbs for skins and mats.

65. *kīrātastiknaḍāśca hemābhaḥ priyadarsanāḥ i 27
āmaminaśaṇaścāpi kirāta dvipavāsaṁaḥ /
anṭarjalaścāgra ghorā naravyāgra iti smṛtaḥ i 28
Rāmāyaṇa, Kiṣkindhya-kāṇḍam, 40th chapter, p. 539.*

The Kirāta people used to make top-knot by their hair and their complexion was as yellow as gold and they were good looking too. They used to take raw fish and they were dwellers of islands. They would swim in water and they were strong as tigers.
the Brahmaputra deltas are seen crowded with the Kirātas or Mlecchas in the description of the *Mhābhārata*.

The Kirāta dwelling region has been described as the country of the Kirhādae in *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* as lying west from the mouth of the Ganges. The habit and the nature of the Kirāta people are very much similar to the nature and habit of the tribals having Austric origin residing in the eastern zone since ancient days.

Kirātas were also located in eastern Nepal. They were applied to any hill-folk, no doubt aborigines. In later vedic period they were taken as the degraded Kṣatriya origin. But they were advanced in civilisation or in military organisation than the barbarians.

It is referred in the Purāṇas and Dharmaśāstra that once the feet of the Garo, Khasi and Jaintia and Cachar Hills were washed by the water of the Red sea, i.e. the Lohita Sāgarā.

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66. In the *Kālikāpurāṇa*, the ‘mlechhas’ of the *Mhābhārata* are described by the name Kirātas.
67. “Kirrhādae, is mentioned in the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* as lying
68. *Vedic Index*, Macdonell & Keith on Kirāta, referred in S. K. Chatterji in *Kirāta-Jana-Kṛti*, p. 17
69. *ibid*
70. *Māṇava-Dharma-śāstra*
71a. Nagendra Nath Vasu, the *Social History of Kāmarūpa*, Vol. 1, p. 43. It has been observed before that a time was when Lohita of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and Pūrva-Sāgarā of the *Manusārīhitā* (*Māṇava-Dharma-śāstra* and *Kālikāpurāṇa* spread over a large part of eastern Bengal washing the feet of Gāro-Jaintia and Cachar Hills.
71b. *Mahābhārata* (Haridas Siddhāntavagisa), Sabhāparvan, Ch.29, p. 256,257 ‘sāgara-tipavāsinaḥ’ =sāgara-tiravāsathah (p.183) the people residing in and around sea-shore.
of the ocean is so named as the river Lauhitya (Brahmaputra) of the eastern region falls into it forming a vast delta including small island on its mouth.

The inhabitants of this region is called Mleccha, i.e. non-Aryans (Tribals) in the Mahābhārata and they were also described as ‘sāgarnūpavāsinah’, meaning dwellers of the sea-shore or dwellers not very far off from sea-shore. Probably for that reason the tribals residing near the sea-shore are described as island dwellers in the Rāmāyāna.

The Greek philosopher of the 5th century B.C. Herodotus described the region in his accounts. The limit of the ocean is shown by the name Erythros, Thalasses,72 extending up to the country of sunrise is described. This was the extension of the eastern boundary of landmass as known to the Greeks during that time.

The Greek word ‘Erythros’ is red and ‘Thalasses’ stands for ocean. Here the country of the Sunrise is invariably the country of Prāgjyotisapura as the meaning of the word is a country where the

72. The Greek word ‘Erythros’ meaning red and ‘Thalasses’s’ meaning sea. So, the whole expression “Erythros Thalasses” “signifies the red sea”. Lohita-sagara, i.e. the Bay of Bengal. Herodotus, History pp. 1, 180, 189. Herodotus, during 5th century A.D., wrote of an Ocean named Erythros. Thalasses means Red Sea also known to the Greeks as the easternmost boundary of the world. The Red Sea. Being within this boundary of that was well known as South Sea (Daksīṇa-samudra), p. 216, Bratindra Nath Mukhopadhyaya, Bhārat Mahāsāgar kave o Kothāy, p. 23 (Desh)
aura of sunlight come first. This is also the country where the river Lauhitya (Brahmaputra) flows forming a great delta on its mouth before it joins the red sea (Bay of Bengal) which once covered the southern boundary of Garo, Khasis, Jaintia and Cachar hills.

Thus it can be concluded that the Khasi people were austric in origin residing in the Surma Valley and Brahmaputra Valley close to the Bay of Bengal since very remote time. They must be the Kirātas or Mlecchas of Indian land. Dr. Suniti Chatterjee is of opinion that India is the original abode of the Austric people who spread to other countries of south-east Asia from India. The astronomer of repute and celebration Ptolemy of Alexandria of 2nd cen. A.D. mentioned in his book 'Geographica Hotegacia' that in the mountain ranges of the Himalayas there were Khasi tribe whose eastern boundary was 'Regio and Kasia monte'.

Bāñabhaṭṭa also refers the whole of North-Eastern region as an abode of the Mlecchas and the name of the region is Suvarṇapura meaning country of Gold. It extended upto Himalayan ranges towards north and eastern sea (Bay of Bengal) to the south.

73. "The original Austric speech appears to have been characterised in India and then it spread into Burmah and Indo-China, the Peninsula of Malaya."
    Suniti Kr. Chatterjee, Kirāṭajanaṅkṛiti, p. 5

74. "The Kasia region and the Kasi Montes beyond mountanaes." were inhabited by same races Kash whose dominations at some period probably extended from Kash for to Kashmir in south of which they left their trace.

75. Kādambari
Arunachal Predesh a vast region is named Suvaṇśiri (Suvarṇaśiri) even today; the meaning is exactly similar to the name as mentioned by Bāṇabhaṭṭa. In the northern boundary of this kingdom remains a vast forest and beyond is situated Kailāsa mountain.  

‘Khryse Khore’ (Suvarṇadeśa) meaning a land of gold is described so far this eastern region is concerned. In the Mahābhārata it is referred as Hāṭakapura meaning a country of gold where the Pāṇḍava brothers Bhīma and Arjuna entered during their eastern conquest of the country, i.e. the land of the tribals.

The expression ‘Khryse Khora’ (Suvarṇadeśa) as described in Periplus Tesh sounds very much similar to the name in which the ancient Khāsi people were habituated to introduce themselve, i.e. “Cussey”. They also used a second name ‘Khara.’ When these two are joined it stands as “Cussey Khara” which is similar to Khryse Khora as mentioned in ‘Periplus Tesh.’

The Khasa tribe and their habitat are described in the

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76–77. In ‘Periplus Tesh’, the eastern region is described as ‘Khryes Khora’ or country of Gold. In Kādambari of Bāṇabhaṭṭa the same region is Suvaṇnapura and in Mahābhārata ‘Hāṭakapura’, a city or country of Gold. Bāṇabhaṭṭa Kādambari, Haridass Siddhantavagisa, p. 184. ‘tataḥ kramenavijitasakalabhuvanaatalaḥ pradaksina kṛtya vasudhan paribhraman kadācit kailāsasami-pacārinam hemakūtadāpanam kirātānām suvaṇnapurānāma nivasthanam nātīvipraṇātam. pārvajalānijijitvā jāgraḥa.’ (p. 183). There was subdued in due course the whole surface of the globe wandered about having circumambulating the earth he once conquered and seized the city called Suvaṇnapura which was not very far from the eastern ocean and was of the Kirātas (tribals) who dwelt on mount Kailāsa.

78. Same as 76 & 77
Mahābhārata in several occasions in the Sabhāparvan. The description one is thus: "During Arjuna’s eastern expedition in the tribal countries he entered the country of the Khasas around which many other tribal territories extended (Tribal belt). Arjuna made all those kings pay tribute to him. Here the ‘Khasa’ country is shown as situated between the Meru and Mandara mountain ranges and the river was named ‘Śailoda’ flowing through the vicinity of the Khasa country. That river is always filled with snow melting water of the high mountains, The site of these tribal countries are very charming as the surroundings are bordered with rows of air tight bamboos making pleasant audible sounds."

A critical examination shows that the area is the country of the Khasi and the Jaintia along with other tribes in the region living since long (i.e. time immemorial).

As Arjuna entered the eastern region it cannot be this Himalayan

79. Mahābhārata, Sabhāparvan, Chapter 28, p. 322 where it is written “kimpuruṣadesam hātakapuram viṣjitvā arjunasya indraprastha nivartanam.” Conquering the country of Hātakapura Arjuna went back to Indraprastha.

80. ‘punāścāparivṛtyam kṛtvā madhyama deśamīvṛtyam // 42
gatvā prācindīśam arājan savyasāci parantapah /
merumandarayo madhye śailodāprayāḥ / 43
ye te kīkāvenunām cha yena ramyamupāste khasān /
jhasauśca haydınān pradhasān dirghavenukān // 44
paśupanśca kulindaśca tangaṇaṇ pratangaṇān //
ratnaanādāyā sarvebhya mālyā vantam tato yagau // 45
Mahābhārata, Sabhāparvan, Chapter 28, p. 323

81. The tribal Hatakapuram, meaning ‘Country of Gold’, p. 183, Arjuna went back to his capital Indraprastha.
area. Here by Meru it will mean the high mountainous part and Mandara speaks low high mountainous part than that of Meru. The area signifies the eastern part of the Himalayan mountain and the long mountain belt stretching in a north-west direction from the eastern part of the Himalayan mountain up to the Garo Hills to the west. Sailoda described as the river flowing through the vicinity of the Khasa country is none other than the Brahmaputra rich in snow-melting water of the Himalayan.

This was the particular region\textsuperscript{82} where the civilisation of the Kirāta people was established in the remote past even before Naraka. During the Rajasūya sacrifice Pāṇḍava brothers entered in and around that region for gathering wealth.

This kingdom is described as Vanarāṣṭra\textsuperscript{83} in \textit{Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa}. This includes the area from the south of Kailāsa to Prāgjyotisapura. These area cover a tribal kingdom that extended up to the Prāgjyotisapura in the south. Brahmaputra is known as Lohitya so far the upper eastern course is concerned.

In the \textit{Yoginītantra} the boundary\textsuperscript{84} area of Prāgjyotisapura and Kāmarūpa is described as the original abode of some tribes. It is

\textsuperscript{82} J. N. Choudhury in his article 'Khāsider Nṛttvik Paricay'

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{"daradastangamscaiva kulata vanarāṣṭrakaḥ sairisthā brahmaputra kasthathaiva vānara-ijyakah pūrvatīrantu kūrmasya padamete samastītah/"} Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa, Chapter 58, p. 252 (Pancanan Tarkatirtha). The country Darada, Kulata, Tangana, Vanarāṣṭra, Brahmaputra (Cachar) etc. are located on the north-east foot (part) of the Kūrma.
The tradition gives us to understand that the Khasis excavated their own gold and other precious metals, including copper, mica and lead. The ancient jewellers were from Khasis who used indigenous gold and silver in which the present heir-looms like the crowns and ornaments of neck, waist, arms and ears were produced.

The Khasi Syiems issued coins, gold mohurs, seals although some coins are of Nickel and silver.

“From the above accounts, it would appear that during centuries immediately before the Christ and in the early Christian centuries, the Kirātas were known to the Hindu world as a group of people whose original home was in the Himalayan slopes and in the mountains of the east, in Assām, particularly, who were yellow colour and presented a distinct type of culture. They were rich with all the natural wealth of minerals and forest products with which the mountains and hills and jungles where they lived abounded plants.”

Hence the idea that the Khasi people joined the sacrifice of Yudhiṣṭhira appears not baseless. Possibly during that time friendly

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86. The Jaintia Syems had gold mine of their own Syems of Nongstain, Malging, Shillong, Umden, Laphyas also had gold mine. They excavated gold from inside the hill on caves and extracted the gold grains from river sand. So the Jaintias could distribute gold and mohurs to the dolois annually.
relation between Khasis and Hastināpura was eastablished.

So far the extraction of gold is concerned from inside the hills and from the river sand of Kapili the Khasis had the experties. The river Kapili had the name ‘Svarnadi’ in the ancient Sanskrit literature. The Khasi’s gold being of a different colour from the gold used by the neighbouring states having an artistic technique of making different designs. Such proficiency in art cannot be possible without a long tradition and craftmanship.

Here it may be mentioned that the terms ‘sekyakāra’ Kaliā has been found in one of the copperplate inscriptions discovered in Surma Valley in Bangladesh. The name Kaliā is a non-Aryan one. He is seen as a sekyakāra, i.e. engraver or a jeweler or goldsmith. It was his profession. This name is not like the Brāhmaṇas. Sekyakāra was a Khasi who were reputed as goldsmith or blacksmith from earliest times. The Bengalis of Sylhet with whom they traded freely were employed as craftman and scribes by their chief.

Kāmarūpa stands for the region where Kāmadeva, the God of love took rebirth from ashes as burnt on the fury of Mahādeva for

87. Nidhanpur Inscription.
Dr. P. C. Choudhury noted : “The washing of Gold from the rivers and smelling of iron rocks particularly in Khasi hills have been practised for a long time past and the non-Aryans had a great deal to the develop-ment of these techniques.”

88. Suniti Kr. Chatterjee, *Kirāta Jana Kṛti*, p. 21
breaking his penance as per Indian purānic mythology.

Initially as evident from the two great epics *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* the area covered by the kingdom of Prāgjyotiṣapura-Kāmarūpa was outside the pale of Aryan civilisation but subsequently treated at par with Aṅga, Vaṅga, Puṇḍra, Magadha, Suhmma etc. (where the Aryan visitor was to take bath in holy water for removing the sin of travelling these areas). Its ruler was one Naraka, as referred earlier, and the country was bordering the land of the Kirātas and Činas. Naraka was contemporary to king Janaka of Mithilā. Local traditions speak of Naraka from whom all the royal houses in ancient Assam claim their descent although the accounts are very scanty referred. Still Narakāsura-path is in the back of Narakāsuragāon at Guwahati where the hillock exist. Narakāsurapatha is leading from the foot of the Nilāchāla hill to the plateau of that mountain.⁸⁹ Naraka is said to have married to daughter of the king of Vidarbha (present Sadiyā) previously known as Kaundina, the capital of Vidarbha. The tradition associates Rukmiṇī, wife of Śrī Krṣṇa, as the daughter of Vidarbha king, in the far east of Prāgjyotiṣa.

But tradition is silent over Bhagadatta in Assam. But the people of Śrīhaṭṭa and Mỵmensingh speak of the location of city of

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Bhagadatta in the hills and forests of north of Sylhet and Maimens Singh.

The verses in the *Rāmāyaṇa* speak of Naraka and Prājyotisa relating to the search of Sītā who was stolen by Rāvaṇa the king of Laṅkā, to unknown destination. Susena, the minister of Kiṣindhyā king Sugrīva addressed the vānaras (Monkeys) to search Sītā in the kingdom of Kāmarūpa in the west for, there he referred the words- “agādha varūnālaya” which although creates the impression of unfathomable western sea but may mean only a sea in general and “varāhanāmo parvata” which means only a long stretch not only in the western sea but also in the kingdom of Prājyotisa where he is hiding himself and Sītā with the abetment of his friend (a comrade in trade) Naraka of equally fierce propensities.

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‘yojanāni catussahasraativāro nāmo parbataḥ
suvarṇaśṛggaḥ sumahān agādhe varūnālaye

atra prājyotisāṁ nāmo jātarupamayāṁ puram

tasmin vasatī duṣṭātmā narakonāmo dānavah

tara sānuśu ramyeṣu viśālaśuguhāṣu ca

rāvaṇa sahas vaideha mārgitabyāntatataḥ

(Kiṣkindhyā, VIII L)
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*Kālikāpurāṇa* links up the tradition of establishing the adopted son of Janaka, the king of Videha, to the throne of Prājyotisa having the river Karatoyā to be its western most boundary.
A reference is noticed in the *Mahābhārata*. According to this a clue of Bhagadatta originating from a separate lineage from Naraka is found referred earlier.

*Mahābhārata* refers to king Druma in the family of Śivi, a *daitya* monarch. In that family Vāskala is mentioned as the best of these Asuras, from which Bhagadatta is said to have sprung.

\[
yastu rājasehibirnāma daityaḥ parikirtitaḥ /
druma ityabhivikhyātaḥ sa āsitbhuvi pārthivah //
vāskalo nama yasttesamāsit asura sattamah /
bhagadatta iti khyātaḥ sa yajñe puruṣarṣava //
\]

—Ādi Parva, LXVIII, 8-9

Vāskala, A son of Hiraṇyakaśipu (Awsavat) incarnated as Bhagadatta, “from an Index to the names in the *Mahābhārata*” — by S. Sorensen.

In Karṇa Parva there is reference of the commentery by Sanjaya narrating the names of the fallen heroes to Dhṛtarāṣṭra of his own army in which he mentions Kṛtaprajña as the son of Bhagadatta.

\[
bhagadatta suto rājan kṛtaprajña mahābala /
śenavacchārata sāṅkhya nakulena nipātite //
\]

—Karṇa, II. 17

But in the Harṣa-carita there is reference of king Puṣpdatta inserted between Bhagadatta and Vajradatta.
"...mahātmāhastasya (narakasya) anvayaḥ bhagadattra
puspadattra vajradattra prabhṛtiṣu vyatīteṣu bahuṣu
merupameṣu mahatṣu mahīpāleṣu......"

But in the inscriptions of Bhāskarvarman and Indrapāla, Vajradatta is described as the son of Bhagadutta. But in the inscriptions of Vanamālavarmadeva, Balavarman and Ratnpālavarmadeva, they are described as brothers. Doobi plate refers as under-

"....tasyatmajah śri bhagadattanāmā tadatmajam
varjradharaprabhāvah śri vajradattakṣipo mahātmā..."

But the Pārvatiya plates of Vanamālavarmadeva speaks otherwise - an opposite version in the line of the Bhauma king.

"kṛṣṇena tannihatyca sasṛṣṭau bhagadatta-vajradattākhyau/
tasyasutau tadvanitākaruṇaviāpahṛtahṛidayena/
"

In the Tejpur plates we get the repetition of the same portion. In Ratnapāla's 1st copperplate inscription Vajradatta is said to have received the kingdom when his brother died.

rājyantadāpa rucamastamite kharāṁśau
bhrāṭuḥ śikhīva valavāniha vajradattaḥ //

Same is in contravention to the tradition of Mahābhārata. In Kālikāpurāṇa we find the reference of the four sons of Naraka where the name of Vajradatta is absent.
In this respect the Pārībatiya plates of Vanamāla is very clear where it is stated that Vajradatta, the brother of Bhagadatta, became the king of Uparipattana when the latter became the king of Prāgjyotisa. The lordship of Vajradatta was due to the grace of Īśvara whom he had propitiated. (Parbatiya plate, verse - 5)

Bhagadatta, the Prāgjyotisādhīpati as referred in Mahābhārata and as referred earlier here was an ally of Duryodhana, the Kuru king and participated in latters’s favour in the Mahābhārata Kurukṣetra war between the Kurus and Pāṇḍavas. He carried with him the Cīna the Kirāta contingent in that war and fought heroically. Prāgjyotisa kingdom alongwith Lauhitya region also held North and South Bengal. The earliest reference we get on Prāgjyotisa is from Sāṅkhya-yaśa Grahyasāṅgraha for its association with solar cult while as per Rāmāyana the foundation of the city was laid by one Amūrtarāja. Whereas in the indigeneous Bodo language this area is also known as pāgār-ju-tik, land of extensive hills. Kāmarūpa over and above taking its root from mythical origin, as laid down in Gopatha Brāhmaṇa, originated from the history of Kāmadeva
after being burnt up by Śiva as referred earlier. It is also related to Kāmākhyā, Khasi ka-mei-kha, or the region where the ‘yoni’ of Satī fell. It is the seat of Kāmākhyā-tantra and figured as a ‘Pratyanta Rājya’ under the Guptas as evident from the Allahabad Pillar praśasti. Thus Assam took its root from Kāmarūpa-Kāmākhyā and Prāgjyotiṣa with its boundaries expanded as well as contracted in different time subject to political situations. Thus Yoginītantra narrates the kingdom of Kāmarūpa consisting of the areas of Cooch Bihar, Rangpur and besides the whole of Lauhitya (Brahmmaputra region) and also covers Manipur, Cāchār, Jaintia, parts of Mymensingh, Sylhet and western Assam.

In most of the land grants the kings of Prāgjyotiṣsapur styled as Prāgjyotiṣādhipati whereas in the grants outside Prāgjyotiṣapura the land is known as Kāmarūpa, e.g. in Allahābad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta. In Allahābad Pillar praśasti of Samudragupta of the Gupta dynasty there is reference of Kāmarūpa as ‘pratyanta rājya’ which paid obescience to the victorious Gupta monarch in his march of conquest. In the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva, Belava grant of Bhojarman, Silimpur grant of Prahāsa etc. we get the reference of Kāmarūpa- maṇḍala and Prāgjyotiṣa-bhukti; in the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva and in other records, Prāgjyotiṣa was the capital and Kāmarūpa was the kingdom.
So far the extension of the kingdom is concerned we get a very vivid description in the accounts of Hien Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, who visited India in 7th century A.D. during the reign of Harṣavaradhaṇa and in Prāgjyotiṣa Kumār Bhāskaravarma. He referred to Ka-Mo-lo-po\(^9\) (Kāmarūpa) having extension of 10,000 li. in circuit and the capital was about 30 li. It may be surprised from this reference that the name of the kingdom was Kāmarūpa and the seat of the kingdom was at Prāgjyotiṣapura although in Rāghuvaṁśa of Kālidāsa we get Kāmarūpa and Prāgjyotiṣapur as two kingdoms. But the confirmation of the two being two separate kingdoms is lacking for the dearth of materials. So Gait, in his History of Assam, identified Guwahati to be Prāgjyotiṣapur, the capital.

As referred earlier the reference of Cīnas and Kirātas\(^9\) who were parts of the force of Bhagadatta, led some scholars to think that in Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and in the frontier of China kingdom of Kāmarūpa was having jurisdiction. Here the extensive area of Bhagadutta’s empire is narrated. It extended as it appears, from the Himalayan ranges in the North to the Bay of Bengal in the south including the areas of Sāgarānupavāsibhi. It also covers the

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90. Doobi grant, Nālanda Clay Seal, ect.
91. Si-Yu-Ki' by Watters.
92. ‘sa kirātaiśca cīnaiśca vṛtah prāgjyotiṣabhavat anyaiśca bahubhiḥ yuddhiḥ sāgarānupavāsibhiḥ’
It requires to state here that Bhagadatta had to agree to recognize the supremacy of Yudhīṣṭhira due to conquest of Arjuna and Bhīma in the eastern region. Bhīma reached the Lauhitya region and compelled the Mlecchas and dwellers of sea-shore to pay taxes. Lauhitya although presumably outside the Kāmarūpa yet formed a part of Bhagadatta’s empire and the Mlecchas and Sāgarānupavāsins formed a part of Bhagadatta’s empire as Vassels.

Further Bhagadatta accompanied by the Yavanas brought jewells, swords and horses for the Pāṇḍavas. It is evident as narrated in Sabhāparvan (Ch. 51, vv. 14-16) that he did so as king of Prāgjyotiṣa. In the Udyogaparva, 26, 15-16 there is reference of Bhagadatta’s supremacy over Cīnas and Kirātas taking whom along with he participated in the Kurukṣetra war with one akṣauhiṇī soldiers of golden complexion. The Karṇaparva also reconfirmed Bhagadatta’s control over Kirātas and Cīnas and also on the dwellers of sea-shore which speaks of vast extension of his empire.

During this entire period mainly from 4th to the 7th century A.D. Kāmarūpa mostly maintained its hold over Puṇḍravardhana, Samataṭa, Vaṅga, Tripurā, Manipur, Jaintiā, Davāka and mainly south-east and part of south-west Bengal including temporary

93. Droṇaparvan, 25, 52 and also Pūrvasāgaravāsi, Udyogaparvan, 4. 11
control over Nalanda region. R. C. Mazumdar in his book *History of Bengal* has also agreed to this fact and thus the history of the the political, administrative, social and cultural extension of Kamarupa kingdom and Kamakhyā Tantra over the entire region is established. Kamakhyā hill is in Assam presently at Guwahati city on the bank of the Brahmaputra. The deity is the Mother Goddess Kamakhyā, the main deity of Kamakhyā Tantra, Assam was famous for Śākta. Tantricism. Worship of Kamakhyā became prominent in Assam after its site came to be recognised as the most holy pītha where the pudendum from the body of the Sati, cutting into pieces by Viśnu's discuss, had fallen. This led the spot being called the yoni pītha and it became a great place of pilgrimage for Hindu India and venerated by all as referred earlier.

Thus it is but a natural course of event, in the course of political history where different tribes have already settled in this area; thus took place fusion of different tribal and non-tribal people and that also with the settlements of very many north and south Indian people through the different land grants and agrarian system under various kings of Assam. Thus the Mon-khmers, the Tibeto Barmans, the Alpine Aryans, the Austrics were supposed to have contributed to the already existing megalithic builders. It is evident from the common artistic motifs as present in some of the ancient
megaliths. A very elaborate ritual is also connected with them. Different tribes were having different rituals worked out by them. But it is peculiar that the basis are the same. Thus the character of the people of Assam is the result of the fusion of the different tribes, non-Aryan and Aryan elements. The Chinese Traveller Hiuen Tsang admitted that the language of the people of ka-mo-lu-po is a bit different from that of the mid Indians. It is nothing but the result of that fusion of different racial elements. The different types of people as referred in the different land grants issued by different kings of Assam speaks to this direction.

Consequently the location of Assam being in one of the main migration routes for which Assam always considered to be a museum of races. All the tribes crossing Assam in pre-historic times has left their traces in the hills and valleys of Assam. Secondly, Assam as bordered by Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, maintains very easy links for the trade routes with neighbouring countries. Thereby through the tributeries of Ganges which links in the west with the Brahmaputra traversing the Assam Valley and leading upto the south; fourthly the route-Assam and Burma through Patkai pass was leading to the Hokawang Valley of Burma via Ledo-Maragherita Road (still well Road) and fifthly through Cachar-Manipur (More) road was

94. Watters.
95. Nidhanpur Copper Plate Inscription.
in the south-east. There was a regular trade route between Assam and China through upper Burma and Unan and also via Bhutan and Sikkim and Northern Bengal as evident from Chinese sources. Thus Assam being in the cross road of trade invited very many people, who contributed profusely for the growth of its material culture.

While we study the Purāṇas and other classical Indian literatures, Inscriptions of both North and South Indian kings, other Indian literatures, we notice a constant march of the Aryan culture in the East and Assam through slow movement of Aryan people. The Jain, Buddhist literatures as well as the different sources reached its zenith during 7th century A.D. Vṛātyas, the Vedic terminology, stands for the people of eastern India, which were earlier outside the pale of Aryan civilization. But even then there was steady march of the Aryans towards the eastern directions. Thus there is the legend of Māthava, the Videhan king, starting with the washing of Agni up to Karatoṣa or Sadanīrā thus Aryanising the area. It is suggested by Dikshitar that the Aryanisation of eastern India had begun in the age of Ṛgveda the credit for this achievement was given to Māthava of the Videha country and to his celebrated priest Gotama Rahguṇa. The very interesting legend in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, as referred earlier
and as pointed out by Weber, refers to Māthava, the Videha king, carrying Agni Vaiśvānara in his mouth with Rṣi Gotama Raṅguṇa as his priest. Māthava is said to have succeeded in Aryanising from Sarasvatī to Sadānīrā. In Assam too there are legends of Vedic Rṣis like Vasiṣṭha, Mārkaṇḍeya, Bhṛgu etc. Around the composition of Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa the Vedic Aryans had been slowly making infiltration beyond the Karatoyā zone. By the time of Aitareya Brāhmaṇa Vedic Aryans entered Assam in search of plant for the preparation of Soma for the richness of Assam in vegetation. Assam thus became the land of Aryan sacrifice. Thus the Mleccha country became a holy land after the defeat of Naraka by Kṛṣṇa. With the entry of Kṛṣṇa in Assam the area was Aryanised; thus by the early centuries of Christian era the Aryanisation of some areas of Assam is complete. According to Kālikā-purāṇa that furnished the genealogy of the family of Naraka, refer to his appointing of Hayagrīva as Commander-in-chief and Madhu for defending Prāgjyotiṣa. The latter along with Naraka was killed by Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa installed Bhagadatta, which is an Aryanised name, who was an ally of Kauravas. The Udyogaparva of Mahābhārata mentions Cīnas and Kirātas forming part of his military contingent supplied by him to his ally.

96. 'prācyamvaidīṣi devam somam rājanam-akhirnam / tasmāt prācyam diṣi kriyate // AB, 1.3.7.
Since then the assimilation of Aryan and non-Aryans started and the Aryan political and cultural ideals got adopted by the political rulers of this area. It is proved from the fact that the patronage was extended by the different kings of Varman, Sālastambha and Pāla dynasty to the Brāhmaṇas in Assam through different land grants \(^\text{97}\) and performance of horse sacrifice after vigorous conquest. Mahendravarman appears to be the first notable ruler of Kāmarūpa. He probably extended his empire at the cost of the Guptas and shook off their allegiance, if any. The performance of two horse sacrifices by him is noticed in clay seal of Bhāskara in the Nidhanpur grant and Doobi grant. Thus Aryan ideal of gift, grants, sacrifices and donations to Brāhmaṇa and students etc. started gaining ground in Kāmarūpa, too. The Aryan ideal of kingship \(^\text{98}\) was adopted in maintaining the administration of Assam and moulding and settling its pattern and kings of Kāmarūpa started playing a very dominant role in the dynastic and hegemononistic war of Aryāvarta of North India. Kings of Kāmarūpa did not lag behind to play their role for suppermacy in North and South Indian political struggles. Right from Naraka-Bhagadatta and till Vallabhadeva Kāmarūpa played a very dominant role in the history of India and the history of which will remain incomplete if we do

\(^\text{97}\) Nidhanpur Grant.

\(^\text{98}\) *Sukra-Nitisāra, Kauṭilya-Arthasastra, Kamandakiya-Nitisāra* were the guiding principles of the ideal of kingship.
not take into account the growth and development of the political history of Assam and its relation with the western kings. The Hindu ideals of kingship and paramountcy was the political stronghold of the kings of Kāmarūpa as they were wedded to it. The Maurya period of Kāmarūpa probably formed part of Magadha as in Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* we get the reference of Assamese Muga and Tasar and gold. But it is not clear why no Aśokan pillar was found in Assam although Huen Tsang referred to the Aśokan stūpas at Puṇḍravardhana. But by 1st century A.D. Assam extended upto the gulf of Meghna, probably upto Noakhali and Chittagong districts.

During the Varmans, established by Puṣyavarman, claiming the origin from Naraka-Bhagadatta, the Prāgyotīsa-Kāmarūpa kingdom extended upto Puṇḍravardhana, i.e. North Bengal and also included some portion of South-East Bengal. During Vanamālavarman and Bhūtivarman kingdom stretched upto Samatāta and Mahendravarman maintained the expansion by performance of two Aśvamedha sacrifices. Bhāskaravarman, after a temporary eclipse during Suscitavarman during the rise of Yaśodharman and his victorious march in Assam, again extended the kingdom upto Nālandā in the west, Samatāta in the South.

99. *JASB*, 1848 (Hannay).
Sadiya\textsuperscript{103} in the east and China border in the north in the 7th century A.D.

In the 8th century under Harṣdeva of the Sālastambha dynasty the kingdom again extended up to Gauḍa, Odra, Kaliṅga and Kośala areas\textsuperscript{104} maintaining its control over Puṇḍravardhana as done earlier by the various kings of this dynasty. Harṣadeva made the largest empire of Prāgyotisa-Kāmarūpa. Under the Pāla kings the extension is same as of Vanamāla and Bhūtivarman. But after a temporary decline during Jayapāla\textsuperscript{105} towards the end of his reign, as is evident from the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva, the latter revived the earlier political glory of Kāmarūpa.

The same extension was maintained even during the time of Vallabhadeva and it continued till the Senas and Muslim attack of Kāmarūpa. Jayapāla maintained his hold in North Bengal by donating land to Prahasa in Puṇḍra or Śrāvasti. The Tulāpuruṣa grant of Silimpur stone inscription, Tezpur plates, the area of Kāmarūpa in the west was maintained and not surrendered to the Vaṅga king. Tezpur plate, the Deopāṛa record simply states that Vijaysena “put down the prince of Kāmarūpa.” The then king of

\begin{itemize}
\item[100.] Doobi grant C.P., 17, Nidhanpur C.P.
\item[101.] Nālanda Clay Seal, Tezpur grant and Nowgāṅ grant.
\item[103.] Doobi C.P., 14
\item[104.] Paśupati C.P. of Nepal king.
\item[105.] History of Orissa.
\end{itemize}
Kāmarūpa, contemporary to Vijoy Sena was Vaidyadeva. The event might have taken place between A.D. 1142-45. The reference in Deopārā record does not mean that Kāmarūpa was invaded. Rather it means that the king of Kāmarūpa was assisted by Rāyārideva, most probably a vassel of Vaidyadeva in Tezpur as known from Tezpur plates of Vallabhadeva, who defeated the king of Vaṅga and won over eastern part of North Bengal (may be probably after initial defeat of Vaidyadeva, the venture of Rāyārideva may be a fresh one).

Prthu, the Kāmarūpa king, annihilated the forces of Bakhtiyar at North Guwahati as confirmed by the Kānavarasaśī Rock Inscription, dated Śaka 1127)(A.D.1205-1206).

Assam as is known in later time is the development of three geographical names Prāgjyotisa, Kāmarūpa and Kāmākhyā. It is the result of expansion and contraction of the boundaries, according to the political situation of different periods of the history of Assam, of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa. From the period from 4th century A.D. to 12th century the following dynasties ruled in Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa, i.e. (1)Varmans, (2) Sālsatambhas, (3) The Pālas, (4) Devas. And in Puṇḍravardhana area in Bengal portion the Chandras, Devas, Rātas and Khaḍgas. Śrīhaṭṭa had also its special role in the hegemonistic deals of these political powers.
The kingdom of Kāmarūpa, according to Yoginītantra comprised the whole of the Brahmaputra valley together with Rangpur and Coochbihār.106 The kingdom of Kāmarūpa included Manipur, Jaintiā, Cāchar, west Assam and parts of Mymensingh and Sylhet. The name Kāmarūpa is absent in local grants where there is only the reference of Prāgjyotiṣa. The local rulers are called Prāgjyotiṣādhipati. Besides Allahābad Pillar inscription Kāmarūpa is mentionned in the Silimpur grant of Prahāsa, Belava grant of Bhojavarmaṇa. Deopāra grant of Vijaysena, Mādhāinager grant of Lākṣmaṇasena, Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva where there is reference of Kāmarūpa-maṇḍala and Prāgjyotiṣa-bhukti under Vaidyadeva. These two administrative units occur in various records of different period. Their jurisdiction sometimes varies. Hiuen Tsang refers Kā-mo-lo-po (Kāmarūpa) having the extent of about 10000 li in circuit and the capital town is about 30 li. It appears that Kāmarūpa was the kingdom and Prāgjyotiṣapurā, identified with Gauhati by Gait, was the capital. In Abhidhānacintāmaṇi of Hemchandra there is reference of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. But in Raghuvaramaṇa they are described as two different nations. To suggest that Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa represented separate kingdoms with undefined boundaries there

106. Imperial Gazetteer, p. 331.
is however little evidence to that extent.

The extent of the kingdom of Prāgyotiṣa Kāmarūpa seems to have varied considerably from the reference of Cīnas and Kirātās. The reference of Cīnas and Kirātās forming part of the military troops sent by Bhagadatta for participation in Kurukṣetra war in favour of Dutyodhana, the Kuru king has led some scholars to think that it extended to Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and the frontiers of China.

In later period of history particularly during the Mauryas and Magadhan domination it might have formed part of the Mauryan empire or under their tutelege although no relic of Aśoka has been found in Kāmarūpa as already referred. About the first century A.D. the kingdom is supposed to have extended upto the gulf of Meghna, probably upto Noākālí and Chittaganj districts.107 During the 4th century A.D. the limits were pushed back to the east of Lauhitya. And in the 4th century A.D. Kāmarūpa, as a frontier state like Samatāta and Davāka, acknowledged the suzerainty of the Gupta monarchs.108 Then when the Guptas were on their decline the kingdom again expanded to include Puṇḍravardhana in northern Bengal, and portion of northern Bengal and portion of south-east Bengal including Samatāta, Tripura Noākhali and Sylhet. The

108. Allahabād Pillar Praśasti.
Samataṭa kingdom found mentioned in the Allahābad Pillar inscription considered covering the entire region enclosed within the lower part of the old Lauhitya and the hills of Assam and Tippera, Sylhet and Cāchār. The Varmans were able only to keep hold over Samataṭa for four generations from Mahābhūtavarman to Bhāskaravarman but the latter’s empire included the whole of Eastern India.109 Basing on Chandragarbhhasūtra of Narendrayasa (A.D.560) the Saktisaṅgama Tantra and the Sammohatantra extension of the boundary of Kāmarūpa was from Kāleśvara to Svetagiri and from Tripura to Nilaparvata, with Gaṅeśagiri lying the heart of this kingdom.110 According to Hiuen Tsang Kāmarūpa lay to the east of the Karatoyā while the Yoginītantra includes the country of the Brahmaputra together with Rangpur and Coochbihār in it.

The findspot of Bhāskaravarman’s seal in Nālandā, the evidence from the Nidhanpur grant, the Paśupati record of Jaydeva coupled with the testimony of the Chinese pilgrim and his biographer speak of the expansion of the territorial limits of Kāmarūpa kingdom under Varman rulers which include areas like Karṇasuvarnā, Puṇḍravardhana and probably eastern part of Nālandā.

Subsequently came Harṣadeva in the eighth century A.D. who probably held the largest empire than any previous ruler occupying Gauḍa, Odra, Kaliṅga and Kośala, may be for a shorter duration, after which rulers of Assam received a set back.

During Vanamālavarmaṇa Kāmarūpa included Pundra-vardhana and some portions of south-east Bengal.

During the Pāla rulers the extent of Kāmarūpa was same as of Bhūtivarman and Vānāmāla.

The decline started from the closing period of the reign of Jayapāla although Vaidyadeva of the Kamauli grant probably revived its past glory followed to a certain extent by Vallaṃbhadeva until the Sena and Muslim invasions of this kingdom.