CHAPTER-I
Introduction

The study of geographical extension of Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana is a very important chapter of the history of Eastern India in ancient time. The great effort in this research is to find out the historical and geographical importance of Prāgjyotīṣa-Kāmarūpa along with Puṇḍravardhana from 4th Cen. A.D. to 12th Century A.D.

Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana were situated in the eastern part of ancient India. Kāmarūpa touched the Southern fringe of China, Tibet and Nepal; not only that, the southern extension of Kāmarūpa touched the sea shore of Bay of Bengal. Present portion of Bangladesh vis-a-vis Puṇḍravardhana was incorporated to Kāmarūpa also.

Assam is one of the frontier provinces of North-East India. The boundaries of Assam lie in between latitudes 28.18° north and 24° south and longitude 89.46° and 97° east. The area of Assam is 54000 square miles of which 24000 being plain areas and 19000 being the hill districts (Subsequently Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland got separated.)
Assam is physically divided into two main parts the highland of the frontier areas as to the North-East and the plain land below. The plain land is on the banks of the river Brahmaputra. The Barak in the South with its tributaries Surma and Kuśīrā enter in the present Bangladesh after crossing Garo Hills. The area of Brahmaputra Valley is 24283 square miles. The Brahmaputra is also called Luit (or Lauhitya). It is the Chief water highway of Assam. The history and culture of Assam or Prāgyotīṣa-Kāmarūpa is very intimately connected with the Brahmaputra. In its mid, in the Kāmarūpa portion, the river touches Nīlāchala or Kāmākhyā, the seat of Tantric or Śākta culture. The valley of Brahmaputra is a compact geographical unit in present Assam proper with the present districts. In ancient time, i.e. in the period of our study at times Kāmarūpa (Assam) also included the whole of Eastern Bengal, down to the sea and also a part of Bihār and the mountainous zone of Bhutan; it also touched the border, in the eastern side upto Myanmar.

In the first two Chapters was dealt the traditional and historical background where there is an attempt to deal with the physical aspect of ancient Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana since Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata. Besides the gradual growth of the people of Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana, along with the racial movement
right from the pre-historic times to the Vedic period has been dealt with. The relation of the history of Kāmarūpa with Puṇḍravardhana, Gauḍa, Samataṭa, Vaṅga, Suḥmma and the adjoining areas are mentioned. The growth and development of the civilisation of Gaṅga Valley with expansion of Aryan culture in the east and north-east of Indian subcontinent has been dealt. The different parts of Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana and the adjacent areas have been referred to in most of the classical and historical literature from 4th to 12th century A.D The early entrance of the Aryans into Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana from the West, process of assimilation of various people in this areas, adoption of Aryan culture by the local communities through the different religious and political processes are referred. The episode of Naraka as the pioneer of Aryan culture in Kāmarūpa is also discussed.

3. The third chapter discussed the geography of Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana. It is practically a major study in the context of the gradual political expansion of Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana. The area of these two zones are delineated gracefully in different literature and particularly in the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, including the Yoginītantra and the Kālikāpurāṇa. It is initially related to the Aryan expansion to the north eastern India. The extension and expansion
of Kāmarūpa are geographically important. The eastern fringe of Kāmarūpa is also found properly dealt with geographical narration in the historical context in this chapter.

4. The 4th chapter deals with the political condition of Eastern India from the beginning of 4th century A.D. to 1228 A.D. It mainly deals with the rise of the Guptas under the leadership of Samudragupta and the position of the Kāmarūpa is referred to as the *pratyanta rājya* in Allāhābad pillar Prāṣasti. The subsequent elevation of the state of Kāmarūpa was under the Varman kings with maximum expansion under Bhāskarvarman. He extended the kingdom unto Nālanda in the West. It is an important phase of political history of Kāmarūpa and deserves special attention.

5. In the 5th chapter broadly discussed the history of Puṇḍra-vardhana. Śaśāṅka’s life and achievements occupied a very predominant place in this chapter. None the less, the history of the subsequent dynasties, i.e. the Rātas and Khaḍgas were also covered. The contemporary Kāmarūpa king, Bhāskaravarman’s relation with Śaśāṅka and also with the subsequent kings of Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti and of the adjoining areas also found mention. No where in other books so intricately the history of the Rātas and Khaḍgas are dealt. Some unsolved problems of
the 'Parameswara', Adhiraja and Sāmanta has been discussed with relation to the Samataṭa king Lokanātha, Jīvadhāraṇa and on the different interpretation of the name Jayatunāgarvāra. This is related to the history of Kāmarūpa and the nature of hold Bhāskaravarman held over the Samataṭa kings and in the area extending upto Jātiṅgā of North Cāchār. The range of Chandrapuri-viṣaya under Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti has been attempted to search out.

6. In this 6th chapter Administrative set-up of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana has been dealt in somewhat broad details including the nature of the development of kingship of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa. How and who is appointed as the king with what qualification, which are the principal factors of kingship, the role of Purohita, Council of Ministers, Crown Princes, Sāmantas, Rājaṇyakas, Mahāsāmantas etc. are discussed. The division of the kingdom into different administrative units are explained.

The gradual development of administrative units of Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti and the nature of its administration are dealt. The revenue administration, its nature has also been attempted to a moderate extent.
In course of dealing with the different aspects of administration of both Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana, the influence of the statements and records of the Rāmāyāṇa, the Mahābhārata, the Allahabad Praśasti, the Arthaśāstra, the Śukranitīsāra and other classical literatures are described.

7. In the 7th chapter is dealt the administrative development and jurisdiction of Puṇḍravardhana. The divisions of the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti and their nature of function has been dealt with. The sources are utilised in searching the nature of bhukti, viṣayās, the grāmas and the bīthis.

8. The chapter 8th is devoted to deal with the religious aspects of Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa and agrahāras and their nature along with the socio-economic condition and religion. In this chapter the ancient practice of giving settlements to the Brāhmaṇas (agrahāras) from Madhyadeśa since the time of Naraka, who has the credit of Aryanising Prāgjyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa, also is dealt with. The land of the Kirātas and Mlechhas, Kāmarūpa became aryanised gradually with the Brāhmaṇical settlements. The Brāhmaṇas spread the Vedic culture, spread out in this land and the non-aryan tribes got converted to Hinduism. Thus many indigenous tribes of Assam were linked up with the Kauravas of the Mahābhārata.
Saivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Śāktatism in Kāmarūpa was popular among the non-āryan people. Symbolic or Phalus form of worship, of the īṅga as well as yoni representing Śiva and Śakti was introduced since very early period. Tantricism was developed along with the various forms of worship of Śiva, Bhairava, Rudra etc. The Ugratārā and Tīkṣṇajatā and Ekajatā form of worship of Śakti was in vogue. Along with worship of Kāma, worship of Śiva's consort Pārvatī were prevalent. The development of Śākta worship with the predominant form of Kāmākhyā was very popular since the time of Naraka.

The Vaiṣṇavism and its development are also covered including the worship of the Avatāra or incarnation form of Viṣṇu. Hayagrīva form of Viṣṇu was found to be most popular in Assam along with the Daśāvatāra form at Hajo. The development of the worship of Balarāma (Halāyūdha) was found in the context of the development and spread of agriculture in Assam. The Gaṇeṣa, Sūrya, Kārtikeya and other minor deities were also devotedly worshipped in Kāmarūpa. Places are evident till now having the numerous forms of Gaṇeṣa images in Kāmarūpa and in the Sūryapāhār of Goalpara district. Sūryapāhār is standing as an epitome of religious beliefs, specially the association of various deities like Sūrya, Gaṇeṣa, Viṣṇu, Durgā, Jainism and Buddhism.
Here every attempt has been made to describe the different aspects of the agrahāra-system. The Kāmarūpa kings based on the principle of Bhūmichhidranyāya, placed the Brāhmaṇas in the ātavī (forest), kṣetras and the victorious bordering zones so as to convert the jungle-lands to revenue land, also to earn the merit of donation. By settling the Brāhmaṇas at different places, the aryanism spread out, the vedic rituals got widely extended in Assam. Although there are some theories of Agrahāra-system, but broadly the Brāhmaṇas got settlement either from Madhyadeśa or from north Bengal or from any other places which was pre-arranged due to victories or for earning merit during śrāddhas or other religious facts by the Brāhmaṇas. Due to Brāhmaṇical settlement the entire social structure has been changed in Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana where the ethnic tribals became the lower strata of the society. Some of them educated in the Aryan way of life as well also acclamatised them with the new methodology of agriculture by the upper class. The result was not only the spread of vedic rituals but had a vigorous effect on the trade and commerce. Religion and economy became the filler of each other due to wide acceptance of vedic way of life by which the caste system was not rigid. But gradually it became profession-based as the society became wider and wider with different types of production devel-
oped as the simple family was not in a position to meet its demand. The interdependence and developments were based on the different types to meet the needs of the family. So different families adopted different trades to meet the needs of the society and, subsequently, these became their trade and ultimately the trade group formed the caste. Gradually different practices among the same caste developed which was dependent on the needs of the some of the same kinds in the same caste. Marriage, food, dress, habits etc. everything got moulded and taking shelter under the wide and vast vedic form of ritual. Sacrifice, system of worship, social norms and their maintenance and observations became both part of social habit as well as religious norm. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra with the Varṇāśramadharma made a very wide and strong superstructure from which none could escape and the king became the protector of the Varṇāśramadharma. In the different inscriptions and land grants, the kings of Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana adopted the titles of Parama-Bhaṭṭāraka, Parama Maheśwara and Paramadvaivata, whether they were superlord or Śāmantas or Mahāśāmantas or Adhirajas. The jurisdiction of kingship became very wide. The Nidhanpur inscription speaks of settling Brāhmaṇas 205 Nos.; the Bhātera seal speaks of settling 6000 Brāhmaṇas. The power of the kings got very strong and
with their strength they settled the agrahāras which became the protectory society with religious merits to achieve Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa.

9. The relation of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana is the 9th chapter of this research topic. Geographical extension of Kāmarūpa with special reference to Puṇḍravardhana is a historical study. If we look at the pre-historic times and up to the beginning of the Varman dynasty, i.e. the 4th century A.D., we find the various settlements growing very rapidly in this region. The races like Puṇḍras, Suhmmas, Vaṅgas developed. Up till that time Kāmarūpa did not take any shape. The Kirātas were the main settlers in the southern part of Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa. With the coming of Naraka as a carrier of Aryan civilisation, the Prāgjyotisa-Kāmarūpa came into existence. Before that period, it were the Puṇḍras who were the strong political power in the eastern zone having friendship with Jarāsandha of Magadha. The Vaṅgas and Suhmmas followed suit to establish and cater Aryan civilisation in different states. With the conquest of Samudragupta as found in Allahabad Praśasti we notice the initial reference of Kāmarūpa and before that we find the reference to Puṇḍravardhabhukti. Since Mahāpadmananda and also during the Mauryas.
Puṇḍravardhana came to be recognised as a Bhukti. Gradually Puṇḍravardhana extended to Varendri, i.e. Vardhamāna and the adjoining areas got added to Puṇḍravardhana. Subsequently, Navyabakāshīka, i.e. Sundarban and present Bāngur area came to its lap. Gradually, Dhākā-Bikrampura area and subsequently, ‘Mayūra-Śālamala-agrā- hāra’ of Śrīhāṭṭa-Maṇḍala, i.e. Śrīhāṭṭa came under the jurisdiction of Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti during Bhāskarvarman.

During Guptas, Kāmarūpa Maṇḍala and Prāgjiyotiṣa-bhukti comprised Prāgjiyotiṣa. Subsequently, the area extended to the Eastern zone. Right from the time of Bhūtivarman, Prāgjiyotiṣa kingdom started expansion and Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti became a part of Prāgjiyotiṣa kingdom. Bhūtivarman settled Brāhmaṇas in the Mayūra-Śālmala-Agrahāra. Taking advantage of Gupta weakness Bhūtivarman sharked off the Gupta allegiance and established extensive Varman kingdom occupying the most flourishing and fertile Gupta zone of administration, the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti. Initially it was outside the border of Prāgjiyotiṣa-Kāmarūpa.

It is evident that subsequently Bhāskaravarman also settled the Brāhmaṇas after ousting Śaśāṅka from the control of Karnasuvanra. He settled Brāhmaṇas in same Mayūra-Śālmala-Agrahāra in Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti. Mayūra-Śālmala-Agrahāra
was of Śrīhaṭṭa-Maṇḍala which was under the jurisdiction of Puṇḍravardhana which area was under Bhāskarvarman.

It is also evident that the king of South, West and North always tried to attack and tried to snatch away this prosperous and commercially rich zone of Puṇḍravardhana. When there is attack on this zone, the Prāgijyotīḍha king drifted the Jayaskandhāvāra to the further eastern area and some times they were to loose Puṇḍravardhana. But on the whole it is noticed till the mid of the Sālāstambha rule, Puṇḍravardhana was under the Prāgijyotīḍha kingdom.

Although during the rise of the Devas, Chandras, Khadgas and Rātas, the Varman hold over Puṇḍravardhana and Śrīhaṭṭa including Cachar area got loose. There were rise of the Sāmantas and Adhirājas in Puṇḍravardhana. Śrī-Chandra was the famous Chandra king who established extensive empire crossing even Puṇḍravardhana. Even he tried to undermine the status of Kāmarūpa. Not only that, these kings of Rātas, Devas, Chandras and Khadgas maintained more or less their independent status in Samataṭa, Puṇḍravardhana, Vardhamāna, Medinipur and in Tamluk areas. Till the middle of 9th century A.D., the administrative structure of Puṇḍravardhana was more or less intact under the different rulers

1. Bhātera Seal.
2. Nidhanpur Inscription.
of Kāmarūpa and subsequently under the different kings of the different dynasties.

It is equally important to note that ancient Assam (Kāmarūpa) played a very dominant and independent role and maintained its independent existence through the extension of political frontier and advanced upto the areas far ahead to the present frontier in the west and south. It may equally be emphasized that along with the geographical extensions, political boundaries have changed from time to time; the geographical limits was determined by nature that helps in such a manner to retain its cultural identity through ages. It is undoubtedly a fact that its history being unbroken unity helped to strengthen the cultural and geographical unity of the Brahmaputra valley.

10. In the 10th chapter the socio-economic and linguistic condition of Prāgjyotīṣa-Kāmarūpa, including the influence of varṇāśramadharma, is narrated. The nature of life other than socio-economic aspects of the people of Kāmarūpa is also dealt with. The growth and development of Kāmarūpa, including the commercial aspects of society, dress, food-habits etc. are dealt with. A very detailed analysis of the education system is also attempted here.
Kāmarūpa was inhabited by the people who were racially and linguistically more or less homogeneous. Inhabitants of Kāmarūpa maintained a distinct unity along with the people of other parts of India, having a common tongue due to adaptation of Aryan dialect of great antiquity. It is creditable to note that even as good as the period of 6th century A.D. the language of the people of Kāmarūpa differed a little from that of Mid-India, it is as reported by Hiuen Tsāng. From this it also can be ascertained that the major area right from Kāmarūpa upto Nālandā was under Bhāskarvarman and that may be the cause of it and that there are frequent intercourses among them.

Along with these pre-aryan dialect there had been other Sino-Tibetan speaking tribes (Mongoloids) who had formed parts of settled population of early Assam since earlier time besides their influx in several subsequent periods. They are now settled in Arunachal, Naga Hills, Karbi Anglong, Manipur, Meghalaya and spread out to Barāk Valley.

In the extreme east of Assam there is Patkai and Namkin Range which form the natural boundary between India on the one hand and Burma and China on the other. The Patkai lower riches of the Sesiri (Dihing, the Tsāngpo of Tibet) the Dihing and Luhit

3. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*
combined to form the Brahmaputra. They are now within the territory of India. In Nepal and Assam along with Arunachal and Manipur live large bodies of Sino-Bhutan speaking Kuki-Chin people. They are broadly called by Europeans as Mongoloids; they knew Sanskrit using ancient Indian dialects. The Kirātas of the southern part of the Kāmarūpa played a dominant role and merged with Kāmarūpa with the ever-expanding change of the political area. The development of mixed language took up its characteristic cachet with its Sanskrit spoken people and mixed Aryan-non-Aryan view of life. Resultantly the basic Mongoloid character of large masses of the people have become wholly Aryanised under the impact of the Aryan spirit and atmosphere, — the statement of Hiuen Tsang that the language of the people of Kāmarūpa differs a little from that of Madhyadeśa is an example to that assimilation.