Appendix-I

The Akas of Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh call themselves 'Hrusso'. Both the terms 'Aka' (literally meaning 'painted' in Assamese) and 'Hrusso' obviously point to the custom of smearing their faces with a mixture of a black resin obtained from the *pinus exelsus* and charcoal. The British writers like Kennedy, Grierson, etc. made some study on this tribe. The Aka-tribe inhabits the hilly region lying to the east of the Khari-Dikrai river measuring about a hundred and twenty square miles.

Existing traditions among the Akas certainly point to Bhalukpong on the Assam-Arunachal border as the place of their early habitat (Chowdhury, J. N., *Arunachal Panorama*, Directorate of Research, Arunachal Pradesh, 1982, reprint, p. 57). According to the Aka tradition, their ancestors were driven out from 'Partabgor' (Pratapgarh) on the banks of the Ghiladhari river north of Bishanath (Bisvanath) by Kṛṣṇa and Balarama. Two other legends of the Akas also clearly indicate that they had early association with the 'Assamese' (i.e., the Ahoms) and the 'Kacharis'. It seems that long ago, both the Akas of royal blood and the 'Assamese' (i.e., the Ahoms) came down from heaven to earth by a golden ladder while the Kacharis together with the Khoas (another tribe of Arunachal Pradesh) descended by a plaintain ladder. The Akas claiming of the
Kacharis as their kinsfolk is also important in this regard. However, the dissimilarity between the vocabulary of the Aka dialect with that of other Tibeto-Burman dialects (Linguistic Survey of India Report, 1909, compiled by G.A. Grierson) makes the situation a confusing one. However, a possible solution is thinly visible again in another Aka legend recorded by Kennedy. It goes thus: All these (the Akas, the Ahoms, the Kacharis, the Khoas and some other groups of people) arrived on a hill called Longkapur in the Lohit valley, whence they scattered in search of land. The Assamese were the first to start, and chose the plains as their country. The Akas delayed sometime at Longkapur resting and drinking beer, and so had to squeeze in as best they could amongst the other people (Choudhury, J. N., op cit. p. 58).

Right now, on the basis of these legends we can not dig deep into the history of the Akas. But what is fairly certain is that they once lived in the Bhalukpong area and came into close contact with the Hindu population of the Assam plains.