CHAPTER I

TRADITION OF TRANSLATION IN ASSAMESE POETRY

Translation in Assamese poetry played a significant role in Assamese literature. It passed through different phases from the pre-Vaishnava era till the romantic poets. The pre-Vaishnavite period comprises the period before the advent of Sankaradeva and the Vaishnavite period initiated by his literary activities. In the pre-Vaishnava era a group of influential poets by actively translating have contributed to the greatness of Assamese literature. Prominent among them were Kabiratna Saraswati, Rudra Kandali, Madhava Kandali and Harihara Vipra. With the intention of spreading knowledge Ramayana, Bhagavata and Purana were translated into regional languages. Tulsi Das’ Ram Charit Manas, a bangla version of Krittivasa Ojha’s Ramayana, Kamban Ramayananam of Kamban in Tamil, Kashi Das’s Mahabharata, Madhava Kandali’s Ramayana are the result of such efforts. As Maheswar Neog puts it in the book Essays on Assamese Literature, “the consensus of opinion of scholars is on the aide of taking the poet Madhava Kandali as a man of the fourteenth century at the latest. It is therefore apparent that Madhava Kandali’s Ramayana was the first of its kind in modern Indian Languages, the Bengali and Hindi versions of Krittivasa and Tulsidas being works of the sixteenth century”. (Neog 138).

The inception of translation in Assamese literature could be traced back to the translation of the Ramayana into Assamese by Madhava Kandali who flourished towards the end of the fourteenth century C. E. He translated under the patronage of Mahamanikya, the then Kachari king of central Assam. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in India a new religion was founded on the liberal doctrine of Bhakti as revealed in the Bhagavata Purana. It preached a faith based on devotion and equality of man and fought against caste prejudices. To propagate the gospels of this new faith to the masses the Sanskrit Puranas were rendered in regional languages. Prominent among the preachers of this new faith as mentioned by B.K. Barua in the essay “Sankardeva: His
Poetical Works” in Banikanta Kakati’s book *Aspects of Early Assamese Literature* were Ramananda (1400-1470 A.D.) of Allahabad, Vallabhacharya (1479-1531 A.D.) of the Telegu state, Namadeva of Maharashtra (1400-1430 A.D.) and Chaitanya (1485-1533 A.D.) of Bengal (65). In Assam Sankaradeva (1449-1569 A.D.) took the initiative but his movement was totally different from the pan Indian movement which was predominantly musical and an instrument of social reform. It was in the age of Sankaradeva or the Vaishnava age that translation flourished in the history of Assamese literature. Inspite of the nature of translation being varied the tradition of translation was controlled more by the Vaishnava religious preachers. That is why Sanskrit books which abound in Vaishnava thoughts were translated more. The main intention of Sankaradeva behind translation was to attract people towards Vaishnavism. Since his audience were not very well versed in Sanskrit he wrote it in a homely and direct Assamese style so that it was accessible to even an illiterate man. In rendering into Assamese verse the uttara-kanda of the *Ramayana* Sankaradeva the greatest Assamese poet of all times pays a high tribute to his predecessor Madhava Kandali:

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पूरव कबी अओमाली  माधव कंदलि आदि
बिरचिला पदे बाम-कथा
हरैद देशिया लाद     शशा फेन फारे मार्ग
मोब तेहल तेहय अवस्था।
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( Neog Rachanavali 12).

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pūrba kabi apramādī    mādhava kandali ādi
biracilā pade rām -kathā
hastīr dekhiyā lād    śaśā jen phāre mārg
mor bhoila tehnaya avasthā.
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Sankaradeva calls Kandali “purba kabi apramādi” (an unerring early poet) and likens him to a mighty elephant in whose comparison he himself is but a small rabbit.

Sankaradeva’s main source of inspiration was the Bhagavata and that is why he made an attempt to translate the book into Assamese. The translation of the entire text was not an easy task and so he allotted different sections for translation to his different disciples. As mentioned by B.K. Barua in his essay “Sankaradeva: His Poetical Works”, Sankaradeva himself undertook the rendering of the major portion namely Books 1, 11, 111, V11, V111, IX, X and Book X11 (Kakati 69). Sankaradeva translated the Bhagavata not only into Assamese words, but into Assamese idiom. The Assamese version of the text serves the dual purpose of a text and a commentary of the original.

Initially Sankaradeva was more of a religious preacher and the basis of his creation was sermonizing. Just as the puppets in a puppet dance are manipulated with a string wire by a “sutradhar” (holder of the string) similarly Sankaradeva tried to control everything from the perspective of preaching Vaishnavism. This adherence to religion limited his creative ability and curbed his poetic genius. Although he did not accommodate folk elements in his creations he did not negate it completely. But gradually he realized that to have a good relationship with his audience folk elements were necessary. It was then that he created the dramas, “bhaonas” (performance) and other compositions in which folk elements were incorporated. He rendered the sacred scripture the Bhagavata Purana into simple Assamese songs and verses which even the illiterate could sing, recite or enjoy. His writings were in Brajabali. As S.K. Chatterjee puts it, “the use of Brajabuli or Brajwali dialect in Assamese is a case of direct participation in a common literary life in Eastern India” (22). In his book Folkways in literature: An Aesthetic Imperative Navakanta Barua opines:

Like Sankardeva, the early Rabindranath Tagore, the seer-poet of Modern India, did not accommodate folk cults and ways in his envisioned synthesis of the Upanishads, Buddhism and Western humanism. Disillusioned and depressed, he looked deep within himself and there was
a welling out from the sub-conscious, images and metaphors immersed in folk cults and practices like mother-goddess and others. In fact, for the context of feelings, from which the later poems emerge we have to look beyond to an older, more earthy and rather esoteric occultism. The Bauls and the Vaishnavas could be rationally accommodated but the Tantric world, first accorded recognition as devices, later on poured forth from the innermost depths of his psyche and his deep-seated realism did not resist it. His faith, after all, was sufficiently strong to face the facts. Goethe as “seer, aware of and confident in his role, he had to talk to people in their idiom and in the process he left no folk motif unexploited, all pontifically trained to reveal his vision”. (Barua 4).

In the scheme of things obtaining in the period religious zeal was matched by secular quarters as in the patronage of the kings. The entire Mahabharata was translated by Ram Saraswati the court poet of king Naranarayan of Cooch Behar in the sixteenth century, the voluminous Brahmavaivarta Purana by Kaviraj Chakravarty, the court poet of king Rudra Singha and Siva Singha in the eighteenth century and the Naradiyan Purana by Bhubhaneswar Bhattacharyya the court poet of the Kachari Raja Suradarpanarayan. (Bhuyan 17). The Assamese nobles including the Ahom Dangarias, Phukans and other nobles maintained poets and scholars to adorn their courts and inspired the translation of numerous classics. Translation was encouraged due to the awareness of the fact that knowledge must be rescued from the Sanskrit books and be made accessible to the people in the popular vernacular garb. The Puranas were regularly recited and translated in the Vaishnavite satras (monastery). Throughout the Brahmaputra valley were scattered hundreds of such satras. Having voluntarily taken the responsibility of imparting religious and moral education to the people regular translations were made. Inspired by Sankaradeva, the influence of the Satras and under the Koch and the Ahom kings patronage Sanskrit scholars Madhavdeva and Damodardeva translated the Puranas. Madhav Deva’s Namghosa is a compilation of selected slokas from the different cantos of the Bhagavata. While translating Madhavdeva has used the words from the main slokas but the rendering is more lucid.
than obscure. During the middle ages the followers of Vaishnavism used the colloquial language.

Another very successful translator after Sankaradeva and Madhavdeva was Ram Saraswati. With the help of other poets he translated the *Mahabharata* into Assamese. To make the stories exciting he sometimes analyzed the original text, sometimes condensed it and sometimes added something new to it. The translation of the *Bhagavata Pad* by Ananta Kandali another famous poet of the Vaishnava age has been mentioned in the hagiography *Guru-Carita-Katha* edited by Maheswar Neog.(3). The entire *Bhagavata Purana* was broken into Assamese verse by joint efforts of several contemporary poets. In the later part of the seventeenth century, Assamese literature became more diffused and *Puranas* of various types came to be translated under the patronage of Ahom rulers. Verse was the prevalent form of translation but sometimes the translators have recourse to prose and dramatic forms as well. While undertaking translations no stringent rules were followed by the translators. The nature of the subject–matter and the expediency of the translator determined whether the translation could be free or literal. Since the translations were intended for villagers who lacked a philosophical background less emphasis was given to philosophical disquisitions. But this does not imply that they discarded philosophy altogether. Philosophical discussions were retained and made more accessible when the narrative demanded it. In contrast to philosophical narratives, devotional elements were accorded a primacy by the poet translators. Other significant poets who undertook the translation of different sections as mentioned by B.K. Barua in his essay “Sankaradeva: His Poetical Works” in Banikanta Kakati’s book *Aspects of Early Assamese Literature* were Ananta Kandali (Books IV, VI and a section of Book X), Kesavacarana (Books V11 and 1X ), Gopalacarana Dvija (Book 111), Kavi Kapalacandra (sections of Book 1V), Sri Visnu Bharati (Sections of Book 1V and V), Ratnakara Misra (Sections of Book 1V), Sricandra Deva (Sections of Book 1V and V) and Harihar Vipra (Sections of Book V). (69).
Adhering, as he did, to the original text Baikunth Nath Bhattacharya or Bhattadev under the advice of his guru Damodardeva translated all the cantos of the *Bhagavata Purana* into prose in Assamese. By translating the two most sacred and dignified Sanskrit texts *Katha Bhagavata* (Bhagavata in prose) and *Katha Gita* (Gita in prose) into Assamese, Bhattadev not only conferred a high status to the Assamese language but also made it an easy medium for expressing abstract thoughts and profound philosophical ideas. His learning and scholarship helped him to write in a style which is dignified and balanced. The use of Assamese and Sanskrit vocabulary to express deep spiritual thoughts reflects his skill as an eloquent writer. Since narrating stories and episodes was given more emphasis in *Katha Bhagavata* Bhattadeva used a language which is intimate and had the terseness of spoken speech. Considering the rather early times in which *Katha Gita* was composed Acharyya P.C. Ray, the noted scientist and savent of India, remarks as mentioned in B.K. Barua’s essay “Early Assamese Prose” in the above mentioned book: “…Indeed the prose Gita of Bhattadeva composed in the sixteenth century is unique in its kind…It is a priceless treasure. Assamese prose literature developed to a stage in the far distant sixteenth century which no other literature of the world reached except the writings of Hooker and Latimer in England”. (129).

Bhattadeva’s translations, his major contribution, revealed his originality as a writer, for they involved interpretation of the materials from his own perspective. Since the beginning of the fourteenth century till the advent of the British in 1826 there is a kind of continuity of the epic and Puranic translation and adaptation in early Assamese literature. The verve and the intensity may vary but the worth is uniform and pervading.

With the advent of the British in Indian soil translation in Assamese poetry takes a totally new dimension. In 1836 Assamese was being replaced by Bengali in the offices of Assam. In the same year Christian missionaries with the intention of preaching Christianity came to Assam. It was at the initiative of Dr. Miles Bronson and other Christian missionaries that Assamese language restored its lost glory. In 1848 another Christian missionary Dr. Nathan Brown composed the second book on Assamese...
Grammar Grammatical Notes On Assamese Language. Dr. Nathan Brown’s translation of the New Testament was published in 1848 as Āmār Trāṅkātā Yesu Chṛistar Natun Niyam (আমার ত্রাঞ্কাতা যেসু চ্রিস্ট নতুন নিয়ম). Some other works of Dr. Brown are some of the translations of the Gospel portion of Mark, Mathew, Luke and John. His Khristar Vivaraṇ Āru Subha Batrā (ক্ষ্রিস্তর বিবরণ আকৃষ্ট সুভা বাত্রা) published from Sibsagar in 1854 has about three hundred and thirty hymns rendered into Assamese out of which sixty were done by him. Both Nathan Brown and Dr. Miles Bronson were good linguists. Bronson was conscious of the fact that for a language to be official and to be used in the academics a dictionary is mandatory. He therefore published the first Assamese English dictionary with 14,000 Assamese words in 1867, Asamīyā Abhidhān (অসমীয়া অভিধান). This dictionary being the first ambitious attempt towards the compilation of an Assamese lexicon is extremely valuable. He also translated certain books of the Bible and some of the Psalms into simple Assamese. This was published as Purāṇi Niyam (পুরাণী নিয়ম) in between 1899-1903. His contribution to Assamese literature was overwhelming. The person who contributed the most towards the development of Assamese literature was Nidhi Levi Farwal, the first Assamese Christian. In the publication of Dr. Bronson’s dictionary also his contribution was significant. In 1907 missionary P.H. Moore very rightly made the following comment as mentioned in B. K. Barua’s History of Assamese Literature, “Brown, Bronson and Nidhi Levi are the trio of names that stand out pre-eminently as the founders of Assamese Christian literature”. (105). In 1813 Atmaram Sarma’s translated Bible was published. It was the first translated book on Assamese from a foreign language, which exposed the inchoate state of the language when it encountered alien realities in a totally different idiom.

Assamese literature in the initial stage of British rule was in an age of transition. The printing press and the Arunodoi (অক্ষরোদয়), (1846-1854) were the two milestones in the history of Assamese literature. It was through the translated works that were published in the Arunodoi that people came into contact with western literature which marked the beginning of a new literary trend. In 1851 in Arunodoi certain parts of the translated work of John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress was published as Jātrikar Jātrā.
Both Nathan Brown and A.S. Danforth translated Bunyan’s work. But the major portion of it was translated by Brown.

Assamese translation gets a new thrust in the ‘Jonākī’ age. The Renaissance in Bengali literature inspired the educated youths studying in Kolkata. Prominent among them were Lakshminath Bezbaroa, Chandra Kumar Agarwalla, Hemchandra Goswami and others. By seeing this Renaissance in Bengal’s literary, social and cultural field it gave them a new assurance and courage and this led to the creation of “Asamīyā Bhāṣār Unnati Sādhinī Sabha” (Assamese language) in 1888 and the Jonākī (Jonakhi) was published in 1889 as the mouthpiece of this Sabha. In the first issue of the magazine as mentioned in Nagen Saikia’s edited book Chandrakumarar Kavita Samagra, Chandra Kumar Agarwalla states, “Āmi jonjibaloi olāichon “āndhārar” bipakṣhye: udeśhya- deśar unnati, “jonāk” (Ami jonjibalo olai chon “andhar” bipakhye: udeshya- deshe unnati, “jonak”). (We are ready to fight against darkness our object is development, moonlight). (4). They took intrepid steps towards their objective and success followed in the wake. The age of “Jonakhi” could be said to have ushered in the Romantic age in Assamese poetry. It was during this period that the real absorption of the form and spirit of English poetry began. Chandra Kumar Agarwalla’s Bankonvarī (Bankonvari) (7) and in his Bīn - Barāgī (Bine Baragi) we can hear echoes of the optimistic tone of Shelley’s Ode to the West Wind:

Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of prophecy.

Mōsebī muṅebi
Mānub prāṇab

Futik akurūl māt

Mōse bhitaṭeṇī
gūḍh bhashab

Satya hōk pratiḥat

মোর্সেই মুখেতি
মানব প্রাণব

ফুটক অকুল মাত

মোর চিতাতেই
gুচ্ছ বহসাব

সত্য হওক প্রতিভাত
morei mukhedi
mānav prāṇar

phuṭak ākul māt,

mor cintātei
guḍha rahashyar

satya hauk pratībhāt.

(Let the human soul’s yearning be uttered through me. In my thoughts let the hidden secrets of truth be revealed).

Befitting the psyche of the Assamese people and implementing the relevant poetic techniques in the right way it made the translations of the ‘Jonākī’ age (1889-1900) very similar to the original compositions. Though Chandra Kumar Agarwalla and Hemchandra Goswami were the exponents of Romantic poetry, it was Lakshminath Bezbaroa who gave form and shape to the lyric impulse through his translations of some of the English poems. Imbued with the romantic spirit Lakshminath Bezbaroa visualizes two worlds in the realm of poetic consciousness, one constitutes the sweetness of the saddest thought and the other the melody and beauty of sound and colour pervading the whole world. The romantic poets fascination for nature could also be seen in Bezbaroa’s poem Basanta (বসন্ত). The poem reminds us of Wordsworth’s Lines Written in Early Spring. The line “juti phuljupi niśās erile” (juti flower breathes) reminds us of Wordsworth’s:

And ’tis my faith that every flower

Enjoys the air it breathes.

Wordsworth’s “the meanest flower that blows” in Ode on Intimations of Immortality From Recollections of Early Childhood appears in Bezbaroa’s poem Reṇukā as “bāṭar dubari ban gachakat parā / tāro eti pāte diye svargar batarā”. (Even the fallen blade of dubari grass by the roadside
convey message from heaven). His *Biśrinkhal* (বিশ্রংখল) reflects Robert Herrick’s *Delight in Disorder*.

The Jonākī age saw the flourishing of lyric poetry in Assamese literature. Hemchandra Goswami, the first composer of the Assamese sonnet *Priyatamār Cithi* (প্রিয়তমার চিঠি), contributed towards Assamese lyric poetry. Hemchandra Goswami’s *Phular Cāki* (ফুলার চাকী) is an amalgamation of three translated poems - *Śūti* (শুতি) is a translation of Alexander Pope’s *Universal Prayer*, *Prakritir Śūti* (প্রকৃতির শুতি) is a translation of *Psalm 19* and *Jatiya Sangīt* (জাতীয় সংগীত) is a translation of Arthur Allen David’s poem. Goswami’s *Saundarjar Bukur Kānsali Udangāi* (সৌন্দর্যবুঞ্জ কাঁসালী উদঙাই) is a translation of Goethe’s *To Unveil the Beauty’s Bust*. (Das, Rajbongshi 138). Another renowned poet of the ‘Jonākī’ age was Ananda Chandra Agarwalla. In his only published anthology of poetry *Jilikani* (জিলিকানী)(1920) there are several translated poems. The translations of poems like Goldsmith’s *The Hermit* as Jīvan Sangīt (জীবন সংগীত), Longfellow’s *A Psalm of Life* as Jīvan Sangīt (জীবন সংগীত), Charles Mackay’s *Today and Tomorrow* as Āji Āru Kāli,(আজি আরু কালী), *Thou Art God* (Anonymous) as Īśvar (ঈশ্বর), Charles Eliot’s *Thy Will be Done* as Taju Icchā Pūrṇa Karā Herā Dayāmāy (তাজু ইচ্ছা পূর্ণ করা হেরা দয়াময়), *Kabir Prān* (কবির প্রাণ) a translation of Tennyson’s *The Poet’s Mind* and Thomas Gray’s *The Shepherd and the Philosopher* as Cahā Āru Pandit (চাহা আরু পাঁচিত) look not like translations at all but like poems of unique originality where thought and diction have been inextricably blended to the original. Hem Barua in the chapter “Nabanyasik Jogar Bhangani Sahitya: Asamiya Kabita” in his book *Sahitya Aru Sahitya* appreciates the translated works of the above mentioned poets.(53) But the greatest adaptations in Assamese poetry were by Hiteswar Barbaruah who imbibed the spirit of English literature. His *Talsarā Phular Tinyājali* (Three offerings of fallen flowers) (তালসরা ফুলার তিনিয়াঞ্জলি), is a collection of poems translated from English into Assamese. Shelley’s *Love’s Philosophy* and Scott’s *Lay of the Last Minstrel* are significant adaptations.
The motive with which the Jonākī was published i.e. to bring light into the dark literary world of Assamese literature was fulfilled. Unlike the English Romantic poets the poetry of the “Jonākī” age was a totally new creation. The Assamese literature of this age was different from that of “Arunodoi” particularly from the point of view of thought and form. Religious, spiritual and moral themes of the previous age were replaced by common people emotions and passions and the relation between man and nature. Its language was the language of everyday speech.

The age of “Jonākī” touched every aspect of modernity and aspired to give Assamese literature a new form. The literary trend which started in Jonākī gained its maturity in Bānhī (बांही) (1903-33). Many of the translations of Jatindranath Dowerah was published in Bānhī. Jatindranath Dowerah’s translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam from Fitzgerald as Omār Tīrtha (उमर तीर्थ) is another cherished treasure of our literature. Even when he was a student he translated “twinkle, twinkle, little star” as “cikimiki cikimiki saru tarāṭ” (चिकिमिकी चिकिमिकी सरु तराट). According to Jatindra Nath Dowerah this was his first poetical composition as mentioned by Līla Gogoi in his article “Jatin Duarar Byakti Jivanat Ebhumuki” in Namita Deka’s book Jatindranath Duwara: Kabi Aru Kabi Prativa. (65). His poetical compositions were influenced by Shelley’s Skylark, The Indian Serenade, Ode to the West Wind, Realm of Fancy, Wordsworth’s Simon Lee and the Old Huntsman, Browning’s The Last Ride Together and Thomas Moore’s The Light of Other Days.

In his Banphul (बनफुल) and Āpon Sur (আপন সুব) we can see the influence of Shelley and Tennyson. Dowerah’s Nawariya Ga (নাবরীয়া গা) is a translation of Tennyson’s Crossing the Bar and Cakulo (চাকুলো) is a translation of Tennyson’s Tears Idle Tears. He translated Shelley’s Mutability into Assamese as Saponar Sur (সাপনার সুব) and his Tomāloi (টোমালোই) is a translation of Shelley’s Lines to an Indian Air. Parts of Gray’s Elegy Written on a Country Churchyard was translated into Assamese as Ekhani Ganvar.
Mariśāli Ocarat (এমনি পাবিব মবিশালিব ওডবত). In many of his poems especially in Samarpan (সমর্পন), To a flying goose, The Boatman Going Downstream, The Queen of Dream and The Golden Land the reflection of Shelley’s Alastor can be best detected. His Kāintiyā Bān (কাইটিয়া ধন) is the outcome of a joint influence of Shelley and Tennyson. His Jīvan Jeoti (জীবন জেউতি) and Atīt Mādhurī (অতীত মাধুরী) are based on Herrick’s Counsel to Girls and Wordsworth’s Immortality. Even his Herovā Sapon (হেরোবা সপন) is an echo of Keat’s La Belle Dame Sans Merci. (Talukdar 151). Speaking of his western studies Dowerah says as expressed in Laxminath Tamuly edited book Jatindranath Dowara Rasanawali: “I have walked in the gardens from bangit to Shelley, from Omar Khayam to Heine, yet even I have stolen any flower from others garden, I have tried to make it beautiful by the imagination of my heart”. (558) Binanda Chandra Baruah’s Āgyāṭhūṭīr Bīr (আগ্যাঘুটিয়র বীর) and Najanā Bīrar Mūr (নজনা বীরব মুর) are adaptations of The Incident of the French Camp and After Blenheim. The translator of Victor Hugo’s Les Miserable’s, Thaneswar Hazarika is a very talented poet. In the Assamese translation of Campbell’s Lord Ullin’s Daughter as Gonhāīn Gābharu (গন্ধীরাইন গাব্হারু) he has created a sad love story against the background of Ahom rule as referred by Hem Barua in his book Sahitya Aru Sahitya. (59). In Atul Chandra Hazarika’s translation of Wordsworth’s The Solitary Reaper the highland lass has been represented as a Karbi girl. The poem was published in Jonākī as Bideśi Dāvanī (বিদেশী দাবনী) in Nagen Saikia’s edited Jonākī. (1222).

Such casual renderings despite their limited effect, influenced the versimilitude of ideas and poetic imagery in the “Jonākī” period when the young generation versed in English poetry began Assamese renderings of English originals either in part or in full. But before the birth of Āvāhan (আরাহন) in 1929 some significant development in the socio political arena impinged on the mindset of the people. The publication of Sigmund Freud’s An Interpretation of Dream and Karl Marx’s Communist Manifesto brought about a new perspective in the way of looking at things. Through a series of articles published in the Āvāhan during the late thirties of this century; a new resurgence in our
literature was initiated that drew poets and artists alike from the world of romantic dreams into the world of cold facts. If we look at the “Āvāhan” age (1929-39) from the perspective of poetry we can refer to the poetry of this age as the last stage of romantic poetry. And the poets of this age are Raghunath Choudhury, Ambikagiri Raychoudhury and Durgeswar Sarma. Nurtured in the romantic spirit of the west Durgeswar Sarma is another reputed translator whose translation of Wordsworth earned him the name Assamese Wordsworth. He translated Wordsworth’s Lucy Gray into Assamese as Sādarī (সাদারী). His Amil (অমিল) is another replica of Wordsworth’s Immortality. He translated certain parts of it into Assamese. Robert Browning’s Fra Lippo Lippi’s speech “for don’t you mark, we’re made so that we love” is translated into Assamese by Durgeswar Sarma as “sadāi cakure dekhā gach pāt chabit bhāl hoi pare” (সদায় চকুতে দেখা গছ পাঁত ছবিত ভাল হৈ পরে). (The familiar leaf looks grand in the picture as word heard always draw the heart in song ). His other translations are Prakritilo (প্রকৃতিলী) of Shelley’s Love’s Philosophy, and Mor Prem (মোর প্রেম) of Elizabeth Barret Browning’s Sonnet’s from the Portuguese. Other significant poets of this age are Dimbeswar Neog, Ratnakanta Barkakaty, Parvatiprasad Baruva, Sailadhar Rajkhowa, Bogoboti Prasad Baruah and Devakanta Baruah.

Dimbeswar Neog has translated many poems from English. The fascination with Wordsworth continued in Dimbeswar Neog and his Bakulī (বকুলী) is a translation of Lucy Gray. The first three stanzas of Shelley’s poem The Cloud is translated as Megh (মেঘ) and Byron’s Stanzas for Music is translated into Assamese as Soundarjya Mādhurī (সৌন্দর্য মাধুরী). Herrick’s To Daffodils is translated as Bināś (বিনাশ) Ben Jonson’s To Celia as Priyār Prem (প্রিযার প্রেম), Lovelace’s poem To Lucasta on going to the Wars as Sradhā Prīti (স্রদ্ধা প্রীতি), Marlowe’s The Passionate Shepherd to his Love as Hriday Rāṇī (হৃদয় রাণী), Robert Southey’s The Scholar as Gīnārthī (গীনার্থী), Sir Walter Scott’s Fatherland as Mātribhūmi (মাত্রভূমি), Pride of Youth as Garabinī (গববিনী) and The Last Minstrel as Ses Gāyak (সেস গায়ক), Longfellow’s Children as Jivanta Kabitā (জীবন্ত কবিতা) and Thomas Moore’s The Light of Other Days as Atīt Smriti (অতীত স্মৃতি).
Rajbongshi 141). On the basis of Mathew Arnold’s *Sohrab and Rustum* he has composed the poem *Pratham Prayās* (প্রথম-প্রযাস). Just as Lucy’s delicate charm has been expressed by Durgeswar Sarma’s *Sādarī* (সাদারী) similarly Dimbeswar Neog has created a sorrowful picture through *Bakulī* (বকুলী). Dimbeswar Neog’s translated poems enriched Assamese literature to a great extent. Retreating from adhering to rules of regularity and preconceived discipline his translations incorporated alien realities in the idiom. Besides being a good poet Ratnakanta Barkakaty was also a good translator. Shelley’s *Love’s Philosophy* is translated as *Premtattva* (প্রেমতত্ত্঵) and Swinburne’s *Before Sunset* as *Sūrjyastar Pūrbe* (সূর্যভ্রষ্ট পূর্বে) (141). Surya Kumar Bhuyan was both a historian and a poet. In Surya Kumar Bhuyan’s unpublished anthology of poetry *Anādārī* (অনাদারী) there are several translated poems. He has translated Thomas Campbell’s *The Soldiers Dream* into Assamese as *Soinikar Sapon* (সৌনিকর সাপোন). In his poem *Gānvar Kamār* (গান্ভর কমার) he was influenced by Longfellow’s *The Village Blacksmith*. His poem *Kabir Prāṇ* (কবির প্রাণ) is a translation of Alfred Tennyson’s, *The Poets Mind* and *Maran* (মরন) is a very popular poem of Bhuyan. Its original source is Mrs. Hemeins *The Hours of Death*. *Prakritir Santān* (প্রকৃতির সন্তান) is a mythopoetic description of a child reared up in harmony with nature that is reminiscent of Wordsworth. Parvatiprasad Baruva’s first translated poem is Shelley’s *Lines to an Indian Air* into Assamese. Other translations of Shelley’s poems include *The Flight of Love* as *Premar Bidāi* (প্রেমার বিদাই) and *One word is Too Often Profaned* and *Music, When Soft Voices Die*. He translated Byron’s *When we two parted* and Hafiz’s English translation of *The Feast of Spring* as *Basantar Uchav* (বসন্ত উচব) as cited in Pabanath Sharma’s book *Parvatiprasad Baruva Rachanawali* (342-355). In his translations he tried to preserve the rhythm of the original poems. *Lines to an Indian Air* was written in the simple present tense but his rendering in the past tense achieves the correct aesthetic distance. He translated Lord Tennyson’s *A Dream of Fair Women, In Memoriam, Come into garden –Maud*. Bhogoboti Prasad Baruah another renowned name among the educated class translated Wordsworth’s *To the Cuckoo* and Shelley’s *To a Skylark* as *Skylārkala’i* (স্কায়লার্কালৈ). Ananda Chandra Baruah also translated a few English poems into Assamese. His *Mil* (মিল) is a translation of
Swinburne’s *If love Were What The Rose Is* (গব্যীযাব প্রেম) is an adaptation of Marlowe’s *The Passionate Shepherd To His Love*. (Das, Rajbongshi 142). Ananda Chandra Baruah translated a few English translation of Russian poems as *Soviet Kabita*. He translated Nikolai Achyibha’s poems from the English translation by Gladis Ivanche as *Autumn, To a Poet, Nightingale* and *Leninar Din* (লেনিনর দিন) is from the English translation by Airina Jelejnoval. Rasul Gamjatov’s poem was translated as *Mor Māṭṛi Bhāṣā* (মোহ মাতৃভাষা) from the English translation by Peter Tempest. *Devadūt* (দেবদুত) was translated from V.V.S. Pinto’s English translation of Mikhail Lermontov’s poem. *Mai Eito Biśvās Nakaron* (মাই এইটো বিশ্বাস নকরো) is a translation of Viktor Bokov’s English translation by Margaret Wetlyn. *Ântarjātik* (আন্তর্জাতিক), *Sei Mānuhjanī*, (সেই মানুষজনী) *Ejan Bandhuloi* (এজন বন্ধুলৈ ) were translated from the English translation of Mosa Jbalil’s poems. *Kuri Śatikār Mājbhāg* (কুরী শতিকার মাজভাগ) is a translation of Andrei Malisko’s English translation by Herbert Marshall. *Śaratkāl* (শব্দ্যকাল) is a translation of the English translation by Gladis Evanche as *Autumn*, of Mirf Tursun Jade’s poem. *Amaratva* (অমরত্ব) is a translation from Mikhail Chetlov’s poem by Darien Rottenberg. *Native Land* an English translation of Anna Akhmatova’s poem by Peter Tempest is translated into Assamese as *Janambhūmi*. (জানমভূমী)

The period from April 1952 to May 1963 is referred to as the “Rāmdhenu” age. The magazine *Rāmdhenu* (রামধনু) played a very crucial role in the development of Assamese literature. Modern Assamese poetry which was initiated in the age of *Āvāhan* achieves its glory in the age of *Rāmdhenu*. The main source of inspiration for the poets of this age were the French symbolist poets. The poets of this age not only experimented with their own poems but they also tried to introduce themselves with the trend of European poetry. The various articles that were published in the *Rāmdhenu* about the German poet Rilke, French poet Rimbaud, English poet Eliot, and others bear testimony to this fact. Even poet like Mayakovsky of Soviet Russia had its impact on the poets of this age. This broadened the horizon of Assamese poets and writers and created an ambience for a new kind of literature. And the person who led the intellectual development of the age was Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya. During this age the
boundaries of Assamese poetry extended to a great extent. The most notable poet of this age was Hem Barua. Ezra Pound was introduced to the Assamese readers by Hem Barua’s adaptation of Ezra Pound’s poem *The River Merchant’s Wife* into Assamese as *Mamatār Cīṭhi* (মমতার চিঠি). Other reputed poets of this age are Nalinidhar Bhattacharyya, Ajit Baruah, Navakanta Barua, Mahendra Bora, Bireswar Baruah, Nilamani Phukan and others. The poets of this age laid great emphasis on translation. Nalini Bhattacharya translated Walt Whitman’s *Song of Myself* as *Mur Kabitā* (মুর কবিতা), Ajit Baruah’s translation of T.S.Eliot’s *The Wasteland* into Assamese as *Chanmāṭi* (ছানমাটি), *Nirbāćita Farācī Kabitā* (নির্বাচিত ফরাচি কবিতা) (Selection of French poetry), *Nirbāćita Ādhunikatābādī Āmericān Kabitā* (নির্বাচিত আধুনিকতাবাদী আমেরিকান কবিতা) (Selection of Modernist American poetry) are his major contribution to Assamese translation (Ahmed 35). Navakanta Barua’s translated works include Goethe’s *Faust*, Whitman’s *Eśa Kabitā* (এশ কবিতা), *Pichar Dinar Tutī Gīt* (পিছার দিনর তুতী গীত), *Āhata Maral* (আহত মোবাল) a collection of Pushkin’s lyrical poems in Assamese, *Kabirāi Kai* (কবিরাই কয়) *Bidruhī Āru Ān Ān Kabitā* (বিদ্রুহী আরু আন আন কবিতা). In his poems we can find the influence of Eliot’s symbolism. We can hear echoes of Eliot’s *The Hollowmen* in his poem *Kramaśah Eṭā Sādhu Kathā* (ক্রামশঃ এতা সাধু কথা).

This is the dead

This is the cactus land.

ওকান হাড়ব

শিক্ষ কাহিন দেশ

মেনা পৃথিবীর দেহ

śūkān hādar
śiju kāṁṭar deś

marā prithivīr deh.

(A tale of dry bones of thorns and cacti of the dead earth).

The line “tumāṛṭo āche bāṭ jaṭil tarkar dare” (তোমারটো আছে বাট জটিল তর্কর দেবে) is a reflection of Eliot’s “streets that follow like a tedious argument” from The Love Song of J.Alfred Prufrock (Ahmed 13). Mahendra Bora in his essays Kumbhīlak (কুম্ভিলক বৃত্তি) Bṛitti claims that it was he who for the first time introduced Assamese readers with poets like Dylan Thomas, Rilke, Czechoslovakian, Chinese and Japanese poets (67). Bireswar Baruah translated Robert Frost’s The Road Not Taken into Assamese as Ji Pathere Jovā Nāi (জি পথেরে জোরা নাই). Three poems of W.B.Yeats have also been translated by him. Ezra Pound’s translations into Assamese include the poems Dukhīyā Lekhakar Pāṭḥ (দুখীয়া লেখকর পাঠ), Eṭā Cukti(এটা চুক্তি) and Ekāśītam Svarga (একশীতম সৃঙ্গ). Two poems of William Blake were also translated by him. Homen Borgohain first translated Rilke’s poem into Assamese. The two poems were published in Ramdhenu as Kabi and Śaratar Din (Dutta 186). Dilip Baruah translated Rilke’s poems and T.S.Eliot’s Love Song of J.Alfred Prufrock into Assamese. Thus Assamese translation shows a wide variety of approaches from simple literal translation to transcreations and adaptations. Some of the translators have succeeded in catching the feelings and images in the original while the others have transmuted through the use of local idioms and phrases.

In Arunodoi (1846) the translators encountered alien realities which in turn changed the idiom of translation. This was built upon and enhanced in the later magazine cycles. Thus we see that in the pages of Arunodoi Assamese literature first gained secular ideas as it has been already noticed. The modern period of Assamese literature began as Banikanta Kakati has observed with the publication of the Bible in Assamese prose translation by the American Baptist Missionaries in 1891. Though Arunodoi basically advocated a religious faith and aimed at its expansion, it began to publish writings on religious and secular subjects, the secular being aimed at modernizing the
Assamese society. Modern poetry may also be said to have evolved from the pages of *Arunodoi*. Mir Majafar Hussain’s translation of Gray’s *Elegy* as *An English Gem* published in the February issue of *Arunodoi* (1854) Vol 1X no 2, was close to modern Assamese poetry in its treatment of a secular theme:

\[
\text{Full many a gem of purest ray serene}\\
\text{The dark unfathom’d caves of ocean bear:}\\
\text{Full many a flower is born to blush unseen}\\
\text{And waste its sweetness on the desert air.}
\]

\[
\text{সুনির্মল বদ্ধ বহ দেখিতে সুন্দর}\\
\text{এগার সমুদ্র মাজত গুপ্ত কলেবক;}\\
\text{ফুটিন্ত অনেক ফুল নে দেখা নয়নে}\\
\text{সুগন্ধ বিনিষ্ট কবে কবর পবনে}
\]

(28).

\[
\text{sunirmal ratna bahu dekhite sundar}\\
\text{endhār samūdra mājat gupta kalebar;}\\
\text{phuṭanta anek phul nedekhon nayane}\\
\text{sugandha binaṣṭa kare banar pabane.}
\]

(Precious stones lie in the ocean hidden from the human eye. Beautiful flowers wilt and wither in the quiet of wilderness).

After *Arunodoi* the two journals *Jonākī* edited by Chandrakumar Agarwalla and *Bānhī* edited by Lakshminath Bezbaroa served most successfully for the development of Assamese literature to modernity. The two major contributions of *Bānhī* were that it revived Sankaradeva and it completed the half done work of *Jonākī*. From the time of
Arunodoi Assamese literature was magazine based. The three magazines that led to the development of Assamese literature were Jonākī (1889-1900), Āvāhan (1929-39) and Rāmdhenu (1952-1962). Though in between Jonākī and Āvāhan, Bānhī (1909-1938) was published it could not create a literary age of its own.
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