CHAPTER EIGHT

OVERLAND ROUTES TO TIBET AND CHINA THROUGH ASSAM
AND COMMODITIES OF IMPORT AND EXPORT

After the First Burma War (1824-26) the Company's Government in India came to know about the shortest and direct routes to Tibet and China which pass through Assam and its hinterlands. But at that time the area through which these routes pass was infested with the savage tribes, i.e. Bhutias, Akas, Daflas, Abors, Mishmis and Khampatis etc. These tribes were always a source of trouble to the Assam Government due entirely to their nefarious habits of loot and plunder.

With the occupation of Assam, the British inherited this hostile relationship with the tribes on the new frontiers. While handling these tribes, the British got the opportunity to explore the tribal belt and the traditional tracks which joined these scattered tribal pockets. The British penetrated into this area sometime under the pretext of punitive expeditions or to relieve the captives; and at other times, to improve the commercial intercourse between
Assam, Tibet and China.

Thus the adventurers like Wilcox, (1) Bedford, Pemberton, (2) and William Griffith, (3) Lieutenant Captain Wilcox carried on number of surveys in Assam during 1825-28. In 1826, he succeeded in penetrating the Mishmi country unto the Nuku village on the Lohit River. He wrote his account of the adventure in a memoir which was published in Asiatic Researches, Vol. 17 (1832), pp. 314-469. This account was reprinted in Selections from the Records of the Bengal Secretariat (1885), No. 23.

R.B. Pemberton's appointment to visit Bhutan in 1837, was an effort firstly to improve the commercial intercourse with Bhutan which through the jealously of the Chinese had been entirely suspended. (Foreign Department, Political Consultations, 7 Aug. 1837, No. 1). Secondly, Pemberton was supposed to collect the information regarding the countries and tribes beyond the frontier (Foreign Department, Political Consultations, 7 Aug. 1837, No. 2). Very interesting facts regarding the commercial transactions between Assam and Tibet are given in Pemberton's Report on Bootan (Calcutta, 1839).

William Griffith came to India in 1832 as an Assistant Surgeon of Madras establishment of the East India Company. In 1836, he visited Mishmi hills and explored the tracts between Sadiya and Ava. In 1837, Griffith accompanied Pemberton to Bhutan: Foreign Department, Political Consultations, 31 July 1837, No. 53.
Rowlatt, (4) John Butler, (5) T.T. Cooper (6) and J.F. Needham (7) explored the tribal area till the end of the nineteenth century. Each of these adventurers pushed the limit of

(4) Lieutenant Rowlatt explored the Mishmi hills between 1844-45. For his account see 'Report of an Expedition into the Mishmi hills to the North-East of Sadyah, JASB. Vol. 14 (1845), pp. 477-95.


(6) In 1868 T.T. Cooper was invited by the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce to travel into India through Rima, a Tibetan outpost. But at Batang Cooper was obstructed by the Chinese authorities and hence deviated his route to India through Bhamo, in Burma, instead of going through Rima. This attempt too was not successful and he had to return. Account of this journey he wrote in Travels of a Pioneer of Commerce (London, 1871).

In 1869, Cooper tried to enter Tibet through India. But he could only reach from Sadiya to Prun, a village some twenty miles south-west of Rima. Cooper has described this journey in: New Routes of Commerce: The Mishmi Hills, (London, 1873)

penetration farther and further until the Tibetan boundary in the north and Chinese boundary in the north-east were reached in 1885-86.

From the diaries and few notes left behind by these adventurers, many interesting facts regarding commercial intercourse between Assam, Tibet and China through this tribal tract have come to light.

This tract now known as Arunachal Pradesh

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(8) In 1912, at the recommendations of General Bower as contained in his Letter No.147-A, this tract was divided into three sections:

(a) The Central Section of North-East Frontier, with headquarters at Rotung;

(b) The Eastern Section of North-East Frontier, with headquarters at Sadiya;

(c) The Western Section of the North-East Frontier comprising the country between Tawang and Subansiri rivers: Assam Secretariat, Political A, Citation, Robert Reid, History of the Frontier Areas bordering on Assam 1883-1941 (Shillong, 1942), p. 240.

In 1919, at the recommendation of the Chief Commissioner, Nicholas Beaston Bell (the Government of India, Notification No. 141-EB dated 20th March,1919) this area was divided into two parts i.e. Balipara Tract and Sadiya Tract: Assam Secretariat Political A, May 1919 Nos. 8-15, Citation, Robert Reid, op. cit, p. 161.

In 1942, Tirap Frontier Tract was carved out of the Sadiya Tract. In 1946, the Balipara Tract was divided into Se-La Sub Agency and Subansiri Area.

Finally in 1954 the whole area was divided into six divisions i.e. Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit, Tirap and Tuensang. However, in 1956, the Tuensang Division was included into the Naga-Bill Districts. The area of remaining five divisions was then called as North East Frontier Agency, abbreviated as NEFA. Major Sita Ram Johri, Where India, China and Burma Meet (Calcutta, 1962), p. 105.

In August 1970, the NEFA was renamed as Arunachal Pradesh: The Tribune, Chandigarh, 13 Aug. 1970.
consists of the country stretching from the eastern borders of Bhutan in the west to the frontier post Kibithoo in the east. (9) Through this area pass two 'most direct' and 'easily accessible' routes to Tibet in the north and China in the east. These two routes are known as the Lhasa-Udalguri route and the Lohit route (10). The latter is also known as Mishmi route or Sadiya-Kima route.

Actually from Assam, as many as five routes (11) lead to Burma, (12) Tibet and China. But the Lhasa-Udalguri and the Lohit route were the most important links between India, China and Tibet during the nineteenth century. Hence a lucid description of these two routes will fit in the scope of this chapter.


(10) Beyond Sadiya Brahmaputra is known as Lohit till it flows in Assam proper. Beyond Assam and up to Kima, Lohit is again known as the Tallu river. And, finally beyond Kima, this Tallu is known as the Zayhul chu.


(12) The routes to Burma are the two routes through Patkoi pass to Shamo and the Manipur route.
Lohit Route or Sadiva - Rima Route

This 'national highway' leading from Sadiya to Rima more or less runs along the Lohit river, which twice changes its name according to its environment. But the route is named after the Lohit itself. It is also called the kishmi route because it traverses through the territories which are inhabited by the Mishmi tribes. It is now motorable upto Temeimukh (Tashiangliang) beyond which one has to march; and particularly beyond Walong, going upto the frontier post kibithoo is very difficult. Total distance between Sadiya and Rima is about 187 miles which can easily be divided into five

(14) Locally Sadiya is known as Kundil because it is situated on the bank of the Kundil stream.
(16) Supra, p. 162, n.10.
(17) The names in parenthesis are those given in maps No. MG 47, Series 1301, Edition 6 Air (Scale, 1:1,000,000)
sections according to the natural characteristics of the route. These five sections are: Sadiya to Sunpura, Sunpura to Temeimukh (Tashiang liang); Temeimukh to Labogam, Labogam to Wati and from Wati to Rima. (20)

First stage from Sadiya to Sunpura is entirely through plains and dense jungles though motorable unto Temeimukh. (21) Sunpura is eighteen miles from Sadiya. (22) Plenty of lime is available near and around Sunpura. Most probably this village has derived its name from 'chuna' (lime) itself as Choonpura. (23) Sunpura marks the eastern end of the road extending to the plains. Immediately east of it the road crosses the contour line of 150 meters (about 500 feet) and then it climbs up a plateau, approximately of one thousand feet high. (24).

(20) Hamilton too has divided it into five sections, i.e., from Sadiya to Temeimukh, from Temeimukh to Chose, from Chose to Delei river, from Delei river to Minxang and from Minxang to Rima. But this description of topography, however, is not supported by Dr. Mukerjee's detailed study and interpretation of the Survey of India Topographical maps. This route has been discussed here according to the latter divisions.

(22) A. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 206.
(24) SITS (1912-13).
It is interesting to note that no complementary water route could be developed in this section because of the presence of numerous rapids in the Lohit river. The route is aligned along the northern bank of the river and four small streams, viz. Digaru, Dening, Teju and Dora are to be crossed before it reaches Temeimukh. These small streams are crossed over by fording, cane-bridges, rope-bridges or by some odd fabrication of branches, trunks or trees. Moreover, in this section the route traverses through a country which is full of lime-boulders and dense jungles along the bank of the river Lohit, and:

... before the cart road was cut by the sappers and miners during 1911-12, the path from Sunpura to Temeimukh was a narrow track, over which jungle hung so low that it was seldom that one could move in an upright attitude. (25)

However, before reaching Temeimukh the small settlement of Demwe is very important for trade transactions. Situated at the foot of the Temeimukh slopes Demwe marks the junction of the northern and the southern routes. (26) Temeimukh is the last stage in the plain country and the


(26) SITS (1912-13).
farthest point which can be reached by elephants also.\(^{(27)}\) Moreover, upto the Dora stream boats can move up the Lohit, but the current beyond that point is too strong for navigation.\(^{(28)}\) Temeimukh (Tashianliang) located at the foot of the ridge (about 800 feet high) provides a junction between the plateau to the west and the mountainous tract to the east. It also provides a good site from where one can enter the mountains through as many as three valleys extending in three different directions. It is possible that these valleys contain some footpaths.

From Temeimukh to Labogan, the route enters the hills and becomes very difficult to traverse. This section of the route comprises of a series of ascents and descents during the whole journey, because of the existence of a large number of high ridges and deep valleys\(^{(29)}\).

\(^{(27)}\) A. Hamilton, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 207.

\(^{(28)}\) \textit{Ibid}.

\(^{(29)}\) Robert Reid, while describing the difficulties of this route says, 'at a point the path will be following a knife edge with 1500 feet drops on either side. At another there is a precipice on one side and a cliff on the other with the path between, little broader than one's boot to walk on': Reid, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 239.
Labogam is another important junction. It is located at the head of a re-entrant. The funnel shaped opening provided attractive sites for the location of the settlements. The route from Temeimukh crosses the ridge to the north of Labogam through a narrow high altitude saddle, and then the rivers and streams occur at frequent intervals. These are Paini, Delei and Du rivers. These streams are of considerable size, particularly the Delei and Du rivers and have risen in the snowy range bordering the Lama Country.

Along the river Delei there is a path through the Glei pass to the Glei village. From this village the Lamas would pour into the village Sameling (Nepumna) for trade. \(^{(30)}\) To the east of Delei is Du river. Though much smaller in size than the Delei, this river also has its source in the same range of snowy mountains. Along Du there is another path through the Du pass which leads to Hima. From these two passes i.e. Glei and Du, the Tibetans used to come to Samelling (Nepumna) to trade with the Mishmis. \(^{(31)}\)

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From Labogam the route moves up to Longjong along the valley of Tellu\(^{(32)}\) or Lohit and taking a complete turn along the ridge reaches Nthung. From here the route bifurcates, one going to the southwest via Changerton and Seyan to Demwa; the other to the south-east through Tilla, Walang,\(^{(33)}\) Mixang, Kramti, Wati, Dong and Kahao to Rima. From Nthung to Wati, the track hugs the slopes of the narrow circular gorge. Along many segments of the route small river terraces provided the sites for settlement. But the first three marches of this section of the route are of steep and difficult ascents and descents\(^{(34)}\). The track continues on a winding and uneven course, and perched precariously on the niche, reaches Minxang in the valley. From a little north of Wati the valley widens a bit and the route keeps on shifting from east to west of the river. The path is

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\(^{(33)}\) This Walang (a little west of 97°, east and a little south of 28 north Latitude), should not be confused with the village Walong, the farthest administrative centre on the north-eastern border, and the place of fiercest battle of 1962 India-China Conflict. cf. G.S. Bhargava, *The Battle of MFA: The Undeclared War.* (Bombay, 1964), p. 103.

\(^{(34)}\) SITE (1912-13).
steep and slippery at some places and altitude gradually rises from 2600 to 3600 feet. But in general the path is good and there are no physical difficulties. Particularly from Kahao to Rima when it runs along the eastern bank of the river, the gradient of this section is less steep than in the earlier segment.

On this section before reaching Rima, Manilkrai and Walong are the important villages from strategic point of view. However, Walong to most of us until 14th November 1962 was a mere place name, a dot on the map of North-eastern frontier, but now Walong is a place where 'patriotism defied death' during India-China conflict of 1962. It is now the farthest administrative centre in the north-eastern region.

Before reaching Rima (almost 500 feet), Kibithoo is another important village and the

(37) Ibid.
(38) SITS (1912-13)
farthest frontier post on the route. It is only six miles from Rima and exactly on the southern side of the McMahon Line. From Walong to Kibithoo the path is very difficult and on the border Lohit is crossed by a rope-way 'which tests the nerves of the user.'

To sum up three significant generalisations can be formulated regarding the alignment of the route. The route for most of its length is located in the valley; most of the segments do not pass through local passes, because the height of the passes itself presented formidable obstacles while the valleys provided many gently sloping topographic segments; and the number of the river crossings ferrying or fording has been kept to the minimum. But one thing is quite clear that the main route and the off-shoots for a long time functioned as trade arteries and joined small market villages. The villages had some rudimentary services which they provided to the population living scattered in the region.

(39) Rima is now the largest military cantonment in the eastern part of Tibet: G.S. Bhargava, op. cit., p. 103.

The Lhasa-Udalguri route from Assam to Tibet passes through the Kameng Division of Arunachal Pradesh. It is strategically and commercially, well frequented, and the shortest route from India to Lhasa. Besides, it is open for traffic throughout the year. The inhabitants along this route are known as Bhotias (in Assam valley) and Monpas (in Tawang area), though there are several other sub-divisions within these categories.

These Monpas and the Bhotias used to attend the winter fairs at Udalguri, Devangiri and Godam (may be

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(41) For the development of the divisions of this area see supra, p.161, n. 3.
(43) It was through this route that Dalai Lama made his entry into India in March, 1959.
(44) B.C. Chakravarty, British Relations with the Hill Tribes of Assam since 1888 (Calcutta, 1964), p. 173.
(45) Actually this route traverses through an area which is a kind of 'horizontal stratification of tribes'. For example the inhabitants near Udalguri are called the Bhotias; those of Tawang area as the Monpas; and still to the north they are called the Khampa Bhotias or the Lenchas etc. : Alastair Lamb, The India China Border: Chatham Houe Essay-2 (Oxford, 1964), p. 130.
Until eighteenth century there was a great deal of movement up and down Assam and Tibet through this route. In 1809, when Assam itself was in an unsettled state, the Assam-Tibet trade through this route was worth two lakhs of rupees. But the Burmese occupation of Assam in 1819 and later British occupation in 1832 adversely affected the trade along this route. The Company wanted to revive the trade, and for this purpose fairs were arranged at Udalguri, and travellers were sent to Bhutan to collect the information regarding the countries and tribes beyond the frontier. But all their efforts proved abortive and a full century was passed before they could obtain a reasonable access to Lhasa.

The route starts from Udalguri which is located near the foot of the southern foot of the Himalayas. Udalguri is the point of confluence of as many as four roads and also has railway connection with the northern plains of Assam. Hence it has a

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(47) Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 15.
(48) Even in the year before the Burmese invasion of Assam in 1819, the Lhasa merchants said to have brought down gold amounting in value of Rs. 70,000 Elwin, op. cit., p. 11.
(49) SITS (1912-13).
road-head location and a convenient place for winter fairs.

From Udalguri for approximately ten miles, the route runs on the plains and piercing the Himalayan region along the re-entrant of the Dhansiri river, follows the latter to a little north of Louri. At this point the road takes a detour to the north-east avoiding the high ridge to the west and reaches the large river settlement, the Dirong Dzong. (50)

The location of this fort provides a commanding view and strategic control of the three tributary valleys converging near it and a good resting place for the weary merchants. From Dirang Dzong the road moves north-west crossing the western ridge through Se-La (14,500 feet), (51) and Tawang river. After crossing the Tawang river the route reaches the Tawang settlement, which is again a big monastery and a big mart as well. The Tawang settlement is well connected with the plains of Assam by a good road. (52)


(52) G.S. Bhargava, op. cit., p. 72.
From Tawang settlement the route goes back to Jang on the eastern bank of the Tawang river. There is every possibility that a large number of hot springs, located north of Jang along the Tawang river valley might have played a considerable role in the alignment of this road. From Jang the route is aligned along the Tawang river upto Kyuri. North of this settlement the route passes through the Tulong La and then reaches Tsona Dzong. (53)

The settlement of Tsona Dzong located at a little north of Mahon line played a considerable part both as a fort and as a mart. When Pemberton visited Bhutan in 1837, he found that:

The commercial transaction between the two (Assam and Tibet) were carried on at a place called 'Chouna' (Tsona Dzong), two month's journey from Lhasa, on the confines of the two States. At 'Chouna' there was a mart established, and on Assam side there was a similar mart at Gegunshar (Godam of SITS, 1912-13) distant four miles from 'Chouna'. An annual caravan repairs from Lhasa to 'Chouna', conducted by about twenty persons conveying silver bullion to the amount of about one lakh of rupees... (54).

(53) SITS (1912-13)
(54) Foreign Department, Political Consultations, 7 Aug. 1837, Nos. 1,2;
Also see: R.B. Pemberton, Report on Bhutan (Calcutta, 1839), p. 145;
Also see: Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 16.
Hence the route from Lhasa to Udalguri was direct, convenient and safe which can be inferred from the small number of persons who composed the caravan and the quantity of silver bullion (amounting to one lakh of rupees) carried by it.

However, in 1852 the British in India wanted to move the site of the Udalguri fair to Hangledey which was expected to be more convenient for the merchants of Assam and Bengal. But later on, it was found that such a change would not be popular, because, the hill caravans would not venture so far into the plains. The existing arrangements were therefore left undisturbed. (55)

COMMODITIES

Unlike Ladakh, Assam had many indigenous products to export to the surrounding countries. The natives of Assam carried on a considerable traffic with the countries situated on the north, south, east and

(55) Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 16.
west. (56) These transactions were not direct as it was in the case of Ladakh, but it was through the intervening tribes that Assam traded with Tibet, China and Burma as well.

**Imports**

During 1840's trade between Tibet and Assam was carried on by the Bhutias, Akas, Daflas and Abors. In the north east the Mishmi tribes dominated all the transactions between China and Assam. (57) The famous marts for the Tibetan and the eastern trade were Udalguri and Sadiya. The Lhassan merchants used to bring the silver bullion amounting to about one Lakh of rupees, and a considerable quantity of rock-salt at Gegunshahr and Tsona-Dzong for the Assamese merchants. Both these places i.e. Tsona-Dzong, situated on the confines of Indo-Tibetan border and Gegunshahr, four miles south to the former, were famous marts where Lhassan and Assamese merchants used to assemble to

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(56) Second Memorial of Hugh Baillie to the Court of Directors: Miscellaneous Letters Received, 12 Dec. 1773, Vol. 57;

Also see Captain Welsh's statement of Assam affairs: Welsh to Shore, 12 Feb. 1794, Foreign Department, Political Consultations, 24 Feb. 1794, No. 15.

(57) See K.B. Pemberton's Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India (Calcutta, 1835); Also see Alexander Mackenzie, op. cit., pp. 15-20.

(58) Dzong in Tibetan means fort.
exchange their commodities.\(^{(59)}\)

Assam having no silver mines of its own, depended largely on its supply from Tibet, China and Barkhampti country near the source of Irrawaddy.\(^{(60)}\) Salt was another very precious and scarce commodity in Assam. It was found at the bottom of some of the hills and the rest was imported from Tibet and Bengal. Some of it was also exported to the eastern tribes like the Mishmis.\(^{(61)}\)

In addition to silver bullion and salt, other imports of Assam from Tibet were gold-dust,\(^{(62)}\) woollen clothes, cow-tails (called 'chowries' in Assam), musk, deer skins and Lama-swords. From the eastern confines, through the Mishmis, Assam imported smoking-pipes of

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\(^{(62)}\) Gold was obtained by washing of the sands of the streams and was brought down to Assam by the Lahassan merchants worth Rs 70,000 annually.
Chinese manufacture, horses, wax, rubber, majeeth\(^{(63)}\), Chinese silk\(^{(64)}\) ivory\(^{(65)}\) and mishmi-tita\(^{(66)}\).

However, mishmi-tita was a drug of great repute. It was a tonic as well as febrifugal purgative. Hence it was in great demand in Assam for its medicinal value.\(^{(67)}\) Several mounds of mishmi-tita was annually bartered at the annual fair at Sadiya by the Mishmis for the salt and grain of Assam. The Assamese merchants used to bring this drug down to Calcutta and then part of it was shipped to China. A large quantity was also sold to the Tibetan merchants at Udalguri fair. However, the best quality, which sinks in the water, was cultivated on Sadiya hills.\(^{(68)}\)

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\(^{(63)}\) Majeeth or madder, a sort of red dye, formed considerable article of the trade of the Daflas. It grew in abundance on their hills and was of superior quality. W. Robinson, 'Notes on the Daphlas', JASB, Vol. 20 (1851), p. 128.

\(^{(64)}\) Assam itself produced an excellent quality of muga-silk which was equal to that of China. Ibid., p. 175.

\(^{(65)}\) The Singphos used to bring ivory in considerable quantity. See: Ibid., pp. 242-43; Also see R.E. Pemberton, on cit., (1835), p. 83; J. M'cosh, Topography of Assam (Calcutta, 1837), p. 12.

\(^{(66)}\) Mishmi tita derived its name from the Mishmis, who cultivated this drug extensively on the higher slopes of the hills. In Assamese it is called 'yoatzhee' or 'gertheon': W. Robinson, op. cit., p. 243; J. F. Needham, Report on the Bebejuya Mishmi Expedition, 1838-1840 (Shilong, 1900), pp. 19-20.


\(^{(68)}\) Ibid.
Exports

Captain Welsh classified the exports of Assam under three heads viz., the vegetable produce, metals and the animal produce. The vegetable products were sugarcane, pepper vine, poppy, indigo, mustard seed, tobacco, betelnut, ginger, rice and cotton cloth. The hills beyond the first range of mountains bordering Assam, not being capable of producing cotton, the people inhabiting beyond them were, therefore, entirely dependent for cloth on the Kishmis bordering Assam (who procured cotton cloth from Assam) and on the Lama people on the north side of snowy range.

(69) Foreign Department Secret and Political Consultations, 14 July 1826, No. 2.

(70) Poppy grew in luxuriance in most of the lower provinces of Assam: Ibid.

(71) Tobacco was in great demand among the Mishmis. 'They are inveterate smokers.... both men and women. When they are not sleeping or eating, they are certainly smoking'. They used brass pipes of Chinese manufacture for smoking. H. T. Dalton, Descriptive ethnology of Bengal (Calcutta, 1872) (Calcutta, 1872), pp. 13-21; Also see J. Butler, A Sketch of Assam with some Account of the Hill-tribes (London, 1847), p. 116.

(72) The Mishmis bartered mishmi-tita for rice, and the Bhutias used to bring silver bullion and salt to exchange them for the Assam rice.

Tea was another item of export during the second half of the 19th century. Although an indigenous plant of Assam, which originally travelled from the borders of China, yet its methodical plantation started after 1834. The plant was discovered by Robert Bruce and a Tea Committee was formed.

Certain experiments were made to cultivate this plant in Kumaon, Garhwal, Mussurie and Assam. Consequently by 1837 the tea-plant was thriving in the districts of Kumaon, Garhwal, Dehradun and Assam. This plantation enabled the Company's Government in India to develop trade which China had hitherto monopolised. (74) Among minerals iron was the only item of major export but a little quantity of gola was also exported. It was obtained by washing the sands of Brahmaputra. Salteptre was also exported to Tibet and China but not in large quantity. (75)

The Animal products consisted of elephant tusks,


(75) Foreign Department and Political Consultations, 14 July 1828, Nos. 2.
buffalo horns and hides, lac, (76)muga silk(77) and tussa-cloth. (78) Tussa-cloth or a special kind of silk was an article of great value and importance due entirely to its strength and durability. Apart from these articles the tribes (Bhotia and Mishmi) were also very fond of glass beads, corals, pearls and dry fish, which Assam exported in abundance.

(76) The great traveller Tavernier mentions that 'the Assam lac, which was used for lacquering cabinets, was exported to China and Japan. Also: V. Balt (tr.) Tavernier's Travels in India (2 Vols. London, 1830) Vol. I, p. 16, Vol. II, p. 27.

(77) The golden muga-silk and very strong and warm endi-silk (made by feeding the silkworms on other kind of leaves than that of the mulberry) are among the most remarkable stuffs in the line of silk textiles of Assam: Suniti Kumar Chatterji, The Place of Assam in the History and Civilization of India (Gauhati, 1955), p. 60.

The art of rearing silk-worm and manufacturing and weaving silk cloth may very well have first come to Assam from China through Assam routes, independently of Central/Routes: Ibid., p. 32.

(78) Foreign Department Secret and Political Consultations, 14 July 1826, No. 2. The name 'tussa' or 'tassar' for silk contains a hidden history of its Chinese origin, In Chinese the word for the silken stuff is 'tasu' which most probably travelled to Assam and is called 'tassar', or 'tussa' cloth by the Assamese: Suniti Kumar Chatterji, op. cit., p. 60.

For further information about all the three varieties of Assam silk, i.e. 'pat', 'endi' and 'muga' see: B.K. Barua, A Cultural History of Assam (Gauhati, 1951), pp. 92-94.
Whole of the Assam trade was carried on mostly by way of barter and it fluctuated from time to time. According to Bogle's estimate, the Assam trade with Tibet and China in 1774 amounted to nearly six or seven lakhs of rupees annually, mostly by way of barter. According to Alexander Mackenzie, the Assam trade amounted to the value of two lakhs of rupees in 1809. Even in 1820 the Lhassan merchants brought with them Rs.70,000 to buy Assam staples. But unfortunately, there is no specific official data about the trade transactions between Assam, Tibet and China as it is for Ladakh and Central Asian trade. Hence it may be concluded that there was a considerable flow of trade between Assam, Tibet and China (through the intervening tribes) though relying only on the passing references in the diaries of the travellers and adventurers.

(79) S.K. Bhuyan, op.cit., p. 80.
(81) A. Mackenzie, op.cit., p. 18.
(82) Ibid., p. 20.