

Conclusion.

The study of dialects is of immense importance for various reasons. As pointed out by J. A. Sheard in his paper, *Dialect Studies*, published in *Transactions of the philological Society* (1945), the study of dialects (i) makes our knowledge of the earlier stages of our language more exact. (ii) It gives us valuable information about the date of acquisition of new words. (iii) The adequate records of all shades of our present day speech furnish good materials to the students of the future for investigation and there-by help to draw general conclusions on language as a whole. (iv) Dialects also represent stages of development through which the literary language has passed and retain forms lost by the latter. In the words of Bleasfield "the local dialects are of paramount importance to the linguist, not merely because their great variety gives him work to do, but because the origin and history of the standard and sub-standard types of speech can be understood only in the light of the local dialects".<sup>1</sup>

For a complete description of Assamese, therefore, the study of its various dialects is highly necessary. The study of Kamarupi will throw some light in the history and development of the standard Assamese. It will also enrich the standard language in several respects. Kamarupi possesses many vocabularies which after slight phonological modifications suit the pattern of the standard language can be used and thereby enrich the vocabulary of Assamese. Mention may be made of such words like *xoiphrãm* 'the guava fruit', *xoiphri kathāl* 'pine apple' which can be modified to *xaphriām* and *xaphuri kathāl*. The words *pāinpeli* 'a kind of flower' and *xetli* 'bed' have already been used in the literary standard as *pānipiali* and *xeteli*. There are also some phrases, proverbs and idiomatic expressions in Kamarupi which can be utilized to fill up some gaps in the standard. For example *baxer puāi* 'very early in the morning'; *hāpāi ainklāk tiri vandā hal upätte giri* 'some one sows and some one reaps'; *hāsei - di barpetāk sā* 'to complicate an easy matter';

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salam lugā 'to make something out of nothing, to decorate'. bhathli bhāṅ 'to enjoy at the cost of another'; xoihrā de < sasira - 'to hang oneself' etc. Kamarupi also abounds in euphemisms. (see. § 189)

In Kamarupi we find some words retained in it and lost by the standard. For example the words for a well in Kamarupi are kūā, nād, lānd, pātā and indrā. In the standard only the first two are in use. Similarly to denote a tray to serve betel-nut Kamarupi uses bātā, xare, thogi and kanti. In the standard we find only batā, xarāi and thagi. This and the semantic development of words in both standard and the dialect with different meanings is quite interesting and important. <sup>In Kamarupi sabaki means an expert cultivator.</sup> In the standard sabaki means rich. In the standard the word rāg means attachment but in Kamarupi it means anger.

The study of Kamarupi also helps in the supply of a great many details concerning the history of individual forms. Thus in Kamarupi we get oth < skt. oṣṭha, Pā. oṣṭha, St. coll. ōth; gātā < skt. garta, St. coll. gāt; lum < skt. lomā Pā. lomā, E. As. lom, St. coll. lom; les < skt. lañja, E. As. leñj, St. coll. nes. So also lesā < skt. rathyā, Pā. raccha, St. coll. nesā; Kām. rāsā, skt. rājā, E. As. rājā, St. coll. rasā; kām. kānā < skt. kāna - ā, St. coll. kanā; pātā < skt. patta + tā; St. coll. patā. Again Kām. lāg < skt. lagna > Pā. lagga, St. coll. lag, ar < skt. apara > Pā. avara, St. coll. ar - u; hāthi < skt. hastī > Pā. hatthi, St. coll. hāti.

On the otherhand the Kamarupi dialect, by preserving some of the important phonological and morphological points of agreement among the Magadhan languages, throws much light on the earlier stage of Assamese. Some of these points are epenthesis of i ( cf. § 78); use of pleonastic - ā < - a - ka; and the loss of case endings and the replacement of locative for the dative acquisitive ( cf. § 118). From the study of the vocables of Kamarupi it has become evident that many familiar words forming part of everyday usage are of foreign origin. Thus it has helped in showing the cultural wave entering into the place. The similarities of phonological

and morphological developments of Kamrupi with other N.I.A. languages clarify the genealogy of Assamese.

The study of dialects also serve a different purpose. Actually speaking "all languages and dialects are of equal merit, each in its own way. There is no such thing as good and bad (or correct and incorrect, grammatical and ungrammatical, right and wrong) in language. 'Correct' can only mean 'socially acceptable', and apart from this has no meaning as applied to language".<sup>1</sup> The notion of 'correct' and 'incorrect' arises when, from among a number of dialects, one happens to dominate the others by being selected as the channel of national literature and civilization. A 'standard' therefore implies convenience and social prestige, not superiority. Still once a dialect is accepted as the standard one, the others sound unusual or comic because they strike as departures from the accepted norm.<sup>2</sup> The systematic study of the dialects showing the causes of such departures can dispel such ideas. The Kamrupi dialect too seems at the outset to be a bit strange to the speakers of the standard. But after knowing the particular system of the dialect and the reasons of the peculiarities, this feeling will not remain and a better understanding among the speakers of both the dialects will prevail. Some knowledge of the Kamrupi dialect on the other hand, will be helpful in the proper study of early Assamese literature which is mainly written in the same dialect.

Here a word or two may be said regarding the non-Aryan elements in the dialect. In earliest times Assam was occupied by speakers of many non-Aryan speeches. In Kamrup also many such speakers lived and are still living and speaking different dialects of their own. According to the census of India 1951 the total number of speakers of the languages belonging to Austric, Tibeto-Chinese, and Dravidian families in the Kamrup district are respectively 2701, 44879 and 1671. But a high percentage of them is bilingual or tri-lingual. According to the same census

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1. Leave your language Alone. P 6 and 13.

2. The Poetic Approach to Language. P 119, 120.

total persons speaking a subsidiary language of the above mentioned families of languages are 1114, 26233 and 304 and the number of total speakers taking Assamese i.e. Kamrupi as the subsidiary language are 1086, 26134 and 289 in order. "In Kamrup and Goalpara, the former headquarters of the kingdom of Kamarupa, the speakers of the Aryan Assamese and Bengali are counted by hundreds, while those of Bodo are counted by tens".<sup>1.</sup>

By 1000 A.D. Bodo and Aryan were spoken side by side in Assam and North Bengal plains.<sup>2.</sup> And prior to 700 B.C. in the area of North-Bengal and Assam, a powerful Non-Aryan, possibly Tibeto-Burman, state may have arisen with a mixed population of Austriacs, Dravidians and Tibeto-Burman.<sup>3.</sup>

Unless a thorough and scientific study is made of these non-Aryan languages and dialects and their results are made available; it is difficult to ascertain the exact contribution of them to Kamrupi or Assamese; Therefore in the following paragraphs the elements considered as non-Aryan by scholars like Dr. Chatterje, Dr. Grierson, Dr. Kakati and others which are found in Kamrupi also, have been mentioned. These elements may be discussed in Phonological, Morphological and Vocabulary aspects.

In the sphere of phonology (i) the loss of distinction between the cerebrals and pure dentals, both of these being substituted by alveolars; (ii) the dentalisation of the palatal affricates of c, ch to s and of j, jh to z; (iii) the change of s to h and then to x; all these have been attributed to Tibeto-Burman influence by Dr. Chatterje. These novel pronunciations were introduced into the Aryan Assamese where it was adopted by Indo - Mongoloid people who were abandoning their own dialects hundreds and hundreds of years ago.<sup>4.</sup> Dr. Grierson

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1. h. S. I. Vol I. P 62.

2. Kirata - Jana - Krti § 56

3. Kirata - Jana - Krti § 44

4. Kirata - Jana - Krti § 54

remarks : In Assamese Tibeto-Burman influence has also been at work to prevent the use of the Dravidian pronunciation of cerebral letters.<sup>1.</sup>

(iv) A certain amount of non-Aryan influence is suspected in matters of aspiration of O.I.A. initial and medial stops. So far as Assamese and the eastern dialects of Bengali are concerned the influence of Bodo in aspirating initial stops is unmistakable.<sup>2</sup>

(v) The phenomenon of spontaneous nasalization ( cf. § 93 ) has been attributed to non-Aryan influence by Dr. Kakati quoting from Dr. Grierson.<sup>3.</sup>

(vi) In the phenomena of Vowel Mutation and Vowel - Harmony ( cf. § 67, 68, 70 ) Austric influence has been suspected by Dr. Kakati.<sup>4.</sup>

(vii) Dr. Chatterje has pointed out that the insertion of short vowels by anaptyxis in consonant groups, which is such a characteristic feature of M.I.A. and N.I.A. is paralleled out in Dravidian.<sup>5</sup> In Kamarupi also this process is at work. ( cf. § 75 ) ).

(viii) In Kamarupi the stress is dominantly initial. The initial stress has been the characteristics of both Dravidian and the Tibeto-Burman dialects.<sup>6.</sup>

In the field of Morphology the following non-Aryan influences have been suspected.

(1) Reduplication of a word has been the notable characteristics of the Austric and Dravidian languages.<sup>7.</sup> In Kamarupi also this process is seen. ( cf. § 188 )

1. L. S. I. Vol I. Part I, P 132

2. Aspects of Early Assamese Literature. P 15

3. Aspects of Early Assamese Literature. P.15

4. A. F. D. P. 35

5. O. D. B. 4. Appendix B § 80.

6. Indo-Aryan and Hindi. P. 113.

7. Aspects of Early Assamese Literature. P. 15.

- (ii) The origin of the enclitic definitives ( cf. § 101) is also thought to be the influence of the Austric language. ( cf. A.F.D. § 842 - 43).
- (iii) Austric influence is also thought to be more probable in the use of personal affixed to nouns of relationship by Dr. Kakati. In Kamarupi too this rule holds good, e.g. piti 'father'; but, tumār pite 'your father'; tār pitāk 'his father' etc.
- (iv) Prefixing of the negative particle *et* the conjugated verb-root (cf. § 74) is considered by Dr. Kakati as the Tibeto - Burman influence.<sup>1</sup>
- (v) The secondary suffixes - sĀ, and - isā (cf. § 193) is also attributed to Tibeto - Burman influence by Dr. Kakati.<sup>2</sup>

The following morphological items in Bengali have been suspected by Dr. Chatterji to be the influence of the Dravidian.<sup>3</sup> In Kamarupi also there peculiarities have been noticed.

(a) The sense of comparative is expressed by putting the compared standard in the locative case followed by some post-positions. (cf. § 140).

(b) The use of compound verbs (cf. § 174 ).

(c) The importance attached to the conjunctive with the sense of having performed or finished an act and its lavish use (cf. § 174 ), is "undoubtedly an idiom borrowed by Aryan from Dravidian, very early in the history of Aryan".<sup>4</sup>

(d) Onomatopoeitic formations and presence of echo-words (cf. Appendix I. ). are characteristics of both N.I.A. and Dravidian.

1. Aspects of Early Assamese Literature. P. 16.

2. Aspects of Early Assamese Literature. P. 16.

3. O. D. B. 4. Appendix B. § 81

4. O. D. B. 4. Appendix B. § 81

(vi) The system of forming the plural by agglutination of words like *saba*, *gana*, *kula* etc. to the noun is suggestive of Dravidian influence.<sup>1</sup> Kamrupi also follows this principle ( cf. § 111).

In vocabulary in Kamrupi the Austric survivals as considered by scholars may be mentioned in the words for counting things, e.g. *gāndā* = 4; *kuri* = 20 and *pan* = 80. The large number of miscellaneous words showing parallels with Nepali (cf. Appendix VI) are also suspected to be Tibeto-Burman in origin. Nepali has been 'more exposed to the action of non-Aryan languages and specially of those belonging to the Tibeto-Burman family. For a great many of those who learnt to speak Nepali had originally as their native tongues Tibeto-Burman or other languages.'<sup>2</sup>

In the matter of syntax the omission of the copula is suspected to be of Dravidian influence.<sup>3</sup>

Thus as has been shown in the body of the book the Kamrupi dialect, structurally and by origin, is an Indo-Aryan speech coming through a process of gradual evolution from O.I.A. stage, with a sprinkling of non-Aryan words and peculiarities particularly of Austric, Tibeto-Burman and Dravidian languages. The Perso - Arabic element is also worth-nothing. (cf. Appendix V)

1. Indo-Aryan and Hindi. P. 119
2. Nepali Dictionary : Introduction. P. XIII - IV.
3. O. D. B. 4. Appendix B. § 82.