P R E F A C E

The present work embodies the result of a comprehensive study on pottery of Assam in both the ethnological and archaeological contexts. The materials under study pertain to the political boundary of Assam prior to its political reorganization in recent years. For the sake of better understanding about the cultural and archaeological heritage, the geo-political limit of this State has been extended to include Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh which earlier formed a part of Assam.

To understand the relative nature of the development of pottery tradition of this province as a whole, it becomes imperative to consider the pottery traditions of the Hills and the Plains with equal emphasis. This is done as the Hills and the Plains cultures have contributed jointly in shaping the present cultural configuration of this province. This is a historical process. In this work an attempt has been made to view the pottery as a tangible
expression of culture, which is potent with informations. These are the socio-economic, ritual and cultural aspects of pottery apart from the technical aspects involved in it.

For the sake of interpretation of pottery from Ambari, two indigenous potter communities, namely, the Hira and the Kumar potters living around this archaeological site have been studied at first hand. These communities are distributed in clusters known as Hira-para, Gotanagar, and Hajo within a radius of five to twelve miles of the archaeological site at Ambari, Gauhati.

The work includes seven Chapters. The first Chapter deals with the historical development of pottery in general, the theoretical aspects together with the data for the present study and scope and aims of this work.

In the second Chapter an attempt has been made to give a brief account of geography, the peoples and the geology of this province.

The third and fourth Chapters include details about the potters and pottery from the Hills and the
Plains respectively. In these two Chapters attempt has been made to study the pottery from their socio-economic view points.

The fifth and sixth Chapters include descriptions of the pottery from the Neolithic and the historical context respectively.

The seventh Chapter incorporates discussions on and interpretations of the pottery collected from archaeological contexts.

Finally, this Chapter ends with a reconstruction of the stages through which pottery in this region developed to reach a stage in which we find pottery works to-day both in the Hills and the Plains areas.