



ANVESHAN

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Department of

HISTORY

A biannual Student E Research Magazine

'A VOYAGE INTO THE UNEXPLORED PAST'



ROYAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY
GUWAHATI

Anveshan

2nd Year, 1st issue

The *e- research magazine* of the Department of History

The Assam Royal Global University

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Foreword

Anveshan the student e-research magazine of the Department of History of The Royal Global University, Guwahati was born in February 2021. It is the Department's conviction that the classrooms of our University should be known for welcoming and celebrating new ideas, critical thinking and freedom of expression. This magazine is part of the same conviction. And since digital magazines have the ability to reach a wider audience while incorporating interactive features to engage interdisciplinary readers, *Anveshan* is a humble effort on the part of the Department to inculcate the habit of writing amongst our students on issues pertaining to local and regional history which may be of particular interest to them, as well as to the students in general. We hope that such a magazine will be a perfect outlet for students to discuss the most debated subjects in history, while also exploring new areas of research.

Originally a class project and created as a "magazine by students, for students", the students have been provided the opportunity to practice their skills in writing pertaining to their interest. The publication is curated by a team of two student editors who facilitate the voices and guide them towards the expansive world of professional practice.

The present edition is the second issue of *Anveshan*. Though intended to be a yearly publication, the hazards of the Covid Pandemic and the constraints of travel made it difficult for the issue to see the light of day in 2022.

We are extremely grateful to the students who have contributed to this magazine. Our thanks are also due to the faculty members of the Editorial Board who have devoted their time for editing the proceedings of the magazine and supporting the students in their endeavour. We hope this humble effort of the Department will be appreciated by the readers.

Prof. Shiela Bora

Honorary Advisor, Department of History,

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Coordinator's Note

It is now almost two years and a little more, that I am writing this piece for a second time. It is not that in between we did not try to publish the next issue of *Anveshan*, but we were dearth of new, original information pertaining to local history. The very idea behind its publication was to bring forth the local history of the region and popularise it through, and among the students of the History Department. The Covid years of 2020 and 2021 greatly impaired the movement of the students in search of fresh information on local and micro-histories. Better little late than never, we have geared ourselves up for the task once again, and with the hope that from now on, we'll be able to publish *Anveshan* on a regular basis. With renewed interest, I would like to assure that the '*voyage shall be taken twice a year into the world of past exploring lesser-known facts of history*'.

Initially, it was decided to entrust one semester with the task of publishing each issue of the e-magazine but of late, we are changing the rule and have selected two student editors from two different semesters. Both have put in tremendous effort in editing of the selected pieces of writing, and so, finally we are ready with the second issue of *Anveshan*.

Hope, the e-magazine will cater to the needs of its readers.

Sincerely,
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Editors' Note

We feel delighted to present the 2nd edition of *Anveshan* before the readers, a platform to express the passion of writing and bonafide perceptions of the past. Published by the Department of History, RGU, the magazine has been named *Anveshan*, meaning “exploring the past”, which itself acquaints with the objective of this publication.

We live in very strange times, where the difference between fact and fiction seems null and void. That's when a historian's role becomes salient. Thus, this e-magazine is graced with some historical accounts largely forsaken by mainstream history. Themed around the contribution of North-East India's historical past, which is often unseen, unknown, and untold, this magazine makes for a very intriguing read.

We would like to give our deepest thanks to RGU and its faculty members for giving an opportunity to the budding writers to express their creativity and talent. Let their words be worthy. We will wait for your encouraging response to this venture. Finally, from the entire team of *Anveshan*, we wish everyone a happy reading.

Thank you

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Leopold von Ranke and The Rise of Disciplinary History

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The rise of history as a modern professional discipline, free from its disciplinary entanglement with philosophy and literature and its purpose as a didactic form of knowledge directed towards moral and esoteric ends, must be studied within the framework of the rise of positivism. It is in the environment of the post enlightenment 19th century, in the social milieu of rationalism and scientific enquiry of what has been called the Scientific Revolution in Europe that history made its pact with Cartesian induction in search for positive knowledge based on observed evidence as opposed to the practice of stating generalized conclusions deduced through universal apriori assumptions. In that, it can be seen as a definite movement of disciplinary history towards the assumption of scientific credentials. A discussion of this shift with the aim of situating Leopold von Ranke as the subject must begin by plotting his theoretical concerns concretely within this environment of intellectual flux. Ranke's general contribution towards the evolution of disciplinary history by way of institutionalization and professionalization of historical scholarship, the standardization of the methods of critical inquiry, viz. source criticism and the establishment of the seminar system are widely acknowledged. In the course of this essay these elements will be discussed further. However, the most crucial among his contributions can only be elucidated by taking into consideration the intellectual conjunction at which Ranke was placed, i.e., the rendezvous between individualism, Lutheran piety and transcendental German idealism. True to the Cartesian heritage, he proposed a particularized history based on the idea of individual agency, but his Lutheran upbringing and Fichtean influence also meant that he saw in the 'particular' manifestations of the 'universal'. The disjunction between these divergent strains of thought and the manner in which Ranke sought to forge a synthesis subsumes the totality of his approach and contribution to what has been called an early form of historicism. Ranke's desire to locate universal patterns in the individual histories of the European nation states was

integral to his approach. The son of a Lutheran minister, it was not contrary to his belief in the individuality of the historical subject, to discern in the history the hand of god and the individual European state constituted for him ideas in the mind of god. This therefore asked of the historian an unsparingly meticulous approach in his attempt to understand the development of each historical individual. Before any approximation of god's will be attempted, one must first study its particular historical manifestation. Wavering from this path may result in the profanity of god. In an appendix to the second volume of his first major work, *Histories of The Latin and the Teutonic Nations*, he elaborated upon the method through which to achieve this goal. His training in philological criticism inspired his reliance on pure sources and intense hermeneutic scrutiny. By the time of the second edition of the book, the need for manuscript sources was also recognized as integral to any meaningful historical survey. He also attempted a form of standardization of the sources by arranging them in hierarchical order with respect to their reliability. In this scheme of things, the manuscript account of an eyewitness came to be prized as the most reliable of sources. Questions such as the nature of the source, first hand or otherwise, reliability of the second hand information or the presence of prejudice and factional interest became central to the methodology of historical research. Another method employed to attain historical objectivity was that of the seminar system. It was hoped that the institution of seminars would help the professional historian by providing him with a critical milieu in which to meticulously cross examine his sources and thereby the history being produced. The seminar system was a product of his familiarity with the model established at Leipzig. Here, the director of the seminar chose professional historians who presented papers of historical research which were then brought under the professional scrutiny of other historians. In this way, it also signalled a move towards forging something of a closed community of knowledge, as was the norm among other sciences of the period. It was believed that these methods, when meticulously employed, would ensure that the particularities of each historical individual and institution would be laid bare and through this the historian would receive a sense of unity with god's design. Ranke's *Histories* may be seen as a veritable manifesto for this approach. Even the choice of 'Histories' in the plural reflects the nature of historical knowledge Ranke aspired to. But for all his emphasis on particularities and individualism, there was the teleological need for arranging individual historical events into an overarching universal trend. *Histories*, in accordance with Ranke's overt understanding of the nature of historical development pits the totalizing influence

of Catholicism against the pluralistic tendency of communities through which developed the European state system but in this triumph of plurality can also be seen the vindication of a sense of universal movement. This is the preeminent dilemma within Ranke's idea of individuality which he sought to address and, as Leonid Krieger has argued, the Revolution of 1830 in France provided the necessary catalyst. The conservative in Ranke despised revolution, the German transcendentalist in him saw Germany as the political ideal, thus it is only natural that in his conception of history there was no place for revolution (as also its counterpart, reaction). The universalizing effect of the revolution in France was thus seen as sapping the vitality out of the individual nations by forcing upon them alien conventions and thus destabilizing the long work of history. His idea of individuality and its relation with history, as elaborated by Meinecke, was that of an organically developing being within the autonomous realm of history which manifested itself as a fusion of ideality and materiality. Here the individual's situation between the opposing poles of worldly and ethereal is wholly independent of both, for the individual is a principle unto itself. However, it also comes with its obverse because for Ranke, the individual was not the only principle. Krieger states that for Ranke, the accessibility of a historical individual had always lain in its affinity with the universal. A historical particularity becomes an individual when it acts in the light of general connections. However, general connections being beyond the realm of history are outside the purview of the historian, he uses two "hybrid general sources" to impregnate the historic particular with the universal. Thus making discernible the "long work of history". These sources are the absolute unity of the spirit of god with that of the individual and the universal pattern interaction with which makes particular existences historic individuals in the first place. Therefore, in Ranke's thought, individualism only represents one element of the historical whole, the other element here being Christianity (not the church). A unity of both principles is the only way through which he could render explicable the multiform existences yet without compromising their inherent interconnections. Ranke's history of the Popes is a mature rendering of what has been called historism, the precursor to historicism which was soon to follow. This work is an engaging account of the life and times of the Popes as opposed to the papacy, a choice which is revealing in itself. It traces the rise and fall of papal dominance through the examination of its relations with the individual nations of Europe and the universal historical movement seen here is towards an interplay between "independent spiritual life and worldly engagement". Christianity is the ideal manifestation of an unattainable god

whose will it is that provides history with the general connections it so persistently craves, and which alone gives meaning to the particulars. Ranke's lifelong emphasis on meticulous investigation of the part of the universal whole is well documented and widely commented upon, but very often it is the other side of the picture historians have failed to see in their estimation of Ranke's philosophy and his contribution towards the discipline of modern history. Through his enunciation of a motive force in history, it gave historical study a sense of purpose. Ranke's historicism is imbued with a sense of change. It accepts an internal logic associated with the movement of historical time, although to the dismay of many modern critics, not necessarily towards progress. II "Ranke had been too deeply rooted in a predemocratic age", writes Georg G. Iggers as the concluding remark to his *The Crisis of The Rankean Paradigm in The Nineteenth Century*. In it he affects an assessment of the changes that may or may not have been traceable to Ranke as far as the historiographical enquiry goes. Using Thomas Kuhn's definitive assessment of the scientific revolution as his conceptual framework, he concludes that neither did it result in a paradigmatic change nor did the debate surrounding Ranke represent a crisis in the process of evolution of history as a social science discipline. For it to have been representative of a paradigm change, it must have been marked by a revolutionary detachment from earlier practices and also a general level of consensus among professional historians. Both of which he fails to locate. He even summarily discounts the impact that his methodological contributions to history, i.e., source criticism, institutionalization and the system of organizing seminars had on the trajectory of historiographical development in the 19th century. However, as we have observed, much of the difficulty in assessing the Rankean paradigm (to use Igger's own term) arrives from a flawed appreciation of his theory, one that does not pay adequate attention to the theoretical complexity of Ranke's thought. Rankean injunction like *wie es eigentlich gewesen* have been understood only in terms of crude dogmatic proclamations (and this happens on both sides of the warring factions), so much so that even eminent historians sometimes resort to what can only be called an intellectual primitivism. What is evident from Igger's criticism (and his statement reproduced in the beginning of his section) is that he betrays a fundamental flaw within the historian, the fallacy of hindsight. It at once becomes evident in his writing when he tries to search for Ranke's merit in the success/failure of his later proponents. The demerit in historicism, which, unlike scientific discipline, is an integral part of history, is that it lends itself to intellectual corruption. By contrast, science is ideologically insular. Iggers here disregards the

truth of his own contemporary past, for he has surely failed to comment on the two great wars and the length to which science went to become a part of propaganda and human suffering. Yes, there were flaws in Ranke's idea of history. His conservatism dictated his approach towards the archives; his histories, therefore, were official state histories. He fails to imbue history with a sense of morality, something that Lord Acton could not abide by. He fails at imbuing historical time with a progressive agenda, much to the chagrin of modern utilitarian history as it emerged in Britain. However, there had always been a sense of movement in his history. In the post modern world, where the nature of reality and epistemological structures are constantly under question, Ranke's historicism is archaic to say the least. But, for his time, to propose a philosophy that sought to reconcile universal metaphysical assumptions with the variegated experience of diffracted individuals, and to employ positive/inductive scrutiny to reach that end is a remarkable feat in itself. If history be a craft, Ranke is most certainly among its master craftsmen.

The Assam State Archives

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M.A (History)

4th Semester



The term 'Archives' refers to the place where public records and historical documents are stored. It was initially conceived as the site where official records were guarded and kept in secrecy.

With the creation of the modern state, The Public Record Office in England was founded in 1838 and the National Archives in France were established in 1790. The archive began to be regarded as the repository of the nation's history and memory in the 19th century. The idea

that it was possible 'to tell history as it was through careful scrutiny of the treasure-house of material from the past, accumulated in the archive awaiting the historian's gaze to bring it to life' was bolstered by the development of the discipline of history through individuals like Leopold von Ranke in Germany and Jules Michelet in France. The archives along with museums, libraries, public monuments, and memorials became instruments for forging the idea of a 'Nation' into people.

However, the creation and maintenance of the archive for it to become a place of dreams, where memory can be reworked by the historian or any kind of researcher who uses the archive is an important process. The archiving process ensures the safe availability of public records and historical documents for the usage by different agents. Thus, as much as the archive as a source of history and memory are significant aspects of its existence, its maintenance and upkeep are also very crucial parts. We the students of the department of History, at the Assam Royal Global University were privileged to undergo an internship program to understand the archiving process at a regional state archive. This was the Assam State Archive. This internship introduced us to many aspects of the process and enabled us to grasp how the archive operates, providing the adequate information to researchers.

The Assam State Archives is the central record repository of the state of Assam, which takes into its custody the non-current records of the entire administration for their proper maintenance and preservation keeping in view their worth of retaining them longer for future use. As early as 1874, during the time of constitution of Assam as a separate Province, a Record office was set up as a subsidiary department of the Assam Secretariat at Shillong, various secretariat departments assemble closed files and are placed orderly for future references. Mr. David Scott who was the then Agent to the Governor General on the North East Frontier of Bengal and Commissioner of Revenue and Circuit in the Districts of Assam, the pioneer in this regard and who had rendered eminent services to construct a Record office at Guwahati, just after the British occupation of Assam in 1826. And as such he had contributed a set of records covering the periods from 1823-1825 to establish the Record Office at Guwahati. But during this course record office were shifted back and forth from Assam to Shillong and to Decca and back to Shillong again but eventually rest at Guwahati, the new capital, as permanent record building.

The main functions of the state Archives is to concentrate in a single repository all the non-current records, both confidential and non-confidential, of the State Secretariat and the authorities subordinate to it and to house them in a properly equipped building and to arrange and classify them on scientific principles. The state Archives also takes adequate measures for their preservation and rehabilitation of the records and make them available both to the official and non-official users. The authority ensures that no government agency weed out their records except in accordance with the rules framed for the purpose by the State Archives.

Archives are collections of documents or 'records' which have been selected for permanent preservation because of their value as evidence or as a source for historical or other research. Therefore, they need to be carefully stored and managed to protect and preserve them for current and future use.

In comparison to libraries, archives usually have weaker classifications and greater amounts of material that is boxed or shelved under chronological or general headings. Hence the archive contents and relevance always contain potential surprises as the life history trajectories by which material travels backwards and forwards between the known and the unknown, between rubbish, junk and sacred priceless records and icons have a high degree of contingency.



Record sorting is an essential practice in archival management. It is carried out by sorting the records according to its departments (Education, Medical, Forest, Home, Finance, etc.), branches (EMI, EPS, ETS, EBS, etc.), and years (1889, 1890...1965,1966, etc.). After sorting the files or records according to their department and branches, all these files are arranged in a chronological manner according to the timelines. Then these files are stored in different labelled boxes in the stack area in according to their subjects and years . The files which do not fall in any category are stored in miscellaneous boxes. By sorting the files and storing them in different labelled boxes makes it practically easier to find the particular files which are required by any scholars or officials in future references.

Listing of records is done after sorting the files. It is carried out by following a proper format where Sl. No., File No., department, branch, year, and subject of the files are written down along with the number of copies. For book listing, the name of the book is written along with the name of the author. Later on, the listed documents will be used for data entry (in digital format).The Record listing process is carried out in order to know which files are kept in a particular box. This makes it easier for one to locate the required files.

Data entry is one of the most important factors in an organization. Data entry helps to access the information very scientifically. It reduces the effort needed to extract meaningful information from data. It obviates the need for a large storehouse of paperwork. Data sharing becomes easy between different departments. It reduces the manpower needed to maintain the archive. It reduces the cost of management effectively. Apart from that, it is very easy to find the information by searching in the database, which also saves time.

Earlier the Assam State Archives has traditionally entered data manually on paper to keep track of the document's information in the register book.The Assam State Archives has started using computerised data entry throughout the past few decades by directly entering the data into their software to maintain the meta data that is derived from record listings. A software called "Archival Management System" is used in the Assam State Archives to organise the document's details. They insert the document's departmental information, followed by the branch, part, file information, subject, date, year, month along with the upload date.

They do not publish all the data in online webpage. For publishing in website, they have to verify the documents properly. Only those documents which are verified are uploaded yearly. Before digitisation in archive, they maintained file's manual book. From this book they searched the documents. For the manual searches, the researchers had to give a requisition form to the archival authority. This process was quite lengthy. The digitization of archive made it easier than ever before.

Conservation of records is an important component within any Archives Management Programme. It ensures that records of enduring value are preserved in its original format for the benefit of present and future generations. So, it is crucial for an archival institution to have a preservation and conservation wing where all the standards of preservation and conservation are implemented to control internal and external agents of deterioration of archival materials and to retain records for as long as they are needed.

The primary record-keeping items include books, papers, maps, charts, plans, parchment, palm leaves, ink, typewriter ribbon, carbon paper, pencils, wax, seals, leather, clothing, photographic films, prints, and sound recordings. Some basic repellents are pyrethrum, sodium fluoride, soda and starch mixture, DDT (Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane) and naphthalene bricks.

In order to preserve and conserve a particular file which are damaged or partially damaged, the pagination of the document and ink test (if the file is handwritten) were the first steps in this technique, which was used to preserve and save a specific file that was damaged or partially damaged. Later hand made paper or butter paper was used to attach the document to it. The damaged or partially damaged paper is placed on the tissue paper, covered with a glue sheet, and set on a rack to dry.

After the papers are properly dried, they are measured and cut equally in order to align them. By following the paginated documents, the papers are arranged in the file accordingly. The next step was to organize the papers and sew them together with the help of thread and needle for binding. While doing so, it is important that the originality of the record be retained.

The Assam State Archives' Reprography division reproduces archival records in order to preserve them. To replicate certain documents and preserve their information, a series of steps are taken. The Archives use microfilming, photography, photocopying, and digitization techniques to preserve the documents' information. Photographic techniques are used to recreate the damaged records.



Research scholars get reliable content for their papers from archival library which are not found elsewhere. Most importantly, libraries enable us to access a variety of publications that are otherwise unavailable to the general public or too expensive. They also aid in preserving an accurate record of the information that earlier generations have amassed.

Therefore, housing the rare yet published books is also crucial for maintaining an archival library. The Assam State Archive's Archival Library has a number of very significant publications, most of which are now rare and no longer in print. These collections include the tribe's report (1874–1950), gazettes, acts, histories, files, census reports, jail reports, old Asiatic Society journals, and other sorts of maps (more than 3000 old maps).

The Assam State Archives provides research facilities to research scholars and other general public. Scholars and researchers have access to a dedicated research room in the Assam State Archives where they can conduct their research.



The Authority also offers scholars and researchers access to a computer. It aids researchers in verifying the documents they seek. If available, they could retrieve the required documents by using a requisition slip.

Record retrieving is the process of finding or locating old data, documents, files, or records, such as legal documents, account records, medical records, or insurance records. The entire process is to keep the records in order. To maintain the process basically requisition slip plays vital role and when a file is taken out from the box to identify and to return the files the slip is tagged in the particular box. The key reason to archive your documents is to avoid losing data.

The internship at the Assam State Archives has taught us a number of useful things about the safe and proper upkeep of documents and texts. These form important resources in historical reconstructions and so their preservation is important too. As discussed in the project, the archiving process has several components and we were introduced to all of them. These components act together to provide a set of safe preservation practices to save our historical heritage in the form of these documents. It was seen that the Assam State Archives has in fact been able to preserve large amounts of documents related to Northeast India. And, offers service to a large and diverse plethora of researchers from different states of the region as

well as foreign scholars interested in Northeast India. It has a decent research room facility and adequately equipped library.

Although, our stint was a lively one, where we learnt well, we noticed that there were challenges of logistics, manpower, and equipment. No doubt, it is commendable on part of the archive employees to be able to run the place with the proper systems in spite of these challenges. Nevertheless, improvements are fast warranted. The record room was a little damp which it was informed to us was bad for the records, as they would decompose faster. Moreover, the room was dusty and was cleaned once a week due to lack of manpower. Digitization of record systems as well as records is a key, but not the only key, especially for an underfunded archive. Even then, it was seen that some amount of digitization has started. However, greater initiative by academicians, researchers and the archive officers themselves is required to coax the state administration to provide the required funds for the purpose.

The Assam State Archives like many state archives that serve the purpose of being markers of collective identities by carrying their histories, has the potential to act as such a marker to bring together a conflicted zone. Containing records that inform us about the formation of modern Northeast India, this store house provides information to scholars of all the seven states of this region. And thus, serves as a common link. The Archive officials at Guwahati can take up programs to promote the Archive as a marker of regional identity to bring in greater publicity and funding too. Thus, it is by devising ingenious ways that this Archive should and is already moving ahead.

A Study report of Assam State Museum

Karishma Arambam

MA History

4th Semester

The Department of History of The Assam Royal Global University gave us an opportunity to do a one- month student internship (as a part of the PG 3rd Semester syllabus) in the Assam State Museum, from 16th August 2022 to 16th September 2022. Throughout the internship programme, we got to interact with the workers and staff members of the Museum. Located in the Ambari side of Guwahati, it is also the most popular and oldest museum in Assam . The Museum, initially known as the Assam Provincial Museum, was inaugurated on 21st April 1940 by Sir Robert Neil Reid, the then Governor of undivided Assam. On 1st April 1953, this institution was taken over by the Government of Assam and renamed as Assam State Museum. Though primarily, it was intended to make it a cultural museum, the Museum was made into an Archaeological Museum having collections of Epigraphy, Iconography and Numismatics. It is one of the most well- known museums in North-East India, providing insights into its rich culture that developed throughout the ages. Its prominent location in the centre of the city attracts a large number of history buffs and tourists visiting Guwahati. Raibahadur Kanaklal Barua was the founder president of the Museum. Shortly after his death, in 1953 it was then taken over by the State. The museum has a large collection of antiquities and sculptures dating from the 5th to the 12th Centuries CE, as well as items connected to the World War II. Subsequently, for systematic and efficient management in 1963, the Museum got split into two separate entities Directorate of Museum and Directorate of Archaeology. The aim of the Directorate of Museum is to collect and scientifically preserve all the antiquities and art objects of Assam for the future generation. The exhibits of the museum are displayed in different galleries¹. Freedom Fighter Gallery: It is a pictography gallery. It includes the photographs on the life history of Mahatma Gandhi and martyrs of Assam in the Quit India movement. 2. Painting Gallery: It houses some of the paintings made by the modern painters of Assam. Some of the notable Paintings are Battle of Kurukshetra by Ramesh Ghosh, Last Stage of Sati Joymati by Mukta Bordoloi, Bodo Weavers by Benu Mishra, Village Scene of Assam by Lambodhar Hazarika etc.

3. Ethnography Gallery: Arts and artifacts of different groups of the tribal population of Assam are displayed here. At present, the tribes which are represented in the section are- Bodo, Dimasa, Rabha, Tiwa, Mishing, Hajong, Sonowal Kachari, Kuki, Jemi Naga, Hmar, Khelma, Deori etc. 4. Village life of Assam: Some aspects of the village life of Assam have been depicted in this gallery. A model of an Assamese household, model of cottage industries and a model of the Namghar are on display. 5. The Sculpture Gallery: In this gallery majority of the sculptures belong to the preAhom period of 6th -13th century CE. Nataraja, Vishnu, Mahishamardini are some sculptures that were discovered from archaeological excavations at Ambari. This gallery also includes some sculptures received from the Bharat Kala Bhavan and Benaras Hindu University. 6. The Manuscript Gallery: The manuscripts preserved in this gallery are in old Assamese, Tai, and Burmese languages. These are written in Sanchipat, Tulapat and Talpat. Some of the Assamese manuscripts preserved here are also illustrated with colours. 7. Arms and Ammunition Gallery: This gallery houses the cannons belonging to Ahom, Koch and Mughal period and also swords such as hengdan, daggers, shields etc. Besides these, modern arms and ammunitions used by the Japanese Army and Air Force during the World War II are also on display here. 8. Epigraphy Gallery: In the Epigraphy gallery, stone and copper plate inscriptions belonging to the period of 5th century to 18th century CE are displayed. 9. Pre and Proto Historic and Terracotta Gallery: It showcases the original specimen collected by Archaeological survey of India dating to the Indus valley civilization which was discovered during the exploration and excavation of the sites at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. This gallery also includes terracotta objects collected from various places of Assam and North East India. 10. Numismatics and Metallic Sculpture Gallery: Some metal sculptures like Mahishamardini, Vishnu, Buddha are displayed here. Coins of Ahoms and Mughal period are also showcased. The Museum has a coin cabinet with more than 6000 coins belonging to different timeline. 11. The Textile Gallery: Costumes of late medieval period, Pat chaddar, Muga chaddar Riha Mekhela and silk dresses of men and women, including the royal gown are displayed this section.

12. Wood Craft Gallery: Wood carving has been very popular in Assam from ancient times. This galley displays the expertise of wood carving in Assam, particularly the Vaishnava satras. The various tribes of North East India are the principal practitioners in the field of wood carving 13. Natural History Gallery: Assam is abundant with natural forests and various kinds of flora and fauna. This section displays the wildlife of Assam such as the world famous one-horned rhinoceros, certain species of birds and their habitat areas in different parts of Assam,

particularly Kaziranga and Manas National Park. 14. The North East Gallery: The North Eastern part of India is inhabited by many tribes, both in plains and hills. Most of the tribal women practice weaving through indigenous methods. The North East gallery's textile section exhibits different varieties of colourful clothes and costumes, which are their products. During the internship programme, we also learnt the process of conserving and maintaining museum items. A Museum Conservator is ultimately responsible for keeping the objects safe, however all personnel who come into contact with the artefacts are trained in object handling practices. On 31st of August 2022, Mr Ashok Das, the Staff Officer of Assam State Museum organised two sessions, presenting the process of conservation. In the first session, he delivered a lecture on the processes of how a museum conserves the various cultural properties in a more scientific way and their types of conservation, its importance and the ideal environmental conditions. From ancient times, manuscripts were mostly prepared on barks of trees and palm leaves. He also gave an opportunity to have an experience of conservation methods by giving a demonstration on various processes of conservation using a particular manuscript made from palm leaves. Workers and staff members are closest to the objects in the Museum. The objects are collected from certain places and brought back to the Museum for research purpose. Later, the objects are catalogued, using numerical form. If any fungal or dirt are to be found on the objects, they are to be cleaned and handled under proper care and guidance of the professionals or researchers. After the cleaning process is complete, the objects are well stored and preserved. The Museum staff use archival box for storing manuscripts and other objects. Archival box is made of alkaline material which absorbs acid and balances it. The material should be made of acid-free material. The boxes are painted with red colors as an indication of high energy. Gluten free cloth is used to safely store manuscripts. In the second session, Mr. Ashok Das also taught us few methods which can be used to clean chlorine and dirt from stone sculptures. He used a method called agar-agar. It is made by using a type of paper known as 'Japanese Tissue paper' which is soaked overnight in distilled water. Later, agar-agar is used for covering stone sculptures which ultimately cleanses the chlorine and dirt inside the stone. The Assam State Museum contributes in preserving the rich heritage of the history and cultural of Assam through collection, research and publication. The Museum itself was a non-profit organization until 1953 when it got recognition as a government institution by Late Shri Arijit Dutta Choudhary who was the first Director of the Museum. Various workshops were conducted for the benefit of the researchers at regular basis. The Assam State Museum has come up with different fellowship programmes in

order to encourage the younger generation in preservation of cultural heritage and artefacts. Few fellowship programmes undertaken by the Assam State Museum had collaborations with the Indian Foundation for Arts for a period of 10-12 months. Their main aim was to support curators, art historians, designers, visual and performing artists and other practitioners to engage with the collection of the Assam State Museum. Their major goal is to provide opportunities to represent themselves through new framework which include exhibitions, publications, performances, events and creative methods to public engagement with museum collections. The collections from Kohima, Nagaland by the Government of Assam viz. bombs, guns, stand guns, cartridge, mortars, rescue suits etc. are also source of attraction to the general visitors of the Museum. One of the most crucial aspects of keeping a culture alive is to meticulously preserve the practices of everyday life within it. The local culture is well presented and preserved by the Assam State Museum. Lastly, to learn more about how visitors interact with their display, the Assam State Museum is adopting visitor attraction technology, where the visitors' interest and taste is given the first priority.

Dogs and Dog Meat in Nagaland: A Viewpoint

Azevino Sophie

M.A. (History)

2nd Semester

Nagaland, a state of India, lies in the hills and mountains of the north-eastern part of the country. It is a small state. Though small, Nagaland is the abode of diverse indigenous tribes and sub-tribes with each tribe having its own festivals and different cultures. The festivals are celebrated in view of agricultural abundance, wealth, prosperity bounty and supply etc. With regards to the diversity Nagaland retains, there is also diversity in language, cultures, ethnic wears and also food. Dogs can also be a source of edible meal. Historically, human consumption of dog meat has been recorded in many parts of the world. For centuries, many South East Asian countries such as China, Philippines, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, including Nagaland in northeast India have considered dog meat a delicacy. It was not until recently that consumption of dog meat was considered as inhumane or rather an act of savagery, possibly because of the growing influence of the Western world. Dogs are amongst the most preferred pets around the world, thus leading to an emotional attachment between the pet and its owner. With regard to Nagaland, there are over 16 major tribes, including the Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Lotha, Sema, Konyak, Pochury, Sangtam, Chang, Khamniungan, Kuki, Phom, Rengma, Yimchunger, Zeliang and other sub tribes, and consumption of dog meat holds separate significance for each tribe. The significance of consumption of dog meat can be found in their usage in many aspects of Naga lifestyle, which includes diverse categories like socio-religious norms to traditional healing and sports. For example, eating of dog meat is often considered as mark of prosperity amongst Angamis and would be eaten during Sekrenyi (an Angami festival), signifying “purification and sanctification” of the body, mind and soul. Meanwhile, Lotha Nagas, dogs are often sacrificed and eaten as a way to win over “evil spirits” since the canines are considered the most cunning of all beasts. With regard to traditional healing and sports, British ethnographer J.H. Hutton in his book *The Naga Angami* noted that the Angami Nagas would eat the eyes of a living dog along with the leaf or root of the mezi tree to cure rheumatism (condition characterised by inflammation or pain in muscles, joints or fibrous tissues. Tenyimia Naga

wrestlers have a custom to consume dog meat before and after traditional wrestling matches. Infact, Neivetso Venuh, Professor at the department of History and Archaeology at the Nagaland University, comments “Although, it is not scientifically proven, but it is traditionally believed amongst the Nagas that dog meat gives strength to people... Every tribe especially Angami and Chakhesang who have wrestling as a sport, consume dog meat.” He further added that for the other Naga tribes like the Ao, Sema, and Lotha, dog meat would be consumed after performing laborious work to regain energy. Apart from consumption as part of traditional beliefs, dogs amongst the Nagas find ample presence in their lived forms. For example, the howling of dogs at night is perceived as the presence of evil spirits in the surrounding and then rituals are performed to woo away the negativity. The role of dogs is also present in the legends and folk stories as well as rituals of the Naga tribes. According to one legend, a dog ate the Naga script which was written on animal skin. Thus, from that day onwards, Naga tradition and knowledge has only been passed orally. The Rongmei Nagas used to have a ritual practise where dogs were involved. It was performed when someone from their tribe passed away, wherein animals like dogs were sacrificed to help the departed soul reach the land of the dead. The Lotha Naga and the Sema Naga were also recorded to have similar practices. However, after the introduction of Christianity by the British, most of these ritual practices have stopped. Today, there is a clear misconception that every Naga consumes dog meat hides and this hides the reality that a large number of Naga households do not eat dog meat, and many people refrain themselves to have it as a part of their regular meal. True, dog meat has been part of Naga food culture for a long time, shaped by various economical, geographical and religious aspects. However, dogs hold a deeper and highly distinctive cultural significance in Naga society as discussed above, as actors in myths and legends, pets, food, and even medicine (because of its nutritive value). The relationship between the people and dogs in the Naga society remain intimate

The Assam State Archives

Lova Ngathem

MA (History)

4th Semester

The term 'Archives' refers to the place where public records and historical documents are stored. It was initially conceived as the site where official records were guarded and kept in secrecy.

With the creation of the modern state, The Public Record Office in England was founded in 1838 and the National Archives in France were established in 1790. The archive began to be regarded as the repository of the nation's history and memory in the 19th century. The idea that it was possible 'to tell history as it was through careful scrutiny of the treasure-house of material from the past, accumulated in the archive awaiting the historian's gaze to bring it to life' was bolstered by the development of the discipline of history through individuals like Leopold von Ranke in Germany and Jules Michelet in France. The archives along with museums, libraries, public monuments, and memorials became instruments for forging the idea of a 'Nation' into people.

However, the creation and maintenance of the archive for it to become a place of dreams, where memory can be reworked by the historian or any kind of researcher who uses the archive is an 2 important process. The archiving process ensures the safe availability of public records and historical documents for the usage by different agents. Thus, as much as the archive as a source of history and memory are significant aspects of its existence, its maintenance and upkeep are also very crucial parts. We the students of the department of History, at the Assam Royal Global University were privileged to undergo an internship programme to understand the archiving process at a regional state archive. This was the Assam State Archive. This internship introduced us to many aspects of the process and enabled us to grasp how the archive operates, providing the adequate information to researchers.

The Assam State Archives is the central record repository of the state of Assam, which takes into its custody the non-current records of the entire administration for their proper maintenance and

preservation keeping in view their worth of retaining them longer for future use. As early as 1874, during the time of constitution of Assam as a separate Province, a Record office was set up as a subsidiary department of the Assam Secretariat at Shillong, various secretariat departments assemble closed files and are placed orderly for future references. Mr. David Scott who was the then Agent to the Governor General on the North East Frontier of Bengal and Commissioner of Revenue and Circuit in the Districts of Assam, the pioneer in this regard and who had rendered eminent services to construct a Record office at Guwahati, just after the British occupation of Assam in 1826. And as such he had contributed a set of records covering the periods from 1823-1825 to establish the Record Office at Guwahati. But during this course record office were shifted back and forth from Assam to Shillong and to Decca and back to Shillong again but eventually rest at Guwahati, the new capital, as permanent record building

The main functions of the state Archives is to concentrate in a single repository all the noncurrent records, both confidential and non-confidential, of the State Secretariat and the authorities subordinate to it and to house them in a properly equipped building and to arrange and classify them on scientific principles. The state Archives also takes adequate measures for their preservation and rehabilitation of the records and make them available both to the official and non- official users. The authority ensures that no government agency weed out their records except in accordance with the rules framed for the purpose by the State Archives

Archives are collections of documents or 'records' which have been selected for permanent preservation because of their value as evidence or as a source for historical or other research. Therefore, they need to be carefully stored and managed to protect and preserve them for current and future use.

In comparison to libraries, archives usually have weaker classifications and greater amounts of material that is boxed or shelved under chronological or general headings. Hence, the archive contents and relevance always contain potential surprises, as the life history trajectories by which material travels backwards and forwards between the known and the unknown, between rubbish, junk and sacred priceless records and icons have a high degree of contingency.

Record sorting is an essential practice in archival management. It is carried out by sorting the records according to its departments (Education, Medical, Forest, Home, Finance, etc.), branches

(EMI, EPS, ETS, EBS, etc.), and years (1889, 1890...1965,1966, etc.). After sorting the files or records according to their department and branches, all these files are arranged in a chronological manner according to the timelines. Then these files are stored in different labelled boxes in the stack area according to their subjects and years . The files which do not fall in any category are stored in miscellaneous boxes. By sorting the files and storing them in different labelled boxes makes it practically easier to find the particular files which are required by any scholars or officials in future references

Listing of records is done after sorting the files. It is carried out by following a proper format, where Sl. No., File No., department, branch, year, and subject of the files are written down along with the number of copies. For book listing, the name of the book is written along with the name of the author. Later on, the listed documents will be used for data entry (in digital format).The record listing process is carried out in order to know which files are kept in a particular box. This makes it easier for one to locate the required files.

Data entry is one of the most important factors in an organization. Data entry helps to access information very scientifically. It reduces the effort needed to extract meaningful information from data. It obviates the need for a large storehouse of paperwork. Data sharing becomes easy between different departments. It reduces the manpower needed to maintain the archive. It reduces the cost of management effectively. Apart from that, it is very easy to find information by searching in the database, which also saves time.

Earlier, the Assam State Archives had traditionally entered data manually on paper to keep track of the document's information in the register book. The Assam State Archives has started using computerised data entry throughout the past few decades by directly entering the data into their software to maintain the meta data that is derived from record listings. A software called "Archival Management System" is used in the Assam State Archives to organise the document's details. They insert the document's departmental information, followed by the branch, part, file information, subject, date, year, month, along with the upload date

They do not publish all the data on online webpages. For publishing on websites, they have to verify the documents properly. Only those documents which are verified are uploaded yearly. Before digitization in archives, they maintained the file's manual book. From this book they

searched for the documents. For the manual searches, the researchers had to give a requisition form to the archival authority. This process was quite lengthy. The digitization of archives made it easier than ever before.

Conservation of records is an important component within any Archives Management Programme. It ensures that records of enduring value are preserved in their original format for the benefit of present and future generations. So, it is crucial for an archival institution to have a preservation and conservation wing where all the standards of preservation and conservation are implemented to control internal and external agents of deterioration of archival materials and to retain records for as long as they are needed.

The primary record-keeping items include books, papers, maps, charts, plans, parchment, palm leaves, ink, typewriter ribbon, carbon paper, pencils, wax, seals, leather, clothing, photographic films, prints, and sound recordings. Some basic repellents are pyrethrum, sodium fluoride, soda and starch mixture, DDT (Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane) and naphthalene bricks

In order to preserve and conserve a particular file which is damaged or partially damaged, the pagination of the document and ink test (if the file is handwritten) were the first steps in this technique, which was used to preserve and save a specific file that was damaged or partially damaged. Later a handmade paper or butter paper was used to attach the document to it. The damaged or partially damaged paper is placed on the tissue paper, covered with a glue sheet, and set on a rack to dry.

After the papers are properly dried, they are measured and cut equally in order to align them. By following the paginated documents, the papers are arranged in the file accordingly. The next step was to organize the papers and sew them together with the help of thread and needle for binding. While doing so, it is important that the originality of the record be retained.

The Assam State Archives' Reprography division reproduces archival records in order to preserve them. To replicate certain documents and preserve their information, a series of steps are taken. The Archives use microfilming, photography, photocopying, and digitization techniques to preserve the documents' information. Photographic techniques are used to recreate the damaged records

The Legacy of Ropuiliani, The Lionheart

R. Lalpekhlu

BA (History)

6th Semester

“She did not surrender to the British She did not fear the men in uniforms She died in a faraway land where they tied her down, We will always honour her beautiful name Ropuiliani.” This is a song sung by the all Mizos (also referred to as Lushais in the colonial period), both young kids and adults. When one hears this song a sense of pride comes over them. Such was the person for whom this song was dedicated to. This was Lalnu Ropuiliani, who is definitely a figure of bravery and courage, and whose acts of resistance to the British for her people and her land is a story passed on in households of the Mizos till today. Born in 1828, Ropuiliani was the daughter of a great Mizo chief Lalsavunga, of what is today North Mizoram, and was later married to an equally great chief of the South, Vandula . Her story goes back to the time when the British were establishing their authority through either territorial annexation or forcible military occupation of one province after the other. Mizoram at that time was known as Lushai Hills. In the years proceeding the Battle of Plassey in 1757, the colonial occupation of Bengal was complete bringing the British to the Chittagong Hills, in East Bengal. This area was located at the borders of the Lushai Hills, and often the British came into contact with the Lushai Hill population. This produced interactions as well as altercations. In the Lushai hills, people lived in conglomerations of different independent units (villages) and each village was under the control of a chief or ‘Lals’. These chiefs even had a council comprising of the elderly and wise men of the village who would often advise the chief in various decision making and in the village administrations. After the annexation of Bengal, there was a gradual and steady number of people, including British entered the territory of the Lushai Hills from East Bengal to establish trade relations with the people of the Lushai Hills. This was however not liked by the Lals who vehemently resisted the intrusions of the outsiders into the region especially the British. By the late 19th century, the British and the Lushais began to live in an uneasy neighborhood. The British created tea gardens near Mizo settlements and began to interfere with the customary Mizo traditions for their commercial interests. Reportedly, there used to be frequent scuffles and skirmishes. Eventually

during the 1890s the British were able to establish their supremacy over some regions of the Lushai Hills. However many Mizo Chiefs or 'Lals' refused to accept the British authority, including Vandula the husband of Ropuiliani. The British tried to lure him with various concessions however he never gave in to their enticements and eventually died in the process of his struggle against the British. At that time, the women folk in Lushai Society were bestowed with the right to become the chief if her husband (who had been the village chief) had deceased. This meant that when the reigning chief died, their widows acted as regents. And so after the death of her husband Vandula, Ropuiliani became the first woman Chieftess of a village called Denlung in the Southern parts of modern day Mizoram. In 1892, a few British officials offered to make peace with the Lushais if they paid taxes and became coolies for the British. The Lushai chiefs were never accustomed to being ruled by anyone and they enjoyed supreme power over their territory where they committed themselves to the task of protecting their homeland with all the possible efforts. It was here that the role of Ropuiliani started to become prominent. The British were planning to construct a road from the Chittagong Hill tracts via the territories which were under the control of Ropuiliani extending up to the Chin Hills of Myanmar. She knew that she will have to make her people work as labourers and coolies under the British for the purpose of the road construction, so she therefore strongly opposed the construction of the roads and urged her followers to stay away from engaging themselves in any work under the British authorities. She narrated to them the stories of their glorious past in order to invoke pride among the natives and inspired her people to stand up to the British. She strongly refused to neither pay any sort of tax nor provide any labourers to the British, who were armed with modern weapons. She informed them that she was the owner and chief of the village and that she would never tolerate the unwanted intrusion or the suppression of her people there. Hundreds of women also joined her in her fight against the British. Even when the British officials organized meeting which required the attendance of the village chiefs, it was Ropuilani who strongly refused to attend any of them. She said- "My subjects and I have never paid any tax to anyone, neither have we done any forced labour. Let them be Kings and Princesses in their own lands; this has been our land since the time of our ancestors, they should not come here and trouble us. We must evict and chase out any and everyone who is an alien." She lived by these very words till here last breath. She even led and engaged in secret activities and movements to drive out the British which aimed to retain the independence of all the villages in the Lushai Hills and not hers alone.

She was also involved in many attacks against the British troops in the Lushai Hills. She even harbored British wanted fugitives like Pavunga and Hlawncheuva wanted for the murder of Lt. Stewart and their interpreter Satinkhara. Rather than giving the British officials what they asked for they preferred to declare war against the foreigners. All this caused major worry for the British officials and irked them so much that they suspected her to be the root cause behind the emergence of anti-colonial resistance movements in the Lushai Hills and its neighbouring areas. By this time most important chiefs of Vandula's clan were dead, but Ropuiliani with the loyal support of her youngest son Lathuama, and so Ropuiliani with the help of Lalthuama invited the chiefs from the Northern Lushai Hills to help them in their fight and resist the British. But before they could be ready news of this alliance reached the ears of Capt. Shakespear, and so the British officials arrested Ropuiliani and her son and imprisoned them in October 26, 1893 at Lunglei, Mizoram. On her arrest, the British report said "Shakespeare reported the capture of an important person and a bitter enemy of the British in the shape of Ropuiliani, mother of Lalthuama, widow of Vandula, an old enemy of British." She was evidently a focus of discontent." Even after her capture, the British feared that her presence even as a captive in the area would escalate tensions and disaffection among the locals, therefore she was deported to a British jail at a place called Rangmati, in the Chittagong Hills, present day Bangladesh. Despite being shackled and tied up she refused to walk on foot to the Chittagong jail, due to which the British had to hire coolies to carry her there. Even after being captured and facing defeat Ropuiliani never gave in to the British in spirit. She refused to eat any food served by the British administrator and never yielded to the British pressure to surrender and stood in defiance to the colonial authorities even after her detention. The British officials even proposed to appoint both her and her son as peons in the Chittagong jail with a monthly remuneration and some emoluments which they strictly refused. Due to poor living conditions and bad treatment, at the age of 86, she died in prison in 1895, two years after she was imprisoned in the Chittagong Hills. And after her death, it became easier for the British to subdue the remaining Lushai chiefs many of whom were murdered. While her role in colonial resistance was a short lived one, but her impact on her people was far greater to say the least. Her great leadership and her utmost mission to protect and defend her beloved motherland like a true patriot, and her resistance against the British to the end of her life is certainly not forgotten till today. This also earned her the title of 'Lalnu' which means Queen.

She was not only a symbol of undying courage and valor but also an inspiration to many women even during her time.

The realm of the Kacharis and the story of Cachar

Harshit Sinha

BA (History)

Second Semester

The Dimasa or Kachari Kingdom, also known as the Kachari Hidimba and Timisa Kingdom was a major, late medieval, or an early modern kingdom in Assam-ruled by Dimasa kings, also called Timisa in the Ahom Buranjis (the Ahom historical chronicles). The first of the Kachari kings claimed to rule from Dimapur in the early ninth century, although he was probably little more than a powerful chieftain. The Kacharis belonged to the Dimasa Bodo Kachari group. They also called themselves descendants of Ghatotkacha, the son of the Pandava Prince Bhima. They also appear to have had links to their cousins, the Mlechha kings. They ruled from their capital at Hidimbapur (Dimapur). The Dimasa kingdom and others (Kamata, Chutiya kingdoms) that developed in the wake of the Kamarupa kingdom were examples of how new states that emerged from indigenous communities transformed these communities. The Dimasa kingdom finds mention in the Chinese chronicles. The undivided Cachar district is congruous to the last Kachari king, Govinda Chandra's kingdom. In the late 18th century, a divine Hindu origin was constructed for the rulers of the Kachari Kingdom. The kingdom was named Hidimba and its kings Hidimeshwar. However, the origin of the Kachari kingdom is not clear. According to tradition, the Dimasa had their domain in Kamarupa and their kings belonged to a lineage called Ha-tsug-tsa or Ha-chengsa, a name first mentioned on a coin dating back to 1520. Some of them had to leave because of political turmoil and some died while crossing the Brahmaputra. Therefore, they were called Dimasa- son of the big river. There was a similarity in Dimasa traditions and religious beliefs with those of the Chutiya Kingdom, a late medieval state that developed around Sadiya, a town in Tinsukia district of Assam and adjoining areas in Arunachal Pradesh. This supports the theory of initial unity and then divergence. Linguistic studies too point to a close association between Dimasa language and Moran language that was alive till the beginning of the 20th-century, suggesting that the Dimasa kingdom had an eastern Assam presence before the advent of the Ahoms. The Dimasas had a tradition of worshipping the Goddess of War, Kechai Khaiti, common among all Bodo-Kachari people such as the Rabhas,

Tiwas, Koch, Chutias, etc. According to an account in a Buranji, the first Ahom king Sukapha (1228–1268) encountered a group of Kachari people in the Tirap region (currently in Arunachal Pradesh). The group informed him that they had to leave a place called Mohung (salt springs) after losing it to the Nagas, and that they later settled near the Dikhou river. This supports the theory of the extension of the eastern boundary of the Kachari Kingdom upto Mohong or Namchang beyond the river Dichang, before the arrival of the Ahoms. The Kachari kingdom emerged as a recognizably powerful entity on the south bank of the River Brahmaputra while the Chutiya kings were dominant in north-eastern Assam and the fading Kamarupa kings to the west were struggling to hold onto their territory. During the sixteenth century, they were forced out by the Ahoms and moved to Maibong, where they adopted a Brahmanical lifestyle. Later in the eighteenth century, the Koch rule of Khaspur (near Silchar) died out and the wandering Kachari kings were able to merge that kingdom within theirs, shifting their capital to Khaspur. The Kacharis in Dimapur By the 13th century, the Kachari kingdom extended along the southern banks of Brahmaputra River, from Dikhow River to Kallang River and included the valley of Dhansiri and present-day Dima Hasao district. Dimapur was built by Raja Chakradhvaj after being driven from Ghergaon (present-day Dergaon) in Jorhat district. According to the Buranjis who called the kings Khun Timisa, the Kachari settlements to the east of Dikhou withdrew before the Ahom advance. The Chutiya Kingdom existed in the northeast and the Kamata Kingdom and the Baro Bhuyans to its west. Hostilities with Ahoms The Ahoms settled into the tract between the Sutiya and the Kachari Kingdoms that was inhabited by the Borahi and Matak peoples. The first clash with the Ahom Kingdom took place in 1490, in which the Ahoms were defeated. The Ahoms sued for peace, and an Ahom princess was offered to the Kachari king and the Kachari took control of the land beyond the Dhansiri. But the Ahoms were getting powerful and pushed the Kacharis back west. In 1526 the Kacharis defeated the Ahoms in a battle, but in the same year they were defeated in a second battle. In 1531 the Ahoms advanced up to Dimapur, the capital of the Kachari Kingdom or the Hidimba kingdom, removed Khunkhara, the Kachari king, and installed Detsung in his place. But in 1536 the Ahoms attacked the Kachari capital once again and sacked the city. The Kacharis abandoned Dimapur and retreated south to set up their new capital in Maibang. Maibang is the original dialect of Dima Kachari. “Mai” means paddy and “bang” means plenty or abundance. The Kacharis in Cachar By the 17th Century, the Kachari rule extended into the plains of Cachar. The plains people did not

participate in the courts of the Kachari king directly. They were organized according to khels, and the king provided justice and collected revenue via an official called the Uzir. Though the plains people did not participate in the Kachari royal court, the Dharmadhi guru and other Brahmins in the court cast a considerable influence, especially with the beginning of the 18th century. The region of Khaspur was originally a part of the Tripura Kingdom, which was taken over by Chilarai in the 16th century. The region was ruled by a tributary ruler, Kamalnarayana, the brother of Chilarai. After the decline of Koch power, Khaspur became independent. In the middle of the 18th century, the last of the Koch rulers died without an heir and the control of the kingdom went to the ruler of the Kachari Kingdom. After the merger, the capital of the Kachari Kingdom moved to Khaspur, near present-day Silchar. A widely believed legend about the Kachari Kingdom, created by the Hindu Brahmins at Khaspur, goes as follows: In the Mahabharata, during their exile, the Pandavas came to the Kachari Kingdom where Bhima fell in love with Hidimba, married her and their son was Ghatotkacha. He ruled the Kachari Kingdom for many decades. Thereafter, kings of his lineage ruled over the vast land of the Dilao river (now known as Brahmaputra River) until 4th century CE. It is believed that Kacharis participated in the Mahabharata war too. British Occupation After Gobinda Chandra, the British annexed the Kachari Kingdom under the doctrine of lapse. At the time of British annexation, the kingdom consisted of parts of Nagaon and Karbi Anglong; North Cachar, Cachar and the Jiri frontier of Manipur. CACHAR Cachar was a part of the greater Kachari Kingdom which also included the adjoining Hailakandi and Karimganj districts. The Last King of Cachar was Raja Govindrachandradwajanarayana Hasnu. During his rule Khaspur was the Capital of Cachar (Kachar). Cachar was another native kingdom that fell victim to the imperialist design of the British. The Kingdom of Cachar was being ruled by two rulers having clearly defined areas of control. In the plains (southern portion of Cachar) Govindrachandradwajanarayana Hasnu was the ruling prince. Immediately after his assassination by Gambhir Singh the British annexed it to their dominion in India (1832). Tularam was the ruling chief of the hilly tract (northern portion of Cachar or Dima Hasao). His territories were annexed after he died in 1854. Thus entire Cachar came under the British occupation. While south Cachar was annexed under Robertson, the hilly tract of Cachar came under British occupation when Jenkins was the Commissioner of Assam. In 1854 North Cachar was annexed to the British Dominion after the death of Senapati Tularam and tagged with Cachar. In 1874, Cachar was included in the Chief Commissionership of Assam as

per proclamation of Feb'6, 1874 and the post of Superintendent was redesignated as the Deputy Commissioner and Mr. R. Stuart was the first DC of the district. Hailakandi subdivision was formed on June 1, 1869. As a result of partition of India in 1947, four Thanas of erstwhile Karimganj subdivision of Sylhet District were transferred to Cachar. The district of Cachar is located in the Southernmost part of Assam is one of the oldest districts of Assam. It is bounded on the North by Barail and Jayantia hill ranges, on the South by the state of Mizoram, on the East by sister district Hailakandi and Karimganj. The district was created in 1830 after annexation of Kachari Kingdom by the British. In 1854, North Cachar was annexed and tagged to the district. In 1951 erstwhile North Cachar Sub-Division was made a separate district and taken out of Cachar. In 1983 erstwhile Karimganj subdivision and in 1989, Hailakandi subdivision was made a separate District. There are two possibilities regarding the origin of the name “Cachar”. They are:- 1. The Kacharis gave this name Cachar when they ruled this land. 2. The word Kachar in Sylhet (Bengali of Sylhet) means a stretch of land at the foot of a mountain. Hence the name Cachar might have been given by Bengali people of Sylhet as the land is surrounded by mountains. Bibliography • About the Dimasa Kingdom of Assam, by Kamlesh Tripathi (Bhavan’s Journal, February 28, 2022 issue, website: www.esamskriti.com) • The List of Dimasa Kachari Kings and Rulers- Kachari Kingdom (Dimasa Thairili, website: www.dimasathairili.com) • Kachari Kingdom Explained (BODOLANDOBSERVER, website: www.bodolandobserver.wordpress.com) • History of Cachar District (Government of Assam | Cachar District, website: www.cachar.gov.in.)