

Situating the Historical Chronicles of Tripura in Traditional Indian Historiography

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ABSTRACT

The sub-discipline of history named historiography is concerned with the history of history writing. India had more than one genres of traditional history-writing before the establishment of the Colonial British rule in the Subcontinent. Though initially not taken up seriously by the scholars of the new ruling class, some from within that group soon found them useful for studying the ancient and medieval history of the country. Situated in the southernmost corner of North East India, the province of Tripura too can boast of a strong tradition of historiography. Mostly written in Bengali language, they are essential for undertaking any research on the history of the Medieval Kingdom of Tripura, particularly from its formation in c. 15th Century C.E up to the end of the 18th Century C.E. This paper tries to locate the traditional historiography of Tripura within the earlier-mentioned Pan-Indian Traditional Historiography. It will also try to bring out the unique features of the historical chronicles of Tripura.

Keywords: *itihās-purāna, Rājmalā, Kṛsnmalā, Ghīzanāma*

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Introduction

Nestled in the southernmost part of North East India, Tripura is presently one of the states or provinces of the Union of India. Geographically, it corresponds more or less to the erstwhile Kingdom of Tripura under the Māñikya Dynasty as it existed before the Partition and independence of India¹. One of the chief features of that Kingdom was the existence of a tradition of historiography which is, despite some controversies, the chief source of information for its history, particularly for the period from its formation to the 18th Century C.E. On the other hand, the nature of this historiography cannot be understood without placing it within the Pan-Indian Traditional Historiography. This paper tries to view the traditional historiography of Tripura as part of the Pan-Indian tradition of history writing and delves into its unique features. It is not an endeavour to provide a mere description of the literary chronicles of Tripura. A short discussion on Indian traditional historiography is to be done at the beginning of this study.

Traditional Indian Historiography

The academic discipline of History deals with past events related to human activity. Its goal is to narrate and analyze the Past *as accurately as possible*. On the other hand Historiography is an ancillary discipline of History which deals with the techniques and ideas of writing history. It is concerned not only with the writing of history according to modern line, but to delve into the ways into which various cultures and people of different ages visualised *The Past*. This is preliminary to any endeavour in historical research. The essential features of historiography are the methods of using source materials or records of past events, both literary and archaeological (in the case of ancient and medieval histories), critical methods of

analyzing the source materials and a keen sense of the past². It deals with the history of history writing. It is concerned with the way various cultures had notion of *the Past*.

Since the days of the great 19th Century German historians Barthold Niebuhr and Leopold Von Ranke, modern method of history writing has come to mean to reconstruct the past in “a scholarly fashion, sticking to certain definite rules of establishing facts, interpreting evidence, dealing with source materials etc”³. The modern academic discipline of History follows this line of operation. But historiography is not concerned solely with this method. Even before the crystallization of the modern method of history writing and sometimes coterminous with it, various cultures looked into the Past from their own perspectives. Even the modern method of history-writing had to go through evolution, absorbing various aspects of the Classical or Greco-Roman, Medieval Christian, Renaissance models. History of history writing has to take account of the way various cultures viewed their own past.

The search for a tradition of historical writing in Ancient India⁴ during the Early British colonialism, starting from the 18th Century C.E period, followed the modern scheme of history writing with emphasis on source materials and their interpretations, causation, humanistic orientation, proper chronology etc. A legacy of Renaissance historiography, these were the principles used to judge Ancient Indian or Sanskrit literature. Going by these yardsticks, the Classical or Greco-Roman, Chinese and Arab or Islamic models of historiography were thought to be the exemplary ones among the cultures belonging to the Pre-Modern World. Even the Biblical traditions were not written off outright. But no such comparable tradition with the features mentioned above was found in India⁵, particularly in the Pre-

Turkish period. Nevertheless, realization soon dawned upon these early exponents of Indology that information given in the 'Hindu' or Sanskrit texts, though haphazard in nature, had kernel of historical truth⁶ and attempts were made to systematize these information. Gradually Buddhist and Jaina texts too began to be used for this purpose. But the overriding idea that Ancient India lacked historical writings in line with the contemporary ancient cultures mentioned earlier in this paragraph lingered on and was accepted even by some of the nationalist historians⁷.

Such extreme views have been modified to some extent in the recent past. The authenticity of the information is not the only yardstick through which to look into this issue here. As has already been mentioned in this paper, historiography is concerned with the way a society in a particular time views *The Past*. It is itself a part of culture of any particular society. The established methods of history writing are still intact in the modern academic world, despite occasional challenges. But historiography should take into account the *other* forms of the notions of *the Past* as well. This exercise, though, must not fall into the trap of obscurantism.

In the context of North India, Romila Thapar⁸ identified two broad divisions of traditional historiography- itihāsa-purāṇa tradition which was brahmanical or Hindu in nature and śramaṇa one which was represented by Buddhist and Jaina writings. This observation has relevance for other parts of India as well. Apart from the two traditions mentioned above, the oral traditions preserved by bards and even inscriptions can be accepted to be branches of Indian traditional historiography. The traditional writings are more often in Sanskrit language (barring the Prakrit inscriptions). The word itihāsa means 'thus it happened' and purāṇa literally means 'old events'. Starting its journey from the Vedic period, the itihāsa-purāṇa tradition

got crystallized during the Mid 1st Millennium C.E when the Hindu purāṇas and upapurāṇas as well as the epics were given the final shape.

Together with the genres mentioned above, the Indo-Persian historiography which began in India from the time of the establishment of Turkish rule in the country in the 13th Century

C.E and regional historiography or 'histories' of various regional polities are two other genres within the field of traditional Indian way of history writing. Mention should also be made of a genre that became evident in the Early Medieval India—historical kāvyas or poetical works based on the lives of one or more than one hero or of illustrious kings (carita).

The brief discussion that has been done in this section was necessary to understand the nature of historical chronicles of Tripura. The relation of the traditional historiography of Tripura with the Pan-Indian traditions mentioned above will be analysed later in this paper.

Traditional Historiography of Tripura

Four literary works in Bengali language and one fragmentary work in Sanskrit constitute the traditional historiography of the Kingdom of Tripura. The Bengali works are Rājṃālā⁹, Kṛṣṇāmālā¹⁰, Ghazināmā¹¹ (pronounced 'Gājināmā' in Bengali) and Campakavijaya¹² (pronounced Campakabijaya¹³ in Bengali). The Sanskrit one is titled Rājaratnākara. Another interesting work on Tripura history is Tripura Deśer Kathā or Tripurā Burañji, composed by Arjun Dās Bairāgī and Ratna Kandalī Śarmā, two envoys sent by the Ahom King Swargadeva Rudra Simha to the royal court of Tripura. They came and stayed thrice in the Māṇikyā court during the 1709-1715

C.E period. Originally written in Assamese language, this book, though, should ideally be considered as a part of the rich historiography of the Ahom Kingdom. Hence this work is kept out of the purview of the present paper. Tripura Vamśāvalī of Dvija Baṅgacandra is actually a shorter version of Rājmālā, and Śreṇimālā, composed by Durgāmaṇi Ujir, is really a genealogy of the Māṅikya Dynasty. Though valuable source materials for the history of Medieval Tripura, these works, too, are kept out of the scope of this write-up.

Apart from the works mentioned above, some epigraphs have also been found in Tripura which gives some information of her history. But their scanty numbers and meagre information that they provide prevent them from being treated at par with the mainstream historiography mentioned above, though in the Pan-Indian context the inscriptions are treated as one form of traditional historiography¹⁴. The coins issued by the Māṅikya kings add to the information on Tripura History¹⁵. But these are not part of any tradition of history writing. So both the epigraphic and numismatic sources are not within the scope of discussion here.

RĀJMĀLĀ

The most important and well-known literary source for the history of Tripura, despite the controversies associated with it, is Rājmālā, the historical of the Māṅikya rule in Tripura patronised by the Royal Authority of the Kingdom. But it is to be mentioned here that the books written on the subject with the title Rājmālā are more than one. Kaliprasanna Sen, the editor of Śrīrajmālā which is the most detailed and authoritative of the lot, refers to the traditional view that the first volume (lahar) was

written during the reign of King Dharma Māṇikya during the Mid-15th Century C.E period by two scholars or traditional pundits from Sylhet (presently Bangladesh) – Śukreśvar and Vāṇeśvar with the help of the royal priest (cantai) Durlabhendra. The second and the third ones were composed towards the end of the 16th Century C.E during the reign of King Amara Māṇikya and in the second half of the 17th Century C.E during the reign of Govinda Māṇikya respectively. The fourth lahar was written by Viśwāsa Nārāyaṇa with the help of Jaideb Ujir (Wazir) in the second half of the 18th Century C.E during the reign of King Kṛṣṇamāṇikya. The fifth and the sixth ones were composed by Dugāmaṇi Ujir in the first half of the 19th Century C.E during the reigns of Kāśīcandra Māṇikya and Kṛṣṇakśor Māṇikya respectively.

In an article on Rājmalā¹⁶ published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society, Reverend James Long accepted the traditional view about its author or period of composition mentioned above which occurred in a copy of the work kept in the Asiatic Society. Scholars such as Dinesh Chandra Sen¹⁷ more or less accepted this view. Though an early scholarly view on the subject, its uncritical acceptance of the date of the text and the view Long propounded that it was the oldest specimen of Bengali composition are rejected by later day scholars¹⁸. Presently it is assumed¹⁹ that in the Tripurā Era 1238 (1828 C.E) Durgāmaṇi Ujir, a highly ranked royal officer, corrected and edited the whole narrative. This is referred to in the text itself where it says --

Purātan Rājmalā āchilo rachita |

Prasaṅgete alagnik bhāṣā je kutsita ||

Bārośo āṭṭriś san Tripurā jakhani |

Tāhāke sudhilo puna Ujīr Durgāmaṇi ||²⁰

In the first two lines quoted above from the Text it is said that the older Rājṃālā was written in a vulgar language. It is not clear to which language this *kutsita* (vulgar) language refers. It might refer to an earlier Bengali version full of grammatical and other errors or in a local dialect of South Eastern Bengal or Kokbarak, the language of the Tripuris and the majority of the tribal population of the Kingdom. But the latter did not have any alphabet in the medieval period. Was it then written originally in Kokbarak with Bengali characters? Or was it prevalent as oral history? Any way the original language Rājṃālā is a controversial issue.

Various kings tried to create their own versions of Rājṃālā. The traditional view itself shows that additions and writing of new volumes kept on taking place during the reigns of different kings. This trend continued in the second half of the 19th and first half of the 20th Centuries. The most notable of these efforts took place during the reign of King Bir Bikram Kishor Māṇikya (1923-1947) when Mr. Kaliprasanna Sen edited the first four volumes, mainly on the basis of the edited works of Durgāmaṇi Ujīr. By the end of the 19th and in the first half of the 20th Centuries a trend of writing local histories of various districts of the British province of Bengal was in vogue,²¹ more as a search for a history of the *Bengalee People*. Mr. Sen, a contemporary of the period when this trend was in full swing, might have been influenced by it while editing the work. In that case he might have treated the medieval history of Tripura as part of Bengal History.

This work, named Śrīrājṃālā, has been published by the Govt. of Tripura. A shorter version of Rājṃālā in Bengali was written by Ramnarayan Deb²². A very important

work of the same kind named *Rājmalā bā Tripurār Itihās* in Bengali was composed by Mr Kailas Chandra Simha²³ which, however, did not get much royal favour. But the latter work is much complete in nature compared to the traditional *Rājmalā*. In fact, it was the first attempt to write the history of Tripura on modern lines. Still, the work of Kaliprasanna Sen, despite its uncritical attitude towards the mythical accounts pertaining to the pre-15th Century C.E period, is the most reliable version of the Text available today. It is to be noted here that it was Mr. Kaliprasanna Sen who coined the term *lahar* to describe the volumes of the text.

The first lahar or volume gives the supposedly earliest account of the Kingdom. The Māṇikya royal dynasty was shown to be descending from the mythical lunar (candra) dynasty. This was the dynasty to which the protagonists of the great Sanskrit epic Mahābhārata belonged. The Māṇikyas were even linked to Lord Śiva of the Hindus. Needless to say that these mythical accounts were conjured up to lend legitimacy to the Māṇikyas and can be compared with similar processes undertaken in some other tribal polities of North East India. But the events such as the establishment in and later the migration of the Tripuri tribe from the Barak Valley of Assam towards Tripura, described in this section, are accepted by the scholars to be authentic²⁴.

Despite Mr. Kailas Chandra Simha's view that the story of the Tripurā kings from King Tripura should be taken seriously²⁵, the account of the Kingdom prior to King Chenthumphā as described in the text, cannot be taken to be authentic history and should be seen as acts of legitimization of royal authority or to put a halo of purity on the royal dynasty, an integral part of state formation process in North East India. Ratna Phā was the first Tripuri ruler to use the title Māṇikya. According to *Rājmalā*, it was conferred upon him by the Sultan of Gauḍa (Bengal). The relation between the

Sultanate of Bengal and the Kingdom of Tripura is an interesting part of this lahar and forms an important facet in the state formation process among the Tripuri tribe. This volume also refers to the migration of the Bengalees from the Bengal Sultanate to the Plains of the Māṇikya Kingdom.

The second lahar deals with the period from the reign of Dharma Māṇikya up to the period prior to the time of the accession of King Amara Māṇikya in 1577 C.E. As it has already been said, during the reign of the latter-mentioned King his General Raṇacatura Nārāyaṇa narrated the story. Though the identity of Dharma Māṇikya is controversial, this volume is important for Tripura History from the perspective that it deals with the reigns of some of the greatest rulers belonging to the Māṇikya Dynasty such as Dhanya Māṇikya and Vijaya Māṇikya II. Particularly important here is the reference to the two successful battles with Sultan Hussain Shah of Bengal during the reign of King Dhanyamāṇikya in the first quarter of the 16th Century C.E. The use of cannon during these battles by the Sultan of Ben) pre-dates even its use in the first battle of Panipat in 1526 C.E.

As has been said in this paper, the traditional view of the composition of the third lahar is during the reign of King Govindamāṇikya during the second half of the 17th Century C.E, though even within the text there is reference to the fact that it was composed during the reign of the latter's son Rāmadeva Māṇikya (c.1676-1685 C.E)²⁶. Starting from the beginning of the reign of King Amara Māṇikya (1577 C.E), it deals with the political history of Tripura up to the reign of King Kalyāṇa Māṇikya (d.1660 C.E). One of the most important episodes of this period is the capture of the Plain areas of the Kingdom by the Mughals. Gaṅgādhara Siddhāntavāgīśa is referred to by Kaliprasanna Sen to be the original author of this lahar. But there is controversy among modern scholars in accepting this claim.

The fourth lahar, supposed to be written during the reign of King Kṛṣṇa Māṇikya in the second half of the 18th Century C.E, deals with the period from Govinda Māṇikya onwards. This king's life and achievements are discussed in detail here. The account comes up to the reign of King Kṛṣṇa Māṇikya, which can be tallied with some other texts like Kṛṣṇamālā and Ghāzināmā dealing with the political history of Tripura in the Late 18th Century C.E period. The Editor of Śrīrājmālā was not able to finish its editing. On the other hand the 5th and 6th volumes, provided they ever existed at all, are no longer extant and not discussed in the present paper.

The controversies surrounding the time of composition and language of the Text have been dealt with previously in this paper. Even then, to accept some of the assertions made in the Texts in their face value is problematic. *Firstly*, in none of the Texts the name of the writer is given. The names which have been taken to be of the writers of the *lahars* by Pundit Kaliprasanna Sen are, in fact, described in the Texts themselves as narrators. Still, in the absence of any proof on the contrary, the view that the narrators were the real writers cannot be rejected outright. *Secondly*, even after disregarding the attempt in the first lahar to connect the Māṇikyas with ancient mythical heroes, a reader encounters some instances of wrong information or no information at all in the portions of the Text pertaining to the historical period. The controversy regarding Dharma Māṇikya's identity is a case in point in this regard.

Still, Rājmālā in its present form is a good specimen of Indian traditional historiography. The history of Medieval Tripura is almost entirely based on this work. Whatever controversies it attracts is common to all the genres that prevailed before the emergence of the *modern* methods of history writings. In fact, these shortcomings even more bolster its claim to be part of the traditional forms of Indian historiography.

KRSÑAMĀLĀ

As the discussion done above shows, the history of Tripura from c.15th Century C.E to the reign of King Kṛṣṇa Māṇikya (1760-1783 C.E) is almost entirely dependent on the accounts of Rājāmālā. Though not comparable with Rājāmālā in terms of scope or gigantic span of time, some other local chronicles in Bengali dealing with some specific portions of her history came up in the Kingdom of Tripura. In terms of style of narration they follow Rājāmālā. One of such works is Kṛṣṇāmālā. Written by Dvija Rāmagaṅgā or Rāmagaṅgā Viśārada at the behest of King Rājadhara Māṇikya II (1785-1804 C.E) , it deals with the life and career of Kṛṣṇa Māṇikya, one of the rulers of Tripura whose reign saw much tumult, in a much more detailed way than done in Rājāmālā. The text suggests that it was narrated orally by the royal priest Jayanta Cantai to King Rājadhara Māṇikya II who happened to be the successor and nephew of Kṛṣṇa Māṇikya. It puts forward a detailed picture of the Kingdom as prevailed during the second half of the 18th Century C.E. A brief description of the subject matter of the text is given below.

After the death of King Mukunda Māṇikya in 1738, Tripura was going through an unstable period. The relations of the Kingdom with the Nawab of Bengal who represented, at least theoretically, the Mughal authority in the region was tenuous and short tenures of kings named Jaya Māṇikya, Udaya Māṇikya and Vijaya Māṇikya (the last two not to be confused with much more illustrious earlier kings of Tripura with the same names) speak of a disturbing and unstable phase. The Text, though, does not refer to these kings, perhaps because of its pre-occupation with Kṛṣṇa Māṇikya.

The story opens with a peaceful picture with King Indra Māṇikya ruling with the help of his brothers, the Crown Prince (Yuvarāja) Kṛṣṇamaṇi (later Kṛṣṇa Māṇikya) and Harimaṇi. But

the non payment of taxes²⁷ to the Nawab authority (called *Mughal* in the Text) of Bengal gave rise to the misfortune of the Kingdom. A rebel named Samsher Ghāzi (called a *taskar* or robber by the author) attacked the Kingdom with the help of the then Nawab of Bengal, Alivardi Khan. The latter was instigated by an official named Hāji Hussain, a friend of Samsher. After facing setbacks against the Rebel, Indra Māṇikya went to meet with the Nawab in Murshidabad (in the present province of West Bengal in India). Before leaving, he told his brother Kṛṣṇamaṇi to retreat deep into the hilly regions of the Kingdom along with other members of the royal family. Following the order, the latter moved to Kailasahar (in the Present Unakoti district of Tripura) and then to the friendly Heḍamba or Cachhari Kingdom, all along facing hardships. On being entreated by his Kuki subjects, Kṛṣṇamaṇi entered into the region peopled by this tribe within his Kingdom.

Meanwhile, though Samsher became the ruler of Tripura, almost all the high ranking officials in the capital Udaipur refused to accept his suzerainty. Cashing in on the situation, Kṛṣṇamaṇi waged war against him. Finally, Samsher's fortune declined. He was detained and assassinated at the order of the Nawab of Bengal.

While facing Samsher's challenge, Kṛṣṇamaṇi put down a Kuki rebellion. On the other hand, after the death of his friend King Rāmacandradhvaja of the Heḍamba Kingdom, the ministers became powerful there. Faced with the hostility from this section, Kṛṣṇamaṇi led successful campaigns against the Kingdom. Then he settled temporarily on the bank of the river Khowai in West Tripura and after obtaining the

formal permission from the Nawab of Bengal, Kṛṣṇamaṇi became the King of Tripura with the title Kṛṣṇa Māṇikya in 1760 C.E. This was followed by the phase of his relation with the British power. Muhammad Reza Khan, a top official of Bengal having seat of power in Chittagong (in present Bangladesh) attacked Tripura. This was followed by the British attack on the Kingdom.

Kṛṣṇa Māṇikya regained the throne in the confusion and tried to maintain a friendly relation with this newly emerging power at the back of his kingdom. Though not mentioned in the text, the Plain areas of the Kingdom came under the British sway at this time.. By 1767 the King's long drawn struggle seemed to have ended and he was able to establish royal authority from this time. But the text again mentions the instability and famine in the Kingdom after the death of the King in 1783 till Rājadhara's accession to the throne in 1785. The role of the British in the process of the accession of the new King too is mentioned in the text.

Despite concerned with a small period, much space is given to this chronicle in this paper because of several factors.

Firstly, the hero of this historical poem is the only one among the rulers of Medieval Tripura whose life and activities have been documented with such precision.

Secondly, as the narrator is contemporary of the events mentioned in the text, its reliability is much higher.

Thirdly, the relation of Tripura with the Mughal or Nawab authority of Bengal or later the British is referred to here. In fact, this was the threshold time in the history of India with the victory of the British in the battle of Plassey in 1757. Kṛṣṇa Māṇikya's reign saw the beginning of this transition.

Fourthly, the Kingdom's relation with the neighbouring powers in the East such as the Cachharis/Dimasas of the Heḍamba Kingdom or the Jayantias is touched upon in the text.

Fifthly, The centrifugal tendencies of the Kingdom are reflected in the King's relation with the Kuki and Tripuri Sardars and the rebellion of Samsheer Ghāzi.

Sixthly, the geographical information and the description of the Kuki tribe in the text give a picture of the Kingdom **not** to be found from any other source.

So in many ways Kṛṣṇamālā holds a unique place among the local chronicles of Tripura.

GHĀZINĀMĀ

Pronounced Gājināmā in Bengali, this historical kāvya or poetical work, was composed by Shaikh Manuhar (Manohar?) in Bengali probably at the latter part of the 18th Century C.E. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that it was not a royal chronicle, unlike other chronicles of Tripura. It revolves around the life of Samsheer Ghāzi, a controversial figure in the middle part of the 18th Century C.E in Tripura. While Kṛṣṇamālā, in line with its nature of being a royal chronicle, paints him as an upstart, Ghāzināmā, on the other hand, hero-worships him. It gives a different perspective and more extensive description of Samsheer's rebellion vis-à-vis Kṛṣṇamālā.

The storyline narrated in the Text starts with Samsheer, the son of a Muslim *faqir*, being raised by Nasir Muhammad, the landlord of Dakshin Shik which formed part of the Plain areas of Tripura. But the latter became jealous of Samsheer after a Brahmin astrologer and a Muslim mendicant or *faqir* predicted a 'spectacular' future for him. Though Samsheer became an officer under Nasir Muhammad after attaining

adulthood, his ambition soared, egged on as he was by the predictions of his future greatness. A clash broke out between the two when Samsher infuriated his master by seeking marriage with Daiyā Bibi, Nāsir's daughter. Ultimately after a chain of violence that saw the deaths of Nasir, his two sons and even Daiya Bibi, Samsher became the landlord of Dakshin Shik area. Having heard of Nasir Muhammad's plight, the then King of Tripura, Indra Māṇikya sent armies against Samsher. But employing clever tactics, Ghāzi forced the King to recognize him in the new position. The hostility between the two continued which ultimately led to Samsher capturing the

capital of the Kingdom, Udaipur. After assuming the authority of the realm he obtained formal recognition from the then Nawab of Bengal, Alivardi Khan. He maintained order, the Text claims, throughout the areas under his control and undertook many works of public utility. The Text speaks of Samsher's popularity and the peace prevailing in the realm:

Gājir doyāi pāre nagare bājāre |

Gaje nāhi mare loke byāgre nāhi dhare²⁸|

But at the height of his glory, Samsher went to Murshidabad to meet the Nawab in 1751, disregarding the suggestions of his counsellors. Though he established good rapport with the Nawab there, his enemy in Nawab's court, Agha Khan, tried to kill him by blowing him up by cannon. But Samsher's death is not confirmed by the author, in line with the hero-worshipping tenor prevailing throughout the Text. Thus, the end of Samsher as described in the Text needs to be tallied with other relevant sources.

Samsher Ghāzi's rebellion is an important phase of Tripura History. The centrifugal tendencies within the Kingdom came to the fore through this event. Being one of the most important source of information dealing with this phase, Ghāzināmā brings out a reliable picture of contemporary Tripura, the references of the supernatural events in the Text notwithstanding. Moreover, the syncretised religious tradition followed at least by some sections of the Muslims of Bengal and Tripura is evident from some of the references in the Text.

Campaka Vijaya

Composed by Shaikh Mahaddi (or Mahaddin), Campaka Vijaya is another work belonging to the traditional historiography of Tripura. Probably written towards the end of the 17th or in the beginning of the 18th Century C.E, this historical kāvya or poetical work describes the political situation of the Kingdom in the beginning of the reign of King Ratna Māṅikya II. Though this work is named after Campaka Rai, a high official of the realm, other characters, particularly Mīr Khan (Āmir Khan in Rājmalā) who happens to be the patron of the poet, too play important roles in the narrative.

After King Rāmā Māṅikya's death, his five years old son Ratna Māṅikya II ascended the throne under the guardianship of Balibhīma Nārāyaṇa (the brother-in-law of the deceased King). Apart from Balibhīma, Campaka Rai was the other Prince (Yuvarāja) of the realm who had important say in the state of affairs. But dispute with regard to the payment of tax led to the conflict between the Mughal authority of Bengal and Tripura, ultimately resulting in Balibhīma's imprisonment by the Mughals. Campaka Rai, though, continued to hold important position in the

administration of the Kingdom. But cashing in on the confusion resulting from the Mughal intervention, Naṛendra Māṇikya, a nephew of Rāma Māṇikya, captured the throne. Campaka Rai ran away and prepared for a showdown with Narendra in order to re-install Ratna as the King. The Text suddenly ends at this juncture.

Divided into four chapters (khaṇḍa), the major issues in the Text are the tumultuous Tripura-Mughal relation and the clashes waged by Narendra Māṇikya, a claimant to the Tripuri Throne. But its information needs to be tallied with other relevant works like Tripura Deśer Kathā. Still this is a valuable source to know the political scenario of Tripura towards the end of the 17th Century C.E, though some wrong or disputed information lessens its importance compared to the three other works discussed before it in this paper.

Apart from the works discussed till now, one Sanskrit work called Rājaratnākara deals with the mythical origin of the Māṇikya dynasty of Tripura. Its narrative is akin to the mythical accounts of the first lahar of Rājīmālā. It is, though, of not much value for the study of the medieval history of the Kingdom. Besides, royal genealogies like Śreṇimālā also supplement the texts already discussed in this paper.

Conclusion

The discussion in the paper done till now is divided into two segments – the first one dealing with the pan-Indian or Classical Indian tradition of historiography and the second one with the traditional historiography of Tripura. This concluding part will discuss whether there was any relation between the two.



⁷ For example, a) Raychaudhuri, Hemchandra --- *Political History of Ancient India* (With Commentary by Bratindranath Mukherjee), Oxford University Press, 2nd edition, 9th impression, 2010 b) Majumdar, R.C (ed) – *History and Culture of Indian People*, Vol.1, Bharatiya Vidyabhavan, Mumbai, 1996

⁸ Thapar *op cit.*, p. 50.

⁹ In this work the first four *lahar* (volumes) of Rājmalā edited by Mr. Kaliprasanna Sen in the first half of the 20th Century and later published by the Tribal Research Institute of Tripura is followed.

¹⁰ Rāmgāṅgā Viśārada (edited by Debbarman, Kumar Sahadebkishor and Jagadish Gana Chowdhury) ---- *Kṛṣṇamālā* (in Bengali), Byasdeb Prakashani, Agartala, 1995

¹¹ Sekh (Saikh) Manuhar (Manohar ?) (edited by Barman, Ramendra Dr.) --- *Gājīnāmā* (in Bengali), Akshar Publication, 1st Edn. 2nd Impression, Agartala, 2001

¹² Mahaddi, Shaikh (edited by Jagadish Gana Chowdhury) --- *Campaka Vijaya* (in Bengali), Byasdeb Prakashani, Agartala, 1995

¹³ In this paper the spellings of the oriental names of texts or writers or characters mentioned in the texts generally follow the pattern of Sanskrit (or Perso-Arabic) pronunciation instead of the original Bengali ones, except in the case of Rājmalā. For example, Instead of Gobinda Māṅkya it is spelt Govinda Māṅkya or Ghazīnāmā, in place of Gājīnāmā in this paper.

¹⁴ Thapar *op cit.*, p. 547 – 548

¹⁵ Acharjee, Jahar --- *Tripurār Itihās (pratham bhāg)* (in Bengali), Raj Kusum Prakāśaṅī, Agartala, 2012, pp 113--146

¹⁶ Long, Reverend James – *Analysis of Rājmalā*, Journal of the Asiatic Society, Vol. IX, 1850

¹⁷ Sen, Dinesh Chandra – *Brihat Banga* (in Bengali), University of Calcutta, Kolkata, 1934

¹⁸ Sen, Sukumar – *Bangla Sahityer Itihaas* (in Bengali), (New Hardcover Edition), Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2015

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ As quoted from Rājmalā (3rd lahar) in Dutta, Ramaprasad --- *Tripurār Prācin Puthi Prasāṅge* (in Bengali), Paunami Prakashan, Agartala, 1999

²¹ Various works on the district histories of Noakhali, Mymensingha and other districts of the undivided Bengal came up during this time. As representative of this genre, one work is mentioned below- Chaudhury, A.C -- *Srihatter Itivritta* (in Bengali), Saraswati Library, Silchar, 1917

²² Deb, Ramnarayan – *Rājmalā* (in Bengali), Deptt. of Education, Govt. Of Tripura, 1967

²³ Simha, Kailas Chandra – *Rājmalā bā Tripurār Itivritta* (in Bengali), Akshar Publications, 3rd Edition, 2013

²⁴ Boruah, Nirode – ‘Early State’ Formation in the Kapili Valley in Assam, in J.B Bhattacharjee and D.R Syiemlieh (eds.), *Early States in North East India*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2013

²⁵ Simha *op cit.* p-36

²⁶ Dutta *op cit.* p-17

²⁷ *Since the time of the first Mughal military intervention of Tripura in the first quarter of the 17th Century C.E, the practice of paying ‘gifts’ or taxes in the form of elephants and ivory to the Mughal authority of Bengal by Tripura Kings became a recurrent affair and it became an annual affair by the beginning of the 18th Century C.E when Murshid Quli Khan became the Nawab of Bengal.*

²⁸ as quoted in Dutta *op cit.* p-77