

A P P E N D I X I

ADMINISTRATION

The rule of succession as evident in case of the Koch rulers was Primarily guided by the law of Primogeniture as usually followed by most of the rulers of other parts of the country. Members belonging to the royal blood were generally considered for the throne, though at a later period the line of the original Koch dynasty was cut off, and the rulers were selected from among the members of the Nasir Deo and Dewan Deo families.¹

The king's legal right to the throne was acknowledged by the performance of abhiseka (coronation), the ceremony which was popular from ancient times in India. With the introduction of Brahmanical religion in the Kāmatā-Koch Kingdom, the Koch kings were coronated through the Sastric rites. The Brāhmanas who conducted these royal functions used to give the name (abhiseka-nāma) to the kings as for instance, on his accession Visu took the name Visvasimha.² His coronation, as we get from the Darrang Rājyasamvālī was performed in pomp and grandeur.^{2a} During his installation, all the royal insignia, viz., the Umbrella, Sceptre, the white gumar (cowrie), the Flag etc. were displayed. Śīsyasimha (śīśu), his brother held the royal umbrella over his head.³

Visvasimha's birth has been ascribed to divine origin. It is said in the Rājopākhyaṇa that Visvasimha was

a son begotten of Mahādeva (Lord Śiva) and his mother was Hīrā, the wife of Haridāsa (Hariyā mandala).⁴ Thus the descendants of Viśvasiṃha henceforth began to claim their descent from Śiva. The adoption of Saivism by the early rulers and its popularity among the people as a whole, perhaps, conveniently prepared the ground to relate Viśvasiṃha's birth with the above tradition.

As regards the origin of Kingship Lakṣmīdhara⁵ one of the early Nivandhakāras, quotes Manu's dogma of divine creation of the king 'out of particles of the eight Regents of the quarters; so as to make him a superman'. Similarly the Bhāṣya Rājasūtrī seems to have echoed the version of the Bṛhadharmapurāṇa while describing the qualities of mahārāja Viśvasiṃha.⁶

'Viśvasiṃha was a Brahmā in creativity, Hṛaikeśa in the well-being of the subjects, Mahesā in putting down enemies and wicked-subjects, Indira in war, Kṛvaga in giving away alms, and candra in performing religious rites and so on and so forth'.^{6a}

From an inscription engraved on the temple of Viṣṇu in Nepal at the orders of Rūpamatī Devī it is learnt that Naranārāyaṇa the king of Kāmatā-Koch kingdom who conquered all his enemies was like Indra.^{6b}

Śrīnāth Brāhmaṇa, a court poet described Viṣṇuārāyaṇa

as the Hdaygiri (the hill from which the sun rises).⁷

An original deed of land grants issued by Prānanārāyana to a Brāhmana, also contains an eulogy describing the king as the Indra of the world, whose fame has risen like the moon from the churning of ocean of his enemies, by his arms like Nandaśā hill.⁸ His character has also been depicted in the inscription offered by the king on the door of the temple of Kāmaśvarī as refulgent like the Sun in prowess and in punishing (the wicked).⁹

The Darrang Rājvasāvalī further enumerates the moral virtues of the king. The king was sweet tongued. His towering personality as being the preserver of truthfulness like Pārvatī, learning like Sarasvatī, righteousness like Vrhaspati fell upon his subjects a tremendous impact. The people of the kingdom thus accepted him laudably.¹⁰

Under the influence of Hindu political ideology, the rulers of the Koch dynasty conformed to the basic issues as laid down in the Hindu political texts. The Koch ruler Viśvasimha upheld the idea of Dharma above all. The Hindu conception of Dharma is taken from the idea of established right. It speaks of social order based on law, conduct and worship which aims at attaining social solidarity. The state acts as a constituent of Society, which gives Dharma top priority and it is noted that Dharma prescribes the duty of the Government and also for the well-being of the society of

various social orders (Varnas). In the words of Manu : "The King has been created (to be) the protector of the classes (Varna) and orders, who, all according to their rank, discharge their social duties".¹¹ The erection and maintenance of numerous temples, land grants made to the Brāhmanas indicate the manner in which the rulers of the Kāmata-Koch kingdom patronised the Brāhmanical religion.

The king was the real head of the kingdom. He was the head of all the branches, viz., Executive, judiciary and legislative. It is noticed before that he was not only the owner of the land but also the master of his subjects. It was at the king's disposal of both selling and granting of lands. Beveridge, Deputy Commissioner in his annual report for 1855-67 observed that prior to the appointment of British Commissioner, the king of Koch Bihar exercised his absolute power on every matter in the country.^{11a} The king could appoint or dismiss any officer and in case of any offence he could inflict severe punishment.

Viśvashīha considered his subjects as his own children and ruled them accordingly.¹² King Naranārāyana was also liked by the people because of his wisdom and qualities. The people used to call him Dharmarāja.¹³ Prānanārāyana was also a benevolent ruler. He took care of the people's happiness. The Tārīkh-i-Assam, a contemporary work praises Prānanārāyana for his efficient discharge of

administration,¹⁴ Mahānārāyaṇa was known for his virtues and the king used to render punishment to the miscreants.¹⁵

As regards the qualities of the heir-apparent (Yuvarāja) and the Prime Minister we learnt from Darrang Rājavisāvalī that a prince should well acquire the knowledge of weapons. His conduct would be of grave but temperate disposition. He should refrain from all sorts of temptations. Faithfulness, non-sensuality, benevolence etc. are some of the essential ingredients required for the prince. He should always consult with the ministers.¹⁶

About the Prime Minister Darrang Rājavisāvalī further holds that he should hail from high family.¹⁷

Viśvasiṃha appears to have appointed Barishā and Vaihāgu as the ministers.¹⁸ Further, we learn that Nārhari Dāsa was appointed as the Prime Minister of Viśvasiṃha at the request of the royal priest Sārvathama.¹⁹ The king appointed Payonidhi in event of his father's (Nārharidāsa's) death to the post of minister. During the period of Nārāyaṇa, Kavindra Pātra acted as his minister. It is learnt from the geneological history of the Darrang Rāja family that Śukladhvaja was accompanied by Kavindra pātra in his campaign against Kāmarūpa, Manipura, Jayantiyā, Tipperāh, Heramba, Hajo and Sylhet.²⁰

It seems probable that there was a council of ministers who could aid and advise the kings. They occupied an important role in the administration of the country. During the maladministration arising out of the evil-designs of the Nākir Deo (the State Officer)²¹ or during the minority of a king the state ministers had to play an important task. The ministers would, on behalf of the minor king, administer the kingdom.²² The king used to consult with the ministers whenever necessary.²³ The Prime minister, as we learn from the Rājanākhyaṇa (p.40), was called khānāvī from the time of the king Rūpanārāyana (1704-14 A.D.).²⁴ The ministers were shown due respect by the kings.^{24a}

Apart from the ministers there were three important post of offices viz., Nākir Deo and Dayān Deo²⁵ and Suba. The former was obliged to hold umbrella²⁶ upon the king's head at the time of accession to the throne.

In order to maintain the bulk of administration a good number of posts were created from early times. Visvasiṅha, appointed a class of officers for the better management of the kingdom. We derive from the Deodhai Agga Burāji a list of twelve officers called 'Karji' who were appointed by the king after defeating the Bhuyāns.²⁷

During the reign of Naranārāyana we come across the names of the following administrative officers whose actual

functions, however, are not very clear.^{27a} Of them, there were Kavindrapātra, Gadhādhār Chāonia, Purandar Laskara, Judhīsthira Kōyastha, Śrīrāmalaskara, Karnapura Giri, Sonāvara, Rūpavara Sardār, Kavirāja Gopāla Chāonia, Gadāl Barkāyastha.²⁸

A number of administrative assignments were given in the reign of Modanārāyana to the following persons :

- (1) Rūpā and Majumdār as Mustofī,
- (2) Indranārāyana Chakravarty as Chāklādār (ruler of a district or estate)
- (3) Gaurinandana Barkāyastha as Kārji
- (4) Visvanāth Sarmā as Pātra
- (5) Kāsināth as Khānis.²⁹

The officers with the title of Laskara, Bhuvān, Barnā etc. were posted at the extremities of the kingdom to keep peace and normalcy in the border areas.³⁰

Ambassador (Dūtas) were appointed by the kings to maintain proper relations with foreign powers. These were also the garas or the spies who had to supply confidential news to the king when required.³¹ Mahārāja Naranārāyana, as noted earlier, is said to have sent Satānanda Karmī, Rāmesvara Sarmā, Kālakota Sardār, Dhumā Sardār, Udbhānda Chāonia and Syamarāy chāonia as an ambassador to Assam.³² He further

sent dūtas (kataki, used as local term) to the court of Manipur.³³ One Bīrāo Kārji is said to have carried on peace negotiations between the Ahom king and the Mughals at the instance of Lakṣmīnārāyana. S.N. Bhattacharyya, however, opines that there was no historical evidence³⁴ for such a peace negotiation.

It may be noted that the Mughal administrative system was introduced in Koch-Hājo kingdom of Parīksit who was, however, defeated by Mīrza Nathan along with Lakṣmīnārāyana of the Kāmatā Kingdom.³⁵ The Mughals made some administrative innovations in Kāmarūpa for the purpose of collecting revenues, suppression of local insurrections and the conduct of Khedāi operations.³⁶ Among these administrative post mention may be made of Diwān, Bakāi (arranging revenue collection), the Karoris and the Faujḍars (collectors of revenues), Mustājirs (Revenue farmers) etc.³⁷

Abduḥ Salān, brother of Mukarram Khān was appointed Commander of the army in Koch Hājo to the west of the river Manās, while Lakṣmīnārāyana was placed temporarily as an administrator, to the east of the above river.³⁸ Later on, we come across the influence of mughal administration on Koch Bihar, particularly when Mirḡmala made his conquest of Koch Bihar in 1661 A.D. during the regime of Prāṇanārāyana, the Koch king.³⁹ Before his departure for Assam Mirḡmala

made an elaborate arrangement for the administration of the Koch Kingdom. The war materials captured from the ruler's armoury comprised 106 gunns, 145 isaburak (small canon), 11 ramchancia and 123 matchlocks.⁴⁰

Isfandiyyār Beg (now Styled Khān), was appointed by Mirgūla to officiate as Faujdar of the conquered kingdom with 400 cavalry and 100 matchlockmen until the next incumbent Askar Khān arrived there.⁴¹ And other officers who were appointed to assist him were Saiyad Mohammad Sadek, Chief Justice, Kāsi Samu, the Dewān and Mīr Abdur Rezzāk and Khājā Kesrīdās as assistant Dewāns.⁴² However, the hold over the territory was transitory. Prānanārāyana came back to the country shortly and reconquered the kingdom.⁴³

It appears that from the time of Sultan Muhammad Suja, the Sūbedār of Bengal, the Kāmātā-Koch kingdom was called by the Mughals as Sarker Koch Bihar. It was divided into 246 parganāḥ and where as the Sarker Bengālthum was divided into 2 parganāḥ (Baharband and Bhitarband).⁴⁴

The king was the head of the judiciary. It has already been noticed that King Modanārāyana (1682-1693 A.D.) inflicted upon Jagatnārāyana death punishment, having been guilty of rebellion in collecting forces against the Rājāh, Jagatnārāyana's father Gosāin Mahīnārāyana also suffered death sentence.⁴⁵ Regarding the nature of civil and criminal justice, it is learnt that the

system was agreeable to the ancient custom of the country. Referring to the mode of judgement as existed during the period of the commissioner Mercer and Chauvet, it is mentioned in their report that 'all complaints are made in the first instance to Shew Persaud Mustofee and reported by him to the Maharanny, (on account of minority of the king), who issues order to him to summon the persons complained against. The complaint is then preferred to the Pundits appointed by the Maharanny for that purpose, when the same having been tried by them agreeable to the law of the Sastra, the persons found guilty are punished by the order of the Maharanny, according to the usage of the country'.⁴⁶

Speaking about the earlier administration of the Koch Kingdom Beveridge points out that there was a general deterioration in the administrative system of the country. 'There was no cohesion or real subordination in any part of the administration from top to bottom. Every officer did what was right in his eyes, and acknowledged no authority but that of the Raja and his subordination even to him was in most cases only lip-service'.⁴⁷ Colonel Haughton who took charge in the last phase of the 18th century A.D. also remarked that the administration set up by the old Mahārājās were "exceedingly cheap". Payment of the officers was very low. An officer had to live honestly by holding three or four different offices.⁴⁸

Military Organisation

The Koch kings took great measures for organising a vast army almost on traditional lines comprising infantry, cavalry, elephantry and naval force. It started from the period of Visvasimha who founded the kingdom by defeating the Bhuyāns. In spite of the stubborn resistance from the Bhuyāns, Visvasimha came out victorious and established a stable government.⁴⁹ Later on, during Narenārāyana's regime the military power increased to a considerable extent. It was during his time that the flag of victory was carried over almost all the territories of the North-Eastern India by the able stewardship of his brother Śukladhvaja who inflicted a sanguinary defeat upon the enemies by prowess of his arms. His war technique greatly resembled with that of the manner in which the Kite used to get hold of its prey. Thus Śukladhvaja was called Cilārā.⁵⁰ The system is similar to the modern blitzkrieg tactics.

There was a regular system of gradation of officers in the Koch army. Visvasimha is said to have introduced the system. Darrang Rāja Vatsāvalī supplies us with the information that there were officers like Thākuriā, Saikia, Hāikāri, Umrāha and Nawab. The pāiks who constituted the lowest military unit were commanded as follows : Thākuriā were the commanders of 20, the Saikia 100, the Hāikāri 1000, the Umrāha 3,000 and the Nawab of 22 Umrāhas.⁵¹

We come across the information that Visvasimha appointed Sisyasimha, as the Raikat and the chief commander.⁵² During the reign period of Upendranarayana (1714 to 1763 A.D.) the office of the commander-in-chief was held by Bhavaniprasad Baksi.⁵³

Buddhaya was a ganapati who flourished during the period of Visvasimha. He was said to have well trained in infantry, archery and possessed an effective eye-sight.⁵⁴ Maharaja Prananarayana employed as many as four generals for his army. They were Aniruddha, Candranarayana, Srirama Kumara and Khandadhar.⁵⁵

Soldiers were mainly recruited from among the young people. It is noticed earlier that there was a number of 52,00,000 soldiers at Visvasimha's time, which is undoubtedly an exaggeration.⁵⁶ A large number of elephants, horses, asses, buffaloes and camels were in his army.⁵⁷

Naranarayana marched against the Ahom king in 1662 A.D. at the head of 5,32,000 soldiers.⁵⁸

It is probable that system of conscription was adopted by the Koch Kings in order to ensure security and safety of the kingdom. The system of gradation of officers and the palka allotted at their commands as noticed earlier seems to point out the fact that there was an indirect

influence of the Mansabdarī system of the Mughals. As regards the war equipments, we have taken notice of a few war materials such as guns, samburaks, matchlocks, ranshangis which were confiscated by Mirjumla at the time of the conquest of Koch Bihar. Shihābuddin Talish who accompanied Mirjumla states that the people used the sword, fire lock, and arrows, as weapons. The arrows were generally poisoned which in most cases proved fatal.⁵⁹

Navy

The naval force also constituted an important constituent of the Koch army. In the Ahom invasion of Narānarāyana, a flotilla of boats under the naval Commander Bhaktamālā and Teju proceeded by river.⁶⁰ There ensued a heavy naval combat between the groups and cannonade was exchanged on the Hariyā river resulting in the defeat of the Ahoms.⁶¹ That Koch Kings maintained naval power has been attested by the Muhammaidan historians in later period.^{61a}

The Koch rulers also paid attention to the protection of the Kingdom from foreign attack. It is said that Visvasimha constructed a long earthen wall from Karatoyā to the banks of the Brahmputra to strengthen the southern defences of the Kingdom.⁶² From the Gurnilā of Rāma Rāya we get the following

description of the fortification of the Kāmatā Koeh territory at the time^{of} King Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa. 'There was fortification on all sides of the kingdom except in three places where the gates like Sālgārā, Rarisiā and Bāghdāra were constructed.'⁶³

Notes and References

1 The rulers belonging to the original Koch dynasty from the period of Visvasimha and those of the Nasir Deo and Dewān Deo families beginning from Rūpnārāyana have been taken notice of in the preceding chapter on Historical Background.

2 S.C.Ghosal, A History of Cooch Behar, p.111.

2a N.C.Sharma, Darrang Rājāsāvalī, pp.23-25.

3 S.C.Ghosal, op.cit., p.111.

Darrang Rājāsāvalī, however, records that Visvasimha was made prince (Yuvarāja) by the king, Visvasimha - See p.31.

4 Biswanath Das (ed.), Rājānākhyaṇa, pp.9-10.

Darrang Rājāsāvalī calls Visvasimha as Naresvara (the God of the People), See pp.27-29.

5 Trivandrum Sanskrit series, Edition, p.28 2

Also see the Age of Imperial Kanauj, ed. by R.C.Majumdar, Bombay, 1964, p.236.

6 According to the Bṛhadḍhamapurāna (III, 3, 8-9)

Brahmā created the King's body by taking lordship from Indra, prowess from Asni, cruelty from Yama, good fortune from the Moṅg, riches from Kuvera and goodness from Rāmājanārōdana, and the king alone and no other should be recognised as Indra.

6a N.C.Sharma, op.cit., pp.26-31.

6b S.C.Ghosal, op.cit., p.201.

- 7 Śrināth Brāhmana, Ādiparva, p. 113
 (Mahābhārata) quoted in S.C. Ghosal's op.cit., p. 192.
- 8 Ibid., p. 205.
- 9 Ibid., p. 206.
- 10 N.C. Sharma, op.cit., pp. 26-31.
- 11 Manu, VII, p. 221.
- 11a H.N. Chowdhury, The Cooh Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement, p. 296.
- 12 Cf. Kerila suk kama, Śatīrtha Devadhara,
Putrabate praiśka nāśna || - V. 131
 N.C. Sharma, op.cit., p. 26.
- 13 S.C. Ghosal, op.cit., p. 165.
- 14 Ibid., p. 201.
- 15 Paramānanda, Vanaparva, p. 4,
 (Mahābhārata)
- 16 N.C. Sharma, op.cit., pp. 32-33.
- 17 Ibid., pp. 33-34.
- 18 N.C. Sharma (ed.), op.cit., p. 34.
 Bahihāna was in charge of war and foreign affairs
 and Baihagu was the minister for judicial affair.
- 19 H.N. Vasu, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 165, 167.
- 20 Ibid., p. 167.
- 21 S.C. Ghosal, op.cit., p. 215.
- 22 Ibid., p. 233.

23 N.C.Sharma, op.cit., pp.40-41.

We come across the names of various ministers from early times such as Kabi Bhūšana, Kavi Ratna (Rājopākhyāna, p.33), Bhaṣanāth Kārji, Rāma Candra Kārji (Ghosal, op.cit., p.207), Bisvanāth Mustāfi, a son of Rūpa candra Mustofī (Ibid., p.219).

24 Ghosal also informs us that Mahārājā Rūpanārāyana retained all the ministers in their earlier posts and from his period the Khasawīs began to act as Chief Minister. See History of Cooch Behar, p.221.

24a B.Das(ed.), Rājopākhyāna, p.28; Ghosal, op.cit., p.221.

25 The Officers Nāsir and Dewān got the title 'Deva' and were thus called Nāsir Deo, Dewān Deo. We learn from the Rājopākhyāna (p.40) that everybody belonging to the dynasty of Viśvasimha were of Deo(Deva) title and for this the Nāsirs and Dewāns were called as Nāsir Deo or Nāsir Devatā and Dewān Deo or Dewān Devatā. But Ghosal observes that in later period, the royal family took the name 'Dev' or Deo (Deva) e.g. Nāsir Dev, Dewān Dev, Dīna Dev. (A History of Cooch Behar, p.212 fn).

It appears that the contentions of both Joyānāth Munsī and Amanatullah are found to be wrong as we learn from the report of Mercer and Chauvet referred to below that Nāsir Deo and Dewān Deo posts were held by a Brāhmaṇa and a Kāyastha respectively. Thus the Nāsir and the Dewān could not be the members of the same royal family.

26 According to the Rājopākhyāna (p.31) Mahārāja Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa is said to have appointed Kumār Mahīnārāyaṇa as Nāsir who held Umbrella upon Vīraṇārāyaṇa, the son of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa at the time of Coronation. But according to the report of the Commissioners Mercer and Chauvet, as noticed earlier, the Rāikats performed the umbrella ceremony during the installation of five kings from Viśvasīmha and afterwards, Mahārāja Madanārāyaṇa appointed Mahīnārāyaṇa and his son Yajñanārāyaṇa successively as Nāsirs (Vol.II, 1788, pp. 19-20, 169). We further learn from this report that right from the time of Viśvasīmha to that of Mahārāja Prānanārāyaṇa, a Brāhmaṇa was Nāsir, a Kāyastha, Dewān. There were other officers of Kārjī-as Scobah and Sennapāṭhī as Rāikats.

27 Cf. Bhakurā Kārjī, Pāro Kārjī, Nicilā Kārjī, Curchāl Kārjī, Satānanda Kārjī, Meghā Kārjī, Pūdrā Kārjī, Bholā Kārjī, Bīru Kārjī, Sadhānana Kārjī, Harichandra Kārjī, Ripuñjaya Kārjī.
See S.K.Bhuyan (ed.), Deodhāi Assam Burañīi, Gauhati, Reprint, 1976, p.126.

27a The Posts created by the various kings of the Kamatā-Koch dynasty are as follows :
Kotwāl (The Wardens), Deuri, Chomdars, Biswās, Kanḍali, Makaddan, Galmali, Karmī, Ahudi, Daptariā, Sat Kāyastha, Medhi, Rājopākhyāna (p.45), mentions about Khāgācharā

(Bodyguard), Khas Daryani, Bhāndār Thākūr (Store-keeper), Majindār, Dwārī (gate-keeper).

- 28 Ghosal, op.cit., p. 152.
- 29 Ibid., p. 213.
- 30 Ibid., p. 118.
- 31 N.C. Sharma (ed.), op.cit., p. 39.
- 32 Ghosal, p. 130.
- 33 N.C. Sharma, op.cit., pp. 82-83.
- 34 S.N. Bhattacharyya, A History of Mughal North East Frontier Policy, pp. 160-61 fn.
- 35 S.K. Bhuyan (ed.) Bahāristān-i-Gharbī, Vol. I, Gauhati, 1936, pp. 222ff.
- 36 S.N. Bhattacharyya, op.cit., p. 165.
- 37 S.K. Bhuyan (ed.), op.cit., p. 272.
- 38 Loc.cit., S.N. Bhattacharyya, op.cit., p. 167.
- 39 Fathīyyah-i-ibriyya, tr. by H. Blochmann, J.A.S.B. Vol. 41, Nos. 1-4, 1872, pp. 66ff.
- 40 Ibid., p. 67, Also see J.N. Sarker, The Life of Mirgula, 2nd revised ed. New Delhi, 1979, p. 289.
- 41 S.N. Bhattacharyya, op.cit., p. 307.
- 42 Ghosal, op.cit., p. 326.
- 43 J.N. Sarker, op.cit., p. 290.
- 44 Ghosal, op.cit., 193.
- 45 Mercer and Charvet, Vol. II, p. 169.

However, S.C. Ghosal draws our attention while he maintains that Yajñanārāyana who, after the death of the

king Mahīndranārāyaṇa, usurped the throne and declared him King. This infuriated the Rāikats of Baikānthopura. They regarded him as a rebel and fought against Yajñanārāyaṇa who was defeated and killed in the battle. See

A History of Cooh Behar, p. 219.

46 Mercer & Chauvet, Vol. II, p. 11, S.C. Ghosal, op. cit., pp. 277-78.

47 H.N. Chowdhury, op. cit., p. 296.

48 Ibid., p. 297.

49 P. Gohain Barua, op. cit., p. 125;
S.K. Bhuyan (ed.), op. cit., p. 175.

50 Cf. Jhāna divā hīre iadi Bhairavī cāraṇā
Prasāngiā saba cilā rāi nām thailā V. 340
N.C. Sharma, op. cit., p. 69.

51 Ibid., p. 40.

52 Ghosal, op. cit., p. 117.

53 Ibid., p. 229.

54 N.C. Sharma (ed.), op. cit., p. 35.

55 Ghosal, op. cit., p. 208.

56 N.C. Sharma, op. cit., p. 40.

57 Cf. Hastī ghorā gardhva mahiṣa uta jata |
Asankhaya āchay tārā lekḥā kaiba kata ||
V. 199.

Loc. cit.

58 Ibid., p. 72.

But we learn from A History of Cooh Behar that Sukladhvaja set out with sixty thousand soldiers of the Koch, Dom and Kawi (Keot ?) tribes. See Ghosal, op.cit., p. 134.

³The Ākbar-nāmah (Vol. III, tr. by Beveridge, p. 1067) tells us, "Koch has 4,000 horses, 200,000 infantry, 700 elephants, 1000 war boats". However, in the Ain-i-Akbari (Vol. II, Eng. tr. by Jarrett, p. 117). Abul Fazi makes a more modest estimate. He says, "The chief of Koch commands 1,000 horses, 100,000 foot".

59 Fathiyya-i-ihriyya, tr. by H. Blochmann, J.A.S.B. 1872, p. 67.

60 ^{Supra} Ibid. Chapter on Economic life.

61 ^{Ghosal, op.cit.} Ibid., p. 136.

61a Ibid., p. 136.

61a R.K. Mookerji, A History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity, Bombay, 1912, pp. 225ff.

62 Ghosal, op.cit., p. 121.

63 K.C. Pathak (ed.), Gurullia, p. 103.

It may be mentioned in this connection that after Mir Jumla's conquest of Koch Bihar, the administration of the conquered territory was entrusted to Isfendiyar Beg who as recorded by Shihab-ud-din gave orders to make the yak Duar levelled with the ground, and the cutting of trees which infested the kingdom.

See H. Blochmann, op.cit., p. 67.

A P P E N D I X II

COINAGE

It is difficult to say to what extent trade, crafts and money circulation prevailed in the region under discussion during 13th-15th centuries. No local coins of the periods, if any, are known. The only coins extant are those minted and left behind by the Turko-Afghan raiders.¹ It is likely that imported cowries continued to be in circulation. For we find cowries had been used as medium of exchange both in Gauda and Kāmarūpa kingdoms.² Barter nevertheless remained the main form of exchange alongside of the use of cowries and the Bengal Sultanate coins coming into the region through trade.

From the late 16th century onwards, if not earlier, information is more detailed about some growth taking place in trade and crafts and some advance made towards monetisation and specialisation. The emergence of regular coinage marks a definite stage of, and also helps in, the economic growth of the Kingdom of Kāmata-Koch Bihar.

After the exit of Hussain Shāh³ from the scene of Kāmata-pura, the whole country was ruled by a number of petty independent Chiefs. Visvasimha seized this opportunity and in course of time made himself the master of the country west of the Badnadi.⁴ The Āsām Burāñji⁵ informs us that the predecessors

of Visvasimha did not issue coins. But, though the Dakṣiṇa Rājā Vasiṣṭhī and the Rājapāthyāna does not give us any indication about the coinage of Visvasimha,⁶ the Rājapāthyāna⁷ records the tradition of striking coins by the ruler. No coin of Visvasimha has, however, been discovered.

The rulers of Kamata-Koch Bihar are said to have issued coins of gold, silver, brass and copper but we have not come across any coin of gold or brass of the earlier rulers so far.⁸ These coins were known as Nārāyaṇī as the successor of Visvasimha assumed the title Nārāyaṇa, though the Alangirnāmah suggests that the name is derived from the family deity which was Nārāyaṇa.⁹ The coins were also known as Śiva-taṅkā as the rulers generally describe themselves as the "devotees of Śiva" (Cf. Śiva-Carita-Kaṇala-Madhukarava on the ~~xxx~~ reverse of the coins).

Stapleton thinks that the coins of Hussain Shāh was in circulation long after his ~~xxx~~ departure from Kāmatāpura and the Nārāyaṇī coins were designed in imitation of those of Hussain Shāh,¹⁰ although we have reason to believe that these coins were influenced not to any mean extent by those of Danuṣmardana issued earlier in Bengali Scripts.¹¹ The influence of Nārāyaṇī coins were, however, greatly increased. In fact, it was in circulation not only in the whole of north Bengal, but in Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Tibet and in the kingdom of the Ahoms (Assam). The Ahom Chiefs

used to realise revenues in Nārāyanī coins upto the beginning of the 19th century inspite of the fact that they had their own coinage.¹² The Bhutiyās were said to have removed a die of Nārāyanī coin to Bhutan in 1770 and started issuing Devtākā,¹³ Earlier they used to make their coins from the Koch Bihar mint.¹⁴

According to the terms of the Treaty ^{the fifth day of} (April, 1773) that was concluded between the Hon'ble the East India Company and Rājā of Kāmātā-Koch Bihar (known as Koch Bihar), the kingdom became a protection~~ed~~ state under the East India Company. But the report of the Commissioners deputed by Government to visit the State in 1788 shows that at ^{that} time power of ~~coining~~ ^{coining} money was fully exercised by the Rājās¹ of Koch Bihar. In that year, as mentioned above by Lewin,¹⁵ twenty eight to thirty thousand Nārāyanī half-rupees were coined. The quantity ~~quantity~~ annually minted, appeared to depend upon the rate of exchange, at which French Arcot rupees were procurable, as from this coin, after some further alloy, was manufactured the Nārāyanī (i.e. Nārāyanī) rupee, and as the Arcot rupee contained originally some 56 per cent of copper, the intrinsic value of the silver in Nārāyanī (i.e. Nārāyanī) but little exceeded half its own weight. The Nārāyanī (i.e. Nārāyanī) coins passed current throughout Koch Bihar and the neighbouring districts of Goalpara, Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, etc. No gold coins appear to have been issued into currency from the mint. A few years after the Bengal Government imposed restrictions, nearly amounting to entire suppression, on the mint of Koch Bihar,

on the ground that the coin issued therefrom was of so debased a quality, as to be entirely depreciated as a currency beyond the southern limits of the District.

The prerogative of striking and issuing coin under the image and superscription of the reigning prince is still however normally exercised, a certain number of gold and silver coins being struck upon the accession of each new Rājā. The Naraini (i.e. Nārāyanī) rupee is no longer current, nor is its value used as a denomination in accounts, the currency of the country being now the same as in British Regulation Districts".

Naranārāyana

The full rupees of the rulers of Kāmatā-Koch Bihar are fine broad coins, with all elements of the design clearly visible, but they are known upto the time of Prānanārāyana (1633-65 A.D.) and from that time onwards the half rupee had become the standard coin of the country. The coins of Koch Bihar are preserved in a number of museums and private collections of India and England. Some of the types of the Nārāyanī coins issued by the rulers before the treaty of 1773 are given ~~next~~ here.

TYPE I (Full coin)

R (Silver)	1447	Legend	Legend
	Śaka	<u>on obverse</u>	<u>on Reverse</u>
		<u>Śrī Śrīma</u>	<u>Śrī Śrī</u>
		<u>Naranārāyana</u>	<u>Śiva-carana</u>
		<u>bhūpālasya</u>	<u>Kamala madhu</u>
		<u>Śake 1447</u>	<u>Karasya</u>

[Journal of the Numismatic Society
of India (or J.N.S.I.), Vol. XXX, pp. 167ff.]

(see Pl. A, No. 1, & Pl. B, No. 1)

TYPE II

(Unique quarter-Rupee R (Silver), round, 15.25 mm. in
coin) diameter, weight : 2.70 gms, Date illegible

Legend	Legend
<u>on Obverse</u>	<u>on Reverse</u>
Śrī Śrī	Śrī Śrī
Man-Naranāra (ya)	(Śi)va-carana
na-bhūpāla(Śya) Śake	(Ka)mala-madhu
	(Ka)Nasya

[J.N.S.I., Vol. XXXVI, pp. 115-16.]

TYPE III (Two Gold A/ coins)

Round, 29.8 mm. in Diameter, weight : 12.15 gm/12.43 gm.

1486 Śake

Legend on Obverse

along the border outside
the circle Digvijayī Samara-
Simha - Śrīman - Naranārāyaṇa-
bhūpalasya - Śāke 1486

Legend on Reverse
in five-line with the
device of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa
at the centre and a 5-pointed
star at the end.

Śrī Śrī - Haragaurī-
cara (ṅaka)mala madhukarasya

[J.N.S.I. XXXVII pp. 114-115;
Also The Numismatic Circular,
London, April, 1931, p. 115]

(See PL. A, No. 1A, & PL. B, No. 1A)

This coin ^{(Type III) rightly} has been described by N.G. Rhodes as false on the basis of the style of the reverse which is more similar to those of Raghudeva (dated Śaka 1510) than to the style of earlier coins [The Numismatic Circular, op. cit., p. 117]

Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa

It was the usual practice of the rulers to issue coins with a single date (in the Śaka era) which is generally associated with that of their accession. "But during the reign of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa (c. 1587-1627), a subsidiary date in the local Koch Bihar era, Rāja Śaka was added, which may be converted to the Christian era by adding approximately 1510 years." The Rāja Śakas appear on the coins of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa are 98 and 92 which are equivalent to 1608 A.D. and 1602 A.D., whereas the other date, 1509 Śaka (=1587 A.D.) corresponding the accession year, on all the coins seem to suggest that 'the Śaka era was

left unchanged throughout the reign, and did not necessarily represent the date when the coins were struck'.

TYPE I (Full coin)

Round, Silver (A), weight : 10.25 gms, Size : 29 mm

1509 Śaka

Legend on Obverse

Śrī Śrīma

Lakṣmīnārāyaṇasya

Śāke

1509

Legend on Reverse

Śrī Śrī

Śiva-Carṇa

Kaṇala māhu

Karasya

[J.N.S.I. XXX, p. 172]

TYPE II

Same as TYPE I
with Rāja Śaka 92

(S.C.Ghosal, A History of
Cooch Behar, pp. 345-47)

[For other discussions on the date of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa's
Coins see J.N.S.I., XXXIV, pp. 93-96; J.N.S.I., XXXVII,
pp. 157-69 & Journal of Ancient Indian History,
Calcutta University, VII, pp. 189-93]

(See PL. A, no II & PL. B, no II)

TYPE III

Same as TYPE II
with Rājasāka 98

(N.G.Rhodes' Collection)

TYPE IV (Half coin)

Same as TYPE I

[S.C.Ghosal, Loc.cit.]

Viranārāyana

The Śaka date 1548 appearing on the coins of Viranārāyana appears almost to correspond with the Rajasaka date of 117. A few coins of Viranārāyana have so far been discovered. According to some, these were not actually coins but medallions issued in honour of Lord Kṛṣṇa during the life-time of Lakṣmīnārāyana, possibly with the latter's permission.

[P.K.Bhattacharyya, in J.N.S.I.,
XXXIV, p. 96]

TYPE I (Full coin of Viranārāyana)

(2)

Round, Silver (AR), 10.25 gm/10.10 gm.

30.45 mm/29.60 mm, 1548 Śaka

Legend on obverseŚrī Śrī nadvīranārāyanasya ŚākeLegend on ReverseŚrī ŚrīKṛṣṇa-caranaKaṇala-madhukarasya[J.N.S.I., XXX III, pp. 129-31]

(See PL. A, NO III, & PL. B, NO III)

TYPE II (Unique Half Coin)

Round, Silver (R), 4.86 gms., 22.20 mm.

Legend on ObverseŚrī Śrī madvīpārāyaṇasya śā(ke)Legend on ReverseŚrī Śrī(Kr) ṇa - madhu(Ka) raava[J.N.S.I., XXX, pp. 131-32]

Prānārāyaṇa

Prānārāyaṇa seems to have changed the earlier system of striking both Śaka and Rāja Śaka on the coins. Thus, his coins either have a śaka date or a Rājasaka date, but not both. Again, under the Na of Nārāyaṇa, a symbol was sometimes added, such as a cross or a crescent moon, with or without a dot. This symbol may stand for the mint-master, or some other aspects of the mint organisation.¹⁷ It may be pointed out that for the first and possibly only time (besides, of course, the second date on the doubtful gold coin of Nārāyaṇa) in the series, there are at least two dates in Śaka era, while there are other dates, all in Koch Bihar era. Thus the date on each coin indicates the actual date of issue, 'rather than any fixed date'. The unique gold coin of Prānārāyaṇa,¹⁸ however, bears the legend and the date 753 in Nagri Script, and this appears to be the Nepalese era

commencing in 880 A.D. The presence of the Nepalese *Sauvat* is undoubtedly in commemoration of the marriage of *Rūpmatī Devī*, sister of *Prānanārāyaṇa* with *Pratāpamalla*, king of the Malla dynasty of Nepal.¹⁹

TYPE I

Full coin of *Prānanārāyaṇa*

Round, Silver (A), Śaka 1554/or 1555

Legend on Obverse

śrī śrī na

ā Prāna Nārāya

naśya Śaka

1554/or, 1555

Legend on Reverse

śrī śrī

Śiva carana

Kamala-madhu

Karasya

(See pl. B, no. IV)

For another full coin with 130 Rāja Śaka, see pl. B, no. IV A

TYPE II

Half coin

Round, Silver (A), Date Śaka 1555

Legend on obverse and Reverse as in TYPE I

TYPE III

Half coin

Round, Silver (A), Date in Rāja Śaka

N.G. Rhodes²⁰ has read different Rāja Śaka appearing on these types. These are 128, 129 (?), 130, 131, 140, 141, 147(?) 14 - , 150(?), 151.

(See pl. B, no. IV B)

TYPE IV

Full coin (Unique gold coin)

Round, gold (A), dated 753 Nepalese Samvat starting in '880 A.D. This is presented in the provincial Museum, Lucknow and noticed by V.V.Mirashi,²¹

During the expedition against Assam led by the Mughal General Mir Jumla, Koch Bihar was occupied by the Mughals and Prānanārāyana, had to seek refuge in Bhutan in his 151 Rāja Śaka and stayed there sometime. At this time a half coin made of copper was struck bearing the name of Aurangzeb in Bengali script, but this does not contain any date. The city of Koch Bihar was renamed Alangirnagara from where the coin was issued.²²

Modanārāyana

Modanārāyana, son and successor of Prānanārāyana, ruled from 1665-66 to 1680-81. His reign is marked by series of disturbances. No full coin of Modanārāyana has been discovered. A number of half coins (AR) of this ruler are supposed to have been issued in different RājaŚakas. In the History of Cooch Behar²³ we get the year 179. Rhodes²⁴ point out that the years 15 — , 170(?), 171 are traceable in his collection. How the year 179 appears on the coin of Modanārāyana whose reign continued only upto the year 171,

cannot be explained properly at the moment.

After Nodanrāyana, all the rulers of Koch Bihar who ruled to the end of our period (i.e. 1773 A.D.) are credited to have issued half coins, mostly of silver, in accordance with the usual practice of the dynasty at least at the time of their accession. ^{cf. P.L.B., nos. V & VI} Most of these coins have been noticed in the History of Koch Bihar²⁵ except those of Mahindrāyana the last ruler of the line of Virnarayana. Recently, however, one half coin () of Mahindrāyana has been discovered.²⁶

Mahindrāyana died in 1693 A.D. and as there was no living descendant of Maharaja Virnarayana, Chatra Nasir Yajnanarayana who was the son of Mahinarayana, the brother of Maharaja Virnarayana, declared himself king on the ground that he was the oldest of the near (Sapinda) relations of the deceased.²⁷ It is likely that he also issued half coins and one such coin has been noticed in the Koch Bihar Treasury.²⁸

Notes and References

- 1 A ^{big} legend hoard of 13,500 pieces of Silver coins on the left bank of the Dharikā discovered near the temple of Kāmatesvarī which is 3 miles South-West of Dinhalā. See E. Thomas, The Initial Coinage of Bengal, 1899. The coins of Samsuddin Illiyas Shāh have been found in Kāmatāpura, while some coins of Sikandar Shāh also found in Kāmatāpura bear legends Qawliṣṭān alīa ^{Kāmrūp} and are dated 759 Hijri (= 1358 A.D.) Cf. Catalogue of the coins in the Indian Museum, Vol. II, p. 152.
- 2 Cf. The Tezpur Rock Inscription of Harjarsvarmā, Kāmarūpasāṁsāyā, 2nd edition, p. 170; also Cf. "the least gift (Lakṣmanasena) used to bestow was a lak of Kaṇḍis", from the Tabaṣṭ-i-Nāsiṛi quoted in R.C. Majumdar (ed.), The History of Bengal, Vol. I, Dacca, 1943, p. 247.
- 3 Hussain Shāh celebrated his success against the Khen dynasty by the creation of a Madrasah the inscription of which bears a date equal to 1501-02 A.D. and issued coins which described him as "conqueror of Kamru, Kāmakā, Jājnagar and Orishā", See A.W. Botham and R. Fiel, Catalogue of the Provincial Cabinet of coins, Assam (Supplementary), pp. 148-52.
- 4 Rai Gunabhīram Barua, Assam Baruaṅgi, p. 55.

According to one tradition Candana, a brother of Viśvasimha was installed to the throne at 1510 A.D., the starting date of Rājāsaka and after his death Viśvasimha became king. Capt. T.H. Lewin, An Account of the Koch Bihar State, Koch Bihar, 1876, p. 11.

5 Cf. śrī Vāhara Visvasimha Rajar purva kona Iska na Chila |

Raj Guhabhram Barua, op.cit., p. 249.

6 S.C.Ghosal, op.cit., p. 342.

7 Cf. ... 13 (tera) Śakāya mahārāja Visvasimha Simhāsana
prāpta haiyā āpana name Chirkājarap Kariyāchena |

Rājvasāśvalī, 16 patra

(i.e. Visvasimha after having ascended the throne on 13
Rājasaka struck coins in his own name). See also JNSI,
XXXII, 1970, Pt.I, pp.40 ff.

8 From the Darrang Rājvasāśvalī, we learn that
king Naranārāyana gave two hundred gold and fivethousand
silver coins to a Brāhmana named Nārāyana Chakravarty.

Cf. Ehi buli Brāhmanak Karilā sammān |

Duisata subernaṅṅ karilanta ān ||

Pañca Sahasrek rūpdilā bhāla cāi |

V. 602

See N.C.Sharma (ed.), Darrang Rājvasāśvalī,


Gauhati, 1973, p. 123.

9 S.C.Ghosal, op.cit., p. 353; The Rās-na-Salatin (tr. by
Rampran Gupta in Bengali), p. 7, refers to the Nārāyaṇī coins.

10 S.C.Ghosal, loc.cit.

11 S.K.Chatterjee, Kirāta-Jana-Kṛti, The Asiatic Society,
Calcutta, 1974, p. 115.

12 Petition dated the 18th May, 1853 by Balaram Fukan and
others to the Government of India.

- 13 Surgeon Rennei, Bhutan and the Story of the Decears War, p.48; Captain S.Turner, Embassy to Tibet, p.143.
- 14 Surgeon Rennei, loc.cit.
- 15 Capt.T.H.Lewin, op.cit., pp.23-24.
- 16 Cf. N.G.Rhodes, Dated Coins of Cooch Behar (unpublished Ms. presented to P.K.Bhattacharyya by the author in London).
- 17 N.G.Rhodes, loc.cit. Some of these signs also occur in the Mughal coins, Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum, Vol.III, pp.358-60. The Rājanāthya (B.Das ed., p.52) says that a flower was inscribed on the coins of Mahārāja Rājendranārāyana. The half moon appears in the coin of Dharendranārāyana or Harendranārāyana. The sign " ~ " signifying lordship was customary before the names of the living rulers of Koch Bihar. S.C.Ghosal, op.cit., p.355. On a coin of Prānanārāyana in N.G.Rhodes' collection we come across the Solomon's seal ().
- 18 V.V.Nirashi, A Gold coin of Prānanārāyana, J.N.S.I., III, Pt.II, 1941, pp.93-97.
- 19 Cf. The Inscription on the Temple of Ugratārā at Anantapur : for translation See S.C.Ghosal, op.cit., pp.20n, 202n.
- 20 N.G.Rhodes, loc.cit.
- 21 V.V.Nirashi, loc.cit.

22 J.N.S.I. XXX, 1968, p.173 fn.

The historian Khāfi Khān stated (1732 A.D.) that Nirgunla after conquering Koch Bihar struck coins in the name of the Emperor, Khāfi Khān, Munta Khabul-lahāb, in the Elliot and Dowson, Vol.VII, First Indian Ed. 1964, p. 265.

23 S.C.Ghosal, p.350.

24 H.G.Rhodes, Loc.cit.

25 S.C.Ghosal, pp.351-52.

26 J.N.S.I., XXXIII, 1971, p.132.

27 S.C.Ghosal, p.219.

28 Ibid., p.351.

.....

Plate - A
OBVERSE



I



IA



II



III

Plate - B.

REVERSE



I



II



OBVERSE:

IVB

OBVERSE:



IV



III

OBVERSE:



V



IVA



IA

OBVERSE:



VI



OBVERSE:
(ENLARGED)

IVA

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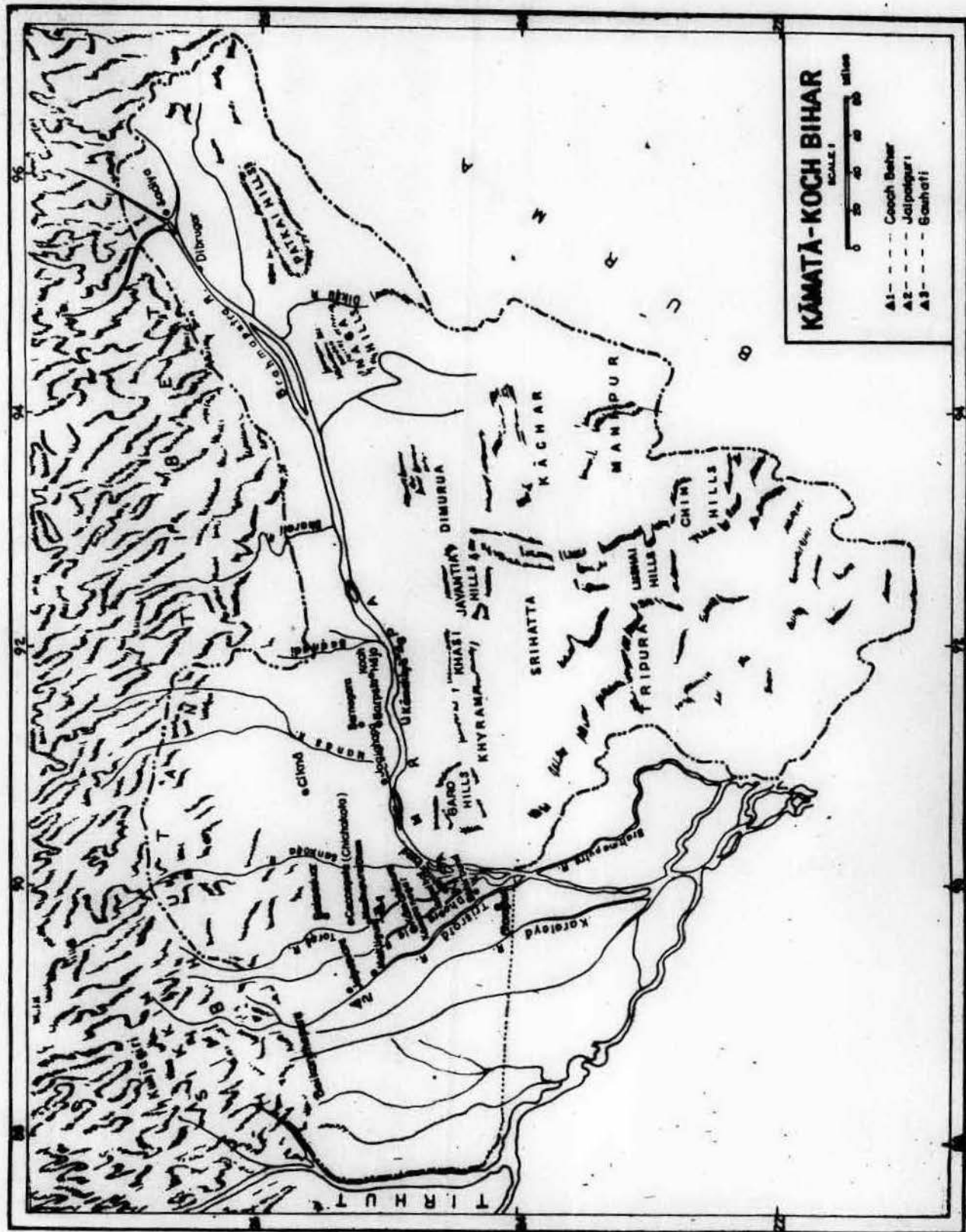
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