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## A STUDY ON THE PERSIAN INSCRIPTIONS DISCOVERED IN ASSAM

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### ABSTRACT:

*This research paper aims at reviewing and analyzing the Persian inscriptions discovered at different mosques, dargahs, temples and museums of Assam. Inscription is considered as the first hand source materials which provide valuable and definite data for different aspects of the history of different periods of different regions. Persian inscriptions have been found in different areas of India through which many dark chapters have been illuminate. Assam is a historical place and most of the historical incidents have been proven by the help of old inscriptions discovered in Assam. The Persian inscriptions on natural rocks, hewn slabs of stone, temples, dargahs, mosques and other places are scattered throughout Assam. The general method used in this work is based on historical facts about the origin of the inscriptions, interviews, field surveys and primary and secondary sources. These inscriptions bear the most authentic hidden secret through which researchers can illuminate many evidence and facts about the history Assam.*

**KEYWORDS** – *Inscription, Dargah, Scattered, Evidence, Historical, etc.*

### INTRODUCTION

Inscriptions are the valuable evidence which can reconstruct the past history of a country. Kalhana, the author of *Rajatarangini* said, “The tedium of historical research is overcome by looking into the inscriptions recording the consecration of temples, by looking into the grants of land by former kings, by looking into the laudatory inscriptions and manuscripts.”<sup>1</sup> It bears the most authentic hidden secret through which one can illuminate the future path of research. It can correct incongruity, provide exact dates and location of events and provide correct names of people and place. It is also considered as the first hand source materials which provides valuable and definite data for different aspects of the history of different regions.

In Indian history, many dark chapters have been illuminated with the help of inscription. During the first three centuries of Muslim rule in India, most of the inscriptions were inscribed in Arabic. But major numbers of Persian inscription were inscribed during the Mughal rule in India. Interestingly, Iran did not have that much Persian inscription as they were in India during mediavel period. First oldest Persian inscription, belongs to the period of 587 A.H., is found in the wall of the mosque, Quwwat-ul-Islam, Delhi which was written during Qutubuddin Aibak’s reign.<sup>2</sup> Apart from these, there are many Indian monuments where calligraphic inscriptions have been found, such as Qutub Miner in Delhi, Atala Mosque in Jaunpur, Adina Mosque at Pandua, Akbar’s tomb at Sikandra, Jami Mosque at Ahmedabad, Taj Mahal at Agra, etc.

In this field, Assam is also not lacking behind. Assam is a historical place and most of the historical incidents have been proven by the help of old inscriptions discovered in Assam. But the ancient period of Assam history is still shrouded in mystery. Although from thirteenth century A.D. Ahom rulers maintained chronicles about their past and presents situations, but many incidents still do not have authentic approval, so in this instance, inscriptions could be the authentic source we ever had. Bhuyan said, “The inscription of other part of India brought to light mainly through the labours of Dr. John Faithful Fleet and Dr. Bhagawanlal Indrajit have contributed, to no less extent towards



dispelling the darkness surrounding the history of the Ancient Period of Kamarupa.”<sup>3</sup> The inscription on natural rocks, hewn slabs of stone, temples, dargahs, mosques and other places are scattered throughout the whole Assam.

### PERSIAN INSCRIPTIONS IN ASSAM: AN ANNALYSIS

The most important Persian inscription ever found in Assam is the inscription of Poa-Mecca dargah which is situated at the pick of a hill of Hajo area. This inscription is engraved on a stone-plate attached to the mosque near Ghiyasuddin Awliya’s tomb. It reads as follows:



Plate no.1, Hajo rock inscription, Assam

#### The text of the inscription is as follows:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم. الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلوات و السلام على رسوله محمد واله اجمعين واصحابه الطاهرين قال الله تعالى انما يعمر مساجد الله من امن بالله واليوم الآخر واقام الصلوات واتى الزكوة ولم يخش الا الله فعسى اولئك ان يكونوا من المهتدين. قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم من بنى مسجد افى الدنيا بنى الله سبعين مسجد افى الآخرة.

بعهد دولت سلطان عادل شهنشاه جهان و خسروی دین ابوالغازی شجاع الدین شه و شهزاده فرخنده امین چو لطف الله شیرازی بنا کرد همایون مسجد خلد زمین بدار الامن مشهور ممالک شجاع آباد و حفظ الله امین به هنگامی که رایات عزیمه به صوبه بنک بود از عزوتمکین مدام این خانه دین بارمعمور بحق حرمت سبعین (بسیں) زفیض نعمت الهی قوی باد همیشه این مهین منادی کن خرد چون سال تاریخ ساخت ندا آمد جلی شد خانه دین بر ضمانت جویندگان اخبار پوشیده نماند که این مسجد اعظم در زمان حضرت صاحب قران ثانی شاه جهان بادشاه غازی کمترین فدویان درگاه مرید و معتقد شاه نعمت الله به اتمام رساند فی شهر رمضان سنه ۱۰۶۰ هـ.

#### Translation:

“In the name of Allah, the most beneficent and most merciful: Thanks to God who is the lord of the universe. May the blessings of God be on the Holy Prophet Muhammad, to his house and his holy associates and the companions! Almighty God says: those who construct mosque of God (on earth) and firmly believe in God and in the day of judgement, offer prayers and *zakat* (religious tax) and fear none except God, are verily the people who receive guidance from God. And the Holy Prophet (pbuh) says: he who builds a mosque in this world, God builds seventy mosques for him in the next world.

During the reign of Abdul Ghazi Shujaud-din, the Just, the emperor of the world, the centre of bounties and religion, the king and auspicious prince, the holy mosque was built by lutfullah Shirazi in a land noted for peace among the entire Muslim world, Shuja Abad. May God protect it from all calamities! It was built at a time when the royal banner was on march towards Bengal. May this religious centre flourish and survive with all its honour and glory forever. May this country live long with all the magnificence of God in consonance with the Almighty’s glory of the Prophet. O’ intellect, declare the date of its construction. The voice came, “the house of religion came into being-1067 A.H.”<sup>4</sup>

This mosque where this inscription is found was built during the reign of Emperor Shah Jahan by Shah Nimatullah in the month of Ramazan, 1067 A.H. According to the caretaker of the tomb and mosque, this inscription was originally attached with another old mosque near the tomb of Ghiyasuddin Awliya’s tomb. But when the old mosque was renewed and rebuilt, this stone plate inscription was attached to the wall of the new mosque. But it is not known that when this new mosque was built.

There is an inscription on a natural rock which was discovered some years ago near the site of a stream, a few yards from the precipitous stone highway leading to the Kamakhya temple in Guwahati.<sup>5</sup> It reads as follows:

”آب حیات، چشمه خضر“

It means the fountain of the life of water, the stream of Khizr. The inscription was carved on a stone nearby a stream from where water sprouts for the whole year. Though the inscription does not bear any date, it is said to be carved by a famous Sufi named Khwaja Khizir in praise of the virtue of the water of the spring who came from Shiraz. M. K. Saikia said. “A stream near Kabul in Afghanistan is said to be associated with his name Khizr”.<sup>6</sup> People of that area believe that he stayed in Kamakhya hill for a long time and local people named him as Khoyaj Pir. In this regards, Suryya Kumar Bhuyan said:

“Most probably the inscription was the work of some band of Mohammedan soldiers or camp-followers in one of the various invasions dying of thirst, and ordaining about in the hills in quest of water, which was ultimately obtained in this spring. It was a great relief to them to drink this pure water, whereas all Muhammadan historians, including Muhammad Kazim and Sahabuddin Talish, are unanimous in their denunciation of the noxious air and poisonous water of Assam.”<sup>7</sup>

Some verses of Sa’di Shirazi are also inscribed on the mosque and tomb of Assam which indicates the popularity of Sheikh Sa’di in Assam. These inscriptions are inscribed on the gate of an old mosque situated on the bank of Kala river in Man-Kachar of Goalpara district which was built by Mir Jumla.

بلغ العلیٰ بکماله کشف الدجیٰ بجماله  
حسنّت جمیع خصاله صلّو علیٰ آلہ

This beautiful verse of Sa’di is clearly visible on the left side of the main gate of the mosque. Secondly,

"بنام خداوند جان آفرین حکیم سخن بر زبان آفرین"

This beautiful first verse of the Bustan-i-Sa’di is inscribed on the right side of the gate. But only the first verse “بنام خداوند جان آفرین” is visible on the right side of the mosque.

Another inscription which is regarding the native place of great Sufi Sheikh Jalal Mujarrad, is found in Barak Valley. It says:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الا مربزه العمارته المباركه المنصوبه بدار الاحسان حرصه الله تعالى من مخافات الزمان العابد العالی الكبير المتعالی  
شيخ جلال مجرد كينپائی قدس سره العزيز في عهد السلطان علاء الدين ابوالمظفر حسين شاه السلطان خلد الله ملكه و سلطانه بنا کرده خان  
اعظم و خاقان معظمه خالص خان جامداد بخير محلی و سرلشکر و وزير اقلین معظم آباد سنه احد عشر و تسع مائة ٩١٥ هـ مطابق ١٥٠٥ ع).

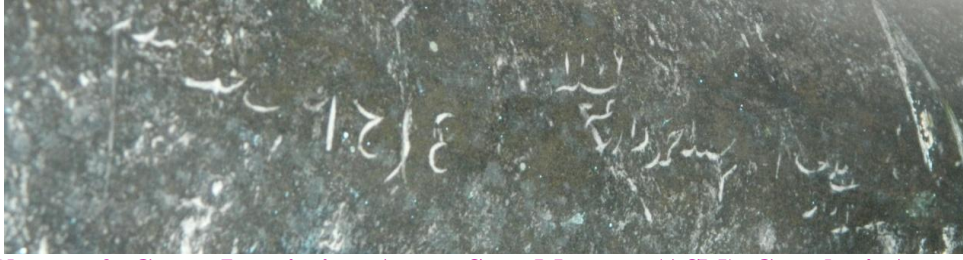
### Translation:

“In the name of God, the Merciful and the Compassionate who ordered the creation of this blessed building attached to the house of benediction. May God protect it against the ravages of time---is the devotee the high, the great Sheikh Jalal Mujarrad, the hermit of Keniya ; may God the Almighty, sancity his dear secrets; it was built during the reign of Sultan Alauddi Abu Muzaffar Hussain Shah, the king, by the great Khan, the exalted Khan, Khalish Khan, Keeper of the wardrobe outside the palace, commander and wazir of province Muazzamabad.”<sup>8</sup>

A Persian stone inscription is discovered in the Rani area. Rani is a nearby place of Guwahati which is situated about 20 km away from Guwahati town. It is said that the inscription was issued by Sultan Azam Shah in 1389 A.D. According to this inscription, his territory extended up to that region.

Another inscription is found in Pirnagar village of Karimganj district which was mentioned in ‘The Amrita Bazar Patrika, Kolkata’, issue May, 1978. This inscription gives some information regarding the medieval Muslim settlement in eastern India.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from these inscriptions which are found in mosques, temples and Dargahs; five Persian inscriptions are found in cannons and stone slab which are preserved in Assam State Museum, Guwahati. They are as follows:



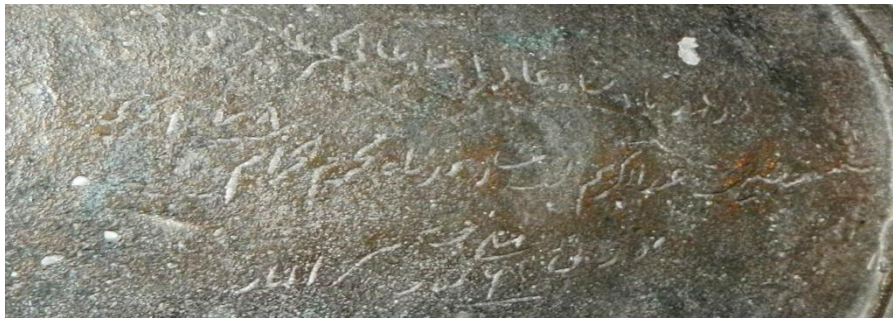
**Plate no.2: Canon Inscription, Assam State Museum (ASM), Guwahati, Assam.**

This inscription is found in the body of a canon which was found in Guwahati. According to the Persian text, this cannon was made by Mohammad Zaman and it was placed under the charge of Darogah Mir Sayyad Ahmad. According to the Sanskrit text inscribed in the canon, this cannon was obtained by Ahom king Gadadhar Singha at Guwahati by defeating Mughals. Before him Guwahati was under the rule of Mughal Fauzadar Mir Jumla. Gadadhar Singha reinforced his army and defeated Mughals in the war of Itakhuli. He regained Guwahati from Mughal and this war brought an end to the eighty years of Ahom-Mughal conflict. This cannon which bears both Sanskrit and Persian inscriptions is preserved in Assam State Museum, Guwahati.



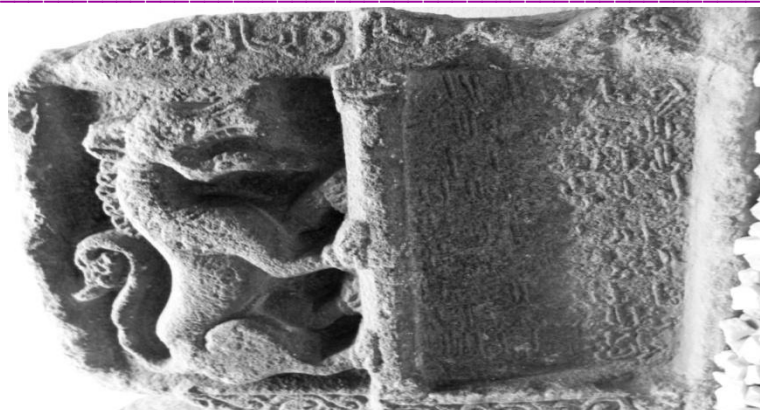
**Plate no.3: Canon Inscription, ASM, Assam.**

The cannon where this inscription is inscribed was found in Choikhowa Ghat, Sadiya by some people of Khamti tribe of Assam. It is said that they found it while they were fishing in Berengpani river in Sadiya.<sup>10</sup> Persian text confirms that this cannon was made by Ganga Ram. The Sanskrit text on it mentioned that king Godadhar Singha acquired this cannon by defeating Mughals in 1682 A.D.



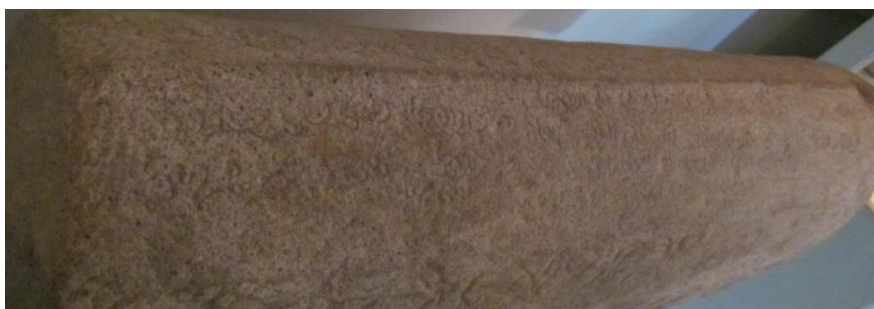
**Plate no.4: Canon Inscription, ASM, Guwahati**

The cannon where this inscription is inscribed, was found in Curzon Hall, Guwahati. According to the Persian text, this cannon was made during the time of Badshah Adil Shah Alamgir Ghazi and it was made by the cannon maker Abdul Karim in the month of Muharram in 1078 Hijri (1667 AD).



**Plate no.5: Stone inscription, ASM, Guwahati**

This stone slab inscription is from the time of Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah (ruled from 1389 A.D. to 1410 A.D). It was discovered in Boko of Kamrup district which was issued by Sultan Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah in 1389 A.D. It seems that he extended his sovereignty through Guwahati upto Boko area. Though the whole body of this stone slab is full of Persian and Arabic texts, the inscription is in dilapidated condition and it is preserved in Assam State Museum, Guwahati in an open place without any proper preservation facility.



**Plate no.6: Stone Inscription, Press Club Museum, Guwahati.**

This stone slab Persian inscription was discovered in Guwahati which is being preserved in the Press Club Museum under Archaeological Survey of India, Guwahati branch. It is said that this inscription was found in an excavation area near Guwahati High Court. This inscription is in very bad condition to decipher it.

Apart from these, there are five Arabic rock inscriptions in Karimganj district of Barak Valley. Historian Kamaluddin Ahmed said:

“Particularly in Karimganj district, we have five rock inscriptions. One is in Karimganj town itself but the script is in such a dilapidated condition no one can read it. Another rock inscription is a wall of an old mosque of Karimganj town itself. Another rock Inscription is in Sutrakandi which is also in a very bad condition. A valuable rock inscription has been found in Asimganj on the wall of a mosque. But when this mosque was renovated this inscription has been removed and fixed in another mosque.”<sup>11</sup>

### **CONCLUSION:**

Above analysis shows how inscriptions may helpful in exploring the medieval Assam history which are still shrouded in mystery. One can extract many historical information if it use as a primary source. It may easily guess that there may exist many more Persian inscriptions scattered in different places of Assam which could be revealed a considerable portion of history. Some of them are destroyed in course time and some of them are yet to be discovered.

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- <sup>9</sup> Ibid. P. 84
- <sup>10</sup> <http://nmma.nic.in/nmma/antiqDetail.do?refId=216019&object=33>
- <sup>11</sup> Personal interviewed data with historian Prof. Kamaluddin Ahmed of Barak Valley, Assam. 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2013.



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