My Ahom Ancestral Heritage:
Tracing the Legacy of My Family Through Generations

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Essay

History is often understood through monuments, official documents, archival records, and written chronicles. However, for many families, history survives through oral traditions, stories shared by elders, family memories, and the lived experiences of ordinary people. These personal histories may not find a place in official records, yet they carry within them a richness and authenticity that formal records often fail to capture. They speak of real struggles, genuine relationships, personal sacrifices, and the quiet triumphs of everyday life. Preserving such ancestral narratives is important because they help us understand our roots, strengthen our sense of identity, and ensure that the experiences and values of previous generations are not lost to the passage of time.

The purpose of this essay is to document and preserve my family's ancestral history, tracing its journey across generations and highlighting the contributions, struggles, and achievements of my forefathers. This account is based primarily on oral narratives collected through conversations with my parents, grandparents, and other elderly relatives. Their memories have served as an invaluable source of information, helping me reconstruct family history and understand the circumstances that shaped their lives. In addition to oral accounts, family records, educational certificates, photographs, and local historical knowledge have also been consulted wherever available to ensure accuracy and depth.

My family's story is deeply connected with the historical and cultural landscape of Upper Assam. Our roots lie in Demow and Nazira in the Sivasagar district, a region that once formed the heartland of the Ahom Kingdom, which ruled Assam for nearly six centuries from 1228 to 1828. The traditions, values, and cultural practices inherited from this rich historical legacy continue to influence our family identity even today. Growing up with a consciousness of this heritage has given me a profound appreciation for the community and the land to which my family belongs.

Through direct conversations with my parents and grandparents, I have learned how our family evolved across two generations, from a rural agricultural background to academic and

professional accomplishment. The determination, hard work, and sacrifices of my grandparents enabled the next generation to pursue education and better opportunities. Their efforts laid the foundation upon which my parents built successful careers and created opportunities for future generations. This essay presents a detailed account of both my paternal and maternal lineage, exploring their occupations, educational journeys, migration patterns, social circumstances, and cultural traditions. It also reflects on the values of perseverance, integrity, education, and community service that have been passed down through generations. By documenting this ancestral heritage, I hope to preserve an important part of my family's legacy and contribute to the broader understanding of the history and cultural identity of the Ahom community in Assam.

1.2 The Ahom Community: A Brief Overview

The Ahom community traces its origin to the Tai people of Southeast Asia. In 1228 CE, the Ahom prince Sukaphaa crossed the Patkai Hills and entered the Brahmaputra Valley with his followers. He established the foundation of the Ahom Kingdom in Upper Assam and gradually integrated with the local communities through diplomacy, cultural exchange, and mutual cooperation. This marked the beginning of a new political and cultural era in Assam, one that would last for nearly six uninterrupted centuries.

Under the leadership of Sukaphaa and his successors, the Ahom Kingdom expanded and flourished. During this period, the Ahoms developed a strong administrative system, introduced efficient land management methods, and organised society through the Paik system, which ensured both military and civil services. Their governance contributed significantly to political stability and economic prosperity in the region. The kingdom became known for its remarkable resilience, successfully resisting foreign invasions and maintaining its sovereignty through periods of great adversity.

The Ahom rulers played a crucial role in defending Assam from repeated invasions, most notably the Mughal campaigns that sought to extend imperial control over the north-eastern frontier. The decisive victory at the Battle of Saraighat in 1671, under the legendary leadership of Lachit Borphukan, remains one of the most celebrated events in Assamese history. This battle demonstrated not only the military genius of the Ahom commanders but also the extraordinary unity and fighting spirit of the Assamese people.

Beyond politics and warfare, the Ahoms enriched Assam's cultural heritage through their traditions, language, festivals, architecture, literature, and religious practices. Over time, they assimilated with the local population while preserving many aspects of their Tai-Ahom identity. The legacy of the Ahom community continues to shape the history, culture, and identity of Assam, making it one of the most influential communities in the state's historical development.

2. Origin of My Family and Ancestral Roots

2.1 Family Lineage and Genealogy

My family belongs to the Ahom community of Upper Assam, a community with a rich historical legacy dating back to the establishment of the Ahom Kingdom in 1228 CE. Our paternal surname is "Bakal," a title that carries historical significance within the Ahom administrative system. During my school days, both my father and I were frequently asked about the origin and meaning of our surname. This curiosity inspired my grandfather to search through various historical texts and records. The question of our surname became a journey of self-discovery, one that connected us more deeply to the historical fabric of Assam.

In 2021, my grandfather discovered a reference in a photocopy of an old historical manuscript. Later, my father located the original source on the Internet Archive: The Ancient Chronicles of Assam (From Chukapha to Gadadhar Singha), edited by Pandit Shreejut Hemchandra Goswami and first published in 1922 (Ref book at the end of essay). According to this text, individuals bearing the title "Bakal" served as political advisers to the Ahom kings. These advisers played important roles in governance, diplomacy, and state administration. This discovery provided our family with a meaningful, tangible connection to the Ahom Kingdom's historical administrative framework and strengthened our understanding of our ancestral identity. It was a moment of great pride for our entire family, knowing that our forefathers had served the kingdom in a position of trust and responsibility.

On my maternal side, the family surname is "Gogoi," one of the most respected titles in Ahom history. Historical records indicate that the title was often bestowed upon trusted officials who served the Ahom monarchy in important administrative and military capacities. Members of the Gogoi lineage held positions in the Council of Ministers and contributed significantly to the

governance of the kingdom. The title itself reflects a long tradition of public service, leadership, and loyalty to the state, values that continue to echo in the lives of our family members today.

Although detailed genealogical records of our earliest ancestors are unavailable, family traditions suggest that our forefathers lived in the Sivasagar region for several generations. Their lives were closely linked with agriculture, community service, and the preservation of Ahom cultural traditions. The stories passed down to us suggest people of integrity and quiet strength, individuals who worked the land, served their community, and maintained the cultural practices of their ancestors even during times of political upheaval and social change.

2.2 The Ancestral Villages

The ancestral roots of my paternal family are located in Demow, while my maternal family traces its origins to Nazira, both in the Sivasagar district of Assam. This region holds a special place in Assamese history, as it was part of the heartland of the Ahom Kingdom. Many historical monuments, temples, tanks, and administrative centres that were established during Ahom rule are located in and around Sivasagar, making the district a living repository of Assam's heritage. Walking through these areas even today, one can feel the weight of history and the enduring presence of a civilisation that shaped the region for centuries.

The natural environment of the region is characterised by fertile agricultural land, lush greenery, rivers, wetlands, and tea gardens. Agriculture has traditionally been the primary occupation of the local population, and the rhythms of village life have long been tied to the seasons of planting and harvest. The cultural life of the area is enriched by festivals such as Rongali Bihu, traditional Ahom rituals, and community gatherings, as well as the preservation of local customs. Growing up with connections to this region has helped our family maintain a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging.

2.3 Oral Histories Preserved by Elders

Much of our family history has been preserved through oral narratives shared by grandparents, parents, and elderly relatives. These stories provide us with valuable insights into the challenges and achievements of previous generations. My grandparents often narrated accounts of village life during their youth, when agriculture formed the backbone of the local economy and educational opportunities were limited. They described a world where the boundaries of the village

were also the boundaries of one's known world, and yet the values cultivated within those boundaries were enduring and profound.

They spoke about the importance of hard work, honesty, and community cooperation in overcoming difficulties. Family members remember how earlier generations worked tirelessly to provide better educational opportunities for their children, believing that education was the key to social and economic progress. These sacrifices enabled later generations to pursue higher education and professional careers, transforming the family's trajectory over just two generations. The stories passed down by our elders are more than family memories; they are lessons in perseverance, resilience, and responsibility that continue to guide us in our own lives.

3. Life and Times of My Grandparents

3.1 Paternal Grandparents: Economic and Social Conditions

My paternal grandfather, Mr. Lokeswar Bakal, was born in 1954 in Saruali village of Dibrugarh district, Assam. My paternal grandmother, Late Lilyma Handique, was born in Panigaon (Lezai), also in Dibrugarh district. Both grew up in rural Assamese families where agriculture formed the backbone of daily life and the local economy. Rice cultivation was the principal agricultural activity, supported by the fertile lands of Upper Assam. Families also grew vegetables and maintained household gardens for their daily needs. Agricultural work was labour-intensive and largely relied on traditional farming methods, with bullocks commonly used for ploughing and family members actively participating at every stage of the cultivation cycle.

Land ownership played an important role in determining a family's economic condition. Families who possessed cultivable land enjoyed greater food security and social standing within the village community. Agricultural production was primarily intended to meet household needs, although surplus produce was occasionally sold in local markets. My grandfather was part of a large family with one elder brother, one elder sister, one younger brother, and one younger sister. My grandmother was the eldest among four sisters and one younger brother. As the eldest child, she assumed significant responsibilities from an early age, helping her parents manage household duties and care for her younger siblings, a role she carried out with patience and devotion.

After their marriage in 1978, my grandparents moved to Demow in Sivasagar district. This relocation marked a significant turning point in their lives. My grandfather joined the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) as a Gram Sewak, working directly with rural communities to implement government development programmes, improve agricultural practices, and enhance rural infrastructure. His service reflected a commitment to community welfare and grassroots development. My grandmother began her career as a government school teacher. After my father's birth, she temporarily left her job to devote herself to raising her children, then later resumed her teaching career, serving as a dedicated educator until her retirement.

3.2 Educational Journeys of My Paternal Grandparents

My grandfather completed his graduation from Hem Chandra Dev Goswami College, Nitaipukhuri, in Sivasagar District, travelling daily by bicycle along a river embankment for approximately five kilometres. During the rainy season, the journey often became difficult, but his determination never faltered. My grandmother similarly completed her graduated from Manohari Devi Kanoi Girls' College, Dibrugarh, overcoming the considerable difficulties faced by rural students in that era. Both came from similar village backgrounds where education required effort, self-discipline, and a willingness to endure physical hardship. These experiences not only strengthened their determination to acquire knowledge but also taught them the value of hard work and self-reliance.

Alongside formal education, traditional knowledge played an important role in everyday life. After returning home from college, my grandfather regularly helped his family with farming activities and also assisted in operating the family rice mill. My grandmother actively participated in household work and community life while continuing her studies. Their upbringing in rural Assam instilled values that guided them throughout their lives. My grandfather's connection with agriculture continues even today. At the age of 72, he remains actively involved in cultivating vegetables in his kitchen garden at Demow, following many traditional farming practices learned from his elders.

After the passing of my grandmother, Late Lilyma Handique, in 2024, my grandfather faced a profoundly difficult period. Having shared more than four decades of companionship with his wife, her loss left a significant void in the family. Despite his grief, he continued to live independently, maintaining his daily routine with remarkable strength and self-reliance.

Recognising the importance of family support, my uncle returned home after taking voluntary retirement from the Indian Air Force, where he had served the nation with dedication for twenty years. His decision to return reflects the strong family values that have always been an integral part of our tradition.

3.3 Maternal Grandparents: Values and Legacy

My maternal grandfather, Late Hema Gogoi, was the fourth among nine siblings, comprising six brothers and three sisters. Growing up in such a large family instilled in him the values of cooperation, mutual support, and collective responsibility. My maternal grandmother, Mrs. Gunaprova Gogoi, was the youngest of seven siblings, including five sisters and two brothers. Their childhoods in large joint families helped shape their resilience and their deep appreciation for the importance of family bonds. My maternal grandparents' home is situated beside the historic pond Dolopukhuri in Sivasagar, an area rich in Ahom heritage that includes the small royal burial mounds known as Bauli Moidams. Growing up in such a historically significant environment strengthened the family's connection to Assam's cultural legacy.

My maternal grandfather served in the Sales Tax Office in Sivasagar with unwavering dedication and integrity. Throughout his career, he earned the respect of his colleagues and the public for his honesty and professionalism. Although he was occasionally offered bribes, he consistently and firmly refused them. He believed that integrity, self-respect, and a clear conscience were far more valuable than material wealth. Sadly, he passed away in 2004 after battling mouth cancer. Although his life was cut short, the values of honesty, discipline, and sincerity that he upheld have become a lasting source of inspiration for our entire family.

Following my grandfather's untimely death, my maternal grandmother faced numerous personal and financial challenges. During this difficult period, some relatives believed that my mother should discontinue her education and focus on household responsibilities. However, my grandmother held a progressive vision and firmly believed that education was the key to a better future. Determined to fulfil my grandfather's dream, she ensured that my mother continued her higher education at Dibrugarh University despite social pressures and financial constraints. Her courage, resilience, and belief in women's education reflected values that transformed not only my mother's life but also set an enduring example of perseverance and the power of education for all future generations of our family.

3.4 Customs, Traditions, and Religious Practices

My great-grandparents and grandparents played an important role in preserving the customs, traditions, and religious practices of the Tai-Ahom community. One of the most significant traditions in our family was the annual ancestor-worship ceremony. Every year, family members gathered to pay respects to their departed forefathers and seek their blessings for the family's well-being and prosperity. Offerings of food, prayers, and traditional rituals were performed with sincerity and devotion, reflecting the deep reverence that the Ahom people hold for their ancestors.

A major religious observance of the Tai-Ahom community is Me-Dam-Me-Phi, the most important traditional festival dedicated to honouring ancestors and departed souls. Celebrated annually on 31 January, it is also recognised as a public holiday in Assam. The term carries deep spiritual significance: "Me" refers to offerings or ritual sacrifices, "Dam" signifies ancestors, and "Phi" represents gods or divine spirits. Through prayers and offerings, families express gratitude to their ancestors and seek their guidance and blessings. This festival symbolises the enduring bond between the living and the departed generations.

The three Bihus, namely Bohag Bihu, Kati Bihu, and Magh or Bhogali Bihu, were the most important seasonal festivals celebrated in our family. Bohag Bihu marked the Assamese New Year and the beginning of the agricultural season, celebrated with traditional foods, new clothes, and cultural activities. Kati Bihu was observed with prayers for the protection of crops and a good harvest, while Magh Bihu celebrated the successful harvest with community feasts, Meji burning, and traditional games. These customs and festivals strengthened family bonds, preserved cultural identity, and ensured that the rich heritage of the Tai-Ahom community was transmitted faithfully from one generation to the next.

4. The Parents' Generation and Social Transformation

4.1 My Father's Educational Journey

My father, Dr. Partha Protim Bakal, began his schooling at Demow and completed his High School Leaving Certificate examination in 1998 from Demow Higher Secondary School. He then pursued his Higher Secondary education at Sivasagar Government Higher Secondary School,

where his interest in science, particularly chemistry, grew steadily stronger. Motivated by his passion for the subject, he enrolled at Science College, Jorhat, now known as the Jorhat Institute of Science and Technology. He earned a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Chemistry. His academic dedication inspired him to pursue further studies at Dibrugarh University, where he completed his Master of Science in Chemistry in 2005.

The journey from a small town in Sivasagar district to university education was neither easy nor straightforward. It required financial discipline, personal sacrifice, and a genuine love of learning. My father lived in rented accommodation and later in hostels throughout his years of study, often far from the comforts of home. These years of relative solitude and academic focus shaped his character and deepened his intellectual commitments. His experience of building a life away from home during his formative years taught him independence, resourcefulness, and the importance of perseverance in the face of difficulty.

4.2 My Mother's Educational Journey

My mother, Mrs. Jyotismita Gogoi, completed her HSLC from Nazira Girls' High School and her Higher Secondary education from Nazira Government Higher Secondary and Multipurpose School. She then pursued a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Chemistry at Gargaon College, graduating in 2003. Despite facing severe family hardships following the untimely death of her father during her undergraduate years, she remained determined to continue her education. With her mother's unwavering encouragement and support, she overcame financial and social challenges and pursued her academic goals with exceptional perseverance and dedication.

During their M.Sc. studies at Dibrugarh University in 2004, my father met my mother. Their friendship gradually developed into a strong bond built on mutual respect, shared academic interests, and common values rooted in hard work and family responsibility. After establishing their respective careers, they decided to marry and build a life together. My mother later completed her Master of Science in Chemistry and a Bachelor of Education, becoming the only daughter among her siblings to achieve these advanced qualifications. Her accomplishments stand as a testament to her determination and the sacrifices made by her mother after the loss of her father.

4.3 Early Career Struggles and Life in Kolkata

After completing his master's degree, my father moved to Guwahati in 2006 in search of employment. Despite his qualifications, suitable opportunities were initially limited. He worked briefly as a junior college teacher for approximately three months before joining a short-term research project at Dibrugarh University. In January 2007, he received a campus placement offer from TCG Lifesciences, also known as Chembiotek, in Kolkata, as a Research Chemist. He joined the company in March 2007, marking the beginning of his professional career in pharmaceutical research.

In April 2008, my parents married and began their life together in Kestopur, Kolkata. Adjusting to life in a large metropolitan city was a completely new experience for both of them. Although my mother had completed her M.Sc. in Chemistry, she was unable to find a suitable job immediately. Rather than becoming discouraged, she enrolled in a Tally Accounting course, enhanced her professional skills, and secured a position at an automobile spare parts company. Later, she joined Chembiotek, the same pharmaceutical research company where my father was employed. Their years in Kolkata taught them the values of adaptability, resilience, and mutual support as they built both their careers and their family life in an unfamiliar city far from home.

My father gained extensive experience in pharmaceutical research and industrial chemistry while working at Chembiotek. However, he gradually recognised that the demanding work schedule, long working hours, and continuous exposure to laboratory chemicals were affecting both his health and family life. Despite the valuable professional growth he experienced, he felt that he could not devote sufficient time to his family. After careful consideration, he made the difficult but meaningful decision to leave the private sector and return to Assam to seek a healthier work-life balance. This decision, though challenging at the time, would prove to be one of the most significant turning points in the family's journey.

4.4 A Turning Point: The Flight That Almost Did Not Land

One of the most memorable turning points in my father's life occurred on 5 January 2011, when he travelled from Kolkata to attend an interview for the post of Senior Technical Assistant at Guwahati Biotech Park. His flight, scheduled to depart at 6:00 a.m., was delayed due to dense fog. After reaching Guwahati airspace, the aircraft was unable to land and, following airline regulations, returned to Kolkata. At that moment, it appeared entirely impossible for him to attend the interview scheduled at 10:00 a.m.

Refusing to give up, my father immediately contacted the interview office. He was informed that he could still appear if he arrived before the interviews concluded. After receiving a refund, he booked the next available flight, reached Guwahati in the afternoon, and hired a private vehicle to rush to the interview venue. Fortunately, out of 45 candidates competing for two vacancies, only three candidates remained to be interviewed when he arrived. He successfully attended the interview just in time. My father often recalls this incident with deep gratitude, acknowledging the generosity of the interview committee, the pilot of the second flight, and the van driver who helped him reach the venue. The opportunity he gained at Guwahati Biotech Park later paved the way for his career at IIT Guwahati, making this incident a true turning point in both his professional life and our family's journey.

4.5 Return to Assam and a New Beginning

After returning to Assam, my father joined Guwahati Biotech Park as a Senior Technical Assistant, allowing him to continue contributing to scientific research while remaining closer to his family and roots. In 2012, he received an opportunity to join the Centre for the Environment at IIT Guwahati, now known as the School of Interdisciplinary Studies and Sustainability, as a Technical Superintendent. This appointment marked a significant turning point in both his professional career and our family's life. Working in an academic and research-oriented environment provided him with greater stability and opportunities for continuous learning.

Demonstrating his lifelong commitment to education, my father enrolled in the Ph.D. programme at IIT Guwahati in 2016. His pursuit of doctoral research reflects his belief that learning never ends and that education is a lifelong journey. From a student who cycled to school in Demow to a doctoral researcher at one of India's premier institutions, his academic journey embodies the transformative power of education and determination.

Meanwhile, my mother continued her own academic pursuits alongside her professional responsibilities. After completing her B.Ed. in 2014, she became eligible for teaching positions with the Government of Assam and qualified for various Teacher Eligibility Tests conducted by both the Assam and Central Governments. Her first appointment in October 2013, when I was only six months old, was located in a very remote area. Choosing family over career at that critical juncture, she declined the posting. She later received an appointment at Model School, Batadrava, in Nagaon district in 2015, nearly 160 kilometres from our home. Accepting the post would have

required her to be separated from her young child, and she reluctantly declined the opportunity as well.

In 2015, she joined Kendriya Vidyalaya, IIT Guwahati, as a contractual Post Graduate Teacher in Chemistry for six months. In 2017, she secured a permanent position as a Science Graduate Teacher at Dirgheswari M.E. School, approximately 12 kilometres from our home. She served there with dedication until May 2023, earning the respect of students and colleagues alike. Subsequently, she was appointed at Pub Par Gandhiji Vidyapeeth before eventually receiving a mutual transfer to PM SHRI Agdala Chariali Higher Secondary School in Baihata Chariali, Kamrup district, where she currently serves as a Science Graduate Teacher. This final transfer brought greater stability and accessibility to her daily commute, bringing deserved peace to a journey marked by many sacrifices.

4.6 Women's Role in Family Development

Women play a vital role in the development and progress of a family. My mother is the youngest of six siblings, with two older brothers and three older sisters. Because of her hardworking nature, determination, and dedication to education, she became the most highly educated among all her siblings. She completed her Master of Science degree, followed by a Bachelor of Education and, through perseverance, secured a government teaching position. Her journey demonstrates how education transforms lives and strengthens families across generations.

Despite her professional responsibilities, my mother has always given equal importance to our family. She patiently teaches me all my subjects, encourages me to study sincerely, and motivates me to achieve my goals. She believes that education is the greatest asset a person can possess and has instilled this value deeply in our household. Her contribution has greatly influenced my academic growth and personal development. Through her example, I have learned that education plays a fundamental role in shaping a better future for individuals, families, and society. That true strength lies not only in professional achievement but in the selfless dedication one brings to those one loves.

5. Urbanisation and Lifestyle Changes Across Generations

The story of my family reflects the remarkable social and economic transformation that has taken place in Assam over the past few decades. My grandparents were born and brought up in a traditional village environment, where agriculture was the primary occupation and basic facilities such as higher education, healthcare, transportation, and communication were limited. Despite these challenges, my grandfather completed his Bachelor's degree and joined the DRDA as a Gram Sewak, dedicating his working life to the service of rural communities. Through dedication, honesty, and hard work, my grandparents raised their three children and ensured that each received a quality education.

The next generation experienced a different phase of development. Both of my parents completed their M.Sc. in Chemistry in 2005 and moved to Kolkata in search of better career opportunities. Those years in a large metropolitan city taught them resilience, independence, and the importance of continuous learning. The industrial and research experience they gained in Kolkata later became the foundation for their future careers in Assam.

A major turning point came when my father joined IIT Guwahati in 2012. Our family moved from the demanding life of Kolkata to the peaceful and academically vibrant environment of the IIT Guwahati campus. The campus offers world-class educational and residential facilities, including modern laboratories, libraries, sports complexes, a swimming pool, basketball and tennis courts, playgrounds, healthcare services, shopping facilities, and a safe, green environment for families and children. Growing up in such an environment has given my brother and me opportunities that were unimaginable during my grandparents' childhood. Within three generations, my family has witnessed an extraordinary journey, from a rural village lifestyle to career struggles in a metropolitan city and finally to a modern, knowledge-driven academic community. This transformation illustrates how education, perseverance, and urbanisation can improve the quality of life while preserving the values of honesty, hard work, and family unity inherited from previous generations.

6. Family Relationships and Community Life

6.1 The Extended Family Network

The relationship among relatives plays an important role in preserving family traditions, strengthening emotional bonds, and maintaining a sense of belonging across generations. My father had limited opportunities to develop close relationships with his extended family during his youth. After completing Class 10, he left home to pursue higher education, living in rented accommodation and hostels for many years. Spending most of his formative years away from home, combined with his naturally introverted personality, meant that he had fewer opportunities to interact regularly with relatives and participate in family gatherings.

In contrast, my mother is an extroverted and sociable person who spent her school and college years living close to her family, allowing her to build and maintain strong relationships with relatives. Even today, she remains in regular contact with her brothers, sisters, cousins, and other family members. Because of my mother's efforts, our family maintains a strong connection with our extended relatives. During important festivals such as Bihu and Durga Puja, as well as during summer vacations, we often visit relatives' homes. These visits provide opportunities to celebrate together, share family experiences, strengthen relationships, and pass on our cultural values and traditions to the younger generation.

6.2 Community Support Systems

Our family has always believed in the importance of community support and maintaining strong relationships with relatives from both my father's and mother's sides. During major festivals, family members gather together to celebrate with great enthusiasm and joy. We prepare traditional food together, exchange greetings and gifts, participate in religious rituals, and enjoy cultural programmes. These occasions provide an opportunity for everyone to meet, strengthen family bonds, and preserve the cultural traditions that define our identity as Ahoms.

Similarly, during weddings in our extended family, relatives come together to help with the preparations and ceremonies. Everyone willingly contributes according to their abilities, whether it is organising the event, cooking, decorating, welcoming guests, or managing different responsibilities. This spirit of cooperation reduces the burden on the host family and makes every celebration memorable. Our family also stands united during times of crisis. Relatives provide emotional support, financial assistance when needed, and practical help in managing responsibilities. This culture of mutual care and cooperation has strengthened our family across generations and remains one of our most cherished values.

6.3 Current State of Family Unity

Although our family remains closely connected, our daily lives are influenced by work and study responsibilities. My parents and I live in Guwahati, approximately 400 kilometres from my paternal grandparents' home in Demow. Because of this distance, we are unable to visit them as frequently as we would wish, and we often miss the warmth of our grandparents' home and the peaceful environment of our native place. Family reunions mainly take place during festivals, vacations, and special occasions, when everyone gathers to spend quality time together.

My maternal grandparents' home has a beautiful village environment that we always look forward to visiting. Behind their house lies a vast rice field where we enjoy walking and experiencing nature's beauty in its simplest and most profound form. In front of the house, there is a large pond filled with different varieties of fish, where family members often spend time fishing together. These simple village activities create wonderful memories and strengthen our bond with our relatives and our roots. Despite living far away due to professional commitments, our emotional connection with our grandparents and extended family remains strong, and we eagerly await every opportunity to reunite and celebrate our shared heritage together.

7. Ahom Identity: Heritage, Pride, and the Future

7.1 Historical and Cultural Identity

Our family has always identified strongly with the Ahom community and its rich historical legacy. This identity is not merely a matter of surname or ancestry; it is expressed in the festivals we celebrate, the rituals we observe, the stories we tell, and the values we uphold. The historical significance of our surnames, Bakal on my father's side and Gogoi on my mother's side, connects us to the administrative and governance traditions of the Ahom Kingdom. These are not simply titles; they are markers of a lineage that once contributed to the functioning of one of the most enduring kingdoms in Indian history.

The cultural practices of the Ahom community, including the celebration of Me-Dam-Me-Phi, the observance of the three Bihus, ancestor worship ceremonies, and the maintenance of oral histories, serve as living bridges between past and present. In our family, these traditions are observed with sincerity and enthusiasm, not as mere formalities but as genuine expressions of

cultural identity and spiritual continuity. My grandparents were particularly diligent in preserving these practices and passing them on to the next generation, understanding that cultural heritage, once lost, is very difficult to reclaim.

7.2 Significance of Ahom Identity Today

In today's rapidly changing world, the preservation of cultural identity takes on a special importance. Globalisation and urbanisation bring enormous benefits, but they also carry the risk of cultural homogenisation, the gradual erosion of distinct identities under the pressure of dominant cultures and modern lifestyles. For a community like the Ahoms, whose historical significance is immense but whose population is relatively small, the conscious preservation of cultural practices, language, oral histories, and community institutions becomes especially important.

Our family's experience illustrates how cultural identity and modern progress can coexist harmoniously. While my parents have embraced education, professional careers, and urban living, they have simultaneously maintained their connection to Ahom customs, traditions, and community values. This balance, far from being a contradiction, is in fact a natural expression of the Ahom community's historical ability to adapt and integrate while preserving its essential identity. The Ahoms integrated with the peoples of the Brahmaputra Valley over centuries while maintaining their distinct cultural practices, and this same capacity for integration without assimilation continues to characterise the community today.

7.3 Vision for Future Generations

The history of my family may not be documented in ancient manuscripts, but it lives in the struggles, sacrifices, and achievements of my grandparents and parents. From agricultural villages in Dibrugarh to the historic towns of Demow and Nazira, and from the bustling metropolitan life of Kolkata to the academically vibrant environment of IIT Guwahati, my family's journey reflects perseverance, education, and cultural pride. Through two generations, I have witnessed a transformation from rural farming backgrounds to academic and professional success, a transformation driven not by chance but by the conscious choices of individuals who believed in the power of education and the importance of integrity.

My grandparents taught us the values of simplicity, honesty, and hard work. My parents taught us dedication, courage, and the transformative power of education. Together, these lessons form the foundation upon which I hope to build my own life. As I grow older and become more aware of the legacy I have inherited, I feel a deepening sense of responsibility to carry these values forward, to honour the sacrifices of those who came before me, and to contribute positively to both my family and the wider community.

The Ahom community's legacy is one of resilience, cultural richness, administrative sophistication, and an extraordinary capacity to endure. As a young member of this community, I am aware that I am part of a living historical tradition that extends back eight centuries and forward into an uncertain but promising future. I hope that by learning more about my family's history and my community's heritage, documenting these stories before they are lost, and living out the values my ancestors embodied, I can play a small but meaningful role in ensuring this legacy continues to inspire generations yet to come.

8. Conclusion

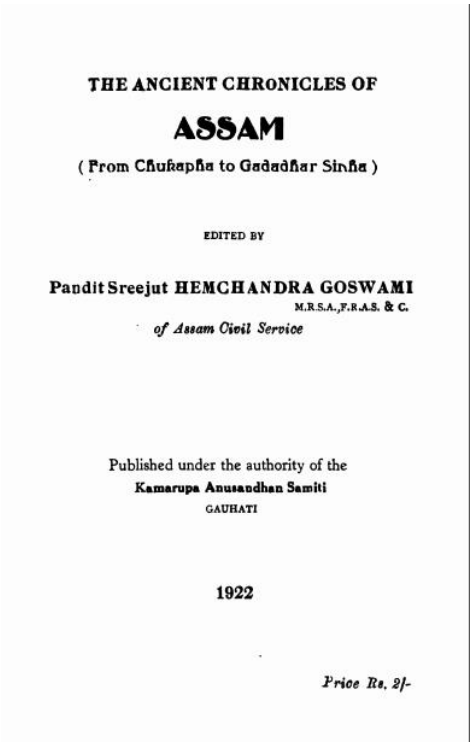
This essay has attempted to trace the ancestral heritage of my family through oral histories, family records, and personal reflections, weaving together the stories of two generations to create a portrait of a family deeply rooted in the cultural and historical landscape of Upper Assam. From the Ahom administrative titles of Bakal and Gogoi to the agricultural fields of Dibrugarh, from the modest government offices and village schools of Sivasagar to the research laboratories of IIT Guwahati, my family's journey is one of continuous transformation guided by enduring values.

The lives of my grandparents speak of a generation that faced significant material challenges and yet found within those challenges opportunities for growth, service, and the building of a better future for their children. Their commitment to education, their integrity in public service, and their preservation of cultural traditions laid the foundations upon which my parents' generation was able to build. My parents, in turn, demonstrated that the values of their upbringing, hard work, perseverance, and a deep love of learning, could be translated into professional achievement and personal fulfilment even in the face of considerable obstacles.

As I look at the journey my family has undertaken across just two generations, I am struck by both the magnitude of the transformation and the continuity of values that have made it possible. The same honesty that led my maternal grandfather to refuse bribes in his government office is evident in the academic integrity my father brings to his doctoral research. The same courage that led my maternal grandmother to insist on her daughter's education despite social pressure can be seen in the patience and dedication with which my mother has pursued her teaching career. These are not coincidences; they are the transmission of values, from one generation to the next, through example, story, and lived experience.

Documenting this family history is itself an act of cultural preservation. In recording these stories, I am ensuring that the sacrifices of my grandparents are not forgotten, that the struggles of my parents are understood and appreciated, and that the rich cultural heritage of the Ahom community continues to find expression in the lives of those who come after them. This essay is my tribute to all those who came before me and my commitment to carry their legacy forward with pride, responsibility, and gratitude.

(Reference Book link of our title “Bakal”: https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.452171)



THE ANCIENT CHRONICLES OF

ASSAM

(From Chukapha to Gadadhar Sinha)

EDITED BY

Pandit Sreejut HEMCHANDRA GOSWAMI

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of Assam Civil Service

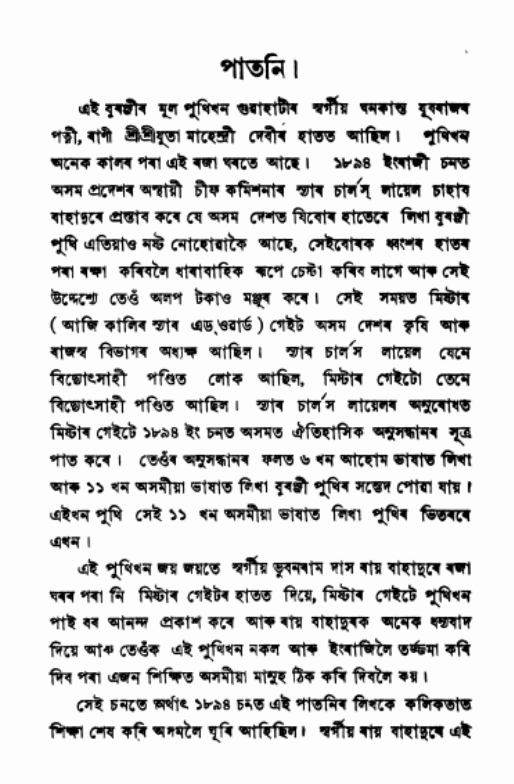
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পাতনি।

এই বুৰঞ্জীৰ মূল পুথিখন গুৱাহাটীৰ স্বৰ্গীয় ঘনকান্ত বুধবাজৰ পত্নী, বাণী শ্ৰীশ্ৰীযুতা মাহেশ্ৰী দেবীৰ হাতত আছিল। পুথিখন অনেক কালৰ পৰা এই বজা ঘৰতে আছে। ১৮৯৪ ইংৰাজী চনত অসম প্ৰদেশৰ অস্থায়ী চীফ কমিশনাৰ স্যাৰ চার্লস্ লায়েল চাহাৰ বাহাদুৰে প্ৰস্তাব কৰে যে অসম দেশত যিবোৰ হাতেৰে লিখা বুৰঞ্জী পুথি এতিয়াও নষ্ট নোহোৱাকৈ আছে, সেইবোৰক ধৰংশৰ হাতৰ পৰা ৰক্ষা কৰিবলৈ ধাৰাবাহিক ৰূপে চেষ্টা কৰিব লাগে আৰু সেই উদ্দেশ্যে তেওঁ অলপ টকাও মঞ্জুৰ কৰে। সেই সময়ত মিষ্টাৰ (আজি কালিৰ স্যাৰ এড্ওৱার্ড) গেইট অসম দেশৰ কৃষি আৰু ৰাজস্ব বিভাগৰ অধ্যক্ষ আছিল। স্যাৰ চার্লস লায়েল যেনে বিজ্ঞোৎসাহী পণ্ডিত লোক আছিল, মিষ্টাৰ গেইটো তেনে বিজ্ঞোৎসাহী পণ্ডিত আছিল। স্যাৰ চার্লস লায়েলৰ অনুৰোধত মিষ্টাৰ গেইটে ১৮৯৪ ইং চনত অসমত ঐতিহাসিক অনুসন্ধানৰ সূত্ৰ পাত কৰে। তেওঁৰ অনুসন্ধানৰ ফলত ৬ খন আহোম ভাষাত লিখা আৰু ১১ খন অসমীয়া ভাষাত লিখা বুৰঞ্জী পুথিৰ সন্ধেদ পোৱা যায়। এইখন পুথি সেই ১১ খন অসমীয়া ভাষাত লিখা পুথিৰ ভিতৰৰে এখন।

এই পুথিখন জয় জয়ন্তে স্বৰ্গীয় ভুবনৰাম দাস বায় বাহাদুৰে বজা ঘৰৰ পৰা নি মিষ্টাৰ গেইটৰ হাতত দিয়ে, মিষ্টাৰ গেইটে পুথিখন পাই বৰ আনন্দ প্ৰকাশ কৰে আৰু বায় বাহাদুৰক অনেক ধন্যবাদ দিয়ে আৰু তেওঁক এই পুথিখন নকল আৰু ইংৰাজিলৈ তৰ্জ্জমা কৰি দিব পৰা এজন শিক্ষিত অসমীয়া মানুহ ঠিক কৰি দিবলৈ কয়।

সেই চনতে অর্থাৎ ১৮৯৪ চনত এই পাতনিৰ লিখকে কলিকতাত শিক্ষা শেষ কৰি অসমলৈ ঘুৰি আহিছিল। স্বৰ্গীয় বায় বাহাদুৰে এই

এই কিতাপখন বহুত দিনৰ আগেয়েই ছাপাখানাত দিয়া হয় আৰু সেই অনুসাৰে অনেক দিনৰ আগেয়েই ই ছাপা হৈ ওলাব লাগিছিল। কামৰূপ অনুসন্ধান সমিতিৰ আগৰ সম্পাদক শ্ৰদ্ধেয় বন্ধু শ্ৰীযুত কালিচৰণ সেন ৰায়বাহাদুৰে কিতাপখন সোনকালে উলিয়াবৰ নিমিত্তে অহোপুৰুষাৰ্থ কৰাতো ছাপাখানাৰ বেমেজালিত আৰু কাগজৰ অভাবত কিতাপখন ওলোৱাত অনেক পলম হল। শ্ৰীযুত মহীনাথ শৰ্ম্মা ব্যাকৰণতীৰ্থে ছাপাখানাৰ নিমিত্তে খৰচা তৈয়াৰ কৰি দিয়াৰ বাবে আৰু শ্ৰীমান শিশিৰকুমাৰ বৰুৱাই তাক মূল পুথিৰ লগত বিজাই শুদ্ধাশুদ্ধ চাই দিয়া বাবে বিশেষ ধন্যবাদৰ পাত্ৰ। ইয়াৰ আগেয়ে আৰু অসমীয়া ভাষাত কোনো বুৰঞ্জীৰোবো পুথি ছপা হোৱা নাছিল। কামৰূপ অনুসন্ধান সমিতিয়েই এই কামত প্ৰথমে বাট দেখুৱাইছে; সেই গুণে সকলো অসমীয়াই সমিতিৰ শলাগ লোৱা উচিত আৰু ছপা নোহোৱা আন আন বুৰঞ্জীবোবো ক্ৰমশঃ প্ৰকাশ কৰিবলৈ যত্ন কৰা উচিত। সম্পাদকে এই কিতাপখনৰ এখন ভূমিকাও

।৹

লিখি দিছে। এতিয়া অসমীয়া বাইজে কিতাপখনক যথোচিত আদৰ কৰিলেই সকলোবে সকলো বকমৰ পৰিশ্ৰম সাৰ্থক হব।

১১।২।২২
২৭ ডবচন বোড—হাওৰা

শ্ৰীহেমচন্দ্ৰ গোস্বামী।

পুৰণি

অসম-বুৰঞ্জী

প্ৰথম অধ্যায়

ইন্দ্ৰবংশৰ উৎপত্তি

সৌমাৰ পীঠৰ পূৰ্ব্ব দেশত হীৰকূট নামে পৰ্ব্বতৰ দক্ষিণে স্বৰ্ণাদ্ৰি পৰ্ব্বতৰ উত্তৰে বিহগাদ্ৰি নামে পৰ্ব্বত আছে। তাৰে গহ্বৰত বশিষ্ঠ থাকে। সেই পৰ্ব্বততে বস্তুভূমি প্ৰকাশিত এক থান আছে। তাতে অনেক পুষ্পবাটিকা আছে। তাতে কামোদ্ভৱ বাত সদা বহি থাকে। সুগন্ধ পুষ্পযুক্ত লতা বৃক্ষ শোভিত এনে সুন্দৰ থান দেখি, স্বৰ্গৰ পৰা ইন্দ্ৰ দেবতা শচী সহিতে আহি ক্ৰীড়া কৰিছিল। একদিনাপ্ৰতি বশিষ্ঠে গহ্বৰৰ পৰা সবোৱৰত স্নান কৰিবলৈ আহোতে শচী আদি কৰি স্ত্ৰীসকল সহিতে ইন্দ্ৰে ক্ৰীড়া কৰোতে বশিষ্ঠে দেখিলে। ক্ৰোধ কৰি বোলে, মোৰ আশ্ৰমক অশুদ্ধ কৰিলি নিমিত্তে তোৰ অন্ত্যজ স্ত্ৰীত সঙ্গম হৌক; এহি বুলি শাপ দিলে। পাচে ঐশান্য কোনৰ বস্তুপীঠত মীনাচল পৰ্ব্বতত তপ কৰিবলৈ গৈল। পাচে বশিষ্ঠৰ শাপে ইন্দ্ৰ জ্ঞান গুচি কন্যাসকলৰ আগতে দৈত্যৰূপ মনুষ্য হৈল। মঞে ইন্দ্ৰ হেন আকো নাজানিলে। পাচে শচীএ

বশিষ্ঠৰ শাপ।

ঢুইড়ামৰ ঘৰ, বাককত মোচাই, বেউতিগাঁয়া অসম, এই তিনি ঘৰ নিয়মৰ অসম নহয়। চুহুম বজা দেৱৰ দিনত যেতিয়া ৮ কোঞৰে কটাকটি কৰি মৰিল, তেতিআয়ে এই তিনি ঘৰ আসমৰ লগত সোমাই আসম হৈ থাকিল। খমিৰ এঘৰ পূৰ্ব্বে চুকাফা ৰজাৰ লগত অহা আসম।

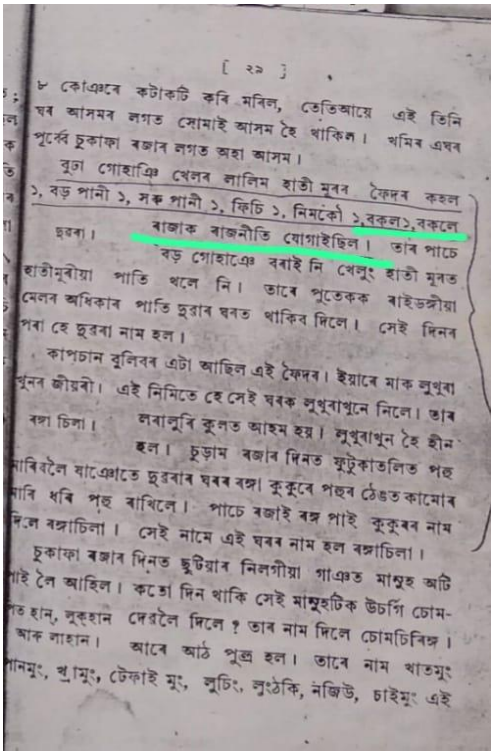
বুঢ়া গোহাঞি খেলৰ লালিম হাতী মুখৰ ফৈদৰ কহল ১, বড় পানী ১, সৰু পানী ১, ফিচি ১, নিমকৌ ১, বকল ১, বকলৰ ৰাজাক ৰাজনীতি যোগাইছিল। তাৰ পাচে বড় গোহাঞে

ৰবাই নি খেলুং হাতী মুখত হাতীমুৰীয়া পাতি থলে নি। তাৰে পুতেককৰ বাইডঙ্গীয়া মেলৰ অধিকাৰ পাতি ঢুৱাৰ ঘৰত থাকিব দিলে। সেই দিনৰ পৰা হে ঢুৱৰা নাম হল।

ঢুৱৰা।

কাপচান বুলিৰৰ এটা আছিল এই ফৈদৰ। ইয়াৰে মাক লুখুৰা খুনৰ জীয়ৰী। এই নিমিতে হে সেই ঘৰক লুখুৰাখুনে নিলে। তাৰ লৰালুৰি কুলত আহম হয়। লুখুৰাখুন হৈ হীন হল। চুড়াম ৰজাৰ দিনত ফুটুকাতলিত পহু মাৰিবলৈ যাঞোতে ঢুৱাৰৰ ঘৰৰ বঙ্গা কুকুৰে পহুৰ ঠেঙত কামোৰ মাৰি ধৰি পহু ৰাখিলে। পাচে ৰজাই বঙ্গ পাই কুকুৰৰ নাম দিলে বঙ্গাচিলা। সেই নামে এই ঘৰৰ নাম হল বঙ্গাচিলা।

বঙ্গা চিলা।



[২৯]

৮ কোঞৰে কটাকটি কৰি মৰিল, তেতিআয়ে এই তিনি ঘৰ আসমৰ লগত সোমাই আসম হৈ থাকিল। খমিৰ এঘৰ পূৰ্ব্বে চুকাফা ৰজাৰ লগত অহা আসম।

বুঢ়া গোহাঞি খেলৰ লালিম হাতী মুখৰ ফৈদৰ কহল ১, বড় পানী ১, সৰু পানী ১, ফিচি ১, নিমকৌ ১, বকল ১, বকলে

ঢুৱৰা। ৰাজাক ৰাজনীতি যোগাইছিল। তাৰ পাচে বড় গোহাঞে ৰবাই নি খেলুং হাতী মুখত হাতীমুৰীয়া পাতি থলে নি। তাৰে পুতেককৰ বাইডঙ্গীয়া মেলৰ অধিকাৰ পাতি ঢুৱাৰ ঘৰত থাকিব দিলে। সেই দিনৰ পৰা হে ঢুৱৰা নাম হল।

কাপচান বুলিৰৰ এটা আছিল এই ফৈদৰ। ইয়াৰে মাক লুখুৰা খুনৰ জীয়ৰী। এই নিমিতে হে সেই ঘৰক লুখুৰাখুনে নিলে। তাৰ লৰালুৰি কুলত আহম হয়। লুখুৰাখুন হৈ হীন হল। চুড়াম ৰজাৰ দিনত ফুটুকাতলিত পহু মাৰিবলৈ যাঞোতে ঢুৱাৰৰ ঘৰৰ বঙ্গা কুকুৰে পহুৰ ঠেঙত কামোৰ মাৰি ধৰি পহু ৰাখিলে। পাচে ৰজাই বঙ্গ পাই কুকুৰৰ নাম দিলে বঙ্গাচিলা। সেই নামে এই ঘৰৰ নাম হল বঙ্গাচিলা।

বঙ্গা চিলা।

চুকাফা ৰজাৰ দিনত ছুটিয়াৰ নিলগীয়া গাওঁত মানুহ অটি
াই লৈ আহিল। কতো দিন থাকি সেই মানুহটিক উচগি চোম-
ত হান, লুহুহান দেৱৰলৈ দিলে? তাৰ নাম দিলে চোমচিৰিঙ্গ।
আক লাহান। আৰে আঠ পুত্ৰ হল। তাৰে নাম খাতমুং
ানমুং, খ্ৰামুং, টেফাই মুং, লুচিং, লুংঠকি, নজিউ, চাইমুং এই

Office of the State Coordinator of National Registration (NRC)
Assam
NRC Details

Selected District : ডিব্রুগড়	Village : 223
Name : শ্রী বাপোৰাম বকল	Father/Husband Name : ভোগ
Image District Name : লক্ষীমপুৰ	Subdivision Name : ডিব্রুগড়
Thana Town : মৰান	Mauza : চেপল
House No : 31...	Sl. No. In House : 1
Age : 30	Gender : ম
Legacy Data Code : 190-0009-4778	

Generated by DLDD Version 3.0

Office of the State Coordinator of National Registration (NRC)
Assam
Voter Details

Selected District : শিৱসাগৰ	Village : নাজিৰা টাউন ১নং ৱার্ড
Name : গুলপ্রভা	Father/Husband Name : হেমকান্ত
Voter Sl. No. : 168	LAC : ১০৮ নাজিৰা
Image District Name : শিৱসাগৰ	Circle Name : শিৱসাগৰ
Subdivision Name : ---	Thana Town : নাজিৰা
Mauza : আঠখেল	Block : 13
Vote Year : 1970	Gender : তি
Legacy Data Code : 360-3006-5994	Age : 32
Image Id : 26205625	

Generated by DLDD Version 5.0

Legacy data of my Grandfather (Paternal)

Legacy data of my Grandfather (Maternal side)

mplete Draft NRC Search https://www.draftnrcassam.com/arnSearch.req

Complete Draft Consolidated List for National Register of Citizens (30th July, 2018) under Clause 4 of The Schedule to Citizenship Rules, 2003

DISTRICT	CIRCLE	NSK	NSK ADDRESS	VILLAGE/WARD
SIVASAGAR	DIMOW	DEMOW4	NAHAT G. P OFFICE DEMOW, DIST- SIVASAGAR	RAICHAI (501)

SL NO	ARN	MEM ID	GENDER	NAME	FATHER'S NAME	MOTHER'S NAME	SPOUSE NAME
1	10183110207005470030 4	1	MALE	লক্ষেশ্বৰ বাকাল	বাপুৰাম বাকাল	তাৰাদৈ বাকাল	লিলিমা সন্দিকৈ বাকাল
2	10183110207005470030 4	2	FEMALE	লিলিমা সন্দিকৈ বাকাল	সুধা নাথ সন্দিকৈ	অম্বিকা সন্দিকৈ	লক্ষেশ্বৰ বাকাল
3	10183110207005470030 4	3	MALE	পার্থ প্রতিম বাকাল	লক্ষেশ্বৰ বাকাল	লিলিমা সন্দিকৈ বাকাল	জ্যোতিস্মিতা বাকাল
4	10183110207005470030 4	4	FEMALE	জ্যোতিস্মিতা গগৈ বাকাল	হেমা গগৈ	গুন প্রভা গগৈ	পার্থ প্রতিম বাকাল
5	10183110207005470030 4	5	MALE	মানস বাকাল	লক্ষেশ্বৰ বাকাল	লিলিমা সন্দিকৈ বাকাল	গায়ত্রী হাজৰিকা বাকাল
6	10183110207005470030 4	6	FEMALE	গায়ত্রী হাজৰিকা বাকাল	বিধান চন্দ্র হাজৰিকা	দেবা হাজৰিকা	মানস বাকাল
7	10183110207005470030 4	7	FEMALE	ধনুষ্কা বাকাল	পার্থ প্রতিম বাকাল	জ্যোতিস্মিতা গগৈ বাকাল	---

New Search

* Note :



Left side: My Grandparents, Right side: My parents, In middle : My Uncle, Aunt



With my parents and brother. (in 2021)

— End of Essay —