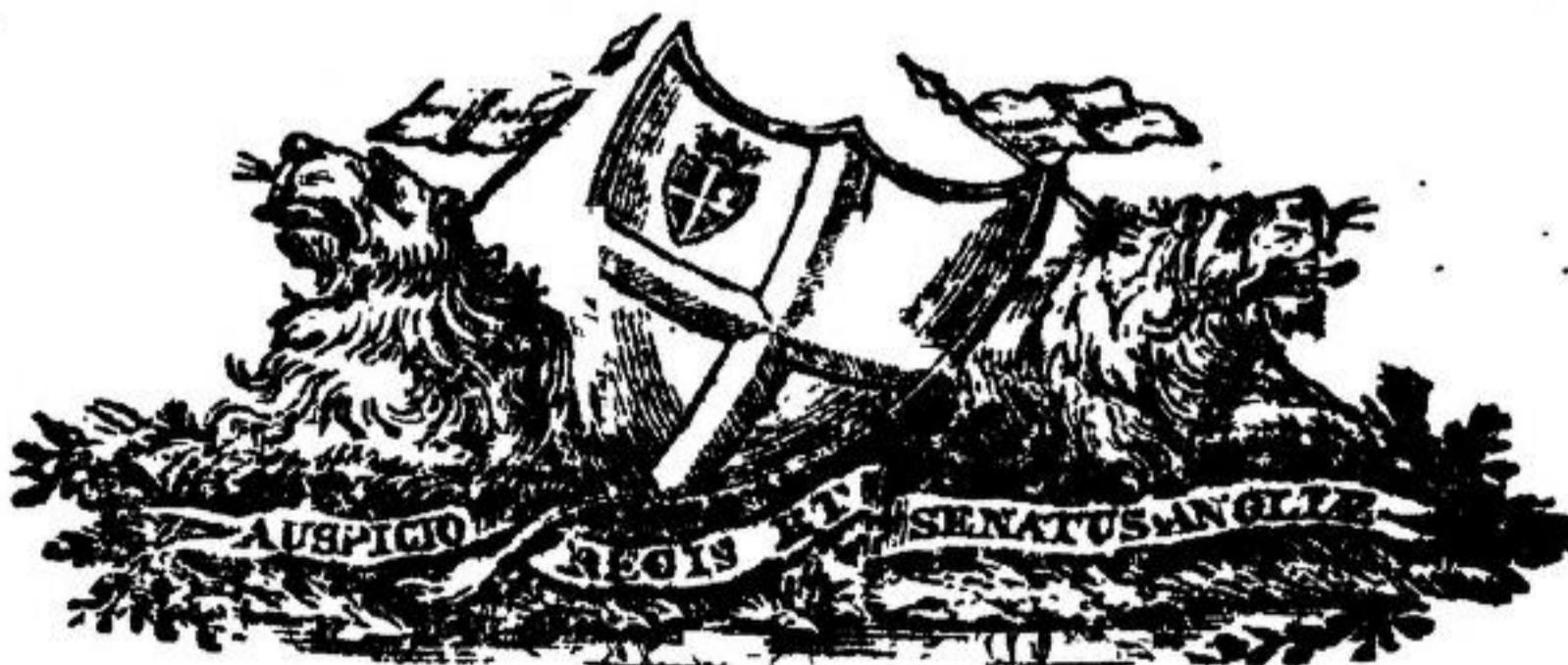


THE
ASIATIC
ANNUAL REGISTER,
OR,
A VIEW OF THE HISTORY
OF
HINDUSTAN.
AND OF THE
POLITICS, COMMERCE, AND LITERATURE
OF
ASIA,
For the Year 1805;
BY
LAWRENCE DUNDAS CAMPBELL, Esq.



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GEOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ASSAM.

By Dr. WADE.

In Two Parts.—1800.

(Never before printed.)

INTRODUCTION.

PART FIRST.

The jealous spirit of the Chinese government accompanied the conquerors of Assam, who have now retained possession of that country during a period of one thousand years ; and must have emigrated originally from the interior, or from the confines of the former kingdom. Strangers of every description and country were scrupulously denied admission into Assam ; which does not appear to have been visited even by the indefatigable footstep of the missionary. It is on record, that two Europeans have obtained access into the kingdom ; one at an early period, who attended the Mogul army, was taken prisoner, conducted to the capital, and afterwards liberated. There is reason to suppose he was a native of Holland, and has published some account of his involuntary travels to the court of the monarch. The second traveller was a Frenchman, whose name will not easily be erased from the memory of many gentlemen of property in Bengal. Chevalier, who, at a later period, obtained the go-

vernment of Chandernagore, embarked a considerable property, it is said, at Dacca, on a fleet of boats, and proceeded to the confines of Assam. Permission was obtained from court, and he advanced with his fleet as far as the capital, Rung-poor-Gurgown, under an escort which deprived him of all intercourse with the natives, and confined his personal observations within the limits of his barge : at length he obtained his liberty by a stratagem ; and has left some information relative to the geography of the country ; or more probably of the banks of the river, which lay in his course.

From such sources the geography of Assam could not receive much improvement. The few hints which Major Rennel seems to have obtained from the conversation or the notes of Chevalier, are marked by such obvious errors, that we cannot regret his information from this quarter has not proved more copious.

The Persian tract published, and probably translated, by Mr. Van-sittard,

sittard, contains a few remarks on the divisions of the country, which are accurate; though, as is usual, in Asiatic writers, involved in much hyperbolical description.

Major Rennel has undoubtedly made the best use of his materials; but little was in his power: with his superior talents, his opportunities, and his information, have not concurred, to give any degree of perfection to the geography of the country.

Mr. Wood, of the corps of Engineers, an attentive and intelligent gentleman, who accompanied the deputation in the capacity of surveyor, has presented government with the only correct map of the course of the Berhamptoter (Brahmapootra), and of such parts of the country as lay within the limits of his survey, as far as the capital Rungpoor-Gurgown

At the desire of the late governor-general, lord Teignmouth, captain Colebrook, the surveyor-general, obligingly favoured me with a copy of Mr. Wood's map, to be prefixed to the history of the reign of Gowrinatsing, late monarch of Assam, which was transmitted to Europe for publication, in the year 1796.

As far as my sources of information extend, these are the only public documents which exist on the subject of Assam. If my personal excursions, during a residence of nearly two years, and my intercourse with the most intelligent and best-informed natives, shall enable me to add something to the valuable information contained in Mr. Wood's map, I shall esteem the labour and expense (for neither has been spared) which attended my researches most amply repaid.

Exclusively attached, until the period in question, to the study and

practice of my profession, I had not acquired the requisite and scientific accomplishments, which might have rendered my opportunities of acquiring geographical knowledge of greater utility to government and to the public; yet I shall venture to hope, that the general and unscientific sketch of the country contained in the following sheets will not prove entirely unacceptable, when it is considered that no Europeans have ever explored, or probably ever will explore, the provinces of Assam with the consent of the existing government of that country.

The kingdom of Assam is about seven hundred miles in length, and from sixty to eighty in breadth; in a few places, however, of Upper Assam, where the mountainous confines recede farthest, the breadth greatly exceeds this proportion; and it will be within a very moderate calculation to consider the surface as containing sixty thousand square miles; an extent much superior to that of England, which is stated at forty-nine thousand four hundred and fifty. From this computation may be deducted the numerous rivers which every where intersect the country. I shall not offer a vague conjecture on the sum of this deduction; but it will not be exaggeration to say, that the remainder exhibits a highly fertile soil throughout; for even the great number of hills, which are interspersed in every part of Assam, are susceptible of cultivation, and increase considerably the arable superficies.

From this computation of square miles are excluded all the dependencies and conquered countries, in or beyond the mountainous limits which surrounded Assam in every direction, as well as several provinces of Eastern Bengal, which formerly

formerly acknowledged their subjection to the Assam government.

Assam is a valley, and extends between the 25th and 28th degrees of north latitude, and 94 and 99 degrees of longitude E. from Greenwich. This extent to the eastward is of course conjectural, for it was not my fortune to fall in with a single native who had travelled to the utmost limits of Assam in that direction. The kingdom is separated by the Bramah-pootra into three grand great stream of the divisions, called Outrecole or Outrepark, and Deccancole, or Deccampark, and the Majuli. The former denotes the provinces lying on the north side of Bramahootra, the and the second those on the south, and the Majuli, a large island. It is subdivided into Upper and Lower Assam; the first includes the country above Coliabark, where the river diverges into two considerable streams, as far as the mountainous confines to the north and south. This division included the whole of Assam at an earlier period; but the lower provinces to be westward having been afterwards annexed by conquest to the dominions of the Surji-Deo, became a separate government, under an officer entitled burio-fokun, with the powers of a viceroy. The distinction of Outrecole and Deccancole were previous to the period in question, applicable to Upper Assam only: and the more learned among the natives affect to confine those even now to the eastern provinces.

From the confines of Bengal or Bisne, at the Khondar Chokey, the valley, as well as the river and the mountains, preserve a northern direction to a considerable distance, and incline to the east by north, or E. N. E. In the upper provinces Assam is bounded on the southwest

by Bengal and Bisne; on the north by the successive ranges of the mountains of Bootan, Anka, Dinfula, and Miree; on the south by the Garrao Mountains, which rise to a greater height in proportion to their progress eastward, and change the name of Gafrao, for that of Naga, above Coliabark.

The valley is divided throughout its whole length by the Berhampooter, into nearly equal parts.

The kingdom of Assam, where it is entered from Bengal, commences on the north of the Berhampooter, at the Khondar Chokey, nearly opposite to the picturesque estate of the late Mr. Raush, at Goalparah; and at Nagrabaree Hill, on the south. The great and famous province of Camroop, or Camaroopa, which formerly gave its name to an extensive kingdom, of which Rangamatee seems to have been the capital, extends from the Khondar Chokey in Outrecole, along the banks of the Berhampootre, to the province of Dehrungu; at one period, the districts in the neighbourhood of Nagrabaree, or Nagurbayra hill, were also included in Camroop. Nagurbayra became the western limit of Assam on the southern bank of the Berhampooter, when the armies of Assam were driven from the vicinity of the Carruttia river, which formed the ancient boundaries towards Bengal. These limits will give a favourable idea of the great extent of the former kingdom, which reached to Lolbazar, in the neighbourhood of Rungpoor, and included Tipoca or Trepooca, with all the intervening provinces. Goalparah, however, and the Khondar Chokey, ought to have been the natural boundaries; for they are in reality the limits of a new and different climate.

Camroop,

Camroop, on the west, or towards Bengal, is bounded by the Manaha river; on the north by Raotan, on the east by the Bushnuddee, which separates it from Dehrungh, and on the south by the Berhampooter.

Formerly, Camroop included Dehrungh, and all the provinces west of Cajully-mook, in Deccancole, or the southern division. It is intersected in various directions by rivers flowing from the mountains, and by branches of the Berhampooter, which are all navigable for boats of any size in the season of inundation: they are known by the following names, viz.

1st. Seinsa
2d. Boiotia
3d. Chaulkoa
4th. Bhooradia } Rivers.

These arise in the northern mountains, flow through Camroop, and join the Manaha.

During the inundations, the navigation through these smaller streams is very convenient, when the Berhampooter is an irresistible torrent. Loatch is the name of one of these rivers in the maps, but it is merely another appellation for the Berhampooter at this part of the country, and of the large branch of the same river above Kobabur.

The breadth of this province, from the banks of the Berhampooter to the foot of the mountains, is in general about forty miles; its length, from the Khondar Choky to the Burranuddee, is about one hundred.

The principal purgannah of Camroop is Burrabaug, of which Cotta is the chief town. At present there are not any places of force at Camroop, except 'northern Goahawtee, which is not considered part of that province. A military causeway extends from Coot Bay-

har to the north of this and other districts, to the utmost limits of Assam; it served to form the southern boundaries of the Botun dominions. In most places it is now in a state of decay. The Bootias at present possess about five miles in breadth of the valley from the foot of the mountains, through the whole extent of Camroop and Derungh.

On the southern side of the Berhampooter, between Goalpara and Nagurbayra, lies Bisne. This part of the Country is noticed with some degree of accuracy in Rennell's map. The Garrao mountains close the scene to the southward; a stream flows at the foot of these which is navigable in the season of inundation to a considerable distance, and falls into the Berhampooter above Goalpara.

The district of Summooria occupies the southern bank of the Berhampooter at Nargurbayra hill behind, and further to the south is the Burhdooriah purgannahs at the foot of the Garrao mountains, adjoining to the Burhdoor; to the eastward is the district of Nodooar, which extends easterly to the country of the Kani-rajah. The Nodooaria country is divided into nine shares, whose possessors are rajahs, though at present the whole country is subject to two princes or rajahs. The dooars, or dovars, are passes into the lofty Garrao mountains. Ranigown, or the country of the rani-raja, extends in a similar direction as far as Bogoribam Chokey, and along the foot of the mountains to Okhooraralli causeway, which separates Ramgown from Bettola, and runs from the lofty hills which surround Goahawtu, to the Garrao mountains, called by the same title Okhoor.

Goahawtu occupies an extent of hilly

hilly country on both banks of the great stream; the hills on each side form a spacious amphitheatre, which has been equally well fortified by nature and by art. It is the capital of Lower Assam, and the residence of the viceroy or burra tokun. The natives of Upper Assam apply the title of Goa-hawtu to all the hilly country in that neighbourhood, including the district of Beltola; but the Goahawta, or inhabitants of this quarter, confine the appellation to the space within the five chokus, or the guarded passes on the southern side, viz. 1st. the Luttasil or Pamehoku; 2d. the Zoictewar; 3d. the Durbumdewar; 4th. the Dewargowula; 5th. the Paurao or Paudhoo Choku. North Goa-hawtu occupies the space within the following passes throughout the fortified hills, viz.

1st. Konieboorakiboa; 2d. Sillarchoku; 3d. Kindaougopa or Sia-doorigopa; 4th. Patdewar; 5th. Korie or Pani-choku. Beyond these passes to the north runs the province of Camroop and the district of Jikree, one of the principal places in Camroop. South Goahawtu extends to Cajullijmook, or to the mouth of the Cajulli river, noted as the ancient limits of the kingdom of Camprist or Camroop; which seems to have occupied all the countries to the south of the Berhampooter from Boritulli to Kapellimook; and on the northern side to have extended from the Carruttia or Corotia river in Bengal, to the Dikolai river beyond Derungh: at that early period Assam was called Koomarprist, and extended to both sides of the Berhampooter as far as Khuddia or Suddia, from these limits. Cajullimook is distant, to the eastward, about twenty miles from the Nut-tasil Chokey at Goahawtee. The

interval is occupied by the Mikeer hills, and by Tattimora mountain, at the foot of which is the residence of the panbooria rajah. Beltola does not extend to the eastward of Goahawtee, but fills the interval of valley between this fortress and the Garroo mountains.

Panbarree is a small district, separated on the west from Goahawtee and Beltola by the Mekeer hills; and on the east by a range of hills which run from the banks of the river at Cagullymook towards the Garroo mountains.

The plain, which is nearly surrounded by those hills, is about eight miles in length, and six in breadth, while Betola exceeds ten in breadth and twelve in length. The Goba and Souapoar districts succeed to the south-east, and lay between the Colone river, and that part of the Garroo mountains, which are annexed to the Zevointa dominions, or the Gentia of Reanell's map. These districts are about ten miles in length and five in breadth, they have Tattemora on the west, Zevointa, and the Garroos on the south, Dimurrooa on the east, and the Colone river the whole extent of the north, to its junction with the Berhampooter.

These, though formerly appendages of the government of Goahawtee, appear now to be under the joint dominion of the Zevointa and Dimurrooa governments. The country is interspersed with small hills. It was formerly the channel of communication with Bengal, from every part of Assam, through Zevointa and Shylet; for all access by the Berhampooter was scrupulously prevented. This part of the country is elevated, and no where subject to inundation in the season of the rains.

The angle above the junction
of

of the Colone, with the Berham-pooter, is occupied by the district of Cajulli; which does not exceed six miles in length; it is bounded on the south by the Colone, on the north by the great stream, on the east and south-east by the Sunna hills, which line the banks of the Berham-pooter from Cajullimook.

It is interspersed with hills. Kagulli formed the western limits of Assam at an earlier period. It is subject to inundation; and the villages are chiefly situated on the sides of hills.

To the eastward of Kagulli, at the hills, lays Mayungh, under the government of a lesser rajah; it is separated to the southward from the Colone by a range of hills; the Berham-pooter and the Booraboori hills form its boundary to the north. Part of it is subject to inundation; it is about eight miles in length, and six in breadth.

It may be proper to observe here, that it seemed necessary to notice the northern as well as southern divisions of Camroop, at the commencement of these remarks, as the description of that province would otherwise have been incomplete; but I shall not describe any other part of Outreparh, until the whole extent of country to the south of the Berham-pooter shall have passed in review.

To the eastward of Mayungh succeed Nagown, Littree, Low-ko, Gorokua, Dehingh, and Silabunda; the five latter are situated on or near to the banks of the Berham-pooter. Nogown occupies the interval between these and the Colone river to the southward, and is bounded by Corungi on the east. It is about twenty miles in length, and probably, not above four miles in breadth, situated on a line of high ground on either side of the

Colone; it is not affected by the inundation of either that river or the Berham-pooter; the former, however, seldom overflows its banks. From Lowko on the Birham-poter, to Nogown, on the Colone, the distance is about forty miles; these districts are contiguous. Part of Littree, and Dehingh, are rather to the southward of Lowko and Silabunda, and immediately border on Nogown, beyond Mayungh, or the range of hills which intervenes between Mayungh and the river, in regular succession to the eastward. I have already noticed the situation of Gorokua, Littree, Lawko, and Selabunda; contiguous to the latter, in the same direction, lays Cobabar; Dehingh also borders on Littree to the eastward.

Corungi forms the confines of Nogown on the east, and occupies both banks of the Colone river like the latter. It exhibits a square of about forty miles. On the north lays a part of Silabunda; on the south the lofty range of Garroo mountains, which obtain the appellation of Cosari, in this quarter. Coliabur is contiguous on the north-east; and the famous causeway Rungulighur, separates it on the east from Upper Assam. The mountains here incline to the great stream; and the interval of low country is occupied by the Rungulighur rampart, which runs from the Colone, near its junction with the Berham-pooter, during a course of ten miles to the southern mountains. Coliabur, upon the whole, may be reckoned about one hundred miles from Cajullimook.

Casirunga lies to the east and south-east of Rungulighur; and Namdoynungh to the eastward above Khonarmook or Sonarmook. The country here is low, and subject to inundation. It extends about six miles

miles in length from the causeway to Bassa, and four in breadth to the foot of the mountains from Namdoyungh. Namdoyungh is forty miles long, and ten broad; it has Colarphaut on the west, Ouperdoyungh on the east, Caserunga on the south, and the Berham-pooter flows on the north. Toqu-harrurgown, Khoololgown, Atooneagown, and Dehinghiagown, are the principal towns of this flourishing province.

Morunghi lies to the east of Casirunga; it is interspersed with small hills, covered with a wild and luxuriant vegetation, and is not subject to inundation; Tobungh, Khapiconti, and Lokow, are the principal towns. It is a frontier district; and possessed a military station of three thousand men, on the Rungagurrah hill, as a protection against the inroads of the mountaineers of Naga and Cossari, who are contiguous on the south. It is bounded on the north and east by Doyungh, Bassa, and the Dunsiri river. Colarphaut extended to east and north-east, above Cobabar, to the distance of ten or fifteen miles. It has Doyungh, and Cassirunga, on the east and south.

Bassa is a considerable district, about ten miles in length, and eight in breadth. The Naga mountains rise to the south, Doyungh lays to the north, Dhooli to the east, and the Dunsiri flows to the west. It is a low country, resembling Natow, in Bengal, on a smaller scale.

Upurdoyungh, is contiguous to Bassa on the north. It has Deurgown to the east, Namdayungh to the west, and the Dehingh river to the north. It is interspersed with small hills of red earth, and is not subject to be overflowed in any part during the season of rains. Purbutteagown, Kabururgown,

Daikialurgown, and Rhadulla-gown, are its principal towns; Cosarihat, and Nagapaut are also places of note in this district, which form a square of about twenty miles in length and breadth.

Deurgown, famous for the temple of Sadasin, is eight miles long and six broad. It is an elevated country on the banks of one of the principal branches of the great river, which, flowing through various channels in this neighbourhood, forms several new islands susceptible of cultivation.

Gooroomara Chapari (Chapari means island) is opposite to Deurgown; it is not of any great extent; but Majcoli, called by pre-eminence the island, lies in this direction, and is very large. It is formed by the Dehingh river on the south, and the Looicheh on the north. To the west of this appears the Staludati island, opposite the mouth of the Dunkiri or Dunsiri river. It is twenty miles in length, and about ten in breadth.

Farther to the west, and similar in size to the latter, lies Rungachapuri, facing Curabai to the south; between this island and Curabai is another small island, eight miles in length and six in breadth, named Nicori. I shall omit any further description of the islands at present.

Dhuli and Khitoli are to the eastward of Deurgown. The former is about six miles in length and four in breadth. The country is high, and is intersected by the Dhuli river. Sungergown lies near the banks, and Sungerghaut is the principal ferry. It is bounded on the south by the mountains.

Khitole is about twelve miles long and ten broad; this district has much low ground. On the banks of the Cacadunga, directly east from Deurgown, is established the

doobi to the east, is about ten miles in length, and six in breadth. It is the last district in Outre part of which I could procure any correct information. A great tract of country occupied the interval between this district and Suddia; but as every person I consulted either confessed their ignorance of those

districts, or gave such inconsistent accounts, as could not be trusted, it will be more prudent to conclude the description of Outreparh, with the Tellatic district, and proceed to that of the third division of Assam, called Magooli; or, the Great Island.

PART SECOND.

RIVERS OF ASSAM.

Rivers of Assam.

THE number and magnitude of the rivers of Assam, have induced me to reserve a description of their rise, progress, and termination for a separate account; which would necessarily have interrupted the connection of the detail given of the provinces and district, had it been introduced in any other than a cursory manner, in the first part.

As far as my information, reading, or recollection extends, this country exceeds every other in the universe of similar extent in the number of its rivers, which in general are of a sufficient depth at all seasons, to allow of a commercial communication on the shallow boats of Assam.

I shall not enter here into any discussion of the certain consequences of the general distribution of such a number of navigable streams on the richness of the soil, the cultivation, population, and commercial riches of a kingdom, but proceed to the immediate subject of these sheets, their rise, progress, and termination.

In this detail, the arrangement observed in the first part, may with propriety be reversed; and the point of departure commence as

far eastward, as any information of the rivers may have been procured.

The number of rivers, of which the existence has been ascertained, amounts to sixty-one, including the Berhampooter, and its two great branches, the Dehing, and Looicheh. Thirty four of these flow from the northern, and twenty four from the southern mountains, the source of the Berhampooter is uncertain.

1st. *From the northern mountains.*

1. Sowpurga,
2. Khobunkhiri,
3. Khomediri,
4. Pabo,
5. Owah,
6. Gayrayleoa,
7. Masicota,
8. Dikrungb,
9. Pisola,
10. Burropani,
11. Doorpangb,
12. Dehiri.
13. Seinsa Oujan, (Upper)
14. Karéi,
15. Seingmora,
16. Madoori,
17. Doobia,
18. Boorbi,