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THE PEOPLE OF MEGHALAYA

—Study on the People and their Religio-Cultural Life

77865

Captain B. S. Rana



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PUNTHI PUSTAK

Calcutta

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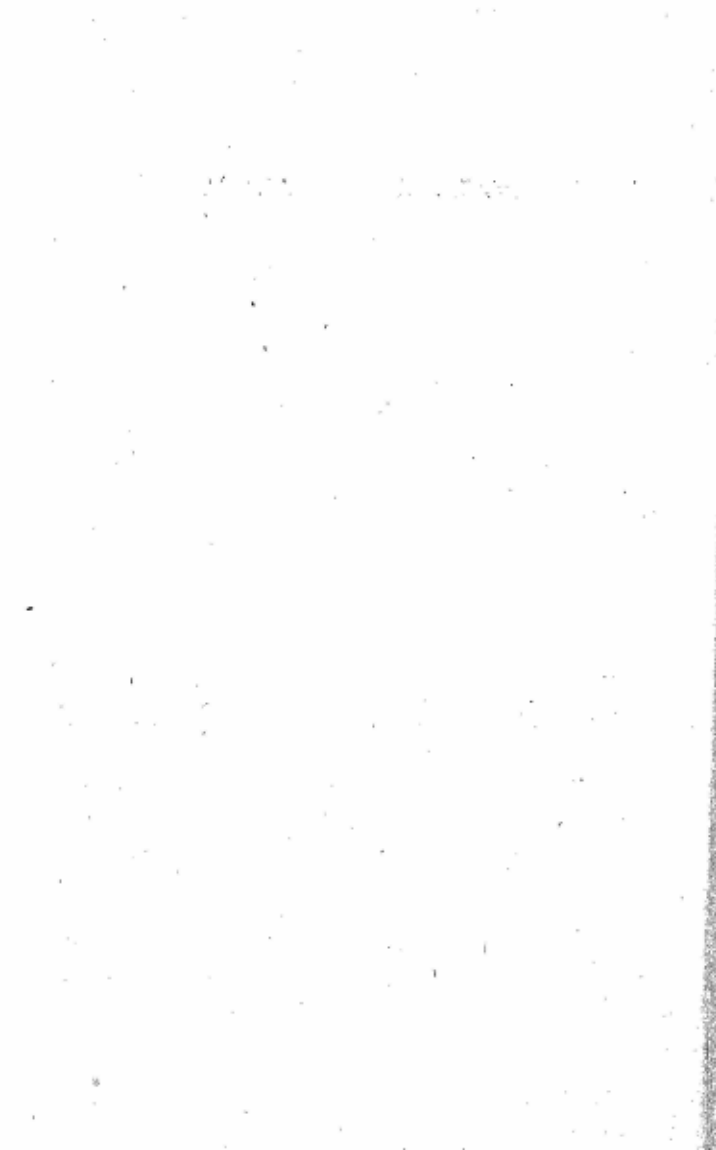
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THE PEOPLE OF MEGHALAYA



FOREWORD

This book is intended for the layman but it would be informative also to the professional. Capt. B. S. Rana, in his attempt, brings out the main features of the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos. This tribal group in the extreme North-East of the Indian Sub-Continent had very little contact with the rest of the country till the nineteenth century when their territories were annexed to the British Indian Empire. The wave of Aryan migration and Muslim invasion did not have much impact in this region. In pre-British period the only contact with the plains were more or less for petty trades. The Khasis only, perhaps, had extensive trades with the plain district of Sylhet, now in Bangladesh. The table of exports from Khasi Hills mentioned by Pemberton, as quoted by A. Mackenzie in the "History of the relationship of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal", when the British first came into contact with them were Limestone (17,00,000 maunds), Coal (45,000 maunds), Smelted Iron (45,000 maunds), besides huge quantities of oranges, betel nut, betel leaves and other items. A people with this capacity and who have acquired the art of smelting iron cannot be considered as a backward community. They, however, remained a people apart. They had a well organised administrative and social system and with a clear concept of 'Man' and 'God'. Their religion namely the 'Khasi' religion is the first tribal religion in the world to get international recognition with the entry of their Socio, Religio and Cultural organisation, the Seng Khasi, as a member of the International Association for Religious Freedom. The Garos, who though they have been put together in the same state of Meghalaya, have nothing in

common with the Khasis or the Jaintias. The Khasis and Jaintias are the same tribe and have much in common with a common written language.

The author made no claim that all statements in this book are 'proved'. He has in his close contact with the people and their land for five years has put into print what he had gathered laboriously, and in a way what he wrote was what he saw and think aloud. The writings were what he personally experienced and appreciated in the peoples in whose country he had served and defended for five years. He had not entered into the qualifications and reservations required in a technical studies, which to a layman would be lost in terminology. He was not influenced by what others have written, and without preconception and prejudice.

To those accustomed to read about peoples and their lands through the pen of a Social Scientist, the language of a military officer may not be so appealing. The value of the book is in what we see in the discovery of a man not tied down by the nicety of foreign language.

—U HIPSHON ROY

General Secretary

The Seng Khasi

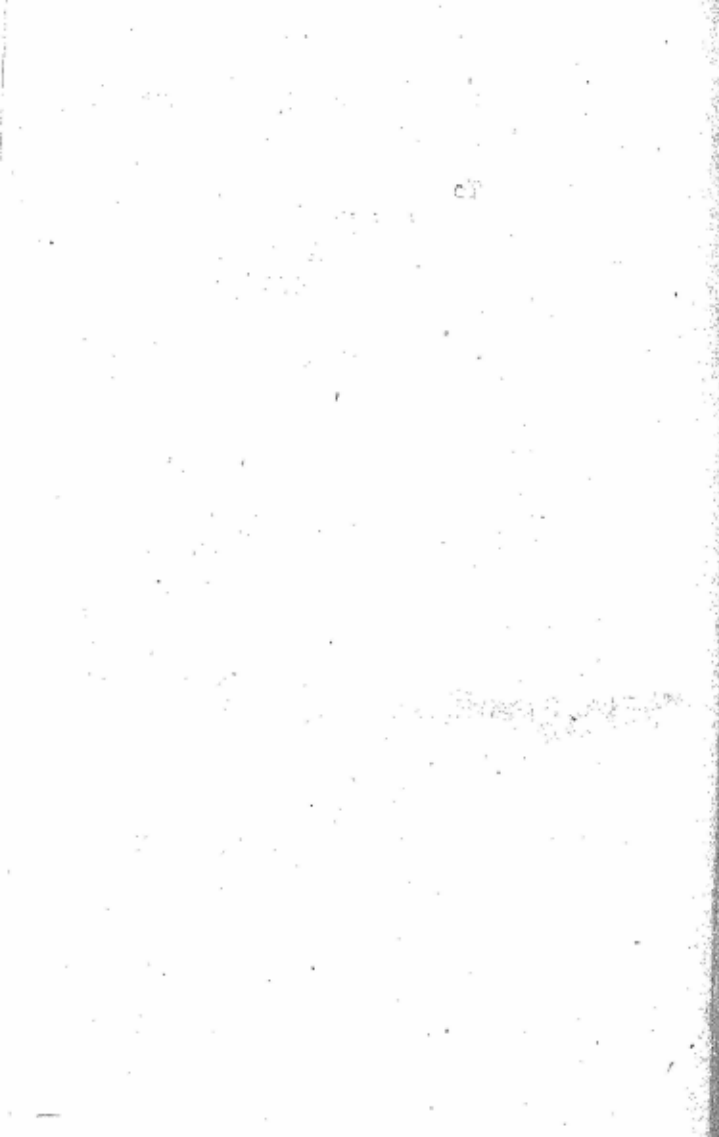
Shillong

To

My Wife

&

Children



to the history and view, tribal men, on their day-to-day life activities, is also includes their traditional way of life, their origin, fascinating tales of their own creation, manners and customs, festivals and ceremonies, music and myth, marriages and divorces, birth and death ceremonies, occupation and professions, love and affection, literature and language, art and architecture and so on, which was hardly available in one capsule. It may be remarked that the subject of the three brave tribal-communities of Meghalaya is in reality, a large one on which a great deal could be written, but owing to the considerations of short supply of time for the dear readers, a comprehensive account was considered essential.

My findings are mostly based on frequent visits to the interior parts of the hills and personal liaison with the heads and personal interviews with my tribal friends. My stay at Shillong for about five years has given me an immense pleasure to peep into the real life of these people from their fore-father to the present.

Although an adequate care has been exercised to compile and complete this book in the form of a shell, yet if any observation appears remotely unpalatable to any amount of the sentiments of the tribe or a tribalman, it may be an accidental and not deliberately.

I, gladly take an opportunity to record the general life activities of these people of India while serving at Shillong and have a proud to mention and acknowledge the sincere help extended to me by my friends to accomplish my mission. I also take an apology and due permission from various writers and authors who have written about the life of tribal communities of India, of whom work has served as reference material and source of verification of the certain facts. I give due regards to the State Central Library Staff, at Shillong who have entertained my requests for reference copy books.

I am extremely grateful to Mr. Hipshon Roy, General Secretary of the Seng Khasi at Shillong, who in fact, spent his precious time to go through the whole manuscript and has given a foreword to this book.

To Dr. G. D. Sharma, Research Department, NEHU, Meghalaya, the greatest debt is always owed for more improving the complete manuscript.

To friends, Mr. R. K. Sharma B.A., B.Ed. and honourable Sheelu my thanks for their efforts above and beyond the call of duty in typing, and retyping this manuscript.

My profound regards and honours to Brig. M. M. Sharma, FRGS, who in reality, encouraged me in the field of writing this book, will ever remain green.

I express my love to my son Deep Rana, for his assistance in sketching and manuscript arrangement assistance. The greatest share of contribution towards this book goes to my wife 'Bimla', who spared me from routine household responsibilities.

My thanks are ever due to Sri Sankar Bhattacharya, proprietor of Punthi Pustak for accepting the manuscript in full for publication.

Happy Valley
Shillong-793007

Capt. B. S. Rana

Dated 2 , Jan. 1987

PREFACE

Nowadays, time is a great factor of life and a short supply especially for the readers. The glory of the brave people of Meghalaya Hills, was the subject of the bas-reliefs. It depicted the people's character, determination, selflessness, sense of duty, love for their mother land and country and their readiness to protect this love.

The splendour of the high peaks, the torrential streams, the deep fertile valleys and the dense lush green forests, really make the shape of Meghalaya magnificently resplendent.

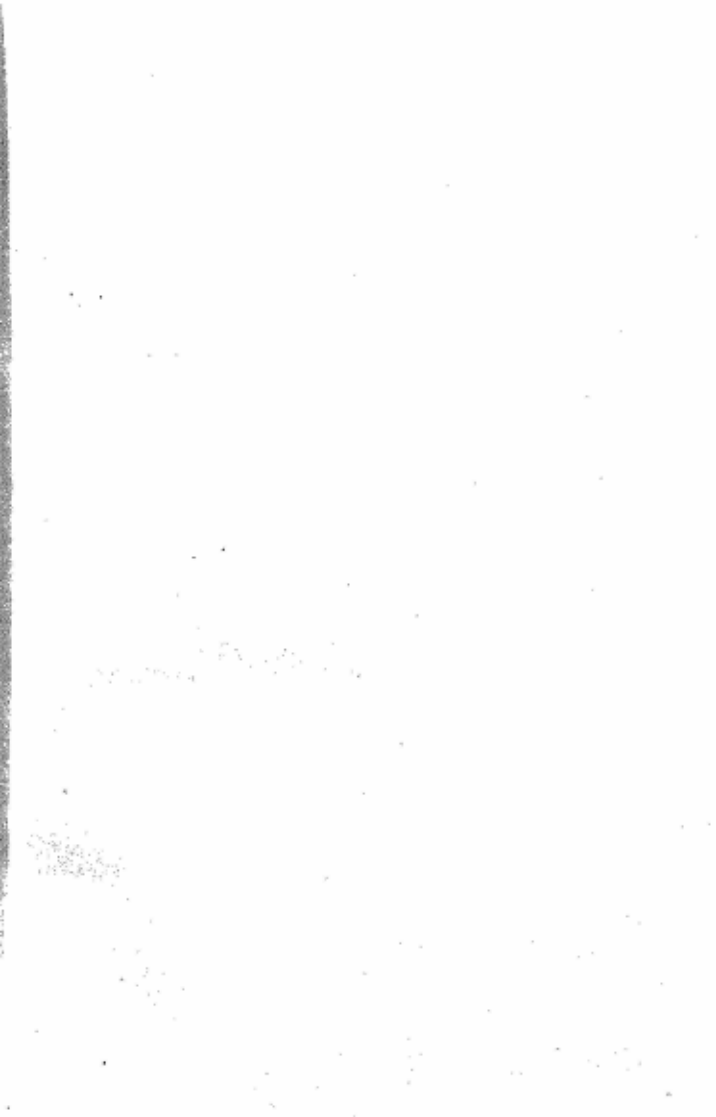
There is a genuine tribute to the talent, honesty and sound social system of the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos. Efforts and attempts have been made to bring out a brief and systematic account of these tribes who had continuously fought in order to protect their religions and cultural heritage in the past. The most vulnerable people of India led a secluded life in the coldest valleys, torturous rocky terrain and deep impenetrable forests for many years and made themselves comfortable in spite of all hazardous conditions. But from the days of the British rulers till today, the tribals of these Hills have seen tremendous changes in all spheres of life. Some traditional norms and patterns have been adversely affected by the waves of changes and the fierce winds of foreign civilization especially Missionaries from the West in regards to conversion of the tribal people into Christianity. But still they have been able to retain their traditional customs, social norms, manners, cultural heritage and religion due to untiring efforts of the Seng Khasi, established in 1899, with particular reference to the Khasis. Till now, the Seng Khasi has been a hard marching and struggle to

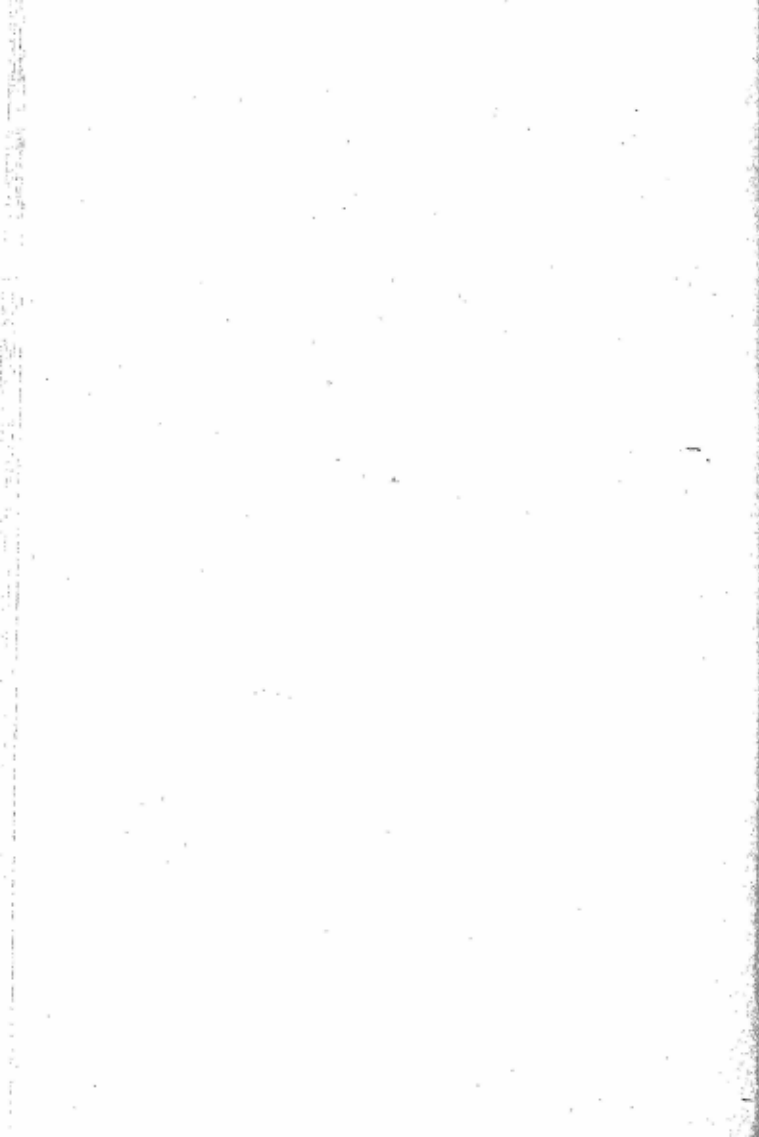
achieve the goal in order to protect the Khasis from its race ex-communication. Since the Khasis love themselves—their traditional way of life, religion, culture and their beautiful Hills and affectionately respect other religion, cultures, customs and races, the Khasi will remain as a proud race in this corner of this great country with a rich and varied heritage.

Similarly the lovable people—The Jaintias of the Jaintia Hills have been retaining some of their fore-father's socio-cultural traits. They strictly observe the rules, customs, cultural traits, worship to ancestors, visiting marriage and so on. They remained peacefully under the Jaintia Kingdom from 1500 A.D. to 1835 A.D. Their last brave King named Rajendra Singha (1832 to 1835) who fought well and revolted against the British policies, was lastly imprisoned and killed in the prison Cell. Western Missionaries also played an active role and influenced the people with their own (Western) culture and civilization. The Jaintias had undergone the influence of Hinduism also during the Jaintia Kingdom.

The talent, honesty and social system of the Garos is especially an interesting because it provide an insight into their own ways and style of life, sufferings and exploitation at the hands of foreigners and invaders from time to time. Despite being handicapped by the problems posed by unknown languages and variations in accounts/records, collected from different sources during East India Company days, a cohesent picture of various aspects of this community's life from the early nineteenth century to date has been put-forth and the readers will find it most interesting because of its valid historical material. The Garos had also been influenced by the Foreign Missionaries in addition to the fighting against the Britishers.

This book comprises a comprehensive account of socio-cultural study of inhabitants of Meghalaya Hills. In addition

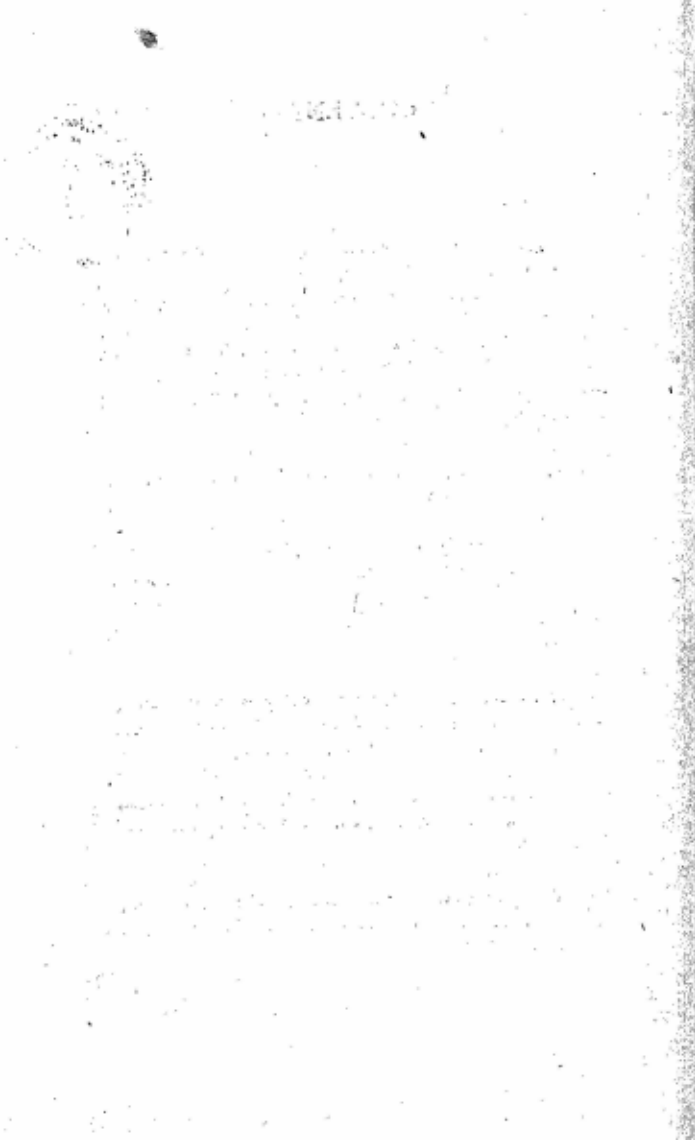




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HISTORiette

The story of man starts about two millions years ago. Early man evolved from tree apes, learnt to work on two feet and his brain increased in size and improved in quality. Man had lived on this earth for several hundred thousand years before he learned the art of writing. The pre-historic times information had been dig out by various scholars by piecing together the things like old tools, pottery, bones of ancient men and animals and so on. From these things, scholars have built up a fairly good record of what happened and how men lived in pre-historic times. The scholars, archaeologist, social anthropologist and social scientists, enabled the man today to know about all the ages of the times by deciphering scientifically the clues offered. Similarly the anthropologists mention about the overwhelming majority of about 500 tribal communities in India and about the only record of their (tribals) origin. In fact, the originality of all the tribal communities varies from historical record to record of the world.

Many Indian tribal communities, till today, had not seen motors, railways, and other modern appliances being pushed into the inaccessible forests

and mountains locked in isolations. Their seclusion from one to another had drowned them in another era of darkness and ignorance about the outside world. Now at the present days, almost all the tribal communities in India as well outside have their own historiette and myths quite fascinating and an interesting reading. Similarly Meghalaya, has three major tribe i.e. Khasi, Jaintia and Garo, living in three different Hills. Historiette of these brave tribes is given in the succeeding paragraphs.

The people of these Hills had been in contact with the plain people long before. But these contacts were generally confined to trade and commerce. Some families from the plains did come to these Hills, settled down and converted into the Khasi way of life, down to the adoption of their religion and matrilineal system. The Khasi pnar society remained in its partine nature till Britishers invaded these Hills. The Khasi-pnar first, came into contact with the British sometime in 1771. Sylhet province then was known as the part of Diwani of Bengal. The Britishers got possession of the Diwani of Bengal by the grant made by the Moghal Emperor Saha Alam to the East India Company in 1765. Mr. John Summer, an officer, first came to Sylhet on 11 January 1771. After he staying about 10 days. wrote back to his superior officers at Dacca that the Rajahs of Khasi-Jaintia Hills bordering the Sylhet province are at present in hostility with each other.

Further to establish more facts and true historical data of these hills according to the writings of Late Babu Jeebon Roy (1858-1894) as Senior Extra Assistant Commissioner of the East India Company and historical works of Wade, Dr. John Peter, An account of Assam 1800, and on publications of British Government, it is written that the Jaintia Kingdom was a very old Kingdom. There were only two states in existence. First was Jaintia hills which includes some plain areas and the second was comprising the mainly mountain region. These kingdom were administered by their chieftains with the people's durbar. According to traditional versions, the total area of the Jaintia State, at the time was about 5750 Sq. Kms., when Ram Singh was the ruler.

The Britishers, possessing Diwani of Bengal i.e. Sylhet were only confined to trade and commerce with Hills but when the king of Ava threatened Bengal in 1824, Mr. David Scott, the head of the Hon'ble Company, entered into agreement with the Rajah Ram Singh of Jaintia Hill. Rajah Ram Singh conceded to Mr. David Scott to help the Hon'ble Company would confer upon him (the Rajah) a part of Assam territory on conquest. Troops were marched and fought well. The Burmese were defeated and they had paid a crore of rupees to British and ceded Assam and Arakan. But in return, nothing was given to Rajah Ram Singh.

The boundaries of the state were formed by marking, where the Keeroowali flows into the Surma

river on the East and the Kupli flow to the river Kulong. These two rivers separated the state from Cachar. The Kulong river separated the State from the rest of Assam on the North. On the West the boundary was marked to be followed by the plain nullah upto river Surma on the South.

In the South bank of Surma river, a small portion of the land was very fertile known as seven riches. According to Pemberton's Report, Umniuh, Nongjri and adjacent Sirdar-ships in the Khasi Hills were the parts of Jaintia State. There was a treaty of Yandaboo by which Assam was annexed by the British for territorial expansion and consolidations. The East India Company built up to break its treaty of friendship with the Chief of Jaintia. The Chief of Jaintia was held responsible for violation of British subjects and building guard posts in his territory. On 15th of March, 1835 the British in "righteous indignation"—took the Jaintia Chief captured at the capital—Jaintiapur. The Britishers annexed the plains areas to the adjacent plains districts of Assam and Sylhet. However, the administration status-quo was maintained in the Hills area upto 1860 as per various friendship treaties with the chiefs of these Hills. In fact, the British rulers were not knowing the power of the Khasi Tribes. The Khasi Tribes were excellent in guerrilla warfare. They were very well able to defend themselves with their available shields, arrows and swords. The British Army wanted to control over all the Hills

in the first instance but failed. Therefore, the Britishers had adopted the policy of friendship treaties. The all chiefs of Jaintia, Khasi and Garo Hills were alert. They were really against the British. But an interesting more to know the story of right approach to these Hills from the plains has been cooked nicely. Mr. Tirot Singh was the Syiem of Nongkhlaw state with Headquarter at Burdewar later recognised as Borduar. Borduar as a part of Nongkhlaw state became an object with Mr. David Scott – the then Agent of the Governor General to establish communication throughout the hills with Sylhet and Assam. When new administration of Kamrup refused to recognise the rights of the Khasi rulers to encroach on the plains of Assam, Mr. Scott was able to convince U. Tirot Singh and other Syiems to permit a road construction through hills via Cherrapunjee, Mawphlang and Nongkhlaw to Assam (Gauhati). But as per the Notes of Mr. David Scott on Capt. Welsh's report on Assam dated 6th February 1794 indicate that communication from Assam to Sylhet through the Hills was already there.

On 30th November 1826 U. Tirot Singh of Nongkhlaw entered into agreement with the British at Gauhati to establish communication between Assam and Surma Valley through Khasi Hills and thus new road was constructed. Mr. Scott, cleverly, with the consent of Mr. Tirot Singh, established his Headquarter at Nongkhlaw. The Khasi Tribes

were already against the Britishers and by misbehaviour and domineering attitude of the British soldiers, the people of U Tirot Singh attacked the British forces, two British officer Lieutenants Beding-field and Burlton, sixty to seventy natives and a clerk of Lieutenant Burlton were killed during the fierce fighting. However, Mr. David Scott fled on horse back toward Cherrapunjee and reached there safely (Report by Roy, Jeebon Babu). He was given shelter by the Chief of Cherra, Mr. Dewan Singh in the Gorge of Rangpungpa. Mr. David Scott died at the age of 45 years on 20th August 1831 at Cherrapunjee.

The Chief of Cherrapunjee Mr. Dewan Singh came into friendship treaty and mutual assistance with the Britishers. Friendship treaties were initially the policy of the Britishers to reach upto the Hills. The British soldiers were allowed to come up from the plains. Even they were permitted to establish their Headquarters at Cherrapunjee. The fighting between the British Army and Mr. Tirot Singh's men was continued. All the Khasi Hills were deadly against the Britishers except Cherra which openly supported them. However, Mr. Bor Manik, the Chief of Khyrim, supported Mr. Tirot Singh but on otherside Mr. Bor Manik Singh, administrator of East Khyrim did not prove faithful to Mr. Bor Manik and Mr. Tirot Singh. In 1834 Mr. Manik Singh became independent Chief of Khyrim and openly supported the

British troops. After his death, his nephew Mr. Rabon Singh was elected who had rendered valuable services to the British Government during the Jaintia war. Even he got a pension of Rupees 150/- per month for two lives. War between the British Army and Mr. Tirot's men was continued. In order to stop the fighting, the British Government sent two officers named Captain Lister and Lieutenant Rutherford alongwith other men to initiate negotiations with Mr. Tirot Singh on 23rd September 1832. The negotiation was put forward.

Mr. Tirot Singh was the man of determination who put his conditions before the British representatives. His terms were to withdrawal of the British troops from his state, the abandonment of the British roads project and that his people and he be left in peace. And thus the negotiation was discarded. After sometime, the British Government again resorted another plan to effect the surrender of Mr. Tirot Singh. They (the British) offered Chiefship of Nongkhlaw to Mr. Jidor Singh, a close relative of Mr. Tirot. He refused this gift. Next day i.e. on 26th of October 1832, a fresh proposal was put up before Mr. Jidor Singh that if he accept complete independency of Mawmluh on a tribute of Rupees one thousand five hundred annually. He was given ten days time to think over the plan. Ultimately this fresh proposal did not materialised (Reference Pemberton's Report). Since the Khasis were against the Britishers and on the other hand

the Britisher were more eager to have their control over the Khasis, the British Government formed another strategy. So, at the end of 1832, Manipur Maharaja Gambhir Singh came in between to help the British Government against the Khasis. He came from Manipur with his bodyguard and contacted one of Tirot Singh's ministers (Mantaris) named Mr. Jit Roy, for negotiation on 9th January 1833 at the Military post of Umshillong, the meeting with Mr. Tirot Singh was fixed for 13th of January 1833, at Nursingaree, two kilometres from East of Umshillong known as Tanghyndur below Shillong Peak. Mr. Tirot Singh came to the place fixed for meeting but with deceptions, he was made prisoner and sent down to Gauhati and from there to Dacca (Now in Bangladesh) jail for life. After about 8 years in jail Mr. Tirot Singh, a brave fighter for the Khasis, died in 1841.

Although the people and Chiefs of Khyrim and Myllem were sincere supporters of Mr. Tirot Singh yet they could not face the continued fighting force of the British. Moreover, when they knew that the Sylhet Light Infantry was sent against them, they presumed that they would be fighting the Shilotias, whose lack of fighting process in those days was just to them. But it was something else and little realised that they would be fighting and facing hill-men mercenaries, the Gurkhas—one of the world's bravest fighting communities. The Battalion was 11th Sylhet Light Infantry, under command of

Captain F. G. Lister. After a fierce fighting, the battalion could capture Jaintiapur in 1835. This battalion later on in 1903, became one of the Gorkhas Rifles.

Mr. Manick was then taken into prison and sent down to the plains. His Rajaship was ceased by the Britishers. In 1834, his Nephew Mr. Manick Chand succeeded him and become the chief of Myllem. It was only eye-wash when Colonel Jenkins the Agent of Governor-General, ordered to Captain Lister, Commanding Officer of Sylhet Light Infantry to restore every thing including the land track, South of the Uiam River to the successor of Mr. Bor Manick, because the Britisher never relinquished their rights and never permitted to leave the land which was once selected for establishing a cantonment for European troops by David Scott. It took about 5 years to the Britishers, to handle tactfully with the Chiefs of Myllem and Khyrim. The last Khasi Chief was 'Sngap' of Mawsynram who fought to the last drop of his blood for the protection of Khasis and at last, he was also taken into prison in 1839 and sent down to plains.

On 11th February 1836, the Khasi Hills Political Agency was established. Colonel Lister, then Captain Lister, was appointed a Political Agent of the Khasi Hills with the responsibilities for friendship with Jaintia Raja. Gradually, he extended his political control over those areas which had become the right territory of the Britisher by conquest. The

villages were left independent without commanding the jurisdiction powers on them. There were only four states named Khyrim, Langrin, Nongspung and Nongstoin who did not surrender and never come into any friendship treaty with the Britishers. They had their own civil and criminal jurisdictions in their territories. But in 1847, the British with their curiosity desires and over ambitiousness for territorial expansion, did cut off Nongwah state forcibly adjoining the area of Sohiong from the Khasi Hills to Kamrup. The people of Nongwah, pleaded to be brought back into the folds of the Khasi people with whom they socially belong. In 1848 "a curious wind had driven to the Bengali speaking Assamese, among them living a one Tree Hill, cut off from the parent tree and parental shelter (Reference to memorandum submitted to the Indian Statutory Commission on behalf of Khasi Hills dated 15th December 1928). But nothing was done in favour of Nongwah state people which clearly show the curiosity at the British Government and had recorded in our pre-independence history.

In order to maintain the political tempo and policies, Government of Britain announced "The Queen's Proclamation" that all treaties and engagements made with the native princes of India are accepted in full and would be maintained scrupulously. This Proclamation was announced by Mr. C. K. Hudson to all the Syiem Lyngdohs, Sirdars

and Dollois from both the Khasi and the Jaintia Hills who had assembled at Cherra on 9th July 1859. But to the great surprise to all the Chiefs of the Hills that before implementation of the proclamation, the British had already claimed de-facto supremacy and forced all the Chiefs to execute agreements on the election of a new Chiefs. All the agreements made earlier were knowingly over-looked. In fact, intension behind was not correct and Chiefs were kept engaged with election of new Chiefs. There was general discontentment among the Hills people and at last in 1867, a general form of agreement was prescribed which included a clause the right of the British over minerals and waste land. Also the status of the Chiefs was further lowered subject to remain under orders and control of the Deputy Commissioner of the Khasi and the Jaintia Hills.

In 1860, the British Government introduced House Tax of Rupee one and annas two per house in Jaintia Hills. The Jaintias objected to it but the rebellion was put down. All the swords, shields and other arms were seized and burnt under the Command of Colonel Rowlatt the then Deputy Commissioner and the nickname was given to him as Shieldburner. This rebellion is known as the Nongjngi Rebellion. (Reference to U Jeebon Roy Khasi bad Synteng 1899). The British also introduced Judicial Stamp Act. Taxes were imposed on fisheries and forest produce. Cremations at Jowai

cremation ground were also prohibited and there was a general discontentment among the people.

It is added that missionaries were not in favour of the Khasi to pay them good enough for their labour. In this regard, an Extract from Dongmusa of 15.3.85 is reproduced as under : —

Letter to Editor by R. Kharkongor :

"Kumba ong uwei u missioneri ba ia u Khasi ka biang eh ba un pass M.E. Khnang ba un long nonghikai ha ki skul Mission bad san tyngka ka biang eh ia u shibnai namar u bam da ka ja bad ka mluh, ia u Ma Khar dei ban siew ka tulop kaba heh ba u bam ja da ka dohkha."

As one missionary said for a Khasi it is good enough to do his M.E. and five rupees is good enough per month for the eats only bhat (rice) and salt for a plain man a bigger pay is necessary because he take rice with fish.

Again in January 1862, under the inspiration of Mr. U Kiang of Nongbah, the Jaintia people were ready to fight against the British. A police Daroga also came from Jowai to confiscate the arms but people immediately took swords and arms to fight against. The British soldiers could not face the fierce fighting of the brave Jaintia people and ultimately, the British soldiers had asked for reinforcement from the plains. The Jaintias fought well but their bows, arrows, swords and shields were of no match against the cannons and muskets of their enemies. At last in November 1863, U

Kiang Nongbah and his subalterns were taken into prison and the rebellion was finally crushed down.

The Britishers did not stop here only. By and large they continued to encroach the area of Khasi land about 1000 sq. miles because of valuable trees. The motto of the British was to control over the limestone deposits on the southern slopes of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. On other hand the Khasi were in feeling and fairing for losing their own identity, religion, culture and art if they surrender to the Britishers.

A brave soldier and political agent of the Khasi Hills Colonel Lister, who was an able military Commander, failed badly as a civil administrator. His son-in-law made the best use of his relationship by marriage and practically monopolised the whole trade of oranges and limestone. He lended money on high interest rate of 25% per annum. He put the limestone trade on lease basis which would remain operative as long as he was alive and European Traders fled the country instead of confronting the decisions given by him. Similarly attraction of the Bengalis towards superior quality of iron, limestone, coal and potatoes available in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills, was the main reasons to bring the foreign traders down which effected the pull force of the British. For quite pretty long time, life was peaceful in the Hills. Henry Inglis had continued export his oranges and limestone. Educational Institutions started coming up slowly. Though, the 1857

war of Independence did not spread deep into the interior parts of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills yet there was still discontentment among the people. By 1858, practically, the whole India had come under British Rule and the East India Company was replaced by the Crown. U Jeebon Roy who had joined the service of the East India Company in 1858, came in between the British Government and the Chiefs of the Hills. The British Government again decided to revise its policies towards the Khasi-Jaintia people and resumed friendly relations with its Chiefs. U Jeebon Roy who later became the first Khasi Senior Extra Assistant Commissioner, gave the account that following the Jaintia was, the British Government decided to shift its Headquarter from Cherra to a Central place, with the reason that Cherrapunjee was too wet and full of heavy rains. Shillong was then selected a central place for new Headquarter being having more facilities and advantages in all respects. But about 35 years back when the British Government established its Headquarter at Cherrapunjee, Shillong was full of thick jungles and also the home of wild animals. U Jeebon Roy was the guide and adviser to Colonel Bivar in acquisition of land, location of Bazar and residential accommodation. The area was bought by the British from the landowners and ceded by the Chiefs of Myllem and Khyrim. The lands acquired for new Headquarter was the strips between Umdiangpun (7 mile) and

the Umshyrpi stream, approximately one kilometer in breadth, along the Cherra Road (At present area occupied by the Air force, The upper Shillong Agricultural Farm and School, and Cantonment upto the Umshyrpi Stream). The plateaus are to the South and West of Iewduh (Portion of the military lines and Jhalupara up to the Umshyrpi) towards East of Iewduh bounded by the Umsohsum stream to its junction with the Umkhras River. The areas also included, presently known by the Contonment, Police Bazar, Jail Road and Civil Station. Shifting to new place was down under the command of Colonel H. S. Bivar, then Deputy Commissioner.

The acquisition of the whole area was finalised by Colonel J. C. Haughton in 1863-64. The cost of the area was estimated to Rs 8,433. A condition was incorporated in the agreement with the Chiefs of Myllem and Khyrim made on 10th December 1863 was that "should the proprietors of any of the land within the limits of hereinafter described, be unwilling to sell or part with their land to the British Government, the said person shall continue to fully enjoy the same without impost or taxation as heretofore". A special committee was formed in 1867 and the British Government headquarters was completely shifted from Cherra to Shillong. Colonel Hoopkingson then Commissioner of Assam laid the foundation stone of new headquarter at Shillong. Colonel R. H. Keatinge, VC, CSI, was appointed the first Chief Commissioner, Shillong then became the

capital of new province, over and above being the headquarters of the Deputy Commissioner of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills district and the political Agent for Khasi state. Lord Northbrook was the first Viceroy, who visited new Capital. At that time Babu Jeebon Roy, Inspector of Police and he had an opportunity to escorting the Viceroy from Chhattack and remain his guide while staying at Shillong.

Coming to Shillong

Shillong is located between longitude 92° and latitude 26° in the Northern hemisphere with healthy climate. It lies at the Northern foot of the Shillong Range and Peak from which it derives its name. In fact, Shillong is a creation of British. About 120 years back when the Britishers shifted their headquarters (From Cherrapunjee to Shillong) it was full of jungles and was the home of wild animals. Gradually, it developed out of thick jungles to one of the most beautiful Hill stations of Cantoriums of India.

The Shillong peak being situated in the central place was the abode of "Lei Shillong" the "Guardian Dienty" of the Khyrim and Myllem Syiemship to the Khasis. Khasi people regarded the Peak as a sacred place. On top of the grave at the crest of the Peak there was a place for sacrifices with beautiful stones and a spring and pool of water for the purpose. Since the grove was regarded sacred, nothing could be taken away from there. If any one dared to do

so, he always invited the danger and anger of God. Sacrifices which were offered did not contain salt. The Peak is mythologically connected with the Himalayas. It was said that it would frost until the hornbill brought a piece of snow and placed it at the Southern side of the Range in the spring, which is the source of Umiew River. There is a natural rocky cave by the side of Umjasai stream, about 3 kms from the Peak where Hindu have built a temple. The Hindus go there on Shivratri day every year. In the South-East of the Peak, another cave exist known as Meral Cave. The ancestress of the Syiem Shillong was drawn out from Murai Cave now represented by the Syiem of Khyrim and Myllem.

Shillong Peak

It is an interesting to note about the origin of the Syiem of Shillong. They had been powerful Chiefs in the Khasi Hills because of divine origin. It is said that in good olden days, there was a very beautiful young slender shaped girl. She used to live in a Cave called Marai, which is situated near the present Village of Pomniakrai, at the source of River Umiew. Many tried to catch that girl but failed due to narrowness of the Cave. Somehow, there was a clever man who struck an excellent idea to catch her. One day he went to the Cave and shown a most fragrant flower known as "U Tiew Jalyngteng". She come out of the cave to snatch the flower. At once, the clever man could succeed to catch her. He

brought her to his house and tended her with most care. After sometime he married her. She was called "*Ka Pah Syntiew*" the flower-lired one because that man caught by coazing and enchanting her with a flower. That man who came from the Nongjri Village in the Bhoi land, was called the Nongjri Kongor. As time passed, she gave birth to daughters and sons. After that she returned to the same cave and in spite of vigorous efforts by her husband and children, she never come back or come out of the cave. The people came from all parts of the country to see the cave and her children. The children also grew up in wisdom. They showed humbleness and good manners to all elders. The people loved them and took them to be the children of gods and did honour to them. The leaders of Shillong appointed Syiem of Shillong Country the present Khyrim and Myllem States, because they had been born of a wonderful fairy woman.

The Range, except Shillong Peak and the Grove which is composed of small hillocks and plain land, extending from the Peak to Lum Sohmyllan, is now under the control of Defence Department for the construction of accommodation for the Air Force personnel.

Going back to British rule over India, Shillong which is known as Upper Shillong being new Headquarters of the British, was quite silent and full of jungles. To meet the requirements, the whole area was divided accordingly. The south of Shillong was

kept reserved for forests. The cantonment area was reserved for military purposes. The Police Bazar was given to the Indians both Official and non-Official where now Thana is located and mostly the traders were settled down in this area. Europeans Ward which include the Government houses and Shillong Club was the reserved for the Britishers and Jail Road was reserved for the Indian Government servants.

Further, the lands was taken on lease basis for reserved forest and for Military Rifles Range on the Northern slopes of the Shillong Range and also on the East of Umiam River ranging towards Barapani. The reserved forest, besides serving the purpose of catchments of water, add the scenic beauty to the town. The location of the town at the present site had facilitated expansion, communication and administrative control over all other parts of the district being located in the Centre. The acquisition of the above territories was secured by Colonel Lister and Colonel Vivar (then Captains) with the help of U Jeebon Roy - an Inspector of Police. The designation of the Administrative Commanders was changed to Deputy Commissioner and Political Officer.

In order to facilitate water supply, especially to the sites on hillocks and slopes, and for the improvement of roads and communication, necessary steps were taken by the concerned divided department. At the present 2nd mile stone at Shillong-Cherrapunjee Road, barracks were constructed for the Gunners

and Transport. Previously, the 2nd mile stone was known as "Len Khashor" to the local people. The present barracks and area occupied by Military Hospital, were constructed for living accommodation for jawans. On the East of the area known as 'Len' was given for the residence of Officers and Headquarters offices. On the West the area was kept for retired personnel from the Army presently known as Jhalupara. To the North, area was given to merchants who supplied rations and other commodities to the military now known as Palton Bazar.

By 1896, much developments in the area were made, and Shillong became the place of all attractions. But to the great surprise that there was a great earthquake and whole of Shillong was shaken like anything and many buildings were destroyed in 1897. Rather, there was complete sweep of new capital. The House of U Jeebon Roy—a most well-to-do man of Shillong and known as father of the Khasis, was also destroyed. It is mentioned that the original Magazine of the Army was located at the site of Dr. S. M. Dass bangalow near Anjalee Cinema Hall which was known as the Mukjin Rim (old magazine). After the earthquake of 1897, the magazine was shifted to near the then old Suspension Bridge at the junction of the Umjasai and Umshyrpi streams. The bridge over the Umshyrpi stream on the Shillong-Cherra Road was known as Jingkieng Tup (Gunner's bridge). The parade ground as well as cricket field was constructed by the side of Ums-

hyrpi near Laban then known as Laban field, and now known as the Garrison Parade Ground. This ground with the adjoining land, now occupied by the Lady Hydari Park and the Pine Mount School compound was the golf link. In 1910, this was removed to the present golf link at Pynthorumkhrab. The present Raj Bhawan (Government House) was the bangalow of then Deputy Commissioner.

With the shifting of the military station from Cherra, people had started coming to Shillong for business, work and settle down. In the upper Shillong side two-three sites were settled with Europeans for residence like the "English by Resenrodes". The Indians from the plains who came first, were mostly Bengalees from Sylhet and Marwaris from Rajasthan. They were settled down in Jail Road, Police Bazar, Laban and Qualapaty. The Khasi from Cherrapunjee and other places came and settled down in Muawkhar, Qualapaty alongwith Iewduh side in Malki, Nongthymmai and Laitumkhrab. At that time, the villages of Laitumkhrab, Malki and Pynthorumkhrab were paddy fields. Polo Ground was converted into Race Course.

Shillong's expansion has over depended on the expansion of government offices and work. Population in the beginning was very less. The people who came from various places for business, made their houses temporarily and returned to their original home after finishing their work. Khasis who came from other places retained connections with their

native villages and did not regard Shillong as their permanent home. They had used to go back to their villages for celebration of Puja and on other occasions. Therefore, in the beginning, Shillong was regarded as a place of "Sojourn" (temporary residence) only. Very late the people started to build permanent houses at Shillong. When Shillong became the capital of Assam, the population increased. The Marwaris came for business. The Behari came to work under Europeans and manual labourers and Bengalees as office workers. Some of them settled down at Shillong even after termination of their work and services. The Nepales came and settled at Jhalupara and Mawprem. The total population of Shillong in 1872 was almost 2,500. The land was sold to these people at the rate of Rs. 100/- per acre per annual for 99 years on lease basis. There was lot of improvement in road/communication. In 1873, under Europeans management, a experimental farm was opened but closed down due to its failureness. After ten years the same farm reopened combined with Animal Husbandry which has continued ever since.

Since Shillong became the capital of Assam, more people from other parts of India started settling down though temporarily, but on 99 years lease land. Cart Road from Gauhati to Shillong was almost completed by 1874 and road from Shillong to Chertapunjee was in progress. Mostly tongas were plying between Gauhati, Nongpoh, at present

is a very costly place where people from Assam mostly Khásis have established their Restaurant and fruit/vegetable shops. Main communication between Shillong and outside world, then was only via Cherrapunjee through Sylhet. The cost of living was very low. Similarly the price of other commodities, food stuffs and other necessities of life were also very low. Food stuff also started coming from Gauhati since road communication between Gauhati and Shillong was opened. The porters used to carry all such things on their backs and travelled even on foot days together. The mode of conveyance from Gauhati to Shillong and vice-versa was by bullock carts. Tonga service was meant for high officials and rich people. The tonga service was first run by the planters stores which was later took over by Messrs Golam Hyder and Sons till regular motor services replaced. There was no mode of conveyance to Jowai, Mairang and other places. People used to travel on foot which took them weeks together to reach their destination. The children were put into *thapas* and men carried them.

During 1879-80 the population of Shillong was not more than five thousand. It is said that during these two years there was an epidemic of Cholera in Assam and Shillong by which many people lost their lives. This epidemic became a landmark for the Khásis in calculating their age because it was so severe. They would as a person how old he was at the time of the epidemic and then they would calcu-

late or reckon their years. Another important mark among the Khasis in reckoning their ages was Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria which was celebrated in 1887 with full enthusiasm.

It is said that in the year of 1882 the Secretariat building caught fire and valuable records were burnt. In view of administrative requirement, this building was rebuilt immediately. Some more buildings were also constructed for offices. By 1891, the population of Shillong was about 8000. This year, the people of Shillong were shocked by the news of the murder of then Chief Commissioner, Mr. Quinton, at Imphal in Manipur. In his memory a big hall named Quinton Hall was built in Jail road, close to Thana. In this year, to accommodate expanding government offices, a hotel of Mr. Quinton was purchased by the Government. A Government High School came into existence in 1891. During 1892, an European English School also started by Miss Jones which was however closed for sometime after the great earthquake of 1897. Till the year 1897, there was nothing of importance to be mentioned except lot of improvements in the town and extension of roads. The water tank dug was remodelled under the direction of Colonel Hophinson and by the order of then Chief Commissioner, Sir William Ward, the connected lands were given for public and the tank was renamed as Ward's Lake. At present Ward lake is a sight view and have become place of tourism interest.

Disastrous Year—1897

The most memorable and disastrous year, especially to the Khasis in Shillong was 1897. This year, U Hain Manik, Syiem of the Laitkor branch of the Myllem Syiem family died. On 12th June, 1897 the people of Shillong witnessed the most disastrous earthquake which wrecked the whole town. Most of the masonry buildings were razed to the ground and heavily damaged. Only mud houses could bear the shock and did not crumble down. The house of U Jeebon Roy the father of the Khasis, was also badly damaged. It was Saturday, when the tremor and quake occurred at 5 p.m. and with the span of minutes, many buildings were badly damaged. This took no time to spread over the whole of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The shock was felt in other districts too, but it was severest shake in the Khasis and Jaintia Hills, especially in the Southern side of the Khasi Hills. The whole administration was disturbed. Water connections were dislocated. There were big landslides, roads were blocked and cracks completely changed the shape of localities. It is true that some villages were buried under the landslides and low lands were full of mud and water. The big quake was followed by a continued week heavy rain, thunder and storms which, in fact, swept the whole of Shillong.

It was good fortune to the people in Shillong because it was Saturday and Government offices were closed little earlier than daily scheduled. The people

were returning to their homes and in fact they were almost in the way back to their homes. The death toll in Shillong was only about 30 to 40 persons including Mr. MC Cabe, I.C.S. The people were in real panic. They lived in camps for many days or till they felt secured. The then Deputy Commissioner, Mr. J. C. Arbuthnor, I.C.S. took away possible steps to help and encourage people. He too ensured the people for sufficient supply of food stuffs and other essential necessities. At once, the work for reconstruction of the buildings and houses was restored for the accommodation of the Government offices and shelter to the public people. The model of the houses from masonry stone building changed to the present type of wood and wiremesh structure which were believed to be more or less shock proof. At that time, there was plenty of work which attracted the people from the interior parts of the district and as well as from the plains. In order to regularise traffic and supply, road reconstruction and necessary repairing work was also taken up immediately. Many people acted to the work and earn money which enabled them to repair/reconstruct their houses soon.

With the great increase in population, Shillong and its adjoining areas were expanded accordingly. At that time Dhankhetti was paddy field which is now a thickly populated area and Meghalaya Government fruit factory has also been established. A Government nursery for vegetables has covered a

large area. The Valley at Laitumkhrah from the end of St. Anthony's College to the corner of Bazar was completely covered by paddy fields including low lands at Pynthorumkhrah. Through the forests and jungles growth, the streams Umshyrpi, Umkharak and Umjasai wound their ways from the foot of the range flowing towards the North. There were beautiful waterfalls alongwith these streams both inside the town and on its outskirts. The water of these streams and streamlets was fit for consumption which provided a source for supply of water to the whole Shillong. In these streams there were plenty of fishes which also provided a source of food. Century old trees, thick shrub and creepers revealed the grandeur of the nature.

The Agricultural Experimental Farm at Upper Shillong combined with Animal Husbandry Section was re-established in 1898. The European school, closed after the great earthquake was re-opened. The Ward was also repaired. The reconstruction of buildings and repairs and restoration of road communication gave a plenty of work to the people.

Due to the expansion of Government activities and consequent incoming of people in search of work, the population of Shillong reached to 9600 during 1901. From this period, people started to construct their permanent houses. The year had witnessed the death of Queen Victoria who was known as Maharani and Shillong people also observed the gloom sorrow alongwith other parts of the country.

The year 1905 was a memorable year in history of Shillong. This year, the Khasi Christians belonging to the Welsh Presbyterian Church in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, witnessed a spiritual revival in the Church which resulted in a great headway of the Church. Also Shillong became a temporary headquarters of the newly formed province of East Bengal and Assam and designation of Chief Commissioner was upgraded as Lieutenant Governor. With the formation of the new province, the expansion of offices and creation of new departments, more area was occupied and this brought more people from East Bengal and other parts of India. More Khasis also came from the villages. Temporary quarters for government officials were constructed on the hill on which the present Pasteur Institute and Ganesh Dass Hospital are located.

In 1906, automobiles were introduced as a means of conveyance. It is said that the people of Shillong, saw a motor car for the first time which was brought by the Nawab of Dacca now Bangladesh. Tonga services from Gauhati to Shillong remained for another 10 years. All supplies including food stuffs were from Gauhati and Sylhet through tonga. The life of the people from 1906 to 1909 was very simple and peaceful. People were honest in spite of communities from Punjab, Sylhet, Bengal, Bihar and U.P.

From 1909 to 1911, there was other shifting of some government offices from Shillong to Dacca.

The plain people and government officials moved to Dacca from parts of Shillong, mainly occupied/inhabited by government servants. Jail Road and some parts of Laban were almost vacant, looked disolate and blank. This shifting of Government offices did not effect much because people from other parts of the country continued their move to Shillong. So the population census of Shillong was almost 13500 souls by the end of 1911. It is added that King Emperor Edward VII died in 1911 and Shillong people shared the mournings of the death. Also they took part in the celebration of the coronation of King George V and in the coronation 'Durbar' at Delhi, in which the Khasi Chief (Raja) Dakhori Singh was present. The Hills were still dominated by the Khasis Chiefs, and the people in the hills were leading a peaceful life in their own style. Moreover, till this time, all important posts and appointments under government and in various other offices were mainly manned by Bengalees from Bengal and Sylhet.

The year, 1912 was marked the starting of a new epoch in the history of Shillong and Assam as a whole. On the Royal proclamation at Delhi Durbar, the capital was brought back from Dacca because of the re-organisation of the province of Assam and partition of Bengal known as "Annulment of the partition of Bengal". In 1912, a separate Legislature for Assam was set up. More people from plains started to move to Shillong and there was again a

big expansion of the houses in the areas of the Municipality and in the suburbs like Nongthymmai, Mawlai, Umlyngka, Lum Mawbah and Nongkseh.

During this period, vigorous steps were taken to reopen the Fruit Garden in the Laitkor Reserve Forest. In the garden pools and nurseries for rearing and breeding trouts were constructed but failed and pools are now being used as nurseries for fish farms.

From the year 1912 to the beginning of 1914, the King Edward VII, Memorial Pasteur Institute was opened. This Institute had been doing an excellent file in the field of various diseases like black water fever, Malaria, blood examination etc. It was from this year that decision was taken to provide accommodation to the Indians who came to Shillong for visit or for health resort which resulted in the location and construction of the Earle Sanatorium close to Police Bazar. Also during this period necessary action to establish more schools for Europeans childrens in Shillong and Assam was initiated which also resulted in the foundations of St. Edmund's College (School Department), Loreto Convent and St. Mary's.

First World War—1914

In 1914, First World War was declared which resulted in the repatriation of the German fathers, brothers, and sisters of the Roman Catholic Church located in Shillong and other places of Assam.

However, the war did not disturb much the administration at Shillong and Government functions. The Legislative Council were carried on as usual. But there was a call for porters to be sent to France and other zones in the years of 1915 and 1916. Recruitment was made vigorously and during 1916-17, first contingent of Khasi porters was sent to France. The other contingent consisting of clerks, army bearers and others was sent to Mesopotamia in 1918. The Khasi contingent sent to France was led by Mr. B.C. Allen, I.C.S. who was the Deputy Commissioner of Khasi and Jaintia Hills during 1912-1914. The contingent was known as the Khasi Labour Corps. The Corps came back in 1919 and a public reception was accorded by then Chief Commissioner, Sir N. D. Eatson Bell. To those, who lost their lives in the war a memorial was erected near Bata Bazar known as "Mot Phran".

Reforms Act, 1919

Montagu Chelmsford Reforms Act was given by the British to India. According to this Act, strong steps were taken for erection of extra accommodation for the provisioning of government offices as well as residential accommodation. The most conspicuous of these were the Assembly and Council Chambers near Police Bazar and the Constitution Hall in the Secretariat Hall. More people from the plains came up especially from Assam Valley and Sylhet District. Accordingly the demand for accommodation

increased, leading to the expansion of the settled area in the suburbs and the fragmentation of big compounds in an appreciable manner. With the result of Reforms Act, more people came to Shillong and the census of Shillong in 1921 was counted at 17,200.

Assam Legislative Assembly Election—1921

This year, Shillong was made an election constituency of the Assam Legislative Assembly by which the people had first opportunity for an election and taste of first election campaign. Also for the first time a Khasi named Rev. J. J. M. Nichols Roy, was elected to the Assam Legislative Assembly who later became a Minister and retired after putting about two decades valuable services. At that time, the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills and other hill districts of Assam were not included in the franchise, except Shillong. It was this time that the legal aspect of the administration of Shillong began to crop up, leading to the conditions more complicated.

In this year, Assam had its Governor with the Executive Councillors and Ministers. The Legislative Assembly was inaugurated. The first Governor was Sir N. D. Beatson Bell, who was the last Chief Commissioner of Assam. The next Governor was Sir William Marris. The first Executive Councillors were Sir William Reid and Mr. Abdul Mazid and the first Ministers were Surjit Ghanshyam Barua and Maulvi Syed Abdul Mazid.

The Assam Municipal Act 1923, came into force on 1st April 1926 and the Shillong Municipality was placed on a proper elective basis for franchise. The whole Municipality was divided into ten wards. One member was to be elected from each wards with two nominated members. The Chairman was still the Deputy Commissioner and Vice-Chairman was non-official elected out of members of the board. The first non-official Vice-Chairman was Rai Sahib Shivanath Dutta, a nominated member. The Chairman, being the Deputy Commissioner, with his various responsibilities, could not devote much time for routine work of the municipality, delegated many powers to the Vice-Chairman. The Vice-Chairman took every step to preserve the beauty of the town being the headquarters and capital of the province. All out efforts were made to make the life of the people easy. Gambling and drunkenness were prohibited. By this time, Christianity both Presbyterian and Catholic had made considerable progress. In spite of contact with various people from outside the district, the Khasis did not change their high standard of morality, integrity and congenial relations. The Sang Khasi, also became more active in its activities. There was an overall progress in all fields. The economic conditions of the people had considerably improved. The number of Middle English Schools spring up and people become more education conscious. In 1924, the Serecultural Farm was opened. The production of new seeds by Agri-

cultural and Animal Husbandry Farm showed remarkable improvement. The food stuffs were almost available and the cost of sugar was 25 paise per kg. (then 4 annas per seer). Rice was Rupees five per maund.

During 1927-28 due to increase in population, more accommodation was made to meet the demand of people. During this period many dignitaries like Viceroy visited Shillong. Since elections were introduced, the political parties came into existence. The main parties were the Congress and Muslim League. The Khasi also felt the necessity of unity and they inaugurated Khasis National Durbar in 1923. In the elections, Khasi candidates stood as Independent. With the march of time, Shillong progressed in every sphere. Good water supply and natural drainage which made its position as one of the most beautiful hill stations in India.

World War II—1941

By this period, there was a great change in the people at Shillong. The people were made war-defences conscious. An immediate precautions for defence against direct attack, Air raid etc. were taught to the people. Especially people were more defence conscious after the bombardment at Manipur and Kohima by Japanese. At that time European and American troops including Africans, came to Shillong for rest and treatment. The military barracks were extended by acquiring lands in Happy

Valley. At that time as a war requirement, drafts of porters were sent to the various war operational theatres mostly in Assam and Burma borders. Shillong city was full of military personnel. Japanese planes also flew over Shillong continuously for two days but with no bombardment. In 1941, after the bombing at Imphal and Kohima by the Japanese, the people at Shillong were well conversant with war precautions. They had deep trenches before their houses to hide themselves. The sounding of a sirens warning and all clear, were introduced to them, upto the years of 1941-42, the prices of commodities both imported and local, soared up and there was a great floating of money, specially from the foreign troops stationed at Shillong. In order to meet the requirement of troops first, supply of food stuffs was controlled which resulted into smuggling and black marketing. However, to meet the ration supply to the public, rationing system through house census in the form of ration cards was introduced for the first time. Rice, sugar and other daily use commodities were supplied through Government appointed shops. Even control was extended to the cloth shops. At this time the number of co-operative societies increased considerably.

During the period as outbreak of fires in the Secretariat in 1882, had occurred which damaged the Shillong Club building, Roman Catholic Church and Loreto Convent including the forest fire of Raid Laban Reserve forests, where fire was continued for

seven days. These were the most notable incidents in the history of Shillong.

U Jeebon Roy in Defence of Khasi Culture and Education

U Jeebon Roy was a very competent man who gradually rose from a second clerk in East India Company in 1858 to service and retired as a Senior Extra-Assistant-Commissioner of Khasi and Jaintia Hills in 1894.

His most valuable service and contribution towards educational institutions, is the establish of a Shillong High School which he and some leading Khasi intellectual founded in 1878. Before this period, the role of Schools in the intellectual development in Khasi and Jaintia Hills has been remained remarkable. In fact, the credit goes to the missionaries. The first missionary was Alexander B. Lish, sent by the Free Church Mission, Serampore. This missionary opened three primary standard schools in 1832, one at Sohra (Cherra) other at Mawmluh and third at Mawsmmai. These schools were closed for sometime when Mr. Lish left Cherrapunjee and never returned back. It was in 1842, that these schools were re-opened by another Missionary from Wales and since then the schools continued to render valuable services to the people of the Hills. More schools in other areas were also opened. Indeed, many Khasi became teachers out of the results of these schools. Primary schools at Mawsmmai in 1853, at Jowai in 1854, at

Nongrmai, Mairang, Laitdom and Nongthymmai in 1857 and in 1863 at Mawdon, were opened. In 1851, it was reported that there were seven schools with the number of 200 students but there were about seventy schools with about 2000 pupils in 1866. Thus, there was a rapid progress of schools every year in the Hills. The Primary schools led to Middle English Schools and gradually in about 40 years time, the schools were set up all over the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the people of these Hills saw a new light in the coming into being a High School in Shillong.

It is mentioned that when Shillong became the Headquarters of Assam in 1874, there was a necessity to establish a High School in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills in order to impart requisite standard of higher education. But the proposal was not welcomed by the Missionaries stationed at Shillong as the requirement was not appreciated by the Provincial Government of the day. Under the leadership of U Jeebon Roy, some leading personalities of the Khasis, put full pressure on the Christian Mission and the Government for High School. However the demand for High School was finally turned down which, for time being disillusioned but not disappointed U Jeebon Roy. Due to untiring efforts, he could establish High School in Shillong in 1878, known as Zilla High School. He donated Rs. 900/- from his own pocket to start with this school which was a great amount in those days. His son, Sib Charan Roy, was the first Khasi Student to pass the Entrance

Examination from that school in 1880. The first Headmaster of this High School was Mr. Rain Mitra.

In the meantime another High School from the year 1879, the Mission Minor School at Mawkhar was upgraded. With the urge of Rev. T. Jarman Jones—the head of the Mission Minor School at Mawkhar and agreement with U Jeebon Roy, Government of the day, accepted the proposal of amalgamation of two High Schools into one and thus in 1880 Shillong Government High School was born. In between there were other new approaches to establish normal training schools and high schools by the Missionaries but with the protracted correspondences between Babu Jeebon Roy and Government, a fruitful result was yielded and two High Schools named Government High School, Mission High School and Normal Training School were once again re-united by 1891 under the Principalship of a Missionary Rev. J. Ceregig Evans. In view of the above it may be concluded that Babu Jeebon Roy was the real founder of the Shillong Government High School in which many Khasis as well as non-Khasi students achieved higher studies and education.

In the meantime various missionaries were inducted with their educational, medical and proselytising mission gradually converted many Khasis not only to Christianity but to a way-of-life of the west. The first Christian missionary who established a mission in Khasi Hills at Cherrapunjee was Rev. Alexander B. Lish of the Baptist Mission from

Serampore. He stayed at Cherra from 1832 to 1838 and during this period he did open three Elementary Schools at Cherra, Mawmluh and Mawsmal. He translated the Gospel of St. Matthew into Khasi using Bengali Script. But missionary work was actually completed by Rev. Thomas Jones and his wife in 1841. He was the man of independent mind and generous nature. He found the way to convert the Khasis to Christianity by writing and translating the Bible and some Christian literature into Khasi language. The names of first two books published in Khasi language by Rev. Thomas and his wife, were Khasi Primer (*Ka Kitab Ba Nyngkong*) and Christian Catechism *Ka Kot Tikir*. After the death of his wife in 1845, he started to study in depth religion, culture, customs and usages of the Khasis. He stated respecting Khasis with deep understanding. He thereafter made efforts in the improvement of their occupation and cultivation of lands. He contributed a lot towards their advancement in all walk of life. He after leaving the Church, left for Calcutta and was never allowed to come back to Shillong by the Government till his death in 1849. The missionaries continued their active role. As time went on, many Khasi-Pnars attended schools and colleges. Many Khasi-Pnars were converted into Christianity. More and more Khasis increased their own trade and business by which they came into more and closer contacts with the Britishers as well as the people from the plains and created more interest in

all the spheres.

Though the missionaries were effectively working to convert the Khasi-Pnars into western style Christianity, yet a man of wide vision who in fact, protected the Khasis, was Babu Jeebon Roy. Till this time, Khasi-Pnar were given many advantages and promises to convert into Christianity which was a great danger of losing their (Khasis) identity, culture and religion. Till then, books written on Bible, great ideas and thoughts of the west were only the media of preaching and teaching the people. Babu Jeebon Roy found that in case Khasi-Pnars were, to be protected from conversion, they must be given higher education. He awaken the people to their heritage, their religions and culture. Due to his vigorous efforts, first Entrance School was established in Shillong in 1876. He encouraged people to attend schools and colleges in the plains. Although U Jeebon Roy was not much educated yet he was having true sense to protect someone own religion. But this motivation could have no effect simply sitting at home. So, he openly advocated the Khasis that they should be broad minded and protect their religion and culture. Follow their own way of life to live free of mind and thoughts. And ultimately in 1858, he himself joined Government Service as a Clerk who later retired as Senior Extra Assistant Commissioner, a most honourable post for Indians at that time, in 1894. He saw that culture is being destroyed by the West. He therefore took steps to write books in Khasi language. He pub-

lished the translations of the Ramayana, and Buddha Charitra. He also wrote the History of India and life of Chaitanya in Khasi language. He had expressed an excellent, noble ideas that Indian History behooves us as Indians to know our own country. He knew that people would not achieve real progress untill and unless they are sent outside the hills and see how the people lived. He encouraged people, sent them outside in order to achieve higher education. In order to meet the requirement, in 1896 he opened his own printing press known as Ri Khasi Press which met the entire needs to educate the people in the State. In order to encourage Khasi Women to work in other fields, he put his own daughter to work in the Ri Khasi Press. In true sense, U Jeebon Roy was the real man to protect the Khasis and lead them to Khasis-way of life. U Jeebon Roy was the man of diamond whatever he preached he practised. He was the man of many parts who in the words of one of the venerable Khasi, U Joab Solomon, "Was not happy to prosper alone". In fact his happiness was to see that every Khasi succeeded in life. He taught Khasis in the field of agriculture and growing various vegetables which has now become one of the main sources of income of many Khasis in these hills. Potatoes growing all over the Khasi-Jaintia Hills which has now a profitable business for Khasi growers, is only through his introduction. He was the man of determination as firm ideas faith as a rock of his forefathers as han-

ded down through the ages from the days of 'The Seven Below'. He never refused to worship or work for any other religion and lastly said that God is one and all human beings of differ races are His creatures. He said that it is wrong to be narrow minded and show a distaste to read books on other religions. But he saw an immense perily (means danger) to the Khasi race conversion which permits inter-marriages within the clan. Therefore, U Jeebon Roy wrote a book on the Religion of the Khasis *Ka Niam Jong Ki Khasi* and about one God *Shaphang Uwei U Blsi*, which in fact were the key notes about religion and showed that the Khasi religion forbid those who are related through the mother's clan (The Khasi are matrilineal) and can not inter-marry with the same clan and who so ever does, commits a great sin which is unwashable and unforgiveable.

It is worth to note that as the boundless greed timber contractor destroy the ancient forests expasing the fertile soil to the eroding action of the wind and rain which gradually convert the land into the land of sand, in likewise the rich heritage of the religion and culture of the Khasis, slowly ended by the winds of change blowing in the wake of the advent of the Britishers. Seeing the danger of their religion and culture being swept away by those outside currents, U Jeebon Roy and some other Khasis, in order to unite in one platform to protect, preserve and propagate the customs and culture of the

Khasis, took steps to establish a Khasi Organisation called *Ka Seng Khasi*. But the British had done enough to divide them through westernisation one against the other. Still it is a sincerity and patriotic work of U Jeebon Roy, which has enable the Khasis, those who still prefers the faith of their forefathers and those who embraced Christianity, to maintain their basic culture and identity sandwiched, as they are, between the mighty thought pattern of the West and of the East which do not leave them untouched.

Movements for Independence

Throughout India, there were movement for freedom of the country. The first Independence war 1857, did not spread deep to the interior parts of Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills. Also many other movements for freedom like Quit India Movement, led by our National Leader Mahatma Gandhi was not that much effective to the Hills being naturally surrounded by geographical factors and location of British headquarters at Shillong. All the Hills including Shillong which continued remain under the rule of Chiefs, had to fight for its freedom and encroachment on traditional land rights of its people. They continued their hold and determination for their own unity and freedom of India as a whole. Though war conditions and precautions were predominant in the minds of the people yet there was lot of progress in political, economic, social, culture and other way of life. In the political field, the people were

watching with great interest of fighting for the freedom of India, though no active part was taken by them. In the matter of elections enforced during 1921, people took a keen and active part. The main political party who successfully fought for the freedom and the unity was the Congress Organisation. Among the Khasis there was no party then, but seeds for freedom and to protect their rights were planted and they formed the Khasi National Durbar and the Khasi Federation Conference.

On 15th August 1947, India got freedom from the clutch of Britisher after long struggles. Sir Akbar Hydari, belonging to the I.C.S. cadre was appointed as the first Indian Governor of Shillong who continued till Independence. The positions of State was uncertain at the time of Independence of India because during the reforms of 1935, when greater autonomy was given to India, the Khasi States were administered by the Crown Representative and when Independence was declared, they were administered through the Dominion. They did accede, but the question of merger was not decided and they were allowed to run their states as during the British rule. In 1950, the Government of India consulted Syiems of Khasi States to accede to the Indian Dominion and at last the Khasi states under the Syiems, were brought within the purview of sixth scheduled of Indian constitution.

Just before Independence, the Khasis Syiems formed Khasi National Durbar which projected a

plan for a separate Hill State. The Constituent Assembly of India set up an Advisory Committee, which in turn, set up three sub-committees to submit report and recommendations on North-East India. The Sub-committee, on Assam Tribal and Excluded Areas, toured all the Hill Districts of Assam. The Committee was led by Gopinath Bardoloi, Premier of Assam alongwith other members, Rev. J. J. M. Nichols Roy, the Khasi leader, Minister of Assam and a member of the Constituent Assembly, Mr. Rupnath Borahma, a plains-tribal leader Aliba Imti Ao, Secretary of the Naga National Council, as a hill leader of Assam and Mr. A. V. Thakur, Chairman of the Committee. Due to some communication difficulties, the members of the Committee could not visit the Garo Hills. The Committees submitted its joint report to the Chairman of Advisory Committee on August 25, 1947. Meanwhile the Draft Constitution was in process of progress. The report submitted by the sub-committees was finally accepted by the Advisory Committee on February 24, 1948. The sub-committee for these hilly areas was known as Bardoloi Sub-Committee. The Bardoloi Sub-Committee recommended the establishment of District Councils in all the Hill Districts with Legislative powers over occupation and judicial powers with the local bodies. District Councils were given responsibilities for the management of administrative in respect of primary fields of Education, Health, Social Welfare, Village Forests, Villages

and Towns developments. The recommendation of the Bardoloi Sub-Committee were incorporated in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution in spite of Nichols Roy's consistent efforts to influence the Constituent Assembly to mould the recommendations in favour of a functionally adequate autonomy. The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution was not welcomed by the Hills Chiefs and Syiems as it reduces their authority and placed them under the administrative control of the District Councils.

The Year from 1950 to 1971

When Syiems were brought under the purview of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in 1950, the total population of Shillong was about 60,000. The capital expanded to Upper Shillong, Mawlai and Happy Valley. Vacant lands especially along the main roads were built on with rows of houses. The capital remained at Shillong by which more people from the plain came and settled. More Central Government Offices were established and in order to accommodate the government employees, the part of Kench's Trace which had been abandoned by the Military as a danger zone, was released and opened for settlement. The whole area of Kench's Trace is now full of houses. Even vacant lands were divided into small plots and released on lease basis for 99 years. Since population and areas were increased, business and trades also expanded accordingly. The Shillong-Sylhet road which was opened in 1930

remained open upto Tamabil. The last village in the Indian side of the border, thus export/import through this route (Dawki) decreased as it depended on the attitude of East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh). Similarly trade communication from Jaintia Hills, Cherrapunjee, Mawaynram and Balat reduced considerable.

In 1951, political parties in the Shillong were, the Federation Conference and the Hills States Party. Elections were fought on the basis of the principles of these two parties, created a great deal and agitation among the people. The Assam Legislative Assembly and the Parliament elections were held simultaneously while election to the District Council were held later. In both the elections, Congress won and upto two terms Congress run the District Council. During the period, a commission for re-organisation of States in India was appointed in which separate Hill State was demanded by the members of the Commission who visited Shillong.

In the field of education many Colleges and High Schools with the facilities of night classes were opened. As regards to health care, Ganesh Das Hospital for women, the Goenka Hospital, Ram Krishna Misra dispensary and Nazareth Hospital were opened. Number of Private practitioners as well as Homeopathic dispensaries were increased considerably.

The military also expanded considerably by establishing a cantonment at stationing of units

at the 7th Mile of the Shillong-Cherra Road and at Happy Valley. In the course of time NEFA (now Arunachal Pradesh) made a landing ground for the convenience of Governor of Assam who is also agent to the President for the Administrative of NEFA. The same landing ground has since been taken over by the Indian Air Force. The area has now developed into an Air Force Station extending to Lum Sohmyllan on the Shillong Peak Plateau and a beautiful small town named 'Nanglyer'. The Army also established their lines at the Spread Eagles Falls just below the Umpling village. The area of Happy Valley developed to a great extent.

On June 3, 1954, a conference was called in connection with to demand a separate Hill State. This conference was presided over by Captain Williamson A. Sangama, who later came up as a first Chief Minister of Meghalaya. The conference was attended by all the leaders from Khasi-Jaintia Hills, Garo Hills and North Cachar Hills. In the conference it was decided to bring all the districts of Khasi-Jaintia, Garo, Mizo, Naga, North Cachar and Mikir Hills under a separate State. Accordingly, with a popular demand for separate hill state, Government had constituted a States Re-organisation Commission. The commission visited the hilly areas and rendered a Not recommended report in 1956. The rejection of the popular demand created tension in the hilly areas of Assam. In 1957, the elections in these hilly areas were held alongwith general

elections. This led to the widening of the gulf already separating the leaders from Assam plain and hilly regions. The situation was tense and President Rule was imposed. The President of AHTU Captain Williamson A. Sangama was inducted in the State Cabinet and made him responsible for the welfare of the tribals. In 1960, induction of Assamese Language Bill was another main factor responsible for making the situation more tense in the whole Assam and hill districts. Captain Sangama resigned from the State Cabinet. Again there were conferences and meetings of the hill leaders to press the demand for separate Hill State and to reject Assamese Language Bill. From time to time Prime Minister Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Home Minister Y. Chauhan, Guljari Lal Nanda and other high dignitaries of the Central Government, visited the hilly areas to assess the demand of the people. In the meantime many other calamities including Chinese attack on India, death of our dearest Prime Minister. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri came as hinderances in the progress of the separate Hill State.

With the expansion of the capital town the demand for timber and firewood increased which adversely effected the natural beauty of Shillong. By the year 1961, the population of Shillong was about one lakh. A great deal of the green scenery especially on the slopes of the Shillong range, had deteriorated because of laxity of Government con-

trol over the forests. The Municipal Committee could not control over sanitation properly. To meet the requirement of water supply, an additional arrangements were made by opening more water pipe lines. The water was to be supplied in fixed hours. During this decade, Government undertook Schemes in Social Welfare and Agriculture, establishment of Development Block and Agricultural Institutions took place. Road communication had improved a lot. The Barapani Dam was constructed and the Dam side which was a jungle and grazing land was converted into small town. The valley from the Khwan (Barapani) village to the Umsaw village, which contained hundreds of paddy fields was taken up by the Government and converted into a lake one of the most beautiful artificial lakes in India for generating Hydro-electric power. This at present is only the main source of power in the whole area. Another development during the period was introduction of Pucca buildings of reinforced cement concrete, both public and private. Many other semi-concrete buildings were come up. The decade 1950-60 marked the origin of best in the town, an evil which has been the scourge to Shillong, Assam, and some places outside Assam was 'The Teer Team'. This is a game through archery which has been the ruin of many families. This game of gambling was not felt much till 1970, when serious steps were taken for its total prohibition. The decade 1960-70 was one of the most eventful periods

in India since independence. The deaths of two Prime Ministers—Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri took place. At the same time since independence for the first time, a lady became the Prime Minister of the country. The Chinese aggression in 1962 and Pakistani attack on India in 1965 changed the History of India. During 1971, there was a great influx of refugees from East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) due to civil war which resulted in the creation of a new Republic i.e. BANGLADESH REPUBLIC, our neighbouring friendly country.

The political parties, fighting for separate Hill State continued their agitation. Political agitations in connection with other matters and suspension of the Syiem Myllem—U Jormanik led to police firing in some areas. The intensity of the struggle, the people drew the attention of the Central Government and led Prime Minister and other dignitaries of the Government to visit Shillong to find out the interests and enthusiasm of the people in connection with the demand. The zeal of the local people was exhibited in the public meetings held from time to time.

Creation of Meghalaya—1972

The fight for the Hill State by the Hill Districts continued and public agitations increased with great force which compelled the then Prime Minister Sri-mati Indira Gandhi to visit Shillong thrice and ultimately resulted into the creation of Meghalaya.

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comprising the districts of Khasi, Jaintia, and Garo Hills, a Sub-state with the State of Assam on 2nd April 1970. With the result of passing of the North East India Re-organisation Act, states of Meghalaya and Tripura became fullfledged states on 21st January 1972. Manipur also became a state. NEFA (North East Frontier Agency) was converted into another Union Territory named Arunachal Pradesh with this new creation of states, Shillong became the capital of Meghalaya, Itanagar of Arunachal Pradesh and Dispur of Assam. All the Hill district of Assam except the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills which were un-united by the British rule, were separated. To restore the lost standards of health and beauty of Shillong, Municipal Board was suspended and a Chief Executive Officer was appointed.

Administrative Set-Up

The creation of independent states with their own separate Capitals during 1973-74 affected the whole life in Shillong.

The state of Meghalaya was then divided administratively into 5 districts, 4 Sub-divisions and 6 administrative units. Now into 8 Sub-divisions and 2 administrative units. The detail of these is as under:

1. The Jaintia Hills District—Headquarter :
Jowai
2. The East Khasi Hills District—Headquarter :
Shillong

3. The West Khasi Hills District—Headquarter:
Nongstoin
4. The East Garo Hills District—Headquarter :
Williamnagar
5. The West Garo Hills District—Headquarter :
Tura

The eight Sub-divisions are as under :

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Amlurem | 5. Mawkyrwat |
| 2. Khliehriat | 6. Mairang |
| 3. Ri-Bhoi | 7. Baghmora |
| 4. Sohra | 8. Dadengiri |

The two Administrative Units are :

1. Resubelpara
2. Betasing

Geographical area of the state is 22429 sq. km. and total population as per 1981 Census is 13,28,343 now estimated to the tune of 14,00,000. At present Meghalaya Government has sixty members of Legislative Assembly directly elected by the people through secret ballot. The head of the Assembly is a state Governor who form the Ministry. The people of the North East Hills are generally known as backward tribes and communities. The Six Schedule seeks to safeguard the general interest and Welfare of the tribal people. District Councils have been constituted to look-after the welfare and developments of the people and also to protect their traditions and customs. Besides Legislative Assembly the Six Schedule of the Indian Constitution providess three Autonomous District Councils for the development of the Hills

people. The three Councils are as under :—

1. The Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council,
2. The Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council,
3. The Garo Hills Autonomous District Council.

The people elect the members of the District Councils through secret ballot. Few are nominated by the State Governor. Each District Council has an Executive Committee being headed by a Chief Executive Officer. In order to speed up the pace of development in the Hills of Meghalaya State, every District Councils have been entrusted responsibilities for education upto Lower Primary Standard, rivers, forests, market and general interest of the people. These Districts Councils have both Judicial Legislative and Administrative functions.

THE TRIBAL MAN

The Indian approach accepts the validity of the different traditions—SARBANGAMA PRAMANYA. Every tradition which helps men to understand his environment, which assists him to live in freedom and friendship with his neighbours, which is an acceptance. We must approach the tribal people with affection and friendship and not concession or contempt. We must not deprive them of their innocent joys, their songs and dances, their feasts and festivals. We should give up the 'big brother' complex. Many tell us that it would be our duty to teach every group its own tradition. We must give equality of opportunity even to unequal groups. We did not isolate the tribal communities, nor did we encourage indiscriminate amalgamation. Without creating great racial disturbances, we aimed at achieving racial harmony. The catholicity of outlook marks the Indian approach from the beginning of history.

—Dr. S Radhakrishnan

* * *

“The tribal people of India are a virile people who naturally went astray sometimes. They quarrelled

and occasionally cut off one another's heads. These were deplorable occurrences and should have been checked. Even so, it struck me that some of their practices were perhaps less evil than those that prevail in our cities. It is often better to cut off a hand or a head than to crush and trample on a heart. Perhaps, I also felt happy with these simple folk, because the nomad in me found congenial soil in their company. I approached them in a spirit of comradeship and not like some one aloof who had come to look at them, examine them, weigh them, measure them and report about them or to try and make them conform to another way of life. We should have a receptive attitude to the tribal people. There is a great deal we can learn from them, particularly in the frontier areas, and having learnt, we must try to help and co-operate. They are an extremely disciplined people, often a great deal more democratic than most others in India. Even though they have no constitution, they are able to function democratically and carry out the decisions made by their elders or representatives. Above all, they are a people who sing and dance and try to enjoy life; not people who sit in stock exchanges, shout at one another and think themselves civilized.

I would prefer being a nomad in the hills to being a member of stock exchanges, where one is made to sit and listen to noises that are ugly to a degree. Is that the civilization we want tribal people to have? I hope not. I am quite sure that the

tribal folk, with their civilization of song and dance, will last till long after stock exchanges have ceased to exist.

—Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

* * *

"Dim through the night of these tempestuous years, a Sabbath town over Africa appears ; Then shall her neck from Europe's yoke be freed. And healing arts to hideous arms succeed ; At home fraternal bonds her tribes shall bind. Commerce aboard expouse them with mankind".

—James Nontgomery (1841)

* * *

Historians, Anthropologists and many Scholars have given different definition for the tribe. Some have written that tribe has been something like speculations of a group of blind men seeking to describe an elephant by touching various parts of its body. Mr. W. H. R. Rivers say that tribe is a social group of a simple kind, the member of which speak a common dialect, have single government and act together for such common purposes as welfare, mystery and tempest describe the march across the centuries not of the African tribes only but the tribal part of the whole humanity. One cannot establish a coherent, logic connection between the past and the future by the tenophobia. In one tribe, there are many communities comprising

neighbourhood towns and villages. The language does not necessarily lie at the foundation of a tribe. In Uganda, the Ambas speak two mutually unintelligible languages. The principle of political integration is also not universally applicable to tribal groups. In Australia, Malaysia, Amazonia and west-north America, there are many tribal communities which are politically autonomous. Social anthropologists have made the division of these communities on the basis of linguistic and cultural resemblances. The criterion of trades, Kingship, culture and inter-marriage are the main crucial factors for all human societies. It regulates behaviour among persons and plays a vital role in the formation of social, political and territorial group.

The Tribal man looked down upon as products of low strata of social and rude forms of culture, with the advent of time and fact based on history and geography of the entire human races have proved the worth and relevancy of his many splendoured culture in many part of the world. Specially in our country with vast mountainous region, have thrown up valuable and most useful information about the tribal man whose social organisation and cultural grandeur differ him as resourceful, valiant, tough and cheerful part of the human race.

Our country is not but the world is extricating itself from the slush of narrow national and regional limitation. Big dispersal of knowledge about various parts of the world, the victory of man over many

hurdles, space and time and reformation of short-sighted social or colonial attitudes, by the progress of science on the part, of historians, and scholars have made it possible for rational people all over the world, to take a balanced view of the totality of mankind.

Man struggled against every difficult objects, in order to exist the invented agriculture after endless experiments. About six thousand years ago, man was only part-time farmer and there were sedentary forms of farming in the lower Nile region in Africa. Some forms of cultivation was practised in the Hills of North-East India. The relative isolation of the hills, poor rocky soils, crude tools, feuding neighbours and other many hurdles could not stop a tribal man from developing systems of cereal growing and stock raisings. The groups of tribes developed gradually, many forms of arts like rock engravings, cave paintings, dance, music, songs, dress and so on. Tribals developed their own life style, own systems of philosophy religion, belief in what life showed them and experience seemed to confirm, worship what inspired awe or admiration in them and despising what hurt their feelings, desires and ambitions. The Tribals of the Hills engaged in hunting, gathering wild vegetables and protecting part-time cultivation, jhuming, practised in the hills even now, was a great feat. Working out their ways of life over many centuries and countless generations, the tribal man have preserved the identity of his own in many fields. The tribal communities managed their affairs.

with little or nothing of the governing machinery but with sharp weapons and strong groups always imposed their will on weaker groups. They took pride in doing so. Thus emerged the sub-groups into main groups, organised kingship and bureaucracy. It brought in its process class differences i.e. the servant and the master, the ruler and the slave. These groups after a long time moved towards the human scene because of their social tension, jealousy and political competitions. At this stage the tribal man became a partner in the daily anguish and strife of life with the man in the plains and the teasingly vague fence of separation between the two began to recede and dwindle. The next movement of the tribal man was the symbol of a revolution and sensational changes in the behaviour in their daily life. The winds that blew from across the tribal borders to their huts and shelters mingled tradition with innovations, heralding a new order and laying the foundations of new ways of life. Many changes in the life of a tribal man took place. Nearby plains markets requisitioned tribal goods and trade started to grow. The plain people also started to visit Hills and established their commerce and trades. The transaction in trade was in cash by the plain people and it was a great leap forward which brought the slow moving social life to modernity. But there were stresses and strains and repercussions because of insufficient economy among the tribal society. Although the progress was bit slow yet they have attained

considerable skill in agriculture and other fields.

It was but now it is wrong to guess that the tribal man is sticking to his traditions and show concern for preservation of his ancient social life. In the democratic countries every one is free to maintain his religion, culture, customs and traditions. In India too every religion is honoured and respected. Similarly the religion, culture and traditions of the tribal man of India are respectfully honoured and tribal societies in India are free to celebrate their functions and ceremonies according to their traditions. During ancient time a man has been sticking to his own society or group customs. No doubt, a tribal man had been sticking to his tradition and showed concern for change with changing times but now it is wrong to say that a tribal man have not at all moved and changed with time pace. The rocky soil, the mountain, jungles and the Hills in which a tribal man started living in spite of every hard and stressed circumstances, were his lot. They had to cultivate it and fight and die for it. To make it gentle and smooth, they had developed strength and determination. To subjugate the wilderness of the secretive forests, the tribal man had conquered fear, the fear of fear, laziness and the natural tendency to comforts. He had united, faced and fought against the foreign invaders and protected his land. The Garos, the Khasis and the Jaintias too bravely fought against the Britishers and other foreign elements.

In fact, fighting against foreign invaders have

given a new life to a tribal man. Rather it gave a big rise in open world to a tribal man. With the social welfare work, various missionary organisations have drawn a large number of tribal people away from their ridged traditional religious beliefs to the fold of Christianity, liberal education has been a great force behind the conversion of a tribal man to Christianity. He had been changing with the changing times. Khasi graced the chair of Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Ambassador, a Garo became the first Chief Minister of Meghalaya. There are bright Professors, Priests, Scientists in the field of arts, literature culture, history, sociology and economics among the tribals of the Hills of Meghalaya. All such achievements of a tribal man are mainly due to his own rigorous labours and works done by the missionaries and modern facilities, like education, social welfare and convenience of transport and communication, extended to a tribal areas.

It is also wrong to deduce that Christianity has destroyed the tribal ways of life. It has only modified and rather it has opened the eyes of the tribal man towards the ways of modern developments. In a secular country, all religions have equal status and people are free to embrace any religion they wish. The people of the Hills belonging to traditional faiths should not feel hurt that they are being subjected to the forces of detribalisation in religions or other fields. The present leaders are fully capable to make the Hills people understand that an ancient tribal man is now a modern man.

THE KHASIS

Geographical Identity

The Khasi Hills, designated as the Central Meghalaya covers an area of about 11,170 sq. km. The low hills of the northern belt lie on the rainshadow of the main plateau. River Umtrew rises from the foot of the Sohpetbneng Peak. The central upland zone is called Shillong plateau which is the highest peak (1966 m) of the State. There are other peaks named Laitkor more than 1500 m, Mawthohrew—1480 m, Diengiei—1770 m, Sohpetbneng—1325 m, and Mawpat—1540 m, which add to the natural beauty of the region. The Mawthadraishan—1895 m, is the second highest peak of the Central Meghalaya.

The important rivers of this part are Umiam, Umkhen (Barapani), Umtrew, Khri and other rivers, flows towards the North and North-East. River Umiam, Umkhen and Umtrew join first goddess river Kupli near Karbi Anglong (Mikir) hills in the Jaintia Hills before joining finally into the Brahmaputra.

In the South of Shillong Plateau, there is a long belt of low hills and fertile deep valleys facing the plains of river Surma. There are rivers named Kynshi, Umiew, Umngi and Umrilang that flow towards the

South and these rivers have cut deep valleys through the cretaceous, sandstones and lime stones.

In this region there are many important water falls named Mawsmmai Falls at Cherrapunjee and Nohkalikai Falls. Mawsmmai Fall (Cherrapunjee) is the fourth highest falls in India which falls from the height of 410 m. There are also number of great falls in this belt. A hot spring at Umjarain near Jakrem and little away from river Umngi, is well known in the State.

The Central Region of Meghalaya is full of quartzite bands overlying the schists. Intrusive granite and diorite rocks are also found in the central part of the plateau with conglomerates and Khasi greenstones. The Khasi greenstones includes amphibolites and epidierites. The central belt is full of coal deposits. The tyrsad region of these hills is under investigation for gold.

The climate of this region is mostly cold. Due to dense jungles and deep valleys, the amount of rainfall is heavy mostly at Cherrapunjee which has heaviest rainfall in the world. The soil of the region is generally red loam in character containing enough amount of potash but poor in phosphates. Fruit, rice and vegetables especially potatoes and pineapple are the principal crops of these hills. Bamboo, reeds, cane, lac timber, pine tree, sal medicinal herbs and plants, cinnamon, tezpatta and lemon grass are the major forest products of this belt.

Origin of the Khasis

The question of the Khasis origin is not so simple. It is added that the general belief prevalent among the Khasis who have certainly inhabited the area for a considerable period is that they come from somewhere else. Their origin has been discussed in length by many scholars. Among those, The Rev. H. Robert who connects them politically with the Burmese and Roy according to whom the language indicates that they belong to the family of powerful Mongoloid invaders of India.

In fact, no written record is available till now about the origin of the Khasis but we can quote Mr. Shadwell the eldest living authority, who remained in close touch with these people for more than half a century. He wrote that originally they came into Assam from Burma via the Patkoi Range. A wide and reasonably acceptable statement of their origin is that the Khasis are an offshoot of the Mom people of Further India in view of the historical fact that the movements of raves into Assam have mostly taken place from the East and not from the west.

Fascinating Story of their Creation

Geographically, it is easy to trace the Hills territories of India which stands for its own significance and importance. In a small size, in the North Eastern Border State of India from the Homeland of the Khasis. Though this land remained quite isolated and unknown for many years from the rest of the world

yet it is full of glorious traditions of the Khasis. There were much controversy about the Khasis name whether this was given by the British or what ? Further question arise from where the Khasis had migrated ? From the West or East ? Even Anthropologists are not much sure about the migration of the Khasis. But the Khasis claim that they descended from the sixteen groups—Nine living 'Above' and Seven living 'Below' in these Hills. Once they come across direct communication through the peak known as Sohpetoneng the western side of Shillong. This is the fascinating story of their creation. At first, God permitted the freedom to move from Heaven to Earth with the help of the golden ladder which signifies the Sohpetoneng (The Navel of Heaven). One day seven families out of sixteen finally decided to remain on the Earth and Nine remained in Heaven. God removed that golden ladder which never come down again. So, these seven families came to be known as "The Seven Below" and in Khasi language are known as *Ki Hynniew Ha Tbian*. Those remaining nine families came to be known as "The Nine Above" and in Khasi language as *Ki Khyndai Hajrong*. Today as what we know about the Khasis from their timeless tale they are the descendants of the Seven Below whom with the time increased gradually and they spread over this beautiful land with their own way of life, customs and religion and with their own conception of God. The to-date, the Khasis whenever approach their God in prayer, call upon

earnestly the intercession of the Nine Above to forgive their omission and commission.

Social Groups—Khasis

In India, as a land of unity and diversity we have different communities in the Hills and plains with their own distinctive traditions and culture. The Nagas of the Nagaland, the Adi of Arunachal Pradesh, the Mizos of Mizoram and soon, constitute the principle clans of their own. Similarly, the Jaintias of Jaintia Hills, the Garos of Garo Hills and the Khasis of Khasi Hills of Meghalaya constitute their own principle clans. Among the Khasis, they trace their descent from ancestresses or the first mother. The principle clans of the Khasis are Lyngdoh, Diengdoh, which in Jaintia Hills is known as Lalu, Dkhar, Dehling, Khar-Kongor, Khong-Teri, Khong Mawpat, Warbah, Swer, Shrieh, Smer and many others. There are other many groups now but all above are not free to maintain relation and socio-culture intercourse like the Garos groups. All Khasi clans are strictly exogamous which denote the origin theory of the family. It is true that a Khasi can commit no greater sin than to marry within the same clan. Some of the clans are prohibited more-over from intermarriages with other clans because of other reasons, such as any two clans having fought together against a common enemy and thereafter considered themselves as brothers and sisters and never to inter marry. Among the Khasi society some

clans bear the names of animals like the Shrieh or monkey clan. Among the Khasi society, the mother is the organiser and originator of each clan and it is the same with the Jaintias. In the beginning there were not many sub and sub-sub clans but in the course of time, with the growth of the Khasi population, the necessities for food and shelter compelled them own to move out of the original stock and established their own settlement away from their place of origin, and acquired different names though not separated from the main clan in any respect. Though the Church indirectly encouraged marriages within the same clans but there are very few instances of such cases. The Khasis and Jaintia Christians till to-date strictly adhered to their original law inheritance and marriage.

Physical Structure—Khasis

The Khasis are well built, nourished and muscular. They are yellowish grey people with short stature. They have small and slightly oblique eyes. Their colour complexion varies from part to part of the hills due to climatic conditions. They have almost erect hair in less numbers. They have broad forehead and their cheek bones are prominent. The inhabitants of the uplands are of somewhat lighter shade, and many of the women possesses that pretty gipsy complexion that is found in the South of Europe amongst the peasants. The women when young are comely, sweet, of a buxom type and the

men, with highly developed calves, the latter always being considered a beauty. The childrens are pretty. They wear somewhat costlier clothes and are very fond of modern fashion. In the town SHILLONG, the people are rich and lives like European style. Westernisation has a great influence in their physical structure whereas in the interior parts of the Hills, the people are of very simple living though of hard and short stature.

The Household Organisation—Khasis

Among the Khasis, Kinship is traced through the mother only. Thus the society is matrilineal. The mother that is the youngest among the sisters is the custodian of family rights and property. She is succeeded by her youngest daughter who succeed her mother as the keeper of the property and the organiser of the family rights in which she can improve the pattern of this residence but cannot part it off. The youngest sister is, however, the custodian of ancestral property. Personal property earned by an individual, can be disposed off as he or she like during his or her life time.

Although the youngest daughter is strictly the custodian but not the proprietor of the family property. She performs all religious ceremonies in the family and her duty is also to take proper care of her aged parents and any unmarried brother or sister who needs parental help and shelter. In Christian families (Convertees), she still exercise her moral

duties and retain her traditional position although she has no longer real religious responsibilities to perform. But she acts under the limits since she cannot go against the decision of her maternal uncle or family council under whose advise she carries out her temporal duties. Exercising of powers by uncles, has undergone a change with a change of occupation from mainly agricultural and pastoral to other fields like partnership business, industrious services and so on. However, the position has not changed with regards to purely ancestral properties, although with the present expansion of individual trade and diverse occupational opportunities, the importance of ancestral property has relatively become less importance. The residential house of the youngest daughter is never counted as her personal or private property. It is an ancestral property. She is the guardian of parentless or homeless members of her family. The mother acts as a moral force to unite the family. In her house all matters of importance and family religious rites are first discussed and performed.

Houses—Khasis

The Land's surface of the Khasis Hills had undergone changes due to frequent earthquake. The Khasi houses were constructed in curved elliptical side-walls with inverted boatshaped roofs which suited for weathering the Violent (fierce) winter storms by dispersing the wind force and for protection from the biting and slanting heavy rains. The

olden days pattern of houses are still being maintained in the interior part of the villages. For example a Khasi house is the present '*Ing Sad*' of the syiem of Khyrim. While preparing the site of a house, eggs were to be broken as good omens. The people have believed and confidence on the powers of Nature and God in their daily life. The houses were made of hard-wood and most superior timber like Jackfruit, Champa, Enginaia Tetragona, Oak, and Pine. People had been helping and are still helping each other for the construction of the houses free of cost. At present, the pacca buildings with modern materials are coming up. Mostly, the Khasi houses are ovalshaped and divided into three rooms, a porch, a centre room and a retiring room. The largest house of the Syiem Priestess at Smit in the Khasi Hills, is 61 feet long and 30 feet broad. The Khasi house has a little space fenced in on two sides but open towards the village street. The Khasis have to perform a ceremony on completion of new house construction. A daughter when construct her own house, she will always build a house on the left side or back side of the mother's house and not according to the housing plan. It is according to their customs and religious belief. Well-to-do Khasis in Mawsynram, Cherrapunjee and Shillong have built their houses on modern plans with iron roofs, chimneys, glasses, windows and doors. Some of the houses are fully furnished with European furniture in Shillong and in some of the rural areas also.

House Warming Ceremonies—Khasis

No house is occupied without a house warming ceremonies. The owners of the new house invite their near and dear friends. When they occupy the new house, one of the male members of the party put five pieces of dried fish on the floor pouring on libations of rice beer. All members keep on standing for sometime and worship to God. The male member takes three pieces of fish and hang them from the rafters—an inclined beam supporting of roof. Sometime they use a pig in place of fishes by hanging a piece of pork on the rafters. After that all present guests would jump up to reach and to bring the pieces down. This is known as 'Ka Kynjoh-khaskairi'.

There are other many house warming ceremonies exists among the Khasis. Like killing a cock, breaking an egg and so on. Mostly the house warming ceremonies are followed by feasting and merry-making. It is believed that God is invoked to shower His blessings upon the owner of the house that he and his family may live in peace and comfort in the house and prosper from generation to generation.

Many others, celebrate while occupying new houses by breaking eggs on the plantain leaf. They put the leaf length-wise from inside to the outside of the door. Then after invoking God, Almighty to bless the house, an egg is taken and sliced in half on the plantain leaf. Care is always taken that the yolk should flow down the length of the leaf. Simi-

larly there are other many ways of such type of ceremonies are followed by feasting and merry-making. Sometime the big drums and the small drums are played with different beats during the killing of the cock, the pig, the fish-leaping rite. This sort of entertainment programme continue for a day. At the time of house warming, every member of the house wear new clothes. Guests and relatives are well looked after by the house owner.

Food and Drinks—Khasis

The main food of the Khasis is rice, meat and fish. They take two meals a day. One in the morning and the other in the evening but labourers and those who work hard, take food thrice a day. They are very fond of all types of meat, especially pork and beef. They obtain flesh from the dog. In the the early days, they did not use milk, butter or ghee. They take the meat of almost all the wild and domestic animals. They also eat field rats and a kind of monkey U Shrieh. An inner part of the bark of the sage palm tree, cut into small pieces, dried in the sun, pounded in a mortar and then passed through a fine bamboo sieve, is a delicacy food of the Khasis. The Khasi believes that human beings are the highest in the creation and animals and birds are created to meet his requirements and to that extent he is justified to kill them for food but not to destroy them. He therefore, addressed the creator in this regard that he goes forth to hunt for food and not for the

purpose of distraction. There is an annual religious function connected with hunting called "*Pynieng Beh-Mrad*" when they pray and hunt for the specific purpose for only a male deer. The deer is brought back to the village and after a prayer for the welfare of the community of that particular groups. The meat pieces are distributed to all householders as a "Prasad".

In the rural area there are still many villages where rice-beer is taken regularly like what the urban people drink tea. It is restricted for sale but there is some relaxation for personal consumption. In ancient times, according to the Khasis traditions and customs only rice-beer used to be taken and use in religious ceremonies, and not distilled spirits which is common now-a-days. Rev. Thomas Jones, a Christian Missionary, introduced a modified form of distilling the Russian drink, "VODKA" in the Khasi Hills. This distilled liquor is even now referred to as "Kind (Liquor) Pudka". Mr. Kynpham Singh in his book 'A Collection of Writings about Khasi Hills and Khasis-1979,' wrote, (From the few recorded references that Rev. Thomas Jones was interested in the economy welfare of the people than in their welfare hereafter. He taught the Khasis improved methods of growing potatoes, the burning of lime by coal and the lucrative art of distilling liquor, which he taught to Ka Tang Dulai, U Amon Sing Jaid Dkhar and a few others at Laitkynsew". Laitkynsew is a Khasi village beyond Cherrapunjee.

Now the people of these hills distill the spirit for home consumption and for sale purposes too. The women and children also use to drink almost daily. Moreover, it costs only Rupees one or two per bottle. It is not much harmful to health provided consumed moderately. It supply some of the vitamins lacking in their normal items of food.

Dress—Khasis

As regards to the olden days of Khasi males dress, they wore the sleeveless coat or jymphong, which is a garment leaving the neck and arms bare, with a fringe at the bottom, and with a row of tassels across the chest ; it is fastened by frongs in front. This type of coat is still being worn by the males in the interior parts of the hills and by the dancers during festivals. They wears modern western dresses. Sleeveless coat has now been converted into a coat and waist-coat with collar but without tie duly made by a tailor. As per the old traditions, some of the Khasis use to wear waist-coat at present. The males in the rural areas wears a cloth peaked cap with ear flaps.

As regards to the female's dress, the old traditional dress is still worn though with some modification by the younger generation, in the urban and rural areas. *Ka Jainsem*—a long piece of cloth especially munga silk is worn which hangs loosely from the shoulders down to a little above the ankles, and is not caught in at the waist. It is always kept

in position by knotting each piece over both the shoulders. Again over the Jainsem another garment known as *Ka Jain Kup* is worn. This is thrown over the shoulders like a shawl, the ends being knotted in front, it also hangs loosely down the back and sides to the ankles. There is a fold in the Jainsem which serves as a pocket for keeping odds and ends. The Khasi ladies in cold weather in rural area wear gaiters which are of long stockings without feet and in case of the poor women, they wear a piece of cloth bound round the legs like putties or cloth gaiters. It is also worn in the cultivation fields as a protection against insect bites. Over the head and shoulder, the Khasi ladies wear a wrapper called *Ka tap-moh-Khlieh*. Moreover, according to the customs and traditions the Khasi women always cover their heads and instead they wear a silver crown decked with flowers. The modern days, young Khasi ladies are fashionable. Of course they wear the jainsem and cloak, but also with short coat of cloth or velvet duly stitched by a tailor, tocking and smart high heel sandal or shoes. It is also seen that sometime during warm weather, the ladies do not wear the cloak. The use of sari and punjabi suits are also seen among the Khasis young ladies especially those who live in Shillong and working in the Government Offices because it is found that they are very fond of various types of fashions/dresses. Gold necklaces, silver chains are worn by the women. Silver collar called '*Rupa-*

Tylli' is peculiar to the Khasis and is worn during festivals by those who takes part in dancing. Bracelets are also worn by women; these are either of gold or silver.

Marriage and Divorce—Khasis

"Marriage, as a custom, goes back to the ancient history of man. It has passed through stages. The first was marriage by capture as prevailed sometime back among the Garos. In that the primitive man simple stole the woman he wanted for his wife. The second stage of marriage was by contract or purchase. In this a bride was bought by a man. The third one is the marriage based on mutual love and arrangements as prevailed in the present days.

Marriage is a big social institution among the Khasis. The most remarkable feature of the Khasi marriage is that it was customary in the earlier days for the husband to live with his wife in his mother-in-law's house till the time his wife give birth to one or two children. After that he can take his wife to his own house. All the earnings of his wife will go to her mother's house for the maintenance of the family during the whole period of stay with her mother. There is no polygamy amongst the Khasis. Their strict adherence to the matriarchate or to the matrilineal system keeps away from it. However, there are instances of men having more than one wife but this is generally looked

down. Among the Wars (Khasi) children by such wives share their father's property with the children from his legal wife. Due to the exogamous character of society, a Khasi cannot marry a girl from his own clan. If one does, he will be liable to serious religious and socially cut off.

It is found that there are certain forms of marriage ceremonies among the Khasis. The boy select his life partner and after some association between the boy and the girl, they disclose to their parents. Their parents find that if there is no taboo and both the parties are agree, the marriage is arranged. Sometime, there is a arranged marriage by the parents in which mostly the girl has no choice. The age of the boy and the girl, between eighteen to twenty-five and thirteen to eighteen respectively, is generally taken into consideration in order to make a fitting couple. Exchanging rings between the would be husband and wife is still prevalent. On the fixed day, the marriage party alongwith kith and kins in their best dresses and garments and wearing turbans (Pagris) start from the grooms house after having feasts and all that, to the bride's house. The females relation do not accompany the bridegroom. Some male members from the bride's received the marriage party on the way where they welcome the bridegroom and exchange "Pan". In the meantime, the bride is dressed in her best dress and jewellery. The females do not cover their heads during the marriage day. A Ksiang and elderly

man who as a leader of the party leads the bridegroom to the bride's house. Similarly in the bride-house also there is a Ksiang to represent the party. A dialogue between the two Ksiangs marked the start of the ceremony. If during the dialogue, nothing transpire, that would go against uniting the two, then religious rite is performed and rings are exchanged with a declaration of the two as husband and wife. The Ksiang first enter the bride's house, followed by the groom and then bridegroom's party. The Ksiang from the groom side hand over the groom to the maternal uncle of the bride's father. Maternal uncle or father as said, take the groom and make him sit next to the bride. When the formalities are completed, the person who perform the ceremony pray as follows :

"Oh God From the Above and Below, Oh God
Lei Synshar, Oh God who created man, the
ring exchanged, or the betel-nut exchanged
today in between the present couple,
have been married this day.
Oh God bless them, grant them
prosperity throughout their life."

Then the person performing the ceremony pours liquor on the ground three times from the gourd. Then he remember and take the names of all family clans' members, pour the liquor on ground. After that he announce before all the elders and all other people present that they all bear witness to the union of these two people as husband and wife. After the

entertainment their friends and male relatives of the groom only go back to their respective places and the groom remain in the bride's house.

After three-four days, the bride along with her husband and her female relatives, visit to her husband's house and have the blessings of her mother-in-law and other elders in the family. After this formal introduction, the wife and her relatives can freely visit them. Husband and wife keep on going and coming to each other's house and according to the tradition, the wife normally does not shift to her husband house till the birth of one or two children. But among the people working outside their home towns, may start living together immediately after marriage. Now-a-days, marriages among the Khasis are also ultra modern basis and much consideration is not given to the extra expenditure but according to the traditions and customs everytime, everywhere.

Among the Khasis, divorce is not common. The main causes for divorce are adultery, barrenness and non-adjustment and non-co-operation in the family. For divorce, both the party should be agreed first. A women will never be divorced during pregnancy time. Among the Wars (Khasis) divorce without consent of any party is compensative. Among the Khasis and the Jaintias, the mother is the supreme source of most of the blessings of life including ancestral property which lends the element of security to every existence.

Inheritance—Khasis

The Khasis and the Jaintias have almost identical laws of inheritance. The Wars law of inheritance differs more from that of the Khasis and the customs of the Bhois who inhabited the Bhoj area are different from those of the Khasis. Women enjoy a position of holiness and piety in the religious celebrations.

According to the Khasis society, the youngest daughter hold the religion ceremonies and in return she enjoy a largest share of the family property. The matriarchate lays down the rule that a man belongs to his mother's clan. His children follow the same system and logic belong to their mother's clan. His wife's clan is outside his jurisdiction. He can have a say in matters pertaining to his clan and his children and wife but not in other matters relating to his wife clan. The founder of a clan; the first ancestress, is deeply revered. For sharing family property, a consensus of all the heirs is necessary. The largest share goes to the youngest daughter of the family being performing many duties like conducting and paying for religious ceremonies and looking after property and old aged parents for longer period. The principle governing the law of inheritance among the Khasis is that obligations create rights.

Disposal of the Dead—Khasis

Among the Khasis, there is humble way of describing some one's death. In natural death which can be confirmed now-a-days by the doctors and other-

wise but in the ancient time the death was being confirmed by the member of the family bending down towards the ear of the apparently deceased person and call him or her by name three times. If no answer or response is noticed, the family laments and the death is confirmed. Still such way of confirming death is prevalent in the interior parts of the Hills. When the death is confirmed, the dead body is bathed with warm water from three earthen pots, dressed in a white cloth that is the waist cloth and turban folded anticlockwise whereas it is always clockwise in case of living. On the day of the funeral the relatives by marriage of the deceased's male children will as a token of love and respect offer a pig or money and the elder sitting by the side of the dead, will declare the name of those who bring such offer and complement them. This is known as 'Pynkham'. A rice bear is also pour on the funeral pyre. Food and betel-nut (Supari) are also kept along the dead body. Among the Khasis, it is believed that the departed soul is gone to the heaven where he will peacefully be sharing supari with his forefathers. The eggs are also broken on the funeral pyre. The funeral pyre is lit fire first by the eldest son of the dead in case of woman only, by the eldest nephew in case of a man and then by others. Three arrows towards three direction that is north, south and east are shot. The relations and friends of the deceased offer bettle-nuts on the pyre and bid farewell before leaving the burning place. After

confirming that body has properly been burnt, the fire is extinguished with water and the bones are collected in three trips by the relatives. The persons who carry the bones are not supposed to look back. The bones, so collected are carefully wrapped in a piece of white cloth by the female relatives and all members of the family and are kept in an earthen pot duly tying alongwith egg yolk and fowls legs so sacrificed. All those are kept inside a cairn. After three days the relatives and friend see the foot/fingers prints of the departed soul by which they know the future events in the family of the deceased. This type of observation is also observed in the case of Hindu death. According to the taboo among the Khasis the pregnant women will not accompany the funeral procession. Upto three days, no major work is done by the deceased family which may be called amourningperiod. To re-marry, Khasis widow or widower within one year period is a taboo. According to U Jeebon Roy, a Khasis widow is do not re-marry as a rule unless they have no female children. The female child is must among the Khasis because the chain of inheritance amongst the Khasis is always passing from the females.

In case of accidental death, a black hen must be offers to *Ka Tyrut*, the spirit of accidental death, the belief is that if the cause of such death be not neutralised by such offering, further death will follow in future. The bones of such accidental died persons are preserved separately for sometimes and then

washed three times in the river and with all ceremonies are brought and kept separately. In case of a person is dead of cholera, small pox or due to other contagious disease, the body is buried and after about a month when fear of infection is over, dug up and burnt with all customary rites. The bones of such persons are kept in a normal way as per done for the other members.

Festival and Dance—Khasis

Festival among all the communities of India have their own significances from time immemorial. Similarly, the Khasis have some well known festivals which they celebrate with great pomp and show from time to time. Some of the important festivals of the Khasis are the "*Shad Suk Mynsiem*" and the "*Nongkrem Dance*" (Ka pomblang). Dancing forms the principal part of all the Khasi festivals. Moreover, Khasi festivals are integral part of their religion. The *Nongkrem* festival is still announced according to the olden days traditions. How a metal ring locally known as *Kyrwoh* is circulated among all the inhabitants of the region? Each *Raid* County will bring he-goat as a token of recognition of the Syiem and state authority and vice-versa the acceptance by the Syiem and his state elders. How the festival announcement with the beat of the drum in the evening time is made? And how *Blaie Lei Shil-long*—A guardian diety to Khyrim state is worship by the village priest, is all given below in systematically.

Ka Pomblang Dance at Nongkrem

The Nongkrem festival, the annual religious ceremony of the Khyrim Syiemship, more popularly known as the Shad Nongkrem, is at present the most ancient and renowned festival of the Khasis. Handed down to the people from time immemorial, it has undergone very little change in its form of worship and ceremony. The conception of the people or the fundamental ideas underlying this festival and even the colourful dances and music of the drums and pipes accompanying them remain practically the same as they were in the olden days.

The origin of this festival has been traced down to the days when the Khasis who inhabited these beautiful hills, lived together undisturbed by the outside world under one ruler and in one State. According to tradition, U Shillong, the first ancestor of the Syiem clan of Khyrim and Myllem, was the founder of this State. As the Khasis have not got any written record, it is not possible to determine the date when U Shillong founded this state but by the time the British invaded these Hills, many changes in its administration had taken place. Khasi Hills were already divided into many states of which two states named Myllem and Khyrim are till this day ruled by Syiems or Chiefs who are direct descendants of *Ka Pah Syntiew*, the first ancestress of the Syiem clan of Myllem and Khyrim. Only Khyrim Syiemship, however, still performs and observes the State religious ceremony established by their common ancestor.

To understand the significance of this Nongkrem festival and its sacrifices, offerings, dances and music, we must know the democratic system of the Khasis and their religion. The State is governed by a Darbar or council consisting of the Myntries of Bakhraws, who are all elected by the people and the Syiem who in turn is elected by the Myntries or Bakhraws from a member of the siem clan. This State again is formed by an association of units, known as "Riad", which consists of a group of villages and governed by Durbars consisting of persons elected by the people. Under them, we have village Durbars of every particular village. But the ancient Khasis had such a deep love and reverence for GOD and a firm belief that there is a divine influence underlying and supporting every relation of life, every social institution, that mere association for administrative purposes, is not enough. Nothing to them, in private or public life, is complete without religious formalities and offerings. Religion strengthens the bonds of loyalty between the syiem and his people and of unity between the different units which form the State. As per the Khasis religion, there are two fundamental and basic doctrines to be observed in life—one deals with worship of GOD, invoking Him aid in all undertakings and seeking comfort and support from Him at the time of distress, and the other deals with the social and moral life of man, and in this, it may include the ceremonial formalities and the respect paid to the departed soul of the

ancestors from whom we have come into being in this world. A brief description for the celebration of this popular Khasis festival is given in the succeeding paragraphs.

The festival is held five days continuously every year in the five week days known in Khasi as *Pamtiah*, *Umni*, *Iewduh*, *Lyngka* and *iew shillong*, generally in the months of May or June or at the convenient to the Durbar of Syiemship. When the date of the festival has been fixed by the Syiem and Durbar, it is generally communicated to all the villages by sending to them the rings of cane tied in a particular fashion to indicate the date requesting them to attend the ceremony with their offerings. It is also proclaimed by playing the music of drums and pipes once a week on every "*Pamtiah*" night in the "*Ing Sad*" the house of the eldest sister of the ruling Syiem.

On the day fixed for the festival, early in the morning before the break of dawn, the drummers and pipers, known as "*Dholias*" beat their drums in the "*Ing Sad*" till sunrise as a reminder to the people that from that night the ceremony will start. On this night, which is always a "*Pamtiah*" night, the High Priest known as the "*Soh Blei*", first enters the *Ing Sad* and sits near the hearth. The *Syiem Sad*, the eldest sister of the ruling Syiem then gives him a gourd of rice beer which he pours in libation to "*Blei Shillong*" founder of the State, invoking him to bless the Syiem clan and the people of the State with social and moral well-being, prosperity and ever-

flowing goodness in everything. A second gourd of rice beer is then given and poured invoking the blessing of the "*Lei Long Syiem*" the first ancestress of the Syiem clan and a third gourd is poured invoking the blessing of the first maternal uncle of the Syiem clan. After this the Syiem, the Bakhraws and others who are present, enter the main hall of the "*Ing Sad*". The Dholias then pour out libation in honour of "*U Biskorom*" the founder of skill arts and crafts, invoking him to bless the people of the State by giving them strength and wisdom and also to preserve the religion honour and house of the Syiem. These rituals are over, the Dholias play on their drums and pipes all the set music prescribed for the festival and then dancing takes place before the "*Rishot Blei*" (Holy Pillar) in the hall of the *Ing Sad*. Other ceremonies and dances are performed on the second day. On this day, the villagers also clean the dancing place and the path from the "*Ing Sad*" to the hill where the sacrifice of a he-goat only, in honour of "*U Shillong*" is to be performed. Beside other libation a "Puja or religious ceremony is performed invoking the aid of "*Ka Blei Synshar*" the goddess of justice to bless the state with justice and righteousness in all actions so that its honour and dignity may be maintained continuously.

On the third day, just after sun set, in the Syiem, the Bakhraw and public proceed together from the "*Ing Sad*" to the Hillock where a he-goat in honour

of "*U Blei Shillong*" is to be sacrificed. They are led by the dancers who dance along the way and Dholias who play the music followed by the High Priest, the female members of the Syiem clan, the ruling Syiem and Myntries, the female member of the Syiem clan take their respective seats arranged in the position and facing east. After, "*Puja*" a dance known as the "*Mastieh*", is performed first by the High Priest, and one of the "*Dholias*", then by the public and then by the ruling Syiem himself or his nephew and a member of the Bakhraws or Myntries clan and then again by the public. He-goat brought from different Raid (County) and villages are formally offered to the Syiem in the verandah of the "*Ing Sad*" in presence of all, as an indication that they are united to one state. These goats are sacrificed on the following day.

As already mentioned that a special care is to be exercised in Khasi religion, is to pay respect to ancestors. The same belief that the ancestors, although they are dead, can guide the life of person and bless them with all the best wishes and prosperous life pervades in the State religion of the Khasis. Offerings are therefore given and blessing of the "Founder of the Religion" the "Goddess of Justice" are invoked. When a family performs religious ceremonies, offering are brought by relatives to signify that they are in good terms. Similarly in the State Religion, offering are brought from different Raid (County) and Villages to demonstrate their

unity under one state.

The fourth day of the festival starts with dancing of the female members of the Syiem clan together with the Bakhraws or Myntries early at sunrise. First, round the hearth in the main hall of the *Ing Sad* and then in the court-yard. In the day time the young girls from all villages clan with gold and silver ornaments and best dresses, come to dance in the court-yard of the "*Ing Sad*" to the accompaniment of the music of pipes and drums. This is the "Thanksgiving dance" to God to signify our gratitude to Him for giving us a life of peace and harmony through the year. On the dance, only un-married girls can participate but men whether married or un-married are allowed. The girls dance in a circle inside and the men in circle outside. They do not lift their hands up and dance at a very slow speed. A women dance goes on, though separately but throughout the night because the Khasis women believe that it gives them the fertility, in order to spreading of their clan. Though young women dance with full enthusiasm and without any hesitation and hitch, yet full decorum at all the times, it maintained.

On the fifth night of the festival, the most important thing is to be observed that on this night all must pray to God the Creator. The Khasis do not give any offerings or sacrifices to God and all must observed a complete silence. The Syiem and the people, so assembled in the "*Ing Sad*" and this assembling is known as "*Durbar Sla*" is also called "*Dur-*

bar Blei" or Gods assembly, where they discuss only about God, the Creator. The Syiem sits on a mat spread out in a raised platform facing east and another elderly person sits on other platform facing north and the public faces the Syiem. After some-time proclamation is made that all should observe complete silence, no one should sleep, no one should talk, and no one should come in or go out. Then all are asked to pray in silence within themselves. After this the Syiem taking off his turban and kneeling down prays aloud to God, the Creator to bless aid and give him and the members of his Durbar, wisdom and strength to enable him and the Myntries to look-after any discrimination between rich and poor, powerful and weak, men and women and that there may be peace and happiness in the State. After him, one of the elderly persons kneels down and prays to God for his blessing on the Syiem, the Myntries, the people and the State as a whole. It is a ceremony performed to honour and respect the ancestors, the founders of the State and Religion and to invoke their blessings on the people. It is a ceremony to strengthen the ties of unity between the different groups of the State and above all to pray to God to give peace, harmony and a prosperous life particularly to the people of these Hills and the people of our Nation as a whole.

Shad Suk Mynsiem Festival

This is another important festival for the Khasis.

Shad Suk Mynsiem literally means a dance when heart is full of joy or happy. It is celebrated during the period of spring just before the next sowing or planting. It is a dance of thanksgiving to God for all the blessings of the past year and devotion prayers to God for the blessings yet to come in the coming year. It is also an occasion, when relatives and friends get together from far and near and settle their family affairs. It is said that in the olden days the youngs used to select their life partners during this festival time but now the practice has been changed. Maidens attired in traditional finest dresses and menfolk in colourful dresses, takes part in the dance. This festival is always celebrated in the month of April every year. The dance during the festival is supported by the music of flutes, drums and pipes signifying the joy of living and the ardent desire for happiness.

These festivals, of course, remind them of their religious duties and respects to ancestors, but also give them the true love of life and humanity. Without these festives and dances of merry-making, the Khasis feels their life is not only incomplete but baseless and paralised. The Khasis believes in God. Who is good and kind, desires them to live their lives fully. Hence the festivals, it is seen that the Khasis always laughs and dances when they are happy. The excellence in the Khasi festivals is that they never sing a song during the festivals but only shouts, laugh and dance.

Art and Architectures—Khasis

Memorial pillars and stones that silently tell the tales of their creators and their motives, can be seen in the hills as a art of the Khasis. The monoliths placed along paths, shows the memory of the ancestors and as well as for passers-by to rest. The big stone bridges and ruined forts in the area are the specimens of the Khasis architectures. The fort at Sajjar Nangala gives an example of the old Khasi architecture. This fort is said to be surrounded by moat and the remains of that moat are visible even today.

The Monoliths and Memorial Pillars: The monoliths and memorial pillars where the Seiyama and Syiem priestess used to reside in these Hills, denotes to basic characteristics of Khasi culture and race. Also these memorial pillars keep the remembrance of departed souls, family festivities and heroic events. Almost whole the area of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills especially by the side of roads is full of large slabs raised mounts of stones and platforms where the people rest their loads of firewoods and market products, shows the structure and monuments of the past.

Cherrapunjee town, about 75km. away from Shillong is not only famous for heaviest rainfall in the world but also a place of dramatic view incomparable to any part of the world. The memorial structure and common platforms of stone can easily be seen in and around the town Cherra. The re-

cords revealed that in ancient times the Khasis used to have a common platform of stone for cremation purposes. This platform is known as "*Kpep*". A permanent "*Kpep*" located in the centre of the stream at Lower Cherra, reminds the Chiefs of Cherra. Also there are two circular platforms on the top of hillock opposite the Ram Krishna Mission, one of them known as "*Palong Ka Ber*" and another "*Palong U Ronsing*". While enjoying a natural scenery of the town, one can easily look on the river *Ka Wah Rupatylli* with sparkling silver lines over it, flowing gradually in wide loops over the plains of Sylhet district of Bangladesh. This is also a source of Mawsmat falls near the *Wahkhlekkeh* or a sparkling stream.

The monoliths and dolmens are also connected with the Khasi's Nongkrem Dance. The Nongkrem festival religious ceremonies is always performed first with a token clod of earth from the monoliths and dolmens on the top of Barabazar or *Iewduh* in Shillong.

Since the Khasis are nature lover and then they had been admiring and loving the beautiful things which God has given to them. In this regard, it is worth to quote the following notification issued to the Chief Commissioner of Assam by the Secretary in 1894". On returning to Assam after an absence of five years, the Offg. Chief Commissioner has been much struck by the extensive destruction of Khasi Memorial stones which he has noticed in

the neighbourhood of Shillong... These monuments are not only of great interest from an anthropological point of view, but are also entitled to respect as memorials of the dead they represent...

Mr. Lyall desires me to request that you will suggest to the Syiems Sirdars and other authorities in Native territory the advisability of issuing proclamations forbidding interference with and punishing the violation of memorial stones, and in the British villages, you will take steps to punish such acts and will formally place the stones under the protection of the village authorities..."

The Notification was addressed to the Deputy Commissioner, Khasi and Jaintia Hills. As a follow up, he issued the following purwans... "For the above reasons, I now put under your care these stones, you will be responsible for the maintenance and protection of these Stones.

You must duly announce in your Elaka that no one should go and destroy these Stones. Should any one disobey this order you must report to me immediately so that I can pass necessary orders."

So, it may be mentioned that the Khasis in the olden days were really nature loving people and it is because of their love with natural and beautiful things and love to their ancestors that one can find the monoliths and dolmens, the "*Kpep*" the "*Palong*" and "*Kors*" erected at various places where a person can relax and enjoy the beauty of this great Nature of this World.

Mirth and Music—Khasis

The Khasis are peace loving as well as music loving people. Music, dances and sports are the main source of their entertainment and cultural life. The Khasis have musical instruments like several types of drums made of wood, duitara (Guitar), wooden pipe, flute made of bamboo. Jewish harp also made of bamboo and so on. These musical instruments are played from time to time on certain occasions. Some of the drums are only played for women dance. Again the flute known as '*Ka Sharati*' is played at cremation ceremonies, collection of bones and deposit of the same in the family tomb. Such instruments are never played on ordinary occasions.

The Khasis perform their dances in the open where all spectator could see and surround the dancers in a circular form. Their dancing pattern is almost like the Garos. The women form their dancing circle inside and the men in outside. The men and women participating in dances, dress themselves in their best dresses. The women wear ornaments and other jewellery also. There are different dances for different occasions. Like Longhai dance is performed during summers at the time of weeding and hoeing. The women dance hand in hand with men in S Lakhimai dance. Nongrem is a most important folk dance of the Khasis because it had a national importance for them. It is also known as Shad Nongkrem dance which is still alive and active in spite of the spread of Christianity and intrusion of

foreign culture. This is a five-day festival during which, the people worship to God for bestowing good harvests, peace, prosperity.

The Khasis are very fond of songs. However, their folk songs preserve a deep touching with customs, traditions and legends of the olden days. Their folk songs are having varieties according to seasons, festivals, occupation and occasions. Harvest songs varies from village to village, where the rural women work and thresh their paddy. There are songs in praise of waterfalls, flowing streams, hill slopes and so on. Also there are songs for love making and thereafter in case of departed both lovers and beloved. Few folk songs of the Khasis translated into English version are enumerated below :—

I. PRHI THARAI BA NGA DANG IEIT IA PHI

Tang namar ba nga iakren kai bad ki lok ;

Katba ngi dang ia iaid kai ha Nanpolok

Tang namar ba ngi ia lap kyrteng jong phi

Haba ia nga ki ia kylli jingkylli.

ch...phi tharai ba nga dang icit seh mo ia phi

phi tharai ruh ba nga dang ap khimblynti

Hynrei em kam long kumta da lei, lei ruh

Shisien ba nga la isih ngam lah ieit shuh.

Tang namar ba ngi kum kren ka ktien ia phi

Haba shisien ngi ia kynduh ha-lynti

Phi ong ia nga ba ngan ap ban ia leit ryngkat

Ka shatri phi ai ha nga ba ngan pynbat.

THINKING THAT I LOVE YOU

The writer imagine himself going and joking with friends while roaming in Nanpolok's lake. Friends were discussing and questioning about his old girl friend whom he loved. In reply he said not and never once I keep up, it is only an accident while I'm going on my way. It is her false. She starts talking and calling me to accompany her and at the same time, she gave me an umbrella as a token of love.

II. RYNGKAT BAD PHI

Jingieit ha phi te nga la ai
 Ei ei na phi shuh mgam tyngkai .
 Kynmaw ki ktien ba nga ju kren
 Kum paila shisien phi la deng.
 Ch...Khlem ma phi marwei nga la iaid
 Jing im jong nga katno ka blad
 Ryngkat ban don bad phi nga kwah
 Ryngkat bad phi ban shong ban sah.
 Ki nawlynnai bad mawkordor
 Shisha ia ki ngi ju khein kor
 Hynrei phi long kham itynnad
 Mynsiem jong nga kam lah ban khlad.

TOGETHER WITH YOU

The poet was telling a story about his true love which he has given to someone and nothing left behind his control. He himself stress and advice

her that real love is like a precious stone once you have decided. Sometimes, the poet was feeling uneasy while going alone without accompanying her and he feel that life was no cost at all. Meanwhile he want always to be with her and to stay together.

The poet compare that love is more than precious stone or gold, that is why his true love cannot be free from him.

III. KA SOTTI JUK

1. Mynba dang lung te ka pyrthei
Mynba dang don u briew u Blei
In kiew ia hiar na sohpet bneng
Ka hok ka sot rangbah ka ieng
2. Mynsiem sngew khraw ha ki kam don
Ym ju don ruh ka eh ka shon
Jingim ba sngur ba khein palei
Ka thok shukor kim tip ei ei.
3. Shano pat ngin shem pat
Kito ki por ba mynshuwa
Ki sngi ba kmen bad ki por ba suk
Ha kito ki por ka sotti juk.
Ch...Ko sotti juk ka por shongsuk
Kaba burom i'u rit i'u ria
Shajngai phi phet ngam iohi shuh
Junom na ngi phi phet jynduh.

THE PAST GENERATION

The song indicates about the past generation when people were so simple and very close to God. The

people of that time the Khasi called the Seven Huts. They were innocent and co-operative. The Seven Huts are divided into two groups and they were living, wandering together. Before them Justice stands forward and no proudness at all. The people are all same and no high caste and low caste. They are being peacefully, no cheatness and trust each other. The Seven Huts had pass away and the present generation stands. The present generation are completely changed and no co-operation at all. The writer of the song show his sadness when he compare the people of today. He remember and called upon the day of happiness and comfort of the Seven Huts.

Once again the writer called upon the Seven Huts, the life of happiness and prosperous. The poet now regretted and warned when he was in helpless condition and situation.

Villages—Khasis

The villages of the Khasis are not built on the extreme summits of hills but little below in order to have some protection from storms and winds. In ancient time, the location of the villages was invariably sited from defence point of view. The Khasi villages are close to each other but so closed like in Jaintia Hills. There are old memorial stones which denotes that the villages of the Khasi have been there for many generations. After the great earthquake of 1897, most of the villages in the Khasi Hills were re-built and the houses re-built after that, are

mostly made of wooden walls instead of stones. It is found in the Khasis villages that no special area is reserved for the village, head of Syiem and the nobility is that all the people, rich, rich or poor lives together in one village but their houses are abnormally scattered and independent. To the democratic Khasi, the idea of the Syiem living apart from his people would be repugnant. The villagers are very simple in living but maintain full decorum at all the time according to Khasi traditions. The villagers are jovial, laborious, Godfearing and hospitable. The villagers were entirely dependent on the field products but now they have trade and commerce due to which their living standard and economy sources are increased. The Government have noted more welfare and development schemes for the development of village people of the Hills.

Occupation/Agriculture System—Khasis

The physical environment being inhospitable and infertile land, almost every able bodied hand has to work in the field to eke out more substance for the family in the Khasi Hills. The women also participate for the services in the fields. Though the Khasis are industrious cultivators yet they are behind-hand in some of the cultivation methods. The main occupation of the people, inhabitant of the Hills is agriculture. Agriculture is still being carried out in traditional way with the help of crude implements and at low level technology. The others,

among non-agricultural activities, are engaged in man-management administrative activities, trade and commerce, transport, livestock, forestry and mining services which help them to absorb their unemployment in the region. The Khasis are thoroughly aware of the uses of manures. The paddy-fields are manured. The Jhuming cultivation system in the region is common. The traditional way of cultivation system being called '*Rep Bun*' (Jhuming) and the same has been explained in detail in the brief account of the Jaintias. There are four classes of land taken into use for agriculture purposes by the Khasi farmers :—

1. Forest land which is taken into use in the way of Jhuming System.
2. Wet paddy land which require less manures and mostly located in the deep valleys of the region.
3. High Grass land and
4. Home-stead land—full of manures and produces good crops, though the area under such cultivation is small.

The main agricultural implements being used by the Khasi farmers are, a large hoe, an axe, a large dah and bill-hooks. In the deep valleys where paddy fields are made for the crops, of the Khasi Hills are, Rice, Millet, Potatoes, Maize, Oil seeds and Cotton. Other commercial crops are orange, pineapple, banana, arecanut, betel-leaf, betel-nut, ginger and tez-patta. In the good olden days the hilly region was

very fertile for potatoes product. Provisions for irrigation hardly exist in the hills. Farming depends upon rainfall from time to time.

More than 80% people of the Hills depends upon agriculture and almost all the crops are produce in the region but still the life of the Khasi farmer is very hard and tough because of lack of proper irrigation, heterogeneous soil condition, lack of marketing facilities and high cost of transport and insufficient road communications. At present the State Government have started many other schemes like package programme for controlling Jhuming cultivation system through terracing of land and providing more provisions for irrigation channel for wet rice cultivation as an alternative to shifting cultivation. All these steps are being undertaken by Meghalaya Government to increase the economy of the hill people in all respects and educate them through Government experimental farm and Bharat Darshan Tour.

Language and Literature—Khasis

The tribal communities of India, their language and literature have been and will be a vast field for research students, amongst the linguistics, anthropologists and historians. According to the conclusion of Professor Kuhn and famous linguist, George Grierson, the Khasi language has been a clear connection with Mon-Khmer group languages and other languages of Indo-China, which is to be seen not only from similarities in some of the numerals, but form

the convincing conformities of many other words of these languages.

The Khasis of the Khasi Hills do not have their own scripts, although they have many dialects. They have adopted the scripts of their rulers. Later on in 1841, when foreign missionaries with the intention of spreading Christianity, came to these secluded and backward people, developed the local dialect of the Khasi as spoken in Cherrapunjee into Roman scripts. The missionaries also had compiled a Khasi-Anglo vocabulary and introduced Khasi literature. In the course of time, the Khasimen of letters (means intellectual Khasis) themselves started writing and composing their own literature. U Jeebon Roy, the founder father of the Khasis, was the first Khasi who rejuvenated the local culture and spelled out the basic characteristic of indigenous religion of the Khasis. He first established the Ri-Khasi press at Shillong in 1896 in order to spread the Khasi literature and enlightened the Khasis to the world thus may be called the Father of modern Khasi literature.

Since there is no record on the history of the Khasi script, we are still not certain about the origin of the language. The more convincing characteristic of the Khasi language are based on the brief description of Sir Charles Lyall's skelton. Grammar contained in Vol. II of Dr. George Grierson's "Lingustic Survey of India" and an excellent Grammar composed by Rev. H. Roberts.

There are four articles in Khasi; three in singular

and one in the plural for both genders. These are as under :—

1. U—Masculine
2. K—Feminine
3. I—Diminutive for both genders
4. Ki—For plural for both genders.

The use of above articles is as under :—

1. u—U bnai means the moon
2. ka—Ka sngi means the sun
3. i—i mei mean the mother
i khun mean a child
4. Ki—Ki Syiem mean the King

For more detailed information and reading, grammar composed by the Rev. H. Roberts may be referred to.

The numerals marked for the Khasi languages are given below :—

- | | |
|-----|---------|
| 1. | Wei |
| 2. | Ar |
| 3. | Lai |
| 4. | Saw |
| 5. | San |
| 6. | Hynriew |
| 7. | Hynniew |
| 8. | Phra |
| 9. | Khyndai |
| 10. | Shiphew |
| 11. | Khadwei |
| 12. | Khadar |
| 13. | Khadlai |

- | | |
|-----|-----------------|
| 14. | Khadsaw |
| 15. | Khandsan |
| 16. | Khadhynriew |
| 17. | Khadhynniew |
| 18. | Khadphra |
| 19. | Khadkhyndai |
| 20. | Arphew |
| 21. | Arphewwei |
| 22. | Arphewar |
| 23. | Arphew lai |
| 24. | Arphew saw |
| 25. | Arphew san |
| 26. | Arphew hynriew |
| 27. | Arphew hynniew |
| 28. | Arphew phra |
| 29. | Arphew khyndai |
| 30. | Lai phew |
| 31. | Laiphew wei |
| 32. | Laiphew ar |
| 33. | Laiphew lai |
| 34. | Laiphew saw |
| 35. | Laiphew san |
| 36. | Laiphew hynriew |
| 37. | Laiphew hynniew |
| 38. | Laiphew phra |
| 39. | Laiphew khyndai |
| 40. | Sawphew |
| 41. | Sawphew wei |
| 42. | Sawphew ar |
| 43. | Sawphew lai |

- | | |
|-----|---------------------|
| 44. | Sawphew saw |
| 45. | Sawphew san |
| 46. | Sawphew hynriew |
| 47. | Sawphew hynniew |
| 48. | Sawphew phra |
| 49. | Sawphew khyndai |
| 50. | Sanphew |
| 51. | Sanphew wei |
| 52. | Sanphew ar |
| 53. | Sanphew lai |
| 54. | Sanphew saw |
| 55. | Sanphew san |
| 56. | Sanphew hynriew |
| 57. | Sanphew hynniew |
| 58. | Sanphew phra |
| 59. | Sanphew khyndai |
| 60. | Hynriew phew |
| 61. | Hynriewphew wei |
| 62. | Hynriewphew Ar |
| 63. | Hynriewphew Lai |
| 64. | Hynriewphew Saw |
| 65. | Hynriewphew San |
| 66. | Hynriewphew Hynriew |
| 67. | Hynriewphew Hynniew |
| 68. | Hynriewphew phra |
| 69. | Hynriewphew khyndai |
| 70. | Hynniew phew |
| 71. | Hynniewphew Wei |
| 72. | Hynniewphew Ar |
| 73. | Hynniewphew Lai |

74.	Hynniewphew Saw
75.	Hynniewphew San
76.	Hynniewphew Hynriew
77.	Hynniewphew Hynniew
78.	Hynniewphew phra
79.	Hynniewphew khyndai
80.	Phraphew
81.	Phraphew Wei
82.	Phraphew Ar
83.	Phraphew Lai
84.	Phraphew Saw
85.	Phraphew San
86.	Phraphew Hynriew
87.	Phraphew Hynniew
88.	Phraphew phra
89.	Phraphew khyndai
90.	Khyndai-phew
91.	Khyndaiphew Wei
92.	Khyndaiphew Ar
93.	Khyndaiphew Lai
94.	Khyndaiphew Saw
95.	Khyndaiphew San
96.	Khyndaiphew Hynriew
97.	Khyndaiphew Hynniew
98.	Khyndaiphew Phra
99.	Khyndaiphew Khyndai
100.	Shi Spah
500.	San Spah
1000.	Shi Hajar
10000.	Shiphew Hajar
100000.	Shi Lak

Religion, Belief and Conception of God—Khasis

Physical features and climate have always had a great influence on the development of human customs and habits. Although culture has been advancing throughout the ages, the people have not always been the same either in every period or every part of the world. There was time in man's history when he progressed at much faster than others. Also some cultures reached to a certain stage and stopped while others continued to advance. Similarly no religion has progressed at once and reached to that level.

The main goal of all the religions, is to realise one God and one brotherhood but in practice, things fall short of that and the World-today is religiously divided into fragment and provincialism. It is only tolerance that can save the situation and usher in a New Era. Each Race or Nation has a part to play. Besides retaining its identity, it must live harmoniously with its neighbours first. Each race or nation has a soul and to guard, to protect that soul is its duty. The present world of religions is a garden of flowers and every religion with all its setting blooms with all its beauty and fragrance and each adds to the beauty and glory of the whole garden. As a race or nation, we have had to go through the days of stress and strains and we have now the time for rethinking, realising and re-assessments.

The Khasis are the people of their own religion, cultural and traditions which forms their rich heritage.

They are the strong believers of one God—who creates all mankind and who is the Supreme, and an absolute reality in this world. He is not definite abode—"is above and below" as well, omnipresent... Thus as the Khasis says, their Khasi religion is the man-knowing and God knowing religion. The Khasi religion had suffered a low tide for more than a century since the British rule started in 1833, followed by the Christian Missionaries. The socio-religio-cultural organisations of the Khasis i.e. The Seng Khasi, bases its aims and defects on Khasi traditions, culture and religion. Babu Jeebon Roy, Babu Sibcharan Roy, Babu Hormurai Diengdoh and Babu Rash Mohan Roy including many other Khasi intellectuals and writers, were the founder members of this organisation. The foundation of Khasi society is based on the concept of *KUR* and *KHA*. It means that who soever descended from the same ancestral mother, belong to the same *KUR*. The members of other *KUR* are *KHA*. Members of the same *KUR*, on matter how far removed, cannot inter-marry. Intra-clan marriage is one of the most greivous and mortal sins that a person can commit. The *KHA* clans can marry but subject to certain kinship restrictions imposed by religion. Each clan has its Triad—the ancestral mother, *Ka Iawbei*, the founder of the clan and the institutor of the clan's religious rituals. The builder and consecrator of the clan's Great Ossuary (Mawbah) and the eldest son *Suidnia* of *Ka Iawbei*, the ancestral maternal uncle of the clan, the one who

intercedes on behalf of members of his clan, before the Creator for their misdeeds and sins of omission and commission, The Khasis believe in close relation and communication between God and man. They start their prayers, (Invocation) with the following words.

"Oh God, the Lord and Master the One who assigns, the Giver of Divine faith to us the Khasis, 'Oh, I uphold the covenant between man and God from the beginning of Creation. I am not like other races and seek you through written books or by bowing before idols and images". Therefore the Khasis, even now, have no specific standard forms to be followed in performing the religious rituals and ceremonies. The Khasi religion has two parts, knowledge of *God Ka Niam Tip Blew* and second part, the knowledge of ones fellowmen and acceptance of the Khasi matrilineal. The Khasis believe that God is the only Creator and we are His creatures. They also compare life on earth to dewdrops hanging from a leaf. As the most beautiful dewdrops glitter and sparkle with an excellent colours of the rainbow, so also life on this earth. They compare the life likewise. They are the believer of that the body of man disintegrates after death but his soul and his identity continue to live. If a person has lived a meaningful and fruitful life then his athereal life is one of bliss, otherwise soul remain wandering in the space without peace.

According to the Khasi religion, all Khasis are

ever conscious of God and therefore they do not make any offerings and sacrifices to God as a token of gratitude.

In hepatescopy when signs are good, then the augurer pinches off pieces from the viscera, usually five, seven or nine in number, before involving the Triad, U Thawlang, *Ka Iawbei* and U Suidnia. Three pieces mentioned above are not offerings to the ancestors but simply taken from the functional organs of the body to symbolise the continuity of life, temporal and hereafter.

In Khasi family, the father look-after the welfare of the family in all respects. In case father is failed and dishonoured himself and his clan and rather ill-treat his family, he finds no favour in his family and the maternal uncles manage and take care of the family in all respects. The women is considered a respectful lady of each house. She is "*Lukhimai*" and the guardian spirit of the house.

If she is the Khad-Duh (Youngest daughter), she become the custodian of the ancestral property and trustee of the ancestral home. God has created woman to procreate and multiply. If a maid and a married woman failed to produce any issue, she is considered failed in her primarily duty towards God and her clan. A woman, as a fountain head of a clan, is held in high respect. Virtue and purity are her essential attributes. Certain religious ceremonies are not performed in marriage if a woman is no longer a virgin. In Khasis religion, marriage is taken

as a secret tie, to fulfil one of the purpose of life on earth—to multiply and expand the clan. Sex is not a past time nor means of gaining wealth. A couple who live together as a husband and wife without the knowledge of their parents, that marriage is temporarily condemned and generally not fully accepted by the family till the birth of a child. It is worth to note that if the man's family consider that woman, he married, is such a character unworth to be a daughter-in-law, she may never be accepted by the family, but children will not suffer because of the fault of the parents. They (Children) may not enjoy all legal right in things worldly but they do not suffer any blemish in matter of religion. Among the Khasis, a disrespect woman to the mother (Mei-Kha) or any other relatives on the father side, is considered as a very serious breach of family relationship, discipline and it is considered comparatively more serious than disrespect shown to one's own mother or any one of the mother's side. This reflects the special position that a man and his family hold in society after marriage. The man in a Khasi society thus hold two respectable and important positions after marriage, as a father in his wife's home and clan and as an uncle in his own mother's house and clan. An extraordinary thing in the Khasis belief that the crimes and transgression committed, not only adversely affect the person responsible but they bring misfortune and troubles to the whole family. Hence, clans loyalty among the Khasis was and is still

very strong and it is considered a disrespect to a clan to have a member begging because of poverty. There is no beggar in the world among the Khasis because of their clan system. In Khasi society, the first question put to a beggar if a Khasi, would be—are you a clan less or has all members of your clan become extinct? A Khasi is not alone as long as another member of the clan is there, however, remotely related they may be. The social gesture of the Khasis is still maintained a high standard. In the interior parts of the Hills and Villages, the community sweeps, cleans and repairs public paths, the market places and the village springs. In many villages they still help each other in repairing and building their houses free of cost. Also they help to each other at the time of harvesting. The Government social development schemes through Welfare Department like the Community Development Blocks which were expected to faster improve community spirit and work, however, seems to have damage the community functions. It tends to make the people dependent on Government helps and for them to loose respect on the traditional village elders and leaders and look up for to those connected with authorities for development grants.

In death we find, the friends and neighbours prepare the bier and the cremator or coffin and the grave and also staying nights together to console and comfort the bereaved family. In the olden days, there were small groups of like minded clans, having

mutual trust, respect and independence to govern over the small states. All matter of state were discussed in the open forum in the Durbar with each clan having a respective representative as its speaker. In village Durbars, the discussion and the proceedings were conducted peacefully and with all decorum but in the state, problems cropped up with crimes, disputes and quarrels. So with these, necessity arose to punish to imprison and in certain cases to execute the people. Due to fear of *Ka Byrsieh*, none of the clans could take the responsibility of carrying out the sentences, an executive officer, the Syiem was appointed. The Syiem was elected by the founding clans from among the foreigners residing in the state or from clanless family or from non-Khasis from the plains. A Lyngdoh is also a ruler like the Syiems. He is however, elected amongst the Khasi-Lyngdoh clan of the particular small state. He has to perform double functions as an administration as well as state high priest. As per the policy and ruling laid down for conducting Durbars by the Syiems, it was to be conducted with full decorum and orders. The males without moustaches, children, women and drunkards were not permitted in the Durbar. They believe that in Durbar, God himself is present to grace the solemnity of the occasion.

The religious concept of the Khasis is the source of inspiration for and foundation of their moral, social and political behaviour. The woman and the

man, the family, the clan, the inter-relation of the clans, the community and the state, are a series of enmeshing gears working smoothly together to produce a contented and happy people living in peace and harmony to honour and respect God. This influence on their way of life is still very much there.

Basic Tenets in Khasi Religion

The basic tenet in Khasi Religion are :

1. Live a clean and moral life.
2. Respect and love to parents.
3. Respect to uncles those who are in blood-relationships.
4. Respect to all elders.
5. Do not commit murder.
6. Do not steal.
7. Do not do any act which would bring bad name, shame and sorrow to another man's home and own home.
8. Do not acquire that is not right.
9. Do not laugh at ugly or deformed people.
10. Do not blame God on miseries and misfortunes, blame yourself instead, on blessings showered upon you, must thanks to God.

The Khasis are firm believer to God. All men and women who are born in this world are equal before God. Whether they are rich or poor, they believe in hard-work and sincere efforts. The richness or poverty are the outcome of ones ability, diligence and conduct. If anyone attempt on other's

wealth or other's homes, God will strike him. Also those who are guilty of intra-clan sexual relationship, those who commit suicide, murder in their own clan, those who commit abortion, and male-female twins are never cremated by their own clan nor funeral rites are performed nor bones are collected. They believe in good deeds throughout life. To work honestly and sincerely, to gain rich for bringing comfort is not a sin. But to make accumulation of money by unfair or foul means is a sin. We must believe the Lord, God, the Creator and the Cosmic Force because we are all creatures of His power and His love is the same for all.

Ancestors and Natural Forces

The Khasis remember their dead ancestors and from time to time. The children and relatives perform a ceremony known as "*AIBAM*" as a token of love and affections. To honour dead ancestors is the duty of every Khasi. To a Khasi, to ignore the dead is worse form of ingratitude which may bring misfortune to the family.

This practice is still exist in the interior of the hills. The people also worship to the natural forces and deities. In the southern side of the Khasi Hills, there are good number of rivers. The river Kenchi-yong is worshipped annually. The state god named *Ulei-muluk*, the god of water *Ulei Umtong* and the god of wealth *Ulei Longspah* etc. are worshipped by sacrifices of goats and cocks from time to

time. There are numerous other natural spirits and rivers in the hills which are being regarded as the abode of gods and goddesses. These gods and goddesses are supposed to exercise good or evil influences over human beings according to whether they are worshipped with all requisite sacrifices or not. The cock is a founding stone of the Khasi religion. As explained elsewhere in this book that according to the mythology and belief of the Khasis, the cock is the bird who brings sun and light every morning. A Khasi prayer has got a great influence and significance in the field of religion. It has very deep feelings of everybody towards the importance of a religion.

THE SENG KHASI

As on orderly account of the Hills tribals has already been given in this book that the British first got into the colourful Hills of Meghalaya in 1826. In order to protect the Khasis from the invaders, the leaders and the chiefs of the Khasi people, U Tirot Sing, fought well but he, the man of the principle, never submitted to the Britishers and at last succumbed to the superior weaponry, prisoned on false promises of the British and died in prison-cell in Dacca—East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), in 1833. The British tempted and offered him to go back to his kingdom and rule it on the condition he acknowledge the supremacy of the British authority but his choice was BETTER DIE A FREE MAN THAN LIVE A LIFE OF A SLAVE KING.

In 1841, the foreign missionaries –The Welsh-Calvinist-Methodist-Presbyterian Church of Wales—came along with the British army who established their shops for selling and purchase of religion and culture. They started active play in the field of conversion from the Khasi into the Christianity and created havoc with the religion and culture of the local people. But when the people were down and out, even then some of them, disobeyed and become terror against the missionaries because of their hearts bled at the sight of the inhumiliation of their people. They got-together and started re-unite under the leadership of Babu Jeebon Roy. Babu Jeebon Roy was joined by many Khasi intellectuals when the progress of Christianity was taken as a challenge to the traditional culture of the Khasis. His two sons named Babu Sibcharan Roy and Babu Chandra-nath Roy also joined him. He inspired the people to fight for the protection of their own rich heritage which led to the establishment of the SENG KHASI. The Seng Khasi, ultimately began to function in the Brahmo Samaj Hall at Mawkhair on 23rd November 1899. In 1902, a house bought at Mawkhair at Rs. 360/-, was organised and inaugurated under the Chairmanship of U Babu Rash Mohan Roy Nong-rurm and secretariatship of Babu Chandra Nath Roy. The family of Babu Jeebon Roy donated more land and money for the extension of the campus and construction of building for the Seng. (Reference to a letter written by Babu Sibcharan Roy to the

Secretary to the Seng Khasi from Sylhet dated 7th June 1909 – Seng Khasi miscellaneous file).

Babu Jeebon Roy was the leading spirit behind the formation of Seng Khasi. Even the missionaries were in full swing in converting the Khasi to West Christianity, he jumped into the people voluntarily and had inspired the people in favour of the protection of the Khasi religion and highlighted the greatness of Khasi and Hindu culture. His task was taken over further by his son Babu Sibcharan Roy who focussed on the close proximity between the Khasi and Hindu culture and inspired the Khasi with the spirit of Indian Nationalism. Babu Sibcharan Roy, born in 1862 at Cherrapunjee was the first Matriculate then known as Entrance Examination among the Khasi who studied in the Presidency College at Calcutta. During his long devoted public life, he made mark as a nationalist, journalist and literature. He joined Government Service as a Sub-Inspector of Police but shortly resigned in 1892 as a protest against the Government policy on tax in Jaintia Hills. He started a Khasi monthly magazine named, *UNonghira*, which criticised the British policy in the Hills and urged upon the Khasis to protect their religion, culture and customary laws. He acted as an active member of the Indian National Congress and gave wide publicity to the Congress Programme and categorically criticised the British Government War policy through a newspaper in the Hills which was banned in 1914. Besides the devotional

songs for Seng Khasi, he wrote many other books and magazines which are the masterpieces in Khasi literature on Khasi religion, culture, traditions and customary laws.

There were other many active personalities like Babu Radhon Singh Berry, Hormn Roy Diengdoh, among the founders of Seng Khasi who contributed a lot for the cause of the religion and culture of the Khasi. Babu Radhon Singh Berry, who wrote *Ka Jinganeng Tymmen* one of the best of Khasi maxims. He came into very close contact with the Brahmo Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission and Unitarian Church which had actively sympathised with the Seng Khasi but Miss Magaret Barry of the latter mission proved an active supporter of the Seng Khasi.

By 1902, the Seng Khasi started functioning almost independently in a hired building and later on by 1912 the Seng Khasi building was constructed. The members of the association donated out of various funds towards the building fund. The present three-storied building was completed in 1959 in which Assam Government had done much to assist the organisation. The Finance sources of the Seng Khasi are the voluntary donations and the fees contributed by the members. In the formative years of the associations, much more was donated by the members of the family of U Jeebon Roy. The Seng Khasi also owns and manages the building and compound of Higher Secondary School, College; cremation ground and a dancing ground in Shillong.

In order to give a solid and permanent continuity to the Khasi religion identity and affinity, at the present, there are another dynamic and reflective personalities behind it. They are master R. T. Rymbai, IAS (Retd) the President, and General Secretary U Hipshon Roy, IFAS (Retd) of the Seng Khasi. They are the men of strong will and right approach of not only for Khasis but to any religion and traditions. They teaches that the religion and traditions of a people, irrespective of community in the world, are two sides of the same coin and no one can destroy the one without destroying the other.

Constitution of the Seng Khasi

The Seng Khasi is an organisation of all the Khasis who adhere to the traditional Khasi religion. Few changes have been made in 1955 and 1956 by inducting new clauses to cover the growing activities of the association but basic principles laid down in 1899 are still the same and nothing has been tempered with. The membership is opened to all the Khasis who believe in the traditional religion. The constitution provides for Managing Committee and the office-bearers are annually elected. Earlier the Chairman was the head of the organisation. It was only in 1955, that the head of the Seng Khasi was redesignated as President. The Managing Committee was further increased in 1966 and since then the office-bearers are :

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. President | 7. Secretary Literature |
| 2. Vice President | 8. Secretary Social Wel- |
| 3. General Secretary | fare |
| 4. Assistant General | 9. Secretary Sports |
| Secretary | 10. Secretary Cremation |
| 5. Treasurer | 11. Secretary Building |
| 6. Secretary Culture | 12. Secretary Collection |

Aim of the Seng Khasi

In 1900, sixteen indigenous Khasi elders committee defined various ways and means to achieve its objects. The committee was fully responsible for the following :

1. To create consciousness of God amongst people.
2. To deliver regular lectures for the mental nourishment of the people.
3. To foster a sense of brotherhood amongst the Khasis who still retained their socio-cultural and religious heritage.
4. To work for the advancement in the fields of Education, Welfare, Sports, social-cultural functions and to regulate the way of living, moral and social code and conduct.
5. To earn name through right services to the people.

There is another organisation known as *Ka Seng Nongshat Nongkhein*. This is an organisation of the indigenous Khasi-Pnar traditional ritualists of the Khasi religion in the Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya based on Nongthymmai Shillong. The

head of this organisation is U En. Nongrum, a ritualist himself in the Khasi traditional faith. It was formally inaugurated in a public gathering at Madanriting Seng Khasi ground on November 21st 1982 with a formal ceremonial hoisting of their flag by U Hipshon Roy, the General Secretary of the Seng Khasi. The traditional ceremonies were strictly observed. Its principles are exactly based on Khasi culture and religion.

The Khasi-Pnar belief is also the same as of the Khasis that God is universal and there is only one God. They also stress that Khasi-Pnar religion has no missionary intention. It is a voluntarily association of the Khasi-Khasis (i.e. Khasis adhering to their original faith, not only for the unity and preservation of the identity in religion and culture of the community but for good relationship and respects for others in keeping the tenet of Khasi religion, "*Ieid ia lade bad burom ia kiwei*"—Love thyself and respect others.

Insignia

Red flag and a crowing cock were adopted as the particular symbols of the Seng Khasi. The design first was formed by U Quet H. M. Blah, a member of the association. In the formative stage, it was reflected with the words "SENG KHASI—1899" on a red colour flange type cloth. In 1961, U Hipshon Roy, now General Secretary of the Seng, proposed a new design which was finally accepted. It is with

crowing cock in white circle with red background. The red background signifies courage. The circle in white represent the world. White stands for the fundamental belief of the Khasis and his faith that he comes to this world to propagate and earn truth. The crowing cock symbolises the ancient culture, rites and traditions of the Khasis that as and when sins darken man's path, it (cock) crows to bring out the sun that gives the light—that man proceeds along the path of purity, humanity and divinity.

Historical Data and Achievement—Seng Khasi

It was submitted in the Annual General Meeting held in 1903, that the SENG KHASI was functioning smoothly with the Brahmo Samaj and Unitarians. But Seng Khasi, gesture to the Methodist Christian for mutual co-operation, in the betterness of the people and creating cultural consciousness was scornfully rejected. The Christians had become jealous to the Seng Khasi. The missionaries were actively working in their missions. The association organised (Thanks-giving Dance—"SHAD SUH MYNSIEM") annually, in the traditional Khasi ways to offer homage to God and praying to shower peace in mind. It has since been developed as a popular festival annually organised at the advent of the spring. Missionaries did not like any function organised by the Seng Khasi and the Welsh Mission then launched practically, a campaign against it by ex-communicating any one from the Church. Even a function organised

by the Seng Khasi to bid farewell to the outgoing Chief Commissioner of Assam, Sir Henry Cotton, was not attended by the Christians. The attacks of the Christians became more and more virulent. The missionaries were supported by the heads of the Church and within 15 years of time, there was rapid conversion and it was hoped that within a short span of years the whole Khasi Hills would be Christianised. But in 1907, Rash Mohan Roy, spoke on conversion and condemned the missionaries actions. He propagated and inspired the people that we must not desert Truth. They (Missionaries) have destroyed the good and moral teachings of the Khasis. We must not believe the strangers. In this year, the Seng Khasi also focussed its attention to the development of indigenous Khasi music as a part of its cultural programme. In spite of several oppositions, the dance and a sport of Archery became annual functions of the Khasis in Shillong. From 1911, the Seng Khasi organised lectures on Khasi religion. These lectures revealed the intrinsic wealth to be found in one's own religion, the religion of truth, they spoke to the Khasi concept of sin and lucidly explained the role of *Kur* and *Kha* in Khasi society. To protect its own people from the onslaught, Seng Khasi adopted an aggressive approach. The religion discourses were interspersed with frontal attacks on Christian dogmas and doctrines, leading to open antagonism between the supporters of Seng Khasi and the Christians. In 1922, the Seng Khasi revised

its constitution and defined the fundamental concepts on which it stood. The Khasi, though faced a crucial time till Independence yet continued their selfimposed work of husbandrying the traditions and customs with patience and with full spirit of dedication and devotion.

Welsh Presbyterian Mission has the upper hand over education too in the Khasi Hills. The missionaries were teaching in the Hills on the line of—"Come to Jesus" for which Khasis were reluctant to attend the missionary schools. Some special phrases like mother is a sinner, Father is a sinner etc. were strongly objected by the Khasis and many citizens of the time, preferred to go down Sylhet to get their education. U Jeebon Roy had contributed a lot towards to raised the standard of education. Once sometime during 1976, he did approach the Welsh mission to start High School but rejected and told that they had come here to teach the people how to read the Bible and not to educate them. From that time, U Jeebon Roy, with the co-operation of other Khasi intellectuals and the Bengalee residents of Shillong, fought against the Missionary to establish High School to impart more education to the people. He after putting rigorous efforts got the Government sanction and the High School was started in the site where the present Telegraph Office is located. In the beginning, Babu Jeebon Roy donated Rs. 700/- for further maintenance. His son, Sibcharan Roy was the first student to pass the

Entrance Examination from his father's school. The missionaries felt jealous over it and being upper hand over the field of education, opened their own High School which later on, amalgamated with the Jeebon Roy's School with the condition that Headmaster of the School would be from missionary. In 1892, Jeebon Roy opened another High School in his village Shella which was fully supported by funds from Shella State but unfortunately the School was completely destroyed by the "Great Earthquake" in 1897. Since the missionaries got hold over the High School, they converted it into another centre of indoctrination. They introduced their own text books like the book of Joshua, Jodgen and the book of Job. As per the saying of Rev. John Roberts, in a conference held at Oswestry in 1896, that the first lesson to be taught to the child, would be that he is a sinner and all are the sinners. The portion of that lesson is like this; I am a sinner, you are a sinner and all are sinner...we make no difference between the day School and the Sunday School...we have a Sunday School not on one day, but in seven days of the week.

The missionaries also made the best use of the Institutions. The pupils were forced to convert into Christianity and those who were not agreed, were refused admission. Non-converts were discriminated in matter of scholarships and Government jobs. In fact, the Khasis were not satisfied with the education being imparted by the missionaries.

Due to continued efforts of U Jeebon Roy and his followers, the Seng Khasi, in 1920, passed a resolution to start a Primary School of its own. At last, on 20th May 1921, under the management of U Rash Mohan Roy, retired Government Servant, a Seng Khasi Free Morning School was opened. The books written by Khasi authors like Jeebon Roy, Radhon Singh Berry and others were introduced. The pupils were taught about one's own religion, culture and heritage and love to each others. From the very beginning the schools faced financial hardship and even in 1924 when many mission schools obtained Government grants, this school was not granted any aid. In 1925, Rash Mohan Roy sent out a letter appealing for funds. It has been recorded in the file—The Seng Khasi—that Lala Lajpat Rai donated Rs. 50/- when he visited the School. The Adamjati Sevak Sangh also sanctioned a grant of Rs. 5/- per month which remained operative upto 1949.

From these monetary aids from the wellwishers, members of the Seng Khasi, and outside helps, Rash Mohan Roy could manage to provide, chalk, slate and books to every poor pupil.

Once the Education Inspector of Schools asked Rash Mohan Roy to include in the curriculum prescribed by his department. Rash Mohan Roy urged to accept the prescribed curriculum provided the books written by and compiled by the missionaries are excluded and not to be taught in the Seng Khasi School. But no consideration was given to Mr.

Roy's plea and recommendation for Government grant to the school was withheld, resulting in a protest circular was printed by the Seng Khasi. Consequence upon the withholding of recommendations for Government grant to the Free Morning School by the Inspector of Schools of the Hills, Rash Mohan Roy, alongwith the members of the Seng Khasi, prepared a circular containing true picture of the treatment being given by the Government to this school. The circular was printed and a copy was sent to Mahatma Gandhi who published an article extracted from the circular, in his "Harijan" dated 9th March 1940. Article "The Secretary of the Seng Khasi Free Morning School Mawkhar, Shillong has sent me a copy of the circular letter among others concerned and I write—"If what is stated here is true, it enforces the argument often advanced by me that Christian missionary effort has been favoured by the ruling power. But I advertise the circular not for the sake of emphasising my argument. I do so in order to ventilate the grievance of the Secretary of the School. Surely, he has every right to object to teaching proselytising literature prepared by the missionaries. It should be remembered that the school was in receipt of grant from the Government. It is not clear, why the question of missionary books has now cropped up. It is hoped that the school will not be deprived of the grant because of the Secretary's very reasonable objection.

The above article published in "Harijan" reached

to every part of India. The British Government never thought about the grant to the Seng Khasi School but on publication of Mahatma Gandhi's appeal in the above article and initiative of the Bhartiya Adamjati, Seva Sangh, granted a monthly grant of Rupees five. British Government also sanctioned a monthly grant of Rupees twenty which remained operative till independence of India.

The Seng Khasi had been facing problems one after another especially in the field of education and religion. Free Morning School was recognised by the Government and after Independence, it was liberated in many ways then one it came in many shapes and forms. It made a great achievement, from a Primary School it became Middle Examination School in 1958 and a High School in 1964 and in the same year Higher Secondary School. Due to continued efforts by the Seng Khasi and on achievement of good result in the Secondary Examinations, it had started Night College in its premise in Mawkhar, Shillong in 1972. After Independence the School now College was taken under India Government grants.

The achievements of the Seng Khasi in promoting its ideals and creating cultural consciousness can never be over-estimated. The Seng Khasi was given associate membership of International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) in October, 1981. U Hipshon Roy, General Secretary of the Seng Khasi and Mr. H.O. Mawrie participated in the

IARF. Theological Conference held at Belgium and the main IARF Congress held in Holland from 24th to 31st July 1981, which shows that the Seng Khasi has now made its appearance on the International scene for the first time from its existence. During 1982-83, the Seng Khasi youths join the first "IARF Youth Encounter India" that unites 25 young adults from foreign countries. In the IARF Conference held in 1983-84 at Calcutta many projects have been taken for World-wide Peace Programme and the Religious Quest for peace. Again during 1984, the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF), a six day triennial Congress was held in Tokyo, Japan, attended by more than 400 foreign leaders including 400 delegates from Japan itself to seek for mutual understanding and co-operation amongst people of various religious affiliations and practical approaches to World peace in our World of nuclear giants.

U Hipshon Roy, the General Secretary of the Seng Khasi, who led the delegation in connection with the attend IARF Congress held during July-August 1984 in Japan, reported back that the Seng Khasi, the living symbol of the traditional Khasi-Socio-Culture life, has been admitted to the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) as a full member and it was Red Letter Day for the Khasi indigenous religion to have found a place in the sun. "For the first time the distinct identity of the Khasis have been recognised in any international forum".

A KHASI PRAYER

Oh God, above and hereunder, Creator and
Bestower,
Life Giver and Sustainer, Gracious Lord, the
Dispenser,
The Designer, Oh God to you a thousand thanks;
Bestow then Oh Lord, bestow strength and
courage,
Intellect and virtue, ways and means to live
and thrive, Physically and Spiritually ;
To grow in intellect with purity and straight
forwardness,
To acquire the understanding of living in Truth;
To be free from ignorance, guilt and obsti-
nateness,
Because of Truth Oh Lord, intellect and virtue
will grow ;
With understanding, awareness, knowledge and
strength,
From all of us, Oh Lord, a thousand thanks.

Evaluation—Khasis

Since no written record about the origin of the Khasis is available till to date, the fact of their origin from powerful Mongoloid can not be ignored. Centuries back, they originally came into Assam from Burma via Patkoi Range and later spread over to these hills. Though the Khasis claim their origin from the Nine Above and Seven Below

families yet no evidence can be established to prove the statement.

The mother is the originator of the family among all the three communities of the hills and the fact of inheritance seems to be correct. As regards to the household organisation, among the Khasis, mother has been considered a custodian of the family rights and property. She is succeeded by her youngest sister. Among the Khasis family, youngest daughter is religiously bound to perform the religious ceremonies in the family. She gets little extra share of ancestors property than the other. It is done in accordance with the Khasis Law of Inheritance which can not be changed. Uncle's role among the Khasi families has got a great importance which can not be discontinued being customary. The co-operation and unity among the families are basic requirements.

In order to defend themselves from the invaders and wild life they had been living in groups in the olden days and this was the basic requirement of the time. Their house warming ceremonies and hospitalities are the deserving activities and cannot be over-looked. Their somewhat natural food, drink habits and strong labour in the rocky and unfertile land are responsible for the well built and muscular bodies. We can not blame these people for their regular liquor drinking habits due to inclement weather and uncongenial climatic conditions in the hills. The old customs and traditions of rice beer consumption only on certain occasions have been

changed into drink spirits (Rukshy). Among the rich families, an English wine and liquor are used. Traditional beer consumptions in urban areas has switched over to the modern drinks. Similarly there is a great change in their dresses and wearings but during annual occasion/festivals the participants wear their traditional dresses. The male members have more or less adopted the western dresses. The female have almost continued with their traditional dresses which shows their love and affections to their community.

According to the Khasis belief and religion, the cock has been considered a guiding bird and therefore the Seng Khasis has taken into use in their emblemizing their flag. This may be to give an identity to the Seng Khasi but in fact, it hardly effect in the field of any religion. As per their faith and belief, the fact of paying homage to ancestors from time to time and celebrate the certain ceremonies is a religious duty of every community and one can continue the same according to their own traditions and customs.

In the field of agriculture, the region is very fertile in product of potatoes and vegetables but the whole economy does not meet the requirements of daily life of the people. In the most interior part of the hills communication is not possible and on the steep slopes, hoeing, or ploughing will result in washing away of the fertile top soil. So, the Jhuming cultivation alone will do and Government should

encourage the system where ploughing or hoeing does not suit. Fertility of the soil can be retained if the land is left fallow for some years. But due to rapid increase in population, fallow up gap cannot be extended more and due consideration is left with the Government. Though, there are number of suggestions from every corner to switch off Jhuming system, but I feel, being this system born with the tribal of the region which is interwoven with the society and suits to the climate, to the terrain and economic conditions of the people of the region, feel this system as a products of everything i.e. their festivals, ceremonies, habits, their own philosophy of life and so on, it is not possible to or desirable to transforming Jhuming system into permanent farming immediately. Acceptability and motivation of the Jhumers, who are still in the relatively primitive stage of culture, is a must. The Khasis have adopted a more advanced method of Jhuming called, '*Rep-Bun*' where on the same land they cultivate every year. They do so by collecting grass and branches of trees in rows of about 2' by 6', depending on the terrain, and separated with a gap of 3' to 4'. When the branches and grass are dry, they dig the stumps around and place the stumps over the branches carefully and then set fire to it. This is a jhuming but without the further destruction of forest land. Pierre De Schlippe, an authority on the subject in Africa had cautioned in 1956 that, "So far the cooperation of Social Anthropology for

the study of Social Changes involved in land tenure and land utilization has not been enlisted. One cannot help feeling that the danger of developing agriculture for the sake of production without a parallel social adjustment has not been overcome." Planners in their enthusiasm, to bring the tribals as equal partners in the main stream has often neglected this aspect, particularly in tribal areas. Money alone will not help as it has not helped in Africa with all the expertise and financial help that the United States of America and the Western powers have given. Press Trust of India recently (4.4.1985) reported that Western Aid has worsened Africa situation where it quoted the Senior Vice-President of the World Bank, Mr. Ernest Stern saying, "We have failed in Africa along with everybody else. We have not identified the priorities. We have not always designed our projects to fit."

In the field of education, as already said that U Jeebon Roy and his family had played an active role to awaken these simple souls of the hills to the modern world. Due to vigorous, untiring efforts by U Jeebon Roy, the Khasis could get into contact with the outside people, and with their education, felt the need to protect their religion, tradition, heritage and recognition which they have now-a-days. The modern civilization in the hills has greatly been influenced by Westernisation. The Christian Missionaries adopted Roman script in the schools, churches and other teaching institutions. In fact, foreign mis-

sionaries have contributed in progress of modern education of the people and wider contact with the modern world. Though the main aim of the foreign missionaries was to spread Christianity yet the intelligent people understood and followed their own path in order to protect, their culture and religion. In spite of wider spread tendency of Christianity among the people in the whole Meghalaya, the Khasis are still having their own identity and their organisation named the "Seng Khasi" which is a symbol of the traditional Khasi-socio-cultural life. The Seng Khasi has been admitted as a full member of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF). Now the identity of the Khasis have been recognised in this International Forum. It may be noted that it is the first and only tribal religion in the world to be recognised as such. IARF practical approach is to seek mutual understanding and co-operation amongst people of various religions in order to achieve world peace in our world of Nuclear Giants.

THE JAINTIAS

Geographical Identity

The Hills of Meghalaya are very old. These were formed at the same time when the greatest Himalayan chains were uplifted from the bed of the sea during the mesozoic and early Tertiary times. Since Meghalaya has been divided into three hill sections, the Eastern Meghalaya is known as Jaintia Hills. The Jaintia Hills covers an area of 3285.5 sq km North Cachar and Kabri Hills border the north-east and Sylhet (now in Bangladesh) on the south of this district. This roughly corresponds to the hilly position of the ancient Jaintia Kingdom. The Headquarter of the district is located on the Central plateau. The height of the peaks and ridges vary between 3250 feet to 5150 feet approximately. The Headquarter town of Jowai is situated at an elevation of 5150 feet above the sea level. In the south-east there are ranges comprising Karsing Peak.

The Jaintia Hills are also full of rivers flow towards the north-east. One of the rivers named Iubha rises from the foot of Marangsihand Krosing Peaks which flows south-west and joins river Surma in Bangladesh. The river Kupli rose from the upland east of Passi, flows towards the north-east in Meghalaya via north-west in Kabri and finally joins the

Brahmaputra. A major hydel project known as Kupli River Valley Project is in progress in the area. There is hot water spring at Garampani which is a beautiful sight view for the tourists in the Jaintia and North Kachar Hills.

Origin—Jaintias

There are different statements about the exact origin of the Jaintias but finally accepted version is that name 'Synteng' (Jaintia) is a later evolution along with the evolution of the kingdom itself. In fact nothing is much more evidence recorded and known about the origin of the Jaintias. According to the Historians and on the base of records available, the Jaintias are of the stock of Mon-Khmer people of Indo-China. They resemble Mon-Khmer people in some basic points of language, festivities and in erecting stone monoliths. Therefore, it could be said that the Jaintias may have come from the South-East first to the splendid valleys of Assam and then beautiful Meghalaya.

They continued their move further to their present abode in search of food and shelter. The exact time of their migration is not known but it is assumed that the final migration might have arisen out of the rivalry of religion and culture followed by the conquest of Assam by Naraka of Mithila between 200-500 A.D. (Reference mother Goddess Kamakhya), The Jaintias first entered to the present hills known as Jaintia Hills, though they are south of the river Kupli. There are legends which shows that how these

people crossed the river Kupli and settled down over the east and west of the hills.

According to tradition, the Sutnga Siemship was the eldest in Khasi and Jaintia Hills. This also tells that the Jaintias were the first inhabitants in these Hills. Few references have been made to establish the oldest history of the Jaintias but no authenticated record is found except in the chronicles of Ahom Kings (Jaintia Buranji). The record is valuable which narrates the relation between Ahom Kings and Jaintia Kings since 1500 A.D. The Jaintias were few in number when they crossed the river Kupli and entered in the east of the Jaintia Hills. As with the necessity for food and shelter and too the rapid progress in their own clans, they scattered over the hills towards western side in small groups, always keeping link with the parent population. In the beginning with their head (King), they established their habitations at Shangpung, Mynso, Sutnga Nartiang and Jowai. The Jaintia King opened few small buyers for their daily needs because the Jaintias were never self-sufficient in the basic necessity of life. Moreover, at that time they were not knowing the proper cultivation. The land was also not cultivable under many other circumstances and natural obstacles but still these brave and laborious people hold to establish their stay in the jungles under command and control of their Kings. In order to meet the basic requirements of the life they maintained contact with merchants from the plains.

The Jaintia King was more a democratic head of the units in the scattered villages under respective Dolois. He was so to say a federal head and village units (Doloiships) were the federating units. He was only need for defence from foreign affairs. Internally, the Jaintias were independent but for the import of rices, salt dry fish and other essential things of the daily need, they had been maintaining continued contact with the plains and vice versa for selling the product of the Hills.

According to the various publications of the British Government and the authenticated account of Assam (1800 A.D.), it is said that the Jaintia Kingdom was very old Kingdom. They were ruling both the neighbouring plain as well as mountains areas.

In order to develop their trade and commerce, the Britishers were trying to keep contact with the Hills Chiefs since 1791. On 10th of March 1824, the British Government signed a friendship treaty with Raja Ram Singh. Although friendship treaties had signed between the Britishers and Kings of the Hills, were not in favour and accepted to these Hills people. The people of the Hills took serious views on the interference of their customs and religion. A brief account of fierce fighting between the brave Tribes and the Britishers has already been given in this book. However, the Jaintias, under the leadership of U Kiang Nongbali rose in revolt (1860 to 1863—The Assam Account). U

Kiang Nongbah was tried and hanged and other many Jaintias died in fighting in this rebellion. Though the rebellion was quelled yet the people could not be subdued. Then, the Britishers adopted back-door policy that of bribing the village chiefs and leaders. Who so ever went against the will and wish of the community, was outcasted. Meanwhile the Missionaries from the wales of the West, played its highest role to convert the Jaintias into Christianity. The missionaries spread to far-flung areas in the villages, preached the teachings of Jesus Christ and constructed churches. The foreign policy, divide and rule, came into force and the villages got partitioned into the 'Mission' Compound and the old Village (Shnong). The waves of western life and culture influenced many, yet the original habits, customs and beliefs have not yet gone out totally. A brief account of social, family, religious and cultural life of the Jaintias is given in the succeeding paragraphs.

Fascinating Story of their Creation

In the folklores of the Jaintias, it is stated that God created first the sun, the water, the air and the fire. The fire is the brother and the first three are the sisters. They were quarrelling for supremacy and in the test competition, God selected the Fire, the being of the Earth and according to other folklores of the Jaintias, the Earth was covered first by rock. The Goddess Bei Rymmaw (in Jaintia) prayed to God for making the earth, worth to live.

So God sent his ministers named Tjor (U Thor U Pyrbat) after Bei Rymdaw, U Thor divided the earth into lower and higher land, dates and valleys, hills and gorges ; streams and rivers and at last made the whole earth completely worth to live. God created everything on the earth except man and made a beautiful world. The world was so beautiful that the heart of Jom (Yama), the chief servant of God involved in jealousy. He was driven out to this world and generated enmity and conflict among the creatures. Soon the whole world become a fighting arena of all the creatures. In order to pacify the animals beings, God sent the seven families down to the earth. These families came down through a rubber plant which was located nearby Shillong-Peak. It is said that this tree was so tall which had been touching the sky and it served a means of communication between the earth and God. It is claimed that since coming down the seven families settled down into the Hills, were the progenitors of the Jaintias Race.

Social Groups—Jaintias

In fact the social life of the tribe communities differ from tribe to tribe and region to region. The society of the Jaintias represents of their social, family, religion and cultural life. The Jaintias of Meghalaya constitute the principal clan groups of Sohkpoh, Liban, Lxngdoh, Lywait, Lanong, Lakhiang, Kima,

Litan, War, Nikhla, Nongbah, Gatphoh, Kynjing, Thangkhiew, Tlang Slong, Shylla, Lato, Pde, Host, Dom etc. The mother is the originator of the clan. It is the mother who contains and sustains in children and children bear her name as titles. In the beginning and till the Jaintias were in a single locality, it was not felt necessary to spread over the whole Hills, but with the growth of population and need for food and basic necessities of the daily life, compelled them to spread out. The Jaintias cannot marry in the same clan.

The position of ancestral mother is very great among the Jaintia society. As already told that the mother is the originator of the clan as such she occupies a very important and responsible position in the family. As regards to the father's position in family, he takes care of his mother, brothers and sisters and simultaneously his family (wife and children) are looked after by his inlaws. Therefore, it may be concluded that this system among the Jaintias society works well hence the family chain does not luck and suffer. Similar to the Khasis clan system, the Jaintias (the husband and wife) retain their respective clan title after marriage.

Physical Structure—Jaintias

The Jaintias are strong and sturdy people. Their physical appearance is similar if not identical to the Khasis. However, due to environment and climatic conditions, the Jaintias are slightly different in

complexion. The women are beautiful and fond of fashionable dresses. The Jaintias are not bulky because of climatic conditions and hard-working in the fields but they are enough strong. Quite interior parts of the Jaintia Hills, the men working in the fields, are not much bother of their health and care. Physical standard is normal. The women are of normal short height but hard working and beautiful of the average health.

Household Organisation—Jaintias

In the house, mother is the originator of the family and as well as organiser in all respects. Mother is responsible to look after her children both minor, major, married and unmarried.

The Jaintias preserved their ancient family institution of matrilineal. Mother conceived as a container among the Jaintias society. She is the custodian of both movable and immovable ancestral property. Even children (unmarried) property belongs to mother. The husband's earnings in his children's house remains with the family and whoever he help to earn in his mother's house remains with his mother only. The married sons and daughters start living separately except the youngest daughter who remain in the ancestral house. With the changing pattern of occupation from agriculture to contracts, Government Services, there has been some changes in the system.

It is an interesting to note that when I come across

to a Jaintia gentleman at Jowai, explained that the family life among the Jaintia society was very rigid in the olden days. A Jaintia family belongs to a mother and her children. He gave an example that the Jaintia family is like a tree, its leaves, branches and fruits. He compared mother with a tree. The mother is a stem creator, container and sustainer and children are her arms like branches, leaves and fruits. So fruit should always go to the creator that is mother and ultimate duties of the branches and fruits goes to the stem that is mother. Further, he gave me an analogies from the animal kingdom. He explained, that it is the mother who own the children and feed them as in the animal kingdom where the father does not show any responsibility towards the female and the children. In this way he discussed and concluded that the mother should be the legitimate owner of the children. He further described that to bring up the children is the responsibility of the mother. She bears every sort of troubles of her child. It is by nature. She nurse her own natural made milk from her breast, heart and soul, so automatically natural love of mother goes to her children. Likewise the children should lookafter the well-being of the mother first. There, the father is a son of his mother first and then husband of his wife. The mother has natural claim and jurisdiction over her children. Only mother permit her son to visit his wife and live there only for the night. The son belongs to his mother in life

and too after death. His bones after death are kept alongwith the bones of his mother.

All the ceremonies, other related matters and entire household are controlled by the mother in the Jaintia family. She is the head and custodian of the whole property. When she is unable to supervise her work and duties, she may ask her sons to look after the work. The gentleman again discussed and told that still mother prefers to have more children in order to have more people of their own clan all over the hills. Generally, Family Planning Programme, is not liked by the Jaintia families. The tribe man has a hidden complex of being outnumbered by the neighbouring people and that is why they are after more and more children. Though it is out of way to mentioned this but one should understand a customary bounded Jaintia family as defined in the *Encyclopaedia in Britannica* (1966). A Jaintia family, categorically is a group of persons united by the tie of marriage, blood or adoption constituting a single household, interacting with each other in their respective social positions of husband and wife, mother and father, son, daughter, brother and sister, who share, create and maintain a common culture.

In every community, the basic aim of the family is first to tie marriage between husband and wife for the procreation and up-bringing of the off-spring. As such, the mother and the father constitute the two vital pillars of a family. But in the Jaintia family, the father does not belong to the family of his wife.

and children. He is only a 'night' visitor to his wife's house. He has more responsibilities towards his mother first and other members of his mother's house where the mother is entirely a house-hold organiser.

The House—Jaintias

The Jaintias houses were made of hard wood, stone walls and good quality of timber like oak, pine and jackfruit. They have also large houses. For example a house of the Dolloi of Sutitnga in Jaintia Hills is 75 feet long. They plaster the space in front of the house with red earth and, cow-dung which shows the influence of Hinduism. The people of the biggest village named Nartiang in Jaintia Hills, came under Hindu influence after the Jaintia kings embraced Hinduism and Nartiang was the summer capital of the Jaintia kingdom. There is a Hindu temple with a Brahmin pujari, a descendant of the Brahmin family from the days of the Jaintia Raj. This Brahmin pujari and the temple are being maintained by the local people. Durga Puja and Bishwakarma puja are annually performed in this temple.

Food and Drinks—Jaintias

The main food of the Jaintias is rice. Their food habits are quite in conformity with the geographical conditions. They are not vegetarians, they themselves also go for hunting in the near jungles. They eat some

type of birds and animals but prefer pork to others. The people of area which has come under Hindu influence like village Nartiang in Jaintia Hills, do not take beef even today. The people in Nartiang in particular, have a great similarity with the Hindu religion and it may be called the influence of the Hindu-Brahman contact in the past and the Jaintia rulers. This is one of the greatest aspects of the Jaintia religion is still being observed strictly. Beef-selling is however seen in the urban area. In their food habits one more similarity of the Hindus is found that before having food, they throw some morsels of food on the ground in honour of mother earth, the food giver. The image towards cow and belief in food offering to the food giver clearly speaks even today, the influence of Hinduism in these area. They also use country liquor, wine prepared by them with the Yogurth of rice and fruits. Even women also use to drink rice beer. Rice beer is also used in religious ceremonies. Distilled spirit is common among the hills now-a-days. In some places, the Russian drink known as 'VODKA' is also taken into use. VODKA drink is prepared by a modified formula of distilling which was introduced by Rev. Thomas Jones.

Dress—Jaintias

The Jaintias mode of dress is simple. They are simple, lovable persons with simple habits. In the earlier days, they had been wearing dhoti and turban

in similar fashion like other Hindus in India. Also their dress and fashion were similar to the neighbouring plains people. They also used to wear sleeveless coat or jymphong (piran). In the interior part of the hills that is to say that in some villages the Jaintias, used to wear only a loin clothed. Turban was and still in existence which is symbol of social prestige and power, The Dolois were always required to wear turban. Even now-a-days, the Dolois wear turban and on certain occasions, they must wear the traditional dress. After the waves of westernisation in the area, dhoti and sleeveless coat have been replaced by shirts and pants but the people still wear turban and dhoti in all religious, social and cultural festivals.

The Jaintia female dress is similar to that of their neighbour in the Khasi Hills. The female wear their dress in the manner of by putting one end of jain Khyrwang under one armpit and its two corners are knotted on the opposite shoulder with the other end bounded round the body and fastened at the waist which hangs half way down the calf. Over this they wear an apron generally of munga silk. The female wear ear-rings also and in certain occasions they wear beautiful necklaces generally of gold and coral and golden bracelets. The people have now becoming fashionable due to influence of modern societies, advancement in education and other many modern changes and facilities made available in the hills.

The female, however, are more conservative than their men-folk in their dresses.

Marriage and Divorce—Jaintias

The Jaintia society is also a matrilineal society like the Khasis. Among the Jaintias, marriage means co-habitation and procreation, which is called *Poikha*.

The offer for marriage is always made by the male. He can choose his life companion according to his will and wish but marriage within clans or sub-clans or with blood relation is never allowed in any case. Therefore the negotiator, ensure first that the boy and girl are not from the same 'Kur' (Kula) or clans or sub-clans. The Jaintias, as in all other matters, will seek for womens before the marriage is fixed. Marriage done with any blood relation or against any taboo, it is believed that marriage goes unfavourable. Both the boy and the girl should know each other and should have agreed to for marriage. There is no compulsion for marriage among the Jaintias. When both boy and girl develop into natural love and affection, the matter is discussed by the respective parents and maternal uncles. The parents of the male send the negotiator (Ksiang) generally the maternal uncle (Kni) to the parents of the girl. Engagement is a pre-requisite of the marriage. The maternal uncles fix the date for marriage. The marriage ceremony is as simple as of Hindu marriage ceremony but differ from belief and faith point of view, to the natural spirits and gods. When a love

marriage, approved by both the parents, a system of offering engagement ring to the girl is also exist and such type of marriage is called 'Gandharva' marriage. In Jaintia Hills, marriage is always performed after dusk. On the appointed day, the marriage party consisting spokesman (Ksiang) maternal uncles, friends, and relatives excluding females, get ready to go to bride's house. They carry pine trees, fire, music with them. The marriage party in general, and the groom, in particular are dressed in their best, wearing white or red turbans (Pagris) which speaks of the earlier times Jaintia Kingdom as well as the present days proud for fashion among the Rajputs of Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana. Further, on the other hand, some selected persons from the side of bride come to the house of the groom to escort the marriage party. On arrival at the bride's house, the marriage party is accommodated in a separate row with all refreshment and honours. The groom's feet are washed, dried and anointed with mustared oil. Then he is led to sit on a particular mat prepared only for the groom. Now the groom is considered as sanctified and no one should touch him till the marriage ceremony is over. The well dressed bride remains inside the room alongwith her friends. An exchange of betel-nut follows. An interesting ceremony known as 'Lamiutang' (an agreement) starts. The spokesman from the groom side narrate the mission to the gathering present and project the boy as having good moral of character and wish on behalf

of all, a prosperous and happy married life for the couple. Then the spokesman from the side of the bride stands and speaks in similar vein, projecting the girl as unblemish character and wish a happy life for the couple. Some time he wishes for many children in lighter mood. After that the exchange of rings between the bride and the groom follows, but this is not universal. When the spokesman's part is over and the Priest comes next for religious ceremony. The marriage from religious side is the invocation to goddess Siem Waboo or Blai Synshar in addition to a prayer by the Priest. Fermented rice-beer container of goud from both the parties that is one from bride and one from groom side, are given to the Priest who mixes the liquor and pours it down to the ground. Now-a-days the rice-beer brought by the marriage parties is contained into a brass-container. The oblations of wine is done thrice. The priest then invokes the blessings of the goddess Siem Waboo or Blai Synshar for the newly wedded couple. According to the Vedic rites and rituals, water sprinkling as oblation is also done by the priest. It is seen that now-a-days due to modernity and apathy, many rites have become meaningless to the people. Some scholars mention that according to the prevailing customs of the Jaintias, three pieces of dried fish are placed duly tied to the ridge-pole of the house in order to have the blessings of the dead ancestors. And these fish pieces will not be removed till the birth of a child to the couple. But in fact, such rite

is not found in the marriage of the Jaintias. Dried fishes, of course, are used in birth and death ceremonies. Only meat, preferably pork and kwai (betel nuts) are the main parts of the food.

At midnight, the groom's party men go back leaving the groom behind in order to meet or unite with the bride. The mat, cloth and bedding are taken with the groom. He remain there only for the night and return back to his mother's house on the following morning. He visit to his wife only in the night with the permission of his mother. This type of marriage is also known as visit marriage among the Jaintias. The husband come back to his mother's house early in the morning and visit to his wife only in the night. Works in the field of his mother, for the mother and other members of the mother's family. The motive behind it as I am told is to be the prominent Jaintias moral attitude; "Love the mother first". It is seen that visit marriage is not possible in many circumstances that when the husband is from different locality, when he works outside the locality. Therefore, the visit marriage are now being converted into 'migrate marriage'. Another exception to visit marriage, when the son goes to his wife's house permanently, is called '*Niangjiah*'. In such cases consent and agreement of all family members is to be obtained and a special prayer (puja) is performed. Then the son is considered as a member of his wife's family and in case of his death, his bones can be preserved in the compound

of the bone-repository of his wife. It is a taboo to die in the wife's house. So it is presumed to start with this system of '*Niangjiah*'. For sometime during earlier time, Polygamy was prevalent among the Jaintias but it is now very rare. Monogamy is an accepted ideal factor of the Jaintia society.

Divorce—Jaintias

Divorce is common now-a-days among the Jaintias as in the case of Khasis. Practically mother does not loose anything in case of divorce because she gets children, property and all other belongings of the house. The main causes of divorce are, misunderstanding between husband and wife, visit marriage, barrenness on the part of wife, impotency on the part of husband, by mutual agreement and due to illicit sex-relations. Sometime, divorce is done with some ceremony through the Langdoh, Doloi or an elderly man of the village. But there are cases of divorce without any ceremony. After marriage, the husband visit to his wife only at night. Spontaneous divorce may follow, if the husband stops visiting his wife or the wife resist and refuse entertaining the husband. Generally, the poor and common people, do not know much about divorce but whenever the case of illicit sex-relation is found, divorce through the Langdoh or an elderman of the family after justifying the case, divorce takes place. Whenever, the boy does not want to stay with his wife, he has to pay some amount as compensation to his wife,

Similarly in the case of girl, compensation is to be paid first then either priest or negotiator announce before all present that so and so are separated and they are now free to re-marry anybody else. This practice is prevalent mostly in the Jaintia War (border) areas. In interior Jaintia Hills in general and Jawai in particular, the divorce system is that the husband (boy) or the girl (wife) desiring to divorce each other, they divorce customarily.

According to the customarily belief, divorcee is a bad omen and is the result of some sin on the part of one or the other either jointly or separately. They pay some money to the Basan, a village elder, and deputy to the Doloi who in turn returns the money, by keeping one-fourth of the money to the husband or the wife as the case may be and declare before all present including parents of the both by and girl, that the marriage is dissolved which follow by an announcement in the village that so and so are separated and free to re-marry again to anybody else. The one-fourth money deposited with the village priest is used for annual sacrifices by the Langdoh or Priest. And so, sacrifice is required to ensure further peace and happiness in the life of the divorcee. In case, when wife does not want to divorce her husband, the husband pays compensation, usually two pieces of cloth and in case of husband does not want to divorce his wife, the wife has to pay compensation equivalent to the expenditure done on her children. According to their customs,

the divorcee can re-marry each other only after one year time but in other cases time gap is not observed.

Inheritance—Jaintias

Since the Jaintia society is matrilineal, inheritance in social order is not after father but it is restricted to the mother's line. Mother conceived as a container, everything must and belong to her. All the property, both movable and immovable belongs to her. Whatever is earned by a husband should go to his mother. This type of inheritance is from mother to daughter (as mother). The daughter youngest one, represents the primoval mother on the earth. Therefore, it is, she who should appease the dead mother by annual offerings of food and should inherit the ancestral house and all property. So, it may be said that property can not pass out of the motherhood limits, it is a straight line linking of generation from the first mother to the last youngest daughter and so on. But in war-areas both sons and daughters are liable to inherit not only the mother's property but also their father's property.

Disposal of the Dead—Jaintias

Among the Jaintias society, all belong to mother in life and after death. To die in the house of one's wife, is a taboo. So, whenever, man who, lives with his wife separately with his mother's permission, and has no hope for survival, is to be brought to his mother's house. In case, he dies in his wife's house,

the dead body is brought to his mother's house and all the rites are performed in his mother's house only. The wife, at such time put betel-nut in her husband's mouth as a last rite. Somewhere, in war area, wine and rice are sprinkled over the dead body before taken out of the house. The dead body of the Jaintias is preserved for three days before final disposal in order to perform the last homage by any relation residing in a distant place. As soon as dead body is taken out, the relatives break egg, one each and swallow up the yolk. It is believed that the egg gives all strength to the living relatives and cock is considered as a divine bird to the Jaintias who guides the departed soul, so its egg gives vitality and strength. After a man dies, the dead body is washed, made to wear dhoti and turban. In general, dhoti and turban are made to wear clock-wise but the dead body is made to wear anti-clockwise. In some places, sword and shield are made hold by the dead body. For three days, all the family members observe in laying state. It is must. The important item that is betel-nut with betel leaves is given a last touch to the mouth of dead body. For three days prayers are made to God for the peacefulness of the departed soul and these days are considered as the days of mourning. Among the certain sections/clans of the Jaintias, the cremation customs are different. The dead body duly covered with white cloth after three days, is carried by the relatives to the cremation ground accompanied by fire. The fire is only taken from the mother's

house. Fire is first lit up to the pyre by the eldest male member of the mother's family. The position of the corpse is such that the head should point to the west and the legs to the east. It is done customarily in the Jaintia groups. Handling of the dead body before taking it to the cremation ground, differ from clans to clans. The Nongtengs (Clans) keep the dead body for a month, in order to complete the Phut, a grief ceremonial dance. At Nartiang, the head of the corpse is shaved by keeping a tuft of hair on the centre of the head which is called grandmother's lock *Unih Lawbei*. In the north Jaintia Hills, a dance known as shadmastich, with swords and shields is performed. This dance is not performed in case of female's death. On female's death, special dishes are made for offering.

When cremation is over the bones are collected. Bones are collected by the relatives including a lady preferably mother or any female from the clans. They observe customary belief that they do not turn their faces backwards, do not talk to each other, they do collect bones only three times. The female hold the bones in the white cloth and offer food to the departed soul once again. Then the bones are carried to the family repositories because the Jaintias believe in the theory of life, after death and reincarnation. In case of accidental death, the body is burnt only in the place of death and bones are taken to the native place in the next day and bones are re-burnt with all the customs and rites. Since accidental

death is considered due to sin, the cremation ground and repositories for bones are kept separately in the respective native places. In case of death due to epidemic, the dead body is first buried for a month or so and dug out again after the epidemic has subsided and burnt with all customary honours. It is said that after sometime when it is convenient and feasible to all concerned, the bones of all the dead are collected and transferred to the first repository of the clans after observing certain customary rules. The female offer food and dishes every year on a particular day of the year to the dead ancestors. In certain case in some villages particularly Nartiang the customs and traditions are similar of not identical as in an Aryan Hindu families.

Festival and Dances—Jaintias

The festivals of the Jaintias are mainly concerning homage to ancestors, adoration to gods or goddesses and an offering to hostile spirits as a retribution for any wrong done against them. The festivals are mostly followed by dances and merry-making, feasts and wine drinks. Every festival has its significance in order to keep the life peaceful and prosperous. Birth of a child is always a happy occasion for every Jaintias. To ensure safe and sound delivery and healthy life for mother and baby and in order to guard off an evil influences, all conceivable precautions and sacrifices of animal or birds especially white pigeon are observed from time to time. On

birth of the baby all relatives are invited in the house and dry-fishes are baked and served among the relatives and neighbours. Naming ceremony of the baby is linked with auguries. Auguries are to be consulted about possible names. Ladies pray to God, (Syeim Waboo) for the blessing to the new born child. Joys and feasts among the relatives take place. After one month the ears of the baby, male or female, are bored for wearing ear-rings of the grandmother. The grandmother ear rings are called '*Ki Cha-Shkor Lawbei*'.

Behdienkhlam festival which, now-a-days has a great significance than the olden days, is one of the most popular festivals among the Jaintias. It literally means in Jaintia to drive away evil spirits by wooden sticks. It is observed annually in the months of June and July when the climate is mostly moisture, crops are likely to be destroyed by the insects and when the people in this part suffer from infectious diseases. This period for the Jaintias is taken as a crucial period from the points of view of agriculture and human health. The date for this festival is decided centrally in the village durbar. This festival is celebrated in a different form. It is as old as the people of the hills but it was stopped by the Britishers and re-started only after independence. It is said that in Jowai, the origin of this festival came with the migration of the first colonising families. It is believed among the Jaintias that once in ancient time, four sisters along with their men-folks landed down at

Jowai nearby by a big stone. They spent the whole night around that stone. At the mid-night the eldest sister heard a sound. She woke up and saw that the stone was dancing. She was horror-stricken and got all other awake. They all were about to flee but the dancing stone spoke, told his name as U Mukhai and ensure them all security and protection of life from every evils. The dancing stone also told them about his three brothers residing around Jowai in the form of big stones. Since then foursisters family habitation place is said to benear the Present Roman Catholic Church of Jowai Town. Further, it is said that in ancient time, there was a widespread epidemic in the area. Therefore, the bewildered people sought for its cause and protection from the protector *diety-U Ukhai*. He advised to the people to propitiate him and other spirits annually. Since then Behdienkhlan has been performed in the Jaintia Hills.

Tiger Killing Festival—Jaintia

In the War area of the Jaintia Hills, it is a biggest festival. Nongtalang is the biggest Jaintia War village. It has about fifteen clans and sub-clans who performs the festival in rotation. In fact, the original belief of the festival is unknown but it is found that the people having orthodoxy views that whenever a tiger is killed none should ignore worshipping the Deity. Otherwise, one or one's clans folk might suffer from blindness or starvation or any other infectious diseases. Therefore the people appoint the day to

move into jungle in search of killing tiger once in a year preferably in the months of January to March. In case, accidental killing of a tiger, during the normal hunting time, the tiger should not be taken inside the village unless proper prayer is performed. On annual hunting, after killing of the tiger, the flesh and intestines are chopped out and remaining including skull and outerskin are taken inside the village especially to the Langdoh-house on the festival day with all sort of prayers. The prayer is performed with folded hands. On this day, the people offer foods and pay homage to their dead ancestors and other goddess. On the festival days, they also go around from house to house in order to driving away epidemics and for ushering in good luck and fortune. The day is also marked with battle types dance by men only with sword and shields in theatrical royal dresses. All spectators also come in their best dresses. On the same day at 4 p.m., the tiger is to be taken out from the Lyngdoh house with all sort of prayers and pujas, followed by dance. The tiger is kept out on the ground at the village boundary, again puja is performed and then every one touch the dead tiger. Some Garo girls from the nearby villages come and join the dancing. Only unmarried girls (Garos) can join the dance with women dance in that village. The dance goes on whole night followed by drinks and merry-making alongwith their folk music of drums and drinks and merry-making alongwith their folk music of drums and flutes. The dance

resembles to the Khasis Nongkrem dance but in the Nongkrem dance both men and women dance at a time in circular sequence, the women in inner circle and men in outer circle, whereas here, the two dancers are separate, males for the day and females for the night and also in different places. The female dancing, for the whole night, is believed in procreation and human fertility.

There are other many festivals celebrated from time to time among the Jaintias societies. These are like Durga Puja, where the villages have come under the Hindu influence, worship of Gods and goddess of nature and other worships to the ancestors, driving away the evils, the contagious diseases, protection of life from the evil spirits, ushering in good luck and prosperous life.

Art and Architecture—Jaintias

The huge stone slabs said to have been shifted from Ratiang to Nartiang by the son of Jaintia King and Queen, polished and planted in a systematic way, explains the art and architecture of the Jaintia people. Memorial pillars are the basic characteristic of the Jaintias culture. The fortress ruins in Nartiang and Jaintia Bar are the specimens of an architecture of a reasonably high order. Legends on the side of holy river Kupli (goddess) are the main marked points towards their architecture. Near Jowai there are the statues of a lover and beloved who escaped from their place but died accidentally. In the

outskirts of southern Jaintiapur, the statues of horses and elephants are found. All these speaks about the art and architecture of the tribal folks. Painting, embroidery, engravings of human, animals and birds on the house walls, shows the interest and charm of the people of this region.

Mirth and Music—Jaintias

Music and dance are the main sources of welfare of these people. In these hills, the people are simple, laborious, God fearing, hospitable and equally music loving. Behadeinkhlam and Loho dances are very important and famous among the Jaintias. Men of all ages, dressed in their fine, participate in such dances which are performed to the beats of drums and tunes of flutes. Some people from this region are found an excellent on their folk songs and music of which echo the sweet and natural sound of the deep and long valleys. They have full devotion and spirit in order to maintain their old traditional dances and enchanted musics. Their music instruments and drums are generally similar of that the Khasis in the Khasi Hills.

Villages—Jaintias

The villages of the Jaintias are big, Nongtalang in the *War* area is the biggest village. It is consisting about seventy families and about one hundred houses/huts. The people lives in group of small villages in the interior parts of the hills. Almost 75% people

live in the rural villages. Modern facilities are very rare so far. The village people are respectable to one another and to their Priests or Lyngdohs. The village administration is under the control of village heads'chiefs who dominate and enjoy very important position. Rural development programmes are in the way to bring these areas developed like Headquarters at Jowai. In the villages, the people are honest and simple living. They love each other and their birth place deeply hence they are not ready to leave their villages.

Agriculture System—Jaintias

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people in the hills but the physical geography and weather conditions of the hills are such that these make the conditions for agriculture extremely diverse. The Jaintia farmers have to continuously tilling hill land to make their living and produce every thing that they needs daily for family. They also do Jhum-cultivation like the Garos. The utility of cow is minimum mostly in the high hills where winter is severe. The farmers hoe the field manually. In the low-lying areas and fertile valleys of the Jaintia Hills, ploughing by bullocks is reported to be done. There is no traditional bound system for ploughing the fields and throwing the seeds by ladies only like Garos but they follow the same methods and system of the Garo farmers in shifting cultivation that is called Jhum-cultivation. The life and living of the

Jaintia farmer is tough and hard. The main food grains and product of the farmers in the Hills are rice, maize, pulses, potatoes, turmeric, oil seeds, arecanut, cabbage, cauliflower, beans, radish, chilly, brinjals, pineapple, betel leaf and other roots of the wild creepers. All such agriculture products are the main source of their economy. Though the Government of Meghalaya has undertaken the protective measures in order to develop agriculture system in the hills yet it is very difficult to a farmer of the hills to establish a permanent rich farming due to natural hazards in the hills. Therefore the Jaintias are more business-minded in order to make their economic conditions sound, instead doing farming.

Language and Literature—Jaintias

The Jaintias do not have any recorded history of their particular language. They do not have their own script and developed vocabularies. No wonder, the mother tongues of the Khasis, the Garos and the Jaintias are dialects. The highlanders of the state did not have their own script. They have been bowing to the scripts of their rulers. More or less available accounts written by the different men were in Persian, Arabic, Assamese and Bengali which reveals that apart from the hold of Assam and Bengal, the hills had contacts with Mughal, Turkish and Afghan rulers. It is a fact that in most interior parts of the valleys, the people were illiterate. There was communication only through some dialects of the tribal

language with the help of Bengali and Assamese mixed. The credit of systematically developing the local dialects, in fact goes to foreign missionaries who were well educated and clever too and who indirectly inducted cultural as well as social unity among the brave tribes of the region. The missionaries teachers and priests employed Roman script to impart education to the local tribals in 1841. The missionaries, in the course of time, brought the literature in booklet form duly highlighting the ways and means of personal hygiene and social cleanliness. After that they projected for compiling local dialects and Anglo vocabulary and introduced literature which had a great impact on the emerging literary elite. In 1896, the Khasis, and the Jaintias men of letters themselves started, composing and writing their own books and booklets in Khasi language which is also a written language of the Jaintias. The dialects as spoken in Cherrapunjee, the then Headquarters of both the British Government and Missionaries, was selected as a written language for both Khasis and Jaintias.

Religion, Faith and Conception of God—Jaintias

As already written in the brief account of the Khasis, that an ultimate goal of every religion is to lead to one God and one brotherhood. The Jaintias in various groups and different parts of the Hills, have different expression about God. Firstly, they are firm believer and worshippers to the heaven ruled

by God Almighty *U Blai Trekirod* with the help of goddess, *Ka Blai Synshar* who is empowered by God to run the affairs of creation and beings. For the Jaintias *Ka Blai Synshar* occupy a very important place in worship. They too believe in some folk-tales, fascinating stories and mythologies about the inhabitant of heaven as similar to the belief of the Khasis. A strong belief runs even today, that a departed soul may come back through a new born baby. They also believe in re-birth. Their mythology says that God had a servant named Jom (Yama) who was expelled from heaven after some mistrust and he established his own kingdom, *Ka Mynkoï U Jom or Hell*. Though there is no noticeable conception of Hell in the mind of the Jaintias but they believe that the *U Jom* or Hell is centred around the Earth and disturb or misguide the departed souls. Too the fascinated story cooked that sometime back the heaven and the earth were negotiable a golden ladder as stated in the Khasis mythology. One more beautiful conception is visible that God (Blai) when prevades all and manifests in personal forms, they are Gods and Goddesses. When they confront troubles, they appeal to God (Blai) and to celebrate other various functions they name Gods and Goddesses. That is why there are numberable gods or goddesses and those too in different local names. They also believe that God may come in any form whether good form or bad. One has nothing to fear if he does not violate the laws of Gods. They worship gods or goddesses.

by individual object, they call the particular god either in feminine (Ka) or in masculine (U) gender and add the particular name of the god. For example the God of water is *Ka Blai Um Um* means water, God of world *Ka Blai Synshar*, God of area, *Ka Blai Muluk* and God of mountain and gorges are *U Thor U Pyrvat* or *U Lale* (the son of Ka Kupli). The object resembling male characteristics are taken as male things. As such, the straight memorial stones represent the male sex *Maw-Shynrang* and the flat one represent the female *Maw-Kynthai*.

The Jaintias have no temple like Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and so on. They have community Puja house in every locality where a Priest resides and no one can visit the house by wearing shoes. They worship in folded hands, and bowing down. In the Puja house, no image of God or Goddesses is found. In this regard we find a great similarity in the form of worship prevailing during the Rig-Vedic period. Among the Jaintias prayer concept is still mixed up with sacrifice or offering food and liquor. They start their puja or prayer with a phrase '*Chi hazar nguh*' (one thousand thanks)...and also ends with same words — *Chi hazar nguh*.

Till the advent of British conquest, the Jaintia Rajas used to make human sacrifices in the Hindu Temple at Nartiang, earlier to Kupli stream and later to Jayanteshwari or Kai Deity. Many a time a person himself used to offer for a sacrifice. He had been used to enforce the inhabitants of the settlement that

on deity's advice he was offering himself for sacrifice. Such persons were known as '*Bhoge-Khoare*'. At times, some persons were even forced for sacrifice. The monolith used as altar on the bank of Kupli river is still hinted by locals. Sacrificion of a bird or a animal before just crossing the river is still in existence. A briefed note on Kupli river is given at the end.

The Jaintia also have been practising black magic since long. Not only in these hills but black magic have been practising in even plain dwellers of some regions. Black magic is nothing but witchcraft. It is believed under this superstition that the man overpowering some spirits, uses the same for the furtherance of his vested interests. Very often he wreaks vengeance over his rivals and enemies. Such type of magic or tantric cult has also been being practiced in the northern parts of India. The Jaintias are also believed to have been influenced by the Hindu Tantric Cult.

Precepts—Jaintias

Precepts of the Jaintias Religion are as under :

1. Respect the parents,
2. Love to all,
3. Earn righteousness,
4. Service to human being is a service to God,
5. Do not steal,
6. Worship God and ancestors.

Earn righteousness stands for right living and

right thinking which leads to the way of happiness and prosperity of life. Respects to the parents is a demand among the Jaintia society. Love to all is love to god is a later slogan. Love to all creation is based on the doctrine of equality of all. They firmly believe in the message of love to all which bind and nourish the society.

Some Taboos—Jaintias

1. To encroach land of the neighbours,
2. To construct houses on triangular plot,
3. To cut tree from a secret forests,
4. To urinate in a stream or on fire,
5. To touch broom while sweeping entrance of the house door,
6. To keep broom's stick at the entrance of the house door,
7. To sleep pointing the feet toward east,
8. Spitting on the fire,
9. To offer anything with left hand,
10. To step over any one's body.

Taboos for Pregnant Women—Jaintias

1. To accompany a funeral procession,
2. A pregnant women should not finish a sowing which she may have started prior to her pregnancy,
3. The husband of the pregnant women is not allowed to thatch the ridge of the house of a six handle to an axe or a 'dao'.

The taboos, though of not much significance yet quite common among all three brave tribes of Meghalaya, are similar to each-one and leads to one and the same goal.

THE KUPLI GODDESS

Kupli is the river which marks the eastern boundary of the Jaintia Hills. The river flows from the North Cachar Hills northwards and then turns westwards towards Assam plains Nowgong district and finally joins the river named Brahmaputra. It is this river where the Jaintia crossed first during their migration to these hills. Kupli is the mother goddess. In the pre-British time, she was appeased annually by human sacrifice. None would cross the river without confessing their sin or propitiating the river by food offering and sacrifices. Thus there are legends about the river which guides the unknown people. Some points have been marked to cross the river. None should cross the river at any other point which is not prescribed for. Crossing over forbidden point may result in death and he who does not observe these rules, faces serious consequences. The goddess Kupli had sons named U Shyngkram and U Jali. They are also to be appeased by fowl and he-goats sacrifices alongwith the goddess Kupli. The cult of Ka Kupli is so strong that non-Christians still does not want to go near the river. They will never cross the Kupli river without any sacrifice or puja

prescribed for. During the Jaintia Kingdom, the goddess Kupli was worshipped with human sacrifices. In case of non-finding anyone for sacrifice, the slaves of the kings would be sacrificed. It is presumed that the Kupli deity, in course of time was displaced and used to be worshipped in any water mark. Annual worship of Kupli deity is prominent in the neighbouring places like Shangpung, Sutnga Ralliang and Nartiang. Even the tributaries of the Kupli river are appeased by he-goat sacrifice annually. The river surrounding the Jowai Town, the Myntder is also propitiated annually by sacrificing a he-goat by the town people.

THE KINGS OF THE JAINTIA KINGDOM

1. PARVAT ROY	1500 - 1516 AD
2. MAJHA GOSSAIN ROY	1516 - 1532 AD
3. BURHA PARVAT ROY	1532 - 1548 AD
4. BARA GOSSAIN	1548 - 1564 AD
5. BIJAY MANIK	1564 - 1580 AD
6. PRATAP ROY	1580 - 1596 AD
7. DHAN MANIK	1596 - 1605 AD
8. JASSA MANIK	1605 - 1625 AD
9. SUNDOR ROY	1625 - 1636 AD
10. CHOTO PARVAT	1636 - 1647 AD
11. JASMANTA ROY	1647 - 1660 AD
12. BAN SINGHA	1660 - 1669 AD
13. PRATAP SINGHA	1669 AD
14. LAKSHMI NARAYAN	1669 - 1697 AD

15.	RAM SINGHA I	1697 - 1708 AD
16.	JOY NARAYAN	1708 - 1729 AD
17.	BAR GOSSAIN	1729 - 1770 AD
18.	CHATER SINGHA	1770 - 1781 AD
19.	JATRA NARAYAN	1781 - 1786 AD
20.	BIJOY NARAYAN	1786 - 1789 AD
21.	RAM SINGHA II	1789 - 1832 AD
22.	RAJENDRA SINGHA	1832 - 1835 AD

[Reference : The History and Culture of the Khasis (Dr. H. Breh)]

Evaluation—Jaintias

Many sociologists and social Anthropologists of the early years of the present century, have given an experience and crude results over the social life of the tribals. Also some travellers from time to time have closely observed and evaluated the religious and cultural heritage, righteous living, belief and right conception of God of the colourful children of the colourful nature, inhabiting in the deep valleys and highest mountains located in isolations/secluded, surrounded by dense forest, living in cold and chill, crushed with poverty and powers of the time, still require a special kind and help of our people and the Government to bring them up and enlighten them to the fast moving modern age. No doubt that the missionaries had a big hand indirectly about the general awakening among these vulnerable people. They (missionaries) established church and schools to educate these people and influenced them with

the sacred preachings of the holy Bible in one hand but on the other hand, it is quite unfortunate that these people, not all have lost the all highest orders characteristics of their cultural and religious life.

It has already explained that the Jaintias must have been migrated from the Tibet-China from Mon-Khmer groups in search of food and shelter centuries back. Before crossing over to the hills, they worshipped holy River Kupli for their prosperous living and life. It may be true according to the mythology of the Jaintias that they are seven families below who must have crossed river Kupli first.

The fact of strong sex, in order to digging up the hilly slopes for shifting cultivation, inclement weather conditions and procreation and sustenance of the off spring, can not be denied which is what a natural. Since mother is the originator of the clan. She bears children and is the head of the family, command over her children even after marriage, the fact of holding land property by mother which is known as clan-property being transferred from generation to generations even now-a-days too, also can not be ignored. Therefore, the system of inheritance among the Jaintias seems to be correct. It is seen that there is a great resentment among the villagers due to introduction of the government legislation and various welfare and development schemes and programmes. Similarly the role of the priest known as Langdoh in the field of their religion and on certain occasions and important festivals can be

admitted and accepted in general. Their right belief and conception of god and goddesses, social traits and cultural rites and rituals are the main factors and facts of their simple living. Mirth and music, dance and merry-making with their own life style are the ways and means to overcome their despairs, compassion, sadness, defeats etc.

The villages were semi-autonomous units before the hills completely come under the control of the Jaintias kingdom. Previously these units were under the administrative control of the Dolois (leaders) who accepted the rule of kings and helped the people by providing all daily life essentials in the form of market. During the rules of the Jaintia kings, the people were in the process of assimilation with the way of life of the Aryan. They accepted the dress, the food (prohibition for beef-eating) the cremation of the dead, sacred use of water in washing bones and feet of the would be groom before entering into the bride's house, image worship etc. was in the process of evolution. They incorporated many Hindu gods and goddesses into their mythology. The Nartiang and Rupnath temples were already constructed. It was all in the process of assimilation when the Britishers came up to these hills during sometime in 1791. The Britishers interest was with trade and commerce. They (the Britishers) adopted the policy of divide and rule. They also interfered in the fields of religion and cultural way of life which was never accepted by these simple and brave people and then

revolted. Many Jaintia Kings and Dolois were bribed in one or other ways. In spite of fierce fighting against the Britishers and due to dubious means, followed by bribery and before the mighty rule of the British, the secluded, inhabited in the mountains people could not do anything in order to protect their religion, cultural heritage and ultimately surrendered to the fate, the forcing rule over the whole areas of beautiful Hills, swept away. The missionaries played an active role and by 1901 the progress of their mission was 15%.

The missionaries divided the people as Christians and non-Christians which led them into two classes that an educated and uneducated. The people really struggled hard for sheer survival. The Jaintia kings were prisoned and hanged and those who surrendered and submitted to the Britishers, were deprived from their respect and status. By the time of Independence, the missionaries progressed 35% in the field of conversion. In fact the missionaries made the tribal people of the hills alert and awakened. Now they do not want to survive individually but to survive racially. As we know that the instinct of race survival leads to social attitude to man and woman. Therefore, woman are the agent of race proliferation among the Jaintia societies and mother is everything. So they should give special care to the women in order to survive individually as well as collectively. It is seen that the Jaintias are very conservative and generally moves within their own circle even today. They make money out of the

jungle nearby and they say that none will ask them for such earning. Moreover they are occupying forest land for Jhum cultivation and for other purposes. Neither they interfere to one another occupation nor they allow anyone else to interfere in their own affairs and due to this civil and criminal cases are very rare.

The Jaintias have moral commitments like righteousness and respect to parents. As regards to righteousness, it is according to the law and customs of the Jaintias. But modern way of living and education have changed the tribal people and many are not interested in sacrifices and believe in orthodoxy.

Regarding respect to parents, the issue is again contradictory to their commandments and mother priority. Here mother bear everything and father is respected. Respect to parents generates only when father, mother and children live together. Father, mother and children may live together if the visit marriage custom and matiararchate system are modified. Most of the educated group of the people nearing to town Jowai have already abandoned the custom and they believe in modern living immediately after marriage.

According to the religion and mythology of the Jaintias, the cock is considered a sacred bird. It takes for them the light (sun). Its spirit leads the dead to the ancestral world. It is sacrificed on many occasions. Too, it is to be eaten in the normal way of life. There are also other many animals like pigeons, he-goats

etc., and sacrifices of these animals may be in addition to the sacrifice of the cock. Therefore, it may be presumed that animal sacrifices are not only to please gods or goddesses but to accomplish some customary mission (Tiger Festival). In the community worship when the animals are sacrificed, the males predominate whereas in ancestor-worship (food offering etc.) the females predominate. It may be concluded that the sacrifices of non-traditional animals and males predominate must have been added subsequently. The Jaintias have however, been seen influenced by Hinduism. The Hindu influences are their male dress, the dress of Doloi, food (especially abstinence from beef eating), offering of food to the dead, conception of cow as a holy animal by some sections. Also the conception of God heads like *Ka Blai Synshar*, Durga, Konka (Ganga), Bishwakarma etc., have similarities with the Hindus. Among the Jaintias, the worship involves sacrifices in every occasion where as in Hinduism sacrifices are very rare. It can not be said that the Hindu worship never involve in sacrifices. It still exists in some parts of Himachal Pradesh that the worship of Kul-Devi—means goddesses of the family (clans) in very well involved the sacrifice of he-goats and cocks. Its head is cut before the Devi (Durga) after due worship and tikka on the head of the he-goat and rice are offered on the feet of Durga first which is followed by worship and ceremonies. Also seen in Behdienkhlam festival, the Hindu influences are prominent but it can not be 'accepted in

principle that the Jaintias are completely under the cult of Hinduism.

The modern civilization in the hills is westernised. The Christian influences are visible in the dress of the people—the pant, coat and shirts etc. Their script is Roman and Christian Missionaries adopted it in School, Church and other institutions as media of instructions. The Christian Missionaries, I think, have given them modern ways of living and hygiene and made them awakened to the modern life. It is found that Christian influences are still widespread tendencies among the people of whole Meghalaya.

THE GAROS

Geographical Identity—Garos

The Garo Hills are one of the three Hills forming the Western Meghalaya. The two districts comprising the West and the East of Garo Hills extend over an area of 8000 square kilometers. The main ranges of the Western Meghalaya are Tura Range passes through the centre of Garo Hills and the Arbela Range. Mostly parallel to the Range in the South-East to the North-West and in the East-West respectively. The Tura Range comprise Nokrek Peak (5000 feet), Megongiri (4400 feet), Meiminrum Peak (4135 feet), and Gawangdara Peak (3550 feet). Generally the Garo Hills alignment is North-South. Gneissic rocks are found in the Western Meghalaya. The Southern part of the Garo Hills is full of deposits of lime stones in the cave known as Siju Cave. The rivers of Garo Hills flows towards North and joins the Brahmaputra. The biggest river is Simsang which flows through the valley of Tura-Range in the North-West. Another river Chitlang in the South-East flows southwards just West of Williamnagar. About three-fourth area of the Garo Hills is covered under the state forest departments which produce mostly sal trees of fine qualities and various kinds of bamboos. Many birds and animals like elephant, leopard, sambher, monkeys, chital, barking deer and pigs are

found in the forests of Garo Hills. Maina bird is abundantly available.

Origin—Garos

In the Pre-historic times, the North-East Region of India was known as Mahakantara. This region is a store-house of nationalities because of the fertile valleys of the Brahmaputra which intersects it, was raided for many times from Burma on the one side and from the Indian plains on the other, and the invaders left behind them an abundant store of races with different religions and languages. These were the lairs to which older nations had retreated before the pressure exerted by our abundant and more resourceful population upon the productive areas fringing the river. Thus there are an ancient collections of humanity. Apart from the Nagas, the Mizos and their sub-groups, the Garos, the Jaintias and the Khasis were three other most powerful tribal communities. Although 'The Descriptive Ethnography of Bengal by Colonel Dalton's work, Census Reports and articles in the various journal by the Asiatic Society had given an interesting accounts of these tribes, as the collected information is fragmentary and scattered.

Sometime during 1791, the British officials came in close contact with Garo tribe who wrote the spot information report about these powerful tribes with their availability of time and convenience. The Garos were the first mountaineers with whom the people

and foreign rulers of Bengal came in contact. The British recorded the Garo people as a truculent and obstinate people.

Much is not known about the origin of the Garos. According to the historians, the Garos are of the stock known as Tibeto-Burman which drifted into Eastern India and Burma across the plateau of Tibet. The Garos themselves prefer to be called as Achik. It is believed that their fore-fathers came from the Indo-Tibet Region. Achik title is generally used for the various groups of people after the division of the race. Their language still retains some similarity with Tibetan and some of their ideas, such as sentimental value, the attack to gongs, are identical with those prevailing in Tibetan villages. Tradition bound and unwilling to change too rapidly, the Garos still talk of their migration from the uplands of the Himalayas to the splendid valleys of Assam and Meghalaya.

The Garos inhabited not only the district which bore their name but there were villages occupied by them in Kamrup and Goalpara districts too. Mymensing district of Bengal joining the Garo Hills was also inhabited by thousands of Garos. These were the people with a matrilineal system like the Khasis. The tribal system of the Garos was found to be highly democratic and all the villages with the Nokmas as Chiefs took part in the council to justify the disputed matters. The districts as a whole were very backward with only about five literates in a hundred and lacking in means of communication. Missionaries

from the West had played an active role and there had been certain amount of conversion from Garos to Christianity. But, on the whole, the Garos fought well against the foreign Missionaries as well against the Britishers to protect their heritage, religion and society as a whole. The Garos, even while being able to produce an intelligent and literate people, had yet to come up the degree of the Khasis or the Mizos. Franchise was not permitted to the Nokmas but it was difficult to work on that system. Though the Garos Hills, were fertile as regard to agriculture but the main problem was of communication, modern methods and devices.

The Garos were very keen and desirous to uniting all the villages inhabited by the Garos whether in the plains of Assam or in Mymensing district of Bangladesh under a common administration.

Fascinating story of their Creation

The Garos and the Khasis have a large collection of folklores and tales. According to the Garos faith for their creation is that what is now on the earth was a vast watery plain. There were no land and darkness was over everything.

Tantra-Rabuga decided to create the Earth, so he sent a lesser spirit, Nostu-Nonpantu, in the shape of women, to carry out his will. The whole earth was full of water and there was no space to her to set foot on, so she tool up her abode in a spider's web which was stretched over the water. Tatara-

Rabuga gave her for material, a handful sand, but when she knew about her task, she found that she could not make the particles stick together. So she sent big crab down under the water to fetch some clay, but it was too deep, and he obliged to return with his task unfulfilled. Nostu then sent Chipong-nokma-Balponggitel, the small crab to do her best, but he was afraid and returned without performing his task. At last, Nostu choose *Chiching-Barching*, a beetle and sent him down whocame back with some of clays with the aid of which Nostu made the earth and named Manepilte. The big rocks were called major and little rocks were called Dinjar. The whole earth was wet and unfit to walk upon. So *Nostu* prayed to Tatara-Rabuga and asked for help. He placed the Sun and the Moon in the sky and 'sent the wind in the open space. Thus with the creation of Sun, Moon and Wind, the Earth was completed. Then Tatara gave the Earth a riking or petticoat (the Earth is spoken of as a women) and a pagri made of clouds, and caused hair a grow on her in the shape of the prap (*Ficus Rumphai*), the sawe (sago palm), the rejok kind of cane and the ampong (grass). As regards of the animals mission of the Earth, Tatara created the first kind of ape a big monkey without tail. The task assigned to ape, was to cry loudly and prevent Mane (the Earth) from sleeping and neglecting her work of productivity. After that the "HAXLUMAN" and the common brown monkey were created. Then came all other creatures. In the

water, the first water animal created was the frog. The frog was assigned the task to proclaim the advent of rain to all living things on the Earth by croaking loudly. And then fishes were created.

Since the complete Earth was dried by the Sun and Moon and under the Earth surface there was much water which was of no use being already stucked by Nostu. There was a great demand for water on the earth surface for the work of productivity. Nostu again prayed to Tatara-Rabuga seeing this, the creator made rivers to flow and sent rain (Norechire-Kimrebokre) to water the Earth. He sent the voice (thunder) before the rain to come. In the course of time man had not yet been sent on the Earth. So Tatara called around him the lesser spirits and choose a goddess named Susime and sent down to prepare it for its new creation.

The first man and woman who came on Earth were Sani and Muni. They both produced children named, Gancheng and Dujong and they further produced children known as Noro and Mande, who were the progenitors of the GARO Race. According to their faith and believe, the Garos make their offerings first to Tatara-Rabuga who is the creator of this Universe. The Garos but very few still believe this fascinating story of their creation.

Social, Religious and Family Aspects—Garos*Social Groups*

The social life in question differs from tribe to tribe and region to region. The society of Garos represent of their social life, a family, a matrilineal maximal lineage and a unilineal exogamous descent group and a still larger group of constellation of clans. The Garos of Meghalaya constitute the principal clan group of Garo-Ganching, Chibaks, Awee, Atongs, Rugas, Koch, Kotohu, Daul, Matchi and Akawe. All these groups are free to maintain relation and socio-culture intercourse. The principal clan groups or divisions of the Garos inhabiting in different parts of the Garo hills, are described as under :

The Akawes or the Awee

They live in the north-eastern hills of the Garo Hills district. Akawes means a plainsman while Awe means of ploughman. Akawes are widely scattered over the north-eastern parts touching the border areas of Kamrup district in Assam. In this area there are big, large plain fields between the hills and there are few river valleys which are rich in paddy crops.

The Abengs

They form the most important group of the Garos. They are inhabiting in the western side. Tura, the district headquarters fall within the lands of the Abengs.

The Atongs

They are also an important group among the

Garos. They are occupying the area of Someshwari valley above Baghmara and spread to Siju. They are well educated and financially developed people. Their cultural and economic conditions must have been developed due to good climatic conditions of the valley and pre-independence constant contact with the people of the Mymensing district. Atongs form the healthiest group of the tribe.

The Chiboks

They live in the upper Bhogal valley, scattered upto the river Nitai. Being living away in isolation almost cut off from all modern communication, they seems to be the most backward group among the Garos. But every efforts of the Meghalaya Government are in the way to develop all such backward areas.

The Chisaks

The Chisaks are the sub-divided clan of the Chiboks. They live in the east of the Someshwari river. Later on they were distributed over the hills lying between the Someshwari and the Khasis Hills and to the south of the Akawes.

Besides these above main groups of the clans there are a few other small groups. They live in different parts of the Garo Hills. It is said that the Garos were originally divided into two clans. These clans are the Marak and the Sangma. They further divided and sub-divided into clans and sub-clans and

gradually became independent. A report received from the interior village named Kodaldhua in the Mehendragunj side of the district Tura, now confirmed that originally all the Garos are the stock of Tibeto-Burman and gradually they scattered over the hills through the valleys of Assam. These people were peace loving and many foreign invaders could not reach to them for centuries. They were few in numbers in the very beginning but developed in population after a long spell of time.

Physical Structure—Garos

The Garos are sturdy people and their complexion is not dark. They look almost like the plains tribes of the Assam. Their nose is a little flatter than that of the average plains men. The womenfolk are a little shorter in body structure. In some of the districts, particularly people of the Someshwari valleys and the east are handsome. They are not fat but strong in structure. Women in their youth are healthy and beautiful. Among the educated sections, a lady cannot be easily distinguished from other Assamese ladies.

Household Organisation—Garos

The society of the Garos is matrilineal. Children adopt their respective mother's clan. The youngest daughter inherits the ancestral property. But according to the Garos the biggest share of property goes to any daughter who would marry to one of her

father's nephew. There are cases too in which a daughter is married to a man outside her father's clan. Other sisters of the family also receive fragments of the property. The son-in-law steps up to the position of father in the house after his death. A Garo family extends vertically and matrilineally. It does not extend laterally in as much as non-heiress daughters establish new local residences within two years of their marriage. The non-heiress daughters are called '*Agate*' and their husbands known as '*Chawari*'. However, the property is managed by a male member who is called as '*Nokma*'. By customs the Nokma is always his sister's son. They do not have many material belongings.

Houses—Garos

The Garos build their houses with bamboos, wood and cane. Their houses are generally long, having no separate rooms inside them. At least 1/4th of the entries length of the house is kept free and open. The remaining part of the house is enclosed with walls woven with bamboo-planks. Only one door is kept for entrance and exit. Fowls are also housed in one corner of the house while pigs are kept below the house. Some places in Garo Hills, houses are made on the tree-tops. These are though small houses but neatly built up on the tops of big trees and are called *BORANGS*. Borangs are built in the jhum fields to guard jhum cultivation from birds and animals.

Nok-Pante Houses

Nok means house and *Pante* mean bachelor. The word *Nok-Pante* literally means the house of bachelors. Almost all the Garo villagers have their own *nok-pante*. Normally the boys above eleven years of age and bachelors are sent to the *nok-pante*, to sleep at night. These houses are big in size made of wood, bamboos, thatches and cane. Half portion of the house is kept open while the half portion is enclosed with bamboo mats of sufficiently polished wax. Two doors are kept, one in the front and another at the backside of the house. In certain *Nok-Pantes*, pig heads are seen hung from the beams. These are nothing but heads of pigs killed for or community feasts. Entrance of a lady into a *Nok-Pante* is very strictly regulated. Entrance of lady through the front door is never allowed. Some respectable and reliable ladies are however, permitted to enter the house through the back door only to supply liquor and important information at times of feasts. The *nok-pante* house/huts carries a fire place in one corner, used for keep the place warm and roasting meat.

Besides being a bachelor's house a *nok-pante* serves many other good purposes for the village. Village elders meet here to discuss and decide important affairs of common interests. People go there at leisure and particularly after the day's supper and in the afternoon to make baskets, mats and fishing nets etc. The Officers or guests are also allowed to stay

there temporarily. Some villages again built small separate houses with cooking facilities especially for the guests and such houses are called 'ALDA'.

Therefore a *nok-pante* houses can be called most important thing in the Garos villages in which various indigenous cultures of the Garos took birth.

Food and Drinks—Garos

The Garos have no aversion to any food, except milk and its preparation all of which they abominate and hate. They do not mind and object to eat in any society. Their vegetarian food consists of rice and millet with arums, caladiums and dioscoreas. They do not use turmeric and for seasoning they have capsicum, onions and garlic. Potatoes are common now-a-days. Their dishes are mostly salted and oily. They prepare in fermented liquor from rice and millet which is not distilled and is used both by men and women, almost daily. Poor people usually get drunk once a month and the Chiefs once every three days. In fact they always prefer strong drink. The Chiefs and others well being people use brandy for taste.

They are very fond of hunting the wild animals. They eat wild hogs, deer, frog and snakes. They also eat goats, dogs, cats, fish, tortoise, fowls, pigs and duck. They also sometime purchase all these from the inhabitants of the low country area.

As regards to fruits, Garo Hills produce the best quality of banana, pineapples and watermelons.

During the rainy season when rice become costly, and those who cannot manage of purchase especially in the far interior parts of the villages where continued rain does not allow people to walk over the slippery paths, lives on these fruits and vegetables, bamboo shoots and other roots available in forests. The country liquor and rice beer prepared and brewed from rice plays an important part in Garo life and culture. The country liquor is mostly prepared by the ladies. It is offered in worship. It is generally believed among the Garos especially 'Songsarik' Garos that this rice beer cures many diseases.

Dress—Garos

Although the Garos have long raised great quantities of cotton, they formerly neither spun nor wove. Because there were no of technical knowhow. They now have begun to practise these arts and weave the small slips of cloth which both men and women wrap round their waists, and their turbans. This constitute their ordinary dress. During winter they make a kind of rug from the bark, of the cell is orientails. This is a sort of blanket which they use in the night and during day time they throw it round the shoulders. The Chiefs and others from well to do families, when in full dress, throw round their shoulders a piece of cloth, silk and cotton. The females wear a small piece of cloth generally black in colour around their waists. Some females put on genji above their waists. Their favourite ornament consists of rings

of bell metal, which are passed through the lobes of the ears, and are so heavy as to distend these until they reach the shoulders. In wearing the people are very simple but with the change of time and availability of modern supplies, they have become more fashion conscious.

Marriage and Divorce—Garos

Marriage customs differ from tribes to tribes and place to place. In Garo society, it is the girl who proposes to the boy. Approaches direct or indirectly, for instance as giving letters has a new tendency that has developed in the town circles and among the educated community. The match may be processed independently or with their parents. In case independently, both the girl and boy report to their respective parents and if both the parties are agreeable and willing, the marriage is arranged accordingly. Child marriage in indigenous society is still prevalent but not among the converted Garos now Christian Garos.

The marriage by seizure before three decades, was their original custom which is not however, prevalent. In that way make a surprise seizure of a would be groom. Widow and widower marriage are common. A young unmarried woman, who proved with child, would not suffer disgrace in the society and moreover such instances are very rare because the women are usually married while young. Divorces are very rare and many wives, when they are infirm or have

no children, allow their husbands to marry or to keep a concubine. When a Chief dies, his heir is any one of his sister's sons, that his widow, or if he has left no widow, that his surviving concubine choose. In Garos society, a man can not marry his father's brother's daughter but he may marry the daughter of his mother's brother. Divorce is permitted by mutual consent when the husband and the wife disagree on vital matters of life. Adultery and non-co-operation in maintaining the family, are other grounds for divorce. Village elders preside over the divorcecases. Proceedings entail a thorough enquiry. The divorce proceedings in their final form are called '*BOLSEKI DENA*'. Bolsekidena is an elaborate ceremony which has been describedthus. Before an assembly of villagers the husband and wife take some dust in their hands, and swear to have no dealings with, nor to claim anything from each other in future. The oath having been administered, the priest takes a sword, a chopper or a spear, strikes the tree with it and calls upon 'the son of the Earth' to be a witness to the oath which has just been taken. The weapon used for is provided by the man whose marriage is being annulled and becomes the perquisite of the officiating priest. Compensation is to be paid where divorce is given without mutual consent.

A formal marriage are also held. The marriage ceremony is simple and quite interesting. Such marriage comes out of the consent among the groom's and bride's parents as a pre-marital condition. It is a

simple ceremony conditioned by the both in which the bride takes at the village well. The next salient feature is the taking of the bride in a procession to the groom's place. No ceremony is held at the groom's place but the intention is to bring him to his in-laws place in which his marriage ceremony will be conducted. If priest performs the ceremony, no elaborate marriage contract are interchanged. Among the Garos the priest place a cock at the back of the boy and a hen at the back of the girl. The groom is then given food with a chicken curry prepared by the bride after the ceremony. After sunset the groom is taken round the village in company of his attendants. He may visit to *nok-pante* and a few houses. All presents, partake in the feast at the bride's house. The ceremony however, differ according to nature of marriage. The couple, in the course of time, have become properly acquainted and settled. The marriage having been confirmed, the couple after few days go on brief visit to the husband's mother and give her some presents. The husband, this time brings some of his personal belongings and some gifts from his parents and start living with his parents-in-law or as independent family.

Agriculture System—Garos

The majority of the Garos depends upon agriculture. In spite of a high percentage of people engaged in agriculture pursuits, the region continues to be short of foodgrains. Since a Garo farmer has to

continuously tilling infertile, stony and rocky land to make his both ends meet, his living is both difficult and hard. Jhuming (Shifting cultivation) is a major agricultural system largely practised in the Hills since centuries long time and by this practice the tradition bound tribal man, living in inaccessible pockets located away from modern centres of civilization, market and means of all communications, he tries to produce everything that he needs from day-to-day life for the family.

Jhuming means shifting cultivation. Shifting cultivation is believed to be prehistoric mode of cultivation and it is still prevailing in many parts of the Garo Hills. It require lot of labour and services almost of all the ablebodied members of the community. The head of the family select a particular plot in the local traditions, they clear the site by cutting trees, grass shrubs, weeds etc. allowed to dry in the field for about two months. The field is surrounded by the stem of the tree in order to protect the soil erosion. Remaining of the clear matter is collected and put on fire. The ashes thus collected are scattered over the entire tract and seeds of foodgrains and vegetables are dibbled in the field before the advent of pre-monsoon session.

According to the customs and traditions existed among the Garo societies before sowing seeds in the selected fields, spirits and goddesses are offered prayers and sacrifices to keep the ill effects away from the crops. Some feasts and dances are also

organised. On appointed day of dibbling seeds, the male members, prepare digging sticks. The dibbling of seeds is done mostly by the female members. However, dibbling of foodgrains may be done by the male members in exceptional cases. Dibbling of seeds for vegetables is exclusively done by the female members. In order to protect the crops from the wild animals, the Jhumlands are fenced with bamboo and shrubs. Pre-independence, the Jhumia farmer had a sufficient land at his disposal to select for the purpose and he had used to come back to the same land for re-cultivation after about forty years but now he had to come back to the same land after even ten years because of increasing rates in birth day-by-day. In fact, this traditional bound system of agriculture among the Garo society had adversely affected the economy of the people particularly of Garo Hills areas. This system had been but now hardly prevailing in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The main foodgrains crops of the Garo Hills people are, wheat, maize and millets. Pineapple, betel leaf, tezpata, seramum arecanut, cotton, ginger, lineseed, potatoes are the cash crops of the Jhumlanders. Plums, oranges, lemon and lichi are also being grown on the Garo Hills successfully. The menace of Jhum cultivation is being combatted under certain developments schemes enforced by the State Government.

Although many development schemes under Government Five Years Plans are in the way in order to bring up and develop the Garo Hills yet being the

people not fully aware the results of the development schemes, require more education and knowledge about the modern agricultural appliances, seeds and methods. Though the Hills are very fertile but the people require to be more educative in agricultural technical know-how.

Inheritance—Garos

According to Garo law, inheritance is restricted to the female. A man can not possess property unless he has acquired it by his own labour. The essence of the law of inheritance among the Garos is that property can not pass out of the motherhood limits.

A daughter of the parents inherit the latter's property and after her, one of her daughter inherits it, inheritance comes down like this. In fact the sons also belong to their mother's clan (machong) and as such they can also claim their mother's property, but this is not the order of the society for the sons would marry from the clan of their father and their children belong to their wives clans and thus if the sons are allowed to lay claim on the properties of a mother, these would pass out of her clan which is never allowed. Again all the daughters of a family do not equally inherit properties. The best of all the daughters of a couple and mostly the youngest one, is selected as inheritress (Nokna) of the family. Wealthy parents given some property to their all daughters due to love and affection only.

In case a couple die without leaving any daughter after them the Chatchis select a Nokna or inheritor for the family. It is found that among the Garos and Non-Garos (convertes-Christians) being fully influenced educationally and financially, though the mother of the house is sole owner of the property, the father can make and at present are making full use of it during the lifetime of the mother. According to Garo customary law the father though can not dispose of the property in any way but his authority in using and disposal of it for the betterness of the house is never questioned. The Garo family is matrilineal in the sense that the woman is the vehicle through whom the property descends from generation to generation.

Disposal of the Dead—Garos

The Garos knew their dead with some expectations. When a person dies a natural death or dies of disease, the body is burned in pyres of wood and bamboo but when a person dies of leprosy or cholera or such other diseases, the body is buried underground. The dead body of the Garos is sometimes preserved for two-three days together before final disposal. The dead body just before it is cremated, is washed with undiluted liquor, this is done by someone near and dear to the dead. Amongst certain section of the Garos, there is a custom of leading a procession from the house of the dead, to that of his father or brothers. After the burning of the dead body is

completed, the bones are collected in a basket as well as in a certain pots. The ashes are collected from within the four pots of the pyre and the basket containing the bones pieces is buried there. A slab of stone is placed over that spot and an enclosure of bamboo mats is erected over there. This enclosure is called *Delang*. Different types of *Delangs* are also erected by the Garos. Also four bamboos are planted on the four corner of the funeral pyre. For one month rice, curry and liquor are usually offered to the dead before erecting *delang*. It is a custom. In some sections or group of the Garos the bones are collected in a earthen pots and kept for one month and then thrown into a river after entertaining the relatives with feasts.

Memorial Statues—Garos

Almost all the Garos excluding Christians, erect memorial for each dead in order to keep the memory. These memorials are called *Kimas*. A *Kima* consists of wood carving the dead man or women and it is effected as early as the cremation is over or maximum time till the bones of the dead are thrown in the holy river. Human faces lining those of the deceased persons are carved in wooden posts, the statues are clothed with the dress the departed soul liked and are planted near the cremation grounds mostly a little far in front of the living houses. A row of *Kimas* pathetic sight tell the number of the persons dead. People erect *Kimas* in memory of their close

friends and friends also besides their own family members. The *Kimas* can be seen at different places in front of the living houses of the Garos and just under the caves. Since the people are coming up financially the *Kimas* are polished/painted and are well cared. A *Kima* keeps the memory of the dead green before the family every now and then. These *Kimas* helps in order to maintain good records of the clan from generation to generation.

Festivals and Dances—Garos

The festivals of the Garos includes certain famous dances which they deserve and celebrate from time to time. The Garos observe some fertility rites. Felling and burning of jhums, weeding of plants and reaping of crops are inaugurated by the performances of such sacrificial rites. The rites seek to invoke the spirits to save their grains from being damaged by wild animals to procure sufficient rain and bless them with good harvest. The calendar year starts with the performance of *Pugalmoka* which finalise the burning of jhums. It is winter time that conditions are good for burning. The next day is the day of festival. Some families perform egg sacrifices at the sacrificial rites in their respective fields. Family feasts are held in the evening at all houses. Meat and liquor are consumed by almost every member of the family. The ceremony lasts about four days. *Wangala* is the most important and richest festival of the Garos. It is a post-harvest festival of the Garos

which is celebrated for several days. All the farmers are free from the jhum fields. It is also known as the festival of thanksgiving to God. It is started in the jhum field by organised ceremony known as *Rugala* followed by Sast Soa, the ceremony of incense. The incense ceremony is never performed without the village chief. Amidst burning fire incenses, beats of drum and tunes of flutes and chants of gathering, the village chief speaks a few words of incarnation and pours rice beer and sprinkles rice flour over a collected rice to be offered to God. The offerings are immediately followed by various drinks, eatings, dancing and merry-making, men, women, young, old, boys and girls—all with colourful dresses and headgears dance and enjoy. This festival is celebrated in the month of November-December every year. There is another festival of the Garos which is known as *Rungchugala*, is performed at the first plucking of paddy from the old field and millets at the new fields. The sacrifice is located near the field. The offering contains food and sprinkling of liquor. Merry-making dance take place in the respective houses.

There is a peculiarity in performing the dances in the Garo Hills. The dances are in the open space where spectators surrounded the dancers on a specially made high platform. The dancers wear colourful clothes and turbans in case of men and dance vigorously. Almost all married and unmarried take part in the dances. The men and women dance in different

circles. The men dancers make outside circle and women inside. They move in sequence. The women move to and fro on their toes and give variations as well as oscillations to their bodies but do not make any movement of their hands.

Art and Architecture—Garos

The art and architecture of the Garos reflects the way of their lives in Meghalaya itself and also in many parts of the adjoining state of Assam. There are many memorial pillars that silently tell the tales of creators and motives. There are flat horizontal stone slabs placed along the paths on in the market for passers-by to rest which shows their generosity towards public convenience. The places where chief priestess used to reside, monolithic-memorials, stone bridges and forts ruins are the specimens of these tribal architecture in this region. Engravings of human, birds and animals figures on the house walls and those of flowers and leaves have been found at some villages of this region which shows the interest and charm of the hill people. Paintings and embroidery on utensils and cloth are also practised by the people of this region. Their ornaments are nicely coloured designs.

Mirth and Music—Garos

The Garos are peace loving people as well as music loving people of the colourful Hills. Music and dance are the great parts of the cultural life of the

Garos. In all the occasions i.e. joy or sadness, Victory or Defeat, birth or death, hopes and despairs, find out the way through music. The most famous folks-songs relate to the ceremonies of birth, matrimony, heroism, love and festival times. During certain festivals and ceremonies while performing dances, musician use different types of drums known as 'Krum', 'Dama' Nakara. Flute is a very common musical instrument which is made of either brass or bamboo. In some interior parts of the villages, Horns made of buffalo horn, are also sounded during all festivals, ceremonies and merry-making occasions. *Wangala*, *Gana*, *Banangala*, *Mangona*, *Saran*, *marang*, *Dakgipa* and *Kirta* are the famous dances and festivals of the Garos.

Villages—Garos

The villages of the Garos are not bigger in comparison of Khasi and Jaintia Hills. About 70 percent villages of the Garos contain about 200 dwellers each. Mostly the people live in group that may be the reason of the defence and protection from the wild animals. The houses and somewhere homlets are found made of wood, bamboo and earth. Roofs are thatched with grass and dry paddystones. The houses on the higher parts of the slopes are erected on wooden platforms. These houses are known as '*Chang Ghar*'. Modern facilities such as water supply, electricity, tele-communications are very rare so far.

The village people though economically weak yet are loveable and respectful. To a plain man, language is great difficulty in the interior parts of the villages whereas this difficulty is not faced in a town like Tura and Williamnagar.

There are village Panchayats like other part of India to decide skirmishes. When a man has any complaint or dispute against another, he reports the matter to the village Panchayat who decide the disputes. In case decision is not accepted, village Panchayat or head of the village reports the matter to the *Laskar*. The *Laskar* is a very important and influential person in the Garo Hills. The hill areas are divided into some (Elakas) and each of such elakas (particular area) is placed under a Laskar for the purpose and collection of the house tax, for communication welfare matters and for deciding the disputes of small nature locally. The Laskar need not essentially be a literate man, wordly prudence is enough for the management of the given area. In practice a Laskar dominate very good position in his elaka. Usually the common disputes are decided by his realising compensation (*dai*) money from the party at fault. The Garos are very keen in realising money from non-Garos. The disputes which are not divided by the village Panchayat or the Laskar of the elaka, are brought to the Deputy Commissioner's court district headquarters at Tura for a decision. But such cases are very rare as ascertained locally from the DC's court at Tura.

Language and Literature—Garos

It is a wrong notion that tribals have no particular language of their own. Every tribal community have their own language, and literature whether it is recorded somewhere in the history or not, whether it is accepted as a script or as dialects. What-so-ever the case may be, like most of the tribal communities, the remembered record above three generations of the Garos goes into the myths and legends. The Garo was nowhere language but some of the people expressed through folklore known as dialects which too of their mother language is Garo language and literature. The famous linguist Mr. George Grierson has termed the Garo dialects as sub-language of Monkhmer and Bodo which are now used in Cambodia and Southern Burma and Bodo in Northern Eastern India. Tibetan language is also spoken in some part of the Garo Hills. In the years of 1841, the foreign Missionaries employed teachers to educate the local tribals. In fact, credit goes to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Jones, a dedicated Missionary couple who systematically developed the local dialects of the Hills people, brought into one of the forms of languages. Foreign missionaries found that the enlightened section of the tribals had a great interest for Christian order.

The Garo language is of the agglutinative type if the agglutinative is understood in its wider sense. In this language the words are made up by stems and suffixes together. But every part of the word retain

its individual meaning to a great extent. For example the Garo word 'Nama' stands for good is either an adjective or a verb according to use while 'Nika' which means to see, to look is a verb root. These two different words (objective and verb) come together and make up a new Garo word 'Namanika' which means to look good or simply to like. Similarly the other words, made up of verb roots and suffixes are numerous in the Garo language.

It is revealed that some of the Garos, claim that they had their own alphabetic system of writing their language in the past printed on the skins of the leopards and tigers which was lost during the great earthquake in these hills in 1897 but this is not proved till now. It is still doubtful if the Garos had their own alphabetic ever. It is evident from the various writings by the British Government and foreign missionaries that the people living in the areas bordering Goalpara and Kamrup used to write in Assamese character while those living in the borders of the Mymensing and the Sylhet (now in Bangladesh) district used to write in Bengali character. The Garos of the interior parts of the hills were mostly illiterate who are even now so. After the Garo Hills came under the administrative control purposes of the British, the foreign missionaries introduced Roman characters of writing and this facilitates them to translate the holy Bible into Garo's dialects and preached Christianity there. The Garos now write in Roman characters but even then all the letters of the

English alphabet are not necessary to write the language. For representing the sounds of the Garo language the following Roman characters are quite enough :

a, b; c, d, e, g, h, i, k, l, m, n, o, p, r, s, t, u & w

The Garo language is almost similar to the Bodo, a group of the Tibet-Burman family of the great Tibet-Chinese language. For example a brief comparison between Garo and Bodo-Kachari language is as under :—

<i>Garo</i>	<i>Bodo</i>	<i>English</i>
Apa	Fa	Father
Ama	Ai	Mother
Ada	Ada	Brother
Anga	Ango	I
Angi	Angi	My
Naa	Nang	You
Bia	Bi	He
Mea	Hoa	Man
Mechik (jik-wife)	Hinzam	Woman
Bisa	Fisa	Child
Sal	San	Suh
Waal	At	Fire
Chi	Dui	Water
Nok	Nu	House
Mai	Ma	What

The Garos have names for numbers which are in common use in them. These numerals are furnished as follows :

SA	1
GNI	2
GITAM	3
BRI	4
BONGA	5
DOK	6
SNI	7
CHET	8
SKU	9
CHIKUNG	10
GHISA	11
GHINGNI	12
CHIGITAM	13
CHIBRI	14
CHIBONGA	15
GHIDOK	16
CHISNI	17
CHICHET	18
CHISKU	19
KOLGRIK	20
KOLGARIKSA	21
KOLGRIKGNI	22
KOLGRIKGITAM	23
KOLGRIKBRI	24
KOLGRIKBONGA	25
KOLGRIKDOK	26
KOLGRIKSNI	27
KOLGRIKGHET	28
KOLGRIKSKU	29
KOLATCHI	30

KOLATCHISA	31
KOLATCHIGNI	32
KOLATCHIGITAM	33
KOLATCHIBRI	34
KOLATCHIBONGA	35
KOLATCHIDOK	36
KOLATCHISNI	37
KOLATCHICHET	38
KOLATCHISKU	39
SOTBRI	40
SOTBRISA	41
SOTBRIGNI	42
SOTBRIGITAM	43
SOTBRIBRI	44
SOTBRIBONGA	45
SOTBRIDOK	46
SOTBRISNI	47
SOTBRICHET	48
SOTBRISKU	49
SOTBONGA	50
SOTBONGASA	51
SOTBONGAGNI	52
SOTBONGAGITAM	53
SOTBONGABRI	54
SOTBONGABONGA	55
SOTBONGADOK	56
SOTBONGASNI	57
SOTBONGACHET	58
SOTBONASKU	59
SOTDOK	60

SOTDOKSA	61
SOTDOKGNI	62
SOTDOKGITAM	63
SOTDOKBRI	64
SOTDOKBONGA	65
SOTDOKDOK	66
SOTDOKSNI	67
SOTDOKCHET	68
SOTDOKSKU	69
SOTSNI	70
SOTSNISA	71
SOTSNIGNI	72
SOTSNIGITAM	73
SOTSNIBRI	74
SOTSNIBONGA	75
SOTSNIDOK	76
SOTSNISNI	77
SOTSNICHET	78
SOTSNISKU	79
SOTCHET	80
SOTCHETSA	81
SOTCHETGNI	82
SOTCHETGITAM	83
SOTCHETBRI	84
SOTCHETBONGA	85
SOTCHETDOK	86
SOTCHETSNI	87
SOTCHETCHET	88
SOTCHETSKU	89
SOTSKU	90

SOTSKUSA	91
SOTSKUGNI	92
SOTSKUGITAM	93
SOTSKUBRI	94
SOTSKUBONGA	95
SOTSKUDOK	96
SOTSKUSNI	97
SOTSKUCHET	98
SOTSKUSKU	99
RITCHA-SA	100
RITCHA-GNI	200
RITCHA-BONGA	500
HAJAL SA	1000
LAKH SA etc.	10000

It can be seen from the above that the Garo numerals are very often used with particles prefixed to them. These particles indicate the right class of things to which they belong. In Garo numerals are many and are mostly based on English language pattern. This is an outline touch of the Garo language. Its much accounts in detail is given in many other books.

Religious Believe and Conception of God—Garos

The Garos believe that there is an Almighty God above them who has created all the Universe and all the creatures of this world. They respect all the fates of the people and in this respect their outlook is much broader than that of many others believing other faith or beliefs.

The Garos believe in the transmigration of the soul as a state of reward and punishment. Those, who are morally wicked, are punished by being born as lower animals. Those who have offerings to the gods are born in high and wealthy families. Salujung is the supreme God who lives in Heaven (Rang) and has a wife named Manim. No offerings are made to this goddess but to her husband are offered male goats, swine and fowls. This seems to be the diety, whom 'BLIOT' known Mahadeva, which merely signifies the Great God, but there is no affinity between Salujung and Sib, who by the Brahmans, is usually called Mahadeva. Salujung, is visible heavens. The heavenly bodies the Sun, Moon, the Stars and Spirits, who preside over hills, woods and rivers, are considered as the agents employed by Salujung to manage the affairs of this world. White cocks are offered to the heavenly bodies and fermented liquor, rice and mostly white flowers are offered to the spirits of the hills, rivers and forests. The blood of the animals is first offered and then, after the flesh has been dressed, a portion is added to the offering, the votary eat the remainings.

There are no temples, nor images; before every house a dry bamboo with its branches adhering is fixed in the ground. To this the Garos tie tufts of cotton threads and flowers and before it they make their offerings. There are priests known as Kamal. They marry, cultivate the ground and go to war like their neighbours and the office is not hereditary.

Any man, who has committed to memory of the requisite forms of prayer during marriage, funerals and in cases of sickness of the family, may assume the offices. The presence of the priests is not considered necessary on the occasion of common offerings that are made to the gods.

The salient features of the traditional faith among the Garos are as under :

1. Salujung is the god of fertility. He is represented by the Sun, and is worshipped because all crops are in his care, and without his favour there is no rain, and no harvest would be reaped. Wangala is a greatest festival among them and they celebrate in honour of Salujung every year. The actual sacrifice to him is offered in the fields before the village festival begins. On the sacrificial altar, a liquor is poured out on the ground in front of it ; and the worshippers then return to the village for the festival rejoicings.

2. Tatara Rabunga is the creator, at whose command the world was made by two lesser spirits —Nostu-Nopantu and Machi. He is believed to be a greatest spirit. His special missions with regard to the welfare of man is curing of wasting diseases.

3. Choraburi is also believed another spirit which protect the crops. Before partaking of the first fruits of the season of first time fruit, such as corn, millet and melons, a small quantity of these, is always offered to him.

4. Nostu-Nopantu is the diety who, at the com-

mand of Tatara Rabunga, fashioned the earth with the help of Machi.

5. Goera and Kalkame were two brothers who are believed the strength of God, look after the health and strength of the people and save from all the dangers of the forest during the year. Sacrifices and offerings in their honour are always done at the foot of a tree during Asongtata or Asongroka ceremony. A pig, a fowl or a duck may be the offerings.

6. Susime a daughter of Asima-Dingsima, who had been considered as giver of riches and the causer and curer of blindness and lameness. A pig and white liquor are normally offered to her.

Evaluation—In Garos

Since the original records about the Garos are not readily available but the historians have recorded that they are from the stock of Tibeto-Burmans which were drifted into Eastern India and Burma across the plateau of Tibet. The Garos with the pass of time and increase in population also spread over Garo Hills and divided into many groups and sub-groups. In order to protect from the invaders and wild life, they also lived in groups. They have been very brave people to protect their land and they fought well against the Britishers. Similar to the Khasis, they also never submit to the Britishers. They resisted the Britishers and fought against them, for maintaining their freedom although they were ultimately subdued by their superior forces. It is

found that after marriage couple start living independently and father looks-after everything of his family. So, father has a respectful position among the modern societies of the Garos and old traditions are being forgotten gradually with the change of time.

The fact of co-operation and unity among the Garos can not be ignored. They are full of hospitalities even to the strangers provided the strangers maintain themselves with all respects and honours. In the field of religion, they are free in all respects to celebrate their feasts and ceremonies with full decorum and according to their traditional ways. They are firm believers of their fates and destinies. They also believe in transmigration of the soul. The Garos as already stated believe in many sacrifices on certain occasions, they still perform, these ceremonies although the spread of education in these Hills is bound to have an effect leading to changes in future. It is seen that the Garos offer whitecocks to the heavenly bodies. Rice, liquor and mostly white flowers are offered to the spirits of the hills, rivers and forests. It is true, because their faith and customs according to which they make all such sacrifices, and offerings which kind of prosperity in their life and all such ceremonies and rituals a source of their identity and strength.

No doubt that the Garo Hills are very fertile provided the modern and latest agriculture devices, methods and technical knowledge is given to the people. The hard destiny of these people is due to

their own fault. Instead believing entirely on their fates and destinies they should become more aggressive and crazy to come forward in the field of agriculture competition with the wake of modern age. They are very hard farmers in the world provided they adopt and implement the Government development schemes fully.

At the end it may be concluded that the present modernisation in the hills is influenced from the West. Though the Christianity had good influence over the hills yet, the Garos have to maintain their socio-cultural and religion in all respects. Since the Britishers and Christianity have introduced to modern them, amenities of life and have made them awakened to the modern world, they must not loose their own identity and flourish in the way of their own religion like the Khasis and the Jaintias of their sister communities in free India for world peace as a whole.

SOME TABOOS—GAROS

1. To build a house with stone walls on all sides.
2. To use nails in building a house.
3. To use more than one kind of timber in building the hearth.
4. To build a house with resivours timber only, the Syiem family can use such timber.
5. To cut trees from a sacred forest.
6. To take or give anything with the left hand.

7. To step over anyone's body.
8. To kill any animal or bird without first throwing rice over its body.
9. To drink the milk of a cow or goat.

Taboos for pregnant women

- (a) To accompany a funeral procession.
- (b) To finish any sewing she may have started before she became pregnant. Similarly prohibition regarding the finishing of the plaiting of baskets.
- (c) It is not permitted for the husband of pregnant women, to thatch the ridge of the house at such a time, or to fix a handle to an axe or a 'dao'.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Sex Ratio—Tribals

An average sex ratio of the tribal communities in India has been said 985 out of 1000. Since no particular data regarding sex-ratio at birth is available, nothing can be said exactly. As per the statistical account of Assam (W. W. Hunter), in 1870 A.D., a rough census revealed that per 1000 males belong 1085 females and during 1901, the ratio was 1118 females per 1000 males. Also according to the Government of Meghalaya census report 1973 says that the ratio of males from 1951 to 1971 has improved to a great extent which may be attributed to better life condition, education and other modern facilities. In regions which are predominantly rural, sex ratio is comparatively high. The sex ratio among the tribals, is generally high everywhere because of inherent reasons. Moreover among the tribals of these hills the bride does not leave her mother's place after marriage but it is the husband who leaves his parents behind and start living with his wife. Because of the women among these tribals of Meghalaya, dominate and organise everything in the family, it can be well adjudged the importance of the women and where the women are prominent in every respects, sex ratio is understood to be high. Also, the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos societies are matrilineal. It is found and however, mentioned that sex ratio in the Khasi Hills is lowest in comparison to the Jaintia Hills and the Garo Hills.

PERSONALITIES SKETCH FROM THE MEGHALAYA HILLS

Babu Jeebon Roy (1838-1903)

Babu Jeebon Roy, the Indian National Freedom fighter and a great Social Reformer, was born in 1838 in Cherra. He was the eldest son of U Ram Sing *Jaid Rani and Bijaan Laitkyasow Jaid Mairom of Shella*. With little education, he joined the service of the East India Company at Cherra Station in 1858 with salary of Rs. 8/- per month and rose to the post of Senior Extra Assistant Commissioner.

During his service career with the East India Company, he did all his duties, entrusted to him, religiously and faithfully which resulted into a great honours and respects to him by the British. He was the guide and advisor to Colonel Bivar in the acquisition of land, formation of new town and residential accommodations, when a capital head-quarter was shifted from Cherra to Shillong. He was nominated as one of the member of the first Town Committee for Shillong. He was a true man from his heart who mixed freely with everyone, his own people as well as people of different religions. He sincerely advised and encouraged his people to politically Unite and understanding the British as well as other Khasi States people. Once he led a group of people to the Calcutta Exhibition in 1884, in which he

presented an excellent set of machines, utensils, clothing and agricultural implements used in domestic and routine mode of life of the Khasis and Jaintias, to the Ethnological Department of the Calcutta Exhibition.

While on service, as a Superintendent of Shillong Jail, he did experiment with various methods of potato cultivation, fruits growing including pear "naspati" and produce of coffee in the southern slopes of the Khasi Hills which are the cash crops of the present days in these Hills.

He had rendered valuable services towards the development of education in general and particularly in establishing of Shillong High School, which he alongwith other Khasi intellectuals founded in 1878. He gave Rs. 900/- to start this School. He wrote many books encountering the influence of the foreign Welsh missionaries in the field of educational activities in the Hills. He wanted his people to be knowledgeable and learn the advancements in different spheres of life from other people.

Besides writing Khasi books, he wrote in Khasi a short version of Ramayana, Buddhadeb Charitra, Chaitanya and Hit-Upodesa. Even he wrote of himself that "I love my Country—(India), desire my fellow countrymen to progress in knowledge." In his "History of India" in Khasi, he wrote these foreword lines which are enumerated as follows :

"This History of our own Nation—India,
It is for us Indians to know it well
And that also from our early age."

In order to facilitate his people for general reading, and providing proper text books to the pupil and to encourage women and Khasi educated girls to earn their livelihood, he opened his own printing press in 1896 in which one of his own daughters was the first Khasi girl to work. Also this press, by means of published materials, awakened and made the people aware and conscious about their religion and cultural life. Thus the people become more socio-cultural conscious.

In the field of religion, Babu Jeebon Roy cherished his traditional faith. After retirement he devoted maximum time towards Khasi religion and in order to give a concrete background to the Khasi religion, he wrote Khasi religion books named *Ka Niam Khasi* (The Khasi Religion) and *Ka Kitab Shaphang U Bloi* (A book on one God). In these books he had crystallised some of the very important ethos of the Khasi religion and its philosophy. One of the ethos, from his book, from which one can very well understand the realism of the Khasi religion is printed as :

God, the Creator, has Himself revealed to us in our Souls—

“To know that He is One and One Alone,
The All perfect and the Truth,
All-loving and All-merciful,
Omnipresent and Omniscient
The sole Creator and All Supreme,
He is the only One whom we shall worship.”

In addition to writing religious books, he was the driving force for the organisation and foundation of "Seng Khasi"—a religio-socio-cultural organisation of the Khasis, founded in 1899.

Babu Jeebon Roy was a great Indian National Patriot. He was one of the most upright magistrates of the time. Above all he was the man of strong 'will' and determination. He spoke to the people, just after the great Earthquake in 1897 in Shillong in which the whole Shillong was swept including his well-built house, that "I have lost everything but not lost hope—I will try again." At last, when he was sent to Delhi by the Government in connection with Coronation Day of Edward VII, he suffered a stroke in 1902 and passed away from this world on 16th May 1903.

Incidentally a booklet *Ka Jingialang Kynmaw*—U Babu Jeebon Roy—1932 fall in my hand in which U Rai Sahib Sivanath Datta, *ula ong* in his speech, convened in honour and memory of Babu Jeebon Roy, at the Seng Khasi Hall, Mawkhair on 29th July 1932 has highlighted the glorious services of Babu Jeebon Roy especially towards human binds and Nation as a whole. A speech delivered by U Rai Sahib Sivanath Datta, during memorial meeting of Babu Jeebon Roy is printed as under.

"Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, sincerely thank the conveners of this memorial meeting, though very late, I had often wondered why my Khasi friends have allowed the name of Babu Jeebon Roy

to sink into oblivion. A nation which does not know how to honour its departed great will have stunted growth, if any. We have not here to-night to do honour to the memory of that great man Babu Jeebon Rai—the father of the modern Khasis. Of all living persons who had the privilege of knowing him intimately I am one—though an humble one. Having lived in these hills for 45 years I venture to lay some claim to have seen Shillong grow. I think I may, without fear of contradiction, say that Babu Jeebon Roy was the pioneer of modern Khasis. It was he who first had the vision of glorious Khasi race and he strove hard for their upliftment in all spheres. He was a seer—and a farsighted seer—and it was in this that his greatness lay. I will first speak of his educational activities. He knew that the spread of English education among the Khasis was in other's hands, but with his keen insight he knew that the Khasis have their future linked with that of the Indian (U Djhars) specially foreigners those of Sylhet, their nearest neighbours, because the Khasis have to live with them and rise or fall with them. He accordingly started a School for the Khasi pupils in which Bengali formed an important subject of instruction. We allowed him the use of the Mawkhar Brahmo Samaj building close by this Hall for this School and it continued there for some years. This was in my humble opinion a move in the right direction. He came to read the Sanskrit Hitopodesha and he was so much charmed with it

that he knew of no other book like it for the moral training of our young hopefuls. He had also some other Sanskrit works similarly translated. His Khasi Primers are still considered as useful text books. Some of you may notice that he approaches here the great Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar of revered memory.

I was told that he began service on Rs. 8/- and rose to the grade of Senior Extra Assistant Commissioner. That itself speaks volumes about his abilities. Though from his high official position Babu Jeebon Roy had the opportunity of coming in contact with the westerners. He was never dazzled by the glamour of their civilisations, he was ever national in his outlook, in his costumes and other things. He tried his best for the agricultural improvement of the Khasi Hills.

He had new plants imported here for cultivation. So Superintendent of the Shillong Jail, he experimented with various new plants in the Jail. The well known Naspati was first brought here in Shillong by him. Some of you may be aware that it was the great David Scott whose monument you will find in the compound of the Cherra Post Office who first introduced potato into these hills. I had heard it from those who had come up here long before me how they used to shed tears over their meals. They had only potato as vegetable; potato in the morning, potato in the evening. Even potato leaves were considered as dainties when they could find them. You see,

what a marvellous change has come over now. New varieties of vegetables and fruits around here now.

I may narrate here a few of my personal reminiscences of him. I came up to Shillong in 1887 and join the Secretariat in 1890. He was then the Extra Assistant Commissioner here and my friend Rai Bahadur (then Babu) Sadaya Charan Das was the Superintendent of the Deputy Commissioner's Office. After Office I on my way home used to meet them very frequently and talk on various matters. I thus came to know him intimately. He was a laborious worker and not fond of play or amusements. I shall finish my address by mentioning an ancestors which I had learnt from my friend Babu Sadaya Charan Das. You must all of you have heard of the great and ever memorable Earthquake of June 1897 when almost all the houses in Shillong specially the pucca ones were levelled to the ground. It came at 5-10 p.m. on Saturday the 12th June. I cannot describe to you the tremor that we experienced. It lasted for about 5 minutes. Few men could remain standing erect. The havoc it did can be easily imagined. Mr. Arbuthnott was then the Deputy Commissioner of these hills and Sadaya Babu was his Superintendent. It was perhaps on the 2nd day of the Earthquake that Mr. Arbuthnott asked Sadaya Babu to make inquiries as to now Babu Jeebon Roy who had then retired from service, was doing. It was on the following Monday noon when tremors had not yet ceased that Babu Sadaya Charan Das went to Jeebon Roy

Babu's house at Mawkhar. The residence which was a strong stone-made building was a mass of stones. Sadaya Babu moved about without finding him. Eventually he saw a speck somewhere in the compound and on approaching it found Jeebon Roy Babu seated under a shade made of a few Chatais (lymphing) with a table in front on which stood a piece of paper with something written thereon. On Sadaya Babu's enquiry Jeebon Roy Babu exclaimed that the property (meaning specially his houses of which he had a number) that he had made with his life's labour and money was gone and he was a ruined man, but he was not in despair. He had started to be in life a new and the piece of paper on the table had the motto inscribed thereon, "Try again". My friends, this at a time when Earthquake shocks had not ceased and people were apprehending some volcanic eruption nearby and all Shillong quivering with fear of death and starvation staring then in the face. This was the man whose memory we have met here to honour."

Rev. James Joy Mohan Nichols Roy (1884-1959)

Rev. J. J. M. Nichols Roy the son of Khan Tham of Shella was born in 1884. He came to Shillong to complete his High School education in 1897. He did graduation from Duff College, Calcutta in 1904. He married N. Evalyn Nichols in 1907. Instead of post-graduate studies he started his preaching career.

In 1906 he came as a President and Manager (business) of Church of God and Business Association of Assam. He promoted the United Fruit Company Limited and did very well till and after independence in the field of business and trades. He was top class speaker and a good writer too. He wrote a number of Religious books, '*Kajingshai Ka Gospel*' an organ to propagate the teachings of the Gospel through his Church was his own newspaper.

In 1920, he took active part in the field of politics and till his death in 1959 he had continuously contributed valuable services towards the Hills people. As a political leader in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills, he formed his own political party in 1936 known as "*Ka Senk laici Shaphrang Ha Ri Khasi Bad Jaintia*". Later he joined the Indian National Congress and in 1947 he organised and became the leader of the Khasi-Jaintia Federated States General Conference, which got the full support of the National Party. Rev. Nichols Roy was never in favour of grouping the Khasis and Jaintias at par with other Hill tribes of India. One of his notes to the British Cabinet Mission in 1947 is worth to quote hereunder :

"The Khasis are the most advanced than of all the hill people in India. As they have a distinct culture of their own, the Administration of this district should be adjusted in a special way in the new Constitution of India."

He was in favour of Assamese language as a provincial language of Assam. He favoured the

abolition of hereditary Chiefship in the Hills and shared Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru's ideas of Unified India in which some of the Chiefs of the Hills did not like him. He resigned from the National Congress in 1956 to stand as an Independent Candidate in the year 1957 election to the Assam Legislative Assembly. He won the Election but could not complete his services due to his death in 1959.

Rash Mohan Roy (1872-1962)

U Rash Mohan Roy was born in 1872. He was the eldest son of U Chandra Singh, Syiem of cherra and ker Meidon Jaid Nongrum. He was a brilliant student of his time who learnt Bengali and other languages while studying in high school in Shillong. He joined the service in the office of then Comptroller and retired as a Record Clerk in 1920. He took an active part in political activities alongwith his father by which of course, the attempt of the British to break up the political structure and claim of the Khasi Hills, was failed. He was suspended from Government service for some time due to his involvement in political affairs.

He was the first member of the Indian National Congress who wanted to throw out the Britishers from the Hills of India. After retirement he took more interest in the field of politics and in 1929 he led the people of Nongwah before the Simon Commission to plead for them the re-integration of their

state (Kamrup, now in Assam) with other Khasi states.

He was the first Chairman of Seng Khasi who remained as a pillar of strength to the organisation till his death. Immediately on his retirement he was appointed as a Headmaster of the newly started Primary School by the Seng Khasi. He contributed his services of the highest order to get this school recognised by the Government and raised it from Primary Standard to Middle Education Standard. He was only the man who printed a circular in which he openly blamed to the Government for not recognising the School among the Christian Schools. In 1940, the circular so printed, reached to Mahatma Gandhi who published it in his newspaper, "Harijan" duly condemning the Government action and as a result the School was given recognition and a meagre grant for Rs. 20/- per month was sanctioned by the Government.

He was also a good writer who wrote many books in Khasi Language on religion and culture. Other books socially and culturally national oriented, were recognised as text-books in the said school. Besides his great contribution towards the progress of Seng Khasi and Khasi School, lastly he wrote book which especially deals with some of the aspects of Khasi religion, moves and customs and some folk-lore.

U Rash Mohan Roy died at the age of 90 years

in 1962 after leaving all the able and right paths, ways and means to the Nation.

U Tirot Singh (1802-1834)

Syiem U Tirot Singh will be remembered as one of the most outstanding rulers not only in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills especially Nongkhlaw State but among all the Princely States of the Country during British rule. The Syiemship of Nongkhlaw has had a great part from the time of UShajer and U Syntiew. They had been ruling over Nongkhlaw State wisely and bravely from the later half of the sixteenth century. U Tirot Singh inherited the qualities of his fore-fathers. His Uncle, U Hain Singh died in 1814 and due to binding rules, customs and traditions, the responsibility for Syiemship had fallen on his shoulders. He was conferred Syiem (Chief) of Nongkhlaw at the age of 12 in 1814. At that time, the Government was run under the guidance of his mother named, Ka Ksan Syiem. The administration and the Darbar Hima (State Parliament) were managed by the Cabinet consisting of Myntries (Council of clan representatives). In the course of time Tirot Singh with the able guidance of his mother made many changes in the internal administration of the State. He put the boundary disputes with his neighbouring Khasi States, under control successfully and introduced the policy concerning the general interest of the people. In order to achieve smooth func-

tioning of administration in addition to the State Darbar, he set local darbars villagewise. The inter-village disputes and appeals were to be decided at the General Conference of State Darbar. In fact, he was a real democrat. He successfully improved the trade relations with the plains which helped the economic conditions of the State.

He was a good administrator and democratic. In 1820, then the Burmese invaded Assam, he saw the danger that the independence of these hills would be seriously effected should Kamrup fall into slavery. He sent messages to all neighbouring States and initiated the formation of the Federation of Khasi States. They rallied their forces and fought well against the Burmese in their territory adjoining Kamrup in Assam.

He concluded a friendship treaty with Mr. David Scott on 3rd November 1826 for an opening route between the Assam Valley and the Burma Valley in Sylhet through Khasi Hills. Mr. Scott established his Headquarters at Nongkhlaw. The British troops started misbehaving with the Khasi Tribes and dominating attitude of the British Force did not take long to realise U Tirot Singh. On 2nd April 1829, war was declared and other Khasi States raised their battle cry. Under leadership of brave U Tirot Singh, his men attacked on British troops and killed many British soldiers. The battle remain continued for about 4 years.

It is an interesting to mention that now this

brave hero of the battle made prisoned by the British.

During these battle days the situation throughout the hills was very tense. The people began to feel the practical effects of War on their cultivation and other daily social life. Many lost either a husband, a brother or a son in the battle. While those who survived were still engaged in some other battles. The economic conditions of the Khasi States were deteriorating being blockade of trade and commerce with the plains. Mr. Robertson the successor of Mr. David Scott, after having seen the adamant attitude of U Tirot Singh, began to tighten up the economy of the Khasi States and the British forces were further strengthen to these hills in order to counter-act the frequent attacks of the Khasi Warriors by requisition of more troops from Assam and Manipur. The economic conditions had its effect on these Hills and marked the turning point of War by which the Britishers were more worried to exploit the situation through offer of negotiations.

The people of U Tirot Singh were suffering and in order to save them from further agony, he with his colleagues finally decided to respond to the proposed negotiation for an honourable settlement with the British. Mr. Robertson, when knew about the negotiation, he immediately assigned to Capt. Lister and Lieutenant Rutherford for talk with U Tirot Singh. In the meantime, he ordered to Lieutenant Townshend to proceed with his troops towards the vicinity where talk with U Tirot Singh was to take place.

Mr. Robertson in his secret letter dated 10th August 1832 informed the Government about all these developments.

The date and the venue for the meeting were fixed by Mr. Ensign Brodie with the help of Manik Singh—a Syiem of one of the Khasi states. The place and date for meeting so fixed was the residence of Manik Singh's sister on 23rd August 1832. Captain Lister and his men in which U Tirot Singh demanded that the whole of Nongkhlaw state should be set free from the British troops and activities and the bridle path passing through Nongkhlaw should be abandoned immediately. Capt. Lister wanted time to put forward the thing before Mr. Robertson for his decision. It took about four months to inform U Tirot Singh for next meeting. This time, in this meeting Lieutenant Inglis who was commanding a post at Myllem, was assigned the task for meeting and talk in order to make Tirot Singh surrendered/captured. However, meeting could be arranged only on 13th of January 1833 at Lum Madiang in Myllem. U Tirot Singh along with his 20 to 25 men arrived to negotiate where Lieutenant Inglis greeted him. According to Khasi custom, to ensure U Tirot Singh that no harm would be done, Lieutenant Inglis took salt from the blade of his sword, but by a treacherous move, the hero of the battle was made prisoner. It was the heinous act and betray in the history of Warfare. Later Mr. Robertson told this treacherous capture for U Tirot Singh as a surrender.

On 16th January, 1833, U Tirot Singh was brought to Cherrapunji before the court of Mr. Robertson for trial. During the trial all out efforts were made that he would agree to resume the reign of his state on condition that he accepted the British Supremacy. But U Tirot Singh kept silent throughout the proceedings of the court. He was once again given an opportunity to submit before the British rule, and resume the rule of his state but instead of accepting and submitting before them, he boldly replied which totally shocked the British court. He spoke in a very high voice before the Army packed in British court in which some Khasi Chiefs were also present, that "BETTER TO DIE A FREEMAN THAN LIVE A LIFE OF A SLAVE KING".

Mr. Robertson, after that gave decision for life imprisonment to U Tirot Singh. He was sent to British jail at Dacca on 17th January 1833. After a little over a year of captivity, U Tirot Singh died some time in the month of March 1834. The date of his death was not disclosed by the Britishers and the same has still remained a mystery. The British authors were also remained silent over the exact date of his death. However, their record show that Mr. Robertson had got a self-imposed agreement on Rajon Singh, the successor of U Tirot Singh, prepared since 6th of June, 1833. URajon Singh was 13 or a little over years old on 29th March 1834.

Though belated on 29 March, 1954 that is after one hundred and twenty years of his death, Mr.

Jairamdas Daulatram, the then Governor of Assam, paid a homage tributes to him and unveiled the memorial Monument of U Tirot Singh at Mairang in the Nongkhlaw Syiemship of West Khasi Hills District in Meghalaya. This great son of Khasi Hills in Meghalaya, will always be remembered among the other prominent India National Freedom Fighters who shed their blood and dedicated their lives for the freedom of their motherland,

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PHOTO PLATES

<i>Plate No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	—Ceremonial Dress—Khasis.
2	—Khasis Dance in Mawolai.
3	—Khasis Children in Dancing Dress.
4	— <i>Khasis Music Instruments.</i> 1. Duitara—This is played on all Khasi occasions. 2. Maryngthong—This is played during family occasions gathering songs connected, with tradition and customs. 3. Maryngod—Generally played by labourers and farmers when they come back from field work.
5	—Khasis Sword and Shield—Sword is very rear now. Sword is original in Photo. Shield is for protection in war as well as used in Social function and dances.
6.	—L to R— <i>Khasis Silver Wearing</i> 1. Rynghap—This is made of pure silver. We may say this was used to keep arrows during war in the olden days.

2. Kynjritabah—It is also made of pure silver to be worn by the King and battle fighters across the shoulders in order to keep the fighting dress tight.
3. Wrist and arms bands—Worn by the ladies during social functions and dances. It is also made of a pure silver as well as gold.
4. Pansngait—It is also made of pure silver/gold worn by Khasis dancing ladies/girls.
- 7 & 8 —Khasis ornaments.
- 9 —Seng Khasi Hall at Shillong.
- 10 —A Khasi House.
- 11 - Khasis Monoliths at Mawphlang.
- 12 —Khasis Monoliths.
- 13 —Khasis Bows and Arrows.
- 14 —“Teer”—Archery in the Khasi Hills from the traditional sports and gambling.
- 15 —A Khasi Labourer.
- 16 —Bull fighting—West Khasi Hills District—Mairong.
- 17 —Khasi-Langam near Bangladesh and Garo Hills border area in Dancing mood.
- 18 —Seng Khasi High School, Shillong.
- 19 —Elephant Fall, Shillong.

<i>Plate No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
20	—Behdeinkhlam Festival of Jaintias at Jowai.
21	—Ceremonial Dress of Jaintias.
22	—Ceremonial Dress of Jaintias.
23	—Garo's Market at Tura Headquarters.

Sketches

Sketch P, Sketch Q, Sketch R

ERRATA

<i>Page No</i>	<i>Line No</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
Page 2	Line 4	—	Use . (Full Stop) after world
" 3	" 14	—	Use—(Space) between the Jaintia after Chirapunji
" 6	" 20	'The'	to be removed
" 6	" 22	Tirot Singh s	Tirot Singh's
" 20	" 16	were destroyed	were destroyed.
" 36	" 11	establish	establishment
" 39	" 17	stated	started
" 58	" 13	In	It
" 59	" 4	people allover	people all over
" 59	" 7	the	he
" 61	" 26	foreign inva-ders	foreign invaders
" 62	" 23	inreligious	in religious
" 83	" 18	amouring period	a mourning period
" 83	" 26	offers	offered
" 86	" 14	deeplove	deep love
" 90	" 13	through the year	through the year
" 90	" 23	it	is
" 91	" 28	festival for	festival for
" 97	" 3	peace, prosperity	peace and prosperity
" 100	" 24	but so closed	but not so closed
" 101	" 4	rich, rich	rich
" 110	" 11	khasi traditions	Khasi traditions,
" 114	" 3	among	among
" 118	" 4	good or evil influences	good or evil influences
" 130	" 2	was withheld	was with-held
" 130	" 27	his	has
" 132	" 11	Again during	Again during
" 135	" 6	the participants	the participants

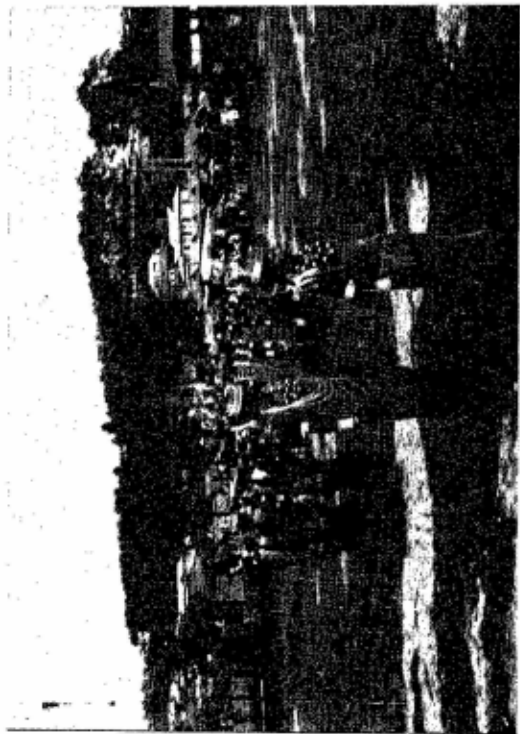
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Plate No.—1



Plate No.—2



Plate—3



Plate No.—4

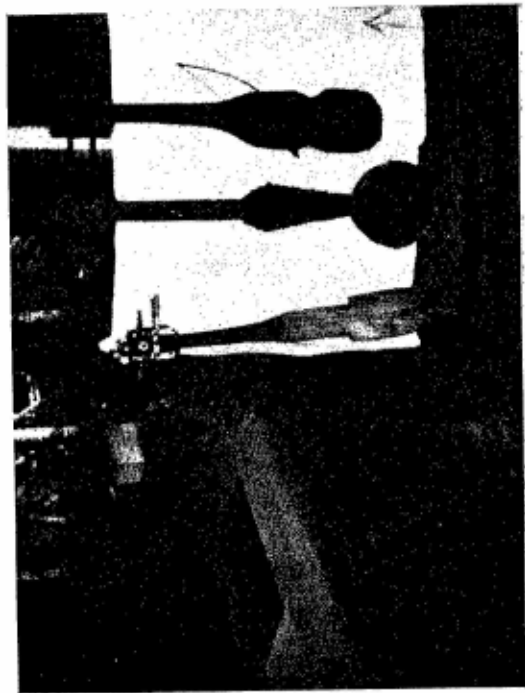


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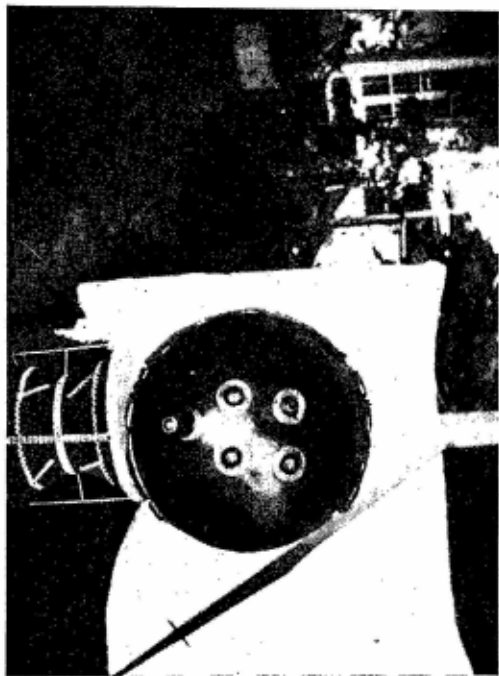


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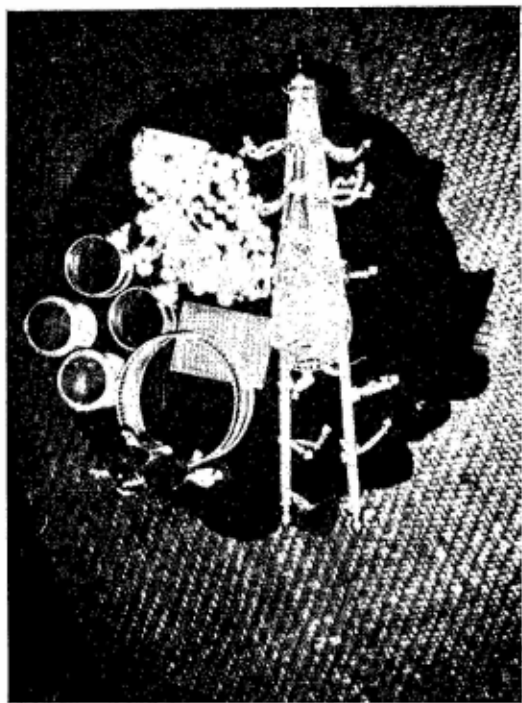


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Plate No.—8

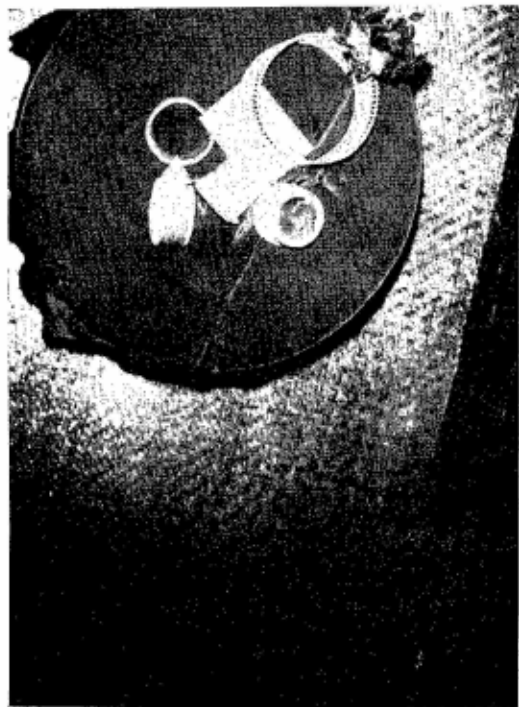


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Plate No.—10



Plate No.—11

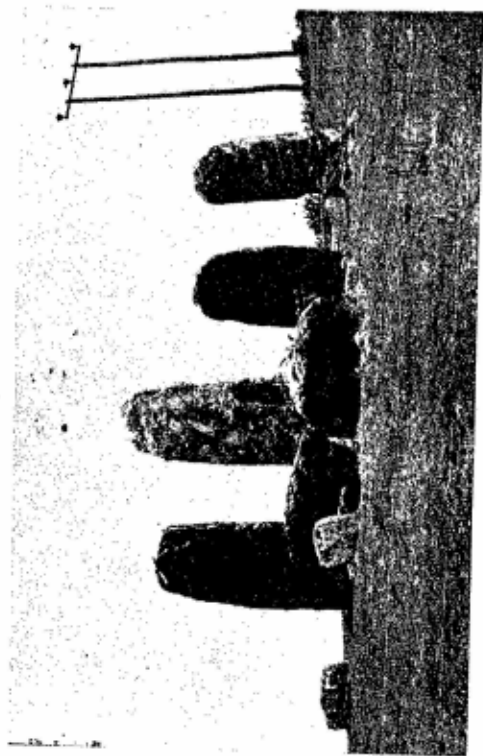


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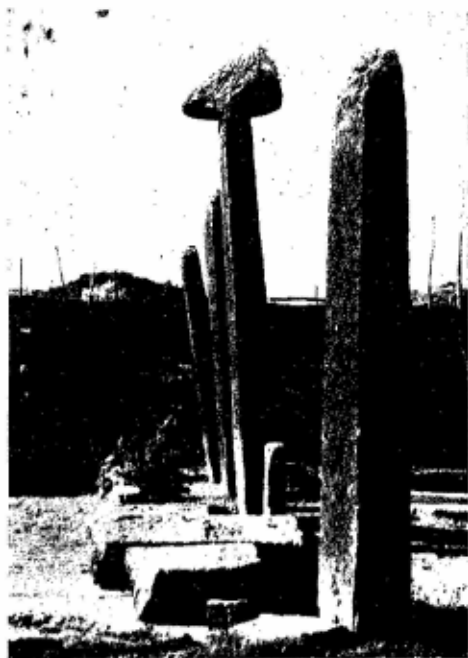


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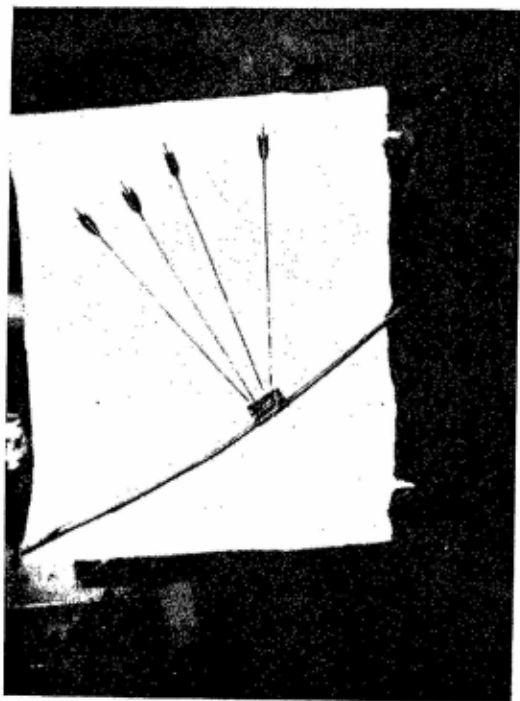


Plate No.—14



Plate No.—15



Plate No.—16



Plate No.—17

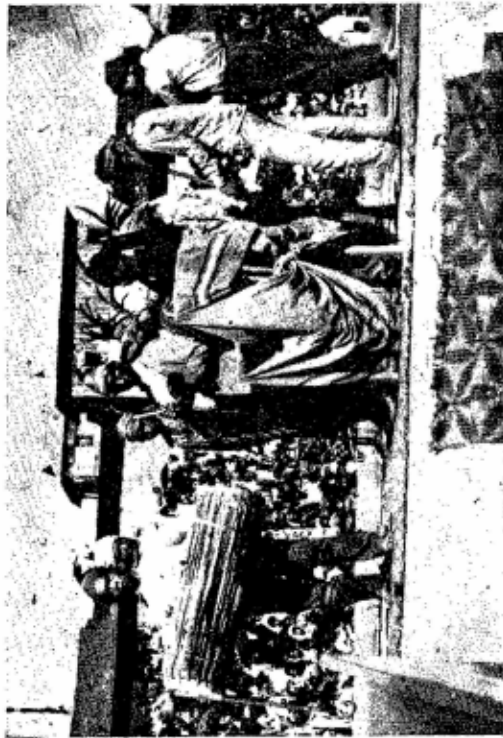


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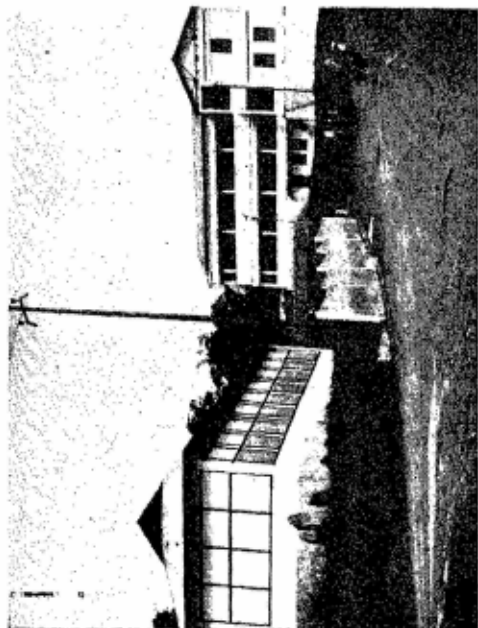


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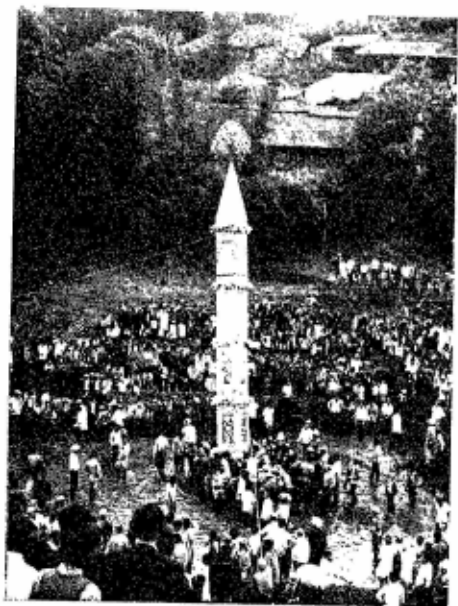


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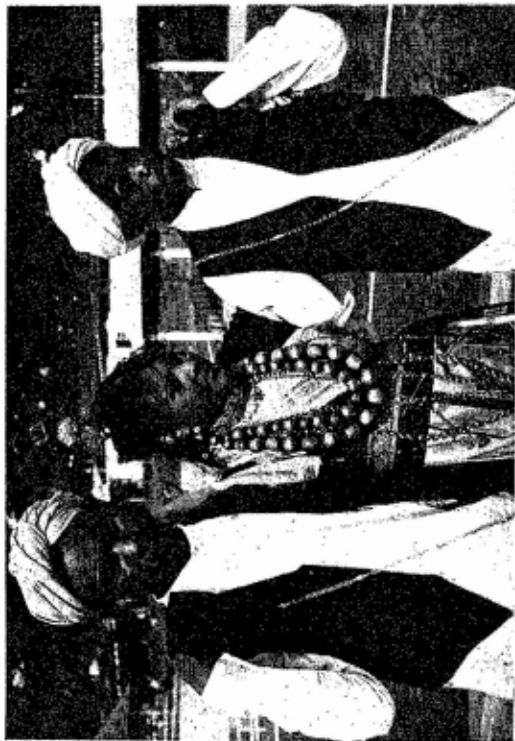


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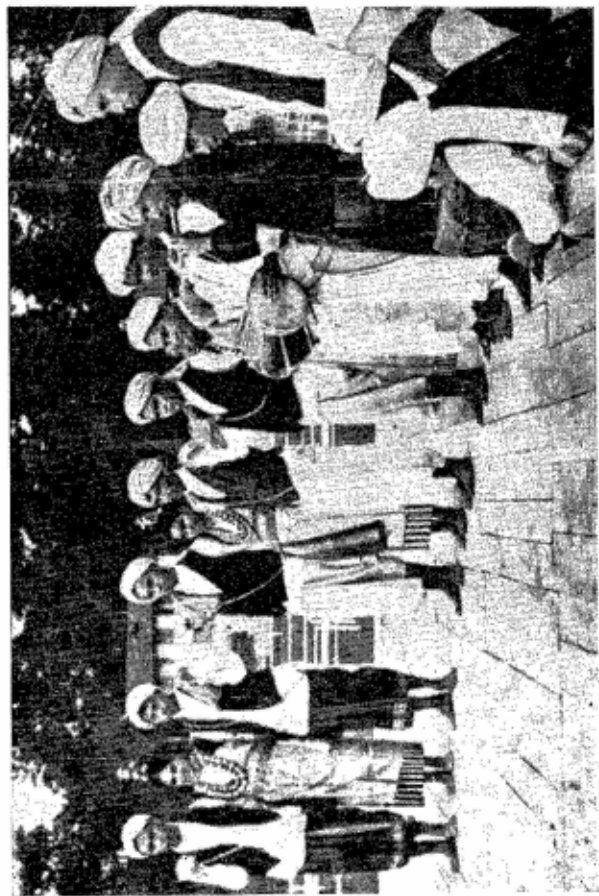
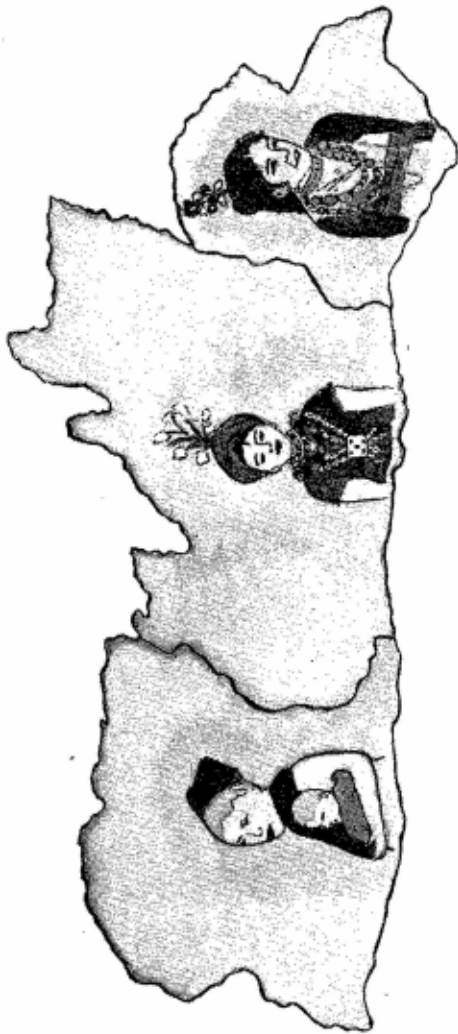


Plate No.—23



SKETCH 'P'

ON THE GREEN HILLS OF MEGHALAYA



GAROS

KHASIS

JAINTIAS

SKETCH 'R'



U. TIROT SINGH

SKETCH 'Q'
ON THE GREEN HILLS
OF
MEGHALAYA

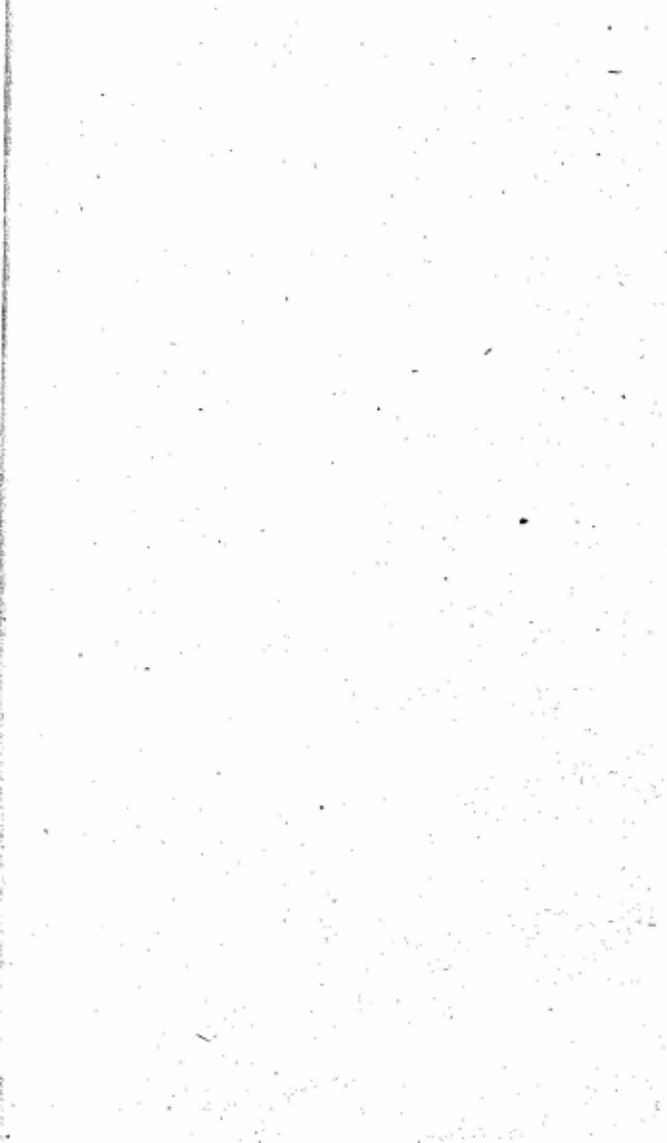
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