

**LANDMARKS  
IN INDIAN  
ANTHROPOLOGY**

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# LAND MARKS IN INDIAN ANTHROPOLOGY

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## EASTERN HIMALAYAS

A Study on Anthropology and Tribalism.

SHARMA T.C.

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## *Introduction*

These essays are presented in honour of Prof. M. C. Goswami, a pioneer among the Indian Anthropologists who retires from service as Professor of Anthropology, Gauhati University in September, 1978, after establishing the department of Anthropology in the University and heading the department for the last 30 years. The articles, included here, project an ethnographical, archaeological and cultural profiles of North-East India along with an outline of the development of anthropological studies and research in this region after the establishment of the department in the University of Gauhati.

North-East India, rightly regarded as an Anthropological Museum, lies at the trijunction of Indo-Chinese, Indo-Malayan and Indian subregions of the Orient. Because of its ethnic diversity, cultural and linguistic varieties, no other part of the world can boast of possessing such an array of classical monographic studies on the Nagas, Kukis, Khasis, Garos, Mikirs, Apatanis and so on. These essays reflect the richness of anthropological studies in North Eastern India. North-East India came to the forefront of anthropological research as early as middle of the last century when British administrators, scholars and scientists tried to project through their writings the traditional lifeways of the colourful autochthones of this region. J. H. Hutton, J. P. Mill, P. R. T. Gurdan, J. Shakespear, T. C. Hodson, A. Playfair, Lyall and Stack, C. von Furer Haimendorf, Verier Elwin and others richly contributed to our knowledge of the hitherto unknown ethno-cultural groups of this region. The linguistic survey of this region carried on by Dr. Grierson is a storehouse of knowledge on ethno-linguistic variabilities of this region.

This was only the beginning of an attempt in understanding North-East India. Presently the work is being carried on by a new generation of professional anthropologists whose contributions are reflected through this volume.

Prof. Robins Burling in his article "Return to Rengsang-gri" made an interesting observation on the changes he observed among the Garos of Rengsang-gri in eighteen years.

Further, this article has great implications on anthropological field work, particularly, as in case of Prof. Burling who lived among the Garos for nearly three years, where the field investigator gets opportunities to become emotionally involved with the community he studies.

Prof. Roy, Burman's article gives a general appraisal of the problems of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes in India.

Dr. D. N. Majumdar's article 'North East India-A Profile, attempts to give a general ethnographic description of the communities of North-East India.

Dr. Ch. Budhi Singh's article on the analysis of Meitei myth aims at giving social anthropological implications of the mythological concepts on the origin of the Meitei community.

In his article Dr. B. B. Goswami gives a brief assessment of changes coming into the Mizo culture since their contact with the outside world.

The articles by Dr. P. B. Das, Dr. Tarun C. Sharma, Dr. D. N. Majumdar and Shri O. Kumar Singh deal respectively with growth of the study of Physical Anthropology, Prehistoric Archaeology and Ethnology in North-East India.

Dr. P. D. Saikia in his article has analysed the kinship system of [the of Arunachal Pradesh. In his article L. Nobinchandra has made an attempt to bring to light the nature of rural economy in Manipur; and Professor Masatoshi A. Konishi, who has carried out extensive field investigations in India, Nepal and Pakistan, has produced interesting evidence on the indigenous paper-making traditions in South Asia. Professor C. von Furer Haimendorf after intimately studying the tribal societies in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, has given a vivid picture as to how fast tribal life is changing in India under the influence of the external forces during the post-independence period.

This volume is prepared by the Anthropological Students' Forum, Gauhati University with a view to paying homage and respect to Professor M. C. Goswami by his pupils and admirers.

Gauhati  
May 15, 1978

T. C. SHARMA

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