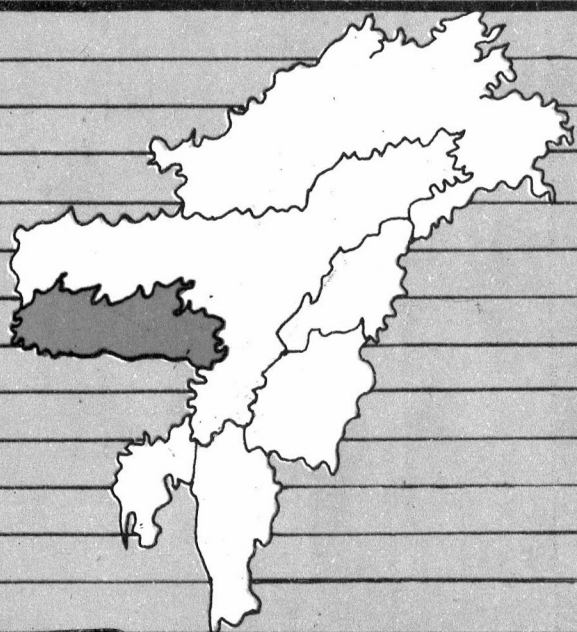


G. K. GHOSH
SHUKLA GHOSH

FABLES AND FOLK TALES OF MEGHALAYA



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G. HOSLA

G. K. GHOSH, a graduate in Chemical Engineering is a prolific writer who wrote over 15 books on environment, anthropology, women development, literature, beekeeping and so on. He had presented over 20 papers in the section of anthropology and archeology in Indian Science Congress. He had also written articles, poems etc., in Oriya, Bengali and English published in various periodicals. He was posted for over four years in North Eastern India therefor he could collect a number of folk tales of the region.

SHUKLA GHOSH, a graduate from University of Calcutta and a graduate in Music from Prayag Sangit Samaj, is a prolific writer who presented four papers in the section of anthropology and archeology in Indian Science Congress. A book on Indian textile jointly written by her published recently. She was in North Eastern India for over four years and collected a number of folk tales which she proposes to publish in series.

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Meghalaya, the land known to be the abode of the cloud, is also the land of fairies. It is a land of fairy tales and a dream land. The land belonged to various tribes like Khasis, Syntengs, Wars, Garos and Koches, known for their traditional culture amidst of natural beauty. These tribes nevertheless did not have their own script hence could not record their folk tales, legends and historical stories but were carried forward orally from generation to generation. Therefore even their historical events became part of their folk tales or legends. Attempts were made by various western scholars like Gurdon and Playfair besides Indian scholars like Mira Pakrashi, Namita Sandop Sen and so on to compile these legends but they are rarely found at one place. In this book 73 legends and folk tales from Meghalaya has been compiled by authors who spent considerable period of their life in North Eastern India. It is hoped these legends should not only be good for pleasure reading for young and old alike but also should help scholars to interpret cultural heritage of colourful tribes of Meghalaya.

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FABLES AND FOLK-TALES OF MEGHALAYA

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G. K. GHOSH
SHUKLA GHOSH



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Who made Khasi's proud of their Culture



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INTRODUCTION

Meghalaya, the land known to be the abode of the clouds was once part of greater Assam. Its state capital Shillong was the capital of undivided Assam and was a favourite place for British Administrators.

Land belong to Khasis, Synteng (Jayantias), Wars, Garos and Koches who have their own distinct cultural heritage which reflects well in their fables and folk tales. Till British occupied their land, they had their own rulers who ruled the vast tract of land. Last Khasi ruler from Nongkhlaw U. Tirhat Singh is still remembered as a patriot all over India. During those period there was influence of Bengali and Assamese culture.

Though they belong to same land, the tribes, have different origin which reflects even in their language and culture. While Khasis, Syntengs (Jayantias) and Wars have identical origin belonging to Austric group, Garos are Tibeto-Burman group more allied to Bodo group of Assam. Koch has influence of both though by and large are close to Garos only. However Khasis, Syntengs and Wars are more close to Austriacs of Far Eastern countries rather than Austriacs of central India. However Syntengs are influenced by Hinduism to great extent. Obviously their culture, hence the legend varies.

These tribes did not have the script of their own hence had to use Bengali script during pre-British period and Roman script thereafter due to influence of Christian Missionaries. Fables, folk tales, mythology and even historical events were carried forward orally which became their folk literature. Bible in Khasi dialect in Bengali script perhaps was their first published document which was published from Shirampur Mission Press near Calcutta during early 19th century. Influence of Christianity among Khasis and Jayantias reported to be much more than other tribes while Garos and Koches remained somewhere between their own nature worship and Hinduism.

Among Khasis, Syntengs (Jayantias) and Wars too there was attempt to revive their tradition through Seng Khasi movement founded by Babu Jibon Roy and carried forward till date by Hipson Roy.

Nevertheless, various stories of these people to the extent possible compiled here not only for pleasure reading of all people irrespective of age group but also shall help scholars to study the culture of the land.

15th June '97

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CONCLUSION

Meghalaya, the land known to be the abode of the clouds is the land belonging to Khasis, Syntengs, Wars, Garos and Koches. Each of them had their own tradition and cultural heritage which reflected well in their numerous folk stories many of them were drawn from their history.

Seventy three such folk tales and fables are discussed in this book which reflect the rich culture besides moral teachings. These tales also give us idea about the way these people used to live in their abode and their society.

These tales are slowly evaporating due to influence of Christianity and modernisation. Earlier attempts were made to preserve them notably by U. Jibon Roy, some British writers like Gurdon, Playfair besides Indian anthropologists but rarely were collected at one place. An humble attempt is made here to collect them at one place with the hope that atleast these stories are preserved.

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