



RELIGIOUS  
CULTURE OF  
NORTH-EASTERN  
INDIA



N.N. BHATTACHARYYA

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# RELIGIOUS CULTURE OF NORTH-EASTERN INDIA

(H.K. Barpujari Lectures)

N.N. Bhattacharyya



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## FOREWORD

These are the series of lectures delivered under the Barpujari Endowment Lectures in June, 1993 at the North Eastern Hill University, Shillong. The objective of the Endowment provides not only to organise annually a series of lectures but also leaves to the discretion of the university to arrange for their publication.

The present volume is the second in the series. The main theme of these lectures is the Religious Culture of North Eastern India and it is one of the first of its kind. The lectures sum up not only the traditional religious beliefs and practices of the hill people of North Eastern India but also draw its parallel in the Hindu religious beliefs and practices. It also traces the processes of Sanskritisation or Hinduisation of the people of the plains of North Eastern India and discusses in details the extent of their absorption into the Hindu culture. The lectures also take up in depth the controversial topic regarding the existence of Buddhism in North Eastern India. Thus the publication of these lectures will certainly provide more information in one single volume on the variegated religious beliefs and practices of both the hill and the plain people of North Eastern India.

I wish to thank Prof. N N Bhattacharyya not only for his enlightening lectures but also for contacting the publisher which made my task easier. I am also thankful to the Publication Department, North Eastern Hill University for giving permission to go ahead on our own with the publication. Thanks are also due to my colleagues in the department who have voluntarily helped in going through the manuscript and making it ready for the press. Let me also thank Manohar

Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, for its ready acceptance for its publication within such a short time.

Milton S Sangma

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## PREFACE

I was invited to deliver the H.K. Barpujari Endowment Lectures in June 1993 by the Department of History, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. The lectures deal with the religious culture of North-Eastern India, and it goes to the credit of the Department of History, NEHU, to bring them out in the form of the present monograph. I am especially grateful to Prof. M.S. Sangma, the Head of the Department of History, and his learned colleagues who have taken a great deal of trouble to revise and edit the text of the lectures and to make arrangement for their publication in a book form. Besides the teachers of the Department, my thanks are also due to the researchers and students who patiently listened to all the lectures and raised many thought-provoking questions and controversial issues which—I remember with pleasure and admiration—often amounted to hot debates. I am grateful to Prof. Barpujari himself not only because his munificence was responsible for this endowment lecture, but also because of the fact that this octogenarian doyen of Indian historians had seen the text of my lectures and offered important suggestions. My thanks are also due to Sri Ajay Jain of Manohar Publishers & Distributors who has undertaken the task of publishing the lectures on behalf of North-Eastern Hill University.

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