

Technology and Socio-Economic Linkages of the Khasi-Jaintias in Pre-Colonial Times

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The history of the Khasi-Jaintias before the arrival of the Ahoms in the Brahmaputra valley is uncertain. Their folklore and oral traditions tell about their supernatural origins, which a section of the tribe has interpreted to explain that they are autochthons of the land now called **Hynniewtrep**. This belief apart, it is generally held that they were one of the first tribal groups to have migrated into their present hills, though when that migration took place and why there was a migration has not been explained. However what is certain is that this migration preceded that of the Ahoms, as the *Ahom Buranjis* make no mention of the Khasis in the course of their own migration into the upper Brahmaputra valley, whereas there are references to the Nagas and other peoples the Ahoms interacted with in the course of their settlement in the valley.

When and where the Mongoloid Khasis changed their language to its Austric base is another of those unsolved aspects of their past. Their tradition says that they lived for some time in the Brahmaputra valley from where they settled in the hills that have come to take the name of the tribe. They are said to have first settled in the Jaintia hills moving gradually toward

the Khasi hills in the practice of swidden cultivation and search for iron ore. That the tribe was one and whose roots are common is explained in their genealogy and clan structure. The Diengdoh clan of Sohra traces its origin to *ka law law*, whose mother came from beyond the Kopili. One branch of the clan resided in Jowai where it became known as the Lalloo clan. Another branch went to Nongkhlaw and became the Diengdoh Kylla clan. The fourth branch went to Mawiong and became the Pariong clan.¹ The story of this clan, to take only one example is remarkable for in part it points to an eastern point from where the tribe came as also it explains the formation of the Khasi clan structure. In all likelihood the tribe was spread over a wide geographical area, in Kamrup where Ahom records² mention the names of some of the Khasi *himas*, and south into Sylhet where much of the lowlands toward the river Surma was in the possession of the hill chiefs.³ Hemmed in by the Garos in the west and the Mikirs in the east whose early histories also need attention, the Khasi-Jaintias were confined to their hills where over many centuries of habitation the Khasi ethos took shape.

Before we enter into a discussion on Khasi technology, something needs to be said of the periodization of history with particular reference to the hill areas of North East India. Today it is generally accepted to study the past in time divisions, pre-history; ancient; medieval; modern and contemporary. Alternately there have been studies that have not used the time schedule but concepts such as pre-colonial; colonial and post-colonial. Both the patterns referred to are applicable to the Brahmaputra and Barak valleys because all the four divisions may be drawn to interpret the past and particularly because these areas have written material for reconstructing the history from the ancient past. In the case of the hill areas of the North-East such periodizations⁴ are not applicable for a number of reasons. While it may be argued that it is possible to reconstruct the pre-history of some of the tribes from material remains, it becomes difficult to provide the tribal histories with 'ancient' and 'medieval' pasts because there is an absence of written material from which to reconstruct that past. Even giving them a modern history becomes difficult because to move into the modern without an intelligent account of the two earlier periods

of history would be contributing to a fallacy in history. The difficulties in such a periodization may be overcome as has been suggested by Amalendu Guha. Addressing a seminar at the North Eastern Hill University in 1988, he said:⁶⁵

In the case of most parts of North East India, periodization breaks down since major segments of our population have lived down to the early 19th century without mastering the art of writing. If we want to know about their pre-19th century past, then the conventional methods of writing history do not help. We need to take resort to research in linguistics, ethnology and archeology for the purpose.

Another problem in attempting an essay on the 'pre-colonial' past of the Khasi-Jaintias is that the time in history covered in the term 'pre-colonial', which, even if it is more apt, covers many centuries and we do not have the material remains or written sources to reconstruct what happened in the post-'pre-historic' stage. Khasi-Jaintia folklore moreover, has not been dated to more judiciously use this source for interpreting the past. It may be possible to use the Assamese and Bengali sources, as the tribe in the hills did not live in splendid isolation, as it is made to believe. There was economic, social and political interaction between the hill people and their neighbours in the plains below. It may be implied, therefore, that over this long period the society under study had first to adjust in the transition from their 'pre-historic' culture to slow developments in time over the next few centuries bringing up their history to the mid-eighteenth century, when material becomes more readily available for studying the tribe and the society.

This then brings in a discussion on the sources used for this study. There are written materials in the Ahom, Assamese and Bengali languages on the Khasi-Jaintias from which to reconstruct Khasi-Jaintia history.⁷⁷ Khasi folklore is also rich in retaining the significant facets of their past. In recent times this has become an important tool for historical research on pre-literate societies.⁷ However, that these are scattered and cover a long span in time and referred in sources that have to be verified makes it difficult to arrive at a conclusive understanding of the society. Moreover there is insufficient

material to reconstruct a meaningful history. This is reflected in the existing material on Khasi-Jaintia history where little but very interesting literature has been worked out on their pre-history and pre-colonial history.⁸

This paper will attempt an understanding of the technology and its socio-economic linkages in pre-colonial times just prior to the colonial interaction. It will use material largely in the English language written from around the mid-eighteenth century and till the early nineteenth century. It may be possible to have a broader picture of the Khasi-Jaintia society at this period of time because what the sources indicate is not change, as much as what prevailed at the time the writers made their observations. In taking this course it is not intended to exclude the use of material in the other languages for which references are available. To be candid, the present writer does not have the faculty to use these sources other than through translations or with the assistance of interpreters. Aware of this limitation, the essay will nonetheless largely use material in English, both primary and secondary, together with references in Khasi to substantiate the primary sources used in the presentation.

Agriculture was hardly the mainstay of the early Khasis. As was in vogue among the majority of the hill tribes in the region food was grown by the tribe by *jhum* cultivation. Discouraging settled agriculture were the high hills with their steep slopes and deep valleys that would have required a great deal of labour for terrace cultivation. Moreover the Khasis did not have use of the plough preferring to till the soil with the *mohkhiew*, the hoe, the shape and name of which Gurdon links with the Burmese and Malays.⁹ Jaintias in the plains of what were the Jaintia Raj and the valleys in their hills had taken to settled cultivation using the plough.¹⁰ The explanation for this technological use over their Khasi neighbours can be found in the Jaintia state structure and exercise of control over much of the Barak valley where the plough was in use, whereas the Khasi *himas* had a control only over the foothills where the plough could not be used. One other factor that might have influenced their agriculture in the hills was that the Khasi *Syiems* controlled the *duars* to the north of their hills opening into Kamrup and the foothills in the south into Sylhet. These lowlands gave them sufficient rice. As one early British report

noted: "the Cosseah never cultivates the soil: he always employs Bengalee ryots: he comes down at the time of harvest and carries off the produce".¹¹ Such was the importance of the foothills that the hillmen went all out to defend their rights over these lands, entering into conflicts with the Ahoms and the Mughal governor of Sylhet. To further elaborate on this point, extensive trade of produce from the hills, the details of which will follow, bartered for what the plains had in surplus was so established in pre-colonial times, that possibly food in cereal could be more easily procured than grown.

A variety of fruits grew extremely well on the southern slopes of the hills. The Sylhet orange as it was called in Bengal which came from the precipitous slopes of the hills were long famous throughout India while the pineapple was also of superior quality. Pineapple leaves had a utility by the hillmen. These were collected before the onset of the monsoon, soaked in water, pounded and the fibre separated. The fibres were then used for making net pouches or bags, which formed part of the dress of every Khasi. In these pouches they carried their clasp, knives, comb, flint steel and betel nut box.

The export of fruit, *tezpat* and iron and limestone was all carried by human labour by a variety of specialized baskets. It is to be noted that the Khasi-Jaintias did not have use of the wheel in any form and particularly for the movement of the produce of the hills. Neither is there any reference to the domestication and use of animals. With plentiful forests of bamboo the Khasis became adept in basketry. The standard basket, the *khoh* was conical in shape, broad and round at the top, narrowing gradually to a point at the bottom. Jaintia baskets usually were upright. Storage baskets with or without lids and measuring baskets were made as also the *kriah* for carriage of *tezpat*. Other bamboo works were the *prah* for winnowing, the *pdung* a circular and flat tray for cleaning rice, while they used the *knup* and the *trap* as shelter from rain. Mats had a variety of uses, for sleeping on, for drying grain and as a cover to the planks in their houses. Still other specialized bamboo works were the cylindrical frame broad at one end, narrow at the other used for carrying pigs. All weighty and bulky objects were carried on their backs in baskets, with the *star* as a sling distributing the weight from forehead to the back. It must be noted here that all this movement of commodities

was performed by human labour. The Khasi are not known to have had use of domesticated animals, nor had they had use of the wheel in any form. Khasi technology was so far behind that one early colonial observer commented: "Man is the only bearer of burdens".¹²

That the Khasis lived in regular villages on fixed sites for generations is an explanation why they have strong attachment to their villages. Villages were not strategically situated, as they did not have fear of each other as some other tribes have of their own kind. Their houses were usually built in the shape of a shell, divided into three compartments consisting of a porch, a kitchen and an inner room. Khasi houses were not large by any standard. This may have been due to the social and family structure which though close-knit lived in individual houses. The material used in the construction was locally available consisting of wood or bamboo and covered with thatch. Walls were made of roughly hewn wood planks for they also did not have use of the saw,¹³ though they were experts with the cleaver and the adze. The doors of the houses turned on good wooden pivots. Though iron technology was fairly advanced in the hills, no iron was used in the construction of their houses as they considered it *sang*-taboo. Gurdon makes reference to a number of taboos relating to house construction. Khasis also considered it *sang* to build a house with stone walls on all four sides; to use more than one kind of timber in building the hearth; to build a house with resinous timber; only the *Syiem* family could use such timber.¹⁴ Why these taboos prevailed is uncertain. What it did have an effect on was the absence of stone and iron in the house construction. Consequently, it has not been possible to study the remains of villages as the material used was perishable and therefore could not stand the test of time. One example of this is though the monoliths of Nongkseh village close to present day Upper Shillong remain, there is no indication of any other human activity in that site. That it was once a village is apparent from the word Nongkseh (*nong*-village-*kseh*-pine tree) and the tradition that the village was situated on the road between the *Bhoi* (northern hills) and the *War* (southern hills).

There are two opinions on whether the Khasi-Jaintias distilled liquor. Khasi tradition says that they did not consume

spirits, confining themselves to rice beer. This was what was consumed when the Jaintia Raja entertained Robert Lindsay, Collector of Sylhet, when the latter was invited to the hills for a *shikar* and its concluding festivities.¹⁵ If another European observer's note that the Khasis distilled spirits themselves is correct, this can be ascertained from the method of distilling of liquor, which was crude to say the least. Fermented rice or millet was boiled in earthen pots and the steam channelled to two outlets to drop into dried gourds. Khasi-Jaintia religious and social practices have made much use of distilled liquor and we are of the opinion that it was a use which was acquired over many years and prior to the more relishing tastes introduced later.

The plastic and graphic arts were conspicuously absent among the tribe. Where there are some drawings on stone should not indicate the general but the exceptional as these are rare findings and will not explain the use of this skill among a large section of the people. The reason perhaps why this is so is the absence of idol worship in the Khasi-Jaintia religion or of erecting totems in their culture, all this despite the use of tools and implements in their iron industry.

A striking feature of these hills is the immense number of memorial stones to be found all across the hills. These are not gravestones; they are both irregular and dressed and commemorate the ancestors. It is possible that the Khasis adopted the custom of erecting stones by the force of example or that they started its use when they finally settled in the hills. The art and ceremony was all but lost with only few stones erected in recent times. That the memorial stones are both rough and dressed may indicate that at a point in time there was the absence of the use of iron in extracting and dressing the stones, while the more elaborately done up monoliths give clear signs of the use of the metal on the material. Questions have been raised how these huge stones were transported when the wheel was not used, and how they were erected; they continue to test the minds of archaeologists.¹⁶ While this tradition on stone was indigenous to the Khasi-Jaintias, the stone bridges of which there are only few remains have to some extent had influence from Bengal. Thomas Fisher, the Superintendent of Cachar in 1840 mentions the Saracenic style of the bridge at Amwi on the

Nartiang-Jaintiapur road which, "quite possible the work may have been constructed by a Mussalman in the employ of the Raja at no very distant past."¹⁷ A unique form of spanning ravines is still to be seen in the southern Khasi Hills. Roots of the rubber and fig trees that have the property to inosculate and form natural grafts have over centuries been used as living bridges.

√The abundance of iron ore in the Khasi Hills made it possible with other requirements of charcoal, clay and water for establishing a flourishing iron industry. It was in part because of the search and location of iron ore that the Khasis moved west from their first settlements in the Jaintia Hills. It is not certain how old this industry could have been, but it is reasonable to say that the Khasis have had a knowledge of the excavation and smelting of iron and production of iron implements for centuries. Lt Yule whose note on the iron industry in the hills was written after extensive travel and observation of the entire process of production had this to say: "So marked an effect have these works achieved on the undulating hills which cover the country, that in many instances what must once have been like their neighbours, round, swelling knolls, appear to have collapsed and sunk to their skeletons, shewing nothing but fantastic piles of naked boulders; the earth which bound and covered them, having been entirely washed out by the heavy rains following in the track of the miner. So numerous and extensive are the traces of former excavations, that judging by the number at present in progress, one may guess them to have occupied the population for twenty centuries"¹⁸. In all likelihood the science of excavation, smelting and manufacture of iron came from contact with the plains people with whom there were economic and social connections.

The principal sites for the mining operations were around Myllem, Nongkrem, Laitlyngkot, around Mairang and Cherrapunji. The open cast mining was invariably worked in the monsoon when with the flow of rain water down the hillsides would assist obtaining the iron ore. After washing the ore a number of times the material would be smelted. Yule then goes on to give a detailed account of the process of smelting the ore. His account differs slightly with that provided by William Cracroft, an early British administrator in the Khasi

Hills. His account describes the process using two large upright bellows; the furnace made of pipe-clay braced with iron hoops and the chimney. His account continues:²⁰

At the right side of the bellows and even with the top of the chimney, is a trough containing damp charcoal and iron sand: at every motion of his body the operator with a long spoon tumbles a piece of this charcoal with the iron sand adhering to it, down the funnel of the furnace and when a mass of melted or rather softened iron is formed on the hearth, it is taken out with tongs and beaten with a heavy wooden mallet on a large stone by way of anvil.

The mining and smelting of iron was not a year round operation. Those employed in the industry included women and young boys. The iron ore was often not smelted in the villages adjoining the mines. It was sold in baskets containing three *maunds* of ore, and carried often for many miles to the villages where the smelting furnaces were located. Again, the manufacture of artifacts in the hills was done in workshops differing entirely from the huts in which the first smelting was done. The artifacts manufactured in the hills were swords, arrowheads, spears and the tools for their manufacture.

Robert Lindsay of Sylhet recollected in his memoir that the Khasi Hills produced wood of various kinds, adapted to boat and ship building, and also iron of a very superior quality: "it is brought down from the hills in lumps of adhesive sand, and being put into the forge, produces excellent malleable iron without ever under going the process of fusion, the hammer and fire discharging the dross and courser particles at once, thus producing what is called virgin iron, superior to any made in Europe by charcoal."²⁰

Much of the iron was sent to markets located in the northern and southern foothills. A reference in Lindsay's memoir explains its transport to the markets in Sylhet: ²¹

I had the gratification of witnessing a caravan arrive from the interior of the mountain, bringing on their shoulders the produce of their hills, consisting of the coarsest silk from the confines of China, fruits of

various kinds- but the great staple was iron. In descending the mountain...the tribes descending from rock to rock...In the present instance the only descent was by steps cut in the precipice. The burdens were carried by the women in baskets supported by a belt across their forehead, the men walking by their side, protecting them with their arms.

Iron constituted the principal industry in the hills and the chief export. Limestone too was exported in large quantity though not from as early a date as that of iron. While the hill people made no use of lime, other than as an ingredient in the consumption of *pan*, limestone was exported from the southern hills to the processing villages in Sylhet such as Chunamgunj, to name only one location. It may be assumed that Mughal Bengal first had use of Khasi limestone which was before the East India Company and British traders took interest in this rock.²² Limestone was easily exported, as the mines were located close to the numerous rivers flowing into the Sylhet plains. Other commodities for export such as those given in Lindsay's account, were carried to the markets by human labour. Imports were few and consisted largely of rice, fish, cotton, silk cloth and salt. These items were traded using barter, for the economy was not a money economy. That the Jaintia and Khyrim *himas* minted coins²³ — *Khattra* rupees, need not necessarily imply that there was a circulation of money within these states. Apparently the trade was in favour of the hill people. They appear to have exported more than what was imported. The items of export would have fetched more, even in barter terms to enable the Khasis to convert some of the profits of the trade into gold and silver. This could be an explanation why the Khasi-Jaintias have a fondness for jewellery.

That there was a trade route from Rahar in Nowgong, through the Jaintia Hills and down to Jaintiapur is certain.²⁴ The route linked Jaintiapur in the southern plains to the large village of Nartiang in the hills and the Jaintia territories in the *duars* adjoining Assam. Less certain is the route which would have passed the Khasi Hills. The construction of a road through the Jaintia *hima* was made possible as that state was more advanced in structure and economy. Moreover both end points

were within that state's territory. There being many Khasi *himas*, large and small, and without any confederation among them other than at times of war, with poor state resources, it was not possible for them to construct a stone road going through the Khasi Hills. However it must still have been possible for Khasi traders to move commodities from the *duars* opening into Kamrup, going through Khyrim and the base of Sohpetbneng, up into Nongkseh, and Jirang *himas*, passing the larger states of Cherra and Nongkhlaw and down into Sylhet in the description given by Lindsay.

The trade was on established commodities and routes. There do not appear to have been markets in the hills. This would be a later development. The markets that were in operation were more in the nature of entrepôts. The entire trade, again it may be deduced, was in the hands of the hill people just as the workers in the iron industry were. If they so jealously guarded their markets in the foothills, they would not have allowed the trade to get out of their hands. Were the trade in the possession of plains people this would have been noticed. Indeed when Thomas Fisher asked the people he met who they were, the reply he got was that they were "*Khyee*"-traders.²⁵ The Khasi-Jaintia *himas* did not have control over the trade other than providing markets which were for the *himas*, more of an expression of their territorial limits.

Through the markets the hill people were able to have political, economic and cultural links with the people of the plains. Some expressions of this interaction are the institutions of *Wahhadadar* among the Shella people, the acceptance of the Hindu faith and customs among the Jaintia rulers and state officials and among a section of the Khasis in the *War* (the southern slopes of the hills) region; the adoption of a number of Assamese and Bengali loan words in the Khasi language; and their dress, more particularly what the menfolk wore.

The pre-colonial technology of the Jaintias, and we may include the Khasis, in their early state formation, was, to use the words of J.B. Bhattacharjee, "simple, non-industrialised and pre-capitalistic."²⁶ If in this essay the term industry has been used in making reference to iron, it is to stress the importance of this activity and its organization in Khasi economic life and does not attempt to compare it with more organized economic

activities both in the region and elsewhere. On all accounts, it appears, the technology used and adapted varied from the crude to the more ingenious.²⁷ While the Khasis appeared to have adapted some innovations to their economic activity from the technology coming from the plains of Assam and Bengal, they just might have also held back for various reasons, from adapting in increased measure the potential to supply agricultural and forest produce and artifacts to markets in the plains.) The technology they applied also appears to have been such that the society was as a consequence stagnant in its economic activity. This stagnation covered a long span in time conveniently understood as their pre-colonial past. The nature of their economy and technology would also provide some clues to why their state structure could not progress beyond their concept and operation of the several Khasi *himas* with their low level of resource mobilization and incapacity to develop into economically and politically stronger states.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. P.R.T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (reproduced, N. Delhi, 1996), pp. 63-65.
2. S.K. Bhuyan ed., *Jayantia Buranji* (Gauhati, 1937); S.K. Bhuyan (ed.), *Deodhai Assam Buranji* (Gauhati, 1933).
3. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Kirata Jana Kriti* (The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1974), p.166; Syed Murtaza Ali, *History of Jaintia* (Dacca, 1954), pp.1-6.
4. Hamlet Barih has provided a periodization for the history of the Khasis in *The History and Culture of the Khasi People* (revised edition, Shillong, 1985). These are pre-history and early period, medieval and pre-British period and modern history. In like manner B.B. Gupta has divided Naga history into their ancient, medieval, modern and cultural histories. See his book, *History of Nagaland*, (N. Delhi, 1982).
5. Amalendu Guha, 'Introduction', in J.P. Singh and Gautam Sengupta, (ed.), *Archaeology of North Eastern India* (N. Delhi, 1991), p. 2.
6. The Ahom sources are the several *Buranjis*; in Bengali two of the more important sources are Abdul Aziz, *Jayantia Raiyer Itihas* (Sylhet, 1920) and A.C. Choudhury, *Shrihatter Itibritta* (Sylhet, 1317 B.S).
7. P.R.T. Gurdon (*op. cit.*) provides a number of Khasi folktales which with other published and unpublished stories, social scientists have used to explain Khasi-Jaintia history. See Namita C. Sen Shadap, *The Origin and Early History of the Khasi Synteng People* (Calcutta 1981); Soumen Sen, *Social and State Formation in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills* (N. Delhi, 1985).
8. Of late the only detailed research on Khasi-Jaintia pre-history has been that of Cecile Mawlong, 'Megalithic Monuments in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills: An Ethno-Archaeological Study', unpublished NEHU Ph.D.

- Thesis, 1996, and her articles, 'Some Aspects of the Indigenous Earthware of the Khasi-Jaintias Hills', *Proceedings of the North East India History Association*, 19th session, Shillong 1999, pp. 62-68.
9. P.R.T Gurdon, (*op. cit.*), p. 12.
 10. J.B. Bhattacharjee, 'Brahmanical Myths, Royal Legitimation and the Jaintia State Formation', in *Social and Polity Formation in Pre-Colonial North East India* (New Delhi, 1991), p. 97; S.M. Ali, (*op. cit.*), p. 80.
 11. W.K. Firminger, *Sylhet District Gazeteer*, Vol. III, No. 172. Letter from J. Willes, Collector of Sylhet to Earl Cornwallis, Governor General, dated Sylhet, 15 September 1789 (Shillong 1917).
 12. Thomas C. Watson, 'Chirra Punji and a Detail of some of the Favourable Circumstances which Renders it an Advantageous Site for the Erection of an Iron and Steel Manufactory on an Extensive Scale', *Asiatic Journal*, Vol. III, 1834, p. 1.
 13. John H. Morris, in *The History of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists' Foreign Mission* (reprinted Delhi, 1996), p. 89, narrates how the Khasis were instructed by Rev. Thomas Jones on the use of a saw — "Hitherto, the Khasis had known no way of securing a plank but by hacking a tree with their hatchets; but when the Saheb, by means of his saw obtained several smooth planks from one tree, their admiration was unbounded."
 14. Gurdon, (*op. cit.*) p. 159.
 15. Robert Lindsay, 'Anecdotes of an Indian Life', *Lives of the Lindsays*, Vol. III, (London, 1849), p. 178.
 16. C.B. Clarke in 'The Stone Monuments of the Khasi Hills', *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. II, 1874, p. 490, wrote that it was highly probable that the method of moving stones on wooden rollers was used in ancient times.
 17. Clarke, (*op. cit.*), p. 489; Thomas Fisher, 'Memoir of Sylhet, Kachar and the adjoining Districts', *Asiatic Journal*, Vol. ix, 1840, p. 834.
 18. Lt. Yule, 'Notes on the Iron of the Khasi Hills, for the Museum of Economic Geology', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, No. 129, 1842, p. 854. Also see D.R. Syiemlieh, 'Khasi Iron Culture and Iron Trade with Sylhet in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries', *Proceedings of the North East India History Association* (Eighth Session, Kohima, 1987), pp. 242-250 for a more detailed study on the subject.
 19. William Cracroft, 'Smelting of iron in the Kasya Hills', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. 1, pp. 150-151.
 20. Robert Lindsay, (*op. cit.*), p. 174.
 21. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
 22. So important was this commodity that an agreement was made between the Bengal Nawab, Mir Kasim and the East India Company on 10 July 1763, that for a period of five years the Nawab represented by his Fauzdar and the Company's Gomastahs would jointly prepare *chunam*, for which each would defray half the expenses.
 23. Refer to E.A. Gait, 'Some Notes on Jaintia History', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, No. 3. 1895, pp. 242-245; Syed Mutraza Ali (*op. cit.*), pp. 88-91, for notes on Jaintia coins and S.K. Bose, 'Symbols in Naranarayan's 'Mudra' and a case of Khyrim coin', *Proceedings of the North East India History Association* (Kohima session, 1987), pp. 92-111.

24. Syed Murtaza Ali, (*op. cit.*). Stretches of this road were traversed by J.H. Hutton in 1925. See his article, 'Some Megalithic Works in the Jaintia Hills', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, N.S. xxii, 1926, pp. 333-347. It was along this route that David Scott, Agent to the Governor General North East Frontier, intended to connect Assam and Sylhet by constructing a road in 1826.
25. Thomas Fisher, (*op. cit.*), pp. 333-335.
26. J. B. Bhattacharjee, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
27. Read Cecile Mawlong's interesting article, "Methods of Preservation Practised in Cherra State: Some Insights," *Proceedings of the North East India History Association* (Agartala Session, 1997), pp. 101-106.