

**PROCEEDINGS OF  
NORTH EAST INDIA  
HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

**TENTH SESSION**

**SHILLONG : 1989**

PROCEEDINGS OF  
NORTH EAST INDIA  
HISTORY ASSOCIATION



TENTH SESSION  
SHILLONG : 1989

SINGHANIA PRINTING PRESS

Tham Lum, Shillong - 791 001

NEHU LIBRARY  
Acc No. 240508 ✓  
Acc B. 4/3/08  
Date  
Classified by  
Submitted by  
Entered by  
Transcribed by

Edited & Published by  
**Jayanta Bhusan Bhattacharjee**  
General Secretary  
On behalf of

**North East India History Association**  
Department of History  
**North - Eastern Hill University**  
Shillong - 793 014

COMPUTERISED



NE  
954.16006  
PRO.10;2

TENTH SESSION  
SHILLONG : 1988

Printed at the—  
**SINGHANIA PRINTING PRESS**  
Thana Road, Shillong - 793 001

The Tenth Session of the North East India History Association was held at the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, amidst great enthusiasm and gaiety. This was indeed a memorable occasion in the history of the Association. The Decennial Celebrations aspart, a session was being held for the second time in the same institution and in the same venue that the Association was born ten years ago and the First Session held a year later. The Association is thankful to the authorities of the North-Eastern Hill University and organising it in the befitting manner.

Shri P. G. Marbaniang, Speaker, Meghalaya Legislative Assembly, inaugurated the session which was graced by Shri P. A. Sangma, Chief Minister of Meghalaya, as guest of honour. Professor Iqbal Narain, Vice-Chancellor, and Professor J. P. Singh, Head, Department of History, North-Eastern Hill University—did the Association a great honour as the Chairman of the organising committee and Local Secretary respectively for the session. It was presided over by Professor J. N. Phukan of the Gauhati University. The release of a commemorative Publication of the Organising committee entitled NEIHA DECENNIAL by Professor H. K. Barpujari, the first President of the Association, a decennial symposium on "A Decade of Historical Research in North-East", and colourful cultural programmes of songs and dances of the seven states of the region by the students of NEHU are among the special features of the decennial Celebrations. A record number of one hundred and eighty delegates attended the session in which ninety research papers were presented and discussed in eleven panels.

The present volume is the proceedings of the tenth session of the North East India History Association held at the North-Eastern Hill University on October 12-14, 1989. I am thankful to my colleagues Dr. J. P. Singh, Dr. M. S. Sangma, Dr. Gautam Sengupta, Dr. Soumen Sen, Shri Atul Dev Sarmah and Shri Amitabha Deb for the help in selecting and editing the papers and publishing the volume. We must also thank the Indian Council of Historical Research for generous financial assistance to the Association for the session and for publication of the proceedings.

**J. B. Bhattacharjee**

*General Secretary,*

North-East India History Association.

Shillong,

The 25th August 1990.

# CONTENTS

	Page
1. Presidential Address — J. N. Phukan	1
2. Perspectives in Indian Archaeology with reference to North East India — Pratap C. Dutta	11
3. Excavation at Ambari (Guwahati) (Its Problems and Prospects) — T. C. Sharma	21
4. Gauhati Monuments : Rock Types and Sources — Gautam Sengupta S. Chakrabarty	25
5. Pre-Historic Culture of Nagaland — N. N. Acharyya	41
6. Rare Coin Throw Fresh Light on Dimacha Rulers of Maibong — S. K. Bose	44
7. Lauhitya in Early Inscriptions of Kamarupa — Jai Prakash Singh	50
8. Historical Interpretations of Kalidasa's Description of Raghu's Conquest of Pragjyotisha — G. P. Singh	62
9. Castes and Professions in the Fourteenth Century Assamese Society as Reflected in Madhava Kandali's Ramayana — Bijoya Baruah	68
10. Sino-Indian Contacts Through North East India. — Ambika Prasad Morarka	74
11. Brief Survey of Oral Sources on the Goalas of Cachar — Ratna Dey	79
12. Martyar Khudiram Bose and Thought Currents of Surma Valley — Amalendu Bhattacharjee	82
13. The Ethnic Process in India with a Special Reference to Assam (An Abstract) — Amalendu Guha	87
14. Endogamy Cultural and Ecological Determinants — A. K. Ghosh	89
15. The History of Puram Debate : An Anthropological Analysis — Nitul Kr. Gogoi	99

16. Spatio-Temporal Disiribution of Tribes of North-East India with Special Reference to Assam.		106
	— <i>S. Sarma</i>	
17. Shaykh Jalal-al-din Mujarrad (d. 1340 A.D.) and the Annexation of Sylhet to the Muslim Kingdom of Bengal	— <i>F. A. Qadri</i>	112
18. The Episode of Shuja Mosque A historical review	— <i>D. N. Goswami</i>	120
19. Military Successes of the Ahom against the Mughals in the 17th Century	— <i>Anowar Hussain</i>	127
20. Aspects of Conspiracies against the Ahom Monarchs and the Nature of Punishments imposed on conspirators	— <i>Kabita Barua</i>	133
21. Organisation of the Villages Under the Ahom Rule	— <i>K. C. Phukan</i>	137
22. Religious Outlook of the Ahoms	— <i>A. Barua</i>	143
23. On Hindu Influence in the Ahom Court	— <i>Indu Bhusan Pal</i>	147
24. Some Devices Employed by the Aitons in Fixing Anspicious and Inauspicious Moment	— <i>Jaya Buragohain</i>	155
25. An Aspect of Buddhism in Assam	— <i>Nikhileswar Sengupta</i>	159
26. Aryanisation and Hinduisation of the Boros	— <i>R. N. Mosahary</i>	165
27. Cross-Currents of the Hinduisation Process in Mediaeval Assam	— <i>Ramesh Buragohain</i>	176
28. Bhakti Movement and Aniruddhadeva of Assam	— <i>S. Dutta</i>	183
29. Evolution of Religions in North East India with Special reference to Assam(1449-1971)	— <i>S. Miri &amp; P. Devi</i>	194
30. The Role of Satras in the History of Medieval Assam	— <i>Renu Mahanta</i>	200
31. Khasi Renaissance	— <i>Helen Giri</i>	203
32. A Brahmo Reformer in Meghalaya (1889-1916) : A study in the life and Work of Nilmoni Chakraborty	— <i>Goutam Neogi</i>	217
33. The New Zealand Baptist Mission and the Beginning of Christian Missionary Activities in Tripura	— <i>Mahadev Ghakravarti</i>	229

34. The Role of the Church in Mizoram Legislative Assembly Election, 1989	— <i>J. V. Hluna</i>	241
35. The Origin of the Meitei : an Overview	— <i>M. Jitendra Singh</i>	249
36. Divine Kingship in Manipur	— <i>M. Lokendra Singh</i>	253
37. Polity Formation in Pre-Colonial Biate Chieftaincy	— <i>B. Pakem</i>	261
38. Political Implication of a Khasi Taboo	— <i>Soumen Sen</i>	271
39. The Position of the Khasi Jaintia Women as Reflected in the Festivals and Dance	— <i>M. P Rina Lyngdoh</i>	275
40. Panal Code of the Kachari Kings	— <i>Suhas Chatterjee</i>	282
41. Economic Contents of Decline of the Dimasa State (1773-1830).	— <i>Joya Choudhury</i>	286
42. A Study into the Abwabs as in practice in Hill Tipperah and the attached Zamindaris in Chakla Roshanabad (Tripura).	— <i>J. C. Dutta</i>	293
43. The Raj Mels : Their Historic Role in Peasant Movements of Assam	— <i>Shrutidev Goswami</i>	300
44. The Phulaguri Uprising of 1861 : A Peasant Mass Movement	— <i>R. C. Kalita</i>	310
45. Peasant Uprisings and Middle Class Hegemony : The Case of Assam	— <i>Manorama Sharma</i>	325
46. Agrarian Relation in Goolpara During British Regime with Special Reference to Peasant Movement	— <i>Santo Basman</i>	331
47. The British Land Revenue Policy in Assam in the early stage and its Impact Upon the Peasantry	— <i>Ananda Saikia</i>	340
48. Location Pattern of Markets in Pre-and Early British Period in North East India (Specific Reference to Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills	— <i>A. C. Mohapatra</i>	347
49. Some Problems Relating to Temple Management in Kamrup During the Post-Independence Period	— <i>Gajendra Adhikary</i>	353

50	Food Grain Production in the North Eastern Region since Independence	— <i>M. C. Pandey</i>	359
51.	The Bengalees in Assam in the 19th Century	— <i>S. C. Sengupta</i>	371
52.	Ambikagiri Ray Chaudhury and Assamese Nationalism : An Analysis of His Ideas as Reflected in Ahuti	— <i>A. K. Baruah</i>	376
53.	The Attitude of the Assamese Towards the Boys Scout Movments in the 1930's	— <i>Meeta Deka</i>	383
54.	Population Education in Tripura	— <i>Jogendra Chandra Das</i>	389
55.	An Attempt for Language Development ; The Adi Experience	— <i>Tamo Mibang</i>	393
56.	The Uttar Khanda-Kamatapur Movement : A Historical Perspective	— <i>Ananda Gopal Ghosh</i>	400
57.	Anglo-Abor Treaty - 1862 and Its Significance in relation to the Inner Line Regulation, 1873 and Arunachal History.	— <i>Jogendra Nath</i>	409
58.	Abor Rebellion 1911-12, A Post Mortem of the Murder of Noel Williamson	— <i>Srinibash Panda</i>	420.
59.	Last Resistance of the Garos to British Imperialism	— <i>Milton S. Sangma</i>	430
60.	The Relations Between the English and the Lushai Chiefs after 1890 : A Period of Conflicts and Co-operations	— <i>Sangkima</i>	439
61.	Reaction of the People of Surma Valley to to transfer of the Valley to Assam (1874)	— <i>J. B. Bhattacharjee</i>	447
62.	A Mid-Nineteenth Century View of Assam ; The Little Known Diary of Sergeant Major George Carter	— <i>Imdad Hussa in</i>	454
63.	<b>APPENDICES :</b>		
A.	Minutes of the Executive Committee	—	465
B.	Minutes of the Annual Business Meeting	—	467
C.	General Secretary's Report	—	469
D.	Treansurer's Report	—	473
E.	Audit Report	—	475
F.	Members of the Tenth Session	—	478

## Locational Pattern of Markets In Pre-And Early British Period In North East India (Specific Reference to Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hill)

A. C. Mohapatra

Market as a concept of economic exchange' between individuals or 'culture groups', perhaps, emerged during the late Neolithic, subsequent to the emergence of agriculture as a secured, sedentary and fruitful means of sustenance compared to the tireless wanderings of the hunter or the nomad of the yester years. Initially, of course, in the semi arid foothills of Central Asia or Iran where agriculture first originated was, perhaps neither as successful to be any alternative to the early pursuits. But, transfer to the great river valleys and use of water to irrigate the fields led to a vast change in productivity (Gordon Childe, 1942 : 98). Thus, might have arisen the first surplus of the farmer over his own family needs. At this phase of human history, the neolithic and the pameolithic or the farmer and the hunter co-habited side by side (Mumford, 1965) and had a peculiar form of trade; the farmer provided a part of his surplus to the hunter, for protection (service) of his life and crops from the marauding animals, a skill the farmer has long lost. So, the concept of trade, after all, has emerged, albeit in a peculiar form. When these village communities got more organised, politically and economically, they found their peculiar valley location put them short of certain materials like timber, asphalt and later, the precious metal, copper which remained the mainstay of the Bronze Age Civilization for two to three thousand years, until the usages and production of iron had become common. So, trade emerged between specialized 'culture groups' based on different skills, technologies and material bases, tucked away in their special environmental niches. At this stage 'trade' as a concept of 'economic exchange', to a great degree, got a spatial expression in form of the 'market place', mostly at a convenient location: whether within large settlements (the cities, like *agora* of the Hellenic civilization) or between culture groups.

A number of spatial theorists have tried to explain the genesis of the market place. The received theories provide two views :

- (i) First, the *endogenous development* of markets took place within all the peasant societies as a response to the growing surplus and product specialization (crops) arising out of technological improvements, and better adaptation with the given matrix of physical resources (at the micro-scale) Pale, 1971 : 171)
- (ii) The second view relates to development of market centres (and periodic markets) due to *contact between two spatially differentiated 'culture groups*, particularly, along the long trade routes (as happened in case of the silk route between Europe and the East ; China and India and the Caravan routes across the desert of Agrica) (Hodder, 1974 ; Polanyi, 1957).

## II

Any study of genesis of market centres in the North Eastern Region of India cannot be entirely explained in light of the above received theories. The peasant markets of the Ahom period (though, not numerous) can be well explained by the endogenous development model. However, the development of market centres in pattern of garlands surrounding the hills and plateaus of the region inhabited by numerous tribes remains to be fully explained. The end eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the period of gradual British entrance in the region can provide a vantage at viewing this pattern of development of market centres, supported by recorded historical data. For the sake of convenience and economy the study is limited to market centres to the north and south of what is known as Meghalaya plateau now, the ancient home of the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos.

## III

During this period, very broadly speaking, North-East India had a large number of culture groups, many large, many small ; some living with limited external contacts and others in their *cul-de-sacs*. However, on the basis of their technological levels and types of social organization of production they could be grouped into two, (i) the 'peasants' in the great river valleys of Brahmaputra and Surma, with an established farming technology and crop based economy (and fishing as a subsidiary hunting activity) with some

surplus, some crop specialisation, quasi-monetisation of the economy, incipient development of internal and external trade. (ii) On the other hand, the 'tribes' inhabiting their little *cul-de-sacs* on the verdant hills and plateaus were still dependent on hunting and gathering activities, though crop culture was not entirely unknown or not practised. However, their degree of subsistence was far greater and the surplus, practically unavailable. The differentiation of these culture groups from the valley civilizations was more a matter of degree of their crop dependence. Moreover, many of the hill tribes differed greatly among themselves in their level of technologies and material cultures and type of contact with other culture groups.

Conceptualization of trade and economic interaction between the peasant and tribal culture groups, i.e. the hill regions and the valley regions in the context of the dualistic situation as stated is to be viewed in light of the nature of economics, product specialisations and surplus generated in their respective economics. In response to emerging crop specialisation and surplus, some internal trade did emerge in the valleys, as evidenced from the number of periodic markets, observed in which the trade transactions were largely carried out by barter, but to some extent through money under the supervision of the Ahom Kings. On the other hand, in the hills, within the *cul-de-sacs* of the tribes there was a complete absence of internal market centre, be it the Meghalaya plateau, the NEFA tribal areas or the Naga or Lushai culture areas. This may be explained *a posteriori* because of the complete absence of surplus in their economics.

However, as evidenced from historical records of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century a large number of periodic markets (*hats*) were found more or less, at the *interface of the two culture areas*, the peasant's and the hill tribe's indicating the specific nature of their distinctively different economic formations resulting in a peculiar spatial expression, the strings of market centres surrounding the hills and tribal culture areas. Genesis of this peculiar spatial formation can be referred as the *contactual genesis* model of market centres, a distinction peculiar to the particular phase of history of the region and different from the two theoretical positions explained earlier.

#### IV

Such *deductive* explanation would be incomplete without relevant historical data of the period of reference. For economy

and clarity, the study is confined to market centres to the north and south of the plateau of Meghalaya. The plateau has been the traditional habitat of the Khasi, the Jaintia and the Garo tribes for a long period of time. Moreover, this plateau region is located in between two large valley civilizations, in the north, the Brahmaputra valley and in the south the Surma and its extension into the vast plains of Bengal. Thus, the tribes living here have been traditionally exposed to technologies and culture of the peasants in the valleys, particularly along the borders with the plains. But, they lived in *relative isolation*, a subsistence economy based on partly hunting and partly agricultural with no significant surplus, but a distinct cultural identity of their own. Towards the late Ahom rule, some regular economic interaction between these tribes both the north (with Assam) and south with Bengal has emerged, in form of barter at periodic markets (*hats*) at the border between the hills and the plains, approximately at the interface between the two sets of culture areas, of the tribes and the plainsmen. The Khasis and Jaintias (*Syntengs*) traded largely with the south of the plateau, i.e. with the Sylhet (*Srihatta*) in the Surma valley. The principal markets were Bholaganj, Chhatak, Lakhat, Jaintiapur, Jaffang, Phoralbazar, Maodong, Ponatit, Sonapur, Molaghul and Lengjul which operated on the Khasi calendar of 8-day week to facilitate the Khasi and Synteng traders to operate on all the markets (Hunter, 1879 : 241). The chief exports from the Khasi-Jaintia areas were limestone, oranges, smelted iron, cotton, betel-nuts and potatoes (the latter, first introduced in the hilly by David Scott in 1830). The chief imports were rice, dried fish, cotton clothes, salt and tobacco (Hunter : 236-37. The total import and export were estimated to the tune of Rs. 1.6 million. On the other hand, the trade with the north was insignificant, amounting to about Rs. 15,000/- mostly through the markets of Burdwar, Rani and Sonapur. By the middle of nineteenth century, the degree of peasantisation of the Garos was much greater than the Khasis and the Syntengs since the latter two tribes depended considerably on import of their staple food, rice, while Garos produced most of their subsistence needs. The main trading points of the Garos to south (Mymensingh) were Hebraghat, Naluabari, Phulbari, Ghospur, Durgapur and Nazirpur while to the north, in Goalpara the markets were Damra, Jira, Nibari, Lakhshampur, Bengal Khata, Tikri-kill, Rajalealla, Singimari, Mankachar and Putimari. (Hunter : 152) (See, Map I). The main exports of the Garos were cotton (Hunter estimated : 35,000 maunds in 1874-75) chillies, wax, lac,

India-rubber and timber while the imports were animals (cows, pigs, goats and fowls), salt, earthenware, swords, spearheads and clothes.

The commodities which the tribes sold can be classified into three types : (i) the forest produce, resulting from the prevalent hunting and gathering activities like lac, hyde, ivory etc. and (ii) special crops like cotton (in Garo Hills), potatoes and betel-nuts (in Khasi Hills) which were specially grown for trade and possibly, introduced from outside, and (iii) minerals and semi-processed metals, like limestone, coal and smelted iron from Khasi Hills (Oldham, 1858 ; Syiemlich, 1987). The imports were chiefly foodstuffs (rice, salt and dried fish) and iron implements like swords, arrowheads, *daos* and *kudalis* (hoes) etc. essential to the defence and farming needs.

The peculiar locational situation of the markets allowed for some economies of exchange. The Khasi and Jaintias were expert traders themselves particularly those living close to the southern border and most of the trade was carried out by themselves. On the other hand, in the Garo Hills area, the traders were the Bengali and Marwari merchants from the south and even the Europeans towards the end of the eighteenth century who wanted to monopolize the cotton and iron trade which was valued elsewhere (Datta, :13-15).

The emergence of trading and trading centres at the foothills of the plateau led to a number of changes in the economies of the tribes by the middle of nineteenth century. Limestone and coal in Khasi Hills have become economic commodities by early part of the century. Commercial smelting of iron which held the away for a century (the role supplier of soft pig iron), by middle of the century has started vanishing due to competition of the European steel (Oldham, 1858). New commercial crops have already been introduced especially cotton and potatoes and the age old subsistence economy was breaking. The forest produce which had at best, some esoteric value assumed 'economic value' once it reached the market. Even, labour, though to a limited extent, became commodity, especially the porters who carried the mineral produce to the markets (Allen, 1909). The markets changed the world view of the tribal man, exposed him to new necessities and in the process started changing his life.

The markets affected the tribal culture and economies profoundly in two ways : (i) that within the tribal culture groups the introduction of money economy and introduction of tolls on market

entry (a form of alienation of surplus) of commodities from the hills by the local chieftains and their officials led to economic and social differentiation. (ii) Secondly, the process of integration of the tribal *cul-de-sacs* and economy with the larger economy of the colony and even, the 'world market' (the cessation of iron production being a good example) was accentuated. The level and nature of alienation of surplus from the tribal produce was extracted at various stages, by various interest groups and by varied methods, whether they were the Ahom Moghal officials, the Bengali merchant, the Marwari trader or the British officers and traders in later years. Gradually, in the process of consolidation, the doors of the tribal *cul-de-sacs* were thrown open and markets emerged in the interior of the territories, in contradiction to the period just prior to it (Hunter : 226). The historical and economic inevitability of integration was nearly complete by the end of nineteenth century.

#### Notes & References

- Allen, B. C. (1909). Imperial Gazetteer : Eastern Bengal and Assam, Calcutta.
- Bhattacharjee, J. B. (1978) The Garos and the English Radiant, New Delhi.
- Childe, Gurdon (1942). What Happened in History ? Penguin, London.
- Dutta, P. N. Impact of the West on the Khasis and Jaintias pp. 10-25.
- Hodder, B. W. (1974). "Some Comments on Origin of Traditional Markets in Africa, South of Sahara", Transactions and Papers, IBG, Vol. 36.
- Hunter, W. W. (1879). The Statistical Accounts of Assam, Vol. II.
- Mumford, Lewis (1965). City in History, Methuen, New York.
- Oldham, T. (1858). "On the Geological Structure of a Portion of the Khasi Hills", Memoir of GSI, Vol. I, Part. II.
- Pale, Jane (1972). "Farmers Market in United States : Functional Anachronism", The Geographical Review, Vol. LXI, No. 2, p. 171.
- Polanyi, K. (1957). Trade and Market in the Early Empire, Illinois
- Syiemlieh, D. R. (1987). "Khasi Iron Culture and Iron Trade with Sylhet in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries" in Proceeding of 8th North East India History Association, Kohima, NEIHA, Shillong, pp. 242-250.