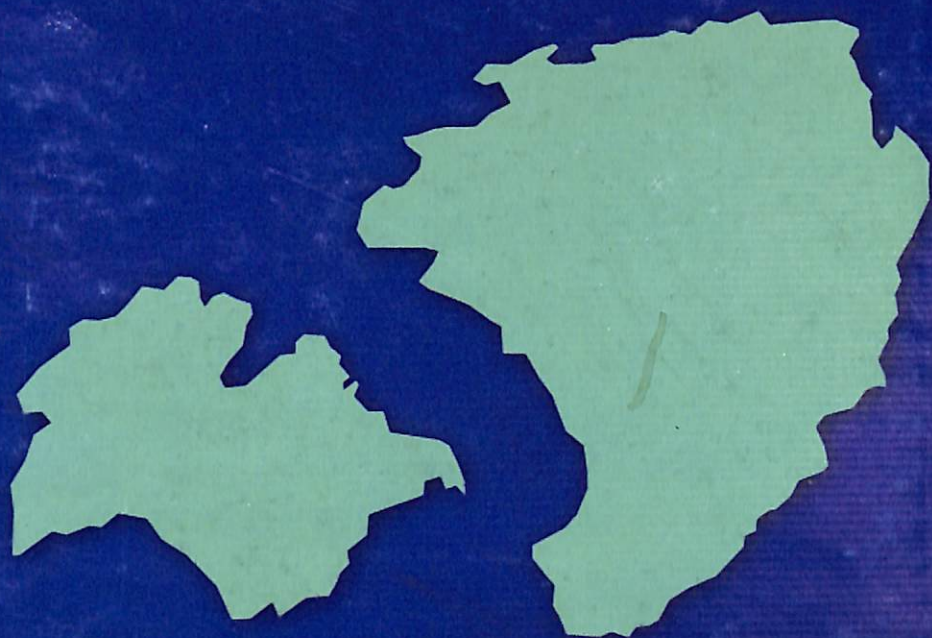


**A Glance
At Karbi Anglong**



Mausumi Gogoi

A GLANCE AT KARBI ANGLONG : *Written by : Mausumi Gogoi*,
to present an overall impact on the life and culture of the karbis,
published by the Director, Assam Institute of Research for
Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Jawaharnagar, Guwahati - 22.

Published by : Directorate of Assam Institute of Research for
Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Jawaharnagar,
Guwahati - 22.

First Edition : 2011

Price : Rs. 50.00 (Rupees fifty only)

Printed at :
Bohniman Printers
Guwahati

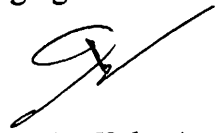
PREFACE

The Assam Institute of Research for Tribals and Scheduled Castes, Guwahati under the aegis of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, have been providing grants-in-aid to authors for publication of books written on different aspects of tribals and scheduled castes. The scheme is known as 'Grants-in-Aids for Literary works for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.' The scheme receives very good response from different authors. In fact, it is difficult to accommodate all the authors under the scheme. As a part of this popular scheme, the book titled "*A Glance at Karbi Anglong by Mausumi Gogoi*" has been sponsored by the Institute for publication. It is expected that the readers will receive the book with pleasure. We look forward to comments and suggestions from the readers.

I am grateful to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India and Welfare of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes Department, Government of Assam for providing financial assistance for implementation of the scheme.

I also offer my thanks to the officers and staff of this Directorate for their help and co-operation.

Finally, I like to thank M/S. Bohniman Printers, Guwahati for their help and co-operation in bringing out the book.


(G.C. Kakati)
Director,

Assam Institute of Research for
Tribals and Scheduled Castes,
Guwahati-22

FORWORD

The District of Karbi Anglong is regarded as the Heart Beat of Assam. It is one of the largest districts situated in the land of Assam. The local tribes of Karbi Anglong mainly the Karbis (Mikirs) constitute an important ethnic group in the hilly areas of Assam.

The great historian of Assam Dr. S.K. Bhuyan wrote that one lesson which the tribal can teach us is their self-sufficiency in domestic economy. Besides the original Kabi Tribes, there are also a large number of other tribal communities residing in the district.

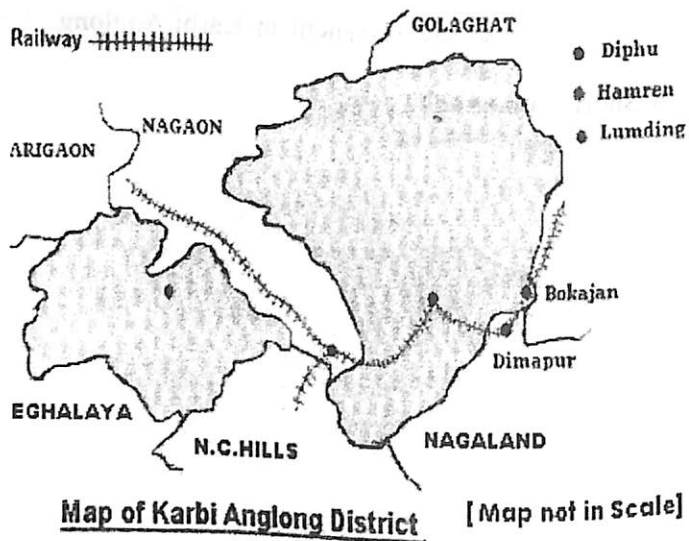
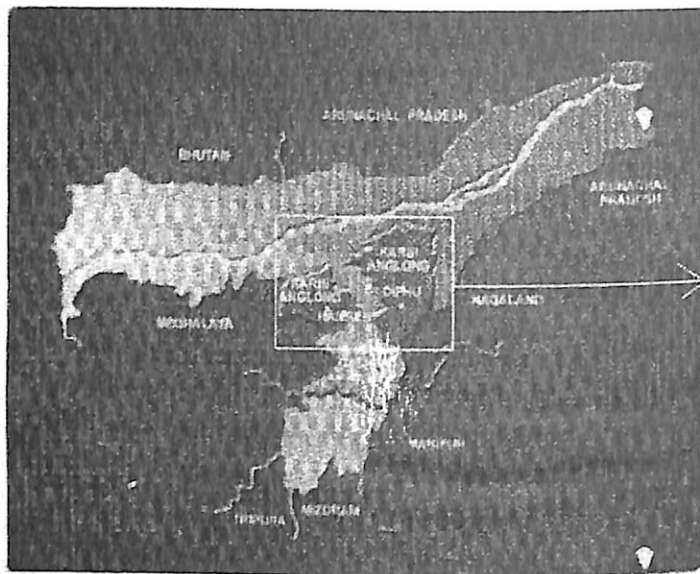
In this small manuscript "**A Glance at Karbi Anglong**", I could like to present an overall impact on the location, history of Karbi Anglong and also a slight glance on the history, culture and traditions of the local tiibe i.e. "Karbhis (Mikirs)".

Mausumi Gogoi

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	7
2. The Land of Karbi Anglong	9
3. The History of The Karbi (Mikir) People	19
4. The Culture And Tradition of Karbi People	25
5. The Essential Cultivation of the Karbi People	36
6. The Tourist Spots of Karbi Anglong	41
7. The Progress of Development in Karbi Anglong	44
8. A Short Bibliography	48

Map Of Assam



Chapter 1

Introduction

The people of Assam saw the birth of a new district i.e. the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills district on the 17th of November 1951. The new district was formally created on the aforesaid date vide Govt. Notification No TAD/R 31/50/201 Dtd. with some parts of the districts of Sivasagar (now Golaghat) Nagaon, Cachar, and United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district of present Meghalaya for all round development of the tribal fold of the Central Assam. This was followed by bifurcation of the erst while district of United Mikir and North Cachar Hill districts into two separate districts under banner as "Mikir Hills" and "North Cachar Hill" district in the year 1970. The Mikir Hill district was again rechristened as "Karbi Anlong District" on the 14th of October 1976 Vide Govt. Notification No. TRD/R/ 155/74/47 Dtd. 14-10-1976. Thus Karbi Anlong came into being as a full fledged separate district in the map of Assam with its Headquarter at Diphu. The district enjoys autonomy under the provision of Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. It is the largest district of Assam.

Karbi Anlong and North Cachar Hills are the only two districts of present Assam. They are also known as Hills Tribal Region having a distinct geographical entity. Karbi Anlong is largely covered by forests with hilly and rough terrains.

The principal tribes inhabiting in the region of Karbi Anlong and North Cachar Hills are Karbis, Dimasas, Kukis, Garos, Khasis and Jaintias, Hmars, Nagas including Rengmas and Jemes and the Bodo Kacharis. Minor tribes in the region are Mans (Tai speaking), Chakmas, Mizos, Hazongs etc. People coming from the plains districts of Assam and other parts of the country generally inhabit in the plains part of the district as well as the urban areas.

The region at different times was ruled by different dynasties or clans such as the Varmans, Palas, Kacharies (Dimasas), Ahoms and then the British. Apart from this, parts of it were also ruled by the Karbis and the Jaintias. After the Varmans and the Palas, Kacharies became the dominant tribe who established their capital at Dimapur at least for four and a half centuries until it finally fell under the Ahoms in the later part of the first half of the sixteenth century. As a result of the Ahom subjugation the Kacharies shifted their capital from Dimapur to Maibong in the heart of North Cachar Hills and finally to Khaspur in the south.

Though Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills are together formed but their developments and advancements are differentiated. They are totally different from each other with difference in every field. We cannot define or choose which district is fastest in development a advanced in technology.

Chapter 2

The Land of Karbi Anglong

The region of Karbi Anglong is one of the beautiful and largest district of Assam. The region is beautifully decorated or covered or surrounded by forests with hilly and rough terrains, rivers, evergreen trees, environment, nature, lands and beautiful tribal people. It is homeland of mainly the Karbis, formerly known as "Mikirs".

The Karbi Anglong District is situated in the Central part of Assam. It is bounded by Golaghat district in the east, Meghalaya and Morigaon district in the west, Nagaon and Golaghat district in the north and North Cachar Hills District and Nagaland in the south. The district with dense tropical forest covered hills and flat plains is situated between 25°33' N to 26°35' N latitudes and 92°10' E (and) to 93°5' E longitudes. The district is largest in Assam with its headquarter in Diphu. It is well connected with other districts NH - 37 and NH - 39 as well as North Frontier Railway, Dimapur 54 Km from Diphu which houses the nearest airport.

Karbi Anglong is blessed with numerous rivers, nature and environment. Paddy is the main crop of cultivators in Karbi Anglong. Tea is also another important industry in this district which is mainly covered by dense tropical forest (41.12%). The several ethnic groups like - Karbis, Dimasas, Bodos and Kukis are self efficient in domestic economy. Though the district is covered with some mineral resources, industries have not yet been able much to encash its potential.

This hill district is lush with its bounty of flora and fauna. The Hamren Sub- Division in the west dotted with hills and following rivulets complement the eastern paddy lands of Diphu with meandering rivers. Karbi Anglong is enriched with wildlife and there exists enormous scope for adventure tourism. Tourist can go for trekking to Singhason, the highest peak in the district

which stands 1600 m, Para- gliding at khanduli, rafting down the Kapili river are some of the adventtore sports that one can participate in while on a holiday in Karbi Anglong. The people can spend their time of holiday from October to March. These months are most exciting months in Karbi Anlong with a beautiful climate and nature.

The temperature of Karbi Anglong ranges from 6 degree to 12 degree and 23 degree to 32 degree celcius in Summer. The average rainfall is about 2416 mm.

According to 1991 census, the region of Karbi Anglong comprising an area of 10,434 sq km. The region has a total population of 6,62,723 persons in Karbi Anglong and the literacy position found to be 45.57%. About 4,922.019 sq km of the district is covered by forests that make up 14 state Reserve Forests and 17 District Council Reserve Forests. This region can be greatly compared with the characteristics of Meghalaya plateau and partly that of the Purbanchal hills of Manipur and Nagaland. Except for some limited areas, greater part of the region is influenced by hot and damp climate with thick forests and grasses.

Some scholars are of the apinion that the Karbis, at least their first batch - the Amri section, who migrated through the southern part of Nagaland, were the preceding tribe to inhabit around Maibang and the Kapili Valley on the west before the Kacharies came to establish their capital at Maibang. A good number of Karbi localities in the Kapili Valley as well as of other parts of North Cachar Hills inhabited by later Karbi migrants from southern Nagaland, come under the Kachari administration. But their relation was not cordial, the ill-treatment of the Kacharis forced the Karbis to vacate North Cachar Hills and inhabit the lower slopes of Jaintia Hills on the west of the kapili river. In a vast area of the north-castern Jaintia Hills, the Karbis largely concentrated and establish their kingdom called Rongkhang. But the Karbis could not maintain healthy relation with the Jaintias for long, and thence batches of some of them migrated to the Nagaon plain during the Ahoms and further east towards

Golaghat/Dhansiri Valley during the British Period.

Many local tribes including the Karbis had to completely abandon their earlier settlements, and established new ones in more interior places for safety due to the invasion of Burmese who created panic and havoc in the whole of Assam Valley during the third decade of the 19th Century. During the british period certain significant political developments took place concerning the region and its principal tribes. The Mikirpar Mahal a hill tract (of present eastern Karbi Anglong) comprising practically the entire area predominantly inhabited by the Mikirs (Karbis), that was given a special status by the Ahoms, was now given the name 'Mikir Hills Tract' by the British administration. This was kept within the administrative boundary of Nagon district constituting under a notification of the Assam Frontier Tracts Regulations. Both the parts of the Mikir Hills Tract were Partially Excluded Areas. Thus the Mikir Hills Tract was administered partially by the Nagaon district and partially by the Sivasagar district. The Rongkhang area earlier administered by the district of United Khasi and Jaintia Hills was known as Excluded Areas. These two areas i.e. the Mikir Hills Tract and Rongkhang now constitute practically the entire district of Karbi Anglong.

The region has three sub-divisions. They are Diphu Sub-Division, Hamren Sub-Division and Bokajan Sub-Division with headquarters at Diphu, Hamren and Bokajan respectively.

In addition to the Civil administration under the Deputy Commissioners and Sub-Divisional officers, the district was administered by Autonomous Council namely Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) having an executive body constituted by the elected members called Members of Autonomous Council (M.A.C.). The executive body is headed by the Chief Executive Member (C.E.M.). The body is again helped in administration by the Principal Secretary and the Secretaries under him. The entire region is represented to the Parliament by a Single Member of Parliment (M.P.)

According to 2001 Census the area of Karbi Anglong is 10,434 sq km out of which the area of Rural is 10,397 sq km

and Urban is 37 sq km. The region shows a high rate of population growth. The growth is even much higher than that of any other district of Assam or perhaps the country. After the creation of the United Mikir, new sets of people mainly working population - employees and job-seekers, labours, business man, contractors started coming for various developmental activities under the state government as well as the district councils. Tribal groups belonging to the same origin but were living in other districts outside origin lands for permanent settlement and cultivation. Such agricultural people belonging to non-tribal stock also came and settled in many parts of Karbi-Anglong with a new opening. During the seventieth decade this phenomenon was greatly reduced but the growth of population continued to be high mainly because of higher rate of development in various fields. The following Table shows the growth of population according to 1991 and 2001 census -

This Table shows the rapid growth of population of S.C., S.T., male, female, literacy and total workers of Rural and Urban areas according to 1991 census :-

TABLE NO. 1

1991	Total population	Rural areas	Urban areas
Population	6,62,723	5,92,257	70,466
S.C.	27,991	25,913	2,078
S.T.	3,41,718	3,19,207	22,511
Male	3,47,608	3,08,543	39,064
Female	3,15,116	2,83,714	31,402
Literacy	2,37,788	1,95,568	42,220
Total workers	2,52,123	2,30,2065	21,856

The region shows a high rate of population growth. Except for first one or two decades of the last century, the rest shows

a tremendous picture of positive growth - much higher than the all India or the all Assam growth rate. The growth is even much higher than that of any other district in Assam or perhaps the country. In one or two decades in the past, however the growth was found to be abnormally high prior to independence of the country.

In the earlier decades of the last century the slow growth of population in the region was mainly due to the high rate of mortality among the local people who often suffered from Malaria, Kalazar (black fever), cholera, small pox etc. Karbi Anglong being a part of Nagaon, likewise recorded population growth as high as + 306% in 1941. After 1941, influx of immigrants reduced to a great extent.

The region of Karbi Anglong is very much rural in character with headquarter Diphu according to 1971 census - But the population of urban areas has steadily increased over the years than that of rural areas. The 1991 census has recorded the development of five more urban centres in addition to Diphu in Karbi Anglong. They are Dokmoka, Howraghat, Bokajan, Hamren and Dongkamukam. As per 1991 census the population figures within the town committee area of the urban centres are shown in the table below :-

TABLE NO. 2

	Towns of Karbi Anglong	Urban areas
	Karbi Anglong	70,466
1.	Diphu	39,547
2.	Dokmoka	4,109
3.	Howraghat	3,756
4.	Bikajan	11,025
5.	Hamren	3,761
6.	Dong Kamukam	8,298

Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe composition of the region gives an interesting picture. Karbi Anglong had shown S.C. and S.T. population as 53.37% and 2.59% respectively in 1971. High ratio of S.T. population is to be found in the Hamren sub-division. In the region the highest ratio of S.C. population has been recorded in Diphu sub-division by the 1991 census. In that sub-division the ratio (45.65%) of S.T. Population is shown to be the lowest among all the sub-divisions of the district. It is to be specially noted that the Howraghat thana area shows the highest ratio of S.C. as well as general population. In Bokajan sub-division S.T. population comprises little over 53% and S.C. population comprises little over 1% only while the general population figures shows considerably high.

The sex ratio in Karbi Anglong in 1971 had 875 and it increased to 907 in 1991. But one can observe the steady increase in female ratio. The ratio of literacy in the regions shows the lower ratio than many other districts.

This table shows the population growth in S.C., S.T., Male, Female, Literacy and total workers of Rural areas and Urban areas according to 2001 Census :-

TABLE NO. 3

2001	Total population	Rural areas	Urban areas
Population	8,13,311	7,21,381	91,930
S.C.	29,520	26,977	2,543
S.T.	4,52,963	4,17,150	35,813
Male	4,22,250	3,73,300	48,950
Female	3,91,061	3,48,081	42,980
Literacy	3,82,574	3,18,427	64,147
Total workers	3,30,480	3,01,889	28,591

In Karbi Anglong there are 2633 numbers of villages according to 2001 Census. The total of literacy rate is 41.04% out of which the ratio of male is 60.81% and that of female is 39.19%. Three sub-divisions existed in Karbi Anglong with headquarter in Diphu. The three sub-divisions are -

- 1) Diphu - Sadar Sub-Division, HQ - Diphu
- 2) Bokajan - Civil Sub - Division, HQ - Bokajan
- 3) Hamren - Civil Sub - Division, HQ - Hamren.

The major tribal ethnic groups of this district are Karbis, Bodos, Kukis, Dimasas, Hmars, Garos, Remgma, Nagas, Tiwas, Man (Tai speaking's). Besides a large number of non tribals live together in this hill region. The major religions Hindus, Christians and Muslims constitute in the region. The district shows 90.27% of Hindus, 7.99% of Christians and 1.30% of Muslims in 1971 census. By 1991 census Hindus have reduced to 84.82% while both Christians and Muslims have increased to 12.48% and 1.57% respectively. Decreasing percentage of Hindu population could be due to the conversion of the former to the latter. While in case of Muslims, increase of its ratio could be mainly due to incoming population belonging to that category from the plain districts of Nagaon. Ratio of Buddhists and Sikhs etc also show upward trend in the district during the last two decades i.e. during the seventies and eighties of the last century.

There are many numerous rivers flowing through the district of Karbi Anglong. The rivers are -

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1) Kapili River | 7) Nambor River |
| 2) Amreng River | 8) Deopani River |
| 3) Borpani River | 9) Jamuna River |
| 4) Dhansiri River | 10) Patradisha River |
| 5) Dikharu River | 11) Longnit River |
| 6) Kolioni River | 12) Doigrung River |

The forest area covered is about 4,922.019 sq km with 14 state reserve forest and 17 district council reserve forest in the district. Though the district is covered with hilly areas and

mountains there are not many peaks in the district. "Singhason Peak" is the highest peak in the district which is 13600 metres above the sea level.

There are many natural resources found in Karbi Anglong district. Different kinds of minerals found in this district are -

- 1) Line Stone - Found in the Dillai and Sainilangso.
- 2) China - clay - Found in Upper Deopani and Silonijan area.
- 3) Feldspar - Found in koilajan area
- 4) Coal - Found in Koilajan and Silbheta.

Although the district is abundant in raw materials only a few industries have come up. The industries are as follows :-

- A.
 1. Bokajan Cement Plant
 2. Karbi Chemical Mini Plant (Under Construction)
- B. Agro Base
 1. Rubber Plantation Lndustry
 2. Citronella Plantation Lndustry.
- C. Tea Gardens :- There are a total of 10 numbers of tea gardens in the district -
 1. Nambor Nadi Tea Estate
 2. Deopani Tea Estate
 3. Borpathar Tea Estate
 4. Dhansiri Tea Estate
 5. Banaspati Tea Estate
 6. Methunguri Tea Estate
 7. Sobhoneswari Tea Estate
 8. Ramanagar Tea Estate
 9. Lahorijan Tea Estate
 10. Lengui Tea Estate

Although the region bears a distinct hilly and rugged topography in Central Assam, it played an important role in the evolution and development of transport and communication routes.

The routes mainly served the purposes of movement of the people who were on expedition or those who had migrated from one plain region to another.

During the British time, some transport routes developed through the region in conforming with the topography. These routes were mostly bridle paths or foot paths. The routes were utilized mainly by the soldiers on expedition or by the people who migrated or moved under economic or political pressure.

After the independence of the country another significant development in matters of transport took place in the region due to the construction of roads connecting important places within the outside region. The first major step was taken in this regard when a PWD with four sub-divisions established in Diphu in 1955. In addition to the roads constructed by the State Government and the national government, the District Autonomous Council took up plans to construct some roads connecting interior villages. Such roads are called District Council Road. During the last few decades the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) also encouraged the villagers providing them finance under the National Rural Employment Programme. Following are some of the important roads of the region :-

1. The Political Project Road
2. The Diphu - Manja - Parakhowa Road
3. The National Highway No. 39
4. The Kheroni - Dong Kamukam - Baithalangso Road.

In the whole region, roads are the principal lines of transport and communication. The important centre points of road linkages may be connected as Diphu, Manja, Dongkamukam, Baithalangso, Kheroni and Hamren.

The railway lines are also one of the most important of communication. In today's life a large number of people choose the journey of trains rather than buses. The railway tracks passing through Karbi Anglon are :-

1) Hawaipur, 2) Lamsakhang, 3) Patharkhola, 4) Lumding, 5) Barlangphar, 6) Langsoliet, 7) Nailalung, 8) Diphu, 9) Daldali, 10) Dhansiri, 11) Rangapahar, 12) Rangaphahar crossing, 13) Khatkhathi and 14) Bokajan.

Although there is marked improvement in the Passenger traffic during the present decade, the overall picture remains gloomy as compared to the need of the time. Very slow development of roads and transport lines in some areas is primarily due to several factors such as : 1) Rugged topography, 2) Lack of human settlement, 3) Shifting nature of rural settlements, 4) Lack of any development scheme from the Autonomous Council to establish any administrative offices etc. The railway traffic is limited and serves only a very small percentage of the population.

Chapter 3

The history of the Karbi (Mikir) people

Before discussing the origin of the Karbi or Mikir people, the first question in our mind arises is "what the word "Karbi" means ? In this topic there are many apinions and suggestions given by different teachers and scholars. One of the teachers named Jagyaram Gogoi gave his suggestion on the origin of the word Karbi is that in ancient times as the matchboxes were not invented people in order to get the fire they kept aside some few burning coals. They use the burning coals next time to produce the fire. This process of producing fire is known as "Mekarobi". This is how from the word "Karobi" the word Karbi is formed. But it is also believed that in olden days each one of the tribal dynasty lived in the same way. So, again the question in our mind arises is that if in the past all the tribals lived in the same way then why they were not named as "Karbis".

Sri Bonglong Terang's point of view for the formation of the word Karbi is that from the word The Kar Kibi or Kerobi, the word Karbi is formed. The Karbis are formerly known as the Mikirs. The Mikir people feel good when they were called or known as the child of Karbi. The word "Ker" means loward. In the region of Karbi Anglong the word 'Ker' is used everywhere. For eg; The Natural Death will be considered as fever and if any one dies from stomach trouble then it is considered as natural death. But Epilipsy, Madness and Accidental death will be considered as cowardness or any evil thing has entered the body. According to the belief of the people the dead person should be repented so that the society could perform the death rituals. But if the dead person is not repented then his/her family members will be sent out of the society.

Some other beliefs of the people are that if any one touches a woman or if he doesnot marry his uncle's daughter and marry's another girl then he too will considered as "Ker" means coward.

Due to all this reason the Mikir People likes to call themselves as the 'child of karbi'. This is what Rongbong Terang gave his opinion.

The word "Mi" is the common word used by the Kukichin's tribe. They used the word 'Mi' in front of their names. For eg - Miring, Mikir, Mizo, Mising, Mismi, Miri (Hills), Miyong or Mayong, Mizi and Myan or Man (Burmeese).

One of the honest man from Kukichin tribe told Boreleng Terang that "Mi" means "People" and "Kir" means "Coward or Timid" If the two words 'Mi' and 'Kir' are combined together then the meaning of the word is 'coward people'. According to the view of the man from Kukichin tribe, the Mikir people belongs to the Miring Tribe. Even the cultures, rituals, customs and the languages are same with the Miring people. The Miring people has their own district in Manipur. The district is named as Moirang.

As the time passed and years rolled one by one the other dynasties had standardized their way of living in every part of their life. They proceeded towards with their change in thoughts, activities, dresses, food, agricultural equipments, supernatural beliefs, languages etc. so the question is that, "If the other races can change themselves in every aspects of life then why not the Mikirs?" After many years of survey and experiments by different people the result is that due to the lack of appropriate education, lack of good environmental surroundings, existence of some supernatural beliefs, lack of good and positive thoughts the Mikir people were not developed or changed. The problem will be discontinued only when there arise some good leaders who can lead them to development. But the leader should be well-educated, well-behaved and the main part is that his thoughts and deeds should be positive.

But it is to be noted in the last few years the Mikir people were developed in all aspects of work and life. Due to the arise of some good and brave leaders the people have now realized what is right and wrong and how they can standardized their life. Today after a lots of change took place in the tribe, they have now become the glory of the tribal people. As it is also stated

that Karbi Anglong is the heart - beat of Assam then obviously the people are also known as heart beat of the tribals.

It is very difficult to define from where the Mikir have originated. As there was no sufficient written history about the Mikir's origination, people were confused about this topic. But from the book of 'Karbi Short History' it is clearly written that after many years of survey and experiments, Dr. Peter Kunstalltar believed that Mikir have originated from the Mongoloid Race.

According to Dr. Robin Barlin, some of the important races are -

1) Kadai, 2) Malyau Polinecian, 3) Miyau yau, 4) Monkhemor, 5) Chin-Tibetan, 6) Tai etc.

As there are uncounted tribes which has originated from many races it is difficult to define them in proper order. The tribes of different races separated in different parts of the world. Some went to survive in the Russian countries and some survived in the land of chin between 1300 B.C. to 1600 B.C. After this, they slowly separated to Tibet in some of the places like Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, Arunachal Pradesh and now also in Assam.

Pacially the Karbis belong to the Mongoloid group and linguistically they belong to the Tibeto-Burman group. The original home of the various people speaking Tibeto - Burman languages was in western china near the Yang - Tee - Kiang and the Howang - ho rivers and from these places they went down the courses of the Brahmaputra, the chindwin and the Irrawaady and entered India and Burma. The Karbis, along with others entered Assam from Central Asia is one of the waves of migration. But, it is very difficult to trace the history of the early settlement of the Karbis as there are no any written documents and other evidence like archaeological etc. Of course, in the old chronicles and Buranjis occasional references here and there were made to the people of this race. But from these references also it is very difficult to trace the chronological events of the Karbis. Their folk-tales and folk lores are the only sources from which it can have an idea regarding their early history.

The folk - lores of the Karbis however, indicate that during

the long past, once they used to live on the banks of the rivers the Kalang and the Kopili and the entire Kajiranga area, the famous National Park situated in Assam, was within their habitation. During the reigns of the Kachari Kings, they were driven to the hills and some of them entered into Jaintia hills, the erstwhile Jaintia Kingdom and lived under the Jaintia Suzerainty.

While a section of the Karbis remained in the Jaintia Kingdom, others moved towards north-east by crossing the river Barapani, a tributary of the Kapili and entered into the Rongkhang Ranges. There they established their capital at a place called "SOCHENG". Those who continued to live under the Suzerainty of the Jaintia king had to face constant harassment at the hands of the Jaintias and this has compelled them to migrate north ward. A good number of them had entered into the Ahom territory and prayed for protection from the Barphukan at Raha. Thus migration took place at the beginning of the 17th Century. The Karbis who migrated to the Ahom Kingdom had to face the Burmese invasion. The Burmese who invaded Assam perpetrated inhuman oppression on the people. The Karbis took refuge in the deep jungles and high hills leaving their hearth and home in the submountain regions. In order to save themselves from the greedy eyes of the Burmese invaders, the young Karbi girls started to use a black line from the forehead to the chin which is known as "DUK" with a view to make them look ugly. While some of the Karbis migrated to lower Assam, some had crossed the Brahmaputra and settled in the north bank.

Some of the great leaders of the Karbi people are -

- 1) Rongpharpi Rongbey, 2) Thong Teron, 3) Waisong, 4) Ding Terang, 5) Barelong and 6) Somsonsing Engti.



'RONGPHARPI - RONGBE' PORTRAIT OF FREEDOM STRUGGLE.

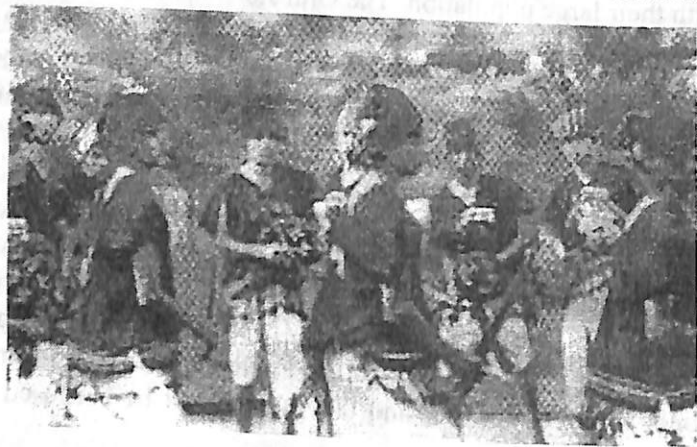
The Karbis are said to have established their new Kingdom occupying a vast hilly portion of the Jaintia Hills and the entire Rongkhong plain, and the kingdom was named Rongkhong. The Karbis since then till present day have been living in the area with their large population. The Oral stories prevalent among the Karbis of Rongkhong mention about twelve capitals that they so far established including the present one i.e. Ronghangrongbong. The other eleven capitals were "Sapholarung", "Menchiru", "Tamu", "Korengkhang", "Socheng", "Mukhim", "Amselam", "Pidong", "Thaihong", "Thongkedam", and "Phongrongman".

From the point of view of habitation, the Karbis are divided into 3(three) groups namely "CHINGTHONG", "RONGKHXANG" and "AMRI". These groups are otherwise known as chinthong, Nilip-Ronghang and Amri Marlong. Those who lived in the plains district are called "DUMRALI". Fundamentally, these groups do not differ each other and they should not be confused with clans.

The Karbis later on shifted their capital to Niz Rongkhong from Socheng. The place Niz Rongkhong is also known as Ronghang Ronbang, situated about 16 kms south of Hamren, the

sub-divisional HQ of the Hamren Civil Sub-Division. There is a parliament called 'PINPOMAR'. The Pinpomar selected the traditional Karbi king called "LINGDOKPO". He still exercises his traditional authority in respect of socio-religious matters. Each village under the erst while Karbi Kingdom was headed by a village headman called "RONG SARTHE", Several contiguous Karbi villages constituted one "LONGRI" and the administrative officer of a Longri was called "HABE" or "HABAI". The kingdom had 12 (twelve) such Longris and these longris were constituted into 4 (four) "ARTUS" and each ARTU was governed by an officer called Lingdok. And at the apex of the 4 (four) Lingdoks was the king called "RECHO" or "LINGDOKPO".

The Karbi people have a liking for the low hill tops and gentle slopes. Their villages in the interior are scattered in nature and they donot live in compact settlements. The villages are often small, each comprises few households only. A good number of large and medium sized settlements in Karbi-Anlong, particularly in the plains of Howraghat, Bokajan, and Ronghang have recently attained some characteristics accommodating large number of non agricultural population - in trade and commerce,



industry, teaching, administration and so on.

Photo of Chong Kedan (a traditional Karbi Shield and Sword Dance)

Chapter 4

The Culture and Tradition of Karbi People

The Karbis, formerly known as Mikirs were the most numerous of the entire tribal population. Though influenced by Hinduism and they believe in a Supreme Being, they are happy with their traditional dress, dance, music and folklore.

Karbi Anlong reflects a true picture of ethnic, cultural and biological diversity. Combination of these features for a region is often true for the statement 'higher the ethnic diversity, higher the diversity of plant use and higher the diversity of plant use, higher the ethnic diversity". Detailed study of Dynamism in traditional knowledge will present the clues of the origin of the knowledge, relationships among communities and route of migration of the race or tribe concerned. Though the Karbis are influenced by Hinduism, their traditional gods and goddesses are more significant than Hindu Gods and Goddesses. The amusing fact is that they have their own version of the Ramayana story, known as Sabin Alun, a sort of folk epic. The culture and tradition of Karbi people is largely associated with customs and rituals of different activities.

1) CLANS AND MARRIAGE.



Photo of a Married Couple

The Karbis have 5(five) clans called 'KUR'. These are Terong, Teron, Enghee, Ingti, and Timung. Each of the five clans has a number of Sub-clans. While Enghee and Timung have 30 (thirty) Sub-clans each. Terang and Teron have 6 (six) sub-clans each and the remaining clan Ingti has only 4 (four) sub-clans. These clans are completely exagamous and marriage between a boy and a girl belong to the same clan can never take place since the children of the same clan are considered as brothers and sisters. Violation of this customary law obviously leads to ex-communication of the couple involved. Even in the cremation ground called Tipit or Thiri, area is kept demarcated for each clan. Although all the five clans are socially on an equality, Ingti being a priestly clan was supposed to have a higher status in former times.

Although, monogamy is the prevailing practice, there is no bar to polygamy and the cases of polygamy are very rare. Cross-cousin marriage is a preferential one. Like other tribal societies, the Karbis do not have the system of bride price. After marriage, the wife continues to use the surname of her father. But the children assume the title of their father. Thus, the Karbis follow the patriarchel system of family structure.

2) VILLAGE STRUCTURE :-

The settlement pattern of the Karbis is in the form of a village. Each viallage has a headman called 'Gaonbura' or 'Sarthe' who is appointed by the authority of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council. But each revenue village has a number fo hamlets situated kilometers apart. Each of the such hamlets has also a Gaonbura. Each Karbi Village is named after the Gaonbura. The Karbis, like the other hill tribes, have a tendency to live on the hill tops. But the people generally donot live in compact areas. The Villages are not only smaller in size, but scattered too. In the plains portion of the Karbi Anglong district where the Karbi people practise permanent cultivation and where the Village headman are quite strong, the villages are found to be stationary. But in the interior areas of the district where shifting cultivation is practised, shifting of village site is still in the practise. The

reasons for continuing such a practise are sometimes economic and sometimes social. The following reasons can be ascribed to this :-

a) The post of the village headman whether that of the revenue village or of the hamlet is very much coveted and prestigious one. In the performance of every socio-religious rite or festival, the headman has to be honoured first. Moreover, the village or the hamlet is also named after him. In a Karbi village there might be a few aspirants for this coveted post. Whenever an aspirant finds that there is no chance of fulfilling his desire if he continues to stay in the village, he leaves the village along with his followers and establishes a village in the new site where he automatically becomes the Gaonbura.

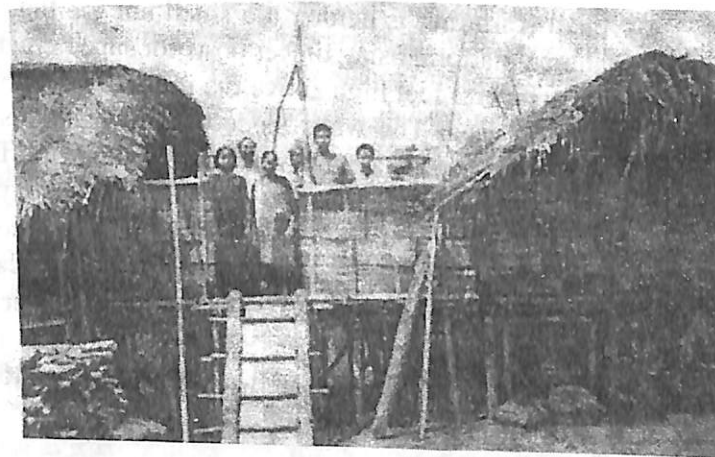


Photo of a front view of Karbi House

b) If the Karbi people living in a particular village, think that their village is a haunted place frequented by ghosts or evil spirits, they shift their village to a new site very soon to get rid of the ghosts on the evil spirits.

c) The Karbis who practise jhuming or shifting cultivation very often shift their villages to new jhum sites which might be 10 to 20 kms away from the present site.

3) Houses :-



Photo of typical Karbi Hut

A typical Karbi hut is neither too small nor too big. It is built on a bamboo platform using timber posts for super structure. The platform is several feet high above the ground. For roofing purpose, thatch is used. The walls made of split bamboos are mud plastered. The house has two verandas - one at the front and other at the rear. The house is divided into two parts lengthwise. The front part or room with a hearth at the centre is called 'KAM' or guest room while the inner chamber called 'KUT' is used as the living room for the family members. A Wooden or Bamboo ladder is used as an approach to the front Varanda. Cattle are generally kept under the bamboo platform.

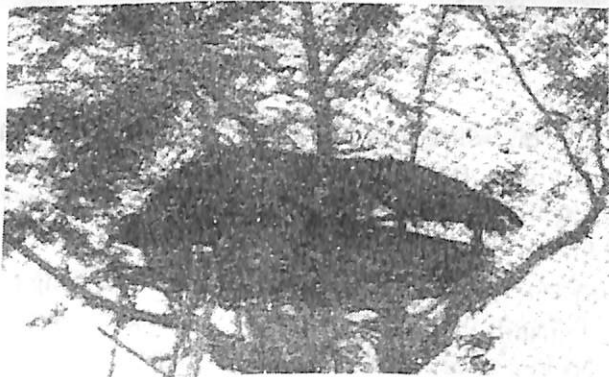


Photo of Traditional Watch Tower

Of course, the traditional housing pattern has more or less been abandoned by the Karbis. Instead of having raised bamboo platforms, the houses are constructed on grounds. Building materials required for construction of the houses, whether traditional or modern are procured from the nearby forests, markets.

4) Festivals and Traditional Customs of Karbi People:-

Among the festivals and traditional customs of Karbi people, mention may be made of the "Chojun Puja" or "Swarak Puja", "Rit Nang ching Di", "Hacha-Kekan," "Minso Kerung", "Henp-uph-ahi-ke-en", "hang Pung Sokchong", "Chang Kaching Nang", "Banjar-Kekan", "Rogker", "Chokk-eroi", "Ok-kepru" and "Chomangkan" etc. All these festivals are socio-religious and some of them are process of various dances. The most amusing fact is to be noted that all the socio-religious ceremonies are performed by singing. Songs are the main traditional customs through which the religious ceremonies are performed. Even in the death ceremony the song is sung by some particular people. So, from ancient days the religious or social ceremonies are performed through songs by the people of Karbi.

The spot for "Chojun Puja" or "Swarak Puja" is generally selected near the house of the family which wishes to perform the puja. The deities in this festival are Barithe, Shar Arnam, Arni and Devil Hii-i and other smaller Gods of the Karbis. Hemphu, the greatest God of the Karbis is also propiated. The Puja is performed for the welfare of the family.

"Rit Nang Chong Di" is a kind of dance performed by the youths of the Karbi. There are different kinds of dance performed by the Karbis to present some messages or prayer to God.

"Hacha-Kekan" is not exactly based on the folk tales. Hacha-Kekan festival is associated with harvesting. It is a kind of dance with a message to enjoy after harvesting. There are no elements used by the youths while dancing. Hence it is to be assumed that the Hacha-Kekan is secular in its activities and differs substantially from another festival. As songs are the

main part of any festival it is also true that dancing is also one of the main leading part of any festival or ceremonies.

"Minso Kerung" is a kind of typical dance which is tributed to the Jhum cultivation. Before cultivation the Karbi youth performed the dance. It is also shown in the stage performance that how the Karbi people cultivate by the process of Jhum or Shifting Cultivation.

"Henp-up-dhi-ke-en" is one kind of exhibition. In this exhibition people try to show different kinds of hand made materials like clothes, foods, bamboo-made utensils etc. Recently in Hamren the exhibition was held, the Karbi people made different kinds of Pickles with various food items.

"Lang pung Sokchong" is a kind of festival when the people celebrate while hasting the rice in urals.

"Chang Kaching nang" is also regarded as one type of dancing. In this dance only boys performed with swords and shields in their hands. Though there are varieties of dance, this dance is regarded as one of the special and sparkling dance of Karbi people. In this dance the Karbi boys show their strength and brevity.

"Benjar-Kekan" is also known as a dance which is performed only by boys.

"Rongker" is performed at the beginning of new year by propitiating the different gods and goddesses for the well being of the entire village. The deities are worshipped by all the elderly male people of the village so that with their blessings the people of the village could be free from diseases, natural calamities during the year and the families could have a good harvest. The women are not allowed to enter into the worship arena. There is another kind of Rongker performed in a greater scale. This type of Rongker which is performed at the beginning of every five years is called "Wofong Rongker", which is performed for the well-being of all the people of the villages that fall within the jurisdiction of a Mouza. While the Rongker performed in a village is only of one day's duration, the Wofong Rongker continues for two days.

"Chokk-eroi" festival is celebrated when the paddy field is ripened to a great extent. The ripened paddy field is cut and taken to a place specially cleared in the field. In this festival the people starts rejoicing when they returned home carrying paddy bags in their hands. Chokk-eroi means the carrying of the paddy from the field. In the festival, one person is selected as the leader who provides the leadership in dancing and singing. He is called 'LUNSE' and he is the director of dancing and singing.

"Ok Kepru" is a festival of fishing. In this festival a large number of people gathered together in the Kapilli river to enjoy fishing. This festival is a community fishing festival of the Karbis.

"Chomangkan" :- The most elaborate socio-religious ceremony that the Karbis perform is chomangkan, a death ceremony. Although the Karbis perform the funeral ceremony at the time of cremation but after few days they perform the death ceremony for the eternal peace of the death and this process of death ceremony is known as "chomangkan". It is the most elaborate and expensive socio-religious ceremony of the Karbis which continues nonstop for four days and four nights. The term "Chomangkan" means "a Khasi dance". It is said that the original name of the funeral ceremony was 'Arleng Karhi' but latter it changed to "chomangkan".

The ceremony does not require any formal invitation and all are welcome to it. In spite of the sad undertone, it is the proud day for the family and they welcome all with great warmth. The ceremonial rites are so many that it takes months to get them prepared. Provision of a large quantity of rice and rice beer is made to feed hundreds of people for at least four days during which the ceremony continues. Pork and tea have also to be provided. Then there is the construction of small huts for the accommodation of the guests. There are three types of chomangkan, the most prestigious being Harne, performed by a family of higher status and greater resources.

In the chomangkan ceremony, mainly two persons lead the ceremony of which one is "Uchepi" and the other one is "Duihudi". The Uchepi is an elderly lady who is the professional

weeper and who is capable of singing the song of lamentation, cooking the special food and the manner of offering it to the departed one. The second important person is the Duihudi, the master drummer. He leads the party playing drums that accompany the ceremony. Another feature of the chomangkan is the invitation which should be extended to maternal uncles of the dead person, for they also have to play a special role.

A tiny square - sized tank has to be dug outside the village boundary, five (5) Jambili Athans are prepared. "Jambili Athan" is a symbolical rod of the Karbis which is decorated with five branches and at the end of each branch, there is a wooden bird, which is called in Karbi "Vo-rali". This is the symbolic representation of the tribe and it is also the symbol of Clan Unity. In the ceremony five Jambili Athans are prepared, of which one is planted near a flat stone or slab on which food is placed and the other four are planted at the four corners of the tank. The Karbis believe in the soul and the soul is represented by a song of praise and lamentation. The song of the Uchepi is : "O you the spirit of such and such, we are offering you food and drink. We are honouring you also with a dance. Please come to the world of living and live with us". As we have discussed earlier that with song, dance is also one of the basic feature performed in the ceremony of chonangkan.

Jambili Athan

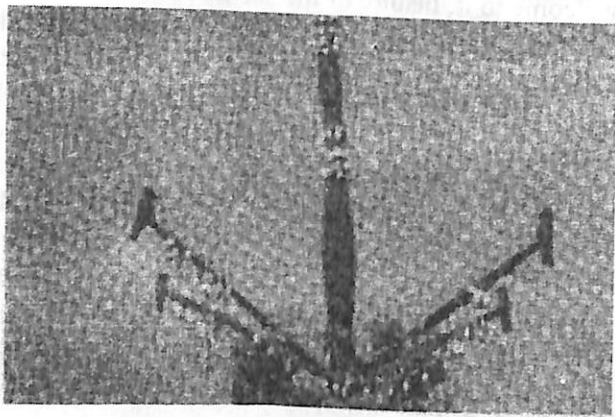


Photo of Jambili Athan.

"Jambili Athan" is the most interesting sign of Karbi people. The Karbi people regards this rod as the symbol of their tribe or clan. The tribe has 5 (five) kur or clans and the Jambili has five branches. Under the cover of it, the Karbis listen the story of their origin. It is called as "Machera Kehir".

The traditional dresses of the Karbi people is a simple one designed artistically. Most of their dresses were woven at their family looms. The aged men use an artistically designed shirt called "choy-mangpo" and the young men use the shirt called "Choy-hangthor". "Rikong" is a loin cloth used specially by the man who is married or aged one. But nowadays only in some interior remote areas men use "Rikong". Karbi male wears a "Choy-Aan" (Jacket) with a "Rekong-Ke-Er" (loin cloth of silk) with a Gamocha on his shoulders and a "Poho" (Turban) on his head.

The Karbi women and girls generally use "Pini-comflack", a piece of cloth tied around the waist like a Mekhala. The Upper part of the body is covered by a piece of artistic cloth called "Pe-Kok". They also use a waist band called "Wamkok" and during winters they use a coloured and strifed endi scarf called "Khong-jari". During the performance of chomangkan young girls use a special Endi Searf called "Dokherso". The ornaments use by the Karbi men are "Narik" a pair of ear rings made of brass, silver bracet called "Prinsiore" and heavy silver naclaces called "Lekhrooa" and "Lek-Enji". On the other hand the beautiful ornaments used by the Karbi women is "Nathempi" a pair of ear-ring made of silver, few silver bracelets called "Rup-Aroir" and necklaces made of white beads called "Lcehlo-so". The Karbi women are also found to use a kind of necklace made of silver coins and red beads called "Lekchike".

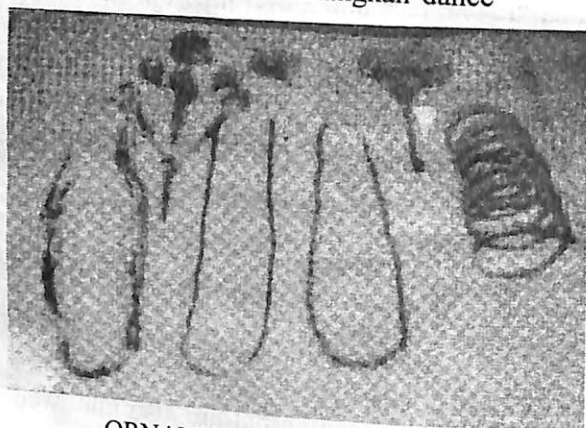
In the Karbi society dance and music plays a very important role. Various types of dances are performed during the death ceremony and other socio-religious activity by the youths of Karbi tribe. Their traditional songs whether folk or religious, are generally sung by experts only who are not only well conversant with their meaning but are also undowed with

sweet voices. They have a Karbi version of the Ramayana called "Sabin Alum", but the most amusing fact is that the epic is unwritten and it is transferred orally from generation to generation.

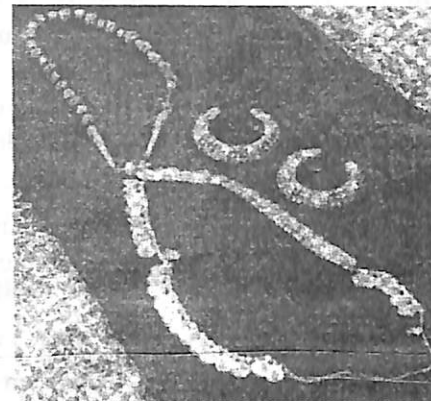
A limited number of musical instruments are available in the Karbi tribe. Specially a big drum which is called "Cheng" is their main musical instrument. Some small drums called "Chengbuk" are used by them. They have two kinds of flutes, the wooden flute is called "Muri" and the bamboo flute is called "Pangche". In some of their dances they use war shields made of rhinoceros's skin called "chong" and prototype war sword called "Nok".



Photo of Chomangkan dance



ORNAMENTS OF KARBI WOMEN



ORNAMENTS OF KARBI PEOPLE

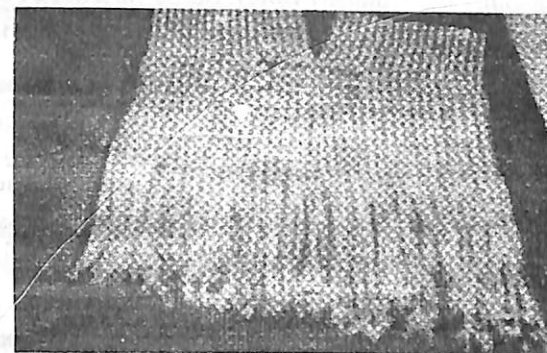


Photo of Choi-Ang
(Traditional Red Shirt of the male Karbis)

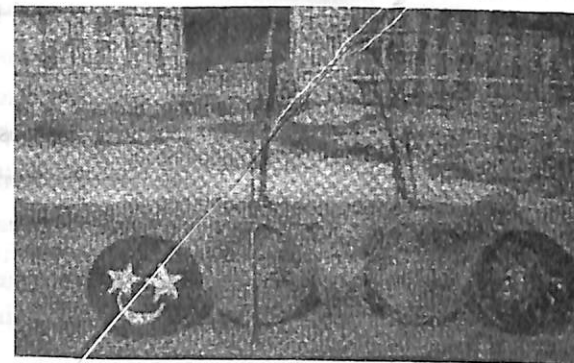


Photo of SHIELD and DRUM

Chapter 5

The essential cultivation of the Karbi People

The main types of natural vegetation found in Karbi Anglong are (1) Evergreen, (2) Deciduous, (3) Mixed deciduous and (4) Wet Savannah grasses.

Evergreen Vegetations are found in high rainfall areas having acidic soils. There are luxuriant evergreen vegetations comprising mostly bamboos and canes in the plains of new alluvium, especially the Dhansiri valley. Some varieties of bamboos are (1) *Bambusa Pallida*, (2) *Bambusa Balcooa*, (3) *Bambusa Tulda*, (4) *Melocanna Baecifera* etc. *Dendrocalamus strictus* and *Bambusa arundinacea* are two varieties of bamboos which grows well in the moist soils with high acidity.

The deciduous and mixed deciduous are found in the places where rainfall ranges from low to moderate. Grasses and miscellaneous trees such as Teak, Bogari, Simul and Dimaru to grow here.

Wet Savannah or tropical savannah grasses grow luxuriantly near the river banks. They grow in moist and acidic soils, and can stand high temperature and heavy rainfall. Along the border of Kaziranga Reserve Forest (in north of east Karbi Anglong), such grasses grow even two or four metres high and become shelter of herbivorous and other animals.

Due to this diversified classification of vegetation the region has a bright prospect for the growth of forest resources. But it is seen that certain areas of Karbi-Anglong such as Rongkhang reserve and Sildharpur reserve which were once rich in valuable Sal trees and other species like karoi, Jamuk, Ajhar, Sam, Gamari, Amari, Poma, Bhelu, Simul etc are now generally and practically completely vacant due to cultivation of Jhum and commercial exploitation.

In Karbi Anglong, due to the availability of water, good quality of soil and moderate climate, the Karbi people enjoyed in agriculture. The people of different localities cultivate varieties of foodgrains such as fruits, potatoes, rice, canes etc. Those Karbis living in hilly areas enjoyed the cultivation of 'rit' i.e. Jhum Cultivation or Shifting Cultivation. And those Karbis living in the plain areas such as Dongkamukam, Howraghat, Bokajan, Bokalia, etc go for 'Pani-Kheti' i.e. Wet Paddy Cultivation. If these areas are affected by drought like-situation water in the paddy fields are essential. Those settlements which are located in the foothill areas practise both the types of cultivation in the hill slopes. The villagers provide irrigation to the wet paddy cultivation in the foothill plain slopes. For raising wet paddy crops in hilly areas the people utilize narrow valley strips (plains) called 'dong-akhok'. As the people living in the plains have sufficient stagnant water, they raise jute which is considered as an important cash crop.

As we know that Assam is an agricultural state, so every part of Assam believed in agriculture department. Karbi Anglong is also a part of Assam, so this is why agriculture means a lot to the Karbis. Agriculture is the mainstay of the Karbis. Many procedures and systems of agriculture have been introduced by the Government. But still in some areas due to the lack of education people were not aware of any scientific methods. But nowadays the Government took some primitive measures for the people to be specialised in agriculture. In the past days the people used bulls in agriculture but as years rolled on and with the invention of scientific method people used the modern technology such as tractors in agriculture.

Jhum Cultivation or Shifting cultivation is the main process of cultivation practised by the people of the hilly areas. In some of the areas of Karbi Anglong, people use the tractor but in hilly areas the tractors are not easy and possible. The people of the hilly areas have to face a lot of problems as they cannot use tractors to fertilise the soil. They have to work hard in order to cultivate. In the dry season the people use to burn and clean the

forests of the hills and make the soil perfect for Jhum cultivation. In the hill slopes hoes still play the most vital part of tilling the lands. In some interior hilly areas of Hamren sub-division, free herd of buffaloes are made to walk on the wet valley strips number of times until the soil becomes muddy and fit for planting the bunches of seedlings. Such traditional practices of tilling the lands are not in vogue.

The common crops grown in the Jhum Cultivation by the Karbis are Rice, Potatoes, Pumpkin, Brinjal, Tomato, Cotton, Turmeric, Sesame, Gourd, Cauliflower, Cabbage, Musk-melon, cucumber, mesta, chilly, Beans, Castor etc. Some horticultural crops like Brinjal, Pineapple, Orange, cane etc on the hill slopes raise by a number of Karbi families.

Rice is the staple food of the Karbis, so mostly rice is cultivated. Some common foods of the Karbi people such as wild leaves and vegetables, bamboo shoots, wild root, Jack-fruit, fungus, ferns, tubers etc are also grown in the areas of Karbi Anglong. Progressive youth cultivators have shown good income of raising rubber and coffee plants. Rubber is also one of the plant which grows well in the soil of Karbi Anglong. Bamboo shoots and rubber plants are famous among the people of Karbi. In some plain areas Jute is also grown instead of Wet Paddy. A number of people raise mustard, pulses, arhar and so on during Rabi season. Weekly markets are available in different parts of Karbi Anglong. In the weekly markets people sold their productions and acquire a good quantity of income. Apart from these produces, Karbis also collect varieties of Mushroom and Bamboo shoot that are sold out in local weekly markets.

In the recent years some seed farms and nurseries have been established in the district with a view to producing certified seeds, plants and grafts for distribution among the cultivators. Since 1957, the seed farms and nurseries are established and the following are the names of seed farms and nurseries present in Karbi Anglong -

- 1) Hamren Seed Farm
- 2) Amri Seed Farm
- 5) Kheroni Seed Farm
- 6) Bokajan Seed Farm

- 3) Diphu Spices Centre
- 7) Tarabasa Seed Farm.
- 4) Amreng Seed Farm

The agricultural departments has undertaken some major steps for the development of people. The irrigation facility has been unsatisfactory in the district. In some areas medium and minor irrigation projects are available. The following are the areas -

Hawaipur, Dimapur, Dhansiri, Honkram, Dongkamukam, Barpathar, Bokajan, Taradubi, Tumpreng, Deopani, Barpani etc. In Karbi Anglong, rice, maize, other cereals and few non-food crops are irrigated, but only in some limited areas. The yield of various crops depend on the quality of soil, availability of water, weather condition, variety of seed and so on.

For better and faster development of agricultural economy in the region, the Regional Agricultural Research station of Assam Agricultural University at Diphu is undertaking various research works on various crops which is suitable in the hilly areas. The Station also undertakes some steps for improving cropping system and traditional practices. It also aims to handle the problems of agriculture related to pests and diseases of Various Crops.

It is clear that in order to get a better quality of agriculture some steps should be taken to improve and prevent all the disqualities of agriculture - The following are the steps to develop the quality of agriculture.

- 1) To control the Jhum Cultivation.
- 2) To increase in irrigation facilities both in hilly areas and terraced lands.
- 3) Increase in the use of high yielding varieties of seeds.
- 4) The cultivators should use modern technology and methods.
- 5) Introduction of more plantation and horticulture crops.
- 6) Conversion of suitable hill slopes into terraces
- 7) The cultivations should use manures, chemical fertilizers and insecticides to prevent the pests and diseases of Various Crops.

- 8) Transporting and marketing facilities should be improved for agricultural produces.
- 9) The Government should establish more and more agro-based industries to create better demands for agricultural produces.
- 10) In any developmental works the people should be well educated about the work.
- 11) The sentiments and feelings of the people should be respected by the others who purchase goods from them.

The situation of agriculture in Karbi-Anglong is better because of availability of more flat lands with large population, innumerable narrow stream valleys, better transporting and marketing facilities leading to higher demand for food production with the help of irrigation. However, Karbi Anglong also has not advanced in terraced method of cultivation even though there are more hill slopes with low angle and fertile soils. On the whole, Karbi Anglong shows better scope for the development of canal and dam irrigation through medium and minor projects.



Photo of Jhum (Shifting) Cultivation

Chapter 6

The Tourist Spots of Karbi Anglong

Karbi Anglong or the land of the Karbis may well be called the heart beat of Assam. This beautiful, large, sprawling district lies in the centre of Assam. This enchanting hill districts with its diversely rare flora and fauna which has remained untouched and undiscarded. The whole Karbi Anglong is surrounded by rolling hills, dense forests, waterfalls, rivers and streams. In the east the combination of flat paddy lands with green hills and interspersed with the meandering rivers brings out the result of most beautiful and sparkling scene of Karbi Anglong.

While in Karbi Anglong the temperature in summer can be hot and humid and generally lasts from June to August. The remaining parts of the year are pleasant and bracing. The season for the tourist to visit the district is from October to March. There are few tourist spots in which we can see the amazing scenes of Karbi Anglong. So, some of the few tourist spots are given below :-

1) Amreng Tourist Centre :-

Amreng is a river cape situated between Kapili river and its tributary "Amreng river". It is located at 120 kms from Diphu and is surrounded by mystic blue hills and evergreen forests.

2) Khanduli Tourist Centre :-

Khanduli is surrounded with temperate grassland and it is also known as Newzealand of East.

3) Umwang Tourist Centre :-

Umwang has an area of 35 sq km carred with natural grassland more or less flat surface and is surrounded by one big river and one perennial river on three sides. Rafting and Angling expedition on river Barapani, horse riding, etc are suitable attractions of this centre.

4) Kohora Tourist Resort and

5) Trekking Expeditions to Singhason, the highest peak of the district.

Though there are many places of tourist spots, still some spots were even undiscovered till today. The Tourist Spots should be kept clean and it should be well-communicated areas. It is clear through the study of Karbi- Anglong district that the district is

really one of the places of Assam where people from other parts of the country could enjoy a true natural beauty with hills, trees, forests, rivers, waterfalls, green paddy lands, streams etc. Thus the following are some of the pictures of tourist spots in Karbi Anglong :-

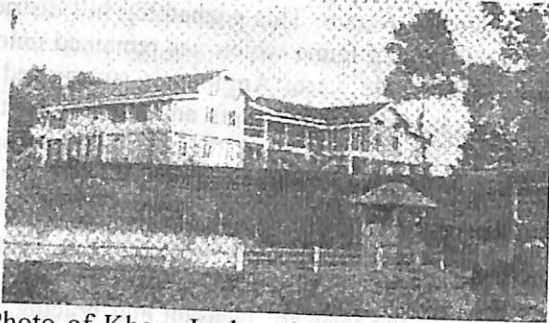


Photo of Khora Lodge, A home in the Woods



Photo of Wild-Venture at Silucta



Photo of Bridle Path inside Kohora (Kaziranga)

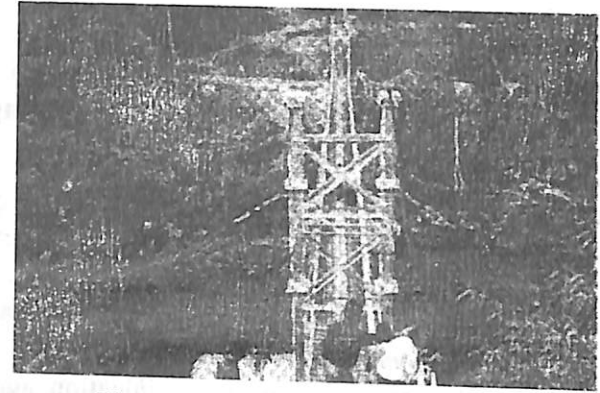


Photo of Tracking Path, Amreng

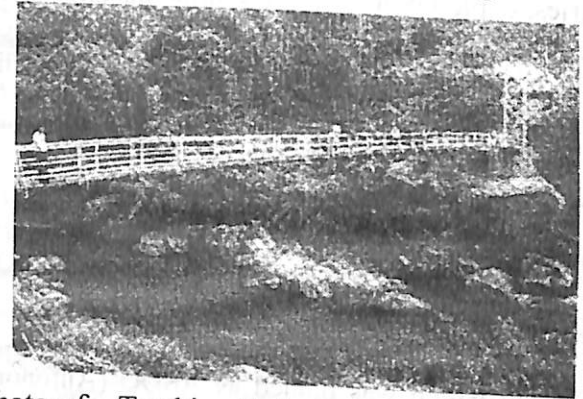


Photo of - Tracking Path And Hanging Bridge



Photo of Koka Falls at Panimur

Chapter 7

The Progress of Development in Karbi Anglong

The study of various cultures and traditions of Karbi Anglong has cleared us that Karbi Anglong is the heart beat of Assam. Karbi Anglong is a district which is surrounded by all beautiful objects of nature. As the time passed and years rolled on, modern education, various schemes of development including the growth of modern transport and communication, agriculture, industries, exploitation of forests, minerals and water resources and so on are developed in various ways. Tremendous changes have taken place in every field of development like political systems, trade and commerce and also in the growth of population.

In the past years after the declaration of the district, the leaders of Karbi people worked hard in order to progress in every activities so that they can compete with other districts. In that time there were many different committee's which were formed for the development of the district.

During the leadership of Jayanta Rongpi, a committee was formed which was named as ASDC (Autonomous State Demand Committee). This Committee protested for the declaration of Karbi Anglong as a state. But till today they were in progress. The slogan of the committee ASDC is "No Autonomous State No Rest". This is the slogan where the ASDC youths shouted to protest against the Government. Slowly by slowly the committee was supported by 2/3rd of supporters. In the beginning the Government did not showed any interest towards the demands of the ASDC. But Hiteswar Saikia wished to help the ASDC's demands and he asked them not to divide Assam into pieces. Later the demands of ASDC were fulfilled and now they were an important part of development of Karbi Anglong. Under the Committee of ASDC some offices were established for the development of the district and the people. The following are the offices of ASDC -

- 1) Centre Council Committee
- 2) Central Committee
- 3) Secretariat,
- 4) Standing Committee
- 5) Parliament Committee
- 6) Parliament Board.

From the point of view of culture and traditions, the Karbis are very rich. However, during the recent years, the Karbi society has undergone transformation and changes. In this connection, the pioneering leadership was given by late Khorsing Terang, who was not only the first chief Executive Member of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council but also the first member of the Assam Legislative Assembly from the Karbi Community. Among the other leaders, mention may be made of Late Nihang Rongpher, Late Chandra Sing Teron, Late Chattrra Sing Teron, Late Dhoniram Rongpi, who were not only the Chief Executive Member of the KAAC, but were the members of Assam Cabinet also.

In the literary field, Padmashree (Prof.) Rongbong Terang, Mr. Longkam Teron, Dr Phukan Chandra Phangcho, Mr. Lunse Timung, Late Samsing Hanse, Mr. Jcet Rongpi and many others have made significant contribution for the development of Karbi literature. In this connection, reference of "Karbi Lamet Amei" (Karbi Sahitya Sabha) may also be made.

The Founder of Karbi Anglong Autonomous council was Samson Engti and Thongnoke Bey was one of the bravest man in Karbi dynasty. The Karbis now have come forward to accept the developmental schemes of different sectors with a view to change their own dynasty. But at the same time, they were maintaining their culture which distinguishes them as a separate ethnic group.

Karbi Anglong is famous for the production of bamboos and woods. Due to the high quantity of bamboos and woods, people usually makes a good number of handicraft items. Such handicrafts items are those common industrial items that have

good demand in the market. Even the people from the plain districts/areas prefer to purchase those handicraft items which is made of bamboos and woods. Most common of such items are - broom-stick, knife, hand-fan, mats, winnowing fans, baskets of various kinds etc. The Karbi people are also famous in making Karbi handloom products such as shawl, jackets, muffler, clothes etc. The garments for both male and females made by the Karbis are of high grade and quality. The colours of the dresses were made by themselves out of plant leaves, roots or seeds etc., the colours of their dresses are mostly red, black, white and yellow.

There are also some good number of traditional institutions which are established in Karbi-Anglong. These traditional institutions helps the people to learn and understand many educative knowledge and ideas. Some of the institutions are socio-political in nature, some are of economic character. Some of these institutions have proven outdated in the modern context and some are still continuing withstanding the wear and tear of time. Some of such institutions are -

- 1) The Village Council "ME" and
- 2) The Bachelor's Dormitory, "FARLA" (JIRKEDAM).

The Village Council "ME" plays an important role in regulating the social, economic and religious life of village. The traditional village council of the Karbis is called "M.E." and this council is composed of elderly male members of the village. It is generally presided by "Sarthe or Gaonbura".

The Bachelor's Dormitory is generally constructed in a central place of the village with locally available construction materials. It is known by various names such as "Terang Ahem", "Terang Hangbar", "Farla", but mostly it is known as "JIRKEDAM". The main spirit of this institution is to offer help hands to the needy people by the Karbi youths of the village.

Though in many areas, Karbi Anglong had developed well but still today in some parts it is still backward. The main problem of this backwardness is due to the lack of good communication

system and educative environment. The communication system creates a lots of problem to the local people to communicate with other districts of Assam. Roads and Bridges are also one of the great problems of Karbi Anglong. So for the systematic development of the district the communication system should be developed with good roads and bridges, some few educational systems should also be provided to the people and the land should be utilized well. Thus, with the development of all these, Karbi Anglong will be surely outstanding and prestigious.

"MARAT LONGRI SANCTUARY"



Photo of a view from Tikka Tourist Complex

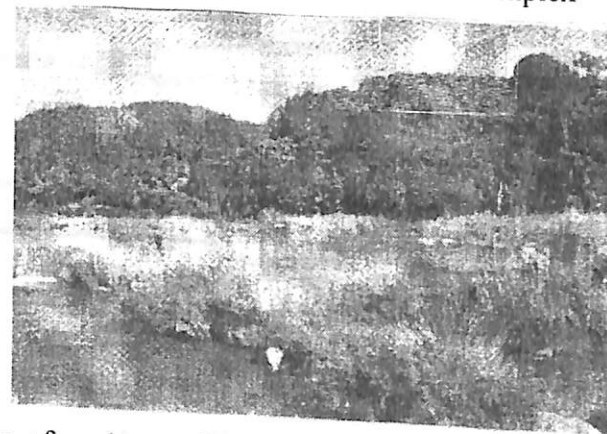


Photo of a view to "MARAT LONGRI" SANTUARY.

A Short Bibliography

Dr. Phukan Ch. Phangcho,

– Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills,
Published December 2001.

Sri Barelong Terang

– A Short History of Karbi, Published 1996

Praphulladatta Goswami

– Festivals of Assam, Published June, 1995

Rongmongve Lokimo (Magazine)

– Editor - Sar Bidya Ram Rongpi, 2008
(Edition)
