CHAPTER VIII

INFLUENCE OF OTHER RACES UPON THE KACHARIS

Chinese and Tibetan Influence upon the Kacharis -

We have seen before that the Kacharís migrated into the north east sentinel of India from the river valleys of the Hoang Ho and Yang Tse Kiang of ancient China. Many centuries of residence in India had no doubt dislocated their ties with the mongoloid world of the south east Asia, still a deep investigation reveals the stamp of ancient Chinese, Tibetan and Burmese culture upon the Kacharís of present times. Let us now proceed to trace out these facets of south East Asian culture among the Kacharís.

Bodo, the language of the Kacharís is distantly affiliated with the Chinese and Tibetan languages. Tibetan words are still many in the vocabulary of a number of Bodo dialects, particularly in Garo it is prominent. In ancient times the linguistic links were definitely many times more. The present gulf between the Bodo and the south East Asian languages are due largely to the sanskritisation in the past.¹ This gulf is sure to increase till it reaches a point of total linguistic uniformity free from south East Asian influence since the veneration of the Kacharis to the Aryan Hindu culture is well known. But there is no justification in saying that the Kachari languages of the North East India had their base grounds elsewhere and not in China, Tibet and Burma.
Ancient Chinese and Tibetan communities were distinguished for their groupism and clan ridden social aspects. It is sure that the Kacharis brought with them these aspects when they sat their feet on the soil of this ancient land from China.

In ancient and in medieval times the Kacharis were extremely clannish. These rigidities of clan rules rendered them immense help in the formative ages of their political and cultural exploits in India. In the North East India the Negritos and Dravidians stood as their formidable adversaries, still they came out successful over them largely due to their ethnic bonds where each of their families, groups and villages fought for their existence and survival under clan leaders, family elders and village headmen. Even to this day the Kacharis are a strongly unified tribe. In the agricultural fields, in the community festivals and in all aspects of human endeavour they have a passionate desire to foster their collective welfare. Beggars, thieves etc. are still rare among them. They are self sufficient in the primary requirements of human lives and their traditional customs are a safeguard against mischiefs of individuals.²

Exogamy rules in marriages were extremely rigid among them and it will take a few generations more to depart from this usage - this was an impact of south East Asian Culture.³

In ancient times the Kacharis tribes had a matriarchal leaning. Matriarchal communities were predominant in ancient Tibet.⁴ The Rabha section of the Kacharis were well known for
their matrilineal features. A Rabha woman enjoys property rights along with the menfolk; Many Lalung villages of the hills still have maiden dormitories where young women share public life along with the boys. In ancient times these characteristics were more predominant.

In the domain of economic enterprises, the impact of south East Asian Civilisation was distinct. The valleys of the Yang Tse Kiang and Hoang Ho the cradle of the Asiatic mongoloids were well known centres of agrarian culture. Agriculture, i.e., paddy cultivation was the basic structure of Chinese economy and primary source of livelihood. The system of agriculture was advanced and scientific. These people knew well the constructions of water reservoirs and irrigation canals. The yields were naturally good. The Kacharis brought this advanced knowledge of agriculture in India from China. The valley of the Brahmaputra in Assam was fertile and congenial for agricultural pursuits. They also introduced the system of irrigation. In the seventh century A.D. Huen Tsang noticed the practice of the construction of irrigation canals among the Kacharis. They are the only people in the North East India who took great care for scientific cultivation by cooperative methods. In the North East India the Kacharis had long experience and skill in agriculture. In times of need all able bodied males of Kachari villages assemble under the command of their leaders for the construction of irrigation canals from the nearest sources of water. Preparation of fields for agriculture and sowing of seeds are also done collectively. These are ancient Chinese traditions.

It seems, jhum or the shifting system of cultivation
was introduced in India after a Tibetan pattern. While settled agriculture was convenient in the plains of China, jhum was used in the hills of Tibet. About the ancient contacts between the Tibetans and the Kacharis we have made mention before. From Tibet the usage of jhum cultivation spread to Bhutan, Sikim, Burma as well as in the hills of the North East India. At present jhum is confined only among the Dimasa Kacharis of the N.C.hills district of Assam.

Sericulture was undoubtedly the best gift of ancient China to India. The Kacharis were the intermediaries between two countries. Chinese silk cocoons were extensively reared in the fertile valley of the Brahmaputra and the tradition of silk culture flourished here through the active patronage of ruling dynasties. The same patterns of silk manufactures are found in the South East Asian countries and in the North East India even today. It is an influence of China upon the Kacharis.

Harvesting festivals have a special significance to the agrarian communities. In ancient China and Tibet the harvesting festivals were observed after the reaping of winter crops. In such festivals of ancient China people of all ages, groups and sexes had considerable liberty to enjoy the festivals with feasts, wine parties and open air dance dramas when considerable amounts of free mixings between young boys and girls were tolerated. Love songs and dances, exchanges of gifts were characteristics features of these harvesting festivals. The Kacharis introduced these festivals in the North
The Bihu of Assam bear such stamps of ancient China. A stage representation of sexual songs, dances, etc., are still to be found in Bihu. It seems that Bihu contain maximum amount of Chinese culture under an Indian label. Folk songs of the tribals of the North East India bear resemblances with the traditional Chinese songs. When tuned with musical instruments, they resemble the agrarian and pastoral lives of the Chinese people, and differences in languages which have occurred as a result of many centuries of cultural disassociation are not very strikingly astonishing. The occasions of songs and dances, their rhythm and significances are astonishingly similar.

Influences of Negritas, Dravidians and Austro speaking Races —

Negritas, the earliest settlers of the N.E. India extended their thrusts upto Assam in the North East at a very early date before the southward pushing of the Chinese Mongoloids. Their only contribution to the great body of Indian culture is bow, used in archery. The proficiencies of the ancient Kiratas (Kacharis) in archery is attested by the illuminating verses of Sharavi’s Kiratarjuniyam; Even to day a section of the Negritos of the Andaman and Nicobar islands are proficient in archery which they themselves produces in their traditional way. The ancestor worship of the Kacharis is also believed to
be a trait of Negrito culture. The Caros and the Nagas erect grave figures of the deceased persons of their families, and these carvings done nicely on wood, are worshipped as their ancestors. In design they are perfectly similar to the grave figures engraved on wood by the Negritos of the island of Nicobor.\footnote{The monoliths of Dimapur and Kasomari of the Hedambial Kachari kings are also memorial stones raised in memory of their deceased ancestors. In fact, the Negritos although extinct in Assam, their impact on the culture of the land was manifold and a deep inquiry is sure to throw valuable light in this regard.}
The evolution of Siva (Bathow) worship through his emblem, the sizu (Euphorbia) plant among the Bodo Kacharis of the Brahmaputra valley was an off-shoot of early Austroindian culture. This custom of the worship of sizu is still prevalent among the Austroindian speaking tribes of Orissa and Chota Nagpur.\footnote{Snake and tree worship connected with Saivism was initially confined among the Austroinds only. The Austroind speaking Khasis of Meghalaya still respect a gigantic snake which they call Thlen. As this has been referred before in the Chapter II, more details is not necessary.}
Aryan Influences upon the Kacharis —

Aryan Hindu influences upon the Kacharis were rather deeper than the south East Asian countries and this is a factor of considerable importance for the Indianisation of the Mongoloids. The Aryan conqueror of Assam was Narakasura as we have stated with details in the Chapter. Hinduisation of the Mongoloids had practically begun since then. The ancient Kiratas (Kacharis) met a decisive defeat in the hands of the Aryans after a stiff resistance. Large numbers of them then sought migration to many directions of the North East sentinet of India by batches. Those who remained there had agreed to remain loyal to the Aryan ideals and in distant places of the region to Hindu culture made considerable headway as it appears from the coinage of Harikela and Pattikera, and their traditional folk beliefs. Though separated by many miles of hilly terrains the tribes of Tripura and the Kacharis of Assam celebrate Kherai festival which we have occasion to refer before. Kherai was probably introduced among the Kacharis by the patronage of the Aryan conqueror Narakasur. Narakasura was a son of earth, i.e., Bhumi, so his regard for the cult of mother earth, i.e., Shumi was probably great. Therefore, it seems very probable that the worshippers of the cult of Earth i.e. Bhumi were Kacharis; the Basumatar clan of the Bodo Kacharis were possibly descendants of Naraka who held earth with maximum regard. Since the days of Naraka and his son and successor Bhagadatta Aryan Hinduism made considerable influences among the Kacharis of the North East. In religion in polity and in other aspects
these were prominent. In polity too, Aryan influences were not superficial. Narakasura's son Bhagadatta was a champion of Aryan culture and ideals. Duryodhana, the Chief of the Kauravas made friendship with Bhagadatta. Frankly speaking the superior standard of Aryan, ideals also inspired the Kiratas of other parts of the North East to adjust themselves with the Aryan ideals though they were not within the territorial area of the Aryan kingdom of Narakasura and Bhagadatta. So, for this reason with Bhagadatta and Ghototkocha took part in the Kurukshetra war taking the sides of rival Aryan princesses. This had greatly contributed to an healthy assimilation between Aryan ideals and tribal beliefs in polity. In the administrative system of the Hedambial Kacharis we find definite stamps of such influences. The severities of the Hedambial penal code and criminal procedure reminds the tenets of Arthasastra.

Influence of Aryan Culture-

The Aryan conquest of the Brahmaputra valley by Narakasur brought the ancient Kirata as (Kacharis) into direct touch with the Aryan world of India. Kalika Purana records that learned Brahmins were encouraged to settle in the kingdom of Pragjyotisha and in its vicinity after this conquest over the Kiratas. Evidently, Aryan ways and manners, culture and language, began to be imitated by a considerable section of the Kachari masses. Aryan god Siva became their chief deity. In the mainstream of the tribal culture of the North-East India Siva attained a
position of strength and power. Side by side with his image worship phallic like stones also began to be worshipped as him emblem. The chessmen pillars and monoliths of Dimapur are nothing but the representations of phallic stones associated with Saivism, which have an interesting parallel in the ruins of the India valley.\textsuperscript{23} J.P. Mills and J.H. Hutton rightly observed, they (monoliths of Dimapur) "must represent a rather specialised development of a phallic ancestor cult typical in Assam..."\textsuperscript{24} The Kacharis regard Siva (Bathow) as their creator and great father, and in the same spirit they respect their ancestors created by him. Siva is also worshipped through his emblem, the sizu (Euphorbia) plant as referred before.

Sanskrit language also came to occupy a place of honour in the royal courts of the Hedambial Kachari kings. Most of their inscriptions and coins were issued in that language. The influence of Aryan Hindu culture was deeprooted in the minds and imaginations of the Kachari masses of the North-Eastern India. Like the Hindus, the Dimasa Kacharis of the North Cachar hills cremate their dead bodies and retain the frontal bones, which they throw in a river or stream after Sraddha for the well being of the departed soul. The formal conversion of the Hedambial kings into the fold of Hinduism took place in 1790 A.D. as we have stated elsewhere. But their veneration to that religion was ancient. W.W. Hunter writes, many generations prior to their formal conversion high caste Brahmins were allowed to stay in the palaces of the kingdom with
dignity. The royal houses of Tippera and Koch Behar also belonged to the same ethnic stock of the Kacharis. But they were perfectly Hinduised. Apparently, Hinduism was responsible for the extinction of the traditional Kachari life pattern but proved its usefulness in another way. We have seen before that the mass culture of Eastern Bengal (present Bangladesh) was primarily Kachari in the pre-Muhamadan epoch. It became Muhamadan in the next stage because of the absence of Hinduised tribal kings in the Muhamadan age. Whereas in Tippera and in Koch Behar the Hinduised Kachari dynasties provided an effective check to the Islamisation of the masses, by their active patronage to Hindu religion and culture. At present the tribals of Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya are mostly Christian in religion, but the Kachari masses of the North East are still firm to Hinduism, inspite of tireless efforts of the Christian missionaries, although many of them have not yet formally adopted Hinduism. Thus the influence of Aryan Hindu culture upon Kachari mind was deeprooted.

The heritage of India, the teachings of the sages left their marks in every nook and corner of the vast land from lapes of good hope to Kashmir in the North and from Punjab in the west to Burma in the East. No wonder the Kacharis similarly felt urge to adopt and assimilate themselves with the mainstream of India culture which was Hinduism. The Bodo Kacharis of the Brahmaputra valley already had tasted the blessings of Hinduism in the post
christian era and now the turn of others came by successive waves. The Barman Kacharis of the district of Cachar, Hejongs, Sonowal Kacharis and a fair number of Chutiyas and Rabhas are now perfectly Hinduised in culture. The Barmans observe similar systems like the Hindus in marriages, diets and in penerals. The Sonowal Kacharis are perfectly like Assamese Hindus in speech. Among the Rabha the Rangdania and the Pati Rabhas have adopted Hindu culture. The two sections of the Hajongs - Paramarthis and Byabaharis are more or less Hinduised. The Paramarthis are Vaisnavites while the Byabaharis are Saktas.

Influence of Aryan Linguistic groups - Assamese and Bengalee -

The evolution of Assamese culture as it stands to day is largely owing to the parental base provided to it by the Indo-Mongoloid Kacharis; but as soon as the formation of the Assamese speaking people with a distinct culture of their own under and Aryan setting was on, the Kacharis failed to remain aloof. The Great Reformer Sankaradeva sought to preach the gospel of Vaisnavism among the animist Kacharis and other tribals in order to build up a universal religion to Eastern India. His attempt was successful partially - Large number of Kacharis embraced the creed of Sankara Deva, apparently to upgrade themselves in caste status. These Kacharis now a days are known as 'Soronla Kacharis', i.e. devoted to the 'Eko Sarana Dharma' of Sri Sankara Deva. The Soronias differ
materially from the animist Kacharis. They use Assamese-Ahom titles viz. Das, Chowdhury, Deka, Soronia, Hazarika, Saikia, etc. Vaisnavism of the Assamese pattern had infused a spirit of revival among all sections of the Kacharis. During the reign of the Ahom monarch Gadadhar Singha (1681-96 A.D.) the Sonowal Kacharis of upper Assam had embraced Vaisnavism propagated by a saint Keshdeo Gosain by name.  

By stages, the advantages of Assamese culture began to be imitated by the intelligentsia of the Kachari masses in their day to day life. Assamese language became a major vehicle of expression of Kachari writers and poets and their ideas thus expressed through this language proved to be an effective mass media for those who genuinely feel the urge to know the heritage of the race. Not only among the Bodo Kacharis, Chutiyas and Sonowals or Rabhas of the Brahmaputra valley but also in the hills of North Cachar and in the plains of Cachar Assamese language had a place of honour among the masses as well as in the royal courts of the Hedambial kings, as we have referred it in Chapter VII under the heading of Language. 

Dut to the patronage of the Hedambial kings Bengalee culture attained a position of considerable status in the royal courts. The royal dynasty of Khaspur was converted into Hinduism in 1790 A.D. by the Bengalee priests. A large number of Dimasa animists also followed the example of the Raja and they embraced Hinduism; they are the Barman Kacharis of the present time. They had adopted many of the usages of their
Bengalee neighbours of Cachar. Living in close proximity to the Bengalee settlers these Kacharis of the plains of Cachar have developed vital differences with their counterparts of the hills. While in other parts of Assam the Kacharis celebrate and take part in Bihu festival along with the Assamese speaking communities, in Cachar the popularity of Bihu is gradually on the wane among the Barman Kacharis. This is due to the increasing influence of their Bengali neighbours. The Barman Kacharis have assimilated Bengali culture to such an extent that on the occasions of marriage they prefer Bengali usages instead of Traditional rites in majority cases. Mangala Charan, chaturthamangal, Bau Bhat, Ful Sajya, Fairajatra these Bengalee cultural ceremonies in marriages are found to be observed by them.

Influence of other tribes -

Matrilineal Khasis- dyatemgs (Jayantias) and the matriarchal Garos also left their indelible marks upon the Kachari society. We have seen before that in certain cases the Bodo Kacharis have recognised the inheritance rights of women and according to this law of inheritance the second husband comes to live with a widow of their first husband's family. It was an impact of the matriarchal tribes. The Rabhas of Goalpara were cent per cent matriarchal in the by gone days. Thus according to the ancient system of Rabha marriage known as "Kelang Dangi Nem" the groom had to reside in the
house of the bride after marriage. Although the groom had a position of status and power in his bride's house he had no right on the properties which entirely belonged to the bride. It was a clear evidence of matriarchal influence.

Secondly, the Khasis worship their female ancestress Ka-law-bei with great respect and in her honour they had raised stone monoliths in the hills. The Kacharis although have a patriarchal tendency seemed to have imitated this usage from the Khasis. It is possible that the 'V' shaped stone monoliths erected by the Hedambial Kachari kings and Dimapur and Kasomari are the symbols of female compliment, i.e., female gerative organ. In the Chapter VII we have pinpointed to the sketch of a female breast sign inscribed on a pillar at Kasomari near Dimapur. Dr. H. Baren, in his Gazetteer of Nagaland, Kohima district, says, the 'V' shaped monoliths of Dimapur have their parallels in the Angami villages and these are female symbols. Does all these findings suggest that there was a female ancestress among the Kacharis? The answer to this query is available in one Garo tradition. The Garos believe that the Kacharis of western Assam had a female ancestress and her name was Kingsari Kangsari, who married a slave of a Garo chief of Jugighopa (Goalpara). The Dimasa Kacharis of the south are known as Hedambial because their ruling dynasty is said to have descended from Hidimba Raksasi wife of the epic hero Bhima. Hidimba Raksasi was an ancestress of the Dimasas who shared her status with Bhima after marriage.
The links between the Kacharis and the various matriarchal tribes of the North-East were deep rooted. For example, the Lalung section of the Kacharis spent many years in the Synteng (Jayantia) country and even to day such influence is detectable in their religious life. They worship a deity known as Majha Gosain. Majha Gosain was possibly a Jaintia king of the sixteenth century A.D. 40

Kacharis of the western tract of Assam and Northern Bengal also assimilated certain usages of Nepali life pattern. Thus the popularity of the Tihar festival among them was evidently due to the influence of Nepali culture. 41

Tea-garden labourers who had flocked into the tea estates of Northern Bengal and Assam from the tribes of Orissa and Chota Nagpur also had vitally influenced the life pattern of the Kacharis of the Brahmaputra valley and North Bengal. In many places of the Brahmaputra valley the Kacharis now prefer to work as labourers in tea factories and this process had started early in this century. 42 Kachari modes of amusements also seem to have borrowed certain aspects from the tribes of Chhota Nagpur and Orissa. Say for example the musical instruments viz. Madal (a drum) and Cephong (flute) used by the Kacharis of the Brahmaputra valley are possible introduced after the manner of these tribes.

The impact of the Naga tribes upon the socio-cultural lives of the Kacharis is still more striking and one will fail to appreciate the manifold facets of Kachari history without a
reference to the Nagas of their neighbourhood. The Kacha Nagas and Dimasa Kacharis had cultural contacts since very early times on grounds of a common ancestry; the Semas too had blood relations with the Kacharis possibly through marital ties. When the Hedambial Kacharis were ruling in Dimapur the Kachas and Angamis came to constant touches with the Kachari masses and their ruling houses. It is evident from the fact that the Kacha Nagas and the Angami folk culture confirm their association with Dhima, the epic hero, whom the Kacharis regard as their ancestor. Naga culture had enjoyed a steady flow in the Hedambial capitals of Dimapur and Maibong through various medias. In the Chapter VIII we have mentioned that the Nagas had easy access to the markets of Dimapur and Maibong for purposes of material trade and commerce. Besides, Naga princesses were possibly kept as consorts and wives in the royal houses of Maibong who took much pains to foster Naga ideals in palace culture. Consequently Naga dress pattern, dances etc. began to be appreciated by the Kacharis. A stone sculpture found at Maibong in the twenties of this century furnishes interesting informations in this regard. The dress pattern of the sculptured figures probably a royal sentry bear striking similarities with the costumes of the Konyak Nagas. A study of Dimasa Kachari dances also help us to suggest the deep influence of the Nagas on the cultural lives of the Kacharis. One particular war Dance of the Dimasas is known as Baimagam. In Baimagam dance two groups of boys take part and stage a mock fight. One group wear Naga war costumes and the other Dimasa war costumes with their
respective traditional war weapons. In the mock fight that followed the Dimasa warriors come out victorious over the Nagas. Tradition says this dance refers to an ancient battle that took place between the Dimasa and Nagas in the neighbourhood of the Semkhor village in the N.C.hills. We have mentioned before about the similarities between the Angami memorial posts and the 'V' shaped pillars of Dimapur. There is one more similar influence of the Nagas has recently arrested our attention. It was customary for the Nagas to hoist the severed heads of their enemies on fall poles of bamboo. At least in one monolith of Dimapur there is a human head clearly distinguishable, and it is suggestive of the imitation of the Nagas usage of hoisting the human skulls on poles. Pending more discussions on other aspects of Naga culture upon the Kacharis we propose to throw a little light on the influence of the Manipuris.

In the plains of Cachar a steady flow of Manipur culture infiltrated through the patronage of the last few kings of the Hedambials. Some Hedambial kings had Manipuri wives as we have seen before and these princesses of Manipur brought with them their own ideals and taste in the Kachari capital. Manipuri settlements grew up in Cachar on the wake of the Burmese occupation. Manipuri dances folk culture and artistry were renowned in the North East India in those days. In Cachar too, Manipuri villages soon overshadowed the traditional Kachari dance patterns and folk songs which were usually dull and monotonous to the spectators. Kachari kings learnt to appreciate the
colourful Manipuri dances and festivals. Ras Purnima, Jhulan Jatra, Holi these festivals were introduced during the times of Krishna Chandra (c. 1790-1813 A.D.) & G.C. (1813-1830 A.D.). Govinda Chandra himself composed songs on Rasa Lila which were beautiful and popular to all. The Barman Kacharis and the Dimasas of Cachar still enjoy the Rasa Lila and Holi festivals with enthusiasm. Manipuris being late converts to Hinduism stood only for the superficial beauties of Hinduism and therefore in their culture attractive sided of Hindu mythical themes predominated throughout and this was the secret of the wide popularity of their dance dramas.

Ahom and Koch Influence:

The Ahoms influenced the Kacharis politically as well as culturally. It is possible that the diplomatic services of the Hedambial Kacharis was a replica of that of the Ahoms. The Hedambial courts of Dimapur, Maibong and Khaspur no doubt had their diplomatic departments since early times but the service became modified with the advent of the Ahoms. Exchanges of envoys between the two kingdoms at times of war and peace was a regular feature and consequently the Hedambial diplomatic service began to accommodate more and more advanced norms in a competitive spirit as testified by illuminating descriptions of the Ahom Duranjis. In upper Assam the Chutiyas felt the heavy cultural impact of the Ahom conquerors. As part of their far-sighted diplomacy the Ahoms brought a large number of Chutiyas.
felt the heavy cultural impact of the Ahom conquerors. As part of their far-sighted diplomacy the Ahoms brought a large number of Chutiyas into their own fold by giving them Ahom social ranks and prospects of matrimonial gains and that it was successful is evident from the emergence of a new class among the Chutiyas known by the term Ahom Chutiya who had adopted Ahom customs and manners in their socio-cultural lives in strange contrasts to the animists. The best gift of the Ahoms to the Indian culture was their love for the heritage of India - the Hindu culture and religion which took its birth far away from the land of blue mountains of the North-East. Dynasties and kingdoms of India fell before the Muhammedan invaders one after another but the Ahoms proved themselves as a formidable champion of Hinduism in the Eastern India. From 1228 A.D. to the beginning of the nineteenth century Assam was the only part of India where our heritage and culture survived triumphantly in the midst of misfortunes and political disorders which crept in due to intentional provocations of fortune seekers in this ancient land. The Kacharlis failed to remain aloof from this general of the Ahom conquerors. Inspite of their internal misunderstanding and botheresses, the tribels of Assam and even the Kacharlis rallied behind the Ahoms and successfully foiled the designs of Mirjumla in the historic battle of Saraighat. In Assam we have no evidence to show that there was Islamisation of the tribels; where as in Eastern Bengal (Bangladesh) the tribels were forced to embrace Islam tradition which we have referred elsewhere in the present thesis.
With a little variation there was an amount of Koch influence upon the Kacharlis. It is a fact that the term 'Koch' is nothing but a caste label of various tribal converts into Hinduism among whom the Kacharlis were prominent. But as soon as the formation of the Koch tribe was on and they emerged as a new political force in the Eastern India, the Kacharlis began to hold them in high regard, The celebrated Koch general Chila Rai or Sila Rai, brother of Nara Narayan became a hero of the Kacharlis and attained the status of a deity in certain Kachari localities of western Assam. Sidney Endle rightly observed, "As a soldier and commander this man (Sila Rai) seems to have been the foremost captain of his time in North-East India, and his striking personality would seem so to have impressed the minds and imaginations of his contemporaries as to lead to his apotheosis after death". The Koches, like the Ahoms were great champions of Hinduism in the Eastern India. The Muhamedan conquest of Eastern India could have ruined the prospects of Hinduism in the North Bengal, but for the emergence of a formidable Koch dynasty North Bengal was saved from Islamisation considerably. Consequently, the Kachari tribes, threw their allegiance to the Koch dynasty instead of the Muhamedans, unlike Eastern Bengal. Most of the Rajbansis and Koches of the area were Kacharlis in the fifteenth century A.D., and those who preferred to continue with their traditional animistic faiths thus remained unmolested by the Muhamedans. Muhamedan conquerors left no stone unturned to purchase the loyalty of the animistic Kacharlis but the successes the obtained were considerably poorer, Politically they won over
the Kachari tribes of North Bengal and western Assam. Thus, the Rabha warriors rendered military aids to Mirza Nathan in his Eastern Campaigns as we have referred in the Chapter V. In a subsequent epoch Bakhtiyar also got assistance from another Kachari Chief Ali Mech by name, the later needless to say was a convert to Islam. Still, the impact of Islam was not deeprooted among the masses. It was due to the influences of the Koches in the west and to Assam in the East.

Muhamedan influences-

By far, the influence of the Muhamedans was most effective among the Kacharlis of Eastern Bengal. We have seen before that in the Eastern Bengal there were Hinduised Kachari dynasties, viz. the kingdoms of Pattikera, Harikola and Sylhet. Effects of Hinduism upon the masses had only a skin deep value, and the Kacharis remained animistic for several centuries possibly up to the eighth century A.D. By the eighth century A.D. caste Hindu settlement grew up in Eastern Bengal districts of Bogra, Maimensing, Comilla and Sylhet. They gained power and strength through the patronage of various ruling dynasties of Eastern Bengal and Assam. The simple animist mass culture thenceforth found it difficult to adjust their life pattern with this advanced alien culture. The caste Hindus discouraged remarriages of widows and imposed caste system causing much inconvenience to the original masses. The simplicity of the Islamic creed in front of the complications
of the Puranic and Tantrik Hinduism, combined with its prestige as the faith of a powerful and conquering community, gave it an initial advantage.\textsuperscript{54} The net result is that the Kachari masses of the districts of Bogra, Maimensingh, Comilla, Rangpur, now in Bangladesh opted the Islamic creed. The Hedembial kings of Dimapur invited Muslim artisans from Bengal for brick constructions. The carved between and pointed arches of the gateway of Dimapur fort invariably point out a Muslim architectural style. On the carved betelment and the pointed arches of the gateway, art critic Percy Brown says, it is "Identical with mosque fronts of Gaur and Pandua."\textsuperscript{55} In Assam the Kachari masses refused to embrace Islam, but imitated certain of its usages - Thus in the Garja Puja, one Muslim idol 'Pir Sahib' (Muslim monk) is worshipped by the Bodo Kacharis in some places. Similarly during the Kherai festival another Muslim idol 'Naban Badshah' has his altar and the priests sacrifice a chicken in his honour uttering "Mismillah."\textsuperscript{56} In the Northern Bengal and Goalpara Bamboo festival is popular among the Kacharis celebrated usually in the month of Chaitra each year. In this regard E.T. Dalton's observation is quite striking and he says, "On this occasion thirteen men carry as many forty bamboo poles decorated with clothing, and having a yak's tail at the head. It is very strange that the low Mussalmans of Chota Nagpur called Jholas, etc. have a festival which they celebrate in Chaith, the most singular part of which is the exhibition of long bamboo poles decorated in a precisely similar manner."\textsuperscript{57} In the fourteenth century A.D. Shah Jalal conquered Sylhet and since then Islamic influence also touched the neighbouring regions of Cachar and
N.C. hills, the principalities of the Hedambial Kachari kings. Constant with the Muhamedans produced remaining of the places names of Cachar. The modern names of Karimganj, Bodarpur, (all in Cachar) are probably of Muhamedan origin named even during the last day of the Hedambial kings who were Hinduised. More investigations in this regard will surely unfold more hidden facts.
REFERENCE

1. In the Chapter II Sanskritisation (i.e., Aryanisation) has been narrated.
2. My observation.
3. Referred in the Chapter VII.F.N.
4. Referred in F.N. 172 of Chapter VII.
5. Referred in F.N. 22 of Chapter VII.
8. Chinese of the Valleys of Hoang Ho and Yang Tse Kiang were hardworking peasants in agricultural fields. Cc. p. 139.
12. Ibid p. Ibid.
13. Ibid p. Ibid.
15. KJP p. 7.
22. Ibid 31; 6 Ekonochettaringo Adhyaya
23. MV and IVC Vol. I. p. 60.
25. SAS Vol. II. P. 40.
26. Allive patrons of Hinduism the Koch kings were the builders of the Kamakhya temple in Gauhati upon its old rites, temple of Kamateswari in Koch Debar etc. vide D.R.V. pp. 42, 109-113. The attachment of the Tippera kings to Hinduism is evident from the emblems and legends of the coins and other archaeological remains Vide Coin. T. pp. 13-42.
27. ADG UM of NCH p. 71.
29. Ibid p.63.
31. AJ pp.70-78.

32. Of such writers Mohinimohon Brahma, Sonaram Thaosen, Gagan Chandra Sonowal, Bishnuprasad Rabha, Bhabendra Narzi, are worthmentioning in addition to a large number of story, novel writers, and poets.

34. Dimasa p.68.
35. Ibid p.58.
39. Garos p.16.
40. JARS Vol.XVIII.1968. pp 70-73; and HOA p.419. However, there is no well founded that Majha Gosain the king of the Jayantias and the deity of the Lalungs are identical. This is a guess work.
41. Referred in Chapter I. F.Note 49.
43. Sema Naga p.379.
44. Angami p.13.
45. JASB. New Series Vol.XX 1924. pp 143-147.
46. DAO p.119.
48. Dimasa p.68.

49. The Ahom diplomatic service was of highest standard in the Eastern India. We know nothing about the diplomatic services of the Kachari prior to the advent of the Ahoms the later had accomodated advanced norms in their foreign and diplomatic serves. Contemporary letters throw valuable hight in this regard vide T.B. pp.139-142.
55. IA(IS)p.39. 56. EKSAS pp 234, 249. 57. DEOB p.86.