CHAPTER II

2.00 THE MISHING PEOPLE AND THEIR ORIGIN:

2.1 Assam a panoramic land of Green valley and Blue hills with a network of majestic rivers and streams is a very rich state of India for its various natural resources along with a large number of colourful tribes and sub-tribes, who practically identify as Assamese. The land covers an area of 78,523.0 Sq. km. and the population goes upto 146,25,152. The mighty Brahmaputra, like the backbone in human anatomy flows through the entire length of the state. The river is fed by a good number of tributaries flowing from the hills covered both sides of the valley. The Subansiri river a prominent tributary of it flows from the upper water of the Himalayan ranges and both sides of this river is considered as home of the Mishing tribe. Like the Mishings many other Tibeto-Burman and Sino-Tibetan speaking tribes (Mongoloids) have formed a special ethnic identity of the population of Assam since time immemorials. All such tribes of the region carrying with its diverse ethnic elements and cultures have came to this part of the country and contributed to the formation and enhancement of the local culture through the centuries.

2.2 The Mishings occupies an important place in Assam culture. It is most interesting that the tribe was originally known as 'miri'. The term 'miri' is popularly used among the non-Mishings and also inserted in the list of scheduled tribes in Indian constitution.

The word 'miri' originates from the word 'mirik' which is a combination of two words of 'mi' and 'rik' which mean 'man' and 'offspring' i.e. 'offspring of man'. According to the traditional belief they consider themselves as descendants of abo-tani, the first man of human beings.

G.A. Grierson\(^2\) tries to show the derivation of miri from mru a tribe living in the Arakan region of Burma. Further he explains as follows:

"The 'mru' tribe has perhaps branched off from the Burmese branch of the Tibeto-Burman family at a very early date, before the modern groups such as Kodos, Nagas, Kukis and Chinas has developed. They were perhaps the fore-runners of the great Burmese invasion of further India. The Arakanese tradition that the 'mrus' were settled in Arakan before the Mayamma (Burmese)."

At present the tribe vehemently oppose to use the term miri as it is a corrupt pronunciation of the word mirui. Further they explain that the word mirui is an ambiguous term denoting the socio-religious functions prevailed in Abor Hills and never used in their own community. Therefore they prefer to use Mishing to indicate the tribe as well as their tongue.

2.3 There are quite a good number of interpretation regarding the term miri. These are enumerated below:

2.3.1 Some elderly persons of the tribe want to show its development as a combination of mi 'person' + ri 'hill i.e. hill man or man dwelling in hilly region. According to their popular belief the tribe originally migrated to the plains of Assam from hills.

2.3.2 Another view is that the word miri is an offshoot of mṛgaya, which links up with the hunting behaviour of the tribe. No doubt the tribe is very fond of hunting various wild animals, birds etc. Supporting this derivation Alexander Mackenzie has further stated as below:

"The abors and Miris coming originally from the same habitat are still so alike in all material respect as to warrant us in calling their earlier and late migration of the same tribe, the Abors as the last comers retaining of their pristine savagery and hardihood, while the Miris have been to some extent influenced by free association with the plains and the settled habits of civilization. Under the Assam Government, the Miris acted as 'go-between' of the Abors and the traders of Assam."

According to Dr. Nomalchandra Pegu the tribe migrated from the place known as Mungri-Mungram. The Ahom kings identify these


migrated people as miri. Ofeoures Sarbananda Rajkumar explains in a different way; he states that the tribe was called by the Ahoms as kha-kang-lai or pangdin.

Tarunchandra Pamegam, another Mishing scholar opines that the term mishing is a formation of two words: mi 'man' and asi 'water'. Thus he wants to explain the meaning of Mishing as the people live on the river bank or the people live on river. The Mishing population is really available on such location.

Another explanation of the term 'Mishing' indicates mi 'man' and ishing 'jungle' i.e.; jungle dwellers. Their migration from original place corroborates this explanation.

All these views regarding origin of the term miri or mishing are based on hypothesis, which have got no scientific etymology. All these are based on popular beliefs i.e. folk etymology. But most of the mishing population widely accept the interpretation of Pamegam. According to him mishing is a contaminated form of mi 'man' and yashing 'white/pure' people.

2.3.3 There is a tendency to thinking themselves as superior and pure. So the miris introduced themselves as mishing, a conjunct form of mi-yasing; me 'man' and yasing 'white and pure' people. Other people are called 'mipag' which stand for impure man.

5. Ibid. P.4.
2.3.4 British historian E. Gait mentioned the *miri* tribes as go-between, meaning 'communicator'. L. Devi asserted that the term *miri* signifying 'a go between' originated from this circumstances. British rulers are also acted the *miris* as communicator to maintain the peaceful relation between hills and plains. "The unique position such enjoyed by them at the beginning of the British rule impressed the English writer naturally and such they struck a new meaning of the term *miri* as 'go between'. However they did not offer any suggestion as to the origin of the word *miri* itself. J.F. Needham, political officer of Sadiya frontier tract, 1886, gave a suggestion that *mishing* means *ashing* 'man' and is identical with *nyi-shing* which name the Daphlas use to denote themselves.

2.3.5 The *mishing* very often introduced themselves as *tani ami, mishing ami, tani* and so on and descendent of *abotani*. *Abatani* is the first man on the earth and *ami* means 'man' or 'offspring'. They called themselves as descendent of the first man *abotani*. Some of the local mishing authorities suggested the term *mishing* derives from *ami* 'man' + *ansing* 'peace loving' i.e. peace loving people. The *mishings* are generally peaceloving people and they migrated from *Abor* hills only to save themselves from the disturbance of the *Abors*.

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2.3.6 Mishing legend refers that the word *mishing* derived from *dashing*. Pedongane 'mother pedong' gave birth namely to *de-pang, de-mi, de-sing, de-bang* and so on. *De-sing* gave birth to the *mishing*, so this name.

2.4.1 In the contexts of the term *miri* or *mishing* dealing with the etymology of tribe names, it may noted that several tribes have two sets of names - a popular name by which the tribe is known by its neighbours and a name which the tribe used to identify itself. Both types of names generally refer to certain characteristics or qualities of a given tribe. There are also some identification or title which areresented as uncomplimentary. There are also certain local terms which refers their identity in relation to the geographical and ecological settings in which they live. It is significant that in certain tribes, they derive more than one etymological meaning of their tribe name. The different name or names are acceptable to the different section of the same tribe. Many of the tribal society have an image of their glorious past and it follows some particular nomenclature behind a tribe. Physical and social characteristics also help to form a new identity. The worship of special deities gave birth to a new identity of any tribe. Tribes believed to have come from a particular region or through a particular route and these have got associated with their names. A number of tribes have legends and traditions to explain their origin. These legends and traditions either attribute their origin to some supernatural circumstances or derived it from supernatural or mythological character.
2.4.2 The above factors are mostly applicable to the meaning and derivation of the term *miri* and *mishing*. The whole probabilities of the meaning behind the term *miri* and *mishing* as expressed by the different authorities. It is clear that either *miri* or the *mishing* denotes that particular tribe who came from hills to the plains of Assam living their pristine savagery and hardihood, occupying the riverine areas and leaving peacefully with Assamese society through cultural give and take.

2.5.0 ORIGIN, MIGRATION AND PRESENT POSITION:

2.5.1 The Mishings are till identified as *miris* in Indian constitution. But the tribe consider the term *miri* as derogatory one and so they call themselves as *mishings*. The Mishings belong to the North-Assam section of Tibeto-Burman family originated from great Mongoloid race.

2.5.2 The tribes of North-Assam section called themselves collectively as *tani* or *ami* group. The *tanis* or the *amis* are variously known to other peoples as the *Mishings, Minyongs, Padams, Gallongs, nishis, Hill-Miris, Apatanis* etc. The speech and traditions of these tribes are almost the same. This tribes of North-Assam section have closely connected with various human races from time immemorials and contributed to the evolution of common culture. They have no written historical traditions excepting disconnected oral traditions. Therefore, the history of their early period remains obscure. The various comments and observations made by the different authorities are only the source for reconstructing their past.
2.5.3 This Tani groups or the North-Assam section is considered as the early group of human races migrating to the North-Eastern region of India in the past. So far the ethnologist's records concern, the tribes of North-Assam section are closely connected with each other.

"The Akas and the Daflas are according to ethnologists, one in race with each other and with the tribes of Abors and Miris inhabiting the hills north of Lakhimpur ...... coming no doubt originally from the same habitat, they are still alike in all material respects as to warrant us in calling them the earlier and later migrations of the same tribe, the Abors as the last comers, retaining more pristine savagery and hardihood, while the Miris have been to some extent influenced by free association with the plains and the settled habits of civilization".

2.5.4 According to G.A. Grierson:

"The Mishing formed a fraction of Tibeto-Burman speakers of greater Sino-Tibetan groups. Following the courses of the Brahmaputras, Sindwin, Irrawaddi, Salwin, Mekong and Menam, and the mountain passes of Assam and Burma these people entered Assam and drove away its original Monkhmer into different regions".

2.5.5 Besides some parts in Nepal and Tibet, the new comers occupied regions of the Himalayan foothills of Assam and gradually extended even to the plains along the banks of the Brahmaputra.

According to Professor Chatterje13

"The North-Assam tribes of the Abors and, Akas, Daflas and Miris and Mishmis appears to have come later and to have established themselves in the mountains to the North of the Brahmaputra plains already in occupation of the Bodos"

Thus it is believed that the north-Assam tribes settled in their present habitats since the beginning of the Christian era.

2.5.6 In the early Aryan literature contains a fragmentary evidences regarding Mongoloids and Aryan contact in the different part of this country and the location of north-Eastern tribes.

Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya14 compiled the remarks of different authorities on Kirata as thus;

"The Eastern division of India which according to puranas was the habitat of the tribes living to the east of Kasi. this Eastern division devided into three well defined zones, the land of Kiratas comprising the present Assam."


14. Chattopadhaya, S :1973: Racial affinities of Early North Indian Tribes, P.70 cf. W.Kirfel, Die Kosmographie der Inder, 12 where Kasi is included within the central division or Madhyadesa.
H.H. Risley denotes those Kirata as Mongoloid group. "The Kiratas lived to the East of Kumaridvipa" which is identical with Bharatavarsha. Ptolemy locates the Kirrhadai just to the east of India intra-Gangem which shows that it was the present Assam. "The Mahabharata inform us that Bhagadatta king of Pragjyotisha (Kamrupa) went with Kiratas and cinas to the battle field of Kurukshetra." Further Manu regards the Kiratas as Kshetriyas identifying their status as sudras.

2.5.7 The above mentioned Kiratas are considered as the mishings and other tribes of North-Eastern India. Aryan also used designate these non-Aryans as Dasyu, Danava, Asura, Mleccha etc. It is now -

"the consensus of opinion among the indologists that Insanakrit, the term Kirata which is found for the first time, indicated the wild non-Aryan tribes living in the mountains, particularly the Himalayas and in the North-Eastern areas of India, who were Mongoloid in origin."

The Vedas mentioned a Kirata to be a cave dweller.

Thus Prof. Chatterji has elaborately discussed about the origin of the Kiratas22 and has also traced out the connection of the Mishings with these Kiratas.

2.5.8 Some old records mention that the kiratas surrounded the land of Pragjyotisha23 which physically and culturally formed as veritable tigerman24, flat nosed and extended themselves upto Bengal25. In the connection of kirata Tolemy mentioned a tribe by name Asmeraoei which appears to have been identical with the miri or the mishings26.

Dalton27 described in a convincing way that the miris are physically well build with five muscular figures and have a close resemblance with the Abars possessing strange dress and appearance, well equipped with bow and arrow and of yellow Mongolian type.

22. Ibid. P. 27, 29, 30.
24. Chatterji. ibid, P.31 cf. Ramayana (Kiskindha kanda).
Munsi Muhammed Quazim in his 'Alamgirnama' of 18th century, marking these hill tribes as red and white in colour. 'Cina-kiratas produced gems of various sort, sandal wood, aqua-allo-chum, cloths, pearls and blankets, gold, silver and lapislazuli'. The gold like yellow skin colour of the kiratas are interesting and some tribes of North-Eastern region collected gold from river Subansiri which is like backbone of the Mishing society since long time back. The term 'Subansiri' is sanskritised one, Mishing pronounced as abanari. The Mishing, who are proficient in weaving colourful cloths, especially the endi cloth and who till very recent times engaged themselves in trade between hills and plains and also between India and China, had been certainly hill dwellers in the region between the valley of Assam and hilly tracts of Himalayas and formed a fraction of the Indo-Mongoloids.

The chinese monk Hiuen-Tsang wanted to link up a relation of the chinese with the Mishing of North-East of ancient Kumarupa. If that was true we may assume that the Mishing formed a trading class between India and China through the North-Eastern hilly routes and they used to inhabiting in the hills till the time of Hiuen-Tsang i.e. 630-643 A.D. However a few references depicted in the writings of Sankardeva and Madhabdeva

29. Chatterji, S.K. loc.cit. P.33
witnessed that the Miris (Mishings) came to be known as a distinct tribe since the beginning of the 16th century.

The archaeological evidences have also thrown some lights on the background of the North-Assam tribes. A.H.Dani has rightly remarked as follows:

"Some neo-lithic tools made of local rocks and bone have been discovered at Sadiya, Abor hills and Mishmi hills, associated with the agricultural and slaying purpose. Thus has the closest link with the types of tools known from yunan. The prolific use of jadeite further strengthened the link with yunan of chinese province."

He further opines:

"the analysis of tools suggests that the neolithic cultures in Assam, as represented by this stone tools are of late origin. The earliest possible date is linked us with the chronology of the developed neoliths in the centuris of South-East Asia and South-china."

2.5.9 Thus it appears that the North-Assam tribe have lately migrated from the chinese province of yunan and settled in their present habitats.

2.5.10 The origin of the north-Assam tribe including the Mishing required a comprehensive discussion from the


33. ibid. P.77.
Anthropological viewpoints. According to Father Krik\textsuperscript{34}, the Adi physical features are characterised by broad and beardless face, black hair and eyes, brown skin colour, standing of the eyes with nose at right angles, flat forehead, short nose somewhat prominent cheek bones and moderate stature, while Col. Waddell\textsuperscript{35} describes the Mishmis as 'physically smaller and less roughly featured than the representative physical characteristics of other North-Assam tribes'. Another ethnologist Col. Dalton\textsuperscript{36} have made some remarkable opinions on the Abor, Aka and Miri as Tibetanstock. According to him 'the Mishings are of yellow Mongolian types, tall and powerfull framed.

2.5.11 Col. Waddell\textsuperscript{37} maintains that the Mishing people are in a transitional stage from the maternal to the paternal. They retain survival of the maternal stage; but appear only recently to have adopted the paternal. As if to emphasise the change and to show the father has direct relation to his child, the father is represented as a second mother and goes through the fiction of a mock child birth, the so-called \textit{Couvade}. He lies in bed for forty days after the birth of his child and during this period he is fed as an invalid. This peculiar customs have already lost

\textsuperscript{34} Krik, N.M :1913: \textit{Account of an expedition among the Abors in 1853}, \textit{Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal} Vol. X, February.


\textsuperscript{36} Dalton, E.T. :1978: \textit{Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal}, Group 1, Section 5(2).

\textsuperscript{37} Waddell, L.A; ibid, P.3.
from the Mishing society. Perhaps the mishing have adopted this custom in the long past from some matriarchal Austric family of South-East Asia.

2.5.12 Linguistic study is one of the most factors on the origin and migration of North-Assam tribes. Dr. G.A. Grierson studied the **Mishings, Mishmis, Akas, Daflas, Adis, Apatanis** in details and classify them into one unit under the broad group of 'North-Assam' of the Tibeto-Burman branch of Sino-Tibetan language family. Laying more stress on his linguistic study, Grierson points out that the North-Assam branch of language a connecting link of the Tibetans and the Himalayan dialects with that of the Kuki-chin, bodo-Naga and Kachin groups. He thus observes the home of the North-Assam tribes as a kind of back-water. The eddis of the various waves of Tibeto-Burman immigration have swept over it and left their stamp on the dialects. In this context, as a North-Assam tribe the Mishing and the Tibetan linguistic similarity appears as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tibetan</th>
<th>meaning</th>
<th>Mishing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>mi</em></td>
<td>'man'</td>
<td><em>ami</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lak</em></td>
<td>'hand'</td>
<td><em>alak</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>mik</em></td>
<td>'eye'</td>
<td><em>amik</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ssi/si</em></td>
<td>'water'</td>
<td><em>asi</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lam</em></td>
<td>'route'</td>
<td><em>lamtc.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.13 This linguistic impression, that they carried with them to their present habitats. North-Assam tribes intermixed with various branches of the Tibeto-Burman language speakers.
Dr. Grierson traced on the basis of his linguistic analysis, the migration of the Sino-Tibetan language speakers in three successive waves to this part of the country.  

Thus the North-Assam tribes migrated and settled in their present position since the beginning of the Christian era. They belong to the Mongoloid race of mankind whose ancient civilization flourished in Prehistoric times in the upper courses of the yangtse-kiang and the Hoang-Ho river of North-Western China. The scholars have pointed out different routes of their migration to the present habitation. G.A. Grierson simply stated that the Mishmis of North-Assam tribes 'made their own way at different periods into the hills overlooking the Assam valley from the north' but he did not clarify about the exact migration route. Another scholar B.S. Guha stated that:

"the North-Assam tribes represent a separate type and must be regarded as different branch of that great Mongoloid race which entered from North Western China, and whose main body moved away towards Indonesia leaving a sidestream in the Assam Hills, such as that represented by the Miri, Bodo and Naga."

like Grierson he also did not stated about the route of migration.

38. *Impirical Gazetters of India*, Indian Empire, 1901, Vol. 1, Chapter - VII.
2.5.14 According to P.C.Choudhury*1 the Alpines and Mongoloids entered into Assam through four different routes as stated below:

1. The mountain passes of Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan.
2. The routes through the Gengatic valley and the Brahmaputra river from west words.
3. By sea through the bay of Bengal and Burma.
4. The passes of Assam and Burma.

Thus, Mongoloids came through the North-Eastern and southern routes of Assam via Burma while another wave of Tibeto-Burmans came from the North comprising the Akas, Mishmis, Garos, Mikirs, Kacharis etc. Similarly Prof. Chatterjee claims that the Tibeto-Burman groups appear to have found an area of dispersion in some tracts to the east of Tibet and North-East of Assam (the present day chinese province of Sinkiang) from where they began to spread East and south. From this centre of dispersion, other Tibeto-Burman tribes took-up tract into India, along the Brahmaputra river west words, some of them formed homes in mountainous tracts to the North of Assam, where we find them in the Halipara Frontier tract to the East of Bhutan as Akas, Hrussos, Abors, Miris, and Daflas and in the Sadiya frontier tract to the East as Mishings*2. From Chatterjee's observation it is found that the North-Assam tribes entered India through the North-East corner of India from time to time in different waves of the Tibeto-Burman immigrants, somewhere in the chinese province of Sinkiang.


2.5.15 According to the beliefs of the Mishings the tribe is considered as the descendents of Sun God and they identify Donyi (=sun) as mother and Pollo (=moon) as father. Sonaram Panyang Kataki, an early Mishing writer has narrated all about such traditional beliefs and stories regarding the original habitat of the Miris, i.e. Mishings. According to him Abo-tani and Abo-taro were the earliest ancestors of the tribe. They live in a place called killing-kangey which is referred by the north-Assam tribes as Killing-lidum / Killing-litung / Teli-lidung and so on. Abo-taro lived in Regi-Regam with his children. The ancestors of the North-Assam tribes are supposed to have migrated to their present habitats from those places. Again the traditional stories prevailed in the societies of Apatani, Hill-Miri and Dafla their ancestors migrated from another place known as Suporig'o, an identical place name with Daporizo of the present Arunachal Pradesh or Riga or Reging mountain of Sianq dist. of Arunachal Pradesh. But there is no identical name of Killing-kangey.

2.5.16 Most of the oral traditions prevailed among the North-Assam tribes on their migration cannot give much authenticity. From physical features, their language and other cultural factors, they are identified with the aboriginal tribes of some province of south-China, and of Eastern Tibet. The Mishings,

Mishmis, Midis, Nyishing etc. from the North-Assam tribe quite akin to the name of the aboriginal tribes, such as Miao, Miaotse etc. of yunan, kwangsi and sinkiang of South-China.

2.5.17 The history of the North-Assam tribes are essentially the history of the Mishings, an allied tribe of this section. It is notable that the junction of all the north-Assam tribe are present Arunachal Pradesh, formerly known as North-East-Frontier Agency. History is silent about the migration of the Mishings to the Brahmaputra valley, leaving of their former abode, the hilly Arunachal. The Mishing does not possess any history of their own excepting a few oral folk song known as abang.

2.5.18 Some Govt. officials during British Rule have tried to point out the original home and migration of the Mishings. But all of them are based on some folk-tales and beliefs, and so, they do not carry any authenticity. There are some reference about the Mishings in the traditional chronicles known as Buranjies⁵. Col. Dalton and A.Mackenzie have also recorded their different observations regarding the 'Plain Miris'. According to Dalton:

> the Miris of the Plains are offshoots from the Abors and claims by that people as 'run away slaves'⁶, settled down in the valley of the river Dihong. In


Mackenzie has asserted Dalton's view. According to him:

'The Miris (Mishings) have been to some extent influenced by free association with the plain and settled habit of civilization'.

Thus it appears that the original home of the various groups of clans of the Mishings was a common place somewhere in the Tibeto-Chinese border. The term Mishing to identify miri was coined by L.A.Waddell and Stated as below:

'This vigorous Mongoloid tribe occupies the North bank of the Brahmaputra in lakhimpur upto the Dihong and extends upto the foot-hills, where they interpose on the offshoot 'Hill-Miri' between the Daflas in the west, and Abors in the East, with both of whom they claim distant kinship. They call themselves Mishing' but popularly known as Miris.

2.5.19 The Ahom chroniclers defined them as plain Miris and Hill-Miris as two group of one tribe i.e., Miri. But towards the end of the last century the plain Miris came in to lime light

47. Mackenzie, A:1884: North-East Frontier of Bengal, Chap. VI.
through the British explorers. Hamilton has described them as follows:

"The term 'Miri' is employed officially to describe them (Hill-Miri), it is undoubtedly a misnomer. It is necessary to emphasise the fact that a wide ethnic divergence distinguished the tribe of the Kamla-Subansiri region and the Miris of the plains, who are really only Abor emigrants from the Dihong valley." 49

2.5.20 Another important reference is available in Banhi, an Assamese monthly that the Miris of the plains had their origin in the Miri hills situated in the foot of Sonagiri Hills. The Sonagiri is actually a derivative of 'Suvarnagiri' the golden hills' in the mountains to the north of modern Sadiya. 50

The Abangs i.e. 'religious folk-song of the Mishing's give sufficient evidences/proofs of the Mishing habitat in Subansiri Vally. The term 'Regi-regam' mentioned in the Abangs is considered as highest dwelling place i.e. heaven, the present 'Rega hill' in the Arunachal Pradesh might be referred by 'Regi Regam'. Thus it appears that the Mishings have migrated from this high Rega hills.

2.5.21 Historical/documentary evidences are not available and in such situation legends and identical traditional stories are

only the supporting sources for reliable conclusion.

According to Panyang Kataki\(^2\) the Mishings are descendant of '\textit{Sedi}' and '\textit{Melo}', whose lineage has been described by Panyang Kataki as follow:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Sedi-Melo} \\
\text{Diling} \\
\text{litung} \\
\text{tuye} \\
\text{yepe} \\
\text{Pedong ane} \\
\hline
\text{Domi} & \text{Dopang} & \text{Dosing} & \text{Dobang} \\
\hline
\text{Mishing}
\end{array}
\]

2.5.22 According to a mythological story Miris are originated from '\textit{Sedi-Melo}'. Verrier Elwin\(^3\) has discussed the story vividly. He also pointed out that the offspring of \textit{Sedi-Melo} slowly migrated towards the west of Tibetan region and spread from hilly \textit{Subansiri} area to the \textit{Dibang} river in the East. The different Adi groups\(^\ast\), in this way spread whole through the present Arunachal Pradesh. The Mishings occupied an area upstream of the \textit{Siyang} river at \textit{Riu-Rega} near \textit{Tuting}\(^\ast\ast\), than at \textit{Karka Simang} area down and around the \textit{Dashing} pass\(^\ast\ast\). Thus it appears that the Mishings proceeded towards down of the foot

\(^3\) Elwin, V.:1958: \textit{Myths of NEFA of INDIA}, PP.103 ff.
\(^\ast\) Gallongs, Minyongs, Padams, Passis.
\(^\ast\ast\) Name of a place situated in Arunachal Pradesh.
hills, finally set foot on the plains of Assam and constituted the main mass of the present Mishing tribes.

2.5.23 The Mishings have migrated down the plains in different groups from time to time through different routes. The place 'Pegu' and the lake 'Pegu Siang' give some evidences about the migration of the Pagro Mishings while some other groups viz Mili, Kumbang, Patir etc. came down through Adi-Pasi and Mebo; Tayo-taye, Taid and the like came through Pangin-Pasighat; Pait, Paw etc. came along the route of 'Torne' and 'Jaging' hills. 'Shayang clan came down later from a place called Pesha-Shyang near Dambuk of Adi hills. Likewise other sections* of the Mishings took different routes. 'Dashing' the ultimate hilly place of the Mishings and the heridity line from 'Dashing' is identical and it seems that the tribe achieved their identity as Mishing during their hilly life.

2.5.24 The Mishings are an allied tribe of the Adis*. The following comparison between Adi and Mishing surnames proves their close connection with each other.

56. Ibid, P.31 - F.N. 15.

* Bori, Modi, Tayung, Taku.

* Adi tribes included Gallangs, Minyangs, Padams, Pasis, Panggis, Baris, Bakarâ, Siyams, Ashings, Pailibas, Tangams, Karkas, Milangs, Shimangs.
According to a popular belief of the tribes, they settled themselves at Dayit pumi near Sadiya after Dashing from where they have a contact with Chutias. This period they were very often disturbed by the Abors which compelled the Mishings to enter in to Chutia kingdom. In 1523 the Chutia king was defeated by Ahoms and Chargadeo Suhungmung put it under an Ahom ruler known as Sadiyakhowa gohain. During the Ahom invasion some of the Chutias took shelter in the Mishing villages and slowly created Chutiya miri group.

In the foot hill areas the Mishing had been disturbed by the Minyang Abars and some of the Mishing clans had sailing down along the Brahmaputra river. Though they were disgusted with the Abars(Adis) and left their place, the inter tribal relationship between Adis and the Mishings are still maintained and both of

58. Ibid, P. 37.
their material culture and language, in many cases similar or identical. The Adis addressed the Mishings as plain brother i.e. *Aying birrang* and the Mishing addressed the Adis as hill’s brother i.e. *Adi birrang* and both of them are prefer to introduce themselves as descendents of *Abotani* the inheritor of *Donyiposa*.

Occupying the upper region of the *Brahmaputra*, they settled besides the different tributaries and rivers flowing through Lakhimpur, Darrang, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Sadiya, Jonai, Dhemaji, Majuli, Balipara and Sonitpur of upper Assam.

2.5.26 The Mishings have been living amidst the Assamese society for the last several centuries preserving their own language and culture and for the national interest they introduced themselves as an integral part of the indigenous Assamese population.

2.5.27 The Mishing population in Assam have been recorded in the different Census reports. Before independence the Census reports of India shows the increasing Mishing population and after independence also it shows increasing nature which shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Kamrup</th>
<th>Darrang</th>
<th>Nowgong</th>
<th>Sibsagar</th>
<th>Lakhimpur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>13,291</td>
<td>4,825</td>
<td>54,818</td>
<td>84,948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>14,948</td>
<td>4,724</td>
<td>84,752</td>
<td>146,626</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1981, there was no census in India and the 1991 Census report not yet published.
Above figures, according to the Census reports shows that Lakhimpur dist, Darrang dist. and Sibsagar dist. are populous by the Mishings and the entire Mishings take a position just after the Bodos of Assam.