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The Hybrid in Rongbong Terang: a literary case study

Dhrijyoti Kalita
Research Scholar
M.A. (English)
Delhi University

Communities are more than mere social constructions. They have their own, pure individual narratives and never for once would they relent to dilute them. In this paper, I propose that although hybridization as a social act has always had been a perpetual process among the communities, yet its encounter at the inception especially in the postcolonial scene, is far from congenial, rather intimidating. "Diaspora, displacement, relocation", the fear of cultural invasion and overhaul and the endless strife for identity preservation constitute the hybrid. In this case, I examine two texts of Rongbong Terang written in Assamese, viz. 'Jak Herowa Pakshi' (lit. Trans. 'Birds of the lost flock') and 'Mirbin' respectively based on the Singhason Hill conflict between the Karbi and the Kuki communities and the counter-cultural struggles of the Longnit-Langparpan valley people of Karbi Anglong. My objective here is to posit how the hybrid, blended with modernity, has led to a subculture of disenchantment, despair, intense and bland turbulence and digression within a small community like the Karbis. These texts of Rongbong Terang portray nothing more than a "shared culture" of violence and dismay while evoking all throughout the postcolonial spirit of Anderson's "imagined communities". The question to be asked here is, "Who is representing whom and why?" as modernity also gatecrashes the wits of uncomplicated minds resulting into a severe imbalance in the traditional but peaceful narrative. This paper will thus showcase the amnesiac attitude of the hybrid and set a reminder for larger social coherence.

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Introduction

This paper only affixes to an uncertainty about the possibility of a 'third space' in the microcosmic yet multicultural sphere of the Karbi community inhabiting the Longnit-Langparpan valley and the Singhason Hills areas of Karbi Anglong[i] as seen through the two Assamese texts, viz. *Jak Herowa Pakshi* (trans. Birds of the lost flock[ii]) and *Mirbin* of Rongbong Terang. Karbi Anglong has been recognised as an insurgent-prone and multi-ethnic conflict zone in recent history. The Karbis are the principal tribal community in the district of Karbi Anglong. But the district is home to around ten different and far-flung tribes of North-east India living together with the Karbis. It thus qualifies as the epitome of the larger ethno- -hybrid profile of the entire North-east India. Recent upheavals between tribes in the region, especially the Karbi-Kuki[iii] clashes (2003-04) followed by the very recent Karbi-Rengma Naga[iv] killings (2013-14) have only distressed the civil society and left the peace-seekers in doldrums. But, is multi-ethnicity the only spur inciting such conflicts?

Rongbong Terang, a native Karbi and a raconteur par excellence, is a noted literary personality of Assam. He has been a recipient of the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award for his formidable work of fiction, *Rongmilir Hahi*[v]. He has also been the President of the highly-esteemed Asom Sahitya Sabha and an author of many books on the Karbi society and Assam. Terang has been known, for his vivid portrayal of the contemporary Karbi society, for his keen study on the emerging problems afflicting the multi-ethnic locale and mostly for representing the covert and sensitive lives of his tribesmen. The narrative of the two texts, viz. *Jak Herowa Pakshi* and *Mirbin* largely revolve around the recent ethnic clashes between the Karbi and the Kuki tribes, an issue of topical significance. The texts discuss their ancient homogeneity and the present chasm that suddenly fell upon them. But the most appealing factor of these two texts/stories is the narration of assorted minute details, situations and instances that somehow contribute to the formation of the 'hybrid' entity, which is the prominent cause behind the ethnic disparity of the region. It can thus be argued that, of all texts coming from the region, these two texts serve as the cauldron containing the many hybrid elements responsible for stirring up a multi-ethnic society.

However, there has been almost no critical study regarding the actual postcolonial plight portrayed in the texts. Most of the works are *etic*[vi] analyses as they immediately refer to the insurgency and politics surrounding the texts and the region, overlooking the innate

cultural hybrid acting within. This paper thus attempts to discuss the region with an *emic*[vii] perspective, while seeking to understand the trouble with the help of the two texts aforementioned. It thus argues the necessity of flexibility in abjuring essentialist positions in a multicultural milieu in order to create a congenial 'hybrid' in the region. The paper strives to draw a trajectory of an 'englobed'[viii] nation at the countenance of a novel postcolonial awareness and its consequent sporadic cultural conflicts. This paper invokes the central themes of hybridity, third space and liminality of Homi Bhabha and redraws and relates them to the plight of the two aforementioned texts. It also touches upon the methods of epistemic and cultural violence as understood through the texts and as inflicted upon each other by the subjects.

Multi-ethnicity, Modernity and Resistance

As in the case of the postcolonial, the context remains almost the same throughout, be it New Zealand, Australia, the Carribean or Karbi Anglong. By claiming that for the mere sake of being pluralistic, a society is vulnerable in nature and easily given to conflict, will keep it away from the essence. As for the History, it has always had observed assimilatory traits. For many years, even after the colonial masters left their sojourn, the Karbis still maintained placid, homogenized. Contrary to their early religious habits that contained sacrifices made more to the evil spirits than to the good, and demon worshipping to boot, Karbis are but known for being "...a mild, quiet, industrious race" (Teron,2011). However, the American Baptist Missionary Magazine, *Journal of Mr Scott* deduced that "...the manly spirit of the Mikir[ix] is not easily persuaded to yield servile homage to either priest or idol" (Teron, 2011).

This clearly brings to our picture the inherent nature of resistance present among the community members, against any kind of colonial subjugation, be that Brahminical or British. Hinduism and Christianity are but postcolonial to the Karbi society. As Dharamsing Teron writes, "The Karbis have traditionally been the worshippers of *Hemphu-Mukrang*[x] but there is no Karbi equivalent to exactly describe the term – 'religion'." The Karbis had fundamentally been animists, and recorded so, for nearly a century since the census of 1872. But how an entire population warped to the Hindu faith, only after the census of 1961, has since then remained an ideological curiosity. Thereafter, a considerable size of the population became Hindus and all that followed suit is what constituted the postcolonial globalized being. The direness of such condition can be aptly defined by a few lines from the John Ashberry poem, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror(1975)* –

"...But it is life englobed.
One would like to stick one's hand
Out of the globe, but its dimension,
What carries it, will not allow it...

...There is no way
To build it flat like a section of wall.
It must join the segment of a circle,
Roving back to the body of which it seems
So unlikely a part, to fence in and shore up the face..."

Nevertheless, they have never distanced from tradition. The Karbis traditionally hold the drongo[xi] as the sacred bird. The extant chunk of conservatism in the community is vivid in a dialogue between the daughter and her father from *Jak Herowa Pakshi (*trans. Birds of the lost flock), when the girl *Lirbon* asks her father *Waisong*, who was busy watching a flock of the drongo bird flying off the Khonbamon Hills perhaps as in a sign of some imminent danger, "Grandma once told when we were kids that we should never ingest the flesh of the *woterang*[xii], is it true *Deuta* (Father)?"[xiii] And her father replies in an ambivalent tone, "The others can, but we from the Terang clan, should never."

Now, this can be contextualised in different ways. Here, it may allow us to think that while the drongo bird is considered sacred by the entire Karbis, why only the Terang clan? Does this indicate flexibility to a certain extent? Is it gradually drifting away from the essentialist position? We have to also remember that the text has been written in the Assamese language. The infusion of words such as *woterang*, and for that matter many in the text, certainly suggests a readjustment with the earlier binary psychology. If here, the Karbis are to be considered as the colonised subject of the Aryanised Assamese/Hindus, then an allusion provided by the British ethnographer Edward B Taylor might sound relevant, "The savage's poor shy gods hide in holes and corners before the white man's mightier Deity" (Teron, 2011).

However, there are also testimonies of resistance even against the British colonial and the modern in the texts. In a dramatised drawing of the character, *Ramsing Tokbi*, an L.P. school teacher of Langparpan area as portrayed in Mirbin, Rongbong Terang makes the distress of the community on confronting the new form of colonial education, lucid for the readers. At a certain moment in the text, Tokbi who is the teacher of a vernacular medium school walks to his school and en route finds himself pondering over the many faces of transformation occurring around him in a radical manner. The author describes *Tokbi*, "While embracing the teacher's life as a path of sheer perseverance, *Ramsing Mastor* silently kept observing the assorted images of change in the valley. He realised about the creeping nature of the social conflicts at the Longnit market area in front of his eyes. He also felt that these conflicts, the differences in education, religion and tribes are being surreptitiously set ablaze like fire set on husks."[xiv]

However, the climactic is achieved when *Tokbi* breaks into a catharsis on discovering that his favourite student, *Longjut* has left his school and joined an English-medium. The author portrays this moment in a soliloquy of emotional bouts, "...The storm has thrust even inside my school. *Longjut* is my favourite student. Why did he go to study English? Why, even we grew up studying Assamese. Why such attraction for English now? If this continues, will the *Langparpan* School really survive? Like the fishes that get stirred up on reaching fresh waters, is it really good to get stirred up on these new currents of education? Why, won't this kind of education bring in conflict to our society?..."[xv]

It is transmogrification and chasm that the colonial religion, only after the colonial education, has brought in among the inhabitants of the same community, divided merely by dint of the novelty in their religions. In another instance of the same text, people gather at the house of *Sarmen Ronghang*, the *Sarthe*[xvi] on the day of *Thengthe Arnam*, the religious occasion celebrating the consumption of *No-makoi*[xvii]. On this mirthful occasion, Sarmen announced to the gathering about the varied threats falling upon the Karbi society and culture, "*Mehei*[xviii], our *Langparpan* is deteriorating. Gone are the days of integrity. A Karbi won't trust another Karbi anymore... The people from the *Milik Gaon* who came that day, have forgotten the rituals of *Tipit*[xix]. They have totally changed the mores and the practices of the ritual. Can they really mingle with us?" At this moment, somehow the echoes of Ishiguro's butler, *Stevens* resonates quite contrarily yet clearly, "Now naturally, like many of us, I have a reluctance to change too much of the old ways. But there is no virtue at all in clinging as some do to tradition merely for its own sake. In this age of electricity and modern heating systems, there is no need at all to employ the sorts of numbers necessary even a generation ago" (Ishiguro, 1989).

The Karbi society is fundamentally agricultural. "Agriculture is the key industry and the backbone of the economy of the district. More than three-fourth of the population derives its livelihood from it" (United Mikir and North Cachar Hills District Gazetteer). The Karbis also have their own pristine set-up of marriage system. "Marriage by negotiation (*adam achar*) is the common practice of the Karbis; however, marriage by mutual consent and elopement (*kanghupan*), and marriage by capture (*kachonghupan*), are also not rare" (Zaman, 2008). In Karbi marriage practice, a special tradition of the prospective groom offering manual labour at the house of the bride is being observed, known as *Piso-kemen*. Thus, the *Osa*[xx] becomes an important figure of the family system.

In the text *Mirbin*, *Longki Teron* while conversing with *Sarmen Ronghang*, inadvertently happens to pronounce the growing decay in the agricultural values of the society. He asks his friend, *Sarmen*, "Will your son-in-law pick up the spade and plough? They despise even stepping on the mud."[xxi] Before that, in the same conversational strand, *Sarmen*, pointing out to the hutments lined up across the *Langparpan* stream to his friends

Lunse and *Longki* says that those are houses of the Manipuri and Bengali people and then he seems to ask them, as if in the undertone of an imminent crisis in identity, "Those fields are of the *Teron* village, aren't they *Mehei*?"[xxii] This seems to assert a mutual confirmation of their plight, a plight dissolving their historical identity and a fear of donning the hybrid, ignorant that their entities are located only at a single moment in the historical process of identity and culture formation. Their awareness of history and the continual process of the formation of the community episteme are only too recent and naive. Like any colonized community, they also resist a mutual exchange at the first instance.

The Karbis have always maintained contiguity with many other tribes of the Tibeto-Burman stock as well as the section of Aryanised Assamese populace. In Karbi Anglong district alone, they cohabit with many other tribal communities like – the Dimasas in the Dhansiri/Mohendijua area, the Bodos in Langhin, Kuki/Thadou/Hmar tribes in Singhason and Koilamati areas, Tiwas in the areas bordering Nagaon and Morigaon districts, Garos in Hamren sub-division, Man-tai speaking community inhabiting in the Bokajan sub-division, some Khasi tribes inhabiting in areas adjoining Meghalaya mostly in Hamren sub-division, scattered population of Chakmas mostly in Borlangphar area and the Rengma Nagas in the Nilip block area.

The Karbis have been hailed as the Columbus or discoverer of Assam by the great revolutionary and cultural visionary, Bishnu Prasad Rabha (Teron, 2011). Nevertheless, they have now begun to candidly defy such a conferment owing to the fact that Columbus was a colonizer, whereas the Karbis are not, "For, like Columbus, we Karbis did not colonize but instead, they have been colonized, divided, dispossessed, and deprived" (Teron, 2011). The Karbis belong to the Mongoloid group and linguistically they belong to the Tibeto- Burman group. "It is believed that the Karbis entered Assam from Burma (present day Myanmar) through northern Manipur and south western Nagaland. This migration probably took place during the first and second millennia before Christ. Referring to a Karbi tradition J.H. Hutton and H. Bareh mention that southern Nagaland offered a land route to the Karbis migrating from Burma via Manipur hills through which a passage was made by tribes who preceded the present people of the Patkai hills" (Hazarika, 2015).

Therefore, mutual exchange of culture and information with other tribes has apparently always been a consistent historical reality for the Karbis. What is new is the politics of globalisation, modernity and the implications thereafter. The conflict between modernity and tradition has been scrupulously presented to us by Rongbong Terang in Mirbin. In the text, *Mirbin*, the girl protagonist, has been portrayed as singing a traditional folk *Bong-oi* song while in the lap of nature, cherishing the golden hued paddy field and the hills of *Khonbamon* in front of her and remembering the caresses of her beloved *Hemari Teron*, who has joined an insurgent outfit and sheltered himself in the unseen confines of the jungle. It so happens that while she was murmuring her song, what intrudes suddenly is a song from a Hindi movie. And it is the ring tone of her mobile phone.

What need to be observed here are the poignant interplays/dichotomies of Hindi-Karbi, Pastoral- Technological, Folk-Modern and last but not the least, Mirth-Distress. *Hemari* is here, a thing of the past, a nostalgia, or a symbol for tradition itself and she has been portrayed as lamenting his loss or imminent loss. She picks up the phone and it is *Hemari* on the other side, as if the tradition has learnt to wear the new and it expresses itself through the mobile phone. *Mirbin* finds her beloved at least with the aid of the mobile phone. The answering of the mobile phone dissolves all the binaries and *Hemari's* voice from the other end provides an answer to the problem.

Hybridity, liminality and the desire for third space in the postcolonial

In plebeian terms, anything that is a hybrid is thus considered a mixture or a corrupt form of the original by the sheer etymology of the word. But in the postcolonial cultural atmosphere, the concern actually becomes whether or not this kind of a mixture is capable of establishing the necessary societal harmony. The role of the text as a receptacle of postcolonial representative signs is formidable in this context, "The imaginative and the creative are integral aspects of that process by which identity itself has come into being. Cultural identity does not exist outside representation" (Ashcroft, 2001).

How does the postcolonial subject think? How does one know that he has a newfangled language to speak and rebuild his pedestal in the "midst of the incomprehensible" colonial? What Ashcroft writes, forms the crux for an organized postcolonial imagination. He asserts that "by taking hold of the means of representation, colonized peoples throughout the world have appropriated and transformed those processes into culturally appropriate vehicles. It is this struggle over representation which articulates most clearly the material basis, the constructiveness and dialogic energy of the 'postcolonial imagination.'"

In this case, the text as a semiotic representation serves the purpose. The texts essentially speak of the plight of the Karbis, written in the Assamese language and directed against the multi-layered crust of colonists overlapping/trying to overlap its smooth surface. The struggle for such overlapping is naturally bound to instigate friction on the surface. Homi K. Bhabha famously expounds such an in-between condition, "It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated."

In his celebrated guide to the postcolonial imagination *Location of Culture,* Bhabha offers the definition of hybridity through the example of an architectural object - the stairwell, "...The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy."

Hybridity is the most desired and the most welcome phenomenon, especially after globalisation has taken its toll in all aspects of the postcolonial society. Hybridity takes into

account the liminal entities, which are essentially "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial." (Turner, 1969) The occurring of the hybrid only elevates the liminal status of a community. Apparently, the crisis in cultural, political or linguistic identity, so as it may appear, acts just as a passage to the newly elevated identity. The social life of a community goes through a "dialectical process that involves successive experience of high and low, *communitas* and structure, homogeneity and differentiation, equality and inequality. The passage from lower to higher is through a limbo of statuslessness. In such a process, the opposites, as it were, constitute one another and are mutually indispensable" (Turner, 1969).

The site of liminality, or the passage, is not mere theoretical or reflective; it is a space to stir up the production of a new cultural meaning. It is the inherent desire of the hybrid to form a cultural space, where political action is generated by moving beyond the "plethora of differences" (Appadurai, 1996). It is thus a pragmatic approach where the language cannot bank upon any essentialist position, of You, I or anything else. It is the rendering of the self as unconscious and bereft of any disjuncture. The Third Space (Bhabha, 1994) thus mobilizes the two positions in the passage and produces a meaning while making fissures in the extant canon with its counter-narrative. Noteworthy here is the fact that the Third Space is not only circumscribed to the limits of cultural interaction; it propitiates disjunctures "between historical periods, between politics and aesthetics, between theory and application" (Graves, 1998).

In a subtly updated perspective, one can call on the concept of Cosmopolitanism (Papastergiadis, 2014) as an extended theorization of hybridity. It reaffirms the fact that "social formations are responsive, rather than fixed and closed" and that the "social and perceptual systems" need to be "relatively open-ended" to encounter the differences (Papastergiadis, 2014).

Cosmopolitanism forwards the forgotten ethic of hospitality to bring in the *longed-for join* (Bhabha, 1994) between unknowns. "Hospitality is not just a cultural practice of reception, but it is also a fundamental gesture that facilitates the encounter and understanding between strangers." (Papastergiadis, 2014) So one might like to say that a cosmopolitan and more refined man is what is desired as an outcome of the hybrid, rather than seemingly ludicrous skirmishes.

Rongbong Terang and the Hybrid encounter

In an interview with Muse India, when questioned on the cultural relationship of the Karbis with the neighbouring societies, Rongbong Terang answered that "perhaps it is only natural for none of the tribes of the Northeast to have an isolated existence." He further added that he would "want each culture to expand with the mentality of tolerance on the basis of mutual trust." (Terang, 2010) Certainly it can be inferred that he has written the two texts concerned here, with the same introspection.

Mirbin and *Jak Herowa Pakshi* (trans. *Birds of the lost flock*) are two short novels/novellas, engaged with the topical themes of violence in the Singhason Hills between

two tribes, viz. The Karbis and the Kukis. The protagonists of the two texts, respectively *Mirbin* and *Waisong Terang* act only as the "umbilical cords" (Baruah, 2009) connecting Karbi Anglong through a hybrid passage of internal conflicts to the events of violence. While portraying the violence and its implications on the commoners, Terang also touches upon those many elements that render it judicious to be classified under the genre of postcolonial literature. Most prominent among them are the concepts of hybridity and the generation of the third space. The texts, though in an indeterminate manner, seem to question, "Is a third space really possible given the surrounding pell-mell of violence and invading, incomprehensible modernity?"

At the end of Mirbin, the eponymous character of the text is shown to have been surrounded with a volley of questions. Her ambivalent person gets expression when the author writes, "Like the stream flowing into the waters, tears incessantly rolled from *Mirbin*'s eyes – moistening her tender, soft cheeks. At one point of time, she poised herself, and gazed at the cooing dove. But, only a dove-less tree could float in her eyes – with umpteen questions."[xxiii]

However, Jak Herowa Pakshi (trans. Birds of the lost flock) draws the curtains with a message of partial hope. The ambivalence at the inception of the text reflects in the speech of *Waisong* to his wife *Kajir*, "Would *Ruplin*[xxiv] not be able to speak the Karbi language? And, our daughter-in-law? Isn't she human? Isn't she capable of learning and understanding?"[xxv] By the end of the text, this undertone of ambivalence transforms into a more sanguine and well-contemplated expression, "I have brought you as my daughter-in-law. I will not tell you to return now. Why would you accuse yourself for the terrorism inflicted by your tribesmen? Of course you have not come here to set our home ablaze, you are here only to build it..."[xxvi] But the text still has not clarified on the transformed stance of *Julie*'s mother-in-law *Kajir*, thus leaving a room for the indeterminacy of such unison, of such hybrid encounter.

The text as 'third space'

The heinous spates of ethnic violence during the last decade have torn asunder the Karbi society, inclusive of the other tribes, owing to the politics of the existing ideological and cultural divisions. Diaspora is also a matter of concern here. The Kukis, like the Karbis, belong to the Mongoloid stock and the Tibeto-Burman linguistic family. But the Kukis have their separate homes in the bordering regions of Manipur and the North Cachar hills. The cause of such sudden conflagration has been the migration of the Kukis to the neighbouring Singhason-Khonbamon hill ranges of Karbi Anglong.

There are actually two groups of Kuki tribe inhabiting the Karbi Anglong hills. One group is integrated with the dominant Karbi populace of the region. They are only four to five thousands in strength. This group is not the cause of concern here. Another group of Kukis that has migrated from the hills of Nagaland and Manipur during the last two decades because of turns in socio-political events and clashes between Naga-Kuki and Naga-Paite[xxvii] tribes there, is the actual matter of concern here. This new group is larger in strength, around twenty thousand or more and they have settled mostly in the Karbi areas of the Singhason-Khonbamon hill ranges, naturally resulting in a lack of space and conflict of interests.

Rongbong Terang has been a witness to these events newly sprouting forth in his native land. Writes Dharamsing Teron and Elwin Teron, "Before 2001, there was no history of tribals of Karbi Anglong and NC Hills killing each other or attacking each other in such a manner."As a writer, it appeared to be Terang's duty in making use of the power at his disposal, of creating a counter-narrative of assimilation and the institution of "accountability" (Fukuyama, 2013) against the newly evolving destructive discourses and of politically articulating and negotiating with the people, who have been just "waiting to be created and constructed". (Bhabha,1990) But what is noteworthy is that while formulating the semioses of his social texts, Terang has not just piled them up with tedious "elaborations of insurgency" (Spivak, 1988), but he has been able to deftly represent "the utterance" (Spivak, 1988) of the native speaker too. Such is the vehemence in his texts that his readers and characters should thus be suffused with the realisation by now that human beings are multi-identitied, with each identity bringing a new richness and warmth to our lives as well as constraints and freedoms. (Costa-Pinto, 2006) The power of the text was alluded when the legendary Assamese poet-singer, Bhupen Hazarika rightly sang – "Rongbong Terang plays the flute of unity/ From Barak came Rajmohan, Hemanga Biswas…" (Thongsi, 2009).

The text has an inherent reservoir of power, to create and to destroy. Nonetheless, the texts of Rongbong Terang appear to be fraught with assorted questions relating to transformations occurring around in all sorts of political, religious, linguistic and cultural aspects of that miniature "universe" (Terang, 2010). The step ahead is uncertain and Terang can only help in constructing the narrative 'third space' suitable for the others to ensue from. So most arguably, being the native writer, he is in the vantage position of creating the "hybrid moment", as Benita Parry writes, "where misreadings and incongruities expose the uncertainties and ambivalences of the colonialist text and deny it an authorizing presence" (Jefferson, 1999). And in so far as creation of the Third Space/the hybrid is concerned, Terang is doing the best thing possible – describing, because "description is itself a political act...it is clear that redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it" (Rushdie, 1992).

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[i] Karbi Anglong is the largest district of Assam by area (10434 sq km.) and home to numerous ethnic tribes of North-east India. It is a district administered as per the provisions of the sixth schedule of the Constitution of India. It has been an autonomous district since 17 November, 1951.

[ii] Translated by the presenter.

[iii] The Kukis, belonging to the Tibeto-Burman family, are the original inhabitant tribe of the Manipur state.

[iv] The Rengma Nagas, one of the sub- branch of the Naga tribe, are the original inhabitants of the state of Nagaland.

[v] *Rongmilir Hahi*, by Rongbong Terong, was published first in the year 1981.

[vi] General and objective perspective of a culture in anthropological terms.

[vii] Description of a culture in terms of its internal elements in anthropological terms.

[viii] John Ashberry, *Self-portrait in a convex mirror*(1975).

[ix] Mikir, considered a derogatory term now, was earlier used to address the Karbis. It is believed that the name was originally given to them by the Aryanised Assamese population. The Mikirs now call themselves "Arleng" meaning "man" or Karbi.

[x] Hemphu, the supreme household god of the Karbis is equivalent to Vishnu of the Hindu mythology and Mukrang, the second-in-order household god is considered equivalent to Mahadeva.

[xi] The drongos are birds with forked-tails, found mostly in Karbi Anglong.

[xii] Drongo in Karbi language.

[xiii] Translated by the presenter.

[xiv] Translated by the presenter.

[xv] Translated by the presenter.

[xvi] The village headman.

[xvii] The new maize corn.

[xviii] A way to address the brother-in-law in Karbi language.

[xix] A place assigned according to clan to maintain the burial rites.

[xx] Son-in-law in the Karbi language.

[xxi] Translated by the presenter.

[xxii] Translated by the presenter.

[xxiii] Translated by the presenter.

[xxiv] Grand-daughter of Waisong Terang in the story, *Jak Herowa Pakshi*.

[xxv] Translated by the presenter.

[xxvi] Translated by the presenter.

[xxvii] The Paites are one of the constituting tribes of the Zomi/Zo tribe inhabiting India, Burma and Bangladesh. They are mostly concentrated in the state of Manipur.