

Chapter: III

Migration and Settlement

The term migration is originated from the Latin word '*migrare*' which means to change residence. Migration is the movement of people from one region to another region. When people leave their place of residence and permanently inhabited in a particular place then it can be termed as migration¹. Human history is one of constant migrations which may be called as human movement or migration. It is stated that human being dispersed from their origin in Africa to the different regions of the earth long before the beginning of agriculture and written history in about 20,000 years before present (BP). As the migration is a universal phenomenon, it touched every country which became the points of origin, transit and destination for the drifters or migrants². Migration can be expressed as a geographical phenomenon which seems to be a human necessity in every age or period since human being has a tendency to leave the areas where the life is difficult, he moves to the places in which life may be easy and better for survival. In true sense of word, we all are migrants, but those group or people who came first consider others as migrants and those who arrived second think those who came third as migrants and so on³. Thus, human history is marked by the waves of the human movement from region to region and place to place.

Northern China, Central Asia and Central Africa are considered to be the three major parts where human habitations started on the earth. From these areas the human population began to move from one settlement to another since pre-historic days. Peopling in Burma, China and Tibet together with the sub Himalayan regions was exactly all Mongoloid origins. Various Mongoloid tribes got mingle with each other and produced a varied tribe which also belonged to the same Mongoloid stock. The absorption of the Mongoloid tribes persisted as late as the last century A.D.⁴. In the case of North-East India the nature and character of the habitations in this region is a bit different from the rest of the country as a result of which it needs to be studied along with Southern and the South-East Tibet, Burma, China and South-East Asia. The people who were occupying the sub-Himalayan region were all migrated from one place to another since it (sub-Himalayan region) was a full of virgin lands. The Mongoloid races

from the eastern and the southern Tibet particularly the sub-Himalayan regions entered into India including North-Eastern part of India in the consecutive waves of the migration and began to settle at the foothills and the plain areas.

From pre-historic to the modern period, different branches of human races migrated into the various places of North-East India and established their settlement in those areas. So, the North-East India is known as the land of melting pot of human races since time immemorial. This land also may be described as a land of anthropological museum of human races. On the basis of pre-historic and other remains, Christoph von Fuer-Haimendorf⁵ clearly indicated that Assam, a part of North East India, was inhabited by diverse racial elements and described it (Assam) as a great anthropological museum with some primitive people. Assam is portrayed as the melting pot of all the branches of the human races and culture of both hills and plains. The Negritos, Austro-Asiatics, Dravidians, Mongoloids and Aryans had been migrated to Assam in different waves since the earliest time which led to mutual interfusion⁶. Since Assam was located in one of the great human migration routes, it became a museum of large numbers of population of the various ethnic groups of disparate socio-cultural heritage and of different languages⁷. Among them, the Mongoloid origin peoples were also one of them who came down in consecutive waves of migrations crossing different regions, making their homeland in most of the parts of North-East India including Brahmaputra valley. Therefore, North-East India regions witnessed the influence of Mongoloid origin culture to a great extent as these areas had been becoming abode of Mongoloid stocks from the ancient days.

The route of the migration received the notice of R. B. Pemberton⁸ who narrated that the route of the Bhutan and Tibet are described in many of the sources. A. P. Phayre⁹ holds the view that the act of communication (route) between Gangatic India and Tagaung lay only through Manipur which is one of the parts of the North-East India at present. G. A. Grierson¹⁰ made a statement about the migration of the Tibeto-Burman groups that they had arrived Assam all the way through Brahmaputra, Chindwin, Irawaddy, etc. and mountain passes of India and Burma by way of North-East and South-East. Based on the accounts of Chang Kien, Pelliot¹¹ furnished the information that at least from 2nd century B.C. or 200 B.C. a regular trade route (land route) to China through Assam, Upper Barma and Yunan came into existence. He also expressed two

routes from Burma through Manipur. It is mentioned in the Imperial Gazetteer of India that in course of their journey the Mikirs, the Lalungs and the Boros (Kacharis) followed the North-Eastern routes¹². The mass movement of the Mongolian race from western China in the successive waves had happened into the plain of India through the gate of Assam. Many of them are regarded to have formed a considerable element in the population of Eastern Bengal and Assam especially in the tribal population¹³. While proposing two probable itineraries of great migration of Mongoloids, Sidney Endle¹⁴ articulates that one group proceeded to North-East Bengal and Western Assam crossing the Valley of Thr, Tista, Dharla, Sankosh, & c. where they founded the powerful kingdom of Kamarupa and another section lead to Subansiri, Dibong and Dihong valleys of Eastern Assam from North and North-East routes. P. C. Bagci¹⁵ suggested three routes from Pataliputra through Assam-Burma to China. They are i) Patkai to Upper Burma ii) Manipur up to Chindwin iii) Arakan up to Irrawaddy. All these routes led to Kunming in China. The probable routes of the migration may be highlighted here as- i) through the north or the mountain passes of Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan ii) through valley of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra from India and west iii) by sea or the Bay of Bengal, passing through Bengal or Burma and iv) the Assam-Burma routes, one over the Patkai passes in the north-east, leading from the Lidu-Margherita road to China through the Hukawang valley in Burma and other through Manipur and Cachar in the south-east or south of Assam. The northern route was doubtful for the convenient of the human movement however, the trade route came into existence through the mountain passes between Assam and Tibet and by water way through the Brahmaputra and Ganges. Donkin, Natu and Jilap were also other three routes through which human being moved in different direction. Mongoloid people from South-East Asia and China infiltrated into Assam through these routes¹⁶. There is a reference to three important trade routes which connected Tibet, Assam and Bengal through Bhutan. They are i) the Manas river valley ii) the Kariapara Duars and iii) the Paro Valley. There existed well establish trade between India and Tibet with the Bhutanese who were collected dyes, *Endi* or *Eri* cloth and cocoons, areca nuts, tea, tobacco, etc. from Bengal and Assam. Based on legend and tradition Prof. Ram Rahul¹⁷ cited a story of the journey of Nythai Tsangpo, the first Tibetan king that Nythai Tsangpo preceded from India through the Mana Valley route which was the historical route between Eastern India and Central Tibet. Pilgrims from Tibet to Hajo shrine near the present Gauhati had trudged along it. Some scholars are

also remarked in respect to the routes of immigrants that flow to these parts of India as one route which run through Cachar-Manipur made the migration of the racial elements from South-east Asia, the Ahom and other Tibeto-Burman groups through Patkai route. The Tibeto-Burman groups apparently made the way of their movement through the hills of Bhutan, Tibet and Nepal. The major route of the human movement was the West- the valley of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. Passing this route the Aryan penetrated into the Pragjyotisha-Kamrupa, the present Assam. One cannot reject that Assam as the land of one of the great migration routes of mankind. Being a migration route of diverse human races this land found the cultural elements of various races and also witnessed ethnic composition of the people¹⁸. The extensive trade relation of India including North-East India with their neighboring countries leave no room for doubt because from very early times Assam was noted for her textiles and various valuable forest and mineral products. Many of those articles were not only exported to neighboring provinces but also found their way to Tibet, Burma and China, the foreign countries¹⁹. The existence of this route is attested at an even earlier date which is evidence from the account of Pelliot.

It is remarked that the offshoots of the Proto-Sino Tibetan speaking Mongoloid moved toward the South China, Burma and from them were descended the Man and Miao-tsze people of South China and the Karens of Burma who belonged to Mongoloid race but whose language now seem to be rather distinct from the other Sino-Tibetan family²⁰. Linguistically Sino-Tibetan languages may be made into two clusters- i) Tibeto-Burman and ii) Siamese-Chinese. In the Tibeto-Burman language group, Tibetan, Ladakhi, Sikkimese, Lho-ke or Bhutanese; the Himalayan group of dialects spoken in Nepal and Sikkim namely Newari, Magar, Gurung, Murmi, Sunwari, Kiranti, Lepcha or Rong and Toto; the Pronominalised Himalayan dialects of the Tibeto-Burman like Dhimal, Thami, Limbu etc; North Assam group of Tibeto-Burman speeches – Aka, Miri, Abor, Dafla and Mishmi; the Tibeto-Burman group of North and East Bengal, Assam and Burma include – the Bodo speeches groups - Bodo, Mech, Rabha, Garo, Kachari, Tipra etc; the Naga groups – Ao, Angami, Sema, Tangkhul, Songtem, Kanyak, Lotha, Mao, Kabui etc; the Kuki-Chin speech of Manipur, Tripura, Lushai Hills, Burma, the most important of which is Meithei, which is quite an advanced literary speech – the most important language of the family in Assam; the Kachine-Lolo group of Northern Burma and finally Burmese are contained. Tai, Siamese, Lao, Shan, Ahom etc. fall under

the Siamese-Chinese branch of Sino-Tibetan²¹. Describing North Western China as a vast bee-hive of the Mongoloid races, Hem Barua²² tells us that the Mongoloid people of that place approached to Assam, Burma Hills and other adjoining areas spreading along the Himalayas in course of time. Another section moved down the course of Chindwin river and that of other river to the south, peopling Burma, the present Myanmar, Thailand etc. He further furnished the information that the great wave of migration of Mongoloid move down to the Brahmaputra and dispersed in the hills and river beds of Assam in search of new home. While supplying the clue of the Mongolian migration to the land of India, it is illustrated that because of the natural changes the sea gave way to the Himalayan mountains from which many rivers like Ganga, Indus, Brahmaputra, etc. were rose and the fertile valleys swabbed these rivers had fostered and sustained Indian civilization. Some groups of the Mongolians came across through the Bod region of Tibet and Khyber Pass. They arrived in the Sind Basin of India in about 5000 B.C. Another group of Mongolian appeared in the eastern and north-eastern parts of Assam and Nathuk pass of Sikkim. Later on many branches of these races reached north-western and north-eastern parts of India where they set up their home but the history of which is became shrouded in obscurity today²³. The people of Sino-Tibetan speaking are believed to have had been in North-Western China between the head waters of Hoang-Ho and Yang-tze-Kiang river. They had began to moved from their original place of settlement to the south and west direction from pre-historic times. It is generally accepted that the Mongoloid tribes from Eastern and Southern Tibet particularly the sub-Himalayan regions penetrated to India including North-Eastern part of India in the repeated waves of the migration²⁴.

The Sino-Tibetan speaking tribes likely to formed the area of dispersion in some zone to the west and north of the Tibet from where they launched their movement to different tracks and directions especially to east and south- Yunan of Chinese province, east of Assam and Myanmar, Siam and Indo-China (Viet-nam). Quite possibly some of the Tibeto-Burman made a way into India taking the route to the southern slopes of the Himalayas through Assam or by way of Tibet²⁵. The Mongoloid groups and Tibeto-Burman who were widely concentrated in the upper course of Yang-tze-Kiang and Hoang-Ho rivers in China from the pre-historic times made expansion to the directions to the upper water of Yrrawaddy and the Chindwin rivers of the Upper-Burma and then

entered North-East India²⁶. Some of them occupied the Brahmaputra valley and some proceeded to Garo Hills and Hills of Tippera, the present Tripura where they established their own settlement. A segment of Tibeto-Burman hoard impeded at the head of the Brahmaputra valley and later on turn south by taking possession of the Naga Hills. Another section that were in the basin of the Chindwin and Irrawaddy rivers advanced towards the south of Assam in search of new settlement and founded their habitations in the Lushai, Cachar, some parts of Manipur and Naga Hills²⁷. E. H. Pakyntein²⁸ while answering on the question which route was followed by the Bodo immigrants while extending Assam wrote as the north and north-eastern direction supposed to be consensus view of the majority of scholars. The Bodo tradition says that the Choraikaling Pass of the north of Lakhimpur district of Assam was one of the routes of Bodo migration to Assam in ancient days. According to the folklore tradition of the Gurungs, particularly of those who were followers of Bonism (pre-Buddhist religion or the advanced form of animism), Cho-Nasa in western Mongolia was the original homeland of their antecedents (ancestors), which located to the south of Sinkiang in western China and north of China in the Tur-fan Depression and spread out to different regions. One section moved to Tibet falling within the northern Himalayan range. The nine clan of the Gurung, Mhina Kugi people moved towards Chamdo in eastern Tibet, the gateway to Tibet for the immigrants. They further proceeded to western part of Yarlung valley of Lhoka region where they were designated as Tamu-Gurung in 1000 B.C. From the ancient history of Central Asia it came to light that the Gurungs were originally called Gyarungs who were one of the nomadic tribes of western China. One group of this tribe went to central Asia and those who came to Tibet stayed behind for a considerable period of time. On the basis of findings, it is also well known fact that the Gurungs who were moving southward from Tibet reached Nepal and Sikkim after the dawn of the Christian era and in the early century of Christian era. The Mongoloid tribes made their settlement on the southern slopes of the Himalayas²⁹. Based on scientific studies and researches on the origin of Tibeto-Burman group, we may agree that the North-western China was the homeland of the Tibeto-Burman speaking people from where they moved southward in the North Burma and westward along the sub-Himalayan ranges and another section moved into Brahmaputra Valley, passing through the North-Eastern and South-East Asia. In all probability some groups of the Tibeto-Burman scattered in different parts of Manipur³⁰. Historical evidences showed that

different people who belonged to Mongoloid race amalgamated and absorbed with each other and this infusion made a mixed ethnic group, even though they belong to same Mongoloid stock³¹.

On the basis of the data available in the folklore regarding the migration of Bodo in the ancient time, the oral source provides the following information:

“Jouma futuma bifa hajwma”

The free translation:

The highest and whitest mountain is the father.

The aforesaid sentence indicates that the Himalayas or Trans-Himalayan region was the land of Bodo's father or ancestor. The folk song referring to the whitest and highest mountain, the Himalaya which covers with the white snow seems to be speaking to their father³². The ancient survival tradition of disposal of death body of the Bodo which placed the head of corpse towards the direction of south do support that the Himalayas was the original homeland of the Bodo. According to legends, the deceased person put in the grave facing towards the south in order to enable the departed soul to see the Himalayas, the native place of their predecessors and the position of the dead body, facing towards the south also enable the soul to proceed back to the primeval mountains³³. From the legends of the Bodo a conclusion may be drawn that the Bodo were originated from the mountains of the Himalayas and the Himalayas was the domicile of the Bodo's forefather. However, it needs to be examined critically by making comparison and cross checking with other sources on migration.

Scholars are not consensus about the date of the migration of the Kiratas who were considered to be of Mongoloid race. While dealing with the dispersal of Mongoloid groups to the North-East India, it is avowed that from the pre-historic times the Mongoloid tribes had been set in motion from their original homeland to south and west but it was most probably in the early part of the first Century BC the large scale of their movement have been occurred³⁴. Most probably, the date of successive waves of migration from Tibet to Himalayan states took place between the first and seventh century AD³⁵. The Mongoloid group from the eastern and southern Tibet mainly the sub-Himalayan regions entered India by successive waves of migration in about second

millennium BC³⁶. The route of their migration to India is not well established but deduced to be through the valley of the branches of Kosi river in the eastern Nepal along the course of the Indus River³⁷.

The ethnogenic history of Mongoloids could be date back to the Middle Pleistocene epoch when *Sinanthropus pekinensis* was unearthed from Choukoutain, south-west of Peiping (Peking) in China. This fossil man has resemblance in some characters with modern China, Eskimos and direct genetic relations with Mongolian group of recent mankind³⁸. Trace back to 2,000 BC of the history of the Mongolian, this people moved in Siberia and Mongolia. It is said that the Mongoloids of Tibet entered North-Eastern India and Assam along the Brahmaputra and its tributaries for trade in silk, noted now-a-days as *Endi-Muga* in Assam. Near about 1,000 BC, the Mongoloids had connection with the Aryans which is evident from the great epic of the Hindus, the *Mahabharata*. The physical features of the Kiratas are described not only in the *Mahabharata*, the *Kalika Purana* and the *Yogini Tantra*³⁹ but also mentioned in even the great epic *Ramayana* and other Vedas like *Yajurveda*, the *Atharvaveda*. The primeval homeland of the Bodo who belonged to Mongoloid race was surely and certainly to be the upper Hoang-Ho region of China. From that place they started moving towards the south-west and on the way to India. As noticed from various sources and eyewitness that human movement became a general phenomenon since pre-historical times even down to the present days. On their way to India they settled in the territory of South-Eastern Himalayas. The Bodo from the southern Himalayas marched to the valley of river Brahmaputra around 8th century AD?, as far as Koch Behar, Garo Hills, Cachar and Tripura. In about 7th century AD the Bodo might have arrived the Southern-Himalayas or Lhasa. The Tibetans used to call the areas to the Southern Himalayas as Bod or Pot which means land of the snows and whence the name of Bodo derived⁴⁰. The probably period of their arrival in the Sub-Himalayan region may be assigned to the early Christian era. Their seemingly cognate tribe called Pa reached India through a different route before the Bodo⁴¹. The Mon tribe who are supposed to be akin to Bodo whose ancestral home was in the region of Upper Hoang-Ho, were the next immigrants to eastern Himalayas region in about 6th century AD. Tibetan called the Mon origin people who were in the South-Eastern lower Himalayas areas as Mon-Pa⁴².

The Bodo of Eastern Himalayan, the Tibeto-Burman tribe penetrated towards the south-west in the Brahmaputra valley. The exact period of their migration to the Brahmaputra valley is not known. According to W. I. Singh, the accurate date of migration of the Bodo in the Brahmaputra valley cannot be fixed but most probably around 8th century AD⁴³. However, the probable date of the Bodo migration in Brahmaputra valley given by W. I. Singh is subject to further investigation as it has been noticed from the numerous sources that the modern Mongoloid tribes of North East India including the Bodo are believed to be the descendent of ancient Kiratas who were in India right from the Vedic period or even before that. From this reason, the arrival of the Bodo in about 8th century AD became a subject matter of controversies; it needs to be examined critically on the scientific way and cannot be agreed fully with his view on the date of Bodo migration to the land of India particularly. W. I. Singh further asserted that the Koch, a branch of the Bodo who were popularly known as Mongoloid tribe mixed up with oceanic elements from Indian plain. Till the coming of the Pongs (Mau Shans) in the 13th century, the Bodo were inhabited near Sivasagar in Upper Assam. The Mau Shans had driven the Bodo from Sivasagar to westward. After pushing back from Sivasagar by Pongs, the Bodo found their settlement in North Cachar hills and Cachar where they were known as Kacharis. Those who were moved further towards the South to Tripura in the early part of the 16th century AD were assigned the name Tripuris or Kok-Borok⁴⁴. But his view on the date of the arrival of the Bodo to Tripura in the 16th century AD may be rejected on the ground that the history of the Tripuri was not begin from the 16th century AD as they had their history prior to 16th century AD. The people of Tripura and Kacharis are of same stock⁴⁵. Like the Bodo who used the word *Pha* and *Ma* for father and mother, the name of the Tripura kings and queens end with the word *Pha* and *Ma* respectively. This clearly shows that the Tripuri and Kachari were same origin. Adi Dharmapha who was also known as Dungurpha or Hari Roy (640-670 A.D.) was nineteenth generation upwards of Chang-Thun-Pha (1240 A.D.). He became the king of Tripura in 64 Tipperah Era which corresponded to 654 AD⁴⁶. There is no doubt that Tripura was known as Kirata-Desha in ancient time⁴⁷. If so, there is room to reject 16th century as the date of arrival of Bodo in Tripura.

W. I. Singh⁴⁸ assumed that Ma tribe is most probably the Bodo. The name Bodo or Boro is supposed to be a Tibetan origin to denote the people of the snows, where Bod

or pot means land of the snows in the Tibetan dialect. The hypothesis of W. I. Singh⁴⁹ is that *Ma* is the original name of the Bodo which is evident from the analysis of the name of their tribes like Dimacha (di-ma-cha). The meaning of the di-ma can be interpreted as *Ma* of water (water here is the Brahmaputra river) and *-Cha* is a suffix which means offspring. Thus, Dimacha (di-ma-cha) can be regarded as the offspring of *Ma* of the big water. It is also revealed that another meaning of *Ma* is big in Bodo dialect. In the word of the Bodo which ended by *Ma* that stand for big. This denoted that Mon and Bodo were also cognate tribes. The word *Macha* in Manipuri language represents issue of a parent, child, small, etc. which is of a Bodo origin, derived from the Bodo word *Ma-cha*= offspring of *Ma*.

Denying tribal migration into the land of the India before Christian era it is remarked that being closed the door of India due to the presence of the seas and the Himalayan Mountains, it was not possible for the migration of the tribe populations to the land of India from outside in pre-Christian era. This statement is based on ancient history and the geography. G. P. Singh⁵⁰ maintained as “both ancient history and geography bear witness to the fact”. G. P. Singh⁵¹ also claimed that most of the ancient Kiratas who were dwelling in northern and eastern Himalayas were of indigenous origin. Those Kiratas who had been settling in these areas from a very remote period in the valley and mountain regions until the migration of the tribes of Mongolian origin were, no doubt, the original inhabitants of the country. A good numbers of Kirata tribes of Mongolian origin had, of course, inhabited in Nepal and Sikkim (called Indrakil in the epic age and later Sukhima) in the second half of the first millennium AD. Those who were migrated from Tibet (called Bhotadesh for the first time in the 7th Century AD) towards eastern frontiers, sub-Himalayan tract of Nepal or eastern Himalayan States of Sikkim before the seventh century were of purely Tibetan origin. The tribes of so-called Mongolian race migrated from the seventh century onwards have been identified with Mongoloids generally on the basis of their physical features.

On the subject of the Bodo who are absolutely identical with the Kacharis, Rev. Sidney Endle⁵² is of the view that the Kacharis (Bodo) were the original autochthonous of Assam. Anderson⁵³ in his introduction in the book of Sidney Endle's *The Kacharis (Bodo)* too had described that the Bodo were the aborigines of the Brahmaputra valley. Like the other tribes of the ancient India, the Kiratas have been

depicted as aborigines, who had been inhabited originally in the Gangatic plains in Madhya-desa, in the wild tracts on the banks of different rivers and their tributaries, of the Kailasa mounting near the lake Manasorovara and its adjoining areas, in the mountainous regions and the forest in the Northern and Eastern Himalayan border land, Vindhya region and many parts of the North-Western, Central and Western India as well as Deccan from the olden days, in many ancient literary texts. However, they have been look upon as immigrants. The impression of immigrants on them may lead to wrong notion as the fact remains that they were by and large autochthonous⁵⁴. These statements testified that the Bodo evolved on the very soil of Assam. However, till date the modern researches into the origin of the human being always silent Assam as the first place of human evolution which clearly proved that Assam was not the land of the human origin. Those who had been settling in Assam might have been migrated from different directions and places in various stages of human dispersal. Kasten Ronnow⁵⁵ had classified the Kiratas into two sections- i) those who had affinities with the Mongoloid and ii) those who are of mixed origin and also informed us that most of the Kiratas tribes of Northern and North-Eastern India are of Indian origin. Nevertheless, Robert Shafer⁵⁶ does not support it by stating that the Kiratas were Mongoloid race and speaker of Tibeto-Burmic language.

The Kacharis, who are considered to be one of the earliest indigenous ethnos of Assam, are known with different names in various places and ages throughout the North-Eastern corner as well as some parts of the Indian sub-continent. They have been assigned the names Meech in Goalpara and North Bengal, Dimasa in North Cachar Hills. Kacharis is another name of Bodo in the Brahmaputra Valley as they are designated alternately as Bodo and Kacharis in this region. The Kacharis are also called Bodo-fisa (son of the Bodo or Man). Ahom called them as Timasa which is clearly a corruption of Dimasa. Therefore, the name must have been allotted to them when they ruled over the Dhansiri Valley⁵⁷. Undoubtedly, some pockets of the Bodo settlement have also been found in some parts of world. The present distribution of the Bodo population is incomplete without covering the areas like Nepal, Tripura, Meghalaya, Bangladesh etc.

North Western China was the original home land of the Sino-Tibetan speaking tribes or the people of Mongolian race. They expanded in different directions from the upper reaches of the Yang-tze-Kiang and the Hoang-Ho or Yellow rivers and penetrated

into India partly from Tibet down the valley of Brahmaputra and partly from China through Burma by the Mekong, the Chindwin, Salween and Irrawady, spreading steadily into various parts of Assam, Bengal, sub-Himalayan tract of Nepal and down to the Gange valley. Those Tibeto-Burman groups of Sino-Tibetan speaking tribes who were dispersed in some tract to the west and north of Tibet (the present day Chinese province of Si-Kiang) began to spread towards east and south. By taking either southern slopes of the Himalayas through Assam or by approaching on the way of Tibet and traversing the Himalayas barrier some of the early Tibeto-Burmans made their habitation into Nepal and Garhwal-Kumaon⁵⁸. On the basis of which the Kirata tribes are not acknowledged as autochthonous in India, but immigrants. In fact, some elements of truth are there in respect of the migration of the Mongolian origin tribes towards Burma, Assam and Bengal. However, G. P. Singh⁵⁹ who made a painstaking effort on the origin of the Kirata argued that “so far as pre-historic race movement is concerned there is no real evidence to show why the Mongolian invasion was diverted eastward”. His argument is based on the information supplied by S. K. Chatterji⁶⁰, G. Grierson⁶¹, E. J. Rapson⁶², B. C. Allen, E. A. Gait & c⁶³, C. Chakrabati⁶⁴ and W. Crooke⁶⁵.

From Hathwa which located on the northern bank of the river Narmada in Madhya Pradesh discovered fossil skull cap. This confirmed the existence of early man in India. It is observed that the *Homo-erectus narmadensis* belongs to the same genus and species as those found from the Java and China. Other unearthed fossil materials of hominids belonging to different varieties from the Siwalik range of Northern India further indicated the presence of hominids in India between the phases of Miocene and Pliocene periods. K. Saratchandra Singh⁶⁶ rightly observed that “the major forms are Dryopithecus, Ramapithecus, Sivapithecus and Gigantopithecus”. He further informed us that the hominids were compelled to move taking the way either along the east or west, towards the east like ultimate points as far east as China or South-East Asia and Indonesia. The migration was the result of the climatic interruption in the form of glacial episodes⁶⁷. There are two theories in respect to the hominid movement viz. eastward flow and westward movement. The earliest school soundly affirmed that in early day there was a connection of India with South-East Asia by land bridge and the same type of animals were roaming freely all over the vast region and that fossil remains of this region can be classified broadly into two groups: i) Sino-Malayan having similarities

with China and Malaya, and ii) Siva-Malayan having affinities with Siwalik region of India and Malaya. The Neolithic culture is likely to have been spreading from Eastern India through North-East India which is clearly evidence from the finding of Celts of jade its materials of Myanmarese or Chinese origin in North-East India. It is also proved that there existed cultural link among these regions since the pre-historical periods, most probably from the days of Paleolithic.

Many of the scholars have also been expressed their opinion that the earliest habitation place of the ancestors of Tibeto-Burman speakers was the North-Eastern region of China lying in between the Hoang-Ho and the Yang-tze-Kiang rivers, from where they flow southward up to the north of Burma (Myanmar) and splited in many sub groups moving different directions viz. one group moved westward along the lower hills of Himalayans, another proceeded southward to reach South-East Asia spreading to other adjoining territories and third one entered North-East India and established their settlement since their arrival. It made a clear indication that the North-East India became the native soil of Mongoloid groups who were migrated from South or South-East Asia since the remote past. The hill dwellers of this place are the indigenous tribal groups who had akin to Mongoloid features. They have been termed as Indo-Mongoloid later on⁶⁸. Most of the people on the foothills of the sub-Himalayan ranges and tribes in many of the plain areas are found to have Mongoloid characteristic. Thus, peopling in North-Eastern region was predominantly the immigrants with Mongoloid physical traits who came from the north and east. The tribes of this region speak either sub-families of the Siamese-Chinese or the Tibeto-Burman of the Sino-Tibetan linguistic family. We find linguistic affinities shared among these tribes and prove that they were migrated somewhere from South-East Asia regions or China. Here lies the validity of theory of migration⁶⁹.

Heterogeneous group of the tribes of North-East India arrived to this place migrating from different parts like South-East Asia, Tibet and Burma. In ancient times the concept of immigrant (outsider) and son of soil were not much strictly applied and fully developed. And it appears that such notions were not prevalent and zilch in the remotest past as human movement is admittedly the law of nature touching each and every corner and inch of the world right from the food gathering stage. The term Indian origin or original and autochthonous applying to some of the tribes or tribe of North-East

India by some scholars seems to finger point to their settlement in this part from the earliest time. Original and autochthonous, these words used by some scholars referring to the Bodo probably pointing to their myth signifying that the Bodo did evolve in the soil of Assam but it could be taken as an indication of the habitation of the Bodo, in Assam, since time immemorial or on or before historical period and hence appositely credited with such epithet.

No denying fact is that human history is marked by the waves of human movement from one place to another place and region to region in different period since pre-historic time. The Bodos are regarded to be one of the earliest inhabitants of Assam, who were said to be originally belonged to the region lying between Hoang-Ho river and Yang-tze-Kiang river of North-Western China began to move and infiltrated in North-East India in different period and made their settlement in this part of India since ancient times, which is supported by many schools, but the date of their arrival is still controversial and unsolved which resulted a wide scope for further research for obtaining accurate knowledge⁷⁰. So, multidisciplinary approach based on historical, indological, archaeological, anthropological and philosophical date available is very much needed to bring an accurate and graphic picture on the migration of the tribes of North-East India including Bodo.

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