

city worthy of the name. The only places that can be called cities are Gauhati, Imphal, and Dibrugarh, and these places are really nothing more than large villages inhabited mostly by tillers of the soil.

The people on the plains, for the most part, are Aryans. There is no distinct Assamese nationality. The Ahoms, or Ahams, who established a strong kingdom, and from whom the province received its name, can no longer be called the predominating class of people. In fact, there are very few of these people left, and it is said that only one or two in the entire province is able to speak the original Ahom.

The tea gardens have brought to Assam, within the last few decades, peoples from all parts of the country to such an extent that within the next thirty or forty years it is by no means improbable that the Sibsagar district will be the only part of Assam where an Assamese will find himself at home. While some sections of Assam are densely populated, yet for India, Assam is sparsely inhabited and could easily support a much larger number of people. Those living in the hill districts are of pure Mongolian stock, each tribe having its own particular language. In the Brahmaputra Valley, a large portion of the people can still be traced to a non-Aryan origin, but most of them speak Assamese.

In the Census Report for 1931, it is stated<sup>5</sup> that there are over sixty languages indigenous to the province. Beside these sixty separate tribes, the immigrants bring the number of languages up to well over a hundred. This indicates somewhat the variety of peoples and tribes located there. There is an Aryan substratum mingled with a Mongolian element from the north. With this mixture is a Dravidian element from the west, another strain from the Shan race, and a sprink-

ling of Burmese. Many centuries doubtless were needed for this process of comingling. Beside these, there are also the numerous immigrants, many of whom are Aryans, who have in the last few centuries become domiciled. Among the non-Aryans, are the numerous tribes of the mountains who, as mentioned above, are entirely Mongolian. The chief tribes are the Bhutanese, Akas, Daphlas, Miris, Abors (several tribes), Kamptis, Singphos, Mishmis (several tribes), Nagas (several tribes), Mikirs, Kukis, Kacharis, Khasis, Jaintias, and Garos, and farther to the south, the Manipuris and Lushais.

Each one of these tribes represents a religion; thus there is here a greater sprinkling of creeds and cults than in any other province in India. About 56 per cent of the people of the province are Hindus, and 30 per cent are Mohammedans, which is a rather large proportion, due to much propaganda and immigration from Bengal, and of these 30 per cent, 83 per cent are in the Surma Valley. About 70 per cent of the hill population are Animists, but this number is continuously decreasing owing to the influence of Christianity. Buddhism has a very small place in Assam; and Jainism has only a nominal number of devotees in the province. The Sikhs are on the increase because of the industrial demand for Punjabi artisans. It is not possible, however, in brief compass to discuss the religions of Assam. Moreover, it does not properly come within the range of this history.

A former missionary has put the religious problems in the following dramatic words:

"Come walk down the street with me; the first man we meet is a Hindu. Will you tell me now what his religious tenets are? You know in a general way what Hinduism is; but I venture the assertion that there is just about one chance

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