

ORIGIN OF THE IDIGENEOUS TRIBES OF MANIPUR

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With the advent of modern technique and new approaches in tracing back the human civilization, new concepts emerged even in the fields of researching our roots. It is true that the enchanting land known as the North-East Region of India attracted waves of diverse racial groups through the ages. It has come to stay as the confluence of the most colourful Mosaic of ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity.

In Manipur (India) there are 39 different tribes having their own cultures, language and traditions etc. All the tribals in the North East have similar physical features with slight variations here and there. Among the major tribes The Kukis and Nagas are the major tribes of Manipur, India.

The origin of the Kukis (Kuki-Chin-Mizo) is shrouded with myths and mythologies. One of such was the traditional accounts that had been handed down through the generation in that the Kukis came out of the bowels of the Earth or a cave called “Chinlung” or “Sinlung” or “Khul” the location of which was believed by some to be somewhere in China. But others claim it to be in Tibet.

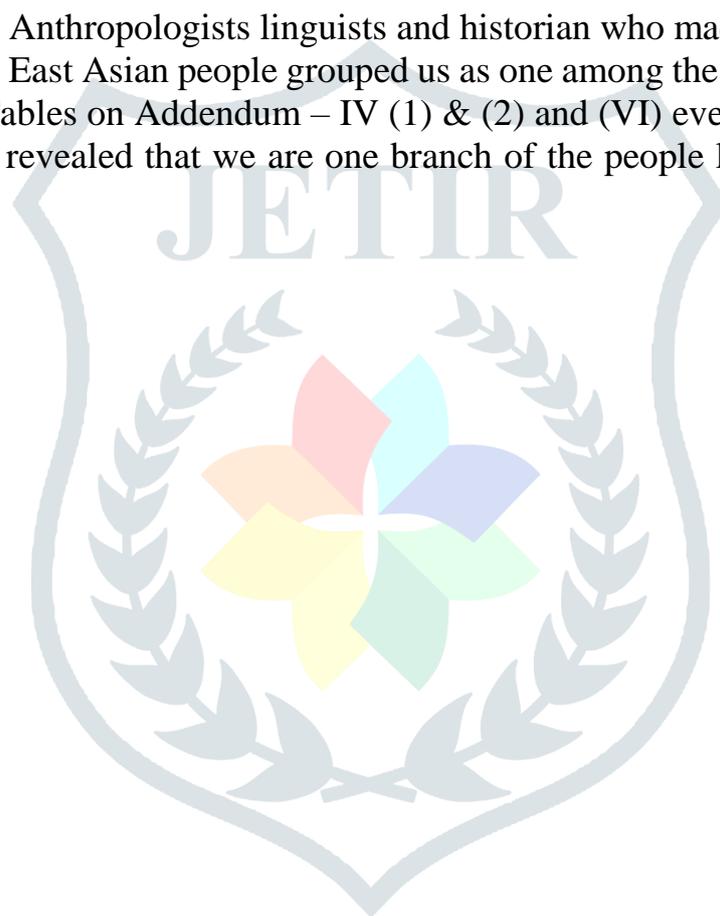
Mc. Culloch contended that the Kukis were known as “Khongjas” also in Manipur and that they: bring their Progenitors from the Bowels of the earth and they relate the manner of their reaching its surface thus; One day their King’s brother was hunting hedgehogs, when his dog in pursuit of one, entered a caverh and he is waiting for its return remained at the month. After lapse of sometime the dog not having returned, its master determined to go in and see what had become of it. He did not find the dog but observing its tracks and following them, he found himself suddenly on the surface of the earth. The scene presented to his view both pleased and astonished him. Returning to his brother he related about his adventure, and counselled him to annex the new country to his territory, which the King did.

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1. Government of Assam, the Seven Sisters Gauhati 1976 p.30.
 2. Ginzatuang J. History of the Zomi Family Tiddim Burma 1973 p.5.
 3. Mc. Culloch Maj. M. Account of the valley of Manipur, New Delhi, 1959 p.24.

Likewise Shaw & Hutton gave slightly different versions though they all pointed to the same story that the Kukis came from the Bowel of the earth, called as Chinlung or Shinlung or Khul etc. The story is obviously suggestive of a separate racial origin of these group of people.

It was generally believed that the Kukis came out of China during the reign of Chinese Emperor Chinglung or Chie'nlung, around 200 B.C. Zawla a Mizo historian claimed that the Kukis came out of the Great Wall of China in about 225 B.C. during the reign of Shih Hungti whose cruelty was then at its height. A number of other theories have been advanced in this connection. But in the absence of any written corroboration of existence of historical evidence to support them, such hypothetical theories re-considered as highly subjective and conjectural.

Research scholars and Anthropologists linguists and historian who made an in-depth study of the Chinese and South East Asian people grouped us as one among the Tibeto Burman People (See also the lists & Tables on Addendum – IV (1) & (2) and (VI) even results from DNA or genetic investigations revealed that we are one branch of the people linguistically classified as Tibeto-Burman.

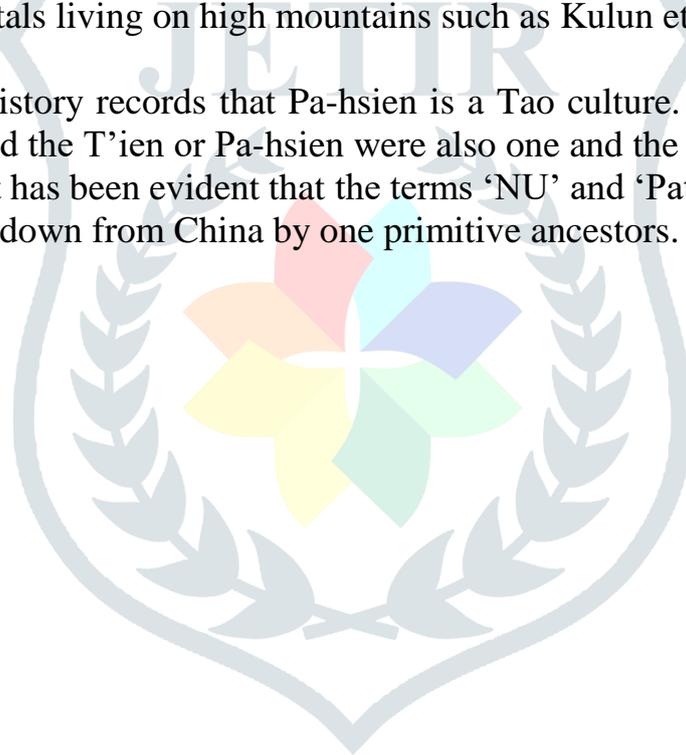


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4. Shaw William, The Thadou-Kuki, Government of Assam, Shillong 1929.
 5. Ibid 1929, p.14.
 6. Zawla K. Mizo Pi Pute leh Anthlahte Chanchin (History of the Mizo forefathers and their descendants Aizawl Mizoram 1976- p.2.
 7. Dr. Vumson: Zo History Aizawl 1986.

Vumson remarked that “Traces of Human existence are attributed to us long ago as a million years and Peking man may have flourished in 500,000 B.C. In the Ordos region of China stone implementations and few bones of hunting people have been found suggesting a time from about 50,000 B.C. By about 4,000 B.C. a Mongolian people with a Neolithic culture appeared but instead of being hunters they were animal breeders. Their tool included finely polished rectangular axes with keen cutting edges. Further one is wonderstruck with curiosity if the Chinese cultural term “NUWA” be the embryo from which our common term ‘NU’ for mother and female had hatched. In Chinese legend it is Goddess NUWA who created man and also restored order between heavens and earth.

Apparently the affinity or resemblance (genetically and linguistically) is a prone that we once live in China. Perhaps even “NU” the term we used for ‘Mother’ and female too must have been brought down from china by one pre historic ancestors. Quite similar to this another term we use for supreme God “Pathian, Pathen, Pasian” may have had its origin from Chinese language. Because in Chinese the word ‘Tien’ closely resemble ‘Thien’ and Pa-hsien which represents eight immortals living on high mountains such as Kulun etc. in central Asia.

The Chinese cultural history records that Pa-hsien is a Tao culture. Therefore it seems that divine name Pathian and the T’ien or Pa-hsien were also one and the same origin. In the light of this historical facts it has been evident that the terms ‘NU’ and ‘Pathian’ were indisputably originated and brought down from China by one primitive ancestors.



8. Dr. Vumson – Ibid.

Nevertheless Enriquez, claim that he had ample scientific data at his command to prove that Mongolian races, who now occupy South East Asia and also the North East India originated from western China lying between the sources of the Yangtze and the Hwang-Ho rivers and migrated in three waves.

1. The Non-Khmer (Talaing, Pa-Lung, EnRiang, Wa, Pale Khais and Annimite) which included Khasis.
2. The Tibeto Burman comprising Pyu-Burmese-Kachin, Kuki, Chin and Lolo;
3. The Tai-Chinese which included Shan, Siamese and Karen.

The route chart of the Mon-Khmer group was that they followed the Mekong Valley towards South into Campuchea and Thailand until they reached Burma where from some of them went further westward upto Bay of Bengal and then turned towards north. It is believed that the Khasis are the remnants of the Non-Khmer group.

Tibeto Burman group initially moved towards the west and thereafter sub-divided themselves into several groups. They followed different routes, one group reaching Tibet on the north where some of them stayed behind, while others moved on northwards until they reached Burma in three waves. These people were the Kuki-Chin- and the Pyu-Burmese Kachin groups. The Kuki-Chin group moved further towards south-west following Irrawady and the Chindwin rivers and continued to do so till they reached the shores of the Bay of Bengal from here they turned back north and eventually fanned out along the mountains down the whole length and breadth of the hilly region on either side of the existing Indo-Burma boundary lines. Thus when the British came here in the 18th century they found the groups scattered about and the British Officers started keeping records of various groups or clans of Kukis.

Hutton (1929) N5 in one of his monographs described the migratory routes of the Kukis in a lucid manner and was more specific in regard to the scattered settlement of the Kukis.

For a very long time the Kuki-Chin groups of tribes, pressed from behind Kachins moving southwards from China and been migrating down the source of the Chindwin River and some turned back perhaps by the Bay of Bengal, had then moved slowly north west and northward again, driving out or incorporating previous inhabitants of what are now parts of the Chittagong Hill Tracts of (East Pakistan) the Shin Hills of Burma, the Lushai Hills of Assam, parts of the areas of Manipur State, the North Cachar Hills and the South of the Naga Hills.

9. Enriquez CM. A Burmese Arcade London, 1932

10.T.S. Gangte – Understanding Kuki since Primordial Times, 2010 p.4-5.

Lehman also observed that history shows however, that both hills and plains people (of Manipur) have moved about within the general region of south west china and south east asia over considerable distances for many centuries with the recent past.

Taw Sien Kho, a Burmese lecturer at Cambridge classified the Kukis as Turanean which included the Chinese, Manchus, Japanese, Annamese, Siamese, Burmese, Turks etc. and concluded that their habit included the whole of North-Eastern India before the Aryan Conquest.

Now the question is had the tribals moved out of China during the 'Great Southward Movement' in chorus with the Dias? If we are moving into our present settlement somewhere from South East Asia (as noted by the Indian Genome Variation Project Team) a fresh empirical Study is required further in depth investigation on exchange of views is necessary.

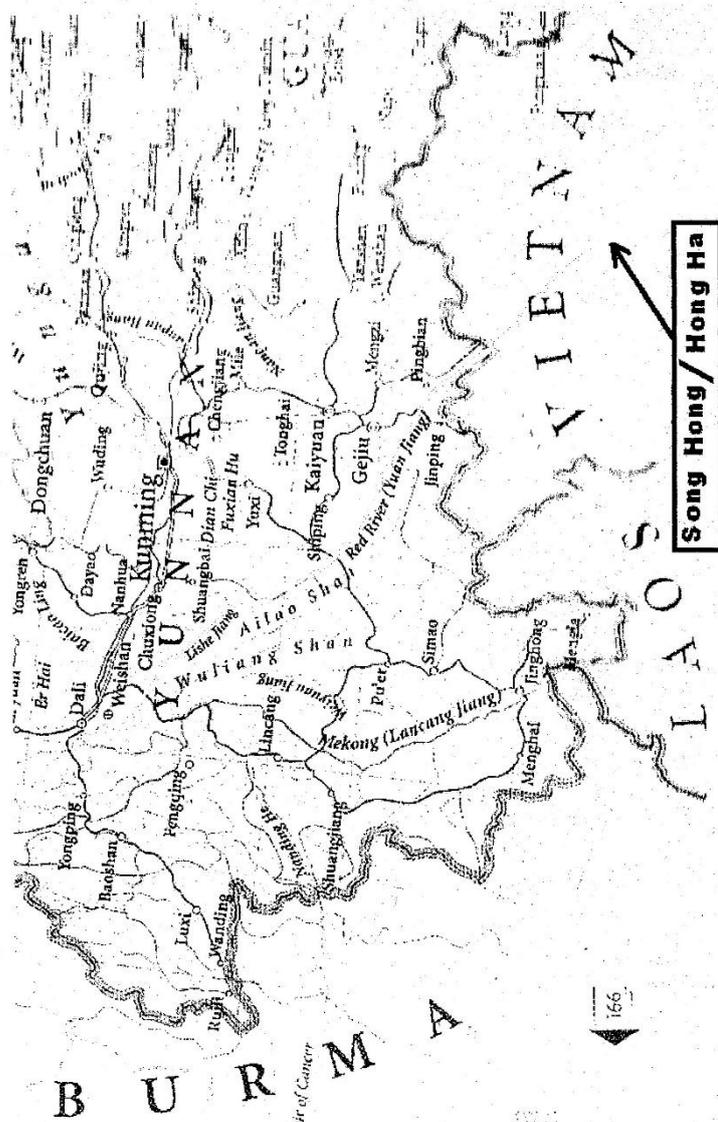


11. Lehman R.K. The structure of Chin Society, Urbana, 1963 p.11

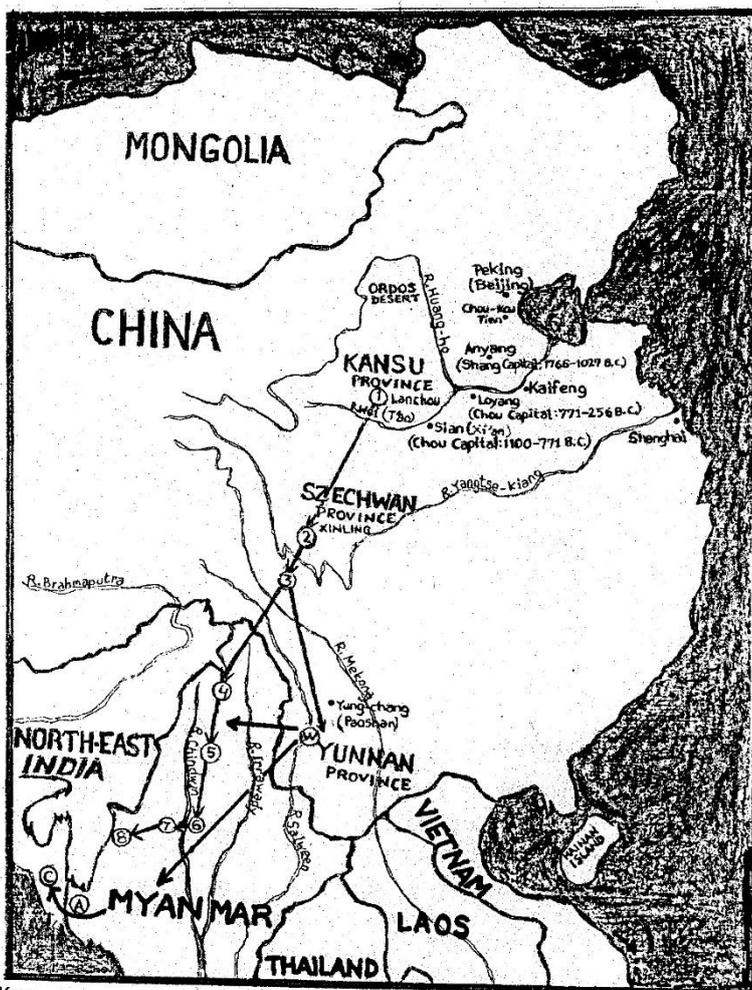
12. Carey Bertram S. and Tuck H.N., The Chin Hills Aizawl Mizoram, 1932 p.2

Addendum-III

Map-1: Location of Red River or Yuan Jiang, crossed by the people called Dai during the Great Southward Movement.
Had our primitive ancestors too waded this river?



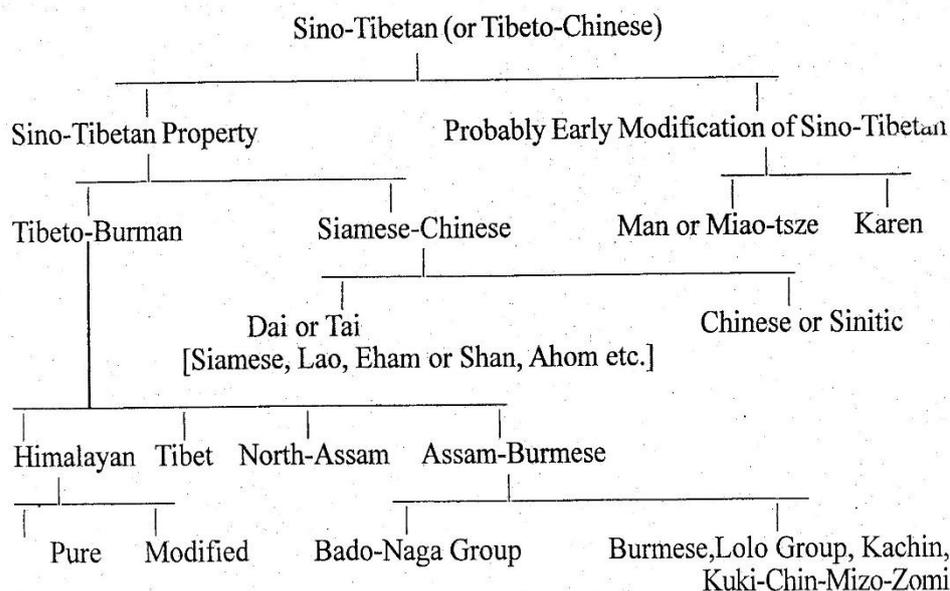
Addendum-IV
 Map-2: Conceptualized map indicating
 the movement of our primitive ancestors
 Conceived by the author



Key :
 1. Earliest Homeland of *Ch'i'ang*, ancestors of Tibeto - Burmans. ; 2. Roughly in about 1600-1000BC they moved into Szechwan; 3. Ancestors of *Chin-Kuki-Zo* people moved into the sources of Mekong and Yangtse and took diverse routes towards Myanmar; 4. Hukaung Valley 5. Chindwin Plains; 6 & 7. Kale-kabaw Plains; 8. Chin Hills (W)=From Western Yunnan into Hukaung, (A)=Arrakan Hills and (C)=Chittagong Hills.

Addendum-VI

A TABLE SHOWING OUR LINEAL ROOT



Sources: G.A.Gierson: *Linguistic Survey of India*, III, ii, "Tibeto-Burman Family", 1967 (Reprint); S.K.Chatterji: *Kirata-Jana-Krti* (The Indo-Mongoloids), The Asiatic Society, 1974, p.23-26; Prof.Than Tun: *Early Burmese History*, Rangoon, Kayah Thukhah Press, 1969, p.19-24; B.Lalthangliana: *India, Burma & Bangladesh-A Mizo Chanchin*, Aizawl, First Edition-2001, p.79.