

CLASS FORMATION AMONG THE KHAMTIS OF NORTH EAST INDIA: TRADITION AND CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

Change is the law of nature. Society is not a tall a static phenomenon but it is a dynamic entity. Change is not a uniquely modern phenomenon. Some kinds and degrees of social changes are universal in human experience. The study of social changes in north-east India (more particularly among the tribes) attracts the scholars of social sciences because of the existence of colourful groups of population belonging to different races. A custom which is defined as socially sanctioned behaviour of the members of a particular society is transmitted from generation to generation and in the process it undergoes changes in the changed situation. Since the class formation among the different tribes (more particularly in north-east India) in a very broad sense, include moral, legal, religious and other aspects of the custom through which the society is controlled. These also undergo change to cope with the new situation. The north-east India is an India in miniature in terms of diverse colourful groups of population belonging different race and linguistic group with their distinctive culture and tradition. Among them the Khamtis in north-east India are, a Buddhist group belonging to the greater Tai-Shan civilization. Traditionally, the Khamti society is highly stratified and the community is divided into classes with a distinct social and economic status. But as time passed there have been changes that took place among the Khamtis in terms of class division. This paper seeks to examine the tradition and changes in the class formation of the Khamtis, a Buddhist tribe of north east India.

KEYWORDS: *Monastery, Priest, Council, Change*