

Animal Sacrifices in Ancestral Worship by Khasis of Meghalaya: An Ethnographic Perspective

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The Khasis are a tribe and native of Meghalaya, a north-eastern state of India. Their origin can be traced to Southeast Asia. They belong to the Mon-Khmer linguistic family. The society of this tribe is matrilineal which considers its descendents from the mother known as Ka Iawbei Tynrai. Christianity has influenced a majority of Khasis in the state. However, a few people continue to follow their traditional beliefs and practice traditional rituals and rites till today. The religion of the Khasis believes in one supreme God in addition to having faith in spirits for both good and bad on certain occasions. In spiritual beliefs of the Khasis, one of the significant spirits is ancestral spirit and ancestral worship is one of the essential features of the traditional life of Khasis. By showing love towards ancestral spirits and belief in supernatural powers, the Khasis try to appease the deceased ancestors by offering both food and sacrifice. The ancestral worship of this ethnic group is associated with megalithic structures. The presence of a large numbers of megalithic structures in Meghalaya indicates that these structures have socio-economic and socio-religious significance for the Khasis, and that is why a number of rituals associated with these are practiced till today. Consequently, the megalithic culture of Khasis can be considered as living tradition. Sacrificing of animals is one of the important aspects of ancestral worship by Khasis and the same has been dealt in detail in this paper.

Keywords : Khasis, Megalithic Culture, Ancestral Worship, Ritual, Animal Sacrifice

Introduction

The 'abode of the clouds' term in Sanskrit is the state of Meghalaya, located in the northeastern part of India. The border of the state in the northern part is covered by Brahmaputra valley and the southern part shares a boundary of 423 km with Bangladesh. At present, the administration of Meghalaya comprises eleven Districts: East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, South West Khasi Hills, East Jaintia Hills, West Jaintia Hills, Ri-Bhoi, West Garo Hills, East Garo Hills, North Garo Hills, South Garo Hills and South-West Garo Hills. It is a hilly state well-known for its beautiful landscape, heavy rainfall, rich biodiversity and a variety of plants, mammals and birds. The significance of this state lies in the presence of diverse indigenous culture with a number of scheduled tribes including Khasi, Jaintia, Garo, Biate, Koch, Rabha, Hajong, Bodo, Dalu, Man, and Banai. However, the main tribes which dominate this region are Khasi, Jaintia and Garo, settled in Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills, respectively. All these tribes have their own traditional indigenous cultures with their living heritage. Worshiping of ancestral spirits has an important place in Khasi society. Rites involved in such ancestral worships not only involve different types of prayers but also performance of animal sacrifice. According to Khasi belief, sacrifice of animals along with food offering to ancestor is necessary not only to appease the deceased but also to get blessings. According to Khasi belief system, the spirits of ancestors have supernatural power and are next to God. Therefore, this tribe offers food in the form of animal sacrifice to the ancestral spirits. Sacrifice of animals like goat, pig and fowl becomes an important part of the ritual. It is a strong belief of Khasi community that the rituals and rites would be incomplete if an animal is not sacrificed. On the other hand, the ancestral spirits might get disappointed in the absence of sacrifice. Cock is, in particular, important for the Khasis. The symbol of Seng Khasi, the followers of traditional religion, is cock. They believe that the sacrifice of cock can save them from darkness. The present paper deals with the aspect of animal sacrifices during the ancestral worship by Khasis.

Methodology

The author recorded the evidence for the animal sacrifices by observing one of the ancestral worship ceremonies performed by the Khasis at Ummat Village, Ri-Bhoi District by Sten and Makodoh clan of Khasis on 13th and 14th March 2015. The author did not directly participate in any of the activities but observed and carefully recorded all the proceedings with a view to obtaining a systematic account of the behaviour of the Khasi community. The data was recorded in the form of field notes, voice and video recordings, and digital photographs. Apart from this, published literature related to the ancestral worship ceremonies of the Khasis were also referred to understand the ethnographic data documented by the present author. However, it is important to note here that very few written records related to different tribal cultures of Meghalaya are available. In fact, almost all the communities of the state have rare written records about their traditional cultures. For instance, there was no written scripture of Khasis before the advent of the

British period. Almost all the traditional ritual and rites have been passed orally from one generation to the other, and the same tradition can be seen even today too. Of the available literature, majorities are in Khasi language and very few are in English. The present author has taken references from a few of these published literatures for this paper.

The Khasis

The Khasis are permanent settlers in Meghalaya at present. The Khasis are comprised of various sub-groups such as *Khynriem*, *War-Khasi*, *War-Jaintia*, *Bhoi* and *Synteng* or *Pnar*. They are identified mainly on the basis of their settlement pattern (Mitri 2016). The upland zone of the central tract of Meghalaya is occupied by *Khynriem*, and the southern steep zone is occupied by *War-Khasi* in Khasi Hills District. The *War-Jaintia* occupy low elevated lying belt and *Synteng* or *Pnar* occupy the eastern uplands in Jaintia Hills Districts. The northern slope of the central part of the state is occupied by *Bhoi* in Ri-Bhoi District. It is believed that the Khasis migrated from the Southeast Asian countries. Their migration from the east can be accepted on the basis of a number of stories present in their oral tradition, and also from their linguistic affinity (Mitri 2016). Their language is originated from Mon-Khmer, which belongs to Austro-Asiatic group. The Khasis like to call them '*Hynniew – trep*' or people of the 'Seven Huts' and trace their origin from the 'Seven Huts' (Kharshiing 2016: 123).

The social structure of this community is comprised of clan, sub-clans and family. In Khasi language, the term *Kur* is used for clan, *Kpoh* for sub-clan and *Iing* for family. There are many clans among Khasis which trace their descent from a single mother known as *Ka Iawbei Tynrai*. According to this ethnic group, *Ka Iawbei Tynrai* is the ancestress of the whole clan. The sub-clans or *Kpoh* are believed to be descendants of one great grandmother known as *Ka lawbei Tymmen*, and the family or *Iing* are believed to be descendants from the ancestress known as *Ka Iawbei Khyraw*. As Khasis believe themselves as descendants from ancestress, they follow matrilineal society. This is a distinct identity of this tribe. However, it does not mean that the males have no values in the society. In Khasi society, the males are also respected since ancient times. The ancestral father *U Thawlang* and *U Suidnia* are the eldest maternal uncles of the clan and are deeply respected. The clans are bound together by strict ties of religion, ancestor worship and funeral rite for those who continue their traditional tribal religion (Syiemleh 1994).

At present, a majority of the Khasis follow the Christianity. The impact of Christianity can be seen in various aspects of Khasi traditional cultures leading into the degradation of a number of cultural values. In fact, a large number of traditional practices are on the verge of extinction. However, there are few people who still follow the traditional beliefs and practice traditional rituals and rites.

Ancestral worship among the Khasis

The Khasis believe in one supreme God, in addition to having faith in spirits for both good and evil ones. In spiritual beliefs of the Khasis, one of the significant spirits is the ancestral spirit and this should be worshiped to have a peaceful life. Ancestral worship basically deals with a communication between the dead and their descendants. In fact, ancestral worship in the form of such communications, is a universal phenomenon, and may be a key to understand the universality of religious beliefs. In the history of religious ideas such worship can be noted amongst many people whether they differ ethnically or culturally (Chowdhury 1998). In fact, ancestors are particularly important to indigenous societies leading to a large number of social traditions (Steadman *et al.* 1996). Ancestral worship can be of various kinds depending on a community's belief. It is important to note here that, in addition to ancestor worship, the Khasis also practice various kinds of rituals for other aspects of life such as marriage, pregnancy and childbirth.

While almost all the tribes or communities living in Meghalaya believe in ancestral spirits, Khasis practice ancestral worship in a different manner. Erecting stones as memorial stones is one such act which differentiates their belief system from other tribes. The custom of ancestor worship as practiced by the Khasis resembles that of the Chinese and Japanese, and does not seem to have been practiced by other tribes (Shadap-Sen 1981). Due to the erecting of such memorial stones in ancestral worship, such practices are often associated with the megalithic culture. Therefore, before discussing about ancestral worship of Khasis, it becomes important to throw a brief light on the megalithic culture of the Khasis.

The megalithic culture of Khasis can be considered as a living tradition. While the practice of erecting stones as memorial stone has stopped at present, other rituals associated with ancestral worship are still going on. The erection of megalithic structures by the Khasi community had both socio-economic and socio-religious significance. A large number of stone structures or megalithic structures can be seen in three districts namely Khasi, Jaintia and Ri-Bhoi. These structures are made of large undressed stone blocks. The large numbers of megalithic structures all over the Khasi-Jaintia region created a curiosity and attracted many British scholars such as H. Walters (1832), Leut. H. Yule (1842), H.H. Godwin-Austen (1872), C.B. Clarke (1874), and P.R.T. Gordon (1914). The megalithic monuments of this region fascinated them and these scholars tried to study these structures. They recorded the practices associated with these structures and also the cultural relevance of the monuments at the time when much of the traditional practices were still surviving in an undisturbed cultural atmosphere (Mitri 2016). Native scholars such as David Roy (1936), Cecile Mawlong (1996), and Marco B. Mitri (2016) also worked on various aspects of megalithic cultures of Khasis.

Although structurally megaliths of Khasi hills are similar to those found in Europe, other parts of India and Southeast Asia, yet there are significant differences in methods and rituals connected with the erection of stones. Typologically, the megalithic structures erected by the Khasis can be divided into five types. These are standing stones, flat table

stones, stone circles, stone cremation platforms and stone cists. In archaeological terms, upright or standing stones are called menhirs, and flat table stones are dolmens. Menhirs are very common in Khasi Hills. Locally, standing stones are known as *Maw-Shynrang* and considered as male stones, while dolmens or flat stones are known as *Maw-Kynthei* and considered as female stones. There are variations in these menhirs and dolmens. These variations may be due to their erection by different clans and their construction for various purposes. Probably different clans erected stones in a different way to give some sort of individuality to these structures. A proper scientific and systematic documentation of these megalithic structures in these areas may be able to through more light on the reasons behind this.

A group of such memorial stones, known as “*mawbyinna*” in Khasi, consists of 3 to 12 upright stones or menhirs with flat table stone or dolmens in front. According to Shadap-Sen (1981), the three types of stone monuments (e.g. menhirs, dolmens and cists) are closely connected with each other. He further noticed that in case of a group of megalithic structures, the menhirs are always combined with a dolmen, if it is a memorial stone. And, the stone cist is always located near menhirs and dolmens. The table stone in front of menhirs are ascribed to as *Iaw tymmen* or *Iawbei Kpoh* or *Iawbei Khyrrow*, the ancestress. The erections of megalithic stone by Khasis were for various purposes. Mawlong (1996) and Mitri (2016) classified the stone structures erected by the Khasis into two types: the funerary stone or *Mawbyinna Niam* and memorial stone or *Mawbynnanam*. The funerary stones have different names based on rituals and place. The funerary stone erected by Khasis are: (i) *Mawlynti* or path stone, (ii) *Mawkjat* or stone of foot (iii) *Mawksing*, or drum stone, (v) *Maw Kait* or stone of banana offering (vi) *Maw Klim* or stone adultery, (vii) *Maw Umkoi* or purificatory stone, (viii) *Kpep* or platform of cremation (xi) *Mawsyieng* or bone repositories (Mawlong 1996). *Mawbyinna Niam* is erected to proclaim the completion of the funeral rites and rituals pertaining to the bone placement ceremony (Mitri 2016). According to Mitri (2016), the highest percentage of megalithic monuments in Khasi hills is found to be associated mainly with the mortuary practice and therefore directly linked with funerary rituals of the people.

There is another group of memorial stones or stone monuments known as *Mawbyinna Nam* in Khasi language. This group is quite different than those associated with mortuary practices or funeral rites of the people. This group includes: (a) *Mawbyinna* - for important events, (b) *Mawbri* - to demarcate private land, (c) *Mawsam* - to show junction of two lands, (d) *Mawsyiem* - to honour the dead chief, (e) *Mawiabei* - for the ancestress of chief, (f) *Mawknimawiwabei* - for maternal uncles and female ancestress, (g) *Mawpudmawpyrsa* - for demarcating boundaries of maternal nephew, (h) *Mawthawlang* - for progenitor of the clan, (i) *Mawkiawkha* - for paternal ancestress, (j) *Maw- khunkha* - for decedents of the male relatives (Mawlong 1996). These types of stone monuments are ascribed to both the maternal and the paternal sides of the family or clan. Such megalithic structures of Khasis can be associated to ancestral worship.

The Bone replacement (or burial) ceremonies of the Khasis

As noted above, ancestral worship is one of the essential features in traditional belief of Khasis. It is generally a worship of the dead spirits to appease the deceased ancestors by offering them food and sacrifice. Memorial stones constructed during the process were some kind of shrines to the ghosts of deceased chiefs or ancestors (Chowdhury 1998). Gordon (1914) stated that it is interesting to note that the ancient Shinto cult of Japan possess some features in common with the ancestor worship of the Khasis. Ancestral worship is a traditional faith of Khasis as they believe in the continuation of survival of a dead person even after his/her death. The Khasis evidently believe that dead ancestors, freed from the earthly bondage, are somehow elevated to higher supernatural status, and capable of aiding the mortals materially in times of crisis (Chowdhury 1998). The main Khasi ancestor worship is associated with the worship of “*Ka Lawbei*” (the mother of clan), “*U Thawlang*” (the father of the clan) and *U Suidnia* (the eldest maternal uncle). According to Natarajan (1977), it is not clear whether supplication in these worship was to please general semi-deities or to a particular first ancestor of a Khasi’s own *matrilineage*. Each sub-clan of Khasi has its own ancestral mother. The flat stone or dolmen near menhirs was erected in honour of “*Ka Lawbei*”. In honor of the first mother, offering of food and sacrificing of animal was a custom. Interestingly, performance of rituals and rites differ in different groups of Khasis.

The bone replacement ceremony performed during the ancestral worship is one of the important customs and rites of Khasis. This ceremony is performed in three stages. In the first stage, the bones and ashes of the deceased, after cremation, are kept in small cairns or *Mawshyieng*. The second stage involves the shifting of the same to the sub-clan ossuary or *Mawphew*, and the last stage involves the placement of bones and ashes in the clan ossuary or *Mawbah*. It is the final resting place of the bones of all the members of the clan. It is the ossuary for the bones of all the members of all the lineages descended from a common ancestress (Roy 1963). While the last stage of bone replacement ceremony occupies a significant position in the tradition of Khasi community, the clan ossuary or *Mawbah* is now rarely practiced by Khasis. According to Gordon (1914), it is due partly to the difficulty that exists in obtaining general agreement amongst different members of the clans, and partly due to the considerable expense it involves. Another probability could be due to relocation or migration of family or a clan.

One such rare occasion came on 13-14 March 2015, when the last stage of bone replacement ceremony was performed by the Khasis at Ummat Village, Ri-Bhoi district by Sten and Makodoh clan of Khasis. The rarity of such ceremonies can be understood from the fact that this last stage of bone replacement ceremony in this village was performed after a gap of 50 years by the people. The author attended the ceremony to systematically record as much data as was possible. Sacrificing of domestic animals was an important part of this ceremony and the same has been dealt in detail in the following section.

Sacrifices of animals

Animals play an important role in the life of Khasi tribe. If we look at their food habits in the present context, then we find that beef, pork, chicken, and fish are the regular item in their meals. In addition to their use as livestock animals and other husbandry practices by Khasi community, animals are also used for sacrifices in worship practices related to ancestral worship. The word sacrifice come from Latin word *sacrificium* denoting the act of killing an animal or human being as an offering to a deity (Carrasco 2003). The main purpose of the sacrifice is to develop a relationship with supernatural in return of welfare of the people performing the sacrifice. The practice of animal sacrifices is one of the important practices since ancient period. Irrespective of religions, sacrifices of animal and traditional rituals associated with it can be seen in India in a number of places even today. In fact, sacrifice of animals and associated rituals is a worldwide phenomenon. It is a general belief that some rituals, particularly those associated with ancestral worship cannot be completed without sacrifice. Therefore, till today, such sacrifices continued to be practiced.

Sacrifice of domestic animals and offering of rice are the two integral parts of rite and rituals of Khasis during the bone replacement ceremony. Therefore, in case of ancestral veneration of Khasis, the process mainly consists of offerings of food and animal sacrifices in the name of the deceased. According to some local people, such offerings to the deceased are a way to give feelings of mortal life to the dead. Some people, on the other hand, believe that the practice of such ancestral worship is a way to offer respect and to appease the deceased for the welfare of the family or clan. The Khasis believe that offering and sacrifice of animals to the deceased ancestor aid the family of clan by blessing and help.

A cock (*Gallus gallus*) is generally sacrificed as an offering for the first mother “*Ka Lawbei*” to settle family quarrels or conflicts amongst the members of the same clan. It is believed by the Khasis that domestic problems occur due to unhappiness of “*U Thawlang*”, the husband of “*Ka Lawbei*”, who is the first father. And, hence they require sacrificing a cock to appease the first father. In fact, in Khasi traditional belief, cock plays a very important role as it is believed that cock acted as a mediator between god and humans. As myth and legendary story of Khasi goes, the cock saved humans from the era of darkness. According to this story, there were three eras (Golden Era, Darkness Era and New Era) in ancient period. The Golden Era was the period of peace and happiness where human beings were in good terms with god and other living and non-living beings. The humans used to communicate with god with the golden ladder, from where the ancestors of Khasis used to go to heaven and come back to earth. In other words, this ladder acted as a heavenly umbilical cord. This ladder is believed to be located at *Lum Sohpetbneng* (Fig. 1) and still exists, according to Khasis. The second period was the period of darkness. During this period, humans started to question the existence of God and started to have problems with God. Consequently, God became angry on humans. However, humankind soon realised their mistakes and tried to restore

their relationship with God. But, no one came to help them and it was only a cock that not only came to help but also became a sacrificial item for the appeasement of God and for the good and welfare of human. It is said that this act of sacrifice appeased God and he forgave the humans. And, thus began the era known as New Era. And, since that time, the sacrifice of cock is performed.



Fig. 1: U Sohpet Bneng

In ceremony dealing with feeding to the spirits, pigs (*Sus domesticus*) are also given as offerings. Pigs are generally sacrificed in rituals over the ossuary of dolmens associated with clan cromlech. Another animal that is generally scarified is goat (*Capra hircus*). Hence three animals (cock, pig and goat) are generally sacrificed during the process of ancestral worship. And, whether it is to appease or to make the spirit as mortal being, sacrifice of animals is an essential component for Khasis. According to Khasi belief, it is their tradition to follow the traditional culture, otherwise there might be chances of various problems arising in the family or clan. It has been observed that out of fear or as religious belief, the Khasis are preserving their traditional belief and rituals.

A sacrifice to the spirit of deceased ancestor is generally assisted by the living member of the clan. While the importance of cock as a sacrificial animal has already been cited above, pigs and goats are probably sacrificed due to two main reasons. First, these animals are easily available. And, secondly, these animals are not expensive to buy. However, it is not compulsory that a person either has to sacrifice any of these animals. The choice of animal to be sacrificed also depends on one's self wish. The animal to be sacrificed is also chosen on the basis of the deceased person's likes or dislikes.

The sacrifice at Ummat village took place in the midnight. Before sacrifice, various rituals were performed. These rituals included sprinkling of water and rice flour or salt on the goat to be sacrificed. Then the goat was sacrificed after taking the name of the

clan ancestors. A similar set of procedures and rituals was performed before sacrificing a cock and a pig too (Fig. 2-4). Perhaps it is for purification of the goat and cock. It is important to note here that other than sacrifice in ritual of ancestral veneration, sacrifice is also performed in other rituals.



Fig. 2: Sacrifice of goat by Makodoh clan

Archaeological remains of Meghalaya

It is to be noted that the state of Meghalaya is known not only for its beautiful landscape and indigenous cultures, but also for a large numbers of archaeological and historical remains scattered all over the state. The archaeological records range from prehistoric to historical periods. For instance, stone tools associating with Neolithic period can be found at Selbalgre, Thebronggre, and Misimagre in Garo Hills, in addition to those which have been reported from Khasi Hills and Ri-Bhoi. Monuments associated to Megalithic culture such as menhirs, and cromlechs are spread in a large number mainly in Khasi, Jaintia and Ri-Bhoi Districts. Nartiang, in Jaintia Hills, is one of the noteworthy evidences for archaeology having a group of megalithic monuments. Historical remains can be found at Syndai, Jaintia Hills and include old temples and royal bathing pool of



Fig. 3: Sacrifice of cock by Sten clan

Jaintia King. A few sites from this region have also been subjected to excavation. Recently excavated prehistoric sites are Law nongthroh (Mitri 2018), and Misimagre (Marak *et al.* 2017). Excavation at the historical site at Wadagokgre (Sharma 1993) in Bhaitbari, West Garo Hills revealed mud-brick *stupa*, temples and fortification wall. It is important to note that the site of Wadagokgere at Bhaitbari was partially excavated, and there is a need of a large scale excavation along with detailed systematic and scientific study of the artefacts excavated from the site. Such a systematic study will definitely provide valuable insights on the historical records of this region.

The above discussion clearly shows that archaeology and heritage sites are not new to the people of Meghalaya. In fact, Sharma (1975) stated that the cultural relics of Meghalaya may give valuable information as far as the cultural history of this part of India is concerned. However, there is still a need to do more archaeological work in this region. Compared to other regions of India, archaeological researches in this region are greatly lacking. With the development of archaeology as an interdisciplinary subject, the study of animal bones from excavated sites becomes significant to understand past subsistence strategies or past human-animal interactions. However, it is disappointing to



Fig. 4: Sacrifice of pig by Makodoh clan

say that not even a single excavated site in the state has revealed the evidence of animal skeletal fragments.

Conclusion

The Khasi tribes are permanent inhabitants of Meghalaya, who were originally migrated from Southeast Asian countries. The Khasis believe in deceased ancestor worship for the welfare of the clan. Therefore, beside other beliefs, the ancestral worship is significant in traditional rituals of the Khasis. The performance can be periodical or during the period of necessity or distress. The uniqueness of this community in ancestral worship is the erection of megalithic structures as memorial stones. While most of the tribes in Meghalaya believe in clan deities, not all of them practice the erection of stone structure as memorial stone. For instance, the Koch community, one of the prominent tribes in Meghalaya, does believe in clan deity but do not practice the erection of stone structure. At present, the practices of erection of stone monuments have been stopped by the Khasi community too but the rituals and rites are still being performed by them. Consequently, these rituals are considered as a living megalithic culture by a number of

scholars. In respect of rituals and rites, this community does not have written record, and they practice oral tradition.

The present study provides an understanding of the role of animals in some of the ancestral rituals of Khasi community. More such studies are required to be conducted in the region which has great implications for the archaeology and ethnography of the Khasi in particular and Northeast India in general. Some of such implications are discussed below.

1. While some of the traditional practices are still performed in Khasi society, the people who are still following these indigenous beliefs are few in number. There is no doubt that such people are playing an important role in continuing their traditional values and beliefs. But, these followers still practice the custom of oral tradition, and this acts as a setback for the preservation of their traditional values. Rituals and rites are passed from one generation to other generation orally, and there is an urgent need to record such oral traditions. For instance, the bone replacement ceremony performed at Ummat village and recorded by the present author can be taken as an example. As informed by the local people of the village, this ceremony was performed after a gap of fifty years. In the absence of any written record and a large gap of fifty years, a number of changes occurred in performing different rituals. This indicates that even these practices are facing danger of extinction and will vanish forever if not recorded properly. The old generation is dying and younger generation is gradually losing their interest in practices like these. While some old people still want to preserve their custom of oral tradition, there is a need to systematically record practices like these as soon as possible. Otherwise, these traditions will slowly but steadily vanish forever. In other words, these indigenous traditional ritual practices are disappearing fast and should be protected and documented as soon as possible. In addition, the Khasi community itself should make deliberate efforts to make aware of this tradition to future generations.
2. As noted above, the excavations at archaeological sites in Meghalaya have not revealed any evidence of animal skeletal fragments. The acidic soil covers a larger part of the state and is not suitable for the preservation of animal skeletal fragments in this region (for details see, Goyal and Koch *in press*). While, in the absence of excavated faunal remains, it is difficult to understand the role of animals in the past, ethnographic studies like the present one can help in understanding the human-animal interactions of the tribal people of Meghalaya in the present context. This, in turn, may prove a valuable tool to understand past human-animal interactions in the region. To understand the traditional culture of a community or tribe, one cannot ignore the role and significance of animals in their life. There is a strong connection between animals and the tribal people as their main occupation

is cultivation, and animals also play an important role in their diet. The tribal communities in this region are strong believers in following a number of indigenous traditions. Therefore, utilisation of animals in the life of tribal people can be traced by conducting ethnographic researches with a view to reconstruct the past cultural life of these communities.

This paper is an attempt to understand the role of animal sacrifice conducted during the ancestral worship ceremony by the Khasis with the help of an ethnographic work conducted in one of the regions of Meghalaya. However, it is important to stress here that further research needs to be done to have more clear insight regarding the same.

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Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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