

ARLENG ဒီရင်



ARLENG

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ARLENG is a book on ethno-linguistic study written by Sarthe Teron Milik on Karbi language (also known as Mikir or Arleng) . A script is for writing the language is introduced in this book.

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PREFACE

I was born in an Arleng family in the beginning of eighties in this century. Birthplace Rongphar where earlier ruled by Timung Rongphar, the Bangthe under Ason Dumura Recho. So my village was an Arleng village and having a primary school in Assamese medium. Comparing to today's trends I started my school vary late directly in 1st standard skipping the nursery and pre-nursery play schools. My uncle was the head master with a young Bodo lady for his assistance. So, except the assistant teacher, all were belong to Arleng community but we had to learn in Assamese medium which many of us had never encountered with the language. We had to give special Arleng terms to the mathematical functions like addition and subtraction etc. for better understandings. But that was confined to our study circle and never become official even today. When I reached to 5th standard I had to learn again two new languages i.e. Hindi and English. So till then my own mother tongue Arleng Alam was missing from my curriculum. So in the summer vacation (in 1993) I decided to make up a set of alphabet series out of the three languages by making some small modifications. However after preservation of three years, lost somewhere in the old school books. So I have made another version in my 8th standard (i.e in 1996). All those were done without any study of linguistics with just my school knowledge. In the year 2004, I have made another version of the script with little modifications keeping view the fonetic inventory of Arleng language. I even made font for computing for the first time. Thus I started sending to various agencies and individuals in 2004 to 2009 for vetting of the script in a booklet form. Till date no single acknowledgment or comment I have received. So this time again with few modification of the scripts, I decided to make public in form of a book with articles narrating the brief migration history of Arleng, some notes on lexicon, phonetic inventory etc. I also have made the font for the same modification i.e. second version of Arleng font for the ease of computing. In the year 2014 I again sent

this my pre-press copy of 'ARLENG' to KLA for vetting. I did not get positive nod for adoption, rather got reply that KLA has resolved to stick in Roman script and no other script shall be adopted.

For scheduling our language, our language must have speakers, books and print media, script for writing etc. It has been noticed that those languages which using Roman as writing script for their languages are lagging back in the scheduling process. Khasi, Lushai (Mizo), Garo etc. languages are the examples. The speakers of the above mentioned languages mostly educated by the American missionaries in the British era in English in Roman script. The English medium schooling even in the present era accounts a large number. So it is a natural gravity towards Roman script and the west and so do not want to avoid Roman script even for writing own languages. Most of Karbis also educated in English medium schools since the British era and even today. So we are also not a contrary to the speakers of the above mentioned languages.

On the other hand look at the languages like Bodo, Meitei (Manipuri) and Santali. They use some Indic scripts and their own creation. Bodo adopted Devnagari, Meitei used Eastern Devnagari (Bengali) but later adopted their own and Santali adopted their own recent creation 'Ol chiki'. All they are just scheduled who were with us in the race of scheduling of languages.

Our language must adopt some Indic script or own creation. Own creation will be better as many of us are anti Indic (as found in online survey in social media) and don't like Devnagari or Eastern Devnagari. Tangsa of India and Myanmar also created their own recently and going to have their own Unicode script. So why Arleng (Karbi) language should lag behind? So I have decided to publish my book for vetting of the script by the peoples themselves. Let every individual analyse and give opinions to KLA or any other authority of our language.

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ABOUT ARLENG (MIKIR/KARBI), IT'S MIGRATION ROUT AND HABITATION

Arleng is an ethno-linguistic community inhabited in the central hilly areas of the North-Eastern India. They are also known as Mikir or Karbi. In the constitution order of India they were known as Mikir however now amended as Karbi. The term Mikir or Karbi believed to given by other community to the Arlengs as they always call themselves as 'Arleng', which literally means 'man' in Arleng language. 'Ason' is also another term which is also used interchangeably with 'Arleng', 'Karbi' or 'Mikir'. However, here the term 'Ason' means the King and his council. 'Mikir' may be similar type of nomenclature existed in the region in naming the other ethnic communities, by way of adding 'mi' which means man as prefix or sometimes as suffix like Mizo, Zoumi, Mitei (Meitei), Miyah, Mising, Miri, Misimi, Miji etc. Hence 'Mikir' literally means 'Kir man'.

The major population of Arleng is living in Karbi Anglong and Kamrup (Metropolitan) districts of Assam. Karbi Anglong district is administered as per the provision of sixth schedule of constitution of India as Arlengs in Karbi Anglong district are recognized as scheduled tribe. Other than the above mentioned places reasonable Arleng population found in the areas like Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya, South west of Marigaon, Nagaon district bordering with Karbi Anglong district, Sonitpur, Golaghat and Dima Hasao districts of Assam, Papum Pare district of Arunachal Pradesh, Dimapur district of Nagaland. Arlengs are also in overseas in the countries like Bangladesh and Myanmar (Burma). In Bangladesh they are found in the international border with India (Sylhet district) near Karimganj of Assam. In Myanmar they are found near international border with Mizoram (India). However they no more retain their language but speak Burmese and adopted Buddhism instead of their traditional belief.

The Arlengs believed to be migrated from central Asia like the other Mongolian ethnic groups in the South East Asia. Arlengs believed to have come down towards present location via one of the two routes given following:-

Route-I:- The Arlengs came down the course of Yarlung Tsangpo (The Brahmaputra) from Tibet and then entered Arunachal Pradesh of India via one of the northern passes of Bhutan and Tibet. Then they entered the North-East frontier of present Assam along the northern bank of Brahmaputra till they reached to Kaziranga national park on the other bank of the river. The Arlengs probably came down through the northern bank of the river and so some of the left behind families still live in Papum Pare district of Arunachal Pradesh. They might earlier live in the valley but afterwards driven away by the other ethnic group (the Boro-Garo-Konyak language group speakers) to the present hilly areas. They spread towards south and west and started their earliest civilization by settling down in the vast Kolong and Kopili valley. They might have crossed the Brahmaputra somewhere near present Biswanath Chariali of Sonitpur district of Assam. Afterwards they were withdrawn from the Kopili valley by Boro-Garo-Konyak speakers (specially the Dimasas/Kacharis) and spread away towards nearby hilly areas i.e. present Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao and Khasi/Jaintia hills. Some of them escaped towards west and formed Lothebo Longri (Dumura Longri /Desh Dumura).

Route-II: - As per Mosera tradition in Arleng folklore, the migration route is clearly narrated with the help of place, kingdom and other ethnic communities. The place or kingdom names like Lasa, Arakan, Muring Murong, Mukindong etc. and ethnic names like Lepcha, Kuki, Chin, Tai, Barmi etc. This clearly indicates that the Arlengs came through Chindwin-Irrawaddy valley and then only crossed the Arakan range somewhere in present Nagaland and

Manipur, Nagaland and Manipur was a corridor of migration since the age of Mon-Khmer migration. So from these migration. So from these migration memories we can opine that Arleng came from somewhere in the west and follow the Yarlung Tsangpo and then entered into Irrawaddy valley somewhere in Arunachal Pradesh and northern Myanmar. Then they entered Assam through the Manipur-Nagaland corridor via present Dimapur and settled entire Kolong-Kopili plain and Kaziranga. The etymology of Kaziranga is derived from Arleng term 'Kajir pe Arong'. Waiposong (Waisong) Terang might be the king or leader of Arlengs who ruled the whole Kolong-Kopili valley. At the time of Dimasa drive out, few families crossed Brahmaputra and settled on the northern bank. Some of them had reached to present Papum Pare district of Arunachal Pradesh. The majority fled to nearby hilly areas and specially, Jayantia Kingdom was thronged. There they live together with Jayantias for several years. Thong Teron (Thong Nokbe) The legendary Arleng hero could become a general for the Kingdom.

Arleng (Karbi) Kiwang is a folk tale in Lothebo Longri that can be compared to the 'Moserá' in the hills counterpart. In Arleng Kiwang few undated events are mentioned. There may be deformities of the actual event but carries the basic aim of the folklore or folktales. Few such events are: - 1. Arleng crossed the 'Him Anglong' (mountain of rice powder) which no doubt meant the Himalayan range 2. Arleng crossed a mighty river 'Langpe' with the help of Teron Longso (Toron Longso po atomo). 'Langpe' might be the Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy or Chindwin in course of their migration. 3. Arlengs were climbing 'Inlong kelok' to touch and play with the sun and the moon (Chiklo-Arni kilemdam atomo). But when they reached to the top of the 'Inlong kelok' they could not touch the sun and moon but still far away. They did not retreat back to their place but moved down the 'Inlong kelok' on the other side. Here 'inglong kelok' might again be the Himalayan range.

Some scholar wants to relate the origin of Arleng from the west Asia. The same way the Mech are also with Melchizedek (Malki Tzedek) who followed the same route via the Hindu Kush-Karakoram-Himalayan range.

The migration route of Arlengs can be proved by the ancient migration waves of other Mongoloid races speaking Tibeto-Burman languages to the region. The origin is believed to be western Tibet of China near the origin of Yang Tse Kiang and Hwang Ho rivers. From there the migration wave followed the down the course of the rivers of Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra), Chindwin and Irrawaddy and they entered to India and Myanmar. In the ancient times every ethnic groups of the Tibeto-Burman speakers migrated along with the river valleys one after another towards North Eastern India and Myanmar. One ethnic community was driven out by the other stronger one and occupied the plain valley areas. The weaker community settled in the hilly areas nearby the valleys. So the domination area was based on river but not like the present day well identified political boundary.

In case of North East India and Myanmar the earliest inhabitant might be the Mon-Khmer speakers. In Eastern India the Khasi and the Mundas might be the earliest inhabitant of the region. It is to be noted that at that time the present Bangladesh was almost under water and later it was named as Eastern Red Sea by the Phoenicians.

After the Khasis and the Mundas in the region, the Kuki-Chin-Naga language group speakers came down through the Brahmaputra and Irrawaddy valley. The Arlengs were the pioneer to enter the the region from the north-east. Garos (the Garudas in the vedic age) are the example to spread out from the west to eastern part of the Meghalaya plateau. In the mean time the Dravidian minimize the density of the Mon-Khmer speakers in the Chota Nagpur areas.

Mundas are encircled only in the Chota Nagpur area as the Khasis in the eastern Meghalaya plateau.

The other groups of the Kuki-Chin-Naga speakers followed the Arlengs in the valleys and due to various clash and domination move southwards to Patkai/Arakan range.

The Kuki-Chin-Naga speakers were followed by the Bodo-Garo-Kanyak language group speakers. They believed to be come through the Irrawaddy-Chindwin valley and crossed the Patkoi (Patkai) range to enter the valleys of the North-Eastern India and Bangladesh. Some other wants to say that they came through Nepal-Sikkim along with other Himalayan language group speakers. Folk tales of some of the ethnics in the groups support this belief. They almost occupied all the plain areas of the region and established vast kingdom. In the later time they fragmented into various politico-linguistic groups and produced different ethnic identities of the group. The Bodo-Garo-Kanyak group speakers were known as Mlecchha, Kirata, Danav, Daisu etc in the Vedic age. Some scholar opines that Mlechha (Mech) are originally belongs to the Melchizedek (Malki Tzedek) of the West Asia like the Phoenicians. This is one of the supports to the belief that Bodo-Garo-Kanyak speakers came from the North West. This connection is proven by the worship pattern of the Mech dynasty in the ancient Assam and Bengal.

Afterwards in the beginning of the Vedic age of India the Phoenician were driven out by the Vedic Aryans towards East and believed to be today's ancestors of the Kochs/Koch Rajbansis (Kovachha, Uttara-Kovachha, Ghata-Kovachha, Pani-Kovachha etc.) of Assam and Bengal. The Phoenicians came to power in the region and took over the powers from the Mech and ruled the Brahmaputra valley for years. The valley had always conflict with the Eastern-Himalayan language speaking group right from the ages of

Bodo-Garo-Kanyak in the region and continued till to the British age. The Phoenicians broke the strength of the Bodo-Garo-Kanyak groups. In the mean time various kingdoms were set up by the Bodo-Garo-Kanyak groups. The Arleng had conflict specially, with the Dimasas in the Kolong-Kopili valley. In the later times Arlengs were driven out to the nearby hilly areas (Rengma hills and Khasi hills etc.). Most of the Arleng population moved towards Khasi hills and took shelter of the Jayantiya (Khasi) King. However a faction of Arlengs came out of Jayantiya rule and established new Arleng Kingdom with capital at Socheng.

In the mean time many other groups occupied the Chindwin-Irrawaddy valley one after another. The weaker groups are always driven out towards Patkai-Arakan range and eastern hilly areas of the valley. This is the reason why many ethnic groups live in the Patkai-Arakan region. Present Nagaland and Manipur State have the highest number of ethnic groups in the region being geographically so small place.

After the Phoenicians the Vedic Brahmas intruded in the region and begin to change the socio-religious beliefs of the people of the region. In course of times they were part of administration of the kings with the portfolio of royal priest and in others offices.

The Brahmans were followed by the Kayasthas in the region who came from Bengal. In the mean time Bengal was inhabited by Indo-Aryans. The Kayasthas were appointed as officers under the kings in the region. In later age many Kayasthas become rulers. The Baro Bhuiyas are identified as Kayasthas. Before the Baro Bhuiyas came, Arlengs were ruling in the area from the Kolong River (Kaziranga area) in the east, to Rani (Guwahati) in the west and from Brahmaputra River in the north, to Jayantia/Khyrim kingdom in the south. Arlengs of this portion were not much affected at the time of Dimasa drive out. Arimatta an Arleng king was one of the rulers of

the area. However many places were fragmented into the control of small petty chiefs due to Dimasa's torn out. Many war fought against the Dimasas and few oral history recorded. The tale of Tumung Rongpharpe (Rongpharpi Rongbe) and heroic defeat of Jongal Bolohu etc. are few examples. In the mean time a faction of Arlengs arrived from Kolong kopili valey. This faction established Lothebo Longri (Dimaruah /Dimoria/Dumura) by the king Lothebo (Thebo Recho). Arimatta (or his descendant) has given a piece of Promised Land (ong kerai adim) to Lothebo in the south western portion of his kingdom. Some says that Lothebo came from Kolong-Kopili valley towards west at the time of Kachari drive out and Kamrupa king gave him land of area comprising from Kachari kingdom in the east, Rani (Guwahati) in the west, Brahmaputra in the north and Jayantia/Khyrim kingdom in the south. It is to be noted that the King of Rani and Beltola who were belong to Arleng community were under the suzerainty of King of Kamrupa for many times. In whatever manner they came the area of rule might be true and shrunk into smaller due to oppression of the Tiwas (Lalung) and later by the Baro Bhuiyas. The Tiwas are sister ethnic group of Dimasa and withdrew Arlengs from the Present Marigaon-Nagaon plain. The destruction of Kumoi kingdom is one of the examples. The royal family is steal leaving in Lothebo Longri with surname of 'Kumai' or 'Rongpe Kumai'. The Baro Bhuiya followed them to occupy the region and even managed to drive out the Tiwa (Gobha) king to the hilly areas in the south. Further we can guess that that the vast land was ruled by Arimatta, the ancestor of Lothebo but not himself. Arimatta was mentioned in some historical books as Kayastha which may not be true but converted him to Hindu by the Brahmans. Many of Arleng fled to Jayantia kingdom during Dimasa drive out and remained under Jayantia's suzerainty. However a faction of them returned back and established Arleng Kingdom (in present west Karbi Anglong). The newly established Arleng Kingdom was divided into three geographical divisions namely Chinthong Rongbong, Nilip Ronghang Rongbong and Amri Marlong/Mirlong Rongbong. Nilip

Ronghang Rongbong was supreme and held the capital Socheng.

The Tai Ahom entered in the eastern frontier and driven out the pre-inhabitants towards the Arunachal and Naga hills. The Rengmas entered into the Rengma hills due to Ahoms drive out and feud with the Angami Nagas. In course of time the Ahoms expanded and driven out the Kacharis from Dhansiri valley and afterwards Kolong-Kopili valley towards south west. The Dimasas had to leave Dhansiri and Kolong-Kopili valley and settled down in the Surma valley (Barak valley) piercing the Arleng population in the Northern Dima Hasao district. Many Arleng were driven out towards north as a shield by the Dimasas from the relative plain areas in the south. Some Arleng family even reached to present Karimganj and Sylhet district of Bangladesh.

The migration of Aryan Brahmins continued till the invasion by the Mughals in the region. In the Mughal age, the Mohammedans invaded in the region especially in the western part of Brahmaputra valley and began permanent settlement. In the British age many Hindu Bengalis accompanied with British for clerical and other office bearing jobs and almost all the valleys are populated by them. British also brought the Tea tribes and the Marwari traders in the region. At the time of division of India, many more Hindu Bengalis influx to the region which changed a lot in the demography of the region. In the recent times the labour class Biharis also have migrated to the region and settling down in permanently.

In whichever way the Arlengs came, they were previously settling whole Kolong-Kopili plain. The history of Arleng is not much said by the ancient neighbours. No clear record is found. That is why it is difficult to trace the early settlement of Arlengs. However as said before, ancient domination and boundary was on the basis of river and river valleys. This is due to the only favorable transportation media was the rivers. The weakest or the earliest

comers to the place are now on the top of the hills. The late comers are in the foothills. The recent comers settle in the plain and riverbank areas. So layers of ethnic communities are formed according to the locations of hill and river. The Khasis roughly inhabited at the peak of Khasi hills. They are surrounded by Garo, Arleng, Dimasa etc. Boros are relatively in the plains. Kuch, Mohammedans, Ahoms, Bengalis are frontal and river bank areas. In the modern time the city areas are populated with Marwaris and Bengalis etc who are economically stronger enough to purchase land from the aborigines. That is the reason why the great kingdoms like Pragjyotisha, Kamrup and Ahom kingdoms etc. spoke less about Arleng being within their territory. Arleng lived in simple living with temporary settlements. They are peace loving and avoid wars. The Mosera tradition clearly speaks about it. Arleng society is self sufficient, self content and so self dependent. Hence no such remarkable communications, relations and wars etc. are found in both Arleng as well as other neighbour's history.

The Arlengs consist of five clans which are exogamy within the clans and endogamy as a whole Arleng. The Five clans are Lijang (Ingti), Hanjang (Terang/Tarang), Ejang (Inghi), Kronjang (Teron/Toron) and Tunjang (Timung/Tumung) and they are equal in social status. However, only the Ejang clan can become a king. The five clans may be originated from five villages or locality as Arleng always name their village with the clan name who established the village or the locality. However there is folktale about the origin of the five clans. In brief it is: - Kong Recho had six princes. Each of them given golden boats and let sail down the course of the Kolong River in search of their future kingdom. Five boats stuck with root of some trees and their names of kingdoms become the name of the tree accordingly. First one root 'Ingsum' tree and so become Ingti, second one of 'Arhi', so become Inghi, third one of 'Thengmung', so become Timung/Tumung, fourth one of 'Lo Toron/Teron' tree, so become Toron/Teron and fifth one by Jom Terang hem Armu (pillar

of bachelors' dormitory in Chom/Jom adobe), so become Terang. The sixth unlucky boat did not stick anywhere and so the sixth prince became 'Wosarli' (Porpoise).

There is another source of naming of clans in the 'Ajon Chingthur Alun' in a Ret Kenong Alun (songs sung at the time of hoeing at jhoom cultivation). This song illustrates how the clan names are originated and given to the particular families.

Arlengs' society is patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal in social structure. In the kinship system the marriage between bride and groom is predefined. An Arleng boy supposed to marry his maternal uncle's daughter (nihu aso).

As mentioned above, the Westen Arlengs (Hamren Subdivision) were broadly divided into three geopolitical groups namely Amri, Chinthong and Ronghang or Rongkhang. They are called Amri Rongbong, Chinthong Rongbong and Ronghang Rongbong headed by Lindokpos. Lindokpos are assisted by Pinpomar Amei. Ronghang had four Lindokpos, Chinthong had three Lindokpos and Amri had two Lindokpos. Ronghang Rongbong had the highest authority and its capital was at Socheng.

THE LOTHEBO LONGRI ARLENG (MIKIR/KARBI)

As mentioned above, the Lothebo Longri Arlengs (Dumrali/Amri/Plains Arlengs) are believed to be a faction of people fled from Kolong Kopili valey during Dimasa drive out. They moved towards west and reached Inglong Mekar and established a separate kingdom by the first king Lothebo (Thebo Recho).

According to a folk tale, at the time of Ason Kewang (at the time of migration, approximately at Dimasa drive out period) all the Arlengs escaped from Dimsas through dense jungles. On the way of escape they took rest a while in the dense jungles. Suddenly the young lot (Riso and Nimso) of the team started to chase Wo Hamlam (a wild bird) and Riso-Nimso Pholong (a kind of big grasshopper). They chased birds & grasshopper so far away from their place of rest that they couldn't find their way back to their elders. In the mean time the older lot left the place and reached Lothebo Longri leaving behind the young stars. They decided to settle down and established Lothebo Longri. It said that, the young stars left behind and so do not know much about cultures and tradition in comparison to the Lothebo Longri Arlengs. The Arleng of Karbi Anglong and other places in the eastern parts are believed to be the off springs of the young lot. It is also said that from that day the grasshopper was named as Riso-Nimso/Menso Apholong to commemorate the loss of young stars. The migrating faction of the Arleng came through a dense forest and took shelter under a Lothebo (fig tree) and planned to establish a kingdom. In some other tale, the king Lothebo was born under a Lothebo tree and hence his name was kept Lothebo. The two tales might be true at the same time, because the migrating Arleng might have taken shelter and at the same time the king Lothebo was born. In course of time Lothebo become Dimoruah, Dumura or Dimoria etc due to Assamese language influence. There

is another folk tale that, the migrating faction of Arleng came down and asked a promised land to king Arimatta. Arimatta (or may be his descendant) was maternal uncle (Ong/Nihu) of Lothebo. Lothebo was told that his maternal uncle has kept land reserve for his nephew Lothebo. So Lothebo was granted the land in the south west portion of Arimatta's kingdom. The land was called 'Ha i-ong Dim kerai' (uncle's preserved land) and in course of time become 'Hayong Demera' and then 'Dumura'. The same phrase also is the origin of the name 'Mayong'. The capital of Lothebo Longri was Bangphor (Bamphor) which was later shifted to Mitni (Mitani).

If we compare the administrative system of the both kingdoms, there are several differences arise. These are due to Arleng kingdom was established after escaping Jayantia kingdom and Lothebo Longri directly after Dimasa drive out. In the then Arleng Kingdom there was three tier administrations. At the root the Sarthes rule the villages. Several Sarthes are governed by a Habe. His area of authority was known as Longri. Such several Longris were constituted the Arleng Kingdom. The Lothebo Longri however administered in two tier administrations. The Ason Recho (Dumura Recho) was the supreme authority. The villages were ruled by Rechos, Banthes or sometimes Rongthes under the Ason Recho. The Ason Recho was assisted by two councils namely Ason Sirkep (the upper council) and the Ason Thomkep (the lower council). The Ason sirkep constituted with the nine Rechos (subordinate kings) under him. The Ason Thomkep constituted with the thirty Bangthes (chiefs/heads) under him. It is to be noted that the Rechos, Bangthes and the Rongthes function same role i.e. head or chief of the villages but differ their status. Rechos belong to the royal family of the Ason Recho and hence were given particular area to rule as a Recho. They are eligible for the membership in the upper council. The Bangthes are the founder or the establisher of the village. They are eligible for the membership in the lower council. Rongthes are the person who rules the new village after bifurcation of the old village. He is

independent to the earlier Bangthe but not eligible for the membership in the lower council i.e. Ason Thomkep. The Bangthe still represents the Ronthe's area in the council. Ason Recho appointed or gave special task to the Ason members. The Kolongpur Recho was crowned as Sar Recho (for special status) and five villages were given under him to rule. Silimor Bangthe (Senimur) was appointed as Bangthe Kong (Bor Bangthe) etc.

Lothebo Longri had many conflict with Khrim Recho (Khyrim, Khasi king) and sometimes became tributary to Khyrim. In the late middle age of Assam Lothebo Longri was tributary of Ahom and then came under British. Since then the control of Ason Recho had lost the control over the kingdom. Now after independence of India the authorities are only ceremonial and cultural parts of Lothebo Longri Arlengs.

Other than Lothebo Longri there were other Arleng kingdoms after the break down of Arimatta's kingdom. One of them is Kumoi kingdom in Present Marigaon. The royal families uprooted by the Langlus (Tiwas) still live in Lothebo longri kingdom. They use sub clan name as 'Kumai' 'Rongpe Kumai' and 'Kumai Rongpe' etc. Mayong is another kingdom in the westernmost of present Marigaon district. Beltola a kingdom in the heart of Guwahati city, the royal Arleng families were converted to Kiche (Koch). Rani kingdom, the westernmost part have no more evidence to say that it was an Arleng kingdom. Hopati Recho in Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya, who was once part of Lothebo Longri, ran away to the present location to escape from punishment of Ason Recho. Hopati Recho was independent to Ason Recho and most of the time remained under the suzerainty of the Krim Recho. All the above mentioned kingdoms belong to same cultural and linguistic group and are included in Lothebo Longri Arleng.

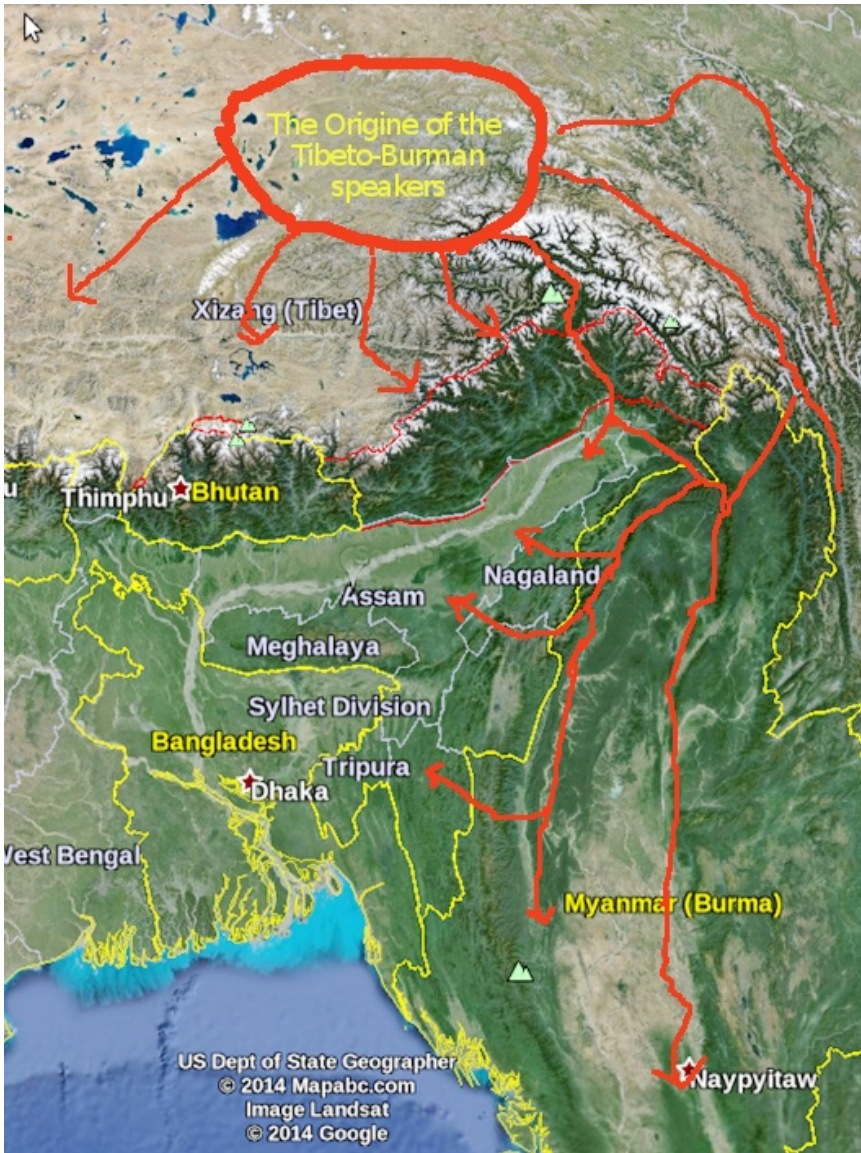


Fig: The migration route of Tibeto burman speakers



Fig: Traditonal land (rough) of Arlengs

THE ARLENG (MIKIR/KARBI) LANGUAGE

Arleng is the language spoken by the Arleng community of North East India. The hierarchy of Arleng language in language classification is given below:-



Some scholar left in confusion that whether Arleng language falls under Kuki-Chin-Naga group of languages and left unclassified. In the lexical point of view, Arleng is close with other Kuki-Chin-Naga languages like Mizo, Meitei and Kuki languages. That is why we can group into that Kuki-Chin-Naga group.

Arleng (Mikir) language have two major dialects, namely Karbi (ISO 639-3 code: - mjw) which is also called hills Karbi and Amri Karbi (ISO 639-3 code: - ajz) which is distinct enough to be separate languages. However both the dialects are spoken by the same ethnic community. The term Amri Karbi is still not fully accepted and known in other names like Dumurali Karbi and Plains Karbi etc. Keeping view the migration route mentioned above the Amri karbi (ajz) is the corrupted form of the Karbi (mjw) language. The lexical similarity between Karbi (mjw) and Amri karbi (ajz) falls as low as 57%-68%. That is why it is very distinct enough and some treat as separate languages. The both are located in the India map 5 in the

language map. They are placed in the non-scheduled language list in serial number 206 and 208 respectively. The Karbi (mjw) has three sub dialects namely Chinthong, Amri Marlong/Mirlong and Ronghang/Rongkhang which are very similar with lexical similarity with 82%-96%. It is spoken in Karbi Anglong, Nagaon, Darang, Marigaon, Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Dima Hasao districts of Assam; Papumpare district in Arunachal Pradesh; Jayantia hills district of Meghalaya and Dimapur district in Nagaland. On the other hand Amri karbi(ajz) has two sub dialects namely, Upper Amri and Lower Amri. Upper Amri is spoken in Northern part of Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya and in the hilly areas of Kamrup (Metropolitan) district of Assam. The Lower Amri is spoken in the plains part of Kamrup (Metropolitan) district of Assam. The lexical similarity between the two sub dialects is 70%- 86%. It is to be noted that Arleng spoken in Diphu and Guwahati is the highest lexical difference whereas Western border of Karbi Anglong and North Eastern Meghalaya has lowest lexical difference between the two dialects of Arleng (Mikir) language.

LOTHEBO LONGRI ARLENG LANGUAGE

As we have come to know that a faction of Arleng migrated towards west and established a Kingdom keeping Inglong Mekar hill as the centre of reference. In the folk tales of the local Arleng people it is found that Arlengs had conflicts with the Kachari king and had to leave their place before settling in Lothebo Longri. This indicates that once the Lothebo Longri Arlengs too came from their old abode, present Dimapur and Nagaon etc. The name of river like Kolong and Kopili also mentioned which flow down the course of the valley. The kingdom was established by the first king Lothebo Ronghang Langdang. The language spoken was Karbi (mjw). Lothebo Longri had faced much cultural and political conflict with other community in comparison to the Arlengs in the Eastern part. When the Arlengs migrated to the west, Khasis were settling in the region. Present Kamakya temple was the place of sacrificing pig by the Khasis. That is why many conflicts were met between them. However in an amicable settlement Arlengs were managed the area comprising boundary of River Brahmaputra in the north; Gobha kingdom, in the east; Umsiyang River, Nursi Inglong, Nongpoh in the south and Rani kingdom, Sandubi Lake in the west. In the course of time and communication gap with the Eastern Arlengs the language has been drastically changed and corrupted the words and sometimes diverted the meaning of the words. In course of time it is now known as Amri karbi (ajz) and other names like Plains, Bhoyam, Thoi/Thol and Dumrali Karbi etc. So here Lothebo Longri Arleng language means the Amri Karbi (ajz). In chronological order, the most effecting communities of the lothebo Longri Arleng and its language are:-

(i) Dimasa kachari, with whom the Arleng came across met conflict. Dimasa made Arleng populations to scatter many directions. Dimasas are the primary factor of division among Arlengs. Before that Arlengs stayed together in their migration route as 'Mosera' or

'Arleng kiwang' etc. do not state about splitting of Arlengs. Kachari language has almost no evidence in Arleng Language of Lothebo Longri except the name like Digaru (lit. water Garo).

(ii) Khasi language and culture are very close with Lothebo Longri Arlengs. Many names like Umden, Umsiyang, Umtru etc are Khasi words. Khasi has great influence even now in the Arleng language of Ri-Bhoi district. Arlengs have abandoned many own words and instead use Khasi words. Many names of place and rivers are translated to Khasi names. An Arleng names prefixed with 'lang' is substituted by Khasi word 'um'. Many opine that the name of 'Ampri' originated from 'Langpri'. Then it became 'Umpri' before the recent name 'Ampri'. Many Arlengs surnames are corrupted and used both by Arlengs and Bhoi Khasis. Following are some examples:-

Teron→Toron→Tron
 Kleng→Klein
 Timung→Tumung→Tmung
 Ronghang→Rynghang
 Rongpi→Rongpe→Rongpeit→Ryngpeit
 Rongchon→Ryngshon
 Terang→Tarang→Trang
 Taro→Tado etc.

The Bhoi Khasi is mixture of Arleng and Khasi. Bhoi Khasis are converted from Arleng and so the Khasi they speak is like Arleng language in some extent (In Khasi the term 'Bhoi' was denoted for Arleng people). Their surnames are Arleng surnames as mentioned above. Only they have adopted Khasi customary and language. Their physical appearance also looks like the Arleng people. They are sometimes called 'Bhoi Karo' or 'Bhoi Garo' by the Khasis. In Arleng language there is a term 'chomang kidam' which means one who converted to non Arleng ethnic i.e. becoming a Khasi. The term 'chomang kidam' is still used for the Arlengs who have converted

their religion into Christianity (Non-Arleng) even in the present days.

(iii) Koches were ruling in the middle age of Assam after breaking down of Pragjyotisha (Kamrup). Even Beltola Kingdom in the present Guwahati city was ruled by the Koch in the late middle age (Beltola king believed to be converted from Arleng to Koch). Arlengs, Khasis, Bodo and Garo etc. and the other ethnic was under the Koch king. In the mean time Koch and Ahom were adopted Hinduism and Sanskrit language. So many Indo Aryan creoles were born, which nowadays become as Guwalporia, Kamrupi, Nalbaria and standard Assamese etc. Lothebo Longri Arleng had a great impact and adopted many words from them. The language is known by them as 'Kiche alam' a special creole in the locality. It is also known as 'Kengsang alam'. 'Kengsang' literally means 'stopping of foot'. In Arleng Guwahati (only Kamakya Temple area in earlier days) is called 'Kengsang Arong'. According to a tale, at the time of Ason kewang, the migrating team escaped to the west from the Dimasa kacharis. The Arlengs decided to stop at present Guwahati and so it is called 'Kengsang Arong' (akeng kisang arong). Most of the names of river and places translated to Kiche/Kengsang as translated to Khasi. Some examples are: Langpe becomes Barapani. Thapli Ari/Rong Thapli becomes Beltola/Belguri, Rong Tharve becomes Amguri, Tintli Ari/Rong Tintli becomes Teleliguri, Kuwe Hunchi (Kuwenchi) becomes Guwahati etc.

(iv) Baro Bhuiyans were ruling in the present North Nagaon and Marigaon districts in the medieval Assam. In the political affair Lothebo Longri was much not affected but a huge change occurred in socio-religious system of Arlengs. Arlengs were scattered in the entire valley of Kolong and Kopili. After Arimatta's descendants were overpowered. Arlengs were scattered places with no king but by petty chiefs or village heads. They are the one who established the village or the area. He or she is called 'Rong Kitar Abang' and the name of village or area is known by his name or clan name. This practice still exists in naming of Arleng villages. In the Kaziranga

forest Arleng women named Kajir established her village or locality and called Kajir Arong (presently Kaziranga). Elenga a locality near Sonapur was earlier known as 'Ingleng Arong'. As stated above, most of Arlengs fled to nearby hilly areas, the remaining Arleng populations were converted to Hindu Vaisnavism in the reforms of Srimanta Sankardeva. Many of them even changed their surnames or name of their clans (kur) into 'Ata', 'Atoi' etc. Nowadays they do not know Arleng language and culture. They use 'Kiche Alam'. The Arleng population under Lothebo Longri king was not subjects of Baro Bhuyans. However the subjects of Lothebo Longri along with the royal family accepted some extend of Hinduism. Even the Royal families in Lothebo Longri adopted surname like 'Deka'. The descendants of Recho family of Nortap some use 'Ronghang Langdang' and some other 'Deka'. So even now many of socio-religious verses (atam) are not pure Areleng but some extend 'Kiche Alam' affected. Even many deities introduced in Lothebo longri Areleng religion, which are not found in eastern Arlengs.

(v) Ahoms were the dominant group and Lothebo Longri was a tributary of Ahom kingdom. Ahom were also adopted Hinduism and Sanskrit language and so they also speak 'Kiche Alam'. So Ahom had the same impact like the Koch and Baro Bhuiyan into the Lothebo Longri Arleng language.

(vi) Other than the above mentioned, there were Garos, Tiwas, Bodos who had close relation with the Lothebo longri Arlengs, however no such accountable impression made on Arleng language. 'Kiche Alam' was used to communicate among these communities. This dialect is still used in the entire area even now. In the recent times Bengali, Hindi and English languages also have a lot of words in Arleng language in ditto and some other in corrupted form.

A BRIEF NOTES ON LEXICAL DIFFERENCE

In the migration route of Arlengs they had come across with many ethnic groups. That is why the language they bear must come through a series of change. This is the result of the Arleng language spoken by Arlengs of the Lothebo Longri. Lothebo Longri Arleng is a bit different with the Arleng spoken in the Karbi Anglong and other part in the East. This difference is magnifying and in the recent times christening a new language named Amri Karbi (ajz). The language is different in many ways and obeys few rules of corruption. If the slight corruptions are removed Lothebo Longri Arleng is the same with the Arleng spoken in the other part of the North East India. Even now many words are the same with Karbi Anglong spoken by the senior generations but made difference by the new and young generations. This is due to lack of standard written language and existence of the changing factors till date. The rules of corruption are: (i) Softening & General corruption, (ii) Whole word substitution, (iii) Omission, Part use and Shortening of Words/Phrases, (iv) Multiple Meanings its Separation, (v) Present Participles of verbs (vi) Kinship terminology and (vii) Miscellaneous. Each of the rules of corruption is illustrated below:

(i) Softening and General corruption of words: Softening is the primary cause of corruption in the Arleng words. The ancestors of Arleng could not pronounce some soft phonemes like /g/, /gh/, /dh/ etc. that is why Arleng pronunciations are hard and strong. In the encounter with the Indo-Aryan language Arleng also nowadays can pronounce and have the words with the soft phonemes. Other than adopting soft phonemes some words adopt /ŋ/ in place of /n/ or /m/ and /j/ in place of /dZ/ etc. Sometimes the vowel sounds are simply changed. The changes are illustrated with few examples:-

(a) Softening of words by adding /h/ as suffix or prefix with the hard

phonemes and afterwards replacing the phonemes:-

LONG→LHONG→HLONG→HONG
 LENG→LHENG→HLENG→HENG
 KIRI→KIRHI→KIHRI→KIHI
 LONANG→HLONANG→HONANG→SONANG

(b) The /th/ replacing with /dh/:

THENGKUR→THINGKUR →DHINGKUR→DHENGGUR
 (Etymology: Theng Angkur)
 THENGPI→THENGPE→DHENGPE
 (Etymology: theng api)

(c) The /n/ replacing /ŋ/:

HENRU→HENGRU↔HINRU→HINGRU
 (Etymology: Hen Aru)
 HEMTUN→HEMTUNG→HENTUNG
 (Etymology: Hem Along Ketun Abang)

(d) The /m/ replacing with /ŋ/:

DUMKEK→DUNGKEK→DHUNGKEK→DHONGKEK
 (Etymology: Adum Kikek)
 NIMTU→NENTHU→NENGTH
 (Etymology: Angnim Kithu)

(e) The /dʒ/ and /ʒ/ replacing with /j/:

PIJO→PIJYO→PIYO
 JANGPHONG→JYANGPHONG→YANGPHONG

(f) The /n/ replacing with /m/ and vice versa:

NIMSO→MINSO→MENSO

(g) The /i/ replacing with /e/:

PI→PAI↔PEI

THENGPI→THENGPE

NIMTHU→NINTHU→NINGTHU→NENGTHU

(Etymology: Angnim kithu)

(h) The /j/ replacing with /l/:

ROI→ROL

JAIDI→JALDI

LANGROI→LANGROL→LANGLOR

(Etymology: Lang Aroi)

HERAI→HEREI→HEREL

(i) The /ɛ/ replacing with /ɒ/:

TERON→TORON

ATE-OT→ATO-OT

(j) The /ɛ/ replacing with /a/:

TERANG→TARANG

(k) The /i/ replacing with /u/:

TIMUNG→TUMUNG

TIMUR→TEMUR→TUMUR

(l) The /i/ & /n/ replacing with /t/:

DAM NOI→DAM NOT→DAMOT
 WANG NON→WANG NOT→ WANGOT

(m) The /l/ replacing with /n/

MESEN LE→MESEN NE→MESENE

(ii) Whole word/phrase substitution: Sometimes the whole word is changed. They are illustrated with examples:

(a) The 'ra' replacing with 'ne'

INGKOI RA ISI→INGKOL NE ISI
 THOMKEP RA THROK→THONGKEP NE THROK

(b) The 'le' replacing with 'ne'

NANG LE WAN→NANG NE WAN
 NANG LE WANGWE TE→NANG NE WANGWE TINE

(c) The 'po' replacing with 'bo'

DAM PO→DAM BO
 WANG PO→WANG BO

(d) Interchange 'si' and 'hi'

HI-I→SI-I
 SIM→HIM

(iii) Omission, Part use and Shortening of Words/Phrases: This rule of corruption is widely applied in the corruption of the Arleng language. This rule is also applicable even in the Eastern part like Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao and Sonitpur districts of Assam. This rule

is specially seen in the question words. The examples are illustrated below: -

(a) Question word for 'What'

KOPI APOT→KOPI→PI
→PI APOT→PIPOT→POT→POK

(b) Question word for 'Why'

KOPI AJOK→PIJOK→PIJYOK→PIYOK→PEYOK→POYOK

(c) Question word for 'How'

KOPI ASON→KOPUSON→KOSON
KOPI APOT BADI→KOPI BADI→PIBADI→POTBADI→PEBADI

(d) Question word for 'when'

KOPI AMANTU→KOMANTU→MANTU
→KONAMTU→KONAM

(e) Question word for 'Where'

KOPI ANAT LONG→KONATLONG→NAT↔KANAT→KANAK
KOPI ADAK
LONG→KODAKLONG→DAKLONG→DALONG→LONG
→DONG

(f) Question word for 'Who'

KOPI AMAT LO→KOMATLO→KOMAT
→KOHO
(OHO→ONGHO←→INGHO)

Note: 'OHO' is used in a passive meaning for 'KOHO'.

(g) Question word for 'How much'

KO-AN BAK→KO-AN↔KOMBAK

(h) Question word for 'So much'

LAPU-AN BAK→LAPU-AN↔LA-AN

(i) Omission of 'lo' and instead use some phoneme according to the last phoneme of the preceding verb:-

End Phoneme	Replacing Phoneme	Karbi (mjw)	Amri Karbi (ajz)
/k/, /kh/, /g/, /gh/, /ŋ/	/ŋ/	Chok lo	Chok ngo
		Hang lo	Hang ngo
/t/, /th/, /d/, /dh/, /n/	/n/	That lo	That no
		Wan lo	Wan no
/p/, /ph/, /b/, /bh/, /m/	/m/	Chep lo	Chep mo
		Nam lo	Nam mo
/l/, and others	/l/	Rai/Ral lo	Rai/Ral lo
/r/	/r/	Kar lo	Kar ro

(j) Combing of phrase into single word by omitting some phonemes:

WANG NON→WANG NOT→ WANGOT

DAM NOI→DAM NOT→ DAMOT

WANG LO→WANGO

CHO TANG ET LO→ CHO ET LO

→CHOTANGLO→CHOTANGO
 WANGCHONOI→WANGCHONOT→NANGCHONOT→NACHONOT

(k) Simply omitting some suffixes:

ILITUM→ILI
 DOWERJI→DOJI→DOJYE→DOYE
 KAHELOWING→HELOWING→KAHELO→KAHOLO

(iv) Multiple Meanings and its Separation: This rule is seen in few words of Arleng. The primary aim is to avoid the confusion due to multiple meanings bore by the same word.

(a) ‘Ason’ have several interpretations i.e. similar, like, manner, way, class, type etc. In Lothebo Longri, ‘badi’ is used in some cases. Some examples are given for meaning separation.

KAMPI ASON ESON API→KAMPI BADI ESON APE
 (A type of monkey like animal)
 LASON LE TIKI→LADI NE TIKI
 (Do this way)

(b) ‘Chetong’ means to meeting of two or more bodies with or without force i.e. meet, come across, collide, fight etc. Whereas the same in Lothebo Longri, used only for forceful meet i.e. fight, collide etc. Instead of ‘chetong’, ‘bichak’ or ‘pochak’ is used for ‘meet’ and ‘come across’. Some examples are given for illustration:

CHAINONG/CHORONG KACHETONG
 (Bull fight)
 HITHI/HAT ALONG KABICHAK/KAPOCHAK
 (Met in market)
 HEM ALONG KAPOCHAK/KABICHAK
 (Meeting at home)

(c) 'Da' is used for 'go' verb in Arleng language. In Amri Karbi (ajz) 'do' is used where the speaker is included, or else 'da' is used. Following example will clarify the difference.

DAMLONANG/DAMENANG DO

(Let us go)

NANG DAMTHA DA

(You go)

(v) Present Participles of verbs: The Lothebo Longri Arleng i.e. Amri Karbi (ajz) use present participle form of verbs in different manner in comparison to the Karbi (mjw). In Lothebo Longri, 'jeng' or 'jong' is suffixed after the verbs instead of 'bom' in Karbi (mjw). It is just like suffixing 'ing' in English. In some places in Nagaon and Marigaon area 'lok' is used as present participle suffix even in Karbi (mjw). The use of present participles is explained bellow with example:

CHINONG KE BAB CHOPANBOM (mjw)

ACHINONG KE BAB CHOPAN LOK (mjw)

CHORONG KE BAB CHOPANJONG DO (ajz)

CHORONG KE BAB CHOPANJENG DO (ajz)

(vi) Kinship terminology: The kinship terminologies are a bit different in some cases between the Karbi (mjw) and Amri Karbi (ajz) especially in the part of the term that used to call. The reason for different is due to better clarification of Karbi term in Amri Karbi as in Arleng kinship terminologies, a single term is used for three generations (ove kethom). However the names of the relationships remain same. The following table will clarify in more details.

Name of relation	Karbi (mjw)	Amri Karbi (ajz)
Phusar (All forth male generations above)	Phusar	Phusar, Sar
Phisar ((All forth female generations above)	Phisar	Phisar, sar

Phu (FF, MF)	Phu	Phu, Ta
Phi (FM, MM)	Phi	Phi, Bu
Po (F)	Po	Po, Pa
Pi/Pe (M)	Pe, Pai	Pe, Ai
Posar (FeB, MeZH, HMeB)	Pesar	Posar, Sar
Pesar/Pisar (MeZ, FeBW, WFeZ)	Pesar	Pesar, Sar
Ponu (FyB, MyZH, HMyB)	Punu	Ponu, Nu, Dada
Pinu/Penu (FyBW, MyZ, WFyZ)	Pinu	Penu, Nu
Ni ^{msp} /Nipe ^{fsp} (FZ, HM, HMZ)	Ni-hai ^{fsp} , Ni-sarpi ^{msp}	Ni-hel/Sarpeli ^{fsp} , Ni ^{msp}
Ni ^{fsp} /Nipe ^{msp} (MBW, WM, WMZ)	Ni-hai ^{msp} , Ni ^{fsp}	Ni-hel/Sarpeli ^{msp} , Ni ^{fsp}
Lok (FZH, HF, HFB)	Lok ^{msp} , Lok-hai ^{fsp}	Lok ^{msp} , Lok-hel/Sarpoli ^{fsp}
Ong/Nihu (MB, WF, WFB)	Ong-hai ^{msp} , Ong ^{fsp}	Ong-hel/sarpoli/Mamali ^{#msp} Ong/Mama ^{#fsp}
Chikle (B, FBS, MZS)	Ik ^{osp} , Mu/Name ^{yvsp}	Ka ^{osp} , Mu/Name ^{yvsp}
Ingjir ^{msp} (S, FBD, MZD)	Ni ^{osp} Ingjir/Name ^{yvsp}	Bai ^{#osp} , Ingjir/Mu/ Name
Ingjir ^{fsp} (S, FBD, MZD)	Te ^{osp} Ingjir/Name ^{yvsp}	Bai ^{osp} , Ingjir/Mu/Name ^{yvsp}
Me ^{msp} (ZH, FZS)	Me-hai	Me
Tepo ^{fsp} (FZS ^{osp} , eZH, HeB)	Tepo (For HeB:Tepo-hai)	Tepo (For HeB:Tepo-hel, Tepoli, Aklengpoli-hel)
Tepi ^{msp} (eBW, MBD ^{osp} , WeZ)	Tipi (For WeZ:Tipi-hai)	Tape (For WeZ:Tape-hel, Tapeli, Aklengpeli-hel)
Korpo ^{fsp} (HyB, FZS ^{yvsp} , yZH)	Korpo (For yZH:Korpo-hai)	Korpo (For yZH:Korpo-hel, Korpoli)
Korpi ^{msp} (HyB, FZS ^{yvsp} , yZH)	Korpi (For yBW:Korpi-hai)	Korpe (For yBW:Korpe-hel, Korpeli)
Ongsar ^{msp} (WB, MBS)	Ongsar ^{msp} , Ong ^{fsp}	Me ^{msp} , Ong/Mama ^{#fsp}
Neng ^{fsp} (BW, BSW, MBD, HZ)	Neng	Neng
Osa/Phili (ZS ^{msp} HZS, DH, BDH ^{msp} , ZDH ^{fsp})	Osa	Oso-hel, Osopoli
Philipi (ZD ^{msp} HZD, ZHZ ^{msp})	Philipi	Philipi, Bey ^{msp} (for ZHZ ^{msp} : Ji)
Sopo (S, BS ^{msp} , ZS ^{fsp} , BDH ^{fsp})	With name	With name

Sopi (D,SD ^{fsp} ,BD ^m ,ZSW ^m)	With name	With name
Ikso ^{fsp} (BS ^m)	Ikso, With name	With name
Ongso ^m (WBS)	Ongso	With name
Armopo ^{fsp} (HZH)	Armo-hai	Armo-hel, Armopoli Ka-li
Armopi ^m (WBW)	Armo-hai	Armo-hel, Armopeli Bai [#] -li
Supo (All third male descendants bellow)	With name	With name, Ka, Khoik
Supi (All third female descendants bellow)	With name	With name, Bai [#] , Khoik
Mun(BD ^{fsp} , SW, BSW ^m ,ZSW ^{fsp})	Mun-hai	Mun-hel, Osopeli, Jok
Penan/pihan ^{fsp} (H)	Sar-bura, Informal name	Informal name
Piso ^m (W)	Sarpi, Informal name	Informal name, Her Clane/village name
Saru ^{#m} (WZH)	Saidu	Saru
(Note:- F=father, M=mother, B=brother, Z=sister, S=son, D=daughter, H=husband, W=wife, e=elder, y=younger, msp=male speaker, fsp=female speaker, osp=older than the speaker, ysp=younger than the speaker, #=Indo Aryan word)		

(vii) Miscellaneous: The various nouns are differently used in different places for the same things. Some examples are placed bellow:-

Karbi (mjw)

Manthu (man kithu)

Hi-l

Sim

Hipi

Nokkek

Nokkek rangso

Chinong

Methan (arimei kethan)

Amri Karbi (ajz)

Toman (man ketok)

Si-i

Him

Hapek

Nokso

Nokkek

Chorong

Hik (hi/sik kecho)ect.

A BRIEF NOTES ON ARLENG PHONETICS

Phonological Inventory

Vowels: - The Arleng language has seven vowel phonemes. Their location in the IPA chart is given below. On the basis of these phonemes various diphthongs are produced by way of combining the vowel phonemes. The details of the phonemes and other diphthongs produced out of them will be discussed in a later chapter.

Consonants: - The pulmonic consonant chart of Arleng language as per IPA has been given below. Other than these given phonemes there are various aspirates for each plosive. There are many clusters produced out of these phonemes and will be given detailed study of them. It is to be mentioned that there are a few difference between Karbi (mjw) and Amri Karbi (ajz) in the pulmonic consonants. The differences are:-

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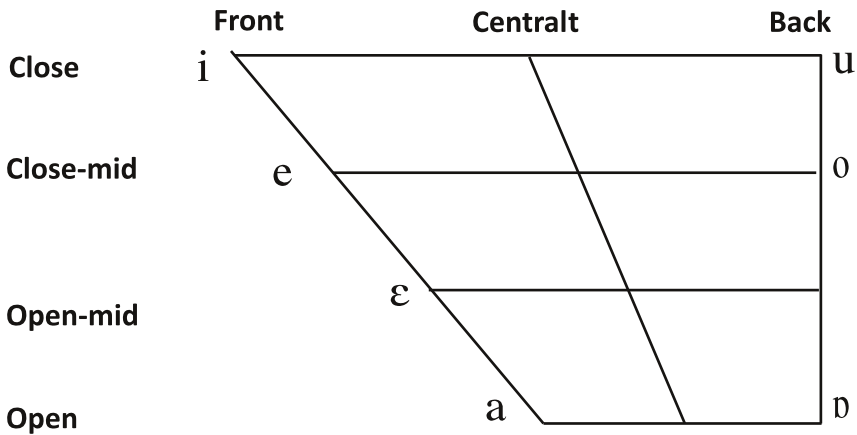
(i) The phonemes /g/, /j/ and /j/ are rarely found in Karbi (mjw). The same are widely used in Amri Karbi (ajz) due to imitationsto the Indo Aryan Language. The /j/ is used as an intermediary between /j/ and /z/. Perhaps almost all Kamrupan languages did not have /j/ and so a Hindi word /jatra/ (travel) becomes /zatra/ in Assamese, Bengali and Oriya.

(ii) The Arleng language has aspirates for /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/ and /z/. However the aspirates /bh/, /dh/, /gh/ and /zh/ are rare use in Karbi (mjw). Amri karbi (ajz) has adopted those imitating the Indo Aryan languages.

(iii) The Amri Karbi (ajz) has clusters like /hr/and /hl/ which are not found in Karbi (mjw). These clusters are used as intermediary to the transformation of /r/ and /l/ into /h/. For example: - The word 'kiri' (to find/search) /kiri/→/kihri/→ /kihi/ and 'leng' (to reach) /leŋ/→/hleŋ/→/heŋ/.

(iv) All the Plosives along with their aspirates whenever placed at the end of the syllable, it becomes glottal in Amri Karbi (ajz). That is /p/,/ph/, /b/, /bh/, /t/, /th/, /d/,/dh/, /c/, /k/, /kh/, /g/, /gh/ becomes /ʔ/. For example: - /ceʔ/(bamboo), /neʔ/(to catch), /heʔ/(to pluck), /leʔ/(to peel), /leʔ/ (chain/necklace)etc. The use of this rule is found less in Karbi (mjw)

Vowels



Consonants (Pulmonic)

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glotal
Plosive	p b		t d	c	k g	ʔ
Nasal	m		n		ŋ	
Fricative			s z	j		
Aproximant		ʋ	r	j		h
Lateral Aproximant			l			

COUNTING SYSTEM OF ARLENG LANGUAGE

The Arleng language had basically senary or heximal counting system with base six. That is Arleng have unique names of count only up to six. These are: 'Isi' for one, 'Hini' for two, 'Kethom/Kithom' for three, 'Phli/Phili' for four, 'Pho/Phongo' for five and 'Throk' for six. In course of times it has adopted decimal counting system and introduced other names corresponding to the decimal system. Ten is the immediate milestone which named as 'Kep'. Seven, Eight and Nine are derived in following ways:

Seven (Six added One)

Throk Isi → throksi

Eight (Ten subtracted Two):

Hini Kep → Hिनirkep/Hinarkep → Nirkep/Narkep

Nine (Ten subtracted One):

Isi Kep → Isirkep → Sirkep.

The next milestone was twenty and so have unique name which is 'Ingkoi/Ingkol'. The names between 'Kep' and 'Ingkoi/ingkol' are derived as followings:

Eleven (Ten and One):

Kep ra Isi → Kere Isi

Twelve (Ten and Two):

Kep ra Hini → Kere Hini.

And so on 'Kere Kethom/Kithom', 'Kere Phli', 'Kere Pho/Phongo', 'Kere Throk', 'Kere Throksi', 'Kere Nirkep/Narkep', and 'Kere Sirkep'. The next milestones are the multiples of ten and are in following manner:

Thirty (Three Tens): 'Thomkep'
 Forty (Four Tens): 'Phlikep'
 Fifty (Five Tens): 'Phokep/Phongokep'
 Sixty (Six Tens): 'Throkkep'
 Seventy (Seven Tens): 'Throksikep'
 Eighty (Eight Tens): 'Nirkepkep' ↔ 'Throknirkep'
 Ninety (Nine Tens): 'Sirkepkep' ↔ 'Throksirkep'.

The name of the in between numbers are named with adding 'ra' after the preceding multiples of ten. For example: Twenty Three: Ingkoi ra Kethom, Ninety Nine: Throksirkep ra Sirkep etc.

The rest of the counting goes like following:-

One hundred: Pharo/phoro isi
 One thousand: Suri isi
 Ten thousand: Suri kep
 One lakh/lac: Lak isi
 One milion: Lak kep
 One crore: Crore isi. etc

The term are Anglo-Indian except 'Pharo/Phoro' and 'Suri'.

SYMBOLS FOR COUNTING SYSTEM IN ARLENG LANGUAGE

Following are the symbols proposed for counting system in Arleng language:

Symbol	English	Name
0	0	Phaive
⋈	1	Isi
⋉	2	Hini
⋊	3	Kethom/Kithom
⋋	4	Phli/Phili
⋌	5	Pho/phongo
⋍	6	Throk/Thorok
⋎	7	Throksi/Thorok Isi
⋏	8	Nirkep/Nerkep/ Narkep
⋐	9	Sirkep
⋑	10	Kep
⋒	11	Kep ra Isi/Kre Isi
⋓	12	Kep ra Hini/kre Hini
⋔	13	Kep ra Kethom/Kre kethom
⋕	14	Kep ra Phli/Kre Phli
⋖	15	Kep ra Pho/Kre Phongo

Symbol	English	Name
₡	16	Kep ra Throk/Kre Throk
₢	17	Kep ra Throksi/Kre throksi
₣	18	Kep ra Nirkep/Kre Nirkep
₤	19	Kep ra Sirkep/Kre Sirkep
₥	20	Inkoi/Ingkol
₦	30	Thomkep
₧	40	Phlikep
₨	50	Phokep/Phongokep/Phongkep
₩	60	Throkkep
₪	70	Throksikep
₫	80	Nirkepkep/Throknirkep
€	90	Sirkepkep/Throksirkep
₭	100	Pharo Isi
₮	1000	Suri Isi
₯	10000	Suri Kep
₰	100000	Lak Isi

SYMBOLS FOR WRITING ARLENG LANGUAGE

Presently Arleng language is written in both Roman and Eastern Devnagari Script. Both the script cannot represent the whole phonetic inventory of the language. Hence it is necessary to include more symbols to represent the phonemes used in Arleng language. More over there are many symbols which are useless in Arleng language. Recently efforts have been taken to come out the situation by using some more symbols in Roman script. However that too cannot fulfill the requirement of the language. So it is necessary to have own symbols according to the requirement of the language. Following are the symbols which can represent all the phonetic inventory of the language.

The vowels

Arleng	IPA	Name	Example/Remarks
၁	ɒ	/ɒ/	၁ဂီ /oŋɛ/: To listen.
ᵐ	ɒ	/ɒ aphutu?/	ᵐဂီ /hoŋ/: Thread.
၉	o	/o/	၉ဂ /oŋ/: Maternal uncle
°	o	/o aphutu?/	°ဂ /no?/: Sword
ဒ	a	/a/	ဒဂဝ် /arue/: Rain
ᵐ	a	/a aphutu?/	ᵐဂ /laŋ/: Water
ε	ɛ	/ɛ/	εဂ /ɛŋ/: To take
˘	ɛ	/ɛ aphutu?/	˘ဂ /hɛm/: House

ꠘ	e	/e/	ꠘꠞ /eꠞ/: To open
ꠛ	e	/e aphutuꠞ/	ꠛꠞ /heꠞ/: To pluck
ꠞ	i	/i/	ꠞꠞꠞꠞ /iꠞnar/: Elephant
ꠛ	i	/i aphutuꠞ/	ꠞꠞꠞ /iꠞti/: Salt
ꠘ	u	/u/	ꠘꠞꠞꠞ /ur eꠞ/: Inguana
ꠛ	u	/u aphutuꠞ/	ꠛꠞ /ku/: Spade

Consonants

Arleng	IPA	Name	Example/Remarks
ꠘ	k	/kꠞ/	ꠘꠞꠞꠞ /kampi/: Monkey
ꠛ	kh	/khꠞ/	ꠛꠞꠞꠞ /khambi/: Sea bean
ꠞ	g	/gꠞ/	ꠞꠞꠞꠞ /gꠞr am/: Guava
ꠛ	gh	/ghꠞ/	ꠛꠞꠞꠞ /ghꠞltonꠞ/: Bell
ꠞ	ꠞ	/ꠞꠞ/	ꠞꠞꠞ /taꠞa/: Money, currency
ꠘ	c	/cꠞ/	ꠘꠞ /ceꠞ/: Drum
ꠛ	ch	/chꠞ/	Optional for Aryan words
ꠘ	z	/zꠞ/	ꠘꠞꠞꠞ /zakꠞꠞ/: Strength
ꠛ	zh	/zhꠞ/	ꠛꠞꠞꠞ /zhamꠞraꠞ/: Unrully hair
ꠘ	ꠘ	/ꠘꠞ/	For Assamese /ꠘ/

ᵀ	t	/tɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀᵀ /tiloŋ/: Boat
ᵀ	th	/thɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀ /thenkur/: Medicine
ᵀ	d	/dɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀ /dumkeʔ/: Fern
ᵀ	dh	/dhɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀᵀ /dhɔp/: Banyan tree
ᵀ	n	/nɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀ /noʔsɔ/: Knife
ᵀ	p	/pɔ/	ᵀᵀ /pɛ/: Cloth
ᵀ	ph	/phɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀ /phaʔ/: Pig
ᵀ	b	/bɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀ /boŋ/: Gourd
ᵀ	bh	/bhɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀᵀ /abhɛn/: Late
ᵀ	m	/mɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀ /meŋ/: Cat
ᵀ	j, j	/jɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀ /bojam/bojam/: Jar, container
ᵀ	r	/rɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀ /reɕɔ/: King
ᵀ	r	/rɔ arnei/	ᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀ /meʔ kri/: Tears
ᵀ	l	/lɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀ /laŋ/: Water
ᵀ	l	/lɔ arnei/	ᵀᵀᵀᵀ /cikli/: Earthquake
ᵀ	u	/uɔ/	ᵀᵀ /uɔ/: Bird
ᵀ	h	/hɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀ /hɔr/: Liquor, Alcohol
ᵀ	s	/sɔ/	ᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀ /saŋman/: Spider
ᵀ	ʔ	/ɔʔ/	ᵀᵀᵀ /leʔ/: Necklace, chain
ᵀ	ɹ	/ɹɔ/	For other Tibet-Burman Words

Diacritics

Arleng script is having diacritics for all the seven vowels. They are always placed above the consonants when used. The seven vowel can produce their respective long sounds with the help of '◌̄' diacritic i.e. Arleng alphabet is having fourteen vowels. This is a great relief for making tonal differentiation of similar words. The long tone diacritic '◌̄' can be used in the nouns. For example:-

𑄀𑄁 /la:ŋ/ Water

𑄀𑄂 /laŋ/ To look

𑄀𑄃 /ce:ŋ/ Drum (musical instrument)

𑄀𑄄 /ceŋ/ To start etc.

Other than the vowels two consonants are too having their diacritics. These are:-

Alphabet	Diacritic	Alphabet	Diacritic	Alphabet	Diacritic
𑄅	◌̄	𑄆	◌̄	𑄇	◌̄
𑄈	◌̄	𑄉	◌̄	𑄊	◌̄
𑄋	◌̄	𑄌	◌̄	𑄍	◌̄
Long tone of vowels			—		

Diphthongs

Diphthongs in Arleng language are produced by way of combining with the two semi-vowels i.e. '𑄎' and '𑄏' present in the Arleng consonants. Following are the few examples of diphthongs.

Diphthongs	IPA	Use/Remarks
ᠵᠤ	ɔi	ᠵᠠᠵᠢ /iŋkoi/: Twenty
ᠬᠤ	oi	ᠬᠣᠭ /oi?/: Yes, true
ᠵᠢ	ai	ᠵᠢ /ai/: Mother
ᠰᠤ	ɛi	Rare use
ᠴᠤ	ei	ᠴᠤ /ei/: Hey (informal)
ᠬᠤ	ui	ᠬᠤ /ui/: Hello (informal)
ᠵᠠ	ɔu	Rare use
ᠬᠠ	ou	ᠬᠠ ᠪᠠᠭ /ou ba?/: Oh! I see
ᠵᠠ	au	ᠵᠠ /au/: Ah!, wow!
ᠰᠠ	eu	Rare use
ᠴᠠ	ɛu	Rare use
ᠶᠠ	iu	Rare use

Clusters

There is no cluster included in the Arleng alphabet. Arleng alphabet follows the rule of Roman alphabet. Where there is no diacritics placed above the consonants, they form cluster together. The 'ᠵ' and 'ᠬ' form most of the cluster and hence diacritics are made for them. The common clusters in combination of 'ᠵ' and 'ᠬ' are given below:-

Diphthongs	Use/Remarks
က+က=ကျ	မိခင် /me? kron/: Liar, cheater
က+င=ကျ	လှိုင် /ciklo/: Moon
က+က=ကျ	ကန် /kho? khree/: Cowboy
က+င=ကျ	လှိုင် /zokhla/: Ladder
ဂ+က=ဂျ	ဂြိုဟ် /grim grim/: Drum beat
လ+က=လှ	အလှိုင် /ancre/: Waste rice
င+က=ငှ	ငှါ /treng/: A kind of wild bamboo
အ+က=အှ	အသံ /ada? prag/: Early morning
အ+င=အှ	အိမ် /plipli/: Butterfly
ဖ+က=ဖှ	ဖှိုင် /phrong/: To put into fire
ဖ+င=ဖှ	အဖှိုင် /aphla?/: Half, semi
ဘ+င=ဘှ	ဘဲ /bamblang/: A kind of fish
စ+က=စှ	စှိုင် /sangsri?/:Roasted semigrinded rice

Semi-vowels

‘ဖ’ and ‘မ’ are the two semi-vowels in Arleng alphabet. They are used to produce diphthongs other than their consonant characteristics.

Special Consonants

There are some special consonants in Arleng alphabet which

are generally found in other Brahmi scripts. These are ‘ɣ’, ‘x’ and ‘r’. ‘ɣ’ represents a glottal plosive sound which symbolized in International Phonetic Alphabet as ‘ʔ’. ‘ɣ’ is not found in Roman and neighboring alphabets like Indics scripts and Meitei Mayek etc. ‘ɣ’ is never used in front or middle of the syllable but always at the end. It is observed that all the Plosives whenever placed at the end of the syllable, it becomes glottal in Amri Karbi (ajz). That is /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /c/, /k/, /g/ along with their aspirates becomes /ʔ/. For example: - /cek/→/ceʔ/(bamboo), /nɛp/→/nɛʔ/ (to catch) etc.

Sample Text:- (a poem)

30000 000 000 000 000 000
 00000 00000 00000 000000 0000 000
 00000 000 000 000 00000
 00000 00000 00000 000000 000000
 00000 000 000 00000.
 000 00000000 00000 000 0000000
 0000 000 00000 0000 00000000
 00000 0000 000 0000000 000.
 0000 000 0000 000 00000000 000
 00000 000 0000000 000
 000 000000, 00000 00000 0000000000
 0000 00000 000 0000000 0000000 000!!!

END NOTES

Arlengs are said to be the Christopher Columbus to discover of Assam by the noted scholar Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha. Only a deep study upon the community can bring out such an opinion. However I have tried to through some lights upon the human migration in the world and its relation to the Arleng community. The Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) studies and various fossils revealed that the Austro-Asiatic language speakers were migrating through Indian sub-continent from North-East Africa to South-East Asia about 60,000-50,000 years BC. Mundas and and Khasis are descendants of them. However the Tibeto-Burman language speaking Mongoloids migrated to South-East Asia somewhere around 25,000-10,000 years BC. This clearly indicates that Khasis and their cousins Mon, Khmer etc. were living in the Brahmaputra valley before the Arlengs along with the other Tibeto-Burman language speakers came from the north through the river valleys like Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra), Irrawaddy, Chindwin etc. Arlengs were the pioneers to enter in the Brahmaputra valley. Arleng were followed by the other Kuki-Chin-Naga language group speakers and moved down towards south through Chindwin and Irrawaddy river valley. The Bodo-Garo language group speakers later engulfed the whole Brahmaputra valley. Then the valleys were occupied by other groups of Tibeto-Burman language speakers. About 5,000-3,000 years BC the Aryans (Indo-Iranians) reached to Indo-Gangatic valley. A large numbers of them migrated to Brahmaputra valley and changed the socio-religious aspects in the region.

Arleng language belongs to one of the language of Sino-Tibetan language group. In the hierarchy the language, under Sino-Tibetan, it belongs to Tibeto-Burman; under Tibeto-Burman, it belongs to North-East Indian or Kamrupan; under North-East Indian It belongs to Kuki-Chin-Naga group. However some scholars classify

Arleng (Mikir), Naga, Meitei, Kuki-Chin etc. are different independent groups under North-Eastern language group. Whatever may be the classification the phonetic inventories, tones, vocabularies and grammatical syntax etc. are similar with the cousin languages. This is due to same origin of all the language groups and split out in the course of migration. Around the beginning years of the Christian era, it is opined that whole of Bodo-Garo languages were a single language. In course of social and political difference many languages like Bodo, Garo, Dimasa, Tiwa etc. were born. Arlengs were pioneer and almost alone in the migration route when they reached to Brahmaputra valley. So the lexical difference is higher with the other languages in the Kuki-Chin-Naga group. That is one of the reasons why the Arleng (Mikir) language is placed directly under North-East Indian group by some scholar. In the life cycle of languages, many new languages are born and some of them die due to lack of speakers. Indo Aryan languages in India and Bodo-Garo languages in the North-Eastern India are the examples. It is opined that, at the beginning of Christian era, all languages like Bodo, Garo, Rabha, Dimasa, Kokborok, Moran, and Kanyak etc. were the same language. Arleng language is also obligation to this rule and so two distinct dialects are born. These two dialects are Karbi (mjw) and Amri Karbi (ajz). This is due to social, political and geographical gap between the speakers. They are so different in terms of lexicon that they can be recognized as different languages. This difference commenced only in the medieval Assam when the Dimasa drove out the Arlengs and a faction of them settled down separately in Lothebo Longri.

Language is one of the most uniting factors in a society. Language is the basis of many political social divisions. The standard of language signifies the standards of the speakers in many aspects. A matured language denotes maturity of the society of the speakers. Hence development of Arleng language also strived to bring out maturity and unity among the Arleng population. Instead of running away

from each other between the two dialects mentioned above, efforts are taken to uniting them by eliminating the differences and covering under same standard written official language viz. Arleng language by considering every nook and corner Arleng population. The standardization can be made by adopting the words which are actually true according to etymology. For better unity all the vocabulary can be accepted but apply the mean word in the official communications. For standard written language, alphabets are the basic components. Since Roman and other Indic scripts are not able to represent all the phonetic inventory of Arleng language, a new series of alphabet is required to develop. In our region various Brahmi scripts were developed by various scholars along with the developments of Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages. Recently in this century Raghunath Murmu has developed 'OLCHIKI' script for writing Santali language and now it is recognized by the constitution of India. So I too have been making efforts since last 15 years right from school going days. Due to lack of resources and knowledge could not bring out them to public. Many versions I have made but ultimately this version I decided to make public after reasonable study of the phonetic inventory of the Arleng language spoken in the various places in the North Eastern India. The alphabets are derived from Roman, International Phonetic Alphabet, Indic scripts and other alphabets in the South East Asia. They are just some small modifications. The Arleng alphabet is abugida and writing from left to write. The framework of the alphabet is taken from Brahmi scripts. So it can be classified somewhere in the Brahmi group of scripts. All the Indic scripts and some South East Asian scripts like Burmese, Khmer, Tai (Thai), Chakma, Laotian, Balinese, Shan etc. fall under Brahmi scripts and so they are similar. Specially the south Indians and the South East Asian who are under Pallava branch of Brahmi. The Thai and Oriya are also very similar. It is a good system to write Tibeto-Burman words. So this alphabet can be used even for other North Eastern Indian Languages who are presently using Roman or other Indic scripts. This is the reason why other phonemes

which are not found in Arleng also included in the alphabet series. I hope every Arleng will recognize my toils of my past years.

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(Note: - No clear picture of Arleng history can be made from the above mentioned sources but some assumptions can be made on that basis in the time line of history)

