

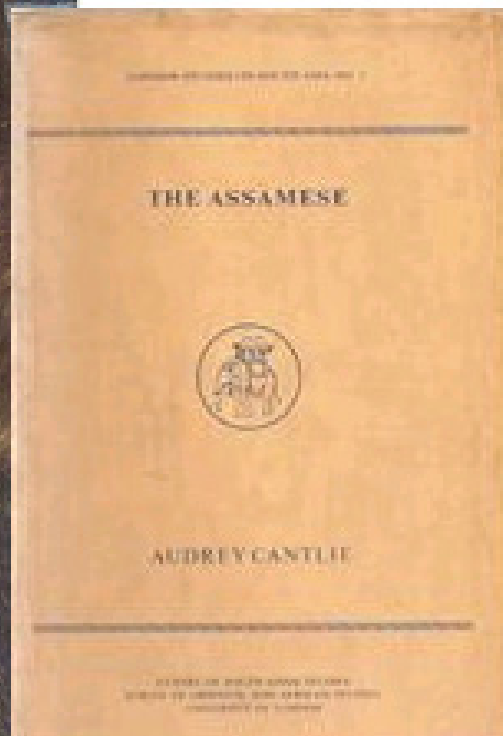
Assam Times

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Dr. Audrey Cantlie: Her sweet memory of Assam and The Assamese



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“My father Sir Keith Cantlie served in the Indian Civil Service from 1910 till his retirement in 1947. So, in a way I consider myself daughter of Assam, a land of outstanding natural beauty with distant views of the snow and Himalayas”

With her disarming smile simple down to earth and smiling manner the bespectacled Dr. Audrey Cantlie welcomes you with a big smile at her door at **Oxford street** as if somebody of her own. She has an emotional bond for Assam and the Assamese people.

I still remember the day I met her sometime in September, 1998 at **SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies, London)** I introduce myself as an Assamese I could see the sparkle in her eyes: said to me **“How many Assamese people are in London? I love to meet them”**.

Dr. Audrey Cantlie was born in Shillong in 1923. She spent her six years in Jorhat where her father was Deputy Commissioner. So, in some ways she consider herself a daughter of Assam.

After taking a degree in Sociology at the London School of Economics, she returned to Assam for fieldwork and carried out a study of a village near Jorhat, which was later published under the title of ‘The Assamese’. It is perhaps the only intensive work done in the plains of Assam and I like to think of it as a small contribution to understanding a unique way of life and, more particularly, the religion founded by Sankardeva.

After working on the staff at the London School of Economics. She moved to the School of Oriental and African Studies where I still teach part-time to the present day.

Few weeks after we have organized the **550th Sankar Jayanti at Wembley** when we invited her as our chief guest. The speech she delivered about Sankardev was so informative. Since then Dr. Cantlie always shares every Assamese Community function in London. Her guidance and support is very valuable to me at my work in a women oriented matter.

From studying, Sociology at the London School of Economics and to teach at (School of Oriental and African Studies. Her beautiful past as an Assamese is still in her mind. She wrote “**The Assamese**” dedicated to the memory of her father Sir Keith Cantlie who served 40 years in the state of Assam. How beautifully she expressed the qualities of Assamese people in this book.

Call her a professor, teacher, academician for rest of our Assamese society in London she is just our “**Cantlie baidew**”

During her stay at Guwahati, we have organised an interactive session with teachers, academicians, journalists and students at Sudmersen Hall, Cotton College on Wednesday 13 February, 2008 at 4:00pm.

by *Rini Kakati*



[editor](#)

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