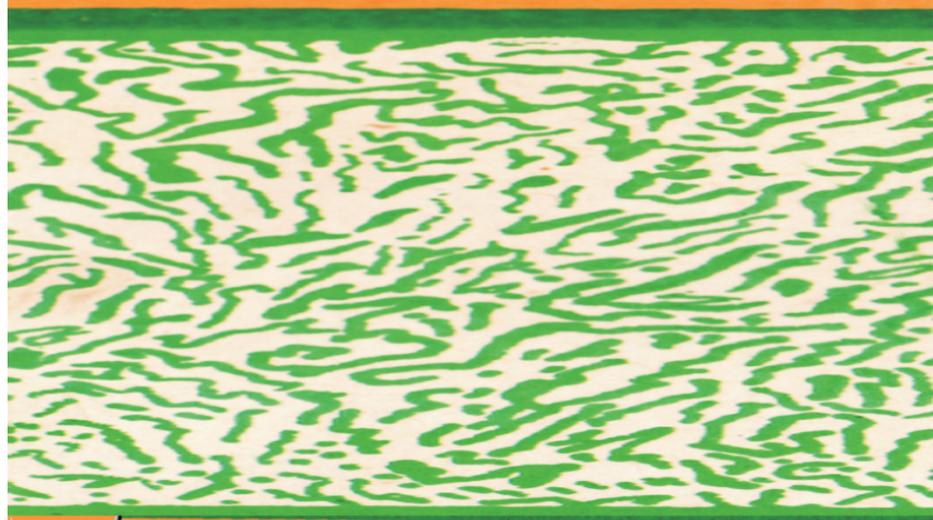


THE BONGS OF TRIPURA



Dr. D. N. Goswami

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FOREWORD

The Bong is one of the sub-tribes of Halam. As the population of Bong is negligible, no separate study has never been done earlier. Our knowledge on this particular sub-tribe is very limited so far. Dr. D. N. Goswami has done a commendable work in taking up detailed study on this tribe tremendously increasing our knowledge to this little known tribe. Based on this study report, the administration may also be in a position to draw up a right type of scheme for their development.

(S. Sailo)

Director,

Tribal Research Institute,

Dated, Agartala.

Govt. of Tripura.

the 22nd March, 1995.

PREFACE

Like other tribal people Halams are also considered as the old inhabitants of Tripura. They occupy the 5th position in numerical strength in comparison with other tribes. The Halam society is composed of a number of clans. The Bongs are the people of one of these clans. They are very limited in number. Due to various reasons they are quickly amalgamating themselves with the other tribes. If this tendency continues, they may be very rare in course of time. For this reason a sociological study on the Bongs of Tripura is essential. Unfortunately there is not even an ordinary work on the Bongs of Tripura. The present monograph is prepared on a time bound programme initiated by the Directorate of Research and as such it is not possible to present an exhaustive account of the Bongs in Tripura in this work. The present monograph is a modest attempt to fulfil the want of an introductory work only and it has no claim of being a scientific study.

I convey my sincere gratitudes to M/S. Milan Deb Barma, Nirmal Das, all Teachers and Teacher-Trainees of the Basic Training College, Kakraban who helped me in providing the various information of the life of the Bongs. Mr Dhanan Lal Halam, Teacher, Mr. Abinoy Halam, a T. C. S. Officer helped me

much in collecting various datas. I offer my thanks to them. Mr Raidhan Lal Halam of Bong Padi. Kamalpur, Mr. Bharat Beb Barma, T/C Kuki Cherra Halampara J. B. School, Kailasahar also deserve thanks and gratitude for their help.

I convey my sincere thanks to my colleague Mr. B. K. Dev Roy, Lecturer, Basic Training College, Kakraban for his usefull guidance. Last, but not the least. I offer my sincerest thanks to Mr. L. C. Das, Director of Research, for all the help and encouragement and elder brotherly advise and the band of skilled workers of his organisation for providing me help in preparing the Monograph.

I shall feel grateful and consider my labour fruitful if this primary work is found helpful and of any use to the researchers in this field.

D. N. Goswami.

CHAPTER—1

Habitat (Natural environment)

The Origin, development and decay of every species in this earth are closely connected with the natural, social and cultural environment. Human being is also not an exception. The food habit, taking protection against unwanted natural phenomenon etc of human being depends on the natural environment where they reside and propagate.

To satisfy their day to day need they evolved or rather developed an institution which is now termed by us as society which regulated their behaviour and actions in the past and also their living now. They liked and disliked some things, followed and avoided some actions according to the suitability of their needs. These activities slowly became their heritage when the progenies followed the activities of their forefathers. Ultimately these activities became rituals and taboos according to their suitability and formed an area which we term now as culture. Thus before starting the study of any aboriginal people it is essential to look at and understand the geographical set up where

these original human clans survived, developed and still live in. This is why we shall have a brief view of the geophysical set up of Tripura including the population to locate the specific clan of which we are going to form some ideas regarding its socio-economic and cultural status.

Location and general boundaries :

Tripura is a small state lying in the north-eastern part of India. It lies approximately between 22° - 25° and 24° - 26° north latitudes and between 91° - 92° and 92° - 94° East longitudes.¹ The state is bounded on the north, west and southeast by the international boundary of Bangladesh and on the east by East Pakistan Districts of Sylhet, Comilla (Tippera), Noakhali, Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tract respectively. In the east it has a common boundary with Mizoram and the Karimganj district of Assam. The present area of the state is 10660 square Kilometer having a maximum length and breadth of 183.5 and 112.7 kilometers respectively.²

Topography:

Tripura was termed by the British as 'Hill Tipperah'. The name itself suggests that the state is hilly.

The surface is undulated and made uneven by hillocks and small hills locally known as 'Tillas'. The state may be divided into five regions according to the unevenness of the land i.e. (a) hills and tillas, (b) rivers and chadas, (c) river valleys and longas, (d) narrow plain strip of the frontier and (e) lakes and marshy land.

(a) Tripura has no mountain. There are six hill ranges running from the north to south parallel to one another. These increase in height towards the south from the plains of Sylhet and towards the north from the Chittagonj district of Bangladesh. From the west, according to gradual height, they are Bada Muda, Atharamuda, Longtarai, Sakhantang and Jampui. The average space between these hill ranges is about 19 kilometer. The highest peak lies in Jampuitang range and named as 'Betling Sib'. Apart from these hill ranges, the whole state is full of small hillocks which are known as tillas. Practically three fourth of the area of the state is hilly which is full of jungles and abode of various plants and animals. This hilly forest was the main habitation of the aboriginal people of Tripura.

(b) The principal rivers of the state are Gomati, Haora, Khowai, Manu, Deo, Dhalai, Feny and Muhuri. The Gomati, the principal river is forme.

be the confluence of two streams—the Raima and Sarma. The Raima rises in the Longtarai range while the Sarma in the Athara muda range and the two unite to form Gomati just above a succession of rapids known as the Dambur falls. ‘The rapids then flow for a distance and ending in one grand impressive Cascade springs into a large round pool from which the stream makes its murmuring way through a narrow passage of rocky walls.’⁴ The river then flows in the western direction through Amarpur, Udaipur, Sunamuda sub-division and finally leaves the state in the western border near Bibir Bazar, a village in the Bangladesh district of Comilla. Many small streamlets popularly known as ‘Chadas’ are the tributaries of the Gomati. They are Begun Chada, Haja Chada, Kadi Chada, Ek Chadi, Kurma Chada, Bhalak Chada, Chelagang Chada, Mailek Chada, Rajkang Chada, Sarbong Chada, Changang, Maharani Chada, Hiraipur Chada, Shinglung Chada, Pitra Chada, Dewan Chada, Dhopai Chada, Kumadam Khal, Jamjuri Chada, Hadra Chada, Amtali Chada, Silghati, Chada, Rani Chada, Kani Chada, Kamrangatali Chada, Kachi gang etc.⁵ The Manu rises from the Kahoisib peak of the Sakhanthang range and initially makes its course through the various narrow gorges with escarpments of naked rock. The river flows in the north direction till it bypasses Kailasahar and reaches the plains of Sylhet when it turns north west. The Deo rises in the Jampui hills, twelve miles south of Betling Sib peak and flows a northerly

course. It then turns west, cuts through the Saktanthang and joins the Manu at Kumarghat. The Dhalai rises from the Dholajari peak and flows north wards and near Kamalpur it enters into the plains of Sylhet and falls in the Manu. The khowai rises from the Atharamura range and flows north western direction. It passes by the sides of Teliamuda, Kalyanpur, Khowai and enters into the plains of Sylhet. The Haora rises from the Badamuda range and flows west wards and passes by the sides of both puratan Agartala and Agartala leaves the western border of the state near Gangasagar to empty itself into the Titash of Bangladesh. The rivers of Tripura are not navigable as these are ranifed rivers and as such they swell in the rainy season, become dengerous and become lean and thin in the winter.

(c) There are some plain land in the course of these river. These valleys are fertile and suitable for growing of varieties of crops. Among these plains the valleys of Dhalai, Manu and Gomati are worth mentionable. Practically these valleys and the plain space between two hillocks locally turmed as Longas are the main growing tracts of the state. With the increase of population small hillocks are made plain and being used for food production.

(d) We have already noted that Tripura is a

land locked country having the boundary with Bangladesh in three sides. There are some strips of plain land adjacent to the Bangladesh boundaries which are fertile and used for Agricultural purposes.

(c) The state contains some natural lakes and marshy areas of which Rudra Sagar, Harijala, Dakmajala, and Suk Sagar are worth mentionable. These water areas became full of water in the rainy season and in the summer these are suitable for zaid crops.

Soil :

The soils of the hillocks are redish in colour and are included in the laterite groups of soil. They are poor in fertility as they do not contain organic matter and humus in adequate proportions. But the soils of the longas are generally fertile being the transported soil having good amount of organic matter. The river valleys are constituted of silt deposited by flood and hence are fertile. The soils of the marshy lands are mainly transported soil and suitable for good Boro crops.

Flora :

Once the forest of Tripura was full of bamboos

of various types and cane brakes. There were many medicinal plants which were found growing profusely in this hilly tract. Increase of population not only curved the forest area of the state but also some valuable plants and shrubs have already disappeared from this territory. Generally speaking the trees which generally grow in the moonsoon forests like sal, Segun, Gamai, Chamal, Rata, Rangi, Sundi, Karai, Jarul, Nageswar etc. are the natural plants of the state. Now a days it is seen that Rubber also thrives well here.

Fauna :

The forest of Tripura was a natural abode for many precious animals, birds and reptiles. Rapid population growth caused to the destruction of forest areas and thereby decaying of many of the animal species. It was a good habitation for Elephants, tigers and bears. But now these animals have become rare animals here. Other animals like deer, monkeys, Leopards, Civit, mongoose, bats, wild cats, squirrels, etc are found in this forest. The rare species of spectacled monkey locally termed as 'Dadhimukh Bandar' is found here. It seems that there was Rhinoceroses in the forest of Tripura as is evident by the royal order of prohibiting the hunting of these animals dated 1905 A. D. but now no Rhinoceros are seen in the jungle. Birds like bulbul, sparrow, parrot,

maina, Bringaraj, wild cock, wild Duck, Dhanesh etc. are usually found in the forest. Different varieties of reptiles like Cobra, Python, amphibious like frogs, gosaps, tortoise and Baurui are found in the state. Python was once very commonly seen but now a days it becomes a rare species.

Climate :

The climate of this territory is characterised by moderate temperature and a highly humid atmosphere. December to February is the cold season. March to May is the Summer in Tripura. The rainy season caused by South-West monsoon starts in June and continues upto September. October-November is the post monsoon season.

By the end of November the cold weather starts when the temperature of days and night gradually fall. January is the coldest month when the mean daily maximum temperature is 25.5°C and the mean daily minimum is 10.4°C .⁷ From the beginning of march temperature rises gradually and day temperature is the highest in April. Due to south-west monsoon rain in May-June the day temperature drops by three to four degree centigrade. The highest maximum temperature recorded at Agartala was 42.2°C on May 1, 1960 and the lowest minimum was 3.9°C on January 2, 1955.⁸

In the summer season the relative humidities are between 50 and 75 percent while in the moonsoon season they are over 85 percent. The average annual rainfall of Tripura is 2,007 m.m.⁹ About 63 percent of the annual rainfall is received in the south-west moonsoon season. The rainfall in the summer months are mostly in the form of thunder showers which amounts to one fourth of the annual rainfall. There is also some rains in the post moonsoon period. The average rainfall in year 1990 was 279.79¹⁰.

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CHAPTER— II

Social Environment.

With this short account of natural environment let us now have a look at the social environment in which the Bongs live amidst other tribal and non tribal people because the social environment is also very important in shaping a people's culture. Bongs are very limited in numbers and as such they were compelled to be influenced by other major tribal and non tribal population in shaping their culture. As other tribal population of same ethnic stock is always influencing them, it is no wonder that they have undergone a drastic change in respect of their primitive culture.

The following table shows the names and numbers of different tribal population in Tripura along with the non tribal population.

Sl.No.	Tribe	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991
1.	Tipra	150971	189799	250382	330872	
2.	Reang	48471	56597	64722	84005	
3.	Garó	7362	5484	5559	7297	
4.	Chakma	7277	22386	28622	34799	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	Mog	3789	10524	13273	18231	
6.	Jamatia	2764	24359	34192	44501	
7.	Kuki	2721	5532	7775	5501	
8.	Lushai	1947	2988	3672	3734	
9.	Noatia	1916	10010	10297	7181	
10.	Halam	1644	16298	19076	28969(1)	
11.	Oraon	—	2875	3428	5217	
12.	Santal	736	1562	2222	2725	
13.	Uchai	—	766	1061	1306	
14.	Khasia	151	349	491	457	
15.	Munda	51	4409	5347	7993	
16.	Bhil	41	69	169	838	
17.	Chaimal	—	50	—	18	
18.	Bhutia	19	7	3	22	
19.	Lepcha	5	7	177	106	
Total:—		237953	360070	450544	583920	

Total Population :

Year	population	Growth
1872	35262	—
1881	95637	171%
1891	137442	4%
1901	173325	26%
1911	229613	32.5%
1921	304437	52.6%

Year	Population	Growth
1931	382450	25.6%
1941	513010	34.14%
1951	639029	4.56%
1961	1142000	78.71%
1971	1556342	34.32%
1981	2053058	31.92%
1991	2744827	33.69%

It seems that according to the 1971 Census the Tipras were the most populous tribe of Tripura while the Halamas were fifth in number and their ratio with the Tripuris was about 13:1. Thus the Halams always had to survive in a social atmosphere pervaded by the Tripuris and other major tribal people and a vast majority of non tribal population.

The present Status :

Among the tribal people who resides in Tripura 19 tribes as shown in the table at page No. 11 are recognised so far as scheduled tribes. Halams are one of these scheduled tribal people. According to the Census of 1981 their number was 28969 only. The data of 1991 Census are not yet available now, so the decennial variation cannot be estimated. The Halam tribe is constituted of different clans.

Experts are not sure about the number of the clans. K.C Singha opinions that there are thirteen clans in the Halam tribe and they are : 1) Malsum 2) Rangkhal, 3) Kalai 4) Rupini, 5) Bongcher, 6) Kaipeng, 7) Longkai, 8) Dub 9) Cadai, 10) Karbang, 11) Khulong, 12) Masbang and 13) Mutilangl⁴. S. B. K. Dev Varma holds that there are 17 clans in the Halam tribe and they are; 1) Kalai, 2) Kulu or Khulung, 3) Karbong, 4) Kaipeng, 5) Kaireng, 6) Cadai 7) Dub, 8) Sakacep, 9) Thangacep, 10) Nabin 11) Bongcher, or Bongsel 12) Morsum or Malsum, 13) Sardakheng or Mudasingh, 14) Rangkhal, 15) Rupini, 16) Longkai, 17) Longleang.⁵ The names of the clans of the Halam tribe were mentioned in the Census report of 1940 T.E. They are 1) Kalai 2) Kulu, 3) Karbong, 4) Kaipeng, 5) Kaireng, 6) Cadai, 7) Dub, 8) Sakacep, 9) Thangacep, 10) Nabin, 11) Bongcher, 12) Chaimal, 13) Morsum, 14) Mudasingh, 15) Rangkhal, 16) Rupini 17) Lankai, 18) Langlu.

But our Survey suggests that at present the following clans claim themselves to be the Sub-tribe of the greater Halam Community. They are 1) Malsum, 2) Hrangkhal, 3) Kaipeng, 4) Hranglung, 5) Bong, 6) Cadai, 7) Bongcher/Krobong, 8) Kalai, 9) Rupini, 10) Langkai or Morchafang⁷. The Kalai and Rupini are somehow different from the Halam people as their dialect is akin to the Tripuri or Kokborok speaking people, yet they consider themselves to be the

Halams. The other Kuki-chin tribal people like Darlong^s etc. are close to the Halam people in respect of dialect, custom etc. yet they are not regarded as Halam.

The above mentioned Halam clans are constituted of various Sub-clans as narrated below :—

Hrangkhal : (1) Daramkha (2) Saitol (3) Molaikha (4) Khongpel (5) Roipu (6) Dorja (7) Dopder (8) Chawnbak (9) Ngameer (10) Bong (11) Sairong (12) Chapia (13) Khawphaisal (14) Tangkor etc.

Molsum : (1) Mapu (2) Dawrai (3) Juisum (4) Lengman (5) Uisa (6) Achep (Sukhachep and Thangadhep) (7) Sungphuen (8) Nokhan (9) Lungthang (10) Numpor (11) Roate/Raute (12) Laurak.

Kaipeng : (1) Dawrai (2) Tungthung (3) Sentei (4) Kuarset (5) Singnar (6) Sunjang (7) Pengaevr (8) Saimar etc.

Hranglong : (1) Achep (Thangachep and Sakhachep) (2) Tara (Chiru Sara, Polpa tara, khol tara) (3) Vangru (consists of three minor clans) (4) Songhuipu (5) Tansurai (6) Banmahar (7) Teivol (8) Khoiplapu (9) Morchaphang (10) Langkai (11) Khetewai (12) Mulfaiwai (13)

Jongtak 14) Kamar 15) Khang-
chum.

Cadai : 1) Khengtewai 2) Malfaiwai (3
Banmahawr 4) Pinhoi etc.

Bong : 1) Vanjang 2) Thisthu 3) Khulum
4) Sangrel 5) Khoknu 6) Achep
7) Reiha 8) Sunjang etc.

There are another minor Halam tribes namely Karbong and Bangcher who have almost amalgamated with the Hrangkhal tribe. Langkai and Marchafang have amalgamated into unseperable community. The Kuki tribes of Tripura namely Darlongs and the so called Kuki have also several Sub-clans like i) Bong ii) Batle iii) Ruakhum iv) Kapjang etc. 'Langkai' are these Hranglong group who; according to Mr. A. Halam, D. T. W. O., West Tripura; came from the Longai river vaily of Cachar and Mizoram and now known as Langkai. They are essentially of the Achep clan. Cadai and Hranglongs also have amalgamated into inseperable tribe who live together. In fact Cadai, Hranglong and Langkai are so close in dialect, custom, tradition, dress etc. that no distinction can be made amongst them. 'Achep' of Dharmanagar and Cachar have very close resemblance with three tribes. Darlong Kuki have as many as twenty two Sub clan Like Khohrang, Pautu, Bong (Thirthu) Rante, Biate, Thengsasuan, Khualt etc.

Close analysis reveals that the Halams and Kukis of Tripura have no fundamental difference in their dialect Social tradition and Cultural practices. Besides the Hmar of Cachar, and Manipur also are very close to the Halams and Kukis of Tripura in the areas mentioned above. Large number of people of Hrangkhal, Cadai, Hranglong tribes are residing in Cachar District of Assam. It is very probable that all these tribes belong to the same ethnic group. So a particular conclusion arriving from the analysis of the Bongs of Tripura may not be scientific. More over partial Sanskritisation due to the influence of the bordering plain people of Assam and the Bengal during the princely regime should be taken into consideration as that influence brought a lot of change in belief and thinking of the Halam people in comparison with the Darlongs and Hmars.

But as the dissertation is about the Bongs of Tripura we are to search their condition in the Geographical boundaries of Tripura. It is found that the Bongs are clans of Halam tribe and the Sakhachep and Thangaceps are Sub-clans of the Bongs. This clan is constituted of very few people or their population has become so scanty now that it is very difficult to recognise them at present as a separate clan of Halam tribe. They are at present due to scarcity of suitable boys and girls in their own Community,

allowing inter tribe marriage and thus the progenies are losing the main features of the clan and hence it becomes difficult to recognise them as a separate Clan. Practically the trend is now to amalgamate this Clan with the Tripurians because they live in the Villages mainly populated by the Tripuri people.

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CHAPTER—III

Introducing the Bongs.

The habitations of the Bongs are mainly located in the Kamranga (Devi Chada), Josh Badi, Germanjoy pada and Bong Badi area of the Kamalpur sub-division of North Tripura district. There are some habitations also in Kanthal chada (Nepal tilla) area of Kailasakar of North Tripura district. As there is a tendency now to conceal their own identity, as I have hinted earlier, it becomes very difficult to find out the whereabouts of these people. Even person like Mr. Abinoy Halma also expressed his inability to help in this regard. In the Censns now the tribal population is not counted, or recorded according to clan or sub clan. Thus there is no hope of having the recorded population of this sub clan. The Devichada people admit that they have some relatives at Bongbadi and Kanthal chada. That kanthal chada people expressed that they have relatives of their own sub clan at Bongbadi and Kamranga. But none points out elsewhere

other than these places where Bongs are residing now.

Physical features :

As the Bongs are the sub clan of the Halam tribe, their stature are like that of the Halam tribe. They are medium in height with good physique. Their face is slightly round in shape having flattened nose and slightly small eyes. Their skin is not as fair as that of Halam, rather it is slightly darker in nature. They have less beards in the face and hair in the body and their hairs are stiff and erected straight. Their feet are stout and powerful. The women are generally shorter than the man but they have all built body. They are strong and laborious. They speak in a language which is more akin to kuki speech. The Tripuris termed them as 'Sikam' while other Halam people calls them 'Bong'.

Population :

There are twenty families in Kamranga (Deb-ichada) eight in Joshbadi, twenty in Bongbadi, nine in Kanailal Halam pada and thirty in Nepal tilla of Kailasahar. The total number of families

thus come to eighty nine only which includes, perhaps, not more than five hundred souls. Abinoy Halam even opines that a good number of Bongs have already amalgamated in the Darlong group of kuki tribe due to continuous hral. Hral means inter tribe conflicts which resulted the amalgamation of the defeated Bong tribe into the victor darlong sect of kuki tribe.

Classification :

Though there is no social classification among the Bong yet they are divided into several dafas. These dafas became familiar either after the name of the once head of the family or from their type of occupation for livelihood or from the place of their original settlement in this state. Nothing definite can be assumed about the origin of this classification. The existing fractions are-Sangrel, Tirthu, Sunthu, Bonjung, Khulum, Raiba, Banjung and sunjung. Inter marriage between these dafas are allowed but intra marriage is strictly prohibited.

History :

Halams are originally included in the people speaking Kuki-chin language of the Indo-

Mongoloid groups . They say that they were the ruler of this Tripura rigion. The Tripura defeated them by the numerical majority and established the present royal house. That was the reason why the kings of Tripura always invited them to the capital on the occasion of Vijaya Dashami, showed much respect, offered good foods and drinks, and granted special favours and presents at the time of their farewel from the capital.

S.B.K. Dev Varman opinies that the original house of the Halams was in a place named Khurpuitabhum situated north of the present Manipur state. Gradually they left their home land and proceeded towards Cachar and Tripua. Practically there are a good numbers of Halams people residing in the Cachar district of Assam. They became submissive to the king of Tripura, When they entered here and began to reside here.

The Census report of 1340 T. E. narrates that the Halams claim themselves as the son of the Lord Siva. Previously they used to reside in Khurpuitabhum and they are actually a clan of the kuki tribe.²

Migration :

It is learnt from the present survey that the Bong people now residing in kailasahar or Kamalpur

sub-division have been residing in this area for last 200-250 years. Previously they were residing in the Sylhet district of Bangladesh in the places named Bhanugach and Samsernagar etc. From there they shifted into Tripura in search of good jhum land. This story of migration from Sylhet to Tripura seems to have some historical basis. The sakhacheps are the subclan of Bong clan of the Ha'am tribe. The royal house of Tripura had close connection with the Sakachep and Thangachep Halams during the reign of Vijoy Manikya II when the rising power of Tripura was engaged in the extension of territorial boundaries of the kingdom in the adjoining districts of Bengal. At that time there was another Vijoy Manikya, the king of Jayantia, who defied the authority of Tripura. The Tripura army marched towards Jayantia to teach Vijoy a lesson. The king of Jayantia, being in trouble, took the help of Nirbhoynarayan, the king of Cachar, Nirbhoynarayan mediated the two waring parties and solved the issue peacefully without any material loss to the king of Jayantia. The king of Jayantia, thus relieved of the humiliation, was eager to take revenge. The Sakhechep and Thangachep Halams who were then residing in the areas situated on the southern and northern boundary of Jayantia and Tripura respectively were very much indomitable and powerful. Practically with their active help the rulers of Tripura were extending their

territorial limits. The king of Jayantia took chance of making them friendly so that they may be used against their master, the king of Tripura. He then engaged himself to win over these Halams. Vijoy Manikya II, being a tactful politician, soon unearthed this plot. He knew that the Halam subjects of that tract were very simple and loyal to their master. Yet as a precautionary measure against the will of Vijoy manik, he summoned the notable sardars of those tribes to the capital, showed them much respect and paid them presents. He advised them to be loyal to their master always as they had in the past. He was successful in persuading them of taking a vow to the effect that in future they would never raise arms against the Tripura kings. As a token of this mutual friendship, the king then presented them a small elephant and a tiger made of metal in which some traditional advices were inscribed. The Halams being pleased took the presentation as a special royal favour. Sri Rajmala also narrates this episode.³

This episode testifies that Bhanugach, Samsernagar etc, the adjoining southern areas of Sylhet was the abode of the Sakhachep Halams. These areas were included in the territory of the kingdom of Tripura. Thus the story of their migration from Sylhet to Tripura is also verified from this episode. From these frontier areas, these people penetrated into the mainland of Tripura in search

of jhum land as the jhumfields generally become unproductive after 3-4 raising of crops when the farmers had no alternative but to shift to a new place. The Bongs in search of fertile jhum land entered in Kailasahar and Kamalpur of Tripura. Thus we are now in a position to sketch a rough picture of the migration of the Bong people from their original homeland to Tripura. From khurpuitabhum they gradually migrated, surely in search of food, and reached the area which now-a-days termed as Caehar. They settled here and again some of them migrated to the adjoining territories of Jayantia, Sylhet (Tripura) and Sylhet (Bengal). From this area ultimately they entered into mainland of Hill Tripura perhaps in the later part of the sixteenth century. But Mr. A. Halam differs, He thinks that Bhanugach and Samsurnagar can not be called as the abode of Sakachep.

Subjects of Tripura :

In the later period of the Manikya rulers, the Halams used to pay House tax @ Rs. three and Annas fifty per 'khana' per year as is evident from the royal gazettee.⁴ Though this rate was fixed on the 'Rupinis' particularly yet it can be concluded that as the 'Rupinis' are the clan of Halams, other Halams also were taxed at the same rate. Hence comes the question of Bongs and they

too also were taxed alike may be presumed.

The Hill subjects were allowed to pay their dues in cash or in kind. They generally offered elephant task, Bison, black papper, cotton and silk etc. in lieu of cash due. Tripura Buranjee also testifies that this method was in vogue in the eastern province of Tripura during the early part of eighteenth century.⁵ It seems to be natural that the people who maintained themselves from food gathering and jhum cultivation would pay their taxes from the collected materials and jhum produces.

Language :

The Halam dialect is a part of the Kuki-chin group of languages of the Tibeto-Burman class.⁶ "Halam dialect is not different much from the kuki dialect. Some change has taken place in their tongue due to the influence of the neighbouring Tripuris".⁷ Most of them understand Tripuri language and a good number of them can speak Kokborok well. Hunter also opines that the dialect of the Halams may be included along with the Thade, Lushai and khung dialect of the kuki.⁸ There are some minor differences of the sounds in the dialect of the each clan of Halam speaking people. S.K. Chatterjee opines that "with the single exception of the Khasis and the connected

jaintias (Syntengs) of Assam, the Mongoloid people who are found in India are all speakers of languages and dialects belonging to the sino-Tibetan or Tibeto-chinese speech family'. " Again he states "Linguistically, the Sino-Tibetan language of the present day have been classified into two groups or branches —

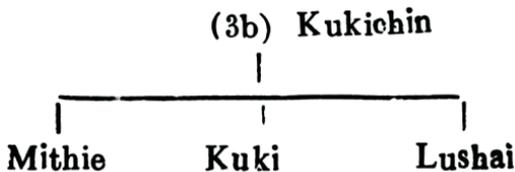
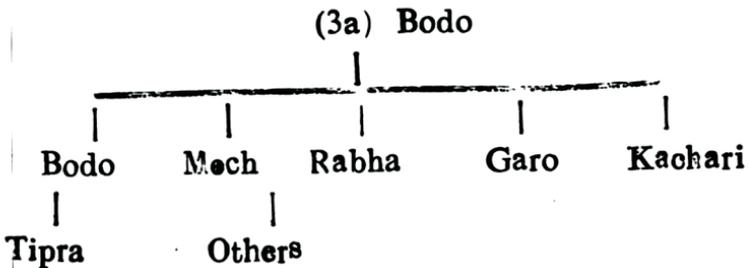
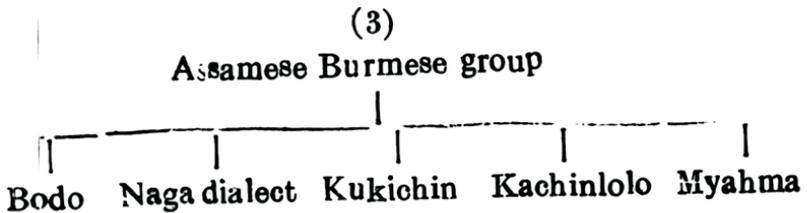
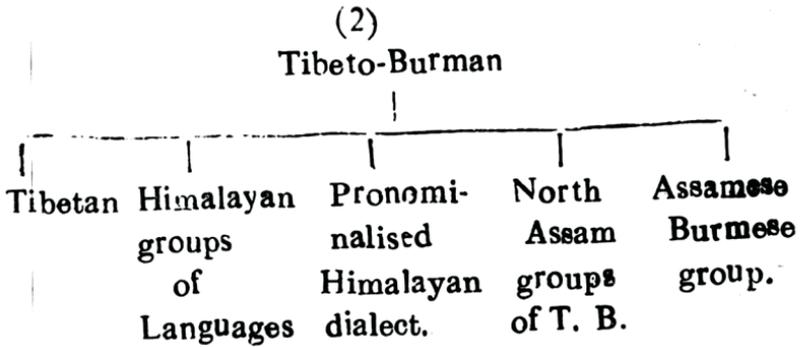
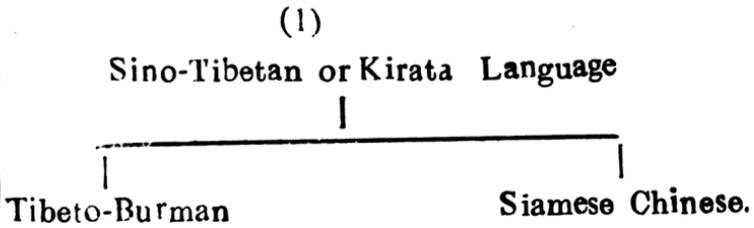
- (1) Tibeto-Burman and
- (2) Siamese chinese' ¹⁰.

The Tibetoo-Burman group includes—

- (a) Tibetan and its various dialects;
- (b) the Himalayan Group of dialects spoken on the Indian side,
- (c) the 'Pronominalised' Himalayan dialects of Tibeto-Burman,
- (d) the North Assam groups of Tibeto-Burman speeches, and
- (e) The Assamese Burman group of Tibeto Burman speeches.

This Assamese Burmese group includes the—

- (i) Bodo speeches,
- (ii) the Naga dialects,
- (iii) the kuki-chin speeches of Manipur, Tripura and Lushai Hills,
- (iv) the kachin lolo group of Burma and finally,
- (v) the Myahma or Burmese. ¹¹ The views of Prof. Chatterjee may be expressed shortly in the following Tabalar forms.



Our assumption is that the Halam dialect is a part of the kuki language or it has close similarity with the kuki language. As the Bongs are parts of Halams so their dialect must have some similarity with the adjoining subtribe of the kuki speaking people. Let us make a comparative study of the Bong dialect with that of Darlong dialect, a branch of the kuki speaking people and Tipra language. Some selected vocabularis are as follows:—

Bengali	Bong	Darlong	Tipra
Ami	Keima	Keima	Ang
Tumi	Nangma	Nangma	Nong
Se	Angma(Ama)	Ama	Ba
Baba	Pa	Pa	Baba
Ma	No	Nu	Ama
Swami	Pasal	Pasal	Buchai
Stree	Nopui	Nopang	Bihik
Bhat	Bhu	Bu	Mai
Mach	Nga	Nga	A
Mangsha	Se	Sa	Bahan
Mad	Rakju	Rakzu	Cauyak
Ghar	In	In	Nak
Bans	Rau	Rau	Ya
Badi	Khau	Khua	pada
Chagal	Kel	Kel	Pon
Bagh	Akei	Kie	Mocha
Sukar	Vak	Vok	Yak

Bengali	Bong	Darlong	Tipra
Kukur	Ui	Ui	Sani
Garu	Serat	Sehrat	Musuk
Harin	Sakhi	Sakhi	Muchuai
Din	Ni	Sun	Sul
Rat	Jan	Zan	Hara
Agun	Mai	Mei	Har
Seet	Adai	Adai	Maising
Jal	Tui	Tui	Tui
Surja	Nisa	Ni	Chal
Candra	Tha	Tla	Tal
Tara	Arsi	Arsi	Athukiri
Iswar	Pathiyen	Pathian	Mutai
Hat	Kut	Kut	Yak
Mukh	Mai	Hmai	Baukhuk
Cul	Sam	Sam	Baukhapaya
Thot	Mur	Hmur	⁶ Khukchoi
Nak	Nar	Hnar	Bukung
Gala	Ring	Ring	Gadna

From this list is evident that the dialect of the Bongs has close similarity with that of the Darlong which belongs to the kuki tribe. Though the mode of pronunciation of a particular word which produces some understandable sound is slightly different in some cases yet both the speakers can communicate to each other their needs and get fulfilled their desires. Some of the words and the sound produced thereby are quite

different but in any case have no similarity with the Tripura tongues and sounds. So if there be found any word or any sound like that of the Tipra, this can be explained as give and take policy, as both the speakers are residing side by side for long period. Thus there remains little doubt that the Bonga dialect belongs to the Halam dialect which is a part of the kuki-chin speaking people of the Assamese-Burmese group of the Tibeto-Burmans of the Sino-Tibetan or Kirat family of languages

Some pattern of sentence are noted :

Bengali
 Ami bhat khai.
 Ram bazare jay.
 Se futbol khele.

Bong
 Bhu Ko nek.
 Ram bazara Ase.
 Bal anaday.

In this pattern the object is followed by the subject and the verb is used at the end of the sentence.

Use of adjective :

Bengali
 Hori bhalo chele
 Ami lalgolap pachanda kari.
 Sada Sukarti bes bada

Bong
 Hari Asing
 Golap Asen Kamadita
 Oak ngi Aliyon.

MaKing sentence interogative ?Bengali

Se ki Mansa Khay ?
Ram ki kal asbe ?

Bong

Se asa kom ?
Nantuk Ram Senim ?

Imperative sentence ?Bengali

Skule jao
Bandha kara halla

Bong

Iskuta Ser.
Dayrek ra.

Negative sentence ?

Cinta jano na
Tumi bhat kheona
Ami bhat khaina
Tumi skule jaoni

Rradan mak raw
Bhu ne.
Bhu nebaung
Iskula Se makoe.

Gender ?Bengali masculine

Swami

Bong masculine

Pasal

Bong Feminine

Nopui

<u>Bengali masculine</u>	<u>Bong masculine</u>	<u>Bong Feminine</u>
Jubak	Aayang	Auoang
Mama	Pu	Pi
Balak	Pamplate	Nungpate
Kaka	Pank	Puiank
Baba	Pa	No

Pronoun :

<u>Bengali</u>	<u>Bong</u>	<u>Bengali</u>	<u>Bong</u>
Ami	Keima	eiguli	hioa ngai
Amar	Kata	eidike	hioatam
Amake	Kemarang	Oidike	Suoatam
Tumi	Nangma	ekhane	him
Tomake	Nangmake	Sekhane	Suoason
Tomar	Nongma	Ke	Ingma
Se	Angmake	Ki	Ingma
Tahar	Ata/Atake	Kothay	Inam
Iha	Hioa	Kakhan	Inokam
Uha	Suoatam	Kahake	Turangma
Oiguli	Suoangai	Konti	hoama

Making plurals :

<u>Bengali</u>	<u>Bong Singular</u>	<u>Bong Plural</u>
Ekti garu	Serat khat ka	Serat Khatnik
Ekti sukar	Oak khatka	Ook khatnik

They use the number of things after the original word :

Use of Tense :

Present Tense

(To eat-Nek)

	Bengali	Bong singular	Bong plurel
Ist person	Ami khai	Kanek	Kannek
2nd person	Tumi khao	Nanek	Nannek
3rd person	Se khay	A nek	Annek.

(to do-kati)

Ist person	Ami kari	Ya kati	Ya kanti
2nd person	Tumi kara	Ya nati	Ya nanti
3rd person	Se Kare	Ya yati	Ya yanti

(to give-Pek)

Ist person	Ami dei	Ka pek	Kan pek
2nd person	Tumidao	Na pek	Pe nanti
3rd person	Se deya	A pek	An pek.

Past Tense

(To eat-nek)

	Bengali	Bong singular	Bong plural
Ist person	Ami kheyechilam	Kanekjei	Kannekei
2nd person	Tumi kheyachile	Nanekjei	Nannekjei
3rd person	Se kheyechila	A nekjei	Annekjei

(to do-koti)

Ist person	Ami kariyachilam	Kaya jei	Kan ya jei
2nd person	Tumi kariyachile	Nā ya jei	Nan ya jei
3rd person	Se kariyachila	Aa ya jei	Anaya jei

(to give-Pek)

Ist person	Ami diyachilam	Ka pek jei	Kan pek jei
2nd person	Tumi diyachile	Nā pek jei	Nan pek jei
3rd person	Se diyachila	A pek jei	An pek jei

Future Tense

(To eat-Nek)

Ist person	Ami khaiba	Ne kati	Ne Kanti
2nd person	Tumi khaibe	Ne Nati	Ne Nanti
3rd person	Se Khaibe	Ne yati	Ne Anti

(to do-kati)

	Bengali	Bong singular	Bong plurel
1st person	Ami Kariba	Ya Kati	Ya nati
2nd person	Tumi Karibe	Ya Nati	Ya nanti
3rd person	Se Karibe	Ya Yati	Ya Anti

(to give-Pek)

1st person	Ami diba	Pe Kati	Pe Kanti
2nd person	Tumi dibe	Pe nati	Pe nanti
3rd person	Se dibe	Pe Yati	Pe Anti

Use of degrees :

<u>Bengali</u>	<u>Bong</u>
Kalu bhalo chele	Kalu asing
Kalu Horir ceye bhalo	Kalu Harinekin asing.
Ram saboeya bhalo	Ram asing tak.

Parts of the human body :

Bengali	Bong	Bengali	Bong
Hat	Kut	gala	Ring

Bengali	Bong	Bengali	Bong
Mukh	Mai	ghar	Dab
Cul	Sam	Cokh	Mit
Thot	Mur	Pet	Feng
Nak	Nar	Buk	Rap
Pa	Ke	Kan	Kuar
Komar	Kong	Bhuru	Kamit raba
Jihba	Lei	Linga	Jang
Dadi	Nerkhamul	Joni	Su

Some Insects and pets ∞

Prajapati	Mathlep	Sap	Marul
Masa	Rangchan	Kakda	Aitiklik
Makodsa	Kumghat	Kachap	Satel
Ganga faring	Khai	Kachim	Sunfa
Cina jok	Inayat	Idur	Maju
Jok	Malit	Beji	Beji
Pipda	Mursee	Kathbidali	Jhalai

Some Birds and Animals ∞

Pakhi	Oya	Kukur	Ui
Payra	Parblee	Bidal	Aming
Sakun	Sarkru	Garu	Serat
Cil	Mukhay	Bagh	Akei

Bengali	Bong	Bengali	Bong
Morog	Ar	Bhalluk	Aum
Hans	Vatak	Harin	Sakhi
Hati	Saipui	Siyal	Siyal
Sukar	Oak	Bandar	Jong
		Chagal	Kel

Plants and their parts :

Gach	Thing	Chal	Thing kadak
Bet	Menang	Ful	thing par
Bans	Rau	Fal	Thing thei
Pata	Thing bau	Lata	Rirang
Mul	Thing rajung	Beej	Thing Ro
Kanda	Thing Kung	Jhum	hai

Some crops :

Dhan	Bhu(Sahom)	Am	Thi hai
Kacu	Dal thuang	Kathal	Lamfuyang
Begun	Manta	Jam	Murjalank
Maric	Marca	Lebu	Lebu
Lal maric	Marca Sen	Kamala	Kamala
Ada	Ithing	Kala	Mot
Sarisa	Jai roi	Supari	Kaoa
Karpas	Pat	Pan	Pathai

Regarding house :

Bengali	Bong	Bengali	Bong
Badi	Khou	Murgir ghar	Ar inn
Ghar	Inn	Bichana	Jilmon
Gola	Sasier	Mancha	Cad
Daraja	Innkhar	Banduk	Selai
Chad	Inncung	Tant	Puonrakal
Kakha	Innsung	kudal	Rei
Rannaghar	Bhn na inn	Langal	Langkan
Paikhana	Inn a nain	Takkal	Cem
Suharer		Lep	Tulabri
khoyar	Oakra kul	Tukri	Tukri
Garughar	Setat inn		

Regarding time sense :

Din	Son	Dupur	sun
Rat	Jan	Bikal	khelai
Mas	Tha	Sandhya	Jan
Bachar	Kom	Aaj	Arian
Sakal	Jing	Kal	Mijan
Bhor	Ar khoyas	Agami kai	Nantuk

Nature :

Prittibi	Ram moyal	Sisit	Red
Mati	Feel	Cnadra	Tha

Bengali	Bong	Bengali	Bong
Batas	Thinthi	Surya	Nisa
Megh	Asum	Tara	Arsi
Jal	Tui	Akas	Fal
Jal prapat	Tong	Cader alo	Thabar
Bajrapat	Macek	Suryeralo	Nisang bar
Pahad	Moal	Chada	Tite
Tusar	Arial	Nadi	Tipui
Agun	Mai	Bristi	Rau

Some other words :

Bhalo	Acha	Cinta	Cinta
Manda	Asiye	Rag	Taksi
Sukh	Mud	Bhalabasa	Indit Inric
Dukh	Dukh	Biswas	Kaeam
Man	Malung	Sahajya	Asan

Regarding teste :

Some colours

Swad	Atui	Lal	Asen
Mista	Athum	Sada	Angai
Tikta	Akha	Kala	Ahang
Tak	athur	Maila	Annim
Jhal	anhung	Pariskar	Anthiang
Nonta	Aal	Sabuj	Aem
		Halud	Aeng

Some diseases :

Bengali	Bong	Bengali	Bong
Rog	Ri	Basanta	Tak asusak
Cof	Khabor	Kabra	In a inluak
Mathadhara	Lu inhai	Pet kharap	fong a na
Dat betha	ha ano/ha kunginni	Dusta	In luyak
Jwar	Asa		

Direction :

Pub	Sumtan	Para(bin selaijama)	Abong
Paschim	Taklam	Poda(naturel)	Akam
Uttar	Mar/Dong	Poda(burning)	Ahal
Dakshin	Sim/Sak		

Some Verbs :

Rakha	Adar	Bahan kara	Apel
Paoa	Aman	(on the base)	
Pan kara	Anek	(on the head)	Atiang
Basa	Insung	Bikrikara	Ajuyar
Tairi kara	Asin	Asa	Ahang
Jaoya	Ase	Bij Bona	Attek/Buttck

Some Verbs :

Some Adjectives :

Bengali	Bong	Bengali	Bong
Para(Selaijama)	A kei	Sidha	Abut
Bona	A khang	Durbal	Akhar
Deoa	Apek	Proyojaniya	Anang
Neoa	Alak	Bisasta	Akhiam
Kanda	Acap	Chota	Acin/a lok
Hansa	Iing/Annui	Bada	Alian
Bala	Ati/Aril	Bhanga	Asiat
Mara	Ajim	Cheda	Acet
Khaoa	Anek	Sundar	Asa
Dekha	Mu	Nutan	Athar
Khoda	Pangak	Puratan	Asarua
Jhadu deoa	Infiat	Satya	Adik
Snan kara	Ti ia buol	Mithya	Milak
Bhat ranna		Alas	Asal
kara	Aer	Parisrami	Atang
Tarkari		Sundari	Asanu
ranna kara	Asuang	Nrityarata	Alam laitak
Hanta	Kal acay	Ucu	Ansung
Daudano	Intan	Nicu	Annauya
Dadana	Inding	Dhar	Apek

Judicial terms:

War terms:

Bicarak
Aim

Royaril
Aim

Banduk
Bijoy

Selai
Arat

Judicial terms :

War terms :

Bengali	Bong	Bengali	Bong
Curi	Inru	Dhanuk	Saili
Sasti	Atong	Teer	Fal
Jarimana	Lie	Ballam	Kalsaru
Jail	Palak	Judha	Insul
Jera	Jera	Parasta	Amandap
Tada	Arajun		

Other terms :

Rasta	Lam	Barsa	Rauchingtha
Khela	Indai	Asan	Sungeur
Nao	Alam	Kache	Anay
Gan	Boe	Dure	Ala
Druta	Inrak	Samne	Anai
Gopaniya	Inrukin	Piche	Nuktiyeng
Prakasya	Thanfuyemin	Mad	Rakju
Nari pidan	Akutakai	Paduka	Kekok
Songam	Inlok	Pankha	Jamja
Grisma	Daipa/Alum	Cula	Ana
Seet	Dirip/Adai	Iswar	Pathian

From the samples of the sentence patterns it is evident that the sentences are formed by using the subject first and followed by object and

it is finished by the predicate. But there are other samples too where this pattern is not followed. In the use of objective the usual pattern to the word qualifying the noun are not generally used before the nouns. The interrogatives are not formed by placing the verb first. The numbers are generally changed simply by using the number before or after the nouns. The verbs are made plural by using the sound before the verbs in case of present, past and future tenses. Thus the oral sentence framing is an original pattern practiced by the speakers as there is no written form and therefore the hard and fast rules of grammar has not yet become a barrier in communicating the ideas between the speakers. The linguists should take the opportunity of exploring this virgin field.

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CHAPTER—IV

The Economic life of the Bongs

The Bong society is regulated by the primitive economic system. There is no specialisation, each member of the society can do any work. There is no bar. Tools and techniques are simple, few and indeginious. But this fitted well with their environment. Want is almost common and satisfied easily. There is no labour division in their society. The economy is self sufficient. They have no trade and commerce in their tradition. only exchange of surplus produces in lieu of another essential commodity was in vogue in their tradition.

The economic activities are food gathering, food production, animal domestication, basketry and weaving. Every family performs each activity to meet the demand of the family but with no expectation of profit. The owner is himself a labourer. He is the master of his production. There remains very little for marketable surplus. Now-a-days with these surplus they gather salt, dry fish Kerosin oil from the nearest market. But these are brought not in profuse

quantities as they have no such purchasing power. This is the picture of the non literate family. The literate families are moving fast having another source of livelihood i.e. employment in private or public sectors. Employment in public sector is becoming a bar to the attainment of higher education and there by attainment of quality of living as very few poor people can remain unmoved by such allurements of easy money making.

An attempt has been made in this chapter to describe their ancient economy along with the current trends.

1) Food gathering :

The food gathering activities of the Bongs consisted of the collection of different vegetables, leaves, stems, roots ect. from the nearby jungles, fishing in the chadas and hunting in the forests. These endeavours are not sufficient for running of the families smoothly and thus they supplement by food production and domestication of animals and birds. As the forests are denuding day by day, the process of food gathering is also decreasing. The production of foodgrains faces change in method as jhuming is being gradually discouraged.

Various edible leaves, stems, tubers and roots are found in the forest which the Bong people

collect. Generally during the rainy season these vegetables naturally grow in the forest and some varieties grow in the marshy land and chadasides throughout the year. These are collected generally by the grown up girls and women who after taking their morning meals set out in groups for collection. Young boys and girls also may accompany them but generally menfolk do not attend these activities. There are so far known no taboos for the man to collect but the fact is that they are then engaged in more laborious works which are not suitable for the women. Only a chopper locally known as Takkal which is used for digging, cutting and pitmaking while collecting these vegetables and a basket made of bamboos locally termed as Khada is used for carrying them.

They collect wild beans, Bamphal (wild papaya) roots of tapioca of two varieties one is sweet (kalkai) and another is not sweet (kangbal) the tubers of different varieties of arum (Bal, Bekhum, Ganj, Balkai etc), the stems of Gandai (kabri), a seanted variety of arum, very tender shoots of bamboos (Toi), leaves like Dheki Sag (fern leaves). Pardi, Thingjor, Nainak, bark of some wild plants like sajena, wild Banana flowers (musha), Banana stick, tender front edge of cane brakes etc. In addition they collect honey (khai tui) Dhup (Baro), Mashroom from soil (Patung) and mashroom from trees (Parmay). The leafy vegetables are cooked while the roots and tubers are simply boiled and used as food.

They collect also firewood, bamboos, Sungrass etc. from the forest. Some of these materials along with surplus collected vegetables they go to market

Hunting :

Hunting is another process of food gathering. It is not only an economic activity but also a sport. Generally boar, deer and birds like fowl, dove, parrot etc. are found in the jungles. Previously they used to hunt even elephants and tigers. Now-a-days these animals being rare in the forests they get no chance to hunt these though they say that they are even now fit and courageous enough to hunt these.

Hunting may be a joint venture when a group of people engage themselves in this sport. It may also be an individual activity. In case of joint venture person who is expert in hunting and have some past experience is selected as the leader of the party. The other members of the party follow the leader and act according to this direction.

The instruments used for hunting are gun, spear, bows and arrows. In addition every member must have his own chopper or Takkal with him. Generally the members of the group track the

hunt from different sides, surround the area, go on reducing the circle, make noise by shouting and beating the jungles and direct the pet dogs to make out the hidden animal out of its hideouts. When the animal comes out all the members attack it. Generally the Gun-man finish the job by target shooting.

In case of individual effort some time pits are made in the way the animal usually use. The pits vary in sizes. Small pits are meant for smaller animal while the big pit is dug for big animal. Generally pits are made in the evening and cover it with wild leaf, bamboos and creepers etc. So that the animal, do not hesitate to pass over it. When the animal falls in the pit makes hue and cry and the waiting hunter finish it simply beating when it is small animal but use other weapons when it is a big animal. Individual effort may also be of other type where the hunter takes his position in a bush near the usual way of passing the animal before the dusk and wait for the game. Later when the animal comes within his reach, he attacks the animal with gun or arrow. Sometime the hunter makes a peculiar sound to attract the game to the hunting spot.

Kheda is a joint venture when a group of hunters work. They make a big pit suitable for the elephant on the path which the animal frequently use. Pointed bamboo spikes are planted at the bottom of the pit so that the animal may be seriously injured as soon as it falls in

the pit. The top of the pit is covered with leaves, creepers and bamboos so that it gives a natural show to deceive the moving animal. They also make some traps for catching birds. These traps are made of bamboos. Gum traps are commonly used in the jhums. Sticky juice of some plants which are adhesive in nature are pasted on the perch which they place in the jhum field. When the small birds come to eat the insects or grains they seldom sit on these perches for taking rest and get stuck. The more they flutter their wings, the more tightly they are stuck. Ultimately the hunter comes to rescue the bird and kills it.

Hunting is a game for the men folk only. No woman is allowed to take part in this game. There is no taboo for the women but they say that such hardy work is not suitable for the women folk. Besides when the men are engaged in hunting, women are also engaged in collection of vegetables and fuels.

One hind leg of the hunt is specially sanctioned to the leader of the party. The other hind leg is reserved for the Galim and other officials of the clan. The rest is divided equally among the members of the hunting group including the leader. There should have a share for the achai according to the tribal tradition but the present survey could not discover any such compulsory custom particularly in vogue even today. In case of individual hunting the share of the Galim is not obligatory. But if the hunt is sufficient enough, the Galim gets his share too.

Various scanted leaves and barks of plants are collected from the forest. These leaves, barks in pasted condition are mixed with the clan meat with adequate quantity of salt. This mixture is now pushed into a green bamboo having a knot in the end. The opening side of the bamboo is then closed tightly with leaves. The bamboo having meat is now placed in the fire. The entire mixture is thus cooked in pressure. When the outer skin of the bamboo becomes black i. e. when it is well burnt, the process of cooking is complete. This cooked meat now is ready to serve.

When sufficient quantity of meat is gathered by hunting, the surplus amount, after satisfying the present need of the family, is not wasted but preserved for the bad days. The meat is either dried in the Sun or is smoked in the oven. In this process they preserve meat for long days.

Fishing :

Another process of food gathering is fishing. The main sources of fishing are the chadas, rivers, marshy or water logged areas of the adjacent area. Though fishing is done throughout the whole year yet the main season of catching starts before the winter months when the rainfed water of the water sources began to dry gradually. But during late winter the sources became almost dry except the

chadas and rivers. So during later winter season fishing is done generally in the rivers.

Fishing may be an individual activity or a group activity too. Generally fishing in rivers is done jointly. But in other water sources it is done individually. The traditional instrument like angle, sewing basket (Seoti), cokshring, Palo and some poisonous plants are used.

There is no taboo in fishing. Both men and women folk including the children can attend the activity. But pragnent women in menstruation are excluded from the activity.

In ponds and water logged marshy area they prefer angling. Sidal or fermented small fish, eggs of ants, earthworms etc are used as bait of the fishes. Sometime the small water area is made waterless by lifting the water with sewing basket or cokshring. It is a basket made of cane. When the water is removed, they collect the fishes from the bottom clay.

In case of fishing in the river they use poisonous creepers. The roots and stem of the creeper named 'Rue' are cut into small pices, crushed, threshed and then mixed with river water in large quantities in the upstream of the river. Thus the poluted water flows down wards and, perhaps, cause respiratory troubles to the fishes as they began to float in surface of the water. The hunters now use polo or spear and Takkal to catch these fishes. Sometime the bark of the 'karai' plant is also used as poison.

The fishes thus collected are divided equally among the members of the group. Of course, in case of individual collection no question of such division comes up.

All the caught fishes are not consumed then and then. Some of the fishes are dried up in the Sun or smoked in the oven and stored for the bad days. During the rainy season, the road to market becomes muddy and the overflowed streams become dangerous to cross. They then use the stored fishes or meat.

It is said that previously pythons were used as food. But now-a-days these are not available frequently. Bongs used to hunt kuchia, a type of all and golden frog (karau) as these two species are included in their food. Usually water logged and barren fields in the rainy season become full of these amphibious.

ii) Domestication of animals and birds :

The Bongs domesticate traditionally pigs, dog fowl and cat. But now-a-days they domesticate goat and cows also. As they were accustomed to shifting cultivation, the rearing of Cows was useless to them. Moreover they generally do not like the milk and milk is not considered by them as must food, like other tribal people. Previously keeping oows, bafullows, goats etc. were trouble

some in the wild atmosphere where ferocious eaters of these animals were in large number. Now as they started plough cultivation, the domestication of cows become essential.

Swine is a common domesticated animal among the tribal people. It is not only used as a food but it is a must in the rituals and social functions. The fowl is also good food and is a must in the rituals. They do not eat beef or the meat of the Dog. Dog is domesticated mainly as a guard and as a guide for hunting. With the exception these animals other many animals and birds are included in the list of their food.

Pigs are at present kept in the pig-sty. But previously these were kept under the platform of the Tonghouse where the family members resided to protect them from the tigers. During day time the pigs roam in the villages and eat what they like. In the evening they are kept in the pig-sty. The Fowls roam in the courtyard garden and collect their foods from everywhere. They are also given grains and rice. They are kept in the baskets or in a small shed.

iii) Food production :

The principal activity of food production is known as jhuming. Almost all the tribal people

of the north eastern India are dependent on this shifting type of cultivation. The soil of hilljacks, locally turned as tillas, are laterite in nature though it is covered by deep bushes. It lacks in organic matter and hence less fertile. Chemically the soil is acidic. But the upper portion of the surface receive plenty of fallen leaves every year. These leaves decomposed in place and make the upper surface slight fertile. Such slopes of the tillas are cleared by a chopper named as Takkal. It is an iron made cutter having one side sharp but the head is sharp on both sides. The side edge is used for cutting while the head is used for pit making like that of khanta. The cleaning operation starts in the month of February-March. The jungles are cut and left in the place for drying up. These dried up bushes are burnt into ashes in the month of March-April. The ashes make the soil more fertile. Now pits are dug in the later part of April or in the first part of May by Takkal in the entire productive area. Varieties of seeds are placed in the small pits and covered by soil. The seeds began to germinate with the commencement of the rain and the whole area become greenish jungle by the immersion of various weeds along with the young crop. Now comes the intercultural operations. The main item is weeding. The cultivators eradicate the weeds. Weeding is also followed by mulching. As the young plants grow, the farmers protect them from damages by various wild animals and

birds. They erect a Tang in the jhum field and guard the crops. As a type of mixed cropping is done in the jhum, the crops come out serially one after another. The cultivator thus harvest the first crop and wait for the second to ripe and so on. In this way entire harvesting is completed. On the same land a second or a third crop can be grown when the soil become so poor that it can produce nothing and as a result the cultivator is bound to desert this jhum land and shift to a new place in search of a fertile and suitable jhum land. The process of jhuming is narrated here in brief and the result of jhuming is not discussed as it is out of place here.

Like other hill people the Bongs also mainly depend on jhun for their food production. Previously it was their main occupation and was the only way of producing food. First of all the jhum field is selected by a special test named as 'Terusan'. After physieal verification of the chosen plot intended for jhuming. the achai, the priest and magician, hold this test to verify whether the land is fertile or not. 'Terusan' is a test by leaves. The Ochai collects some leaves and mix these casually with 'mantra'. Then he goes to a place of higher altitude and let the leaves to fall in the ground below. If all the leaves fall on the earth in right position i. e. the smooth side of the leaves facing the Sun and rough side touching the earth then it is conoluded that the soil would be good for cultivation. Now the whole area is devided into plots for each family of the

dafa by Fe. Fe means sign. Thus the demarcation of the individual plot is done. The demarcation is not made by digging posts and some thing like that. Generally big trees, Longas etc. are determined as boundary signs. Before the cleaning of the jungles starts, most of tribal people used to perform some rituals. But in case of Bongs, as per our information, no such ritual is performed before the work starts. Men and women jointly perform this laborious task. They use only Takkal as the instrument. Some times some families jointly clean their area. Sometime co-farmer helps the needed one in cleaning the area but it is done not in lieu of cash money. The owner offers the helpers dinner or launch along with smoking materials and wines. Only the minor boys and girls, very aged men and women, ill and handicapped people are exempted from this tiresome work. When the bushes dry well, they burnt these into ashes. In this ready field they sow paddy, jute, cotton, sesamum, maize, pepper, jhinga, Tarmuj, Kharmuja, Melon, Bean, Red gourd, Bottle gourd, various arum and spices like ginger termeric etc. Both men and women jointly work in the intercultural operations like weeding thinning, mulehing etc. They erect a Tong in the jhum field and take rest there. During the days of guarding the crops from wild animals both men and women jointly work during the day time. No women is allowed to stay in the jhum-hut during night. The men folk only guard at night. the main enemies

are animals like boars, bears, elephants, Sajarū etc. and birds like Cadai, Eabui, tota, maina etc.

From the month of Aug-Sept the crops began to be ready serially for harvest. The crops are harvested according to their maturity. When all the crops are harvested completely, the crops are stored in the house. At this time the Achai performed Luxmipuja. The store-room is prepared in the main dwelling house. It is made of bamboos. In corner of the dwelling house a platform is made of bamboos. on the platform a mat made of bamboo strips is placed. The four walls also are made of bamboos and joint together placing them on the platform. The walls are tied in the joints by bet either made of bamboos or canebrakes. The cover of the store is also made by a mat of bamboos. This store is named as Sasier in Bong language. At present as regular cultivation is being adopted by the Bongs, implements like plough, spade, sickle, Nirani etc. are used and livestock are also domesticated for this purpose.

iv) Handicrafts :

Bongs have some craft works. They prepare some materials entirely for the household works. None of these articles are marketable. Actually

their production have no market value as these articles are not commonly used by the neighbouring Bengalees.

Basketry :

Cane and bamboo works are one of the crafts commonly practiced by the Bongs. Usually the males are engaged in this craft. The tools required are very simple and indigineous such as only Takkal and the raw materials need are bamboos and cane brakes. They make Base, Tuikak Cempai, Ral, Bem etc. Each of these articles are very useful for household works. Base is like the khada of the Tipras, it is made of bamboos only. Base is used for carrying goods from one place to another placing it on the back. It is hanged from the head of the person by a string of vegetable fibre and placed on his/her back. Tuikak is used for lifting water from the well or chada. It is wooven by cane brakes. Thin canes are placed so closely and tied to tightly that on space is left between the canes and water do not leak while lifting from the sources. It is a masterpiece of handicrafts but it has no market value. Cempai is a kind of basket generally used for loading and unloading paddy or grains from the Sasier.

Bem is a bukset, wooven by fine cane brakes.

It has a cover. The brakes are woven so tightly that no space remains in between the two canes. It is used for keeping clothes etc.

Rel is a basket like the shape of a Almirah. It is about 4'4'-6" in height and 12"/14" in breadth. It has legs so that it can stand on the floor. It is four edged and made by fine cane brakes. It has a cover also. It is used for keeping clothes and other important household goods. Tabong : It is a small basket square in size made of thin canes. Size varies from 16-25 squinches. It is used for keeping gewallaries. Paikong : It is a basket made of cane used for carrying paddy from the jhumfi'd.

It is seen that they use furnitures made of cane brakes only because these are not heavy and suitable for transit to other places when they leave one area in search of jhumland and settled in the new area. Other articles they do not make.

Weaving :

The Bongs are self sufficient in textile and weaving. Both men and women used hand woven clothings and usually they do not purchase any cloth from the market. At present, of course, the new generation do not better for their old tradition. The entire work of cloth making is done by the

women folk as they believe that a man who does this work may be attacked by bears.

Cotton is grown in the jhum field. In the month of Oct-November boles are collected from the field; dried in the Sun and stored. Thereafter they-puled off the shells of the boles and separate the seeds from the cotton by ginning machine termed as Muiot.

This machine consists of two wooden rollers horizontally inserted into the poles which are fixed on a short heavy wooden plank. The rollers are geared in opposite direction with a crank. Cotton is carded by a bow and a striker. The bow is made of a matured Bamboo and string is either made of skin or rope. The triker is a piece of wood. The cotton is rubbed on the thigh to make several wicks. From these wicks thread is made.

But they dye the wicks before making threads. They generally use two colours c. g. black and Red. The leaves of a kind of plant named Cica are collected and soaked in water for four to five days. Now alkalined water or Kharpani is mixed with this water. They also add some other elements in this solution. The threads when dipped in this solution become permanent black in colour. The sap of a plant named Cingfak is prepared from the barks of this plant. The barks are cut into small pieces, dried and then made powdered and soaked in water for some days. Some amount of kharpani is then mixed with this solution, along with some

other ingrediants. The threads when dipped into this solution become permanent red in colour. The other ingrediants which they add with these two solutions are not disclosed by them, perhaps to maintain the secrecy of their knowhow.

The prepare loom by bamboos. Only five or six pieces of bamboos are required to make this device which we term as loom. Ratiem is used for tightening the weaved threads. The shuttle is turned as Kather. It is a piece of bamboo through which the thread passes. The threads are placed upward or downward by a stick named as timbu. The timbu is controlled by Zaref. The waist belt is prepared by the hard skin of buffalo. It is known as Kongon. (Kougvon) or waist-belt.

They prepare only a few kind of clothens named as Kaipreng beltung, Puan bam, Kaipreng, Jaku, Kamdum, Kamanyie, Risa, Punnai, Puanhak and Puanribo. Rokob etc.

Wood Craft ?

The Bongs are not very much interested in wood works. Previously they did not use any wooden furniture. Wooden furnitures are heavy and not suitable for quick transit. They had to shift from place to place in search of good jhum field.

In that case wooden furnitures were burden and that was, perhaps, the reason as to why they are not habituated in wooden furniture. They only use wooden mortar and pestle (serel) for husking paddy. Mortar (Sumpuk) is made of wooden log. The log is entered in the earth to a depth of 5/6'. The out portion remains above the soil on this plain part, Simply a hole is made on the middle and pestle is made by a branch of a tree so that it can be entered into the mortar safely. Generally husking is done by the women folk. They say that previously, they use to make wooden dish (mayrang, Tubs (Kheng pui) etc. for household use. But now-a days they do not make any such utensils. They use pieces of bamboo having knot at the bottom for carrying or preserving oils or other liquids. Even grains are kept in the dried shell of the bottle gourd. It is also used for preserving and storing of water. The bark of wild jar (odal plant) are used for making string for the Tuimeng or base. At present as they are accustomed in rearing animals for agricultural purposes, this fibre is used for making of ropes for binding the live stocks.

Pottery :

Bongs knew a bit of pottery. Previously the pot for boiling rice, pitcher and distillation

pots for making wine were made by them by earth. Now these are available in the market and thus they stopped this work.

Inlom: The Bong people follows on unique economic practice termed as Inlom. The work in the jhum field is done by the young farmers of the village in rotation. The members from each house both men and women together start work from one side of the field and continue till they reach the other side. Every man and woman was free to join Inlom or withdrew himself or herself from it. It is unique in this sense that there was no difference amongst the families on the basis of class or wealth and the workers got no remuneration or wages. They even carried their own lunch packet consisting of riceball as they started the work in the morning and returned to thier own hamlet in the evening.

CHAPTER—V

The Social life of the Bongs

The Bongs being the clan of the Halam tribe prefer separate house for each family. This house is known as In. A village is formed by some families. Generally it is found that the name of the village is done after the name of the famous sardar or after the name of the clan/sub-clan itself. The names like Jarmanjoy para, Kanailal Halam para or Bong Badi may be cited for example. Previously they used to live together but at present due to shortage of population they are often surrounded by the people of other tribe.

The selection of land for home stead is generally done on the top of the hillock. They prefer fresh light and air of the high altitude. Ha means soil and tam means owner i.e. they were the owner of the land. So they prefer to live in a high place from where they can see the Jhum field situated in slopes of the hills. Of course due consideration is given regarding the sources of water. So the hillock selected for home stead must have spring or water fall or it must be situated near a hilly stream. The Jhum field for

each family is demarcated. The demarcation is not done by posts but by natural elements. Some big tree or slope of the hillock or a hilly stream etc are mentioned as the boundary of a particular field.

The dwelling house is termed as Khan. It has three parts. The first one is meant for the unmarried boys and girls of the family. The second one is the main dwelling house is termed as In where the married people of the family stay and the third part is Sasir, the store house of the grains and other Crops. At present the married boys prefer separate for themselves and as a result the number of sheds are increasing. As they now began to reside in the plains and become accustomed in normal agricultural operations, they require sheds for the domesticated animals. Thus in the courtyard cowshed, pigsty, goatshed and sheds for fowls may be seen now.

Bamboos, cane brakes, logs, sungrass etc. are used as house building materials. Each family is helped by the members of the other family while erecting houses. They help not in lieu of cash but generally they are offered tiffin, launch, tobacco and beetle leaves. This process is termed as Furgkoi. The owner of house, to be built, generally takes a handful of soil from the chosen plot and place the soil before his head rest while sleeping. If he dreams a good dream then the place is selected for house building. Otherwise

the place is rejected and search is made for another suitable plot.

The dwelling house is decorated with some furnitures made of canes. These are: 'Bam'a basket with cover finely wooven by canes and used for keeping clothes etc; and 'Ral'a almirah made of canebrakes.

In the main dwelling house a corner is selected for cooking purpose. Thick wooden planks are placed by the sides of the bamboo made walls and on the floor. The planks are then plastered by mud quite thickly so that the fire can not touch the under laid planks. Then the oven is made with opening in three sides so that fuel can be pushed from each side. Over the oven some strong cane strings are hanged from the roof. The string serve the purpose of hanging meat and fishes for smoking. They keep a hole in the floor through which all the waste materials are dropped down. The upper wall near the oven is wooven loosely so that some gaps remain through which the smoke liberates from the oven.

Generally they use bamboo made mats on the platform (floor) and sleep there. They avoid the western side for placing their heads while sleeping. They use guilt (Tula bree), Pillow (lukham). These are made of jhum grown cotton. They use also Puan ribo, a bedsheet in their beds.

Food and drink :

The Bong takes food thrice daily. In the morning they take food and set out for work. At noon they come back home from the work and take food. In the evening they take the dinners and go to bed. During jhum cultivation the food for the noon is carried in the jhum field and they take it there. In case of plain cultivation, the morning diet is carried in the field.

They are omnivorous in nature, with the exception of the cow, dog, cat, rat, owl, tiger, monkey and vulture they take almost all animals and birds as food. Generally rice, vegetables, fish, meat, molasses etc. are their usual food. They do not like milk and milk made foods. They take tobacco and beetleleaves.

Rice is their staple food. One adult can consume about 500 grms of rice with curry at a time. They husk sundried paddy with mortar and pestle and winnow the mixture and get fresh rice. They prefer unboiled rice. Rice is cooked in the earthen pot with starch. Previously they use bamboo peices for cooking rice. Now a days some people even use pots of Aluminium. They prefer gruel rice. Vegetables are prepared either by boiling or roasting or frying or grinding. In the preparation of curries they use alkalined water popularly turned as Kharpani. They use no oil in the preparation of curry. In a green bamboo peice having a knot at the bottm some clean vegetables are pushed along with adequate quantities of pepper, common salt, dry or fermented

fish, some wild leaves having smell accepted to them and the opening of the bamboo is closed with the leaves of Sungrass or other creepers tightly. This bamboo peice is now roasted in the fire until its upper surface burnt and become blackish. The content in the bamboo is now well cooked and ready for serving. Fish or meat is also cooked in this process.

Previously they would collect salt from the salined water of the different hilly streams. The names like noon chada, Laban chada etc. indicate that they carry salined water. This salined water when boiled the water vapoured and the sediments were used as common salt. Some salined rocks were also there in the hill where the wild animals used to lick the rocks to meet their need of salt. The hill people often collected these rocks for their own use. At present they collect this commodity from the market.

They prepare alkalined water in their houses. Some tender bamboos are burnt and the ash is collected in the base. Actually bamboo charcoal is collected although ashes are also mixed with them. They mix some other ingredients with this ash and the base is hanged from the roof by a string. Some water is poured in the base on the ashes. This water saturates the ashes first and then passes through the charcoal. A containeris placed under the base and the filtered water is collected. This filtered water is known

as Kharpani (changal). It is used in every curry including that of dry fishes and meat.

They use wild banana leaves and a kind of leaves as Nathil as their dishes. The prepared rice, vegetables and curries etc. are served in a leaf. All the members of the family use to sit around this leaf dish and enjoy the food. The glass for taking water is a small dried bottle gourd having narrow neck named as Tuium. The guests are also invited to join in this mini community dinner. It is regarded as a severe insult to the family if any guest refuses to eat food from this common dish. Usually an able person can consume about 500 grms of rice at a time though there are persons who can consume more.

The home made wine is a favourite drink for every body. It is taken by all including the children. In every ritual, marriage, community parties and in entertaining guests wine is a compulsory drink. The rice of Bini paddy, a good variety of paddy, which grows in the jhum, are mixed with 'Cal' or 'muli' and fermented in a pitcher to make a mixture named as Langi.

The leaves of Simdrama, pine, apple, Jack fruit, the tubers known as "Maitya alu", the barks of Kuchia are mixed with the rice powder to make cakes. These cakes are dried and stored. These cakes are termed as Cal or Cuaon.

This langi is a favourite drinks for all They use to drink langi from the pitcher by a thin

bamboo pipe collectively. Afterwards this **langi** is again distilled in an earthen vessel, specially made for the purpose into wine. This wine is also again processed to make it more strong. An adult can consume about 500 m.l. of such liquor at a time easily. During festivals the amount of personal consumption increases. There is no social prohibition about the amount of individual intake.

The tribal people are accustomed in smoking. They grow tobacco in their **jhum** field, collect the mature leaves dry them in the sun, treat them and then store. These leaves are then cut into very small pieces and mixed with very poor quality of molasses to prepare the tobacco mixture. This tobacco is smoked by a simple instrument called **Hukka**. A piece of bamboo having a knot at the bottom is taken. The opening and the bottom of the bamboo piece is made smooth. At the middle of bamboo piece a hole is made through which a small pipe like bamboo piece with two sides open is inserted tightly at 45° angle. The head of the small pipe is rubbed so that a bowl may fit on it. The bowl is filled in tobacco mixture having a piece of hard soil in its bottom. Burnt pieces of wood or charcoal is placed on the tobacco mixture. The operation is complete now and the smoker can smoke by placing his mouth on the opening of the thick bamboo piece. There is no social bar in smoking. Hence male, female, even the children smoke together. Now a days they also prefer **Bidi** and **Cigarettes** which are available

in the village market.

They also like to chew bettle leaf. Beettle leaves are grown in the trees from which they collect mature leaves. They purchase dried arecanut and lime from the market and along with tobacco leaf they enjoy the bettle leaves.

Social structure :

We have already narrated that the Bongs are the sub-clan of the Sakhachep clan of the greater Halam tribe. It is also mentioned that these subclans are classes but not based on the occupation. Perhaps, these are named after the name of some famous headman of the remote past.

The marriage between the clans are allowed and that of subclans are also regarded as good. Inter class marriage is allowed but intraclass is strictly prohibited. Due to lack of population marriages are taking place with other tribes particularly with the Darlongs of the Kuki tribe. We have evidence that even Bengali girls are also married to the Halam boys. The spread of christianity loosened the ageold traditions and intra tribe marriages are not uncommon now.

Linage ♂

The Bong society is patriarchal. The family

runs under the direction of the father and the progenies are recognised as the lineage of the father. The right of property belongs to the sons only. Generally, the father during his life time, divides his property both immovable and movable among his sons equally keeping an equal share for himself. Sons are allowed to live separately, if they desire so, and thus forming other units of families. The old parents generally live with the eldest son who looks after them, take care of the share of the property of his father. The girls are generally given marriage by the father in lieu of some cash money which usually was upto Rs. 45/— as the highest rate. But in actual practice this dowry money was much less than this rate. If the father dies before giving marriage to any daughter, the responsibility fell upon the brothers who share the responsibility and the dowry money too. After the death of the father, the eldest son becomes the owner of the property share of the deceased father. Though the mother has no right over the property yet the sons generally look after her. In case any sister becomes widow and returns to her brothers house, in absence of her father, and desires not to marry again, the brothers generally give her shelter, though they are not bounded by any customary laws. The widow sister is also economic member of the family and thus no trouble arises.

Birthrites :

The experienced women of the society help the pregnant mother during the child birth. Normally the expected mothers, particularly in the advanced stage, are not allowed to lift loads or engage in hard laborious work. She was guided by the experienced women of the hamlet regarding her foods and drinks. The varanda or a portion of the dwelling house is used for the purpose of delivery. Now-a-days, of course, separate room is used. The male members of the family are not allowed to enter in this delivery room. Only in case of any serious trouble they are summoned by the attending women.

Hot water is used for this purpose. As soon as the child is delivered the attending lady cuts the umbilical cord by the sharp edge of the slit of a bamboo and ties the naval cord by a clean thread in three knots. The placenta and other fluids are removed from the place and the place is cleaned with hot water. The mother observes seven days as the period of unholiness.

After seven days the name giving ceremony of the baby is held when the neighbours and nearby relatives are invited. Generally the names of the grand father and grandmother are bestowed on the newborn babies. The name of the mother or mother's father or brother have no connection with the name of the newborn baby. The relatives and neighbours bless the baby with paddy, cotton and wine. This ceremony ends in a feast with

adequate drinks, though this feast is not obligatory.

After this preliminary festival a big festival is organised at the age of one month in case of a female baby and one and half a month in case of a male baby when all the relatives of this house are invited. This is organised to celebrate the completion of the unholi period of the mother along with the rice feeding ceremony of baby. The mother after taking holibath takes part in this festival. The maternal uncle of the baby cleans the hairs of the baby and the ochai offers them to the Sun God. He offers Sun God materilas like bamboos, paddy and cotton. With the chanting of mantras he saerifices cocks to please the God. The maternal uncle first feeds the baby with a portion of rice. Thus the child begins to eat other things along with the breast milk of the mother. The festival ends in a feast with adequate drinks.

Family :

The Bong family consists of the father, mother, sons, unmarried daughters, wives of the sons including their proginies. The grandfather or grandmother may also happened to be the members of the family incase the head of the family be the eldest son of his father. The family

is devised later when the married sons desire to live separately. In some cases though families with 8-9 members are seen but in most cases the families consist of 5-6 members. At present, with the spread of education and availability of other facilities, new families are being formed when the working son resides in his place of work for away from the father's house in his place of posting.

Social Institution : (Marriage by Contract)

Marriage is a social contract. Generally when the girl starts menstruating and the boys are well grown and capable of earning his livelihood, they are given in marriage. No child marriage is there at present. Marriage generally are held within the clan but intra sub clan marriage are not permitted. Usually marriage are settled by the parents but before the final decision is arrived at, they advise their son to see the girl and narrate his view. If the son does not choice the girl the parents stop the matter there But actually what happens is that the boy chooses a girl and gives hint to his parent about the matter. The parents then go to the house of the girl along with some Kins like uncles and maternal uncles of the boy. After reaching the house of the girl, they convey to the father of the girl about the cause of

their visit. The father of the girl entertain the party with meat and liquor. The discussion is held and if the father of the girl agrees to give his daughter, then the date of finalisation and the date of marriage are settled mutually. Generally marriage is prohibited in the month of Pous and the months like Magh and Falgoon are regarded as good months for the occasion. The Saturday is avoided as the day of marriage. After this preliminary talks the father of the boy set out for his own house along with his kins. On the day fixed for final settlement, the groom's party consisting of the parents, uncles, other relatives, friends of the bridegroom go to the house of the bride where they were received cordially. The settlement of contract in the value of the bride is usually settled orally at Rs. 45/- in presence of the village leaders like Galims etc in case of the same clan marriage. But if the bride belongs to separate clan then the price is settled at Rs. 55/-. The grooms party usually comes back on that day. But if their house is situated far away from the house of the bride, the party halt for the night in the house and set out for their house in the next morning. The amount of contract money or the duration of labour by the boy (Jamai khata) is settled in presence of the village leaders.

On the specified day the groom's party including parent, relatives and friends go to the bride's house. They are offered good foods and drinks. The

marriage ceremony is very simple one. The Ojhai, recites some chants. The other essential things are paddy, cotton, cock and liquor. The girl is dressed in a new clothes but the in case of groom no special dress is necessary. The Ojhai chants the contract of promise, the bride and the groom repeat the same. After taking the Oath of fidelity the boys and the girl bow down to the respected persons like father, mother, other relatives etc. They all bless them and hope for a peaceful and useful long congenial life. Then the groom entered in the room of his father in law where they jointly perform the puja of Luxmidevi on this very auspicious occasion. In normal cases, the bridegrooms party start for their own house in the next day. At the time of the departure of the party some people of the house of the bride obstruct them to proceed further by singing some songs through which they ask the bridegrooms party to narrate the cause of lifting their girl from their custody. They must satisfy the brides kais about their intentions. If they fail to satisfy the brides party, they are fined. The fines are accepted in terms of liquor. The grooms party then arrange drinks for the bride party to such extent by which they are satisfied.

Thus ends the ceremony of the arranged marriage. The friends and Kins of the bride will accompany her to the house of the groom. Here they will be offered good food and drinks. They

stay for the night and start for their home in the next morning.

Jamai Khata :

If the contract is made of paying the price of the bride by offering labour by the groom, then the boy began to reside in the house of his father in law after the marriage. He is to work in the jhum field and do other household duties as usual during the period of contract. When the boy first go to the house of the father of the girl to marry her, the function done on this occasion is known as Ludju. The ceremonial marriage is done but the boy is allowed to cohabit with the girl. After the specified period when the groom departs from the house of his father in laws with his wife and children a function is organised which is termed as sokju. Meats and Wines are served in this function. If after Ludju, the boys sleeps with the girl and as a result if the girl become pregnant and now if the girl doesn't want to marry him then the boy is punished by a fine of Rs. 120/-. Generally this doesn't happen because in case of such intercourse the girl marries the boy or the boy is rather compelled to take her by the society and ceremonial Sokju is held. Sokju means exit ceremony.

Marriage by elopement :

If any youngman elopes a young girl from the custody her parents and brings her to his own home with a view to marry her, the father of the youngman will rush to the father of the girl and beg his pardon. Of course, both the boy and girl in this case are in love and the girl willingly leaves her fathers house. Now if the father of the maid becomes happy at this gesture of the father of the boy and agrees to give his daughter in the hands of the boy who elopes her, the matter ends in a happy conclusion. But if the father of the maid disapproves the activity of both his daughter and the son of the other person, the matter becomes clumsy. The father of the boy then asked the father of the girl to bring back his daughter and control her so that such occurrence is not repeated again. The father of the girl brings back his daughter, punishes her by mere beating and compel her to forget her own choice. The boy is also warned and fined for his activity. But if both the girl and the boy are determined to their choice and do not yield to any punishment, then ultimately the guardians respect their will.

Marriage by force :

If the youngman and his party lifts any girl from the custody of her parent by force with a view to

marry her and brings her home, the father of the youngman then and then rushes to the father of the young maid and begs his pardon, for the activity done by his son. If the father of the girl accept his gesture and expresses his will to give his daughter in the hands of the youngman who lifted her by force, the matter ends in happy conclusion. But in other case, he summons a meeting of the village officials and place the matter before them for justice. Generally a few bottles of wines and some meats are required as fees of the council. They will hear the case. If the boy is found to have lifted her against her will, he will be given severe punishment alongwith a heavy fine. A portion of the fine money will go to the father of the girl and the remaining to the council. The boy is being compelled to abide by the rule of the council. But in case the father of the girl agrees to give her in the hands of the lifter and the girl disapproves his idea then she will be punished. A peice of bamboo is placed horizontally on the back side of her kneejoints and she is ordered to sit with the bamboo peice. This gives her much pain in the kneejoints. The pain is increased by placing weight on her back. This torture continues till she yeilds to the wish of her father.

Divorce :

Like other tribal societies divorce is also in

vogue in Bong society. Both the husband and wife are at liberty to ask for divorce. The village council generally sanctions divorce on the following grounds:—(1) if either the wife or the husband is found to be in illicit connection with other male or female respectively. The culprit is fined and a portion of the fined money is given to the opposite partner (2) if either the male is incapable of sexual act or the female is incapable of being pregnant or bearing progenies (3) either the husband or the wife now developed dislike for each other. In this case the elders give advice and declines them from separation (4) if either of the partners becomes insane etc. If the male is found to be guilty, he is fined the full dowry money. A portion of it will go to the village council. If the female is found to be guilty she is also fined the wage of the entire period of service rendered by the husband, in her father's house. Though divorce occurs but these are only occasional not plenty in numbers. The society thus try to control the behaviour of its individual member. Generally Bongs are monogamous but in some cases, though rare, polygamy can not be ruled out. Any how women folk are not allowed to enjoy more than one man at a time.

Remarriage of widow :

Remarriage of widows are in vogue in the Bong

society. An widow or an widower or a divorcee is allowed to remarry again generally this marriage is not performed with much pomp like the general marriage. Widowers are preferred for an widow. Marriage between a fresh youngman and a widow is very rare. Women are respected in the society as they are also the economic member of the society. There is very little scope for corrupt practices in such a tight bounded society. Yet when a case comes up, it is dealt very rigidly. The culprits are physically tortured and fined and even outcasted. There is no way of leaving the society and the persons compell to swallow the command of the society.

Child marriage :

At present no case of child marriage is found in the Bong society. But the census of 1930 AD hints that there were child marriage at the time and the Census report also gave some statistics. But those days are gone and now, with the spread of Education, easy means of communication, their entire character are in changing phases.

Kin ship :

The kin relationship among the Bongs is very

intimate and sweet. The relation between husband and wife, parents and children are very intimate. They love each other and are dependent on each other. The babies are reared up by parents and others. In case of diseases, deformity or death they help each other. No beggar is to be found in the Bong society as the society make some persons responsible to maintain the unables or lonely persons who have no Kins to look after them.

The relation between the husband and wife, younger brothers or sisters is very close and friendly. Before the marriage of a sister, her elder sisters are informed compulsorily and they must join the ceremony when they present clothes to their younger sister. Similar relation is to be found between the wife and her husband's younger brothers or sister. They joke with each other but may have no physical relations. In case of death of a wife, her husband may marry her younger sister. In case of death of a husband, the wife can marry the younger brother of her deceased husband.

But they maintain a distance in relation with son in law and parent in law. Similarly daughter in law and parent in law's communication are also of distant. The wife generally do not speak with the elder brother of the husband. She can not touch him. Similar taboos are maintained between the wife and her husband's maternal uncle, between

the husband and his wives elder brother or sister. The husband talks less in front of parent in law or the elder brother and sister in laws.

A list of Bong Kinship terms alongwith corresponding Bengali and Darlong terms is noted below :—

Bengali	Bong	Darlong
Baba	Pa	Pa
Ma	No	No
Bhai	Parul	Upo
Bon	Sarno	Uno
Stree	Nopui	Nopang
Swami	Pasai	Pasai
Thakurda	Pu	Pu
Thakurma	Pi	Pi
Dadamasai	Pu	Pangtak
Didima	Pi	Ni
Swasur	Tarpu	Tarpu
Sasudi	Tarpi	Tarpi
Sala	Kumai	Naibungpa
Salee	Bachai	Naipungnu
Mama	Pu	Pu
Mami	Pi	Pi
Meso	Marang	Pate
Masi	Puank	Nate
Pisi	Karang	Ni
Pisa	Ni	Pangtak
Kaka	Pank	Pate
Kaki	Puiank	Nute

Bengali	Bong	Darlong
Jotha	Pater	Panlian
Jethi	Puiter	Nunlian
Baudi	Bachai	—
Bauma	Moi	—
Didi	Uno	—
Jamaibabu	Kuei	—
Sambandhi	Kawaipa	Nypa
Sambandhiirstree	Bachai	Bachai/didi
Salar stree	Saruinu	Saruinu
Jaistha Salika	Kawainu	Didi
Bhaya	Saruipa	Saruipa
Bhasur	Kumaf	Uvoi
Ja	Saruinu	—
Devar	Kakumaipa	Nakumaipa
Nanad (nanas)	Wainu	Na Bachainu
Nanad (thakurjee)	Bachainu	—
Putra	Naite	Kanai
Bhaiput	Naite	Kaupahal
Bhaginee	Nainupang	Kacharnumaipang
Bhatijhee	—	—
Bhagina	Naite	Kacharnu naipasal
Behai	Thurpa	Thurpa
Behain	Thurou	Thurou
Bauma	Kasamainu	Kamainu
Jamai	Kasamapa	Kamakpa
Nati	Tupa	Katupa
Pauti	Abharupa	Ka Barapa/Kabaranu
Khanti	—	—

Dresses and Ornaments :

The male Bong wears a close fitting underwear (nengti) named as Kaipreng. Some times they wear another underwear like a towel (gamcha). It is not stiched and named as beltung. These two are the common dresses for the lower portion of the body. They wear a coat like hand stiched garment to cover the upper portion of the body. This is known as Jaku. They place on their heads a black coloured spiral peice of cloth (Bida). This peice is known as Kamdum. Over this Kamdum they wear a white turban known as Kamngai. All these pices are made of cotton which they grow in the jhum field. The peices are stiched by the women.

The women generally wear a Pachda of white colour known as Puanbom. This puanbom hangs from the chest and covers the lower portion of the body upto just beneath the Knees. They wear a breast cover termed as Risa. The colour of the Risa varies from white, Red, blue to black. The risa contains different designs. They also wear Jaku of Black colour. Thus with Risa and jaku they cover the upper portion of the body. The child bearing mother wear a peice of cloth named as Punnai which hangs from her neck on the back in which the child is carried. All these garments are made of cotton which they grow in the jhum field and these garments

along with that of the males are designed and stitched by them. They also wear a Taga, a string made of thread, in their waist.

They are very fond of ornaments. The unmarried young women wears a bangle in her hand termed as Jakse.

The yalso wear Bandril, Naphul, Samkil Bomjoy and Sumri. Bandril is an arnlet made of brass. It may be gold plated or coloured in golden colour. Generally wel-to-do families use gold plated ornaments. Naphul is an ornament of nose. It is made of silver. It looks like the seed of a pumpkin with a bright red stone in the centre. It is hanged from one side of the nose. Samkil is made of the bones of deer and it is used in the chignon. It is tonge like instrument made of silver. There are chains hanging from the bottom of the tong. These chains contain small coins in the foreend. The sumri is a necklace made by the coins. Previously only the coins of the kings of Tripura were used in making these chanins. Now all other available coins are used. The sumri of the Bongs reach up to the chest of the person who wears it. The bangle determines her status because only unmarried Women can wear it. Others wear a bangle named as Harbon. It is made of lead and the Bong men makes this bangle. They use various garlands (males) of flowers. Almost every girl use flower in her hair. They prefer scanted nageswar flower (Kersaipar) and other various wild flowers.

There is no tabo regarding the dress. The panchda wore by mother-in-law can also be used by daughter in law. Of course the same Jaku is used by both mother and daughter or father and son etc. At present the aged bong sometime used dhuti and shirt while he is in town out side his village. The young male prefers shirt and pent. But the aged women are still prefer their customary dresses, while the young maids prefer saree or skirt blouse as these are also the uniforms of the Schools.

Idea of numbers :

The Bongs can count things. There are some words in there language which implies that they could count upto one thousand. The following cardinal numbers by which other numbers can be made.

Bengali	Bong
Ek	Khatka
Dui	Khatnik
Tin	Khathum
Car	Khatlik
Panc	Khatrangak
Chay	Khatdhuk
Sat	Khatsirik

Bengali	Bong
At	Khatariat
Nay	Khatkuk
Das	Khatsam
Egara	Khatsamkhatka
Bis	Khatsamnik
Tris	Khatsamthun
Eksa	Drazak
Hajar	Asang

Sense of time :

The Bongs divide the day into morning, noon, afternoon and dusk mainly. They use different terms to denote the stage of sunrise e.g.

Sakal : Arkhuyam, when the cocks cry.
Jing, when the sun rises. Jing
Okhaitak, means early morning or
morning.

Dupur : Suun
Bikal : Khalai Oaitak
Sandhya : Khozingbup.
Rat : Jan
Madhya rat : Jan rilet etc.

Estimation of height :

Actually they do not have the idea of height

though they stay in the higher hills. They express the idea of height or depthness by the touch of water to a particular limb of the human body while crossing a stream in the hills. Thus they express :

Bengali	Bong
Mati theke hatu	Keman Khuktena.
Mati theke komar	Kong tena.
Mati theke navi	Malai bultena,
Mati theke Buk	Rak tena.
Mati theke gala	Hring tena.
Mati theke nak	Nar tena.
Mati theke Matha	Mikhum.
Mathar Upare	Mikhumdik.

Idea of length or breadth :

In this region traditionally the unit Hat is used for measuring length and breadth. A standard hat means 18" in length. The Bongs also use Hat as the units of length and breadth. These are as follows:—

Hat : Kuttummuk

Bighat : Pekhata, two pekhata make one kuttummuk.

Idea of Weight :

Actually they had no idea of measuring weight. Later they prepared a balance termed as tulpalli. A piece of wood is taken having its left end thicker than the right end. This is used as the beam of the balance. At the end of the right side of the beam a basket is hanged with three strings made of rope. This basket holds the weights made of stone which are prepared at par with seer, five seers etc. with the help of the local traders, and marks are given on the beam of the different weights. At the middle of the beam a hole in a grip of threads is inserted to handle it. This grip is adjustable at the left side with the increase of the commodities in the Basket. The beam, when becomes straight having commodities in the baskets and grips in the definite hole, is considered to have given the actual weight.

References & Notes :

1. Ghosh Sudhangshui : Nan dan, Baisakh-Jaistha, 1394, BS, Calcutta. P. 56.
2. Deb Barma S.C : Op, cit, P. 85.



CHAPTER—VI

Religious belief and cultural life of the Bongs :

The Bongs believe in Sanatan dharma. Though they worship many gods and offer puja to different deities yet they believe in oneness of almighty and his Supreme power. They believe in the existance of soul and its reincarnation. Their belief has close similarity with the socalled Hindu religion though there are some elements of animism, dream, devination, witchcraft, fertility rites, polytheism etc in their practices. At present the majority of them embraced christianity while the minorities especially the older generation are still sticked to their old faith.

They use to offer pujas to the Tarpa or the Budadevta dias Mahadeva in a big tree. They do not claim that a particular tree is the god but they mean it is to be the abode of that power. In Bengali society also people in the rural area perform the offering to the kali or Sitala under a big banian tree. Thus the names like Kalitala, Sivatala or Sitla tala evolved. This type of puja or offerings may be classified as the elements of animism.

Disposal of the dead body :

When a person dies, the dead body is kept inside the room where the person dies. The relatives and kins of the deceased person are informed about the damage and the dead body is kept upto one night for their arrival. After that day the funeral process starts. The young people of clan with the sons of the deceased person carry the body placing it on a bamboo made stretcher. The elder people move first and spread cotton and basil leaves while the carriers follow them. The body is burnt according to Hindu rites under the leadership of the Ojhai who act as priest. The sons are authorities to perform the rituals. Each has equal right. They collect a peice of bone from the pyre and preserve it by hanging it in a tree near the house so that none can damage it. The bone is protected upto the next uttrayan Sankranti when it is emmersed in the sacred water of Tirthamukh on that auspicious day after observing the formal rituals. After the disposal of the body they wash the pyre come back home by touching those peices of cottons and basil leaves which the elders spred in the path while going to the burningghat which must be situated near a river or chada. Next they change their dresses, take bath and drink sacred basil-leaf water to purify themselves. After ten days the Shradha ceremony is held when all the relatives are invited and they all attend the function. The

Ojhai performs the rituals and the sons act with him. Rice, cloth and drinks are offered in the memory of the deceased person so that the departed soul be pleased with its customary food and drinks. These special offerings are, of course, taken by the Ojhai. In absence of the sons this religious work is done by the daughters, wife or brothers of the deceased respectively. If there is no kin of a deceased person, no Shradha is generally done. In such case, the property of deceased is confiscated by the village council who manages the property in its own way. The relatives and the persons who attend the function are served good food which must contain wine and meat including other items. After one year of the death the annual Shradha is also held. Elder people say that previously there was no annual Shradha but day by day they learnt it from the Tripuris. All the sect of the Bongs burn their dead bodies except the Tirthus who prefer to bury their dead bodies. The pit is made according to the size of the deceased, the body is placed and covered by earth. Though the Tirthu people prefers graves yet they perform other rituals rigidly like other Bong people who prefer burning of the deceased. At present, in case of neo-christians, the whole affair is controlled by the clergymen of the local church. According to Mr. A. Halam previously all the original Bong people burries their dead bodies. The Sakacheps who introduced themselves as Bongs began to burn their dead bodies.

The Bongs give special importance to dreams

and they believe that the seen or objects reflected in the dream have some indication of future events. Particularly during the selection of a site for homestead, the head of the family collect a handful of earth from the proposed plot and place the soil under his pillow before sleeping. Now if he dreams a good dream then the site is regarded as a suitable place where house can be erected safely. Otherwise he will search another plot and repeat the same procedure. Generally if one dreams the scene of fire it is apprehended that the person would be entangled in a quarrel in the near future. The scene of kuocia, a kind of ill fish, in the dream is regarded as a signal for loss. The bathing scene in dream is considered as a signal for good and healthy life. The scene of a dead body in dream indicates the possibility of a good feast with meat. But if one dreams a firewood he apprehends to get a bad news like the death of a relative or a kins man etc. Devination is not generally believed yet if guest comes to a house they think that the time in future will be good. The guest may be a male or a female one but the expected result would be the same. They believe in witch craft. Some persons especially old women may be the medium of witch the who can place by craft even a piece of meat inside ones stomach which ultimately kills the person. Such other damages may be done by witches who use their ban towards the specified person. They believe in their bad

power & as soon as one is detected as a witch is killed by the villagers simply by beating. The witch is termed as "Khorī" by the Bongs. They also perform some rituals as fertility rites. Before sowing in the jhām field they offer special pujas with the blood of boar. Again they satisfy the earth after harvesting by offering the blood of boar. They are polytheist as they offer offerings to many gods and goddess. Among the gods some are mentioned here. Manasa is offered offerings in one corner of the homestead as they believe that this goddess protect their childrens when they play in the courtyard. When a child laugh within itself, the Bongs think that the child is communicating with manasa. They offer good Bhog and black cock to please her. Luxmi puja is a must in each marriag. The groom and bride jointly offer pujas to her when they first enter the room of the father of the bride just after the formal marriage. They worship the Sun (nisa) as the source of all power. They worship Pous Sundari devis, the two antics, which they received from the king of Tripura in the past, on the occasion of Pous Sankranti each yaer. They worship the Moon in every month when the moon is seen after the new moon day. The moon is known as 'Tha thar pa thean: Above all they keep special vow of worshiping the thirty three crores of goddess of the Hindu puran for a definite purpose. This puja is known as Arkhunroi and it is held in the

morning. They offer Bhog along with he goat, hog & cock to please then. It seems to be a community festival though the vow is vowed by some individual. All these pujas, the rituals from birth to death, their belief in Karma and above all their belief in the existance and rein-
 carnation of souls etc. undoubtedly show that they believe in Sanatan Dharma. At present though the new generation opted for christianity but their fathers and grand fathers are still following their ageold traditional belief.

Cultural practices :

There are some festivals which the Bongs are celebrating from time immemorial and thus these festivals became part and parcel of their cultural heritage. Some of these are as follows :—

In Lomjuhek :

It is a special feast organised in each house of the village after the harvesting of the jhum crops. The people enjoy the fruits of their hard labour after offering these to their deities. On this occasion adequate quantities of meat and drinks are arranged along with other food prepared from the jhum grown crops.

They all together enjoy the feast along with dance and songs.

Pous Parban :

It is also became a feature of their cultural heritage as they offer special pujas to the Pous Sundari and immerse the bones of the deceased in the holy water of Tirthamukh. On this occasion special feast is arranged by sufficient quantities of wine, Rice, Meat and Ricecakes. They offer these to the Sun god (Sonamangtai) and anjoy the occasion merrily.

Iraikhal :

Another important cultural practice of the Bongs is Iraikhai which the annual offerings to the spirits of the ancestors. Generaly in every year before consuming the new harvestings of the jum feilds an offering is made first by the eldest person of the family to the spirits of his ancestors. This ritual is done to memorise those relatives who passed away and reside in "Thikhow" of the deceased. This practice resembles the annual Bhog ceremony of the Vaisnabas of Banglees served in the memory of thier passed ancestors.

Ker puja :

Like other tribal people of Tripura, the Bongs also observe Ker puja with great care. The whole village is demarcated as the area of the Ker and some signs are posted in the entrances of the village. If any one enters or exits violating the demarcation known as 'Khuinhoel' she or he is fined. Even the relatives who came from a separate village will not be spared. The whole ritual will have to be arranged again as it is disturbed in the midway. Of course, every hill man know the symbols and always remain very careful about this matter.

Recreational activities :

There are some indegenious games which were practiced by the Bong people. At present, as they come in contact with the plain people more frequently, they also became habituated in the sophisticated games and sports which are inculcated by the young boys and girls in the schools and colleges. Some of the indegenious games are traced which are as follows:

(A) Throwing stones :

A piece of stone is selected for the purpose. The stone should be such heavy that it can be

moved and thrown by the young players. From the starting point the young thrower throws the stone. The distance covered by the thrower is measured and recorded. Everyone of the assembled young people will participate in the throwing activity. He who has thrown the longest distant will be declared as the winner. The test actually is a test for a powerful person.

(B) Pulling the Bamboo (Chemasongapai)

A peice of bamboo is held by a person. The other one will try to snatch the bamboo by force from him. If he succeed to snatch it, other one will try to snatch it from him and so on.

(C) Tug of Bamboo :

Two parties hold a long bamboo from two sides. There is starting point in the middle of the field. The middle point of the bamboo will touch the starting point. The two parties standing by the two sides of the mid point will hold the bamboo. With the signal of the Refree they will pull the bamboo towards themselves. The party which succeed in pulling the bamboo fully to their side is declared as winner.

(D) Panja Khela :

It is like the indigenous panja game of the Bengal-ees. Two youngmen sit face to face and place the elbow of their right hand on the ground and hold the hands of each other tightly by the fingers. The left hand is placed on the back of each competitor. Now with the signal of a third person they will try to make each others hand flat pressing with all their mites. Ultimately one will be the winner when he will compel the other to make his hand lie down in the ground.

(E) Kekindal :

It is a special game for the girls. Even the married women take part in it. It is played by the seed of a plant name as ghilla.

Dormitory or Ghutul :

There exist no bachelor's domitory or Ghutul like that of the Gonds within or outside the village of the Bongs. Though free mixing if allowed yet no such institution developed in their society. In every house, the frant room, as narrated earlier, is meant for the unmarried members of the house. Here, in this room other bachelor boys and

unmarried girls from this village or from other village may come, sit together and gossip as they like with the unmarried girls and boys of this house. Of course, their discussions and activities are frequently disturbed by the presence of other eldest people of the house who enters the inner room through this front room. References is there of a picnic with drink, dance and music generally held at night after the harvesting of the jhum crops where all the young boys and girls of the village participate. They cook together, eat together and enjoy drink, and dance, music. Generally unmarried boys and girls of the different houses are not allowed to remain together at night. But if such incident of cohabitation occurs and reported to the elders, the culprits are punished.



CHAPTER—VII

The Administration of village

The Halams had their own system of administration and judiciary during the princely regime. Generally the highest dignitary of the Halam community was selected from the Morsum sub-tribe who was styled as 'Ray'. The leaders from the different sects are selected a Galims, Gabur etc. But each sub-tribe or clan also had their own administrative unit which was incharge of their village administration. They maintained the law and order situation of the village. The leader was also the head of the socio cultural affairs of the village. Nothing in the village could be held without his approval.

The highest official of the Bong society in a particular village was the Galim. He was supported by other officials like Gabur, Senkrak, paida etc. These persons who were selected for these posts would work for whole life. No other galim was appointed during the lifetime of a galim. The people of the clan selected persons for different posts not by vote but by negotiation and send the name of the royal darbar for approval. The king usually approved the list and appointed those

officials. The king then presented them their official costumes, turban, flag etc. The highest dignitary was specially honoured by a pipe made of silver by which he could seep the lungee a special type drink.

These officials held durbars in their own villages and settled disputes like theft, decoity, women lifting, abduction and various other matters of the social life. Galim presided over the sessions and proclaimed verdicts with the consent of all the officials. If the suit was of a difficult nature and if very hard verdict was to be pronounced then the Galims of the other adjacent villages were invited who heard the session jointly and passed verdict jointly. The guilty was punished according to the degree of crimes he committed. The punishments include caneing, beating with sticks and monitory fines etc. The serious criminals were also given light punishment if the guilty begged pardon of the court and assured the court that in future he would refrain from doing such crimes and would abide by the rules framed by the society. But the arrogants were dealt without sympathy. The series of punishment one by one were given to him till he begged pardon of the court. Starting from simple slaping the guilty had to experience severe caneing, ruthless beating and fines. After the infliction of these punishments even if the guilty did not repent for his crime and begged sympathy and pardon of the court, his hands and feet were bound tightly

by canebrakes. Then the guilty was hanged from a higher attitude having his head downwards. Below his head blazing fire was created and much amoke was made by giving dried red pepper in the blazing fire. The guilty was to inhail these smoke. This punishment was very terrible and very few people could bear it because caneing was continued with this torture. In a word no one could reside in the society egnoring the social leaders and their verdicts.

In case of human murder the natural punishments was death. These leader had no authority to pronounce death sentences. The case was then forwarded to the royal Durbar as the king was the only judge who could pronounce death sentences. After wards, of course, the pahari adalat was consituted and the cases of the tribals were heard by that court. In the capital there were the representatives of all tribes. They were styled as Misip and they were actually either person from the royal house or from the house of Thakurs. Each Misip represented a particular tribe. The village officer referred the case to Misip. The Misip tried to solve the case if it was within his capacity. when he found that the case referred was beyond his jurisdiction, he piaced the case to king. The king in full Durbar heard such cases and pronounced verdicts according to his will. Though it was expected that he would pronounce the virdiot according to the customs and hindu tradition which are found in the scriptures. But

reality always does not confirms the theory.

The officials of the villages were not paid in cash. They used to collect case fee for each case from the plaintiff in addition of some meat and lequior. The accused were called and made present in the court. After the trial when the accused were found guilty he was fined in addition to some physical torture. The fine includes some cash money, meat and wine. The lequior and meat thus procured were consumed during the trial as the court would sit either in the house of the plaintiff or in other house of village. The fined cash money was devided and a portion of it was paid to the plaintiff as his compensation. The rest fine in cash and fees in cash were devided among the officials according to the position of the degnitaries. Thus this was one of the sources of their income.

Thes officials had their own jhum land which was generally cultivated by the other villagers either by force or as duty to the social leaders as they are engaged in various other important jobs. The guilty was also compelled to work in the field of the leader without payment. The villagers often gave them the share of the good produces and the leader also pickup the best product of any ordinary person which he found best. Any way this was style of those days when the king himself collected bhet and Nazar and enjoyed forced labour (Begar) of the poor ryots, his representative in the villages could not be expected to do otherwise.

Reference & Notes

1. Banerjee. S.(ed): Op. Cit. PP. 1—4,
It is evident that King like Govinda Mani-
kya even enjoyed forced labour from the
Kharaj land tenures.



CHAPTER—VIII

FOLK MEDICINE

The Bong people believe in the folk medicine like other tribal people of the country. In the past as there was no dispensary or hospital in the vicinity of their habitations in the dense forest, they had no other alternative but to abide by the advices of indigenous **mediceman of their society** popularly known as Ojhai or Occai. These Ojhais were the physicians and surgeons and they monopolised the trade.

They believe in both natural and supernatural causes of illness. The illness of a particular person may have been caused according to them, by the following reasons.

- a) Showing disrespect to any particular God or Goddess,
- b) By the influence of any evil spirit,
- c) By the breach of any family or clan taboos and
- d) By the evil vision of some people. The causes are determined by divination and accordingly the treatment is done. Special Pujas are offered to the dissatisfied God or Goddess to please them.

Counter spells are performed to negate the bad effect of the evil spirit and bad vision. They believe that a foe or a bad people can engage an Ojha who by his magical action, popularly known as Tirmara, can do definite harm to the specified person who by this magical action, becomes lean and thin day by day and ultimately dies. He may have also developed other symptoms like seeing hairs or bad things in food and drinks. The Ojha engaged by the affected person then locate the previous action by divination and applies counter spells to negate its effects. He also prescribes chains beads, armllets having parts of some medicinal plants for the ailing person along with some herbal doses. This herbal doses are prepared from the leaves, roots, barks, fruits, seeds etc. of some plants which are available in the locality. In case he needs a rare plant then he himself collects that plant.

When a person becomes ill, the elders and well wishers of the person prescribe medicines from their past experience. They nurse the patient and take care of him according to their own tradition and capacity. If their medicines fail to cure the person, they invite an Ojha. Each sect of tribal people have their own Ojha. But it is reported that the Bongs have their own such no Ojha (Particularly in the Nepal Tilla area of Kailasahar where such practices are done by the Ojha of the Reang tribe).

The Ojha first put a series of questions to

the patients and his kinsmen to have an idea of the causes of the attack. The questions are done generally from the following areas.

- a) The instances of dishonouring the family or the clantaboos
- b) The instances of disregarding any God and Goddess.
- c) Whether the patient or his relatives saw any unusual event before the patient fell ill.
- d) Whether the patient or his relatives experienced any dream before the patient fell ill.
- e) Whether the patient developed enmity with any person and
- f) Whether the patient or his relatives suspect any person who might have done this harm.

The Ojhai collect answers of the various questions from the above noted subject area. He then asks the relatives to narrate their own opinion regarding the causes of this illness. In this way the Ojhai forms an opinion and begins to locate the evil spirit who is responsible for this illness by divination.

There are various methods of divination. He selects a suitable one and begins to perform. One of the methods is as follows :

The Ojhai prepares a bow. Some pieces of threads are tied with the bow. The bow is then hanged upright down by a thread. He then recites some hymns which include the names of some probable duties or persons, as the case may be,

who are thought to be responsible for causing the disease. Now if with chanting of the hymn with particular name of the God or a person, the bow oscillates or begins oscillating slightly, the particular God or person is considered to be responsible for causing the illness. The sacrificial object for curing of the illness are also determined by divination. Generally sacrificial objects includes boar of cocks and liquor. The size of the animal or the quantity of the liquor and other necessary materials are offered according to the advice of the Ojhai. All these materials are sacrificed to the God or Goddess for their pleasure, with the aim of negating their curse. Sometimes the ojha understands by divination that the patient is attacked by a Sorcerer who is engaged by some person to do harm to the patient. The Ojhai then arrange and recite counter spells to negate the ill effects of the previous spells. If the succeeds the patient improves. In case of the flight of the evil spirit from the body of the patient some lady of the hamlet will give birth to a dead child. This dead child is considered as the so called evil spirit. The Ojhai also prescribes harbal medicines to the ailing persons both in the form of beads, or arnslets and drugs.

I have collected a list of some diseases along with the counter harbal drugs prescribed by the Ojhais. Of course this list is not exhaustive because there might be many medicines beyond my search as the people do not generally open their

mouths for the fear of the Ojhai and the Ojhai gives no ear to our appeals for his professional interest.

Name of the diseases & Medicinal Plants Used are given below :—

1. EKSEN: (Dysentery) : The Juice of Rakhak leaves mixed with water is advised to drink for several times daily. Rakhak is perhaps Thankuni in Bengali. The leaves of Anrakhak are soaked in water and the patient is advised to drink the water. Some times Juice of the tuber of Motruneya (Plaintain with seeds) is also prescribed.
2. LUINHAI (Headache) : The tubers of the plants like Tatrakh or Senattur is collected, washed and pasted finely. This paste is applied on the forehead of the patient for several times.
3. AJENG (Gout) : The leaves of Thimparul, Laipaland Umachekpunpai are boiled with water in equal quantity. The patient is directed to take his bath with this boiled water for a few weeks. The roots of Maherfot, Laikak and Sangrai are pasted together with water and made globules. The patient is directed to swallow these globules at the prescribed doses.
4. INTHING (Swelling) : In case of sudden swelling in any part of the body, the patient is directed to apply hot compress with the leaves

of Letok, (Akanda in Bengali) for several times. Hot compress by Mepui leaves (Jaba in Bengali) is also advised. Wayinam rang, a kind of scented creeper is pasted and advised to paste on the affected limbs.

5) APOOR (Burning). : Occasional burnt are treated with a paste made of the onion like tubers of the plants named Jamdaipuran. The tubers are collected washed, pasted finely and applied smoothly on the affected parts of the body.

6) RATHANMOI (Prickly heat) : The patient is advised to take bath with hot water in which the leaves of Impate, (neem in Bengali) is boiled.

7) HAKUANA (Toothache) : The patient is directed to gargle with the boiled water. This boiled water is made by boiling the barks of Thehai (Mango). Sometimes Chunni-Munni leaves are also used.

8) MITSAY (Conjunctivities) : One drop of mango sap is applied to each eye from the leaf of the mango tree when it is just detached from the branch. The snails are collected, washed and the mouth water of the snails are dropped in the eyes. Sometimes (Sachiti) i. e. salined water are also prescribed for washing the eyes.

9) INLUOAK (Vomiting) : Inching i. e. the soots of the Kitchen are collected and mixed with water. The water is then sieved and a few drops of the sap of the Meherfot is mixed with it and the patient is advised to drink it. Sometimes

spelled ribbon (Taga) is given to hang from the neck. Meherfor is Kath Golachi in Bengali.

10) PUERPERAL DIARRHOEA (Sutika) : The horns of Ajukraki (Goboy) is used to make paste by friction. This paste is prescribed for in taking by the patient.

11) NAIPEI (Abortion) : The roots of the Thakpui, Thangrei and Leikak are used for this purpose. Thangrei is a flower plant. These roots are pasted and prepared globules. These globules are applied to the patient for abortion.

12) KUARALOOM (Affected ear) : Oil turpentine is advised to message. The oil is procured from the Market.

13) RUEAKYYAAK (Fractures) : The fats of python is used as massage. The affected portion is bandaged by Harbanga stem. This bandage is kept for some days. After that the massage oil is applied.

14) KHABUR (Cold) : The seeds of Hairaru (mustard) and Purangui (Garlik) are rubbed and made hot. The extract is applied as massage in the face and nose.

15) KHABUR (Cough) : I thing (ginger) and tulasi ban (leaves basil plant) are pasted together and the juice extracted thus is advised to be taken by the patient.

16) APAP (Cut) : Sepuipar (Jaba) and Thunglubian (pisach) leaves are squeezed on the palm by rubbing and the patient is advised

to apply the juice on the cut mark.

17) MARULIPET (Snakebite) : A hard knot is given above the bitten limb then and then. and then. Afterwards the Ojhai extracts the poison by his magic charm.

18) KAKUDA IN/KAKIYA IN (nervous debility); The symptoms of this disease is that suddenly any limb of the body began to bend causing serious pain. Particularly fingers of both hands and feet are more attacked. To treat this disease wine making cakes are used for hot compressin which gives quick relief of the pain and the affected limb becomes normal again. It is known as Cuaon.



CHAPTER—IX

FOLK SONGS

In each primitive society songs are regarded as the outcome of sorrow, happiness, loss & gain etc. of the primitive people who do not know to conceal their outburst of emotion. Hence the Bongs also have their own songs which they use to sing in various social functions. I have collected some songs, though not exhaustive in nature, which may be classified into the following groups:

1. Devotional Songs, 2. Action Song, 3. Love Song, 4. Marriage Song, 5. Songs expressing pleasure, 6. Lullaby 7. Funeral Songs, 8. Festival Songs.

1. Devotional Songs : The devotional songs are sung by the people on various occasions when they offer Pujas to the Forteen Gods or other Gods to attain their blessings for negating a certain curse. They also offer Pujas to the Gods for recovery from illness.

A. Cunga Nino thapa ngai nangnikeng nua
 mariamranj Sinsam amam rel Sibrai raja haograi raja
 haunke saksum Anoarel. Sibrai raja hukai raja
 marim cannun rang in Sibaraia Taseman

hangaci raja Khaphaijam mariem sinsum cirel.

English translation :

Oh ! almighty God, you gave everything to the people of this world. You directed the laws of peaceful living though the King Siva Rai and Hangrai. So, we are grateful to thee. Oh Krishna ! we shall not allow you to do any physical labour. We shall give you bath in hot water like the utensils of brass. We shall place you in inner compartment of our house and spin the wheel of threads. We shall not allow you to perspire by the heat of the sun or fire.

B. Prayer to stop excessive downpour :

Cungaa pathian ngaini, hadar kuk rom tui akaijaiaa, hadarou caynoi manhomjaiaa, hadar kalcem nanlekjaiaa hadarka cayirananhomjaiaa soma oancaua. Kalla oan angtar adaya nirsai kalincunjai, Adai nersung Kaninnakjai, aloom alti oanringtara.

English Translation :

Oh Lord ! why is thy downpour ? Your red eyes do not yield any good things for us. This excessive rain cause trembling of our limbs during daily work. We are having music of teeth. We can not see the face of the sun without your command. Be kind to us, please control your anger.

C. Prayer to remove draught :

Aloom alti inrenghe maniya mariem ngeai ngai, Sikti limnga ngaikham thihai asamrangke annijai.

Mara Kalcean Oamlektar, Kunga cairo in homtarso, oanlai oekriyel insaitar, oanlai romtui Kaitarra. Lintha paitan indairaise sikti limngakhom munganga marorse.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

On the rain ! all the worldly animals and plants including the fishes of water are thirsty for your shower. We invite you and expect your roaring and shower. We expect heavy rain with hail storm and for this act we all shall remain grateful to you.

2. ACTION SONGS :

A. Song sung during the weeding of Jhum crops :

Arcu haia haiar haia
hed tanir hai haia.

Aeicun samsang rang akung dayang satpuire-
rai lamtangya indi ngai mangyantan reroi hangke
akung mungang aeimarrang hanke apar thangoan
oei elpuirang, hanke marem oancairang oalung
oisunrang.

English Translation;

Oh friends ! if you clean the root area of the plants, it will grow quickly, it will give flowers. The flowers will look at the sky etc.

B. Song Sung during harvesting of jhum crops :

Haina haia haiaar
hai, hai haiaar hai hai.

This is purely an action song with peculiar

sounds with the action of the Takkal while reaping the crops. It can not be properly translated.

3. Love Song :

A. Song sung by the lover when she is detached from her lover.

Karol ramngi oi ingin munang sarang nam-sul Kai hangna, Kajum nama sul Kabejae Kacun ma namsul kabejai, ingin ma anthar lamdar kasai ingin ma anro kilnam kaihergna. Nangma ripap napel rang ramngai oai. Kaima ripap Kapel rang acung pathian in homsai leijain ati, suaksum lei rel ati.

English Translation :

Oh my love ! I can't forget you. I can't accept the choice regarding my life's Paetner. How can I give my mind to enjoy a new life !

B. Song Sung by the lover when he is deserted by his beloved. Sen nu oei alai lenpai ai in dailai in, Bel buong ningju ai man canglai in, khalai sumpek rang tana cangthi ai man cangtai in. halai ditlam ai in roei laoau in, hirang nagua in ninglai naroeol ramngoirang, oiya kil nam nahengjai, antharke lumdar nasajjai, kaima naroni dirameu, kaicu Kilnam nahang maing arom ripapou sen nu pangpel nati, airo! ripap ai peleu taiai rathrui aichur inou airo! ripap ailen anti ... etc.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

My love, do you remember that bamboo pipe

which we used to sip the langi in our childhood when both of us were play-mates of each other ? Where lies then this urge of love ? Where lies then this painful experience of detachment ? To day you are approaching for a new life forgetting the past, I doubt you may be attacked by my sinful attachment. But I don't want your suffering for sins of mine. I shall haul the ropes of the holy chariot of rub-off my sins ... etc.

4. MARRIAGE SONG:

A. The Song Sung during the marriage ceremony to welwish the bride and groom by the elders :

Cayanga caputul oera canarul oacairang.
 Jayagya sidhi oachangra. Jayagya purni oacangra.
 Jayagya jayagya oacanager, kaia keibar Pekcang-
 narche. Chungnga ninu thapa barpek cangrangche.
 Atui aculley tikhang intan ngtarche. Amul
 aculley mul khang intan ngta rache. Kaia Kabar
 pekcu Tui tang pet narche.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION :

Let your path be cleared by our blessings like the blessing of His lordship. We bless you to give birth seven sons and seven daughters to be a proudy mother ... etc.

B. Farewel Song sung after the marriage :

Narang rang inhe lanthang sulna lei in pinrache
 sumsen aai leiphong narche. Sunbam aai leifong
 moroche. Jayagya mangal oacangndretar jayagya
 sidhi oacangdrache.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Let your path be easily accessible. All the thorns of the way be vanished and have a pious departure. The turning point of your life comes with this rising sun. Let God bless you and fulfil your aspiration. This is our humble prayers to the almighty.

C. SONG SUNG BY THE PARTY OF THE BRIDE WHEN THEY GIVE MOCK RESISTANCE WHILE THE GROOM STARTS FOR HIS HOME WITH THE NEWLY WED BRIDE.

Narang rang in anthebamutang khing alei inkhangjai, nacun najuo rangma-sadaidai nao thajai, khulum ma tabuk naoathakjai. Kepuima tui nar naoanekjai. Oangkhuo nutar patarrang khulum tabuk ma naoathajai. Kepui ma tui nar naoanekjai na Rulakh sadai naoathajai.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

The path of your journey is clear but I am in the way like a fallen tree, will you keep me out to clear your way? Why are you so eager to go to the house of your new parents after bidding goodbye to your own parents? Oh the blessed bride! you are approaching to your father-in-law's house having the welwishes and dusts of the feet of your elders. But could you imagine our condition in absence of you.

D. SONG SUNG BY THE GROOMS PARTY TO OPEN THE BARRICADE PLACED BY THE BRIDE'S PARTY:

Kanthai Kanrai ma sifeng ma nutar patar aurai masiyekengke asa barang kan hongjongjai. Kandun kanjua ngrang khulum tabuk kanhong khajai. Kepui tui nar Kanhangnekjai, oangkha nutar patar rangkhom, khulum tabuk kanhongthajai. Kepui tinar kanhongnekjai. Kanrol kham sadai kanhongthajai.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION :

This ritual is not man made but directed by the almighty. This was followed by our forefathers contineously and weshall be continuing. Please forgive my wrong and wrongs and bad things and bless me. I bow my head before you to clear the way of my future life.

5. Songs expressing pleasure :

A. Mother's blessing to a son.

Macin lai athur (afa) aka kaingaina karol lung tin kei aina, Atuku sarai dalthin gahang lei jai, Salung raang amanjai. Maja cin khugtang kamang cangjai Raki caltui kaokjai. Kekhat tangwikaparjai. Maja cin khung camancarjai, Oancay ajar in.

6. ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

My love, I stopped taking sour and pepper in your early childhood to rear you, to make you man and now I feel proud of you. I feel myself safe now against any power as I live now under your shade and dance with joy by ome foot with claping etc.

B. Assurance by the daughter to her mother,

Cacun lalnu Oei, Sarai lalpuhi dalthing kalijenjai. Soan bel kei khaimar, Par tui khom lutuk khainar. Keima soan bem kei kati. Keima par tui lutak kati. Cardan kelim tui inbulak.

English Translation :

Oh my mother ! I am your daughter, quite grown up now. You will have (not fetch water in the morning now. You will be freed now from cooking and preparing foods. Now I shall fetch water and you will have your bath on the Varanda of the tong house !

C. Assurance of the son towards his mother :

Kacun Lalnu Oi sarai dalthing kaalianjai. Ingma cinta maitharang ite cinta thakran-ainar. Maja cinkhong mancargra. Kekhat tangoai pararong hard lekhusi tharu nanum balsum laliar changro.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Oh my mother ! I have grown up now. I am a man. Don't think much now, it is not necessary. Now you dance on one foot by clapping.

D. Emotional outburst of the wife towards her husband

Thakur oi, kaima nana nu thai he karang rang incu, rama swayang ke nani. Nakirita binke limang kailang, kajuonuk sula eu karang guru ke nani. Karang tama tulsike nani, karang ganga gaya ke nani. Thakur nanang rangin aneum sunbel kaleikei.

English Translation :

My Lord ! I am your wife. You are only Rama to me. I stay here on your courage. After my father, you are my preceptor, my protector. You are my copper, basil plant, ganga and gaya ! I am here to satisfy your hunger thrutyness. My Lord come to me, take me and satisfy your hunger.

6. Lullaby :

A) Sang sung to aruse the child from sleep.
Kapa babu oi bulai in shaitara, babu lintui in buoltara. Khalai eltin oan daitar. Narol khelang an in daijai.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

My dear ! please get up, take your bath in hot water, go and play with your frands. They are waiting to play with you.

B) Song Sung to make the child sleep.

A in pui rol thaitar.

A in dalthing lientar.

Noral sasang lilaiya na thai kil sai

indatrang ke nani. Athei homsai in jenjar ke nani misek muhar adeng rangke nani.

Minek in saical aratrang kejani. Intor mar, mar, mar

ENGLISH TRANSIATION:—My love, you will be grown up in the sleeps. Sleep my love. You will be famous among your friends. You will be a symbol of Spirit. The symbol will not be forgotten by all.

C) Song Sung as blessings to new born child:

Lungsina aju manrase, thirbam ajungta

manracha. Dalthir ajunta manrae. Jayagya mangnta oacangra. Nacun Seoa oathngtar, najuo seoa oathngtar nanei purni maonthangngtar. Nanei pardhan maonthangngtar. Naroal jitbat oajaingtar. Oang Kao nutar patarrang khumtan lulang moanlututar.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Be a well built man with good looking face having long life. This is my well wish. You will surely attain the glory of a man with heart by serving your parents. You will surely be a spirited man and your valour would be respected by all. The flag of valour be hosted as the well known conscious person.

7) FUNERAL SONGS:

A.) Songs sung during the cremation of a dead person,

Laion felri ancam incu sajanbung tang pan rang. Khui sam anilreng natiten tale bungtang panra. Pathian ngairang khulum tabuk oathar. Ke khat ngirsai oandir ... etc.

B. Song sung during shradha ceremony.

Nutar bhujan kanathjai patarbhujan kanathjai

8. FESTIVAL SONG:

Songs sung during any party.

Oang Khoa nutara asangai oangkhaio patar asngai.

Fungten Khai oi mana kharaisai mancang roi.

Macal repui teng Narai Calipar Kailidon narai.

English translation:

Present parents like old man and women, brothers and sisters like youths and maids, I am pleased to see you all here in to-day's festival and I am also very pleased to find that you are also amused.

CHAPTER—X

VILLAGE STUDY REPORT.

In order to get an idea of the present economic status of the Bong Society a survey of their habitation and economic activities are essential. In this Chapter an attempt has been made to cover this area. All the Bong habitations are not taken into consideration due to lack of adequate population. Only two worth mentionable Villages are described here a good number of Bongs reside.

KUKICHADA HALAM PARA :

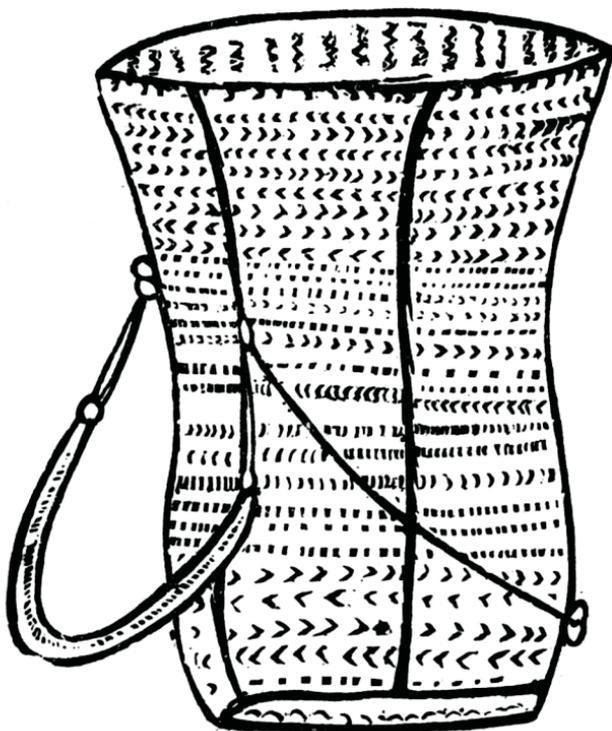
It is situated about 2.5 Kilometer west of Nepal Tilla. Nepal tilla is a bazar about 35 Kilometer west of Manughat which situated on the Assam-Agartala Road. From Manughat Bus, Jeep Mini Bus plies to Nepal Tilla Bazar through Dhumachada and Masauli. Nepal Tilla is a village included in the Kanthal Chada gaon Sabha of the Kailasahar-Sub-Division of the North Tripura District. There are 15 families of Bong people there with the population of 77 souls in which 27 are females and 50 are males. There are both big and small families. The maximum number of members in a big family being 9 while the small families consist of only 2 members. These families

have 85 Kanis of plain and 62.75 Kanis of tilla land under their occupation. The highest occupier occupies 22 Kanis of plain and 8 Kanis of Tilla land while the lowest occupier have only 2 Kanis of plain and .25 Kanis of tilla land. They grow paddy and potato in the plain land. In tillas they grow fruits like Pine Apple. The maximum area of pine-apple under an individual is 2 Kanis where as the minimum area is 1 kani, 4.5 Kanis of water area are used for Pisciculture. In total there are 8 families who have water area for Pisci culture. The highest water area under one individual is 1.5 Kani while the lowest it only .25 Kani. They rear cattles, goats, pigs etc. and in the poultry cocks and hens are there. Only 8 families are engaged in rearing animals and poultry birds. 6 persons of this society are in the Government Service of whom one is a T.C.S. Officer, one tribal Supervisor, Two Police men, one T.S.R. and one is a I.C.D.S. worker, One of the villager is the owner of a Bus. There is one small Grocer, one dry fish dealer and one Tea stall owner. Except these four persons none are engaged in business. 5 of the villagers the members of the Co-operative Society/ Lamps etc. One of the members of this society is a graduate and two are Secondary passed. These three persons are male. 13 males and 2 females either reading in the or read up to Secondary Classes. 15 males and 9 females are either reading or read up to the Primary stage.

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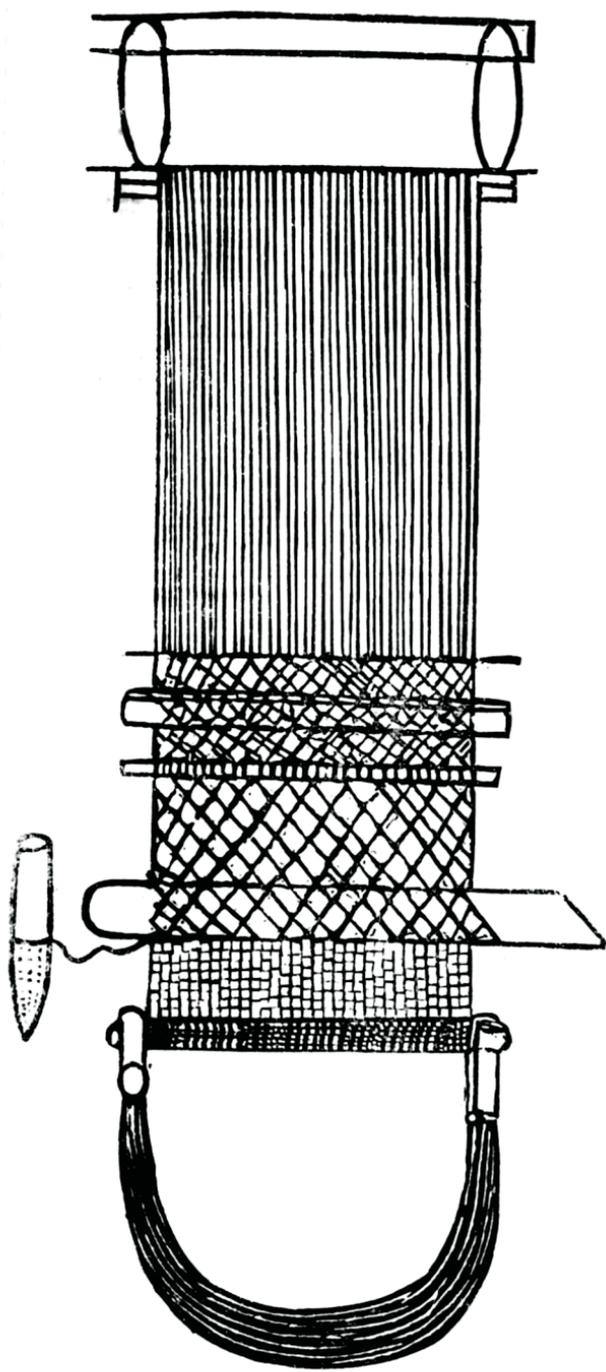
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Sketch of Bem



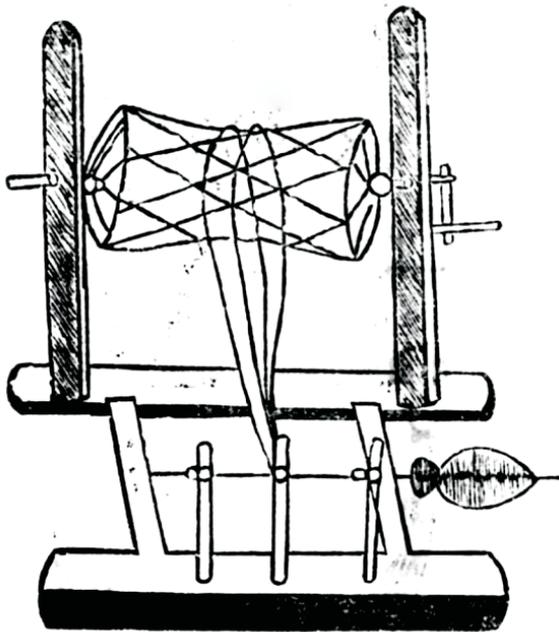
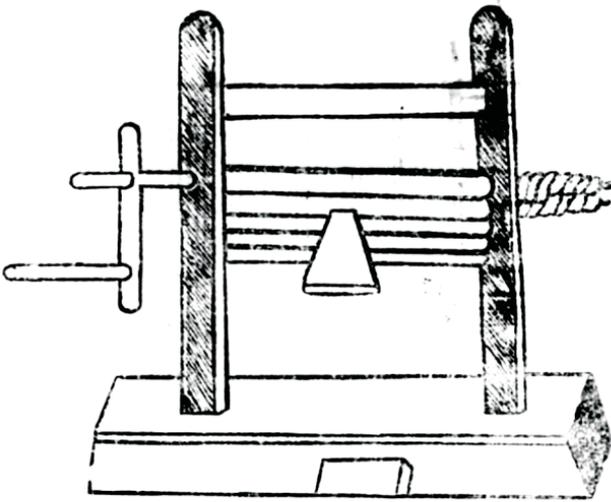
Sketch of Tuiseong





Sketch of Puon rakal

Sketch of Minto

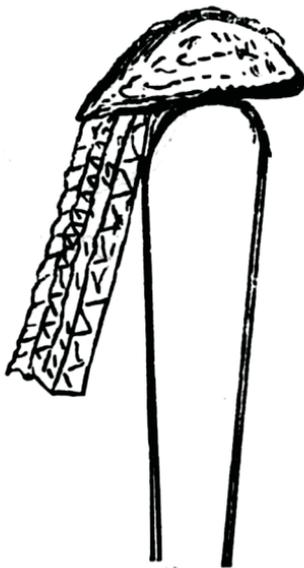
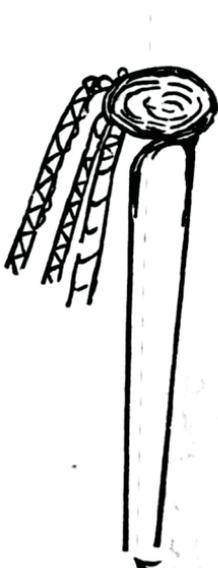


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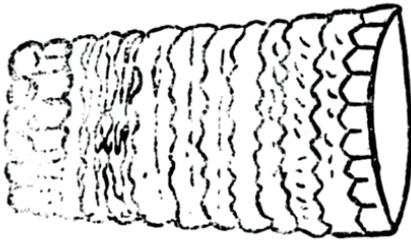
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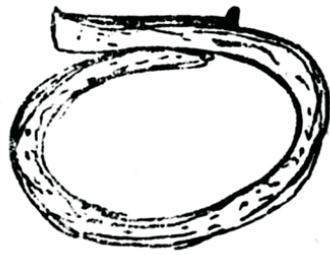


বহুজয়

মার্ঘলী



জ্যাকসের



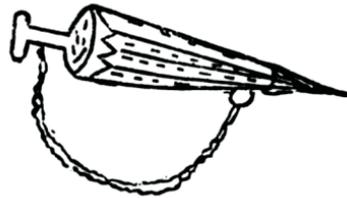
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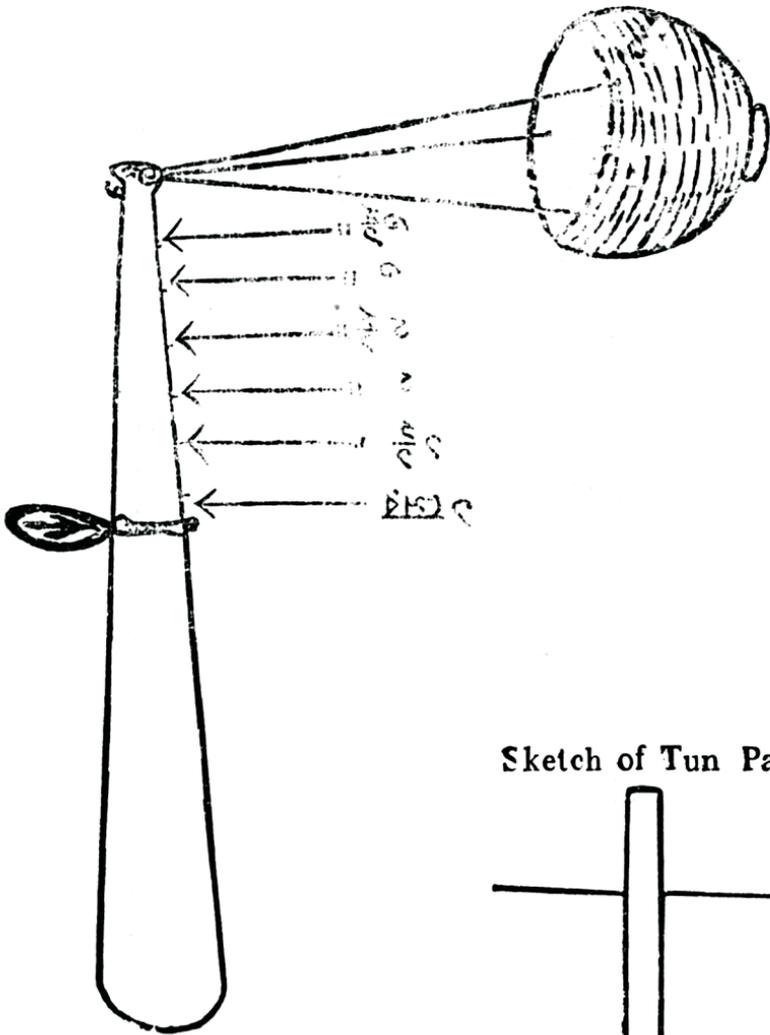
কুমর বেষ্ট



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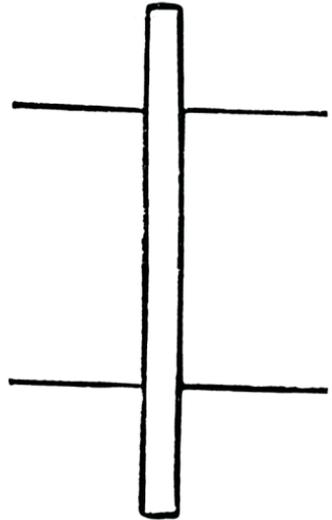


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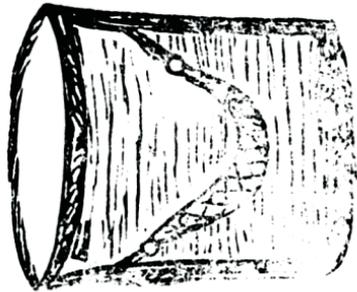


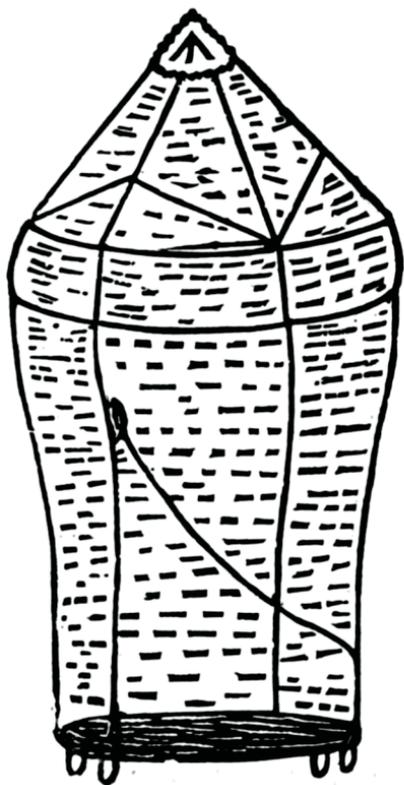
Sketch of Cempai

Sketch of Tun Palli

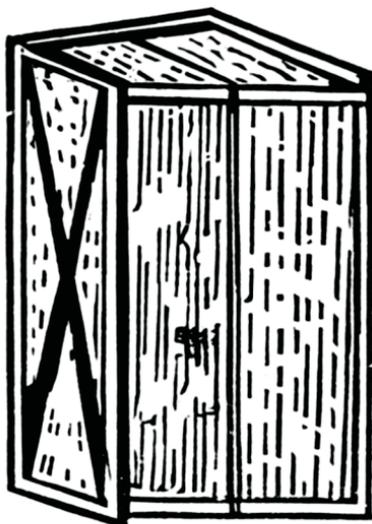


Sketch of Patding

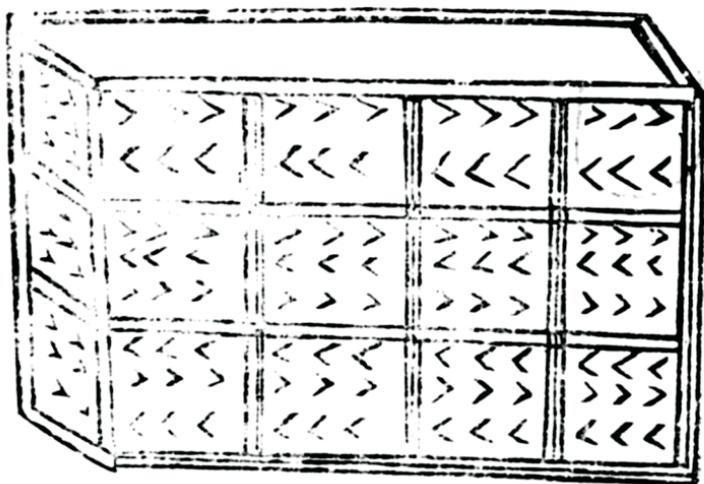




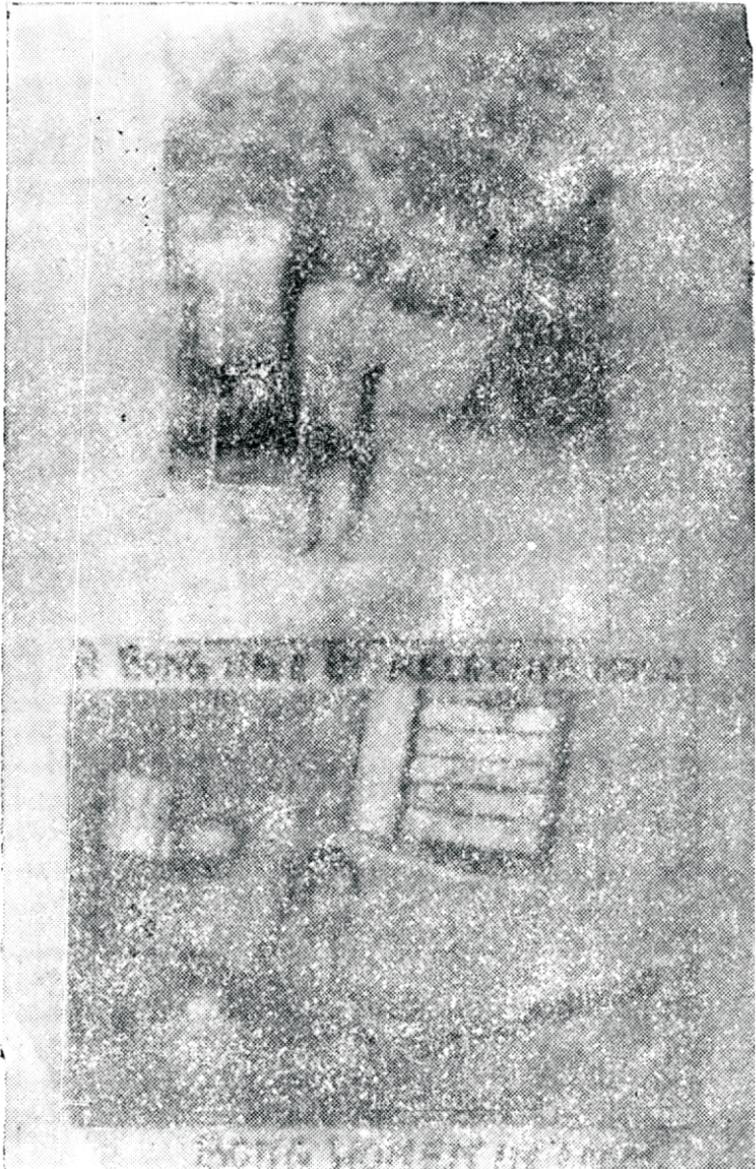
Sketch of Ral



Sketch of Tabung

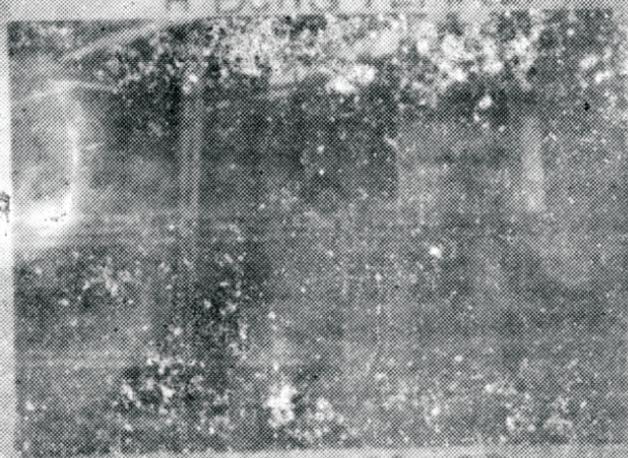


Sketch of Sasier





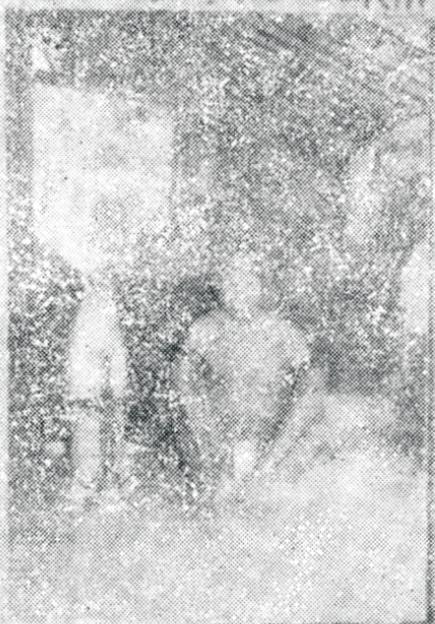
A BONG FEMALE



VIEWS OF SASIER



SOME PHOTOGRAPHS



A BONG NILE



SOME MORE PHOTOGRAPHS