

T **HE** **KĀIPENGS**

Tribal Research Institute
Govt. of Tripura, Agartala

THE KAIPENGS

TRIBAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE
GOVT. OF TRIPURA
AGARTALA.

FOREWORD

This monograph "The Kaipengs" is an addition to our publications. Prior to this, the Directorate of Research have published some other monographs dealing on the Kukis, the Noatias, the Kalais etc. In this monograph a detail study on the social life pattern, family, kinship economic life and acculturation of this community have been made by Shri Suchinta Bhattacharya, Asstt. Prof. of M.B.B. College, Agartala. Shri Bhattacharya has collected the informations after performing extensive tour in the tribal areas of this State. We are thankful to Shri Bhattacharya for his kind labour for collecting the informations.

We do hope that this book will help to the research workers, anthropologists and the interested persons who are in search of such informations and also the administrators working in various fields of development of the society.

Agartala,
30.12.80

S. Sharma,
Director of Research.

PREFACE

The present survey work on the Kaipeng of the Halam Community of Tripura has been undertaken at the instance of the Directorate of Research, Government of Tripura. The study presents in a short compass the Socio-Economic life patterns of the Kaipeng Community. In stead of making it a simple statistical Survey, the Monograph is based on case studies which are both factual and based on field investigations.

I express my deep gratitude to my reverend teacher Dr. S. R. Das. Professor and Head of the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History of the University of Calcutta for this affectionate guidance, continuous interest and ecouragement in not only my Research Work but in my whole career. I would like to place on record my appreciation of the service rendered by the B. D. O.s., Extension Officers, Tribal Inspectors in the respective Blocks for their Co-operation and hospitality.

I am grateful to Dr. J. B. Ganguly, Professor, Department of Economics, P. G. Centre, Calcutta University, Agartala for his veteran guidance and blessings. I am also grateful to Shri S. R. Chakraborty. I. A. S. Director Census of Inda, Vice Principal K. Bhattacharya M. B. B. College, Dr. J. Ganchowdhury B. B. E. College, Shri A. K. Bhattacharya, retired Census Director, Shri C. S. Chatterjee. Tribal Welfare Officer. Agartala who have rendered considerable help by making useful comments. In conducting the work I have also been

assisted by Shri Ramgopal Singh M. A., Sri Tarini Rupini, Tribal Extension Officer, Sri Rathindra Kr. Deb Barma, District Tribal Welfare Officer, Shri C. R. Das, Shri Subir Chakarborty, M. B. B. College Library, Shri Bimal Chakraborty, Project Executive Officer, Amarapur M. P. Block, Shri Parimal Debnath of Taidubari, Amarapur, and Shri Amitava Bhattacharya of Mosabanimious lastly the author gratefully acknowledges all active help and co-operation extended by Mrs. Jayanti Bhattacharya B. A. B. T., Miss Priti Bhattacharya. Shri Gautom Deb Barman, Asstt. Director. Publicity Department and the Research Directorate of Tribal Welfare Department.

It is hoped that the present monograph will focus attention to the various Socio-Economic problems of the Kaipengs of the Halam Community of Tripura. It has not been possible to include all materials relating to the life and activities of the Halam in the present monograph, but a sincere endeavour has been made to present an overall picture of this small community within its short compass. The author craves the indulgence of the readers of some acts of omission and commissions in the monograph.

March, 1980.

M. B. B. College.

Suchintya Bhattacharya

Agartala, Tripura West.



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CHAPTER 1

A. THE PHYSICAL BACKGROUND :

Tripura is a tiny state in the north-eastern region of the Country. It comprises picturesque hills, green valleys and dense forests. The State lies between the latitudes of $22^{\circ}56'$ N and $24^{\circ}32'$ N and longitudes of $91^{\circ}10'$ E and $92^{\circ}21'$ E. It is bounded by Bangladesh in the north, west and south and by Assam and Mizoram in the east. The maximum length from north to south is 183.54 km. and maximum breadth from east to west is 112.70 km. It has a boundary of about 837.20 km. with Bangladesh on the north-west, west and south-east. The surface link with the Indian Union extends to about 28.98 km. It has a total area of 10,477 square Kilometres, and its capital is Agartala.

The climate is characterised by moderate temperature with a highly humid climate atmosphere. During the coldest period of the year the mean daily temperature is maximum 25.5°C (77.09°F) and minimum 10.4°C (50.07°F). From the month of March temperature rises fairly rapidly and it reaches highest point in April. The south-west monsoon arrives by about the last week of May and temperature at that time falls by three to four degree centigrade. After the withdrawal of south-west monsoon

temperature gradually decreases from the month of October and rises in the month of January. Humidity is high almost throughout the year. During the months of April-May humidity varies between 50 per cent to 75 per cent.

The average annual rainfall in the territory is 76'' inches of which 5'' inches fall in April, 11'' inches in May, 15'' inches in June, 12'' inches in July, 11'' inches in August and 10'' inches in September. On an average the State has 99 rainy days in a year.

There are six major hill ranges from north to south parallel to one another. The hills are mostly covered with bamboo bushes while the low ground is rich with timber, cane-brakes and thatching grass.

Along the north-western and southern boundaries of the State the soil is not at all different from the adjoining areas of Bangladesh. The hill ranges beginning from the east are : Jampui (highest points, Betling Sib 976 Meters and Jampai 567-300 Metres). Sakbantlang (highest point, Sakhan 786-290 Metres). Atharomura (highest Point Jarimura 457-500 Meters). Baramura (highest point Saisum Sib 269-620 Meters). Deota Mura (highest point, Deotamura Tulamurah 229-360 Metres).

B. POPULATION AND THE TRIBES :

Out of the total population of 15,56,342 of the State; the number of tribals according to 1971 Census is 4,50,544 which comes to 28.95% of the total population. The total tribal population has been fluctuating almost every year. Consequently, the ratio of the tribal population of the State has never remained static. It is interesting to note that the population of the State

was 5,13,010 in 1941, 645,707 in 1951 and 11,42,005 in 1961. This abnormal increase was due to heavy influx of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

The following table shows the total population strength of Scheduled Tribe of Tripura-1971 Census.

State\District	Total Population	Tribes Population	% distribution of Sch. Tribes population in each district to the total S/T population of the State	% of total S/T population in each district to the total population of the district.
1	2	3	4	5
Tripura	1556,342	4,50,544	100%	28.95%
West Tripura	7,51,605	1,98,878	44.14%	26.46%
North Tripura	4,05,009,	1,08,547	24.10%	26.80%
South Tripura	3,99,729	1,43,119	31.76%	35.80%

The table shows that every district of the State nurtures some tribal population. However, the tribals are not distributed evenly all over the State. In West Tripura District they form 26.46% and in North Tripura District 26.80% of the total population and in South Tripura their strength is about 36% per cent.

The ranges in the eastern part of the state were separately occupied by different tribal communities, each being ruled by its own chieftain. They continued in their respective positions for a long time being quite indifferent to happenings outside their pockets. The interior hills are even to-day inhabited mostly by the tribal population.

On the other hand, the flat western part of the State is occupied by the Bengalees who had no separate and independent entity as the inhabitants of Tripura. In reality, Tripura is mostly inhabited by tribal people and displaced persons. The area and population of the State and its districts, according to 1971 Census are given in the following table :

DISTRICTS, THEIR AREAS & POPULATION

SI. No.	Name of district	Head quarter	area in sq. km	Population (1971)		
				Urban	Rural	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	North Tripura	Kailashahar	3,541	27,460	3,77,549	4,05,009
2.	West Tripura	Agartala	3,359	1,09,602	6,42,003	7,51,600
3.	South Tripura	Udaipur	3,577	25,298	3,74,430	3,99,728
4.	State	Agartala	10,477	1,62,360	13,93,982	15,56,342

According to the Census report of 1971 there are altogether nineteen scheduled tribes in Tripura. The tribes are : **Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Chakma, Halam, Noatia, Mog, Lushai, Uchai, Kuki, Garo, Munda, Orang, Santal, Khasia, Bhil, Chaimal** (now extinguished), **Bhutia** and **Lepcha**. All these tribes constitute 28.95% of the total population according to the Census report of India 1971 whereas the figure was 31.53 per cent and 36.84 per cent in 1961 and 1951 respectively.

The following table shows the Sch. Tribe Communities and their frequencies in Total Sch. Tribe Population of Tripura, 1971 Census.

SI. No.	Sch. Tribe Communities	Population	% of total Sch. Tribes Population of the State.
1.	Tripuri	2,50,382	55.57%
2.	Reang	64,722	14.36%
3.	Jamatia	34,192	7.59%
4.	Chakma	28,662	6.36%
5.	Halam	1,90,76	4.23%
6.	Noatia	10,297	2.28%
7.	Mog	13,273	2.94%
8.	Lushai	3,672	.81%
9.	Uchai	1,061	.21%
10.	Kuki	7,775	1.72%
11.	Garo	5,559	1.23%
12.	Munda	5,347	1.18%
13.	Oraong	3,428	.78%
14.	Santal	2,222	.49%
15.	Khasia	491	negligible
16.	Bhil	169	—do—
17.	Chaimal	—	—
18.	Bhutia	3	Negligible
19.	Lepcha	175	—do—

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCING THE KĀIPENGs

The Kāipeng is a sub-tribe of the Halam Community. Ethnologically they belong to the Kuki group. They are characterised by medium stature, well built physique, flat face and nose, facial hair scanty, straight hair, coarse and oblique eye with epicanthic fold. Skin colour varies from black to brown. Some do not have even epicanthic fold and all are not again well built. It implies that Kāipengs are a mixed people.

**Physical
Characters**

The Kāipengs represent one of the most primitive peoples of Tripura. While the Tripuris, Jamatias, Noātiās and Riāngs have considerably adopted the life pattern of the plains people, the Hālāms particularly the Kāipengs have been able to keep themselves aloof from any such contact. Anthropologists have classified the human species into several ethnic groups of which the Mongoloid stock is a major one. The Kāipengs are supposed to belong to one of the branches of the mongoloid stock. Linguistically the Kāipengs and many other allied tribes of north-eastern region have been grouped under the Kuki Sub-family of the Sino-Tibetan family

**Origin &
Migration**

and that they migrated from some where near the Burma frontier in the east.

In this context it would be worthwhile to refer to the movements of the Mongoloids. Barkataki observes :

“All that we can say with certainty is that from about 2000 B. C. there was a movement of Mongoloid populations from the north to India through Assam and these people along with others who migrated from northern Burma formed from the remote past the bulk of the population of Assam..... There were apparently wave after wave of these migration and the invaders belonged to the India-chinese Linguistic family, of which the two most important sub families are the Mon.-Khmer and the Tibeto-Burman. The third, Siamese- Chinese, includes Shan, which was spoken by the Ahoms, the last of these invaders. The Mon.-Khmer speakers appear to have come earlier than others. They are apparently driven by subsequent Tibeto-Burman hordes into the Khasi hills, which is the only part of Assam in which the Sub-family now exists. Of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family, there were three groups viz. Nāgā **Kuki-chin** and **Bodo**. The Nāgās and Kuki speakers were driven to the hills and Bodo became the dominant language. It includes all the surviving non-Aryan leagues of the plains, the Garo hills and the North Cachar hills. Kachari, Mech, Garo, Dimasa, Tipra, Lalang and Chutiya are the derivations of Bodo.”

Linguistically and ethnically the Kāipengs of the Hālām Community are to be affiliated to the tribes of north-east India and it is obvious that the Kāipengs might have migrated to this land from north-eastern India. Anthropologists also are of opinion that the original homeland of the speakers of the Tibeto-Burman languages of which the Hālām language is a branch, is to be

located in the south-west of China near the head waters of the Yangtse and the Hoangho. It is believed that the Tibeto-Burman speakers moved downwards from this place and after crossing the Himalayas they spread over Burma-Assam and north eastern Bengal. It is thus evident that both linguistically and ethnically the Kāipengs of the Halam Community are to be affiliated to the Kuki sub-family of the Sino-Tibetan group and the Mongoloid ethnic stock and as such, they are not an isolated group. On the other had, they are closely related to other tribes of north-eastern India.

The Kāipengs of the Halam Community are divided into seven dafas or groups. They are : **Sungang, Kurset, Singer, Donrai, Lungthang, Senghor and Sientai.** The last group Sientais are generally known as warriors who occupy the lowest social position. At present the Sientais are becoming Christians at an alarming rate. All the above class practise the Jhum methods of cultivation and were originally nomadic, but some of them, under changed circumstances are taking to plough cultivation.

The above table reveals that the concentration of population of the Kāipeng Community is limited in three Sub-divisions of the State, viz. Sadar Sub-division, Khowai Sub-division and Amarapur Sub-division and maximum concentration is to be found in the Taidu Bari area of Amarapur Sub-division.

It is significant to note that there is no separate record of population of the Kāipeng Community in the Census Report of 1971. Moreover, the Kāipengs have been included as one of the Sub-tribes of the Kukis. In the Census Report of 1961 it is stated :

Sub division wise distribution of Káipengs (C.R.—1961) :

Name of Sub-division	TOTAL			Total Workers		Workers as cultivator		Workers as Labourer	
	P	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sadar	417	210	207	122	116	122	116	Nil	Nil
Khowai	408	202	206	121	115	121	113	Nil	Nil
Amarpur	1,156	573	583	356	345	352	338	2	2
Total :	1,981	985	996	599	576	595	567	2	2

“The names of Rāngkhole and Khephong (Kāipeng) appear as sub-tribes of Hālām at page 81 of the Census Report of 1931..... but these two sub-tribes are included among the sub-tribes of Kuki in the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes list Modification Order, 1956.”

Again in the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes orders Amendment Act, 1976 the Khephongs (Kāipengs) are recorded as the sub-tribe of the Kukis. It is interesting to note that in the Tribes of Tripura, Published by the Tribal Research Directorate, Govt. of Tripura. Kāipengs are shown as the sub-tribe of the Hālām. During my field survey it was gathered that the Kāipengs are more Hālāms than Kukis.

It is however, evident from a study of distribution of the Kāipengs that they might have migrated into Tripura from the eastern sides of India.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL LIFE PATTERNS

From the general observation it appears that the Kāipengs are healthy, strong and lively in disposition characterised by yellowish or brown skin colour, black and usually straight hair, scanty facial and body hair and small eyes with epicanthic fold. The stature generally varies from 138 Cm. to 180 Cm. These are indeed the basic characters of the Mongoloid.

The homestead of the Kāipeng Community consists of a group of dwellings without a common yard. They have a nomadic attitude towards home. From the very beginning the Kāipengs were in the habit of changing village sites. A new village site is indicated by a new house. Even today, they have no permanent house. As such, the building of a house is of little consideration to them. So a Kāipeng house looks very simple, carelessly built and loosely thatched hut. A few wooden poles, bamboos, thatching grass, fibrous bark— are all that is required for building a Kāipeng house ! A household has one or more dwelling huts, each of which faces east or north in accordance with the traditional customs of the

communities. In some houses specially of Machang Ghar (Tongghar) there is no separate room for cooking or store or guest room but definite areas are set a part for the specific purpose of cooking or storing. Not part of the house is reserved for the use of women or children. Of course, the house has partitions from pile to pile with the purpose of reserving accommodation for head of the family; elders, youngsters, sons, daughters, new couples guests. etc. There is also provision for extension for the purpose of storing for the future.

Tong ghar is erected on piles of about six to eight feet above the ground. The size of the house varies from 20 feet to 60 feet in length. The ground plan of the hut is rectangular with an average measurement of 20' x 14' in length and breadth.

Tong ghar or Mai Jom Generally, the height of the tong ghar from the bamboo platform is 7 feet. Each tong ghar has a verandah which is used specially for receiving and drying fuels collected by women folk. A typical Kāipeng house has no doors. Instead a simple entrance of 2' x 2½' opening is made by a matting frame of bamboo strips, An identical opening is to be found at the backside of 'tong' but a little smaller in size. Inside the tong ghar there are inches for keeping different household utensils, weapons and agricultural implements etc. The cooking is done in the centre of the tong ghar with a high dunnage (Machang) for water pots and cooking utensils.

In Some areas where Bengali influence is strong, the Kāipengs have adopted the Bengali type of houses like Māitya ghar built on high on low plinths with mud walls and roofs of Sangrass. The word 'Maitya' comes from Bengali word 'Mati' which means earth and ghar means hut i.e. a house built of earth. These houses are either dochālā or

chārchālā. Its plinth height varies from $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet to 3 feet and the plinth area usually ranges from 150 sq. feet to 350 sq. feet. Materials, which are required for constructing houses are generally procured from neighbouring jungles and forest. The building of the house is a communal affair. Most members of the clan co-operate in building the house of a co-member. No ritual function is necessary for building of the house.

A table relating to the material of the wall, roof and floor is given below :—

Sub Divisions	Total No. of families.	No. of families living in houses with			No. of families living in houses with foot of			No. of families living in houses with		
		Mud wall	Brick wall	Bamboo	Straw	Iron sheet	Pacca roof	Bamboo floor	Mud floor	Cement floor
Sadar	85	15	—	70	85	—	—	70	15	—
Khowai	82	7	—	75	75	—	—	75	7	—
Amarpur	403	18	—	385	403	—	—	385	18	—
Total	570	40	—	530	563	—	—	530	40	—

Houses in the Kāipeng locality are closely clustered. Grouping of houses in their locality has not taken any definite pattern. Four or five houses clustered round a common compound. Houses which are not so grouped are separated by a narrow passage round a central courtyard.

The Kāipeng rear pigs and the pigsty is attached to the ground floor of the tong-ghar. The open space of the pigsty is closed by bamboo strips tied together to prevent the pigs from coming out at night and also during day time in the harvesting season. It is to be noted that this type of pigsty is maintained by

the Kāipengs like other tribes of this region with a definite purpose. This type of pigsty provides a readymade arrangement for clearing of human soil by the pigs which are reared by them and also assures that the pigs do not have to go far away in search of food. Thirdly, it also works as an improvised attached latrine for the inhabitants and saves their trouble of going to a distant place.

Main items of house hold utensils are baskets of various types, sizes and dimensions, earthen wares such as Lotā (jug), gotā (pitcher), galās (glass), pātil (mud pitcher), mairm (dish), khun (bowl) and jhāru (Luddle) are common. Rice is cooked in a pātil either made of earth or aluminium. Karai is used for cooking curry and pulses. Cooked food is served by a dankheih (big spon) either made bamboo or aluminium. Food is taken in banana leaves (thailik tai) or metallic flat dish made of brass or aluminium. Lota or bamboo glass is used for drinking water is stored in Gotā (pitcher) made of earth. About 80% families use a mud dekchi for cooking rice. Aluminium dekchi is also not rare at present.

Member of about 500 families out of 570 sleep on floor made of bamboo poles. Of course, the habit of sleeping on the ground does not always depend on economic condition of a family. For there are families among the Kāipeng tribal community who have the means to purchase bedsteads but still they prefer to sleep on the floor made of bamboo poles. But a few well-to-do families mainly of the rank of Sardar possess some items of modern furniture like bed-stead, table, chair, almirahs etc. They also use some such articles as fountainpen, umbrella, gramophone which are finding their way to the tribal life. The following Table gives an account of the modern articles in different households.

ARTICLES OF USE AS POSSESSED OF HOUSEHOLDS

Total No of H.H. in the village surveyed.	No. of H.H. who do not possess any of the article in Co. 3-16.	Fountain Pens		Watch		Umbrella		Radio		Bi-Cycle	
		No	No. of H.H.	No	No. of H.H.	No	No. of H.H.	No	No. of H.H.	No	No. of H.H.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
75	40	15	12	2	2	30	25	2	2	1	1

It is evident from the above table that modern articles which are of real necessity in daily life are actually making their way in the village. Even Radio is becoming very popular in the village day by day. About 5 years ago the villagers could not even think that it would be possible for them to listen to the radio programme.

There is no wide variation of dresses among the Kāipengs. It is curious to note that not even a strip of cloth will be found on the body of most of the Kāipeng children of both sexes upto 10 years of age. An adult male member wears a single piece of cloth of 2 yards or $2\frac{1}{2}$ yards or $2\frac{1}{2}$ yards long napkin commonly known as 'Pāiderā' made by the women folk of the community. Some well-to-do families use gāmlī (shirt) with half sleeves or full sleeves, when they visit market, or nearby place. On festive occasions and social ceremonies they prefer to wear pādri (dhoti) and gamli. Young women always wear a long strip of cloth commonly known as 'ponjel' tied round their waist and carried accross their breasts and fixed in at the back. The strip does not reach even the knees. Of course, on the occasion of marriage and during any visit to the distant places, they use fine Ponjel (shari) and Risha (blouse). The Kāipengs usually do not use footwear of any kind. They believe that it will render their feet soft for the forest or climbing

trees and rocks. Blankets or other clothes do not form a part of their clothing. Winter is viewed with awe by the community because most of the Kāipengs are very poor and cannot afford to arrange sufficient clothes. Early in the morning and just after the sunset the Kāipengs sit together round the fire to warm their body, before they go out to work in the field and fall asleep at night. For protection from rain, the Kāipengs wear on head a sort of indigenous umbrella (known as chal Kātan), made of bomboo frame with leaves. Sometimes they also wear wooden slippers which keep them slightly above harpek or mud. During working hours also some put on sandals of wooden material (Udal tree) to avoid unnecessary cuttings.

Though a forest dweller, the Kāipeng is not devoid of aesthetic sense. Almost all the families use—various types of ornaments. Girls generally prefer to put on flowers in hair. This is one of the ways by which they attract opposite sex. The women folk wear mathia (bangles) made of zinc and synthetic chemicals. Some of them wear necklaces and ear rings made of silver and beads. Local tastes and the influence of Bengalees and visits to bazars greatly affect their choice of ornaments. They also take extra-ordinary interest in tending and dressing their hair. While dressing, they put it in the middle and give two or three knots before folding upwards. The folded locks are hung to the neck. Young girls put combs and flowers as symbol of others admiration and love for them.

The Kāipeng women use the following ornaments.

Bengli name :	Kāipeng name :	English name :
1. Har	Sumrui/Anjuly	Necklace
2. Churi	Bala	Bangle
3. Ananta	Bajibani/Madali	Bangle, used in the upper arm
4. Dul/Pasha	Kurdao/Jumkha	Ear ring

A Kāipeng is primarily a food gatherer and as such all his activities veer around food and the incessant quest for it. The food is simple, primitive and suited to his economic conditions. The daily time-table of food starts with a breakfast early in the morning at about seven o'clock called Bushan (Breakfast). After taking Bushan they start with the day's work.

Food &

Drink

The second meal is taken in the noon called Dubar or Sunbo consisting of Bu (rice) Anchhel (vegetables) and Barman (dry-fish).

Kharpani is a special item which is very much liked by them. Anchhel vegetables includes Tai (Bash Kurul) Alu (Potato), Kal Kai (Sweet Potato) etc. For the Khalaru (evening meal) they take 'Bu' with anchhel or barman, children have no fixed time for taking meals. Women generally follow men's routine and usually take their meal after the elders.

Meat or fish is also liked by them. Barring animals like Chui (dog) Amin (cat) Maium (elephant), Bathan (beef) and Cibuk (serpent) they take flesh of almost all animals of the locality. They do not take milk. It is nauseating to them. Sugar or Gur is consumed rarely. Khai-tui (honey) is easily available in the forests and therefore, it serves the purpose of Gur or sugar.

Almost all the Kāipengs are accustomed to smoking. They call it Daba-in. The Taripuis call it Duma nunga. The women folk are very fond of smoking and chewing of betel leaves and catecheu. Tobacco is puffed in an indigenous

Smoking

Haku. It is a device for relaxation, stimulation for work and recognised medium of Nankl Fam or Ham Krai nainai (friendship). There is no limit to the number of times a Kāipeng smokes because it is more than a habit—it is a part of physical existence.

All the Kāipengs whether young or old male or female drink country liquor locally known as Jokla or Langi—a favourite rice beer used in every walk of their life. This is so closely connected with the tribal life that without it tribal life cannot be imagined. It is a device for relaxation. Stimulation for work and recognised medium of Nanki Fem (friendship) that binds together those who make a pact of Peace. After a whole day labour, drinking of Langi causes comfortable relaxation.

Country
Liquor

Preparation of Langi is typical with all the tribals of Tripura. About $1\frac{1}{4}$ kg of atop rice is taken with water in an earthen pitcher and made into boiled-rice. Then a dried chuan (cake) is powdered for mixing with the boiled-rice. In the next stage the earthen pitcher containing boiled-rice and chuan powder is covered containing boiled-rice and chuan powder is covered with the banana leaf and the neck of the pitcher is tied with the leaf by a thin bamboo cane. The pitcher will not be touched before three nights. After that specific period the langi will be drinkable.

Preparation of Langi

It is to be noted in this context that chuan or chal is the main fermenting tablet for the preparation of langi. Chuan is nothing but a leaf of Chuan tree. The leaves are big, generally 20 c.m. long and 13 c.m. wide with narrow end. The tree is also very big. In absence of chuan leaf Chindrama leaf is a substitute for it. The other components are the following.

1. Jack fruit leaf
2. Sugar Cane leaf
3. Takhi Selang leaf
4. Dhutura leaf
5. Thakhi Waksa leaf
6. Bor leaf

7. Duk mangkhong leaf
8. Barmajal leaf
9. Khumdrupui leaf
10. Sammase leaf
11. Chanduma root
12. Pine apple leaf
13. Dry chilly
14. Brinjal leaf
15. Sweet potato leaf etc;

At the time of preparation of the country liquor some customs are followed. The person who is going to prepare this, must put on a sacred dress which has not been used after washing it. The person will not mix with or touch other persons or things save the essential utensils cleaned previously. According to tribal custom, the female prepare chuan and langi. Kāipengs ascribe food value to langi. Their feast is incomplete without drink. The old Kāipengs said that they did not feel energetic without some alcoholic drink. It has been found that "while the alcohol content is small, it enriches the nutritive value of the tribal diet approximately by 10 per cent of calories, 5.5 per cent of protein 5.3 per cent of calcium, 11 per cent of phosphorus, 29 per cent of iron, and 8 per cent of hiacian, with the result that it was found superior to the food of the average Indian peasant in all important nutrients."

The Kāipengs like the Tripuris follow tribe endogamy but they are exogamous in respect of clans. Some important methods of acquiring mates prevalent among the Kāipengs are Marriage by service (Bangpui ehemjep), by Customs elopement (rat puia) love marriage (mangnang) and by gift of daughter and land (Samak Oalakt) and lastly widow

marriage. Of all these means, marriage by service for the bride, by payment of bride-price are very common. The negotiation of marriage is usually done in autumn that is after the harvesting of joom crops.

The special qualities esteemed in a husband are : character, politeness; and good economic condition. It is also observed whether the husband can manufacture dinagaro or Khara (the type of basket which is carried on the back). A skilled dingaro maker is a prospective bride-groom. If one fails to make dingaro one's prospects as a husband very bleak. He is ridiculed as Ponka meaning good for nothing.

On the otherhand, the good qualities of a wife are : good weaving, good cooking, knowledge of design. Much importance is given to the knowledge of weaving. If one is not good in weaving, she is called Punki.

Generally, accepted marriage age in the Kāipeng community is 20-22 years for boys and 12-14 years for girls. It is habitual for a man to marry a girl after attaining puberty. The following Table shows age at the marriage and present age groups :

Sl. No.	Age group marriage	Upto 29 years younger generation			30-59 Middle generation			60 above older generation		
		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
		P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1.	10-14	25	—	25	25	—	25	3	—	3
2.	15-19	32	8	24	28	18	10	2	1	1
3.	20-4	15	12	3	33	33	—	6	6	—
4.	25-29	2	2	—	6	6	—	—	—	—
Total :		74	22	52	92	57	35	11	7	4

Analysing the above table, we can come to this conclusion that the age at marriage of the younger generation (upto 29 years) lies in the age at marriage groups 10-14 years, 15-19 years and 20-24 years. The age at marriage of females lies mainly in the age groups 10-14 years and 15-19 years and that of males in the 20-24 years. The analysis also reveals that in all the generations age at marriage of the males lies mostly in the age group 20-24 years with a mean age at marriage 21 years while that of females within the age groups of 10-14 and 15-19 years with a mean age at marriage 14 years.

Mediator plays a vital role in the solemnisation of marriage ceremony. Mediator is known as Raiba. He takes initiative in providing a link between the bride and the bride-grooms families. This gathering is known as Sankusu. During the preliminary stage of the marriage proposal a Langi party is arranged at the bride's house. The bride-groom party bears the expenses of the following items:

Sl. No.	Name of the items	Quantity
1.	Lāngi (Liquor)	1 (one) Gala (Pitcher)
2.	Phatui (Betel)	25-30 (approx)
3.	Koai (Nut)	200g. (approx)

When Sankusu is over a social feast is arranged within one month from the date of the observance of Sankusu. At this social gathering guests are invited. This social gathering is known as Sankatar. Here both the brides and bride-grooms parents in consultation with their respective family priests, select an auspicious day for marriage. Generally, Bhadra (July-August) and Chaitra (March-April) months are avoided. The expenditure incurred in connection with the above social gathering is borne by the boy's family.

The second stage is fixed for the arrival of bridegroom. The bride groom arrives at the bride's house on the date fixed by the Ojha. There are two divisions of the bride-groom party. One is led by the head of the family comprising the elders and the other one is led by the bride-groom himself followed by friends and youngsters. At this stage Jāmāi Khātā starts for the period of about five years.

As a matter of fact, the probationary period is subject to relaxation provided the Kara (the father in-law) and the Karajuk (the mother-in-law) are satisfied with the performance of the son in-law (chamari). Liking and disliking of the girl is also counted with importance. So marriage ceremony may be solemnised before the expiry of the probationary period. If the girl does not like the boy marriage will not be solemnised and the girl's father will compensate for the expenditure borne out by the bride-groom's party.

The father of the girl demands bride price known as Jarman. This is to be paid at the rate of Rs. 30.00 by the bride-groom's party. If the latter that is the groom's party fails to pay the above money he must give a pig. Bride price is given in consideration of wealth.

At present due to acculturation it has been observed that the system of bride-price or probationary practice (Jamai Khata) are giving way for groom's price. It has been noted that the bridegroom does not accept anything from the bride's party in cash but realises it in the form of gifts and presentation such as, land, buffalo cow, clothes fountain pen, umbrella etc. Mention be made about the following cases by way of illustrations :—

1. Lundai Ni Kāipeng of Gandek received 2 Kanis of landed property, 2 cows and one constructed house from his father-in-law Shri Manthung Kāipeng of Taidu as dowry about 4 (four) years back.

2. Likhilal Kāipeng of Karkari, Tuichundri (Taliampurah) married Rang-bum dhan Kāipeng, daughter of Shri Satinhan Kāipeng of Luxmidhan Para of Taidu Bari, Amarpur Block received 3 Kanis of land, 1 cow, 1 chaki and one sinduk as dowry in 1972.
3. Manindra Kāipeng of Laxmidhanpara, Taidu has reported me that he has settled his daughter's marriage with Shib chaung Som Kāipeng who is already working in his family as Jamaki Khata for one year. He has decided to give 2 Kanis of land, and two hundred rupees as dowry.

Widow marriage is practised like the other communities of Tripura. It is the Kāipeng language known as Sindoorfool or Janjain. The choice of the widow is also honoured. Cases of divorce though rare are not completely unknown. This happens due to non-adjustment between the husband and the wife. When separation is made the father will have the claim over the children.

After the negotiation the betrothal ceremony is performed in the bride's house. In the morning of the marriage day, water is collected from the nearby chhera, a worship of God sarbing **Details of Ideal marriage.** Arr thatnale is performed in the bride's house conducted by a tribal priest 'Ojhai' compulsory offers of fowl (tak) and chowbalangi (a pair of bamboo pieces containing wine) are the characteristics of this worship. After the worship, the liquor is first offered to the respective headmen of the para i. e. choudhury, then to other elderly persons of each party, followed by a feast.

Generally a Kāipeng does not take a girl from his own gotra, but the rules of exogamy are not always observed. Mention may

be made about the cases of inter-tribal marriage among them :—

- i. Shib Chandra Kāipeng of Jampui married a Kalai girl of Ampu, Amarpur in 1962.
- ii. Rabindra Deb Barma of Taidu Bari married a Kāipeng girl Daising Rong daughter of Rangdong lieu Kāipeng of Taidu Bari in 1971.
- iii. Lepoi Kuki of Howaibari married a Kāipeng girl, daughter of Wanpuisick Kāipeng of Baramura in 1972.
- iv. Rajlakshmi Kāipeng daughter of Roldon Sum Kāipeng of Baramura was given marriage to a Reang boy about 3 years back.
- v. Samarendra Deb, a Bengalee teacher of Dhanlekha married a Kāipeng girl Hang jou siem daughter of Tirtha som Kāipeng of Dhanlekha about 30 years back.
- vi. Lal-te-Lushai, a Christian Missionary staff of Mizoram married a Kāipeng girl named Palong-don Kāipeng, daughter of Hang-yu-thang Kāipeng of Dhanlekha in 1972.

The dead body is burnt in case of an adult and buried if it be that of child below 18 months of age. The dying person is attended by all the elderly persons of the locality.

Death Customs After Kothai (death) the dead body is first washed with water and dressed in new cloth. The dead body is burnt near a chhera. The belief is that the dead body will be swept away to the heaven and thus the soul of the deceased will be in the place of eternal bliss. Witch crafts, ghosts and spirits or the breach of tribal taboos are regarded as the real cause of death. If a man dies of an accident or commits suicide, he is considered to be a sinner.

The Kāipengs, though apparently isolated from the so-called outside world, they have a world of their own in which festivals and ceremonies are not lacking. It has been observed that Kāipeng festivals are not so much associated with their religion as in the case with the Hindus. Their festivals are very closely linked up with the harvest, season and local customs. In order to secure best yield in cultivation they observe a festival known as **Arthianang Nai**. There is no fixed date for the celebration of this festival but it is usually held after the harvest. In this festival home made liquor langi and sacrifice of fowls are considered compulsory. The belief is, if the deity is properly appeared they will never be unhappy.

Festivals

CHAPTER 4

FAMILY AND KIN RELATIONSHIP

A Kāipeng family consists of a nucleus of father and mother with separable units in sons and daughters. Of course, every family is not actually a biological group because there are some married couples who never have children, yet they constitute a partial family. There are many children who are adopted yet they are members of the adoptive family.

As elsewhere, so among the Kāipeng the family provides for the satisfaction of the fundamental biopsychic drives of hunger and sex, and makes it possible to perpetuate the species through reproduction and the social heritage through the handing down of traditions from generation to generation. The family is also an economic grouping : it provides food, shelter and clothing for its members, irrespective of their contribution towards the economic activity. The function of preserving language customs, mores and folkways is performed in co-operation with other groups like the clan. The family regulates marital relations between the sexes and the instruction of the young.

In this context it is important to note that a family is not only a permanent functional institution and an over-active

affective association but also is a process which passes through three or four welldefined stages. In the first instance, we have the formative stage, when the individual as a growing child is prepared for his adult hood roles as a responsible member of society. Then follows the nupital stage among most of the rural and urban groups, particularly in the former, child marriage having been a very distinctive feature of the Indian rural social structure. Kāipeng Community like the other tribal societies in India correspond to modern Western Society in having a pre-nupital stage after the formative and before the nupital stages. During this stage, it has been found, among them some sort of liasons develop and found, among them some sort of liasons develop and attachments are formed which are consummated after the ceremonial function of marriage has taken place. Among the rural and urban sections of the people, where marriages are parent-arranged and no courtship taken place, no such pre-nupital stage exists. After marriage come the children i.e. the post-nupital stage. Speaking from the point of view of society at large, this stage is the most significant. As the growing generation of children comes of age, they set the same process going again. Thus the family is an ever-continuing process, on the smooth continuity of which depends the continuity of society itself.

From my recent study it appears that among the Kāipeng there are two types of family called Nokhong Kāsu (nuclear family) and Nākhong Kātār (extended family). Nokhong kāsu consists of husband, wife and unmarried children whereas nokhong kātār includes not only the husband and wife and their married and unmarried sons and daughters and grand children, but also brothers, their wives and children. Thus, the larger extended family very often includes three or more generations. The older section of the Kāipeng Community considers the Nokhong Kātār (extended family) as an ideal one but now-a-days the young generation prefers nuclear family instead of

extended family. Even to-day Nokhong Kātār in remote corners is not rare. It has been found that in the extended family all the members share in common the house, food, agricultural fields etc. All the economic and social activities are performed in co-operation. The eldest member is the supreme head of the family who not only manages the family but also represents the family in all important matters including the performance of all family rituals.

It is evident from the above facts that monogamy is the general rule and rarely a second wife is taken before the first has died or has been divorced. Polygamy is not, however completely unknown within the family. The supreme authority rests with the father and lineage or descent are traced through him. When the father becomes old and is incapable of managing the family affairs the *ch geias* handed over to the eldest son. On the death of the father, the brothers very often separate themselves and establish their respective family units. Some time the brothers continue to live together to serve mutual interests.

The kin-relationship among the Kāipengs is restricted to its primary unit of family and lineage. It has been found that the Kāipengs are closely allied groups known Sānjāng, Kurset, Singer, Daurāi or Kutrā, Lungthung, Sengtai and Senghor. Though family is the nucleus with the highest density cohesion, yet like the nucleus of the physical atom it is not indivisible within the family there is a series of varying degrees of closeness in attachment and relationship. This may be seen from the study of following kin relation.

Normally, the relation between husband and wife is regulated by the norms of the joint family system which is in vogue even today among the Kāipengs. There is no provision for a separate house or a compartment for the married couple. As a result, the husband and the wife can hardly have any independent ways of

living. The relation, however among them is not strained by the patterns of the joint family. The division of labour is scrupulously observed and both the husband and wife accept the traditional pattern without any question and grumbling. Of course, their idea about activities suitable for the husband and wife differs from ours. A Kāipeng man for instance, does not mind looking after a child while his wife is away from home in the fields. He may even not mind for cooking.

Within the family the supreme authority rests with the father. This continues unchallenged till the children have reached the dormitory—going age. It may be noted that both the father and the mother actively co-operate in bringing up their children.

It may be noted that a boy is primarily under the care of the father who is responsible for imparting training in hunting, basketing, ploughing and all other activities. On the other hand, a girl is under the care of her mother. She gives her training in drawing water, cooking and looking after the babies etc.

It has been observed that in almost all societies certain rules of behaviour regulate the relations of kinsmen and affines. No man or woman should call his or her parents-in-law elder or younger sister-in-law by name. Thus we have the universal kinship usage of avoidance. We may note that the taboo on having any intimacy with wife's parents-in-law, husband's elder brother and maternal uncle is given much importance. The wife shall not talk to them and not only that, under no circumstances she should meet them or touch their clothes or bodies. In the same way, parents-in-law, husband's elder brother and maternal uncle shall not talk to her, look at her face and touch her body.

Of course, there is no bar if the wife cooks food, serves meal and washes plates and clothes for them.

The reason for such avoidance is that a woman's loyalty as wife may come into conflict with her loyalties as daughter-in-law. Consequently, the authority of the parents-in-law might collide with that of the husband. This would subject the wife to severe strain and impair the parents-son relationship. To prevent such social strains, daughter-in-law—parents-in-law avoidance is observed.

The reverse of the avoidance relationship is an extreme degree of familiarity expressed through joking relationship. Various interpretations have been given to this queer usage. According to some Social Anthropologists such relationship is the indicative

**between a wife
and her husband's
younger brother**

of equality and mutual reciprocity. They may also be indicative of potential sexual relationship between a man and his wife's younger sister or between a woman and her husband's younger brother. In each case the two may be potential mates. This is evident from the report of S. C. Roy who put an instance of a grand father marrying his grand daughter among the oraon. Verrier Elwin also reported a similar instance from the Baiga where a grandson married his own grand mohter. This kind of practice is not uncommon in the Hindu Society. Reference may be made about the younger brother of husband who is called Devar (Dvi+vara = Second husband). This reminds us of practice of Levirate that is after the death of the husband, the younger brother is entitle to marry the widow.

An important fact is that the system of cross cousin marriage is absent among the Kāipengs. So, mother's brother's daughter or father's sister's daughter is considered as kins and therefore there cannot be any marrige relations. This kind of practice is

also common to the most of the tribes of Tripura like Tiprās, Jāmātia, Noātiās, Uchais and Garos.

It may be noted the Kāipengs like the Trpras have few relationship terms in their language and most of the terms have been adopted from the Bengali Hindus. A list of terms of relationship along with their corresponding English, Bengali, and Tipra terms is given below :

RELATIONSHIP TERMS

English	Bengali	Tipra	Kāipeng
Father's	Prapitamaha	ba Katar	Da-burda
Father's		or	Katar
Father		Da-buda	
Father's	Prapitamahi	ma-katar	ma katar
Father's			
Mother			
or	—Do—	a-chu or	a-chu or
Mother's		dadu buda	dada buda.
Mother's			
Mother			
Father's	Pitamahi	a-chui	Nana
Mother or	or	or	or
Mother's	Matamahi	didi budi	Nana
Mother	Thakurma/ didima		
Father's	Pitamaha	a-chu	Da-buda
Father or	or	or	or

English	Bengali	Tipra	Kaipeng
Mother's Father	Matamaha	dada buda	—Do—
Father	Pita, bap, baba	a-pha or bap, baba	a-pha or ba.
Mother	Mata, ma	a ma or mata ma	a-ma
Father's Elder Brother	Jetha	aiung or Jetha	aiung
Mother's Elder Brother	mama	aiung or mama	aiung or mama
Father's Elder Sister's Husband	Pisha	aiung or pisho	aiung or pisha
Mother's Elder Brother's Wife	mami	yang tuk or mami	aiung or Burui
Mother's Elder Sister's Husband	Mesho	aiung or mesho	aiung or mesho

English	Bengali	Tipra	Kaipeng
Father's Elder Brother's wife	Jethi	Yanjak or Jethi	Aiung Burni
Mother's Younger Sister	mashi	atoi or mashi	Tatai
Father's Younger Brother's wife	kaki	atoi or kaki	kaki
Father's Younger Brother	kaka	kaka	kaka
Mother's Younger Brother	mama	mama	mama
Father's Younger Sister's Husband	pisha	pisha	pia
Mother's Sister's	Mesho	Mesho	Mesho

English	Bengali	Tipra	Kaipeng
Younger Sister's Husband			
Father-in- law	Svasur	kara sasur	Ankra
Mother-in- law	Svasuri	Karajak Sasuri	Karajak Sasuri
Step mother Elder Brother	Satma hatai dada	hatai dada	Buma matai dada Ata.
Younger brother	bhai	phaiung	phaiung
Elder Sister	didi	bai, didi	bai katar
Younger Sister	bon	hanakjak	Abang
Elder Brother's wife	baudi	bachai, baudi	bachai baudi
Younger Brother's wife	bauma	Oaijuk-rok	Oaijuk

English	Bengali	Tipra	Kāipeng
Elder Sister's Husband	Jamaibabu	Kumai	Kumai
Younger Sister's Husband	Bhagnipati	buai rok	buai
Wife	Stri, bau	bik	bihik
Wife's Elder Brother's Wife	Sambandhir Stri	bachai	bachai
Wife's Elder Brother	Sambandhi	buprang	buprang
Wife's Younger Brother	Shyalak Sala	ang, prang- Sala	buprang
Wife's Younger Brother's Wife	Shyalaker Stri Salar bau	ang, prang, juk	ang, prangjuk
Wife's Elder Sister Wife's Elder Sister's	Jesthya Shyalika bhayra	Oaijuk-rak Kumai	Oaijuk Okra. Kumi

English	Bengali	Tipra	Káipeng
Husband			
Wife's	Shyalika/	ang, prang-	ang,
Younger	Sali	juk	prangjuk
Sister			
Wife's	bhayra	ang, prang	ang, prang-
Younger		jukki busai	jukki
Sister's		bhayra	busai
Husband			
Husband	Swami	Slai	Sai
Husband's	bhasur	Oairak	Oaijuk
Elder Brother		Oairak	Oai
Husband's	ja	bachai	bachai
Elder Brother's			
Wife			
Husband's	devar	ang-prang	ang-prang
Younger		rak, kui	rak
Brother		monai	
Husband's	ja	ang-prang	ang-prang
Younger		rakui bihik	rakui bihik
Brother's		kuini bihik,	kuini bihik
wife			
Husband's	nanad,	buai-juk	baui-juk
Elder Sister	nanadini, nanash	rak	rak

English	Bengali	Tipra	Kaipeng
Husband's	nanad,	ang-prange	ang-prang
Younger	nanadini	juk, kui	juk, kui,
Sister	thakurjhi	monai	monai
Son	Putra, poot chhele	Shajla, poot chhela	Shajla
Brother's	bhratusputra	bai, bhatija	Babu
Son	bhatija		
Sister's Son	bhagina	bhagina babsa	Babu
Daughter	Kanya, meye	Shajuk, kanya, meye	Shajuk
Brother's	bhatiji	baini-juk	Mayo
Daughter		bhatiji	
Sister's daughter	bhagini	bainijuk, bhagini	Mayo
Child's	behai	chamai,	chamai,
Father-in-law		behai	behai
Child's	behain	chamai juk	chamaijuk
Mother-in-law		behai	behai
Son's wife	bauma	bamjuksa	chamari
Daughter's husband	jamai	chamai-sa jamai babu	chamari sa

English	Bengali	Tipra	Kaipeng
Grand Child	nati, natin	Shuk	Shuk
Great grand child	natin nati	bara	Sukkatar
Great Great		ranchi	ranchi
Great Child		chichu	chichu

It signifies from the above noted terms of relationship that the Kaipengs have no terms for their ancestors beyond the third generation. Again father's elder brother, mother's elder brother, father's elder sister's husband and mother's elder sister's husband have one term *aiung* and the corresponding female relations are addressed as *aiung burai* whereas Tipras use the term *yangjak*.

Husband and wife call each other as 'noong' that is 'you' they never pronounce each other's personal names in the presence of others, nor may they address each other by terms of another relationship. A man may call his wife by her nickname but in no case the wife utters the name of her husband. It is believed that if the husband's name is uttered his death is inevitable. Generally, when a man speaks of his wife he calls her the mother of the child' while she speaks of her husband as 'the father of the child'. It is interesting to note that there is no term for father's younger brother. Every where he is being called Kaka and father's younger brother's wife is called Kaki. The mother's younger sister is called Mashi or Tatai.

It is evident from the above analysis that the practice of such relationship is the direct result of a lively contact with the Bangalees of the plains.

CHAPTER 5

ECONOMIC LIFE

By tradition Kāipeng is a forest dweller. Hills and forests have shaped the habitat and economy of the tribe. Most of the activities pertaining to food quest are performed in the hills and forests. Fruits, leaves, roots and tubers which supplement and balance otherwise his predominantly cereal diet are obtained from the forest. The wild animals which are the food items of Kāipeng dish are found in the dense hilly forest. Again fish, a delicacy in Kāipeng diet, are caught in small streams or chheras and waterlogs. And the last but sweetest of all honey is collected from the canopy covered forest. In fine, hills and forest supply the prime necessity—namely food to the Kāipeng community.

As a matter of fact, Kāipeng economy, being based on the principle of self-sufficiency mainly centres round the hills and forests. It consists of food gathering, food producing, animal domestication and cottage industry. Like other primitive tribal folk, the Kāipengs are essentially food gatherers. As a natural process their food gathering is supplemented by the primitive method of agriculture known as shifting cultivation or jhum cultivation. It

Food
gathering

is significant to note that there is nothing particular about the food gathering pattern of the Kāipengs. The pattern is mostly common to all tribes of Tripura. Similar food gathering activities are also to be found amongst Sema Nagas, Angami Nagas. Kuki-Lushai tribes, Lakhers, Purums and Iamets of South-East Asia.

The necessary tools and implements for food collection are very few. They primarily consist of an iron chopper, Takal and a basket called Diāngro or Khāra. The chopper is an all purpose tool including clearing jungles particularly the branches of the trees and undergrowth. It is also used for removing the unwanted weeds by cutting them off from their stems. Basket used for the purpose is called tishing which is loosely woven with bamboo splits. This is used specially for carrying articles such as vegetable, fuel, utensils etc.

Like other tribes, Kāipengs are also very fond of fishes. It is a popular practice among them to catch fishes through out the year specially during the rainy season when the rivers over flow and marshy areas become filled with water. They are also further encouraged by the presence of many marshy places such as longa, chhera in and around the village. Fishing is done by various traps like Jurkha, Dam, Chowk, Palo etc. Jurkha is a kind of triangular basket having a flat base and narrower at the opening. This kind of trap is also familiar with the other tribes of north-east India. Dam is vertically planted in water and a piece of cloth with bait is spread over the funnel. Chowk is a rectangular basket-trap made of fine bamboo splits knitted by cane splits having several chambers inside. Such a trap is set against water-current and sometimes also in stagnant water. Fishes driven by water-current enter into the chamber and cannot come out. This kind of trap is very common to neighbouring regions.

The villagers also fish by poisoning water of small ditches or chheras with the help of wild roots and barks of particular varieties of plant locally known as "Man Paglar Bathai" that grow abundantly in the local forest. The system is : a particular area is made stagnant with the help of some artificial means and then 'man paglar' bathai spread over and then water is stirred constantly causing chemical reaction and as a result of which fishes float over water and then they are readily caught by the people. Generally, all kinds of fishing are done by the male folk of the community.

Hunting is a significant characteristic of the food gathering economy of the Kāipeng community. In olden times the Kāipengs organised hunting regularly to meet their food requirement. Practically speaking the wild

Hunting

game was an important source of food supply from the hills and forests of Tripura are the veritable resorts of different species of animals like the wild boar, deer, elephant and birds like dove, parrot and wild fowls etc. In respect of distribution of the share it may be pointed out here that the whole thing is taken over by the hunter himself or he may share with the members of his family only. In most of the intervals between his agricultural operation, a Kāipeng is found, roaming in the forest in search of the game. Even the children can be seen busy with the fixing of traps and snares for small game and birds. The game ranges from tiger to mouse. Of course, the singers of the Kāipeng community never kill a tiger. It is a taboo to koll a tiger. They consider that they are the descendants of Tiger. Even if they hear that a tiger is killed they mourn for three days and shall not take anything other than Neramishi chanai (vegetarian food) for three days. They will loudly cry for the killed tiger.

Hunting operation consists of tracking, stalking, snaring or

trapping. In tracking several persons armed with spears, stalks and choppers encircle a forest area keeping a minimum space for an opening. The hunters then track the games with a loud sound as a result, being frightened the animal run away and are easily caught out.

Tracking

Stalking is another method of hunting animals. Here, in this case, the hunters armed with weapons take their position during night at such places where animals fequently visit those places.

Stalking

Whenever the animals come across the hunters, they fall upon on them and catch them easily.

Traps and snares are used for catching small animals and birds. In this method a deep and circular pit measuring about $3\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ feet is dug and a number of short bamboo stakes are planted vertically inside the pit and its mouth is then covered with leaves or grass when animals come across that pit they soon get entrapped.

Snaring or

Trapping

Ring chang is another kind of baited snare made tying a long rope connected with the branch of a tree bent down to the ground. The rope ends in a running nose. Two bamboo sticks each about 20'' long are planted vertically at a distance of 1' (one foot) from each other behind that nose. Then a bamboo-split is horizontally tied to the vertical post and a second one to their upper portions. A tread-board made of bamboo splits is placed in a slanting position, the top of whcih rests on the lower horizontal bar and the otherside on the gound. The nose covers the whole tread-board. The end of the rope and the nose are fixed on the upper horizontal bar with an attached trigger.

Ring chang

Some food is spread about to attract animals. The trap is now ready. As soon as any small animal enters into the tread-board to eat, then the trigger is automatically released and as a result the branch of a tree is freed and thereby suspending the animals by the nose which grips its legs firmly. It is to be noted that this kind of snare is mostly used for catching wild fowls.

Besides the above traps and snares, there is another method of catching wild birds known as Neel which is very popular among the youngsters of the Kāipeng community. In this method a bamboo is vertically planted in the middle of the paddyfield. Then some gum or sticks juice obtainable from the jack-fruit or banyan-tree is pasted with the bamboo when birds take rest on such a planted bamboo when birds take rest on such a planted bamboo their wings get stuck up and cannot fly away. The waiting persons then catch them very easily. Small birds like sparrow, parrot piara, takbal are caught in this method.

Previously there were strong beliefs and practices which were closely connected with the hunting expedition but at present those are less significant and are not as organised as before. but still then the tribals co-operate with one another in hunting. Except in small game or accidental chasing Kāipengs always go out together for hunting. The direction about hunting is always available from the elders of the community. Each one has distinct part to play. Even boys do their job of howling and take active part in the expedition. Every individual is conscious to become the hero of the day. All act in such a concerted manner that the animals is soon over-powered by them. The distribution of the kill is proportionately settled and quarrels are not there. If some one had laboured more, he may be given a slightly bigger share as the recognition of achievement. No one grudges the share of non-participants, To ensure success in huntings, the Kāipengs

worship their God, Pathian. The main purpose of worshipping God is to win the favour of deity who is presiding over the forest and wild animals. The usual practice is to offer a sacrificial fowl to the deity in order to get the blessings of the god.

Cattle was not known to the Kāipeng community even a few years ago. They are primarily jhum cultivators and as such milch cattle is not very important to them. Cattle meat and

**Domestication
of animals**

milk are taboo to them. It is only due to contact with the plain people that some have started cattle domestication. Animal species like Pigs, Fowls, Dog, Cat are important. Pig and fowl occupy the pivotal position. The rearing of pigs and fowls does not require extra care, moreover, they give a good return. The pigs and fowls both multiply in greater number and their meat is most favoured by the community. Almost every household has a pig-sty which is attached to the ground floor of the tong ghar measuring about 8' x 5' x 5'. The following Table gives all account of cattle and poultry possessed by different households of the Kāipeng community.

Cattle and Poultry possessed by Households											
	Total No. of H. H.	Milch Cattle		Draught Bullock		Goats		Pigs		Fowls	
		No.	No. of H. H.	No.	No. of H. H.	No.	No. of H. H.	No.	No. of H. H.	No.	No. of H. H.
Sadar	80	31	18	84	35	15	10	56	35	76	22
Khowai	75	28	15	81	32	22	17	48	32	63	19
Amarpur	231	144	82	162	98	29	18	118	93	105	23

Analysing the above table it seems that largest number of House holds are in Amarpur Sub-division having 82 household possessing 144 milch cows, 98 households with 162 draught

bullocks, 18 households with 29 goats 93 house holds with 118 pigs and 23 households with 105 fowls respectively.

Like many tribal folk, the semi-nomadic Kāipengs food gathering activity is supplemented by a very primitive method of food production known as shifting cultivation. In the whole of north east India it is known as jhum or Jhum. It is to be

Food Production noted that in these areas there is a remarkable uniformity in the methods of cultivation. The cycle of primitive agricultural operation still existing among the Kāipeng community is marked by several stages : (1) Selection of land (2) Preparation of field (3) Burning the dried forest into ashes (4) Worship and sacrifice (5) Dibbling and sowing of seeds (6) Weeding (7) Watching and protecting the crops (8) harvesting (9) Thrashing and storing etc.

A forest patch for jhum is at first selected on the basis of unfettered choice. However, in actual practice elders make a final selection. In olden days Kāipengs had full freedom to cut and burn any forest patch for jhum cultivation.

Selection of land But now the officials of the Forest Department give out a particular patch in forest villages without any regard to a Kāipengs choice.

When a Kāipeng is free to choose any patch for jhum cultivation, certain factors influence his decision. The bamboo forest area more particularly a multi bamboo forest receives the first priority.

It is due to the belief that such a field yields rich crops. Secondly, the distance of a jhum land from the village also receives good consideration because a very long distance involves waste of time as well as energy badly needed for clearing and burning the forest and watching the crop. Distant plot also requires his wife to travel a long distance for taking māichu (food) to her husband. Moreover jhum near the village can be better

protected against wild animals. Kāipengs prefer slopy areas as their experience shows that the growth of the weed is less dense on slopy places than on the level land. Being a primitive agriculturist, he does not get time for frequent weeding. Naturally he chooses such a plot where weeds do not grow very deusely. He is expert in seleting the plot for he is fully familiar with the surroundings. Disputes regarding distribution of jhum plots among them are practically unknown. They have wonderful mutual understanding among themselves. Selection of land is generally done in the months of November, and December.

There are some magico religious observances regarding site selection. First of all, a small area is cleared in order to worship Burāh Devtā the goddess of jhum. Three short bamboo pieces stand for the goddess Buroh Devta. The pieces are planted closely in a row with the distance of 12'' between the two. Another bamboo piece split into two halves is held by the owner of the land. He drops the two halves with the chanting of the following incantation.

“Hima louning hāi pui āh
 Shi par ar jir rang nung
 Ri khu thang khu akong rang nung
 Tanga mao jit te rel jun woa
 Ar dai nabal, sing lai a—detai
 Chong khel rilmok takhel rilmok
 Ni sug khaowar ah omong
 Chandi Sakhi ah omong
 Satyr Satyā tin satya khatka
 Khupate khatka thalate deo”

(Translation : I shall cultivate this plot of land. It is really a wonderful place. Let there be plenty of crops. Oh oa! (bamboo)

let your head be seen by the birds, moon and sun and the root to penetrate deep into the soil. Please make correct forecast in presence of moon, sun and chandi).

Chanting the above incantation the owner of the jhum land drops the two halves in front of the planted pieces. Now if one half of the split-Bamboo falls obversely on the ground and the other half reversely it is considered auspicious. On the otherhand if both the halves fall on the ground in the same direction that is both obversely or reversely that is considered to be inauspicious. This is practised thrice. If there is no auspicious sign that plot of land will be abandoned and another plot of land will be selected. It is to be noted that similar type of practice can be found among the tribal communities of North-East India like the Lakhers. The Lhota Nagas, the Ao Nages, the Purums, the garos etc.

After site selection the members of the family are busy with the clearing of the forest tract by cutting down the jungle. First Preparation of field of all, they will cut the whole grass bamboos and plants upto the ground level. This work is done by men. It takes about three or four days to remove the grass. In the second stage smaller trees and the branches of bigger trees are chopped off.

The hardest part of the clearing work is to cut down the heavy trunks. This is the final stage. It is to be noted that the bigger trees are not cut from the root, About 3 feet to 4 feet portion of the trees are left out, around which creepers climb up. The felling period lasts from 20 to 25 days. Of course, where the jhum is used for the second time, the felling work is neither so hard nor so prolonged.

After finishing the work of clearing the jungle, all the felled bamboos, trees and plants are set to fire during the month of February-March. The dried logs and under growth burn in four

to six days. Within two or three days ashes cool down.

Burning of
dried forest

These are used as manure for fertilising the soil. The work is completed in the month of Falguna (February-March). The implements which are used in jhum cultivation

by the Kāipengs may be noted as under.

Name of the Implements	Primary Use	Secondary Use.
1.Rua (Age)	For cutting big trees in the jhum field.	It is also used for making pieces of logs.
2.Takkal	It is used for clearing jungle	It is used for cutting the branches of trees, removing the unwanted weeds and for cutting vegetables.
3.Hoe	This is used for turning up the soil and thus making ready for cultivation.	Sometimes used for removing the unwanted weeds.
4.Digging stick	It is used for making holes on the ground for planting seeds.	Also used for clod-crushing purposes.
5.Rake	It is used for collecting unwanted weeds scattered all over the world.	

Name of the Implements	Primary Use	Secondary Use.
6. Winnowing Fan	It is used for separating the food grain from the unwanted particles of the waste products.	

The jhum plot is now ready for sowing. After the first rains preparations for sowing start in right earnest. Since the Kāipengs are primitive agriculturists plough is not used in jhum cultivation

Sowing on the other hand they use da-barak, (a kind of chopper) for digging purpose. They dig small holes at a depth of 2 inches at a distance of about 8 inches only. As a matter of fact sowing of seeds is a communal affair. Both men and women take active part in it. It is to be noted here that digging and sowing both are done simultaneously. Men and women fill up baskets with mixed seeds.

They do not allow separate plots for different crops, rather the whole plot is treated as one and a mixture of all grains consisting of paddy, cotton, segamum, chilli, arum is sown. Each cultivator ties up a small japa (basket) in his or her left waist and a dao is held by the right hand for digging hole. After digging hole he drops three or four seeds in each and covers them with earth raked with the toe of his foot. This operation is made very systematically. The operation of digging and sowing starts from the top of the hill and ends of the bottom. Then again each one climbs the top and again comes down. Thus the whole area is covered. Besides this, another method is also adopted. Seeds are scattered over the entire field. One or two persons holds a small

basket containing mixture of various seeds in the left hand and then with the right hand seeds are taken out and sown.

After broadcasting seeds, the cultivators wait for a couple of days for more rains, within a month the bare field turns into a green lawn in the midst of thick forest shadowed by cloud ridden sky. Soon wild grasses and roots raise their heads. The cultivators know that jabra (weed) will obstruct the growth of joom and therefore starts removing it in the latter half of the second month

Weeding i.e. in the month of Jaistha-Ashada (May-June). Like the other tribes of Tripura, the Kāipengs also weed the field thrice. First weeding starts in early June, second weeding in July and the third weeding is in the month of August. Of course, the number of weeding largely depends upon the intensity and speed of wild growth and the labour power available in the locality. Weeds are removed either with hand or takkal. Women and children play important part in the weeding operation.

The site of the jhum plot which is far away from the village may give an impression that the crops are not carefully watched and protected against the wild animals. But in fact, the case is opposite. They take particular care to protect their crops both

**Mang
Khang** against wild animals and evil spirits. Some sort of fence of split bamboos is constructed around the jhum land. Then again within the fence they put shares and traps for different animals. The tribals know the pulse of the wild animals—their habits, strength and even daily routine and as such wild animals are frequently trapped by them. One such trap is Mang-Khang. This is usually set near the fence, generally some gaps are maintained around the fence and in between the gap a heavy and long log is placed in a slanting position. One end of the log rests on the ground and the other end is placed horizontally which in turn, rests on

another bar that acts as the balancing rod. A thead-board of bamboo poles and splits is placed below that heavy log. The balance rod is the connecting link between the log and the thread-board. When any wild animal steps into the thread-board it weighs down the board. The board pressess down the horizontal bar, as a result the peg is released and consequently the peg shoots up and the balance get disturbed causing again the falling of the log. Thus the game is easily trapped.

The watch-house is called Dandi which is created at the centre of the field measuring about 15 x 9 feet. It is a dochala (i. e. double roofing) house of thatched roof without any wall.

(watch man)
Watch house

The platform is made of bamboo poles at a height of about 5' form the ground. For climbing up, the Kāipeng, use bamboo-poles placed in a slanting position. The duty of the warung is to protect the field by driving out birds and wild animals. This is generally done by various ways-loud cry, clapping of hands, setting dogs and burning fire etc.

The harvesting has no mythieal significance among the Kāipengs. The reaping and winnowing processess are similar to the other tribes of North East India. Men, Women and Children reap, using small iron sickless (Cekhra). But previously they were ignorant about the use of Cekhra and each harvester used to carry a langa on the back by fastening it round the forehead with a string made of fibre. The ears were simply broken and put into the langa.

Although different crops are sown in the field, they do not ripe all at a time. Reaping is therefore a selective and slow performance. Different corn ears have to be searched separately since different crops were not sown separately. It is during the period from the month of Ashada to Aswina (i. e. from the month of June to September) that the crops in the field become

mature one after another. The following Table shows the period of harvesting of different crops :

Serial No.	Name of the Crops	Period of harvesting
1)	Thaichumu (cucumis)	June
2)	Mamphal (Melon)	"
3)	Sasah (Cucumber)	"
4)	Magdam (Maize)	"
5)	Maisinga (Sugarcane)	First half of July
6)	Khakloo (White gourd)	"
7)	Chalcumra (Pumpkin)	"
8)	Milak (Gourd)	"
9)	Tilak (Gourd)	"
10)	Banta (Ocimum basilicum)	"
11)	Khundra pai (Coriander)	"
12)	Mai paddy	Second half of July
13)	Phantak (Brinjal)	"
14)	Masa (Chilli)	"
15)	Muiti (Arum)	"
16)	Masai (Kaon)	"
17)	Sabai (Long bean)	August
18)	Labiya (Rec bean)	"
19)	Chiping (Sesamum)	"
20)	Daspia (Hibiscus)	"
21)	Sutai (Turmeric)	September-October
22)	Mesta (Jute)	"
23)	Khool (Cotton)	"

Threshing is done by individual families of their own and there is no co-operative effort in this work. Kāipeng women take part in threshing work and it is not a taboo for them to join with the males. Men and women form an extended line and tread the corn ears with their feet. There is also another method of threshing corns by beating the ears with a wooden or bamboo club.

Threshing

The threshed grain is winnowed in the ordinary way. One man lifts up the uncleaned grain in a tray and drop grains on a mat. This is done particularly when the wind blows. As a result of this dropping process, heavy grains fall on the mat while the chaffs etc. are blown away by the wind. In absence of wind, this is done with a bamboo fan called Kichib. After the completion of winnowing, grains are dried in the sun on bamboo mat. The husking operation, that is maichuga is generally done by women during the period from October to December.

Winning and husking

In the early stages, the Kāipengs did not accept plough cultivation. They were traditional axe cultivators and jhum represented a living myth in their life. But now-a-days owing to shrinkage of jhum land they are forced to take recourse to plough cultivation. Moreover, encouragement from the governmental machinery the Kāipengs like the other tribes are generally getting settled with plough cultivation on their principal pursuit. Certain significant facts may however, be noted in this connection.

Plough cultivation

Generally speaking, a Kāipeng produces as much as he needs for himself and for his family only and not for what others need. For example, he prepares a basket when the old one is to be replaced by the new, a new fishing net is woven only when the

previous one shows holes. Since the production is exclusively for home consumption, market fluctuation does not affect

**Household
industry**

household industry. As a matter of fact, the basic structure of Kāipeng, handicrafts still rests on self sufficiency. He does not bring any raw material from external source rather he utilises the local raw materials only. It is to be noted that the amount of capital invested in such crafts is smaller than the units of labour. Therefore such household crafts have all the advantages of labour intensive industries.

Basketry is very popular among the Kāipengs. A Kāipeng house is decorated with basket of different patterns, shapes and sizes. The baskets are used for various purposes like fishing, winnowing, food collection,

**Basketry &
Weaving**

cooking and washing etc. The Kāipengs do not face much difficulty in producing raw materials because the material is readily available in the nearby forest. The handicrafts provided job for the whole family. The aged, children and women all join hands together. In fact, a Kāipeng home has the appearance of a small workshop in which every member is doing something in accordance with his capacity. Of course the work depends on nature's supply of raw materials and the availability of spare time. One is seen weaving his nets and traps during the intervals, between sowing and weeding. Almost every Kāipeng household has its own indigenous loin loom, spinning machine made of bamboo and pieces of wood. It has been found that most of the families primary source of income comes from cultivation while the secondary source of income from handloom.

The Kāipeng technique of agriculture is of crudest type being dependent on monsoons and modern scientific methods

of a protecting crops against nature's whims and depredation by insects, pests and wild animals are not known to the Kāipeng. It is therefore not surprising to see a Kāipeng worshipping gods with chicken and liquor to save his crops from evil spirits. A survey of 216 Kāipeng families of Taidu Bari of Amarpur reveals certain facts about their income from different sources. As a matter of fact, some factors have to be kept in view while considering the income statistics of the Kāipeng e.g. that they are reluctant to disclose their real agricultural production lest the government might seize it under the procurement system. Moreover, they are illiterate and ignorant of weights and measures, and as a result they are unable to give an exact quantitative estimate of their yields. The above factors have definitely influenced the data of Kāipeng income. Therefore, due weightage has been given to them while analysing the over-all economic position of the families.

From my survey it has been found that the total income of 216 Kāipeng families from cultivation was Rs. 38,880.00 and as such the yearly average income of a family is Rs. 180.00 or Rs. 15.00 per month. The average size of a Kāipeng family being five (5) in number the per capita monthly income from agriculture comes to Rs. 3.00 approximately. It may be possible that the informants were not coming out with correct figures with the hope that if they can portray their economic conditions as that of a miserable state further Govt., assistance will follow. However, my reading is that the difference between the real income and what they stated is not much.

Like the other tribes the Kāipeng also leads a very simple life. His wants are few and limited in variety. They live from hand to mouth on roots and produce of the wild. They do not

bother for the future and as such they do not save, rather whatever amount is produced is used without providing any thing for the rainy day. During my field study a young Kāipeng considering me a government official, sought monetary help from me. I tried to convince him but he was too simple to follow and went on insisting, as before. At last I asked him whether he was interested in work. The young man readily agreed. I gave him two rupees and asked him to come tomorrow. But surprisingly enough the youngman came to me after three days. I asked him why did you come earlier?" The young man replied he would not work even to-day because still he had fifty paise with him. As a matter of fact, they are very extravagant, indifferent and they never think for to-morrow.

A Kāipeng untouched by so-called civilisation will use only a strip of cloth just to cover his private parts. The women also do not require much cloth except a Pachra of 3 to 4 yads. to cover their breasts and thigh.

The system of curing disease is based partly on magic and partly on herbs and roots. Of course one surrenders to a modern doctor when tribal prescription fails to cure. Ordinarily he does not include medicine in his normal expenditure. Education also does not find any place in a Kāipeng's budget. However recreation and drink are essential items in the list of expenditure. He takes drink in every sphere of life. It is an essential element in the tradition of hospitality which is one of the most admirable tribal virtues. No tribal conference can succeed without it. It is the pledge that binds together those who make a pact of peace. The belief runs that life will not be worth living if liquor is taken out of it. Drink and dance are like the twin tonic without which they cannot enjoy the rythm of life. The following Table shows the average annual expenditure in a Kāipeng family.

Table showing Average Annual Expenditure on different items in a Family:

Items of Expenditure	Average Annual Expenditure per family on the Item
Food	Rs. 298.00
Clothing	Rs 60.00
Housing	Negligible
Light & Fuel	"
Medicine	Rs. 5.00
Tobacco	Rs. 10.00
Liquor	Rs. 25.00

An analysis of the Kāipengs income and expenditure reveals that out of the 216 families surveyed, there was an excess of expenditure over income in the case of 192 families that is 88.98% of the total number of families were having deficit budget. The remaining 11.2% per cent could meet their expenditure or earn some surplus.

The following table sums up the economic condition of the Kāipeng families :-

SURPLUS OF DEFICIT FAMILY BUDGETS YEAR 1977—78

Total No. of families surveyed	216
No. of families having surplus budget	24
Percentage of Surplus families to the total No. families surveyed.	11.02%

No. of families having deficit budget 192

Percentage of deficit families to the

total No. of families surveyed. 88.98%

The above tables shows that the high percentage of deficit families, is a reflection of the fact that the tribe is submerged in steep poverty.

During the last three decades Kāipeng economy had to pass through a drastic change. The sudden change in the technique of cultivation shattered their traditional economic life. Being not well versed in plough cultivation, they failed to produce sufficient crops. Frequent change of village site in search of new jhum plot of land entailed heavy loss of crops and forced him to borrow from the village money-lenders. Besides these reduction in the scale of agricultural operation, decline in the agricultural yield, increase on social and religious ceremonies converted the Kāipeng economy into a deficit economy. However, among the causes of indebtedness the major ones are :—

Causes of indebtedness

- a. The improvidence and extravagance of the cultivators
- b. Un-economic holdings.
- c. Frequent change of village site and
- d. Dishonesty of money lenders and charge of high rate of interest.

It may be noted that the sources of finance which are available locally may be broadly classified into two categories : (a) Governmental agencies like Development Blocks, Co-operative Banks etc. and (b) Private Agencies, like money lenders, Paddy merchants Mahajans, friends or relatives living in the village or adjacent villages. Since it is a complicated job

to get loan from Governmental sources, the simple and easy-going tribales approach only local mahajans for loans. In almost all the cases, the loans carry compound interest at the rate of 50% during the first year and 100% thereafter. The mode of repayment is generally in kind, i.e. by tendering the future cash crops after harvest of prices which are normally calculated at less than half the previous rates. Among the sample households 88.98% were indebted to an extent of Rs. 96,000.00. The average amount borrowed per households varied from Rs. 200.00 to Rs 1,500.00/-

It is significant to note in this connection that although Block offices and Co-operative Banks are always ready to extend financial help to them, the tribals prefer private money lenders because of difficult process of getting loans from the Block officers and Co-operative Banks. Taking advantage, of this, the private money lenders charge very high rate of interest varying from 50% to 100%. As a result they cannot repay loans for which they even run the risk of losing their lands.

It is very difficult if not impossible to collect correct data on income and expenditure and particularly about their debt. Their attitude towards debt is different from us. For example, money borrowed by a Kāipeng from his neighbour or from his friend is not considered as borrowings by him. Ordinarily a commoner cannot count beyond 20. One can hardly calculate the duration of loan or interest charged on it. At what rate of interest the total amount is borrowed, or how much he had repaid and what amount still left to be repaid cannot be correctly answered by a Kāipeng. As a result, the whole calculation remains as a game of approximations.

As a matter of fact, precarious economic condition often necessitated the borrowing by tribal people from the people of

other communities at a very exorbitant rate of interest and due to non payment in time they are forced to part with even their land. The improvidence and extravagance linked up with the traditional socio-religious customs on the part of the Kāipeng Community, leaves no alteration but to be deeply buried with indebtedness. Further, excessive drinking habit, dishonestly of money lenders, unproductivity of the soil are aggravating the amount of indebtedness to an alarming rate.

CHAPTER 6

ACCULTURATION

Acculturation is the process through which the tribal cultures are usually transformed or modified. It involves acceptance and adoption. A tribe in contact with civilisation may accept some of the traits of their neighbour such as the employment of Hindu priest in indigenous ceremonies and festivals among some of the tribes in Tripura is an example of simple acceptance. It is significant to note that the Kāipengs of the Halam Community is no exception to this process of transformation. They have been subjected to the influence of the plains who presented a higher culture with a more effective productive organisation. Bengali Hindu culture is not antagonistic and the economic and political superiority of the plains set an ideal before them and they eagerly began to imitate or assimilate those elements of culture which attracted their attention most. We shall now see how these influences categorically in the various spheres of life.

In the field of agriculture some Kāipengs are still in the stage of primitive method of cultivation. They practice temporary hill cultivation (jhum) as the most important source of food supply and this has become the foremost productive system among them. But example of the plain dwellers has deeply

influenced the Kāipengs in this respect. Like the other neighbouring tribes they also turned to some modernisation of their agricultural practices and therefore have practising settled wet rice cultivation now it has been considered by the majority of them that shifting cultivation is no longer profitable. Jhum cultivation is being replaced the bullocks are taking the place of dāma, tisim and yāgul khilāiya.

It is interesting to note that only a couple of years back there was no plough cultivator among the Kāipeng as they were strongly against the adoption of the complicated plough cultivation. W. W. Hunter writes, "plough cultivation is limited to a narrow strip of land lying along the boundary which divides the state from the adjoining British Districts, and to patches of land in the interior. The people who practise this form of cultivation are with few exception, Bengali's and Manipuri's, the majority of the Bengali's being Muhammadans....."

The hill tribes object to cultivation by the plough as being contrary to their traditions, and so strong is their prejudice against any change from their own system that the Political Agent regarded it as deserving of report that a hill man in easy circumstances had taken up some waste land in the plains near his village, and was cultivating it through Bengali Musalmans whom he employed as servants".

It may be recollected that Late Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikys Bahadur (1923-47) in order to induce his tribal subjects (viz Puran Tipra, Noatias, Jāmātiās, Riāngs and Hālāms) to plough cultivation in stead of Jhum cultivation, reserved a large fertile ploughable area by an order dated 20th. Bhadra, 1341 T.E. and by a subsequent order dated 1st. Aswin T. E. (1943) the area was extended later. Again in order develop the vast tracts of wild land and populate them. His Highness opened a new

Department called the Immigration and Reclamation Department. Soon after the opening of his department vigorous attempts were made for the study material conditions of various tracts of land awaiting development. Reclamation work was commenced in Kulai Gaor, Dhalai Valley of Kailashahar Subdivision and various other places and nearly 400 sq. miles of land were distributed amongst the immigrants. The Agricultural department which was re-organised at the instance of his Highness took up the work of introducing superior quality of cotton, paddy, jute, tobacco, sugar-cane and potato in the high lands and in the plains. Circuit lectures against nomadic **Jhuming** and in favour of plough cultivation was arranged by the said department. As a further step the department opened an enquiry office in a specially constructed shed right in the heart of Agartala Bazar to furnish people with all information regarding agricultural operation, seeds, appliance, plants and cattle diseases.

As a result of this contact initiated by the kings considerable changes took place in the environment, economy and socio-religious life pattern of the Kāipengs. Although change in general is a continuous process but in case of the Kāipengs it cannot be denied that the notion of change was very slow prior to 1947 and that the changes are occurring very quickly after accession to Tripura with Independent India.

The new orientation of the Kāipeng economic system has already begun to influence the different aspects of their socio-economic life. It has been found cattle, goat, pigeon and duck are being domesticated along with the pigs and fowls. Now, in times of scarcity they no longer turn to the natural source of food but try to borrow money from their neighbours although a few years back they had scarcely any idea about the use of coin money, the rare rupees that reached them were pierced and worn as ornaments, by the women folk of the Community. An Assistant

Surveyor of Topographical Survey party in the year 1872-73 writes, "Money was inducement, and no amount of vigilance was sufficient to retain men, who brought nothing with them but the clothes on their backs." The present trend is however different. The domestic architecture of the Kāipengs has been influenced by the plain dwellers. The more durable house with four-sloped roofs with definite partitions and decorative carvings on the beams is a direct loan from the plains. These types of houses are more commonly found in those areas where Begalees inhabit as their neighbours. It has been found that the tribal people are imitating the pattern of houses on the ground as practised by the dwellers of the plains. They are no longer selecting high hill tops as sites for their villages. As a result the tribal village is losing its integrity, homogeneity and compactness.

In the matter of dress and ornaments the Kāipengs seemed to have borrowed freely the practices of the plains people. Previously their cloth requirements were extremely scanty and they got them in exchange of forest produce but to-day many of them use shirts, coats and dhutis on important occasions. These articles of dress are made of imported clothes and are sewn in sewing machines by the tailors at the market. Chemise and blouse are also becoming popular among the women folk. Mill made clothes are increasingly being used. It is interesting to note that Taidubari market of Amarpur M. P. Block is frequently visited by the Kāipengs of the nearby villages of **Gandek**, **Dhanlekhā**, **Falkuchhera**, **Luxmidhan** for business as well as for relaxation. Tailor made coats of foreign fabric, lanterns, torch-lights etc. are now seen in the houses of comparatively well-to-do Kāipengs.

Christian missionaries also played a notable part in changing the dress of the tribes. The long-sleeved tight-fitting jacket made of velvet or satin with a preference for black or blue colour which

Kāipeng boys or girls put on festive occasion is the result of contact with the missionaries.

As regards hair-styles or hair dressing men and women show marked influence of the plain dwellers. The young boys now rarely shave all around the crown of the head or keep a tuft of hair on the top. The men cut about two inches of their hair round the head and make it pointed towards the nape of the neck. Kāipeng women wear their hair long parting it in the middle and making a roll on the neck in the style of Bengalees.

In the matter of marital relation the age old custom of marriage is now passing through a transitory stage. The bachelors are now disinterested in building bachelor's dormitory. Marriage by elopement or by service or by paying bride price is fast becoming a thing of the past. In olden days, a boy's skill in basketry and a girl's skill in weaving were valued as the criteria for suitability in marriage but today these are no longer deemed as essential qualification. In stead, the educated grooms are now demanding dowries from the parents of the bride. Marriage rule is not strictly followed. To-day there is no bar to inter-tribal marriage and not only that marriage with plainsmen is not uncommon. It has been reported that Mr. Samarendra Dev of Dhanlekha married a Kāipeng girl named Hanjon Siem, daughter of Tirtha Som Kāipeng only a few years back.

It is in the domain of religion the Kāipengs have borrowed directly the Hindu elements from the plain dwellers. It has been found that at present some of them are employing Bengali Hindu priest in their indigenous ceremonies and festivals. The striking feature is the absorption of elements of Hindu religion. Mahadev is now universally recognised as the chief God. The worship of Durga, Chandi, the reputed deities of the plains of Bengal has been fully assimilated by the Kāipengs. As to be precise I may quote one of the popular hymns.

A few cases of the dowries are given below as illustration :-

Sl. No	Name of the parents of the bride	Name of the groom	Grooms village	Brides village	year	presents
1.	Manthung Kāipeng	Lundai Nikaipy	Gandek	Taidu	1974	Landed property 2 kanies cows-2
1.	Manthung	Lundai	Gandek	Taidu	1974	Landed
2.	Rangbam dhan Kai- peng	Likhilal Kāipeng	Thichun-Taidu dri		1974	land-3 kanies cow-1 cot-1 wooden safe-1
3.	Manindra Kāipeng	Sibchang som Kāi- peng	Tuidu Tuidu	Luxmi- dhan	1976	land-2 kanies cash Rs.200/-

Abuniā himatārikhā himā bārā Nunule ānu āpale neni
unruyatuh Ring sat mānrāodāmsāt mānrāoSānoopumā Sumpumā
dānpumā chang pumā Lāpumā luchuk Samchuk hangra fāirow
Medrithi narathi āmoh re sah Himatulla chekin nen Sam han
chekra ra Thiring jāgāmong ring jāgā thiring jaga Kaima chang,
chang mak Ai pa Mahādev, Anu Durgā Chang Changā ra sa Jai
Sampurna chang rah

Summary : To-day on this date we parents of both the bride
and bridegroom's party give you in marriage. Let the day be holy
and sacred. May you live long. We wish your son, daughter and

plenty of wealth. May you live even when hair becomes as white as cotton. May your sons and daughters live long. As water or the earth or iron are free from the touch of death so also you may live long. This is the message of Lord Mahadev and Goddess Durga. May your marriage be blessed.

From the above analysis it seems that the process of Sanskritization is working among them. The Kāipengs now are changing their custom, ritual ideology and way of life in the direction of a high caste. Of course, the mobility associated with Sanskritization results only in positional changes in the system and does not lead to any structural change.

Besides contact with the plain dwellers there are other factors which have deeply affected the life of the Kāipengs. They are no longer absolutely isolated from the vortex of modern civilisation. The spread of modern education, appointment of the tribal youths in white collar jobs, improvement in the means of communication, trend towards Westernization, welfare activities by the Government, special facilities for them, the spread of urbanization, attempts at social reformation and activities by the political parties are some of their prime factors responsible for bringing about changes in their life pattern.

The effects of such contacts have been very far reaching on the life of the tribals. One of the most important effects is that the growth of urbanization is responsible for disorganising the primitive social life. The village has ceased to be a living community, it is now an aggregate of some isolated units. Many of the traditional customs which provided recreation to the whole community are being abandoned at the cost of important village politics, rivalry and social disputes. Again the rapid opening up of the means of communications has resulted more in conflict of culture and material. In this connection, it would be wise to refer

to the observation of Dr. Hutton who has specifically stated, "attempts to develop minerals, forests or land for intensive cultivation can only be made at the expense of the tribes whose isolation is thus invaded : tribal customs which regulate the ownership usufruct, transfer of land are normally superseded by a code in the application of which the tribe is deprived of its property, generally in the name, alienation to foreigners or by transferring the trusteeship of a tribal chief into absolute ownership of a kind foreign to the customs of a tribe. The complicated administration of justice has tended to impair the natural truthfulness and honesty of the people and social solidarity of the tribes has weakened the authority of the social heads and the respect they formerly commanded."

It has been found that in spite of the best intention a lot of injustices is done to the tribals by the judges, Magistrates, Executives and the police officers of all grades only due to their ignorance of tribal customs and usages. The Kāipengs now having come into close contact with the various official functionaries and others, have learnt all the chicanery of alienation and litigents. Many cases now come before the local circle or the B.D.O's which could have been disposed of at the village level. Ordinary villagers now prefer to take cases to Government Courts rather than run the risk of getting an unfair award at the hands of their headman. Many of the village headmen and elders have abused the confidence reposed in them. They are no longer dependent for position on the good will of their villages.

In social relations, there is a estrangement between the Christians and the non-Christians. Their dress, manners, standard of living, method of greeting and other behaviour patterns are different. Thus a village having both non-Christians and converts is divided into two factions standing not shoulder to

shoulder but face to face. When the village is faced with any problem there are always divergent points of view instead of unanimous decision. The converts regard themselves as being outside the pole of village headman's authority and consider the missionary as their sole guide not only in the realm of religion but in that of secular activities as well.

The type of education that they receive in the schools alleviates them from their home and culture. Being brought up in the atmosphere, the tribal child gradually feels encouraged to give up village life and seek his fortune in some nearby town. He prefers to be a peon in an office rather than remain an agriculturist on his own fields. The effect of Christian education in missionary school is far worse. The tribals begin to imitate the European missionaries in dress and talk and draw inspiration not from their own culture but from European culture. Coming back to his village he begins to look down upon the non-Christians backward and ignorant folk. As a result the new gap between a small so-called elite group of the tribals and a very large section of the general population began to become wider and wider undermining much of the egalitarian composition of their earlier society. In suggesting measures for the improvement of the Káipengs we should remember that they should not be left in their age-long isolation. Although many anthropologists have advised segregation of primitive groups in order to save them from contact with higher civilisation it is not possible because modern civilisation with its railways, automobiles, aeroplanes, telegraph, telephone, wireless and hundred other means of rapid communication has conquered time and space and has spread out its tentacles far in to the heart of the country. It is not easy to check this trend, and at the same time it is not advisable to place the tribals face to face with this heavy flow to be swept away. It should be kept in mind that civilisation to the savage is

something like an intoxicating stimulant which is conducive to health when properly administered but causes disease or death when the control is removed.

As a matter of fact it would be wise if we confine ourselves to the betterment of their health sanitation a higher yield for their labour in the fields, improved techniques for their home-industries and above all the the material comforts of their life. It should be our endeavour to bring the best things of the modern world to the tribes, in such a way that they will not destroy the traditional way of life, but will activate and develop all that is good in them. We should not suggest anything for the spiritual uplift of the tribe because improvement in that sphere can only come from within and should not be imposed from outside. The history of christianisation of the African tribes bears undisputed testimony to the failure of such attempts.

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A SAMPLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY OF THE SCHEDULED TRIBE OF TRIPURA

Questionnaire — 1

1. Name of the village.....P.O.P.S.....
Tehsil.....Sub-Division.....District.....

2. Total population of the village (community wise):

1971 Census	Present
SC ST Others Total	SC ST Others Total

3. Total number of households in the (community wise):

1971 Census	Present
SC ST Others Total	SC ST Others Total

4. Whether the village has a kucha/pucca or semipucca approach road?

5. Nearest Bus station to the village;

6. What are the amenities/facilities available in the

School	Public H.	Piped drinking	Electri city	Banks
Centre	water	city		

village?
 Others

7. What is the economy of the village as a whole?
8. Whatg are the main crops grown in the area?
9. Total area of fand of the village? Tilla.....
Nal..... Lunga.....Faelow.....
10. Is there any household industry in the village?
11. Whether irrigation facilities are avaiioable?
12. Whatg is tghe total cultivable land under irrigation?

A SAMPLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY OF THE SCHEDULED TRIBE OF TRIPURA

Questionnaire—II

(For individual informant)

1. Name of the village.....Gaon Sabha.....
Block.....Sub Division.....District.....
2. Name of the informant.....Age.....
3. Name of the CommunityTribe
4. What is the total members in your family?

<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Adult	Minor	Adult
(0-11 yrs)	(0 11yrs)	
5. How many of you are literates?

<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
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6. Number of educated persons:

<u>S.F./H.S</u>	<u>Graduate</u>
<u>Upwards</u>	<u>Technical</u>
7. How many children of the school going (0-11) are actually attending school?

<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
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8. Reason for non-going school for 0-11yrs children :
9. How many members in your family are married?

Age at first marriage	Same vill. age	Out-side the vill-age	Commu-nity of wife (gotra) with distance	No.of living wife	Cause of divorce if any
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- (a) Father
- (b) Son
- (c) brother
- (d) Sister
10. No. of widow in the family:

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

- A. Occupation:— Primary Secondary with callings.....
- B. Land (in acre) :
- i. Owned & cultivable
Tilla Lunga
- ii. Owned but letout on barga
Tilla Lunga
- iii. Lan taken on barga
Tilla Lunga

iv. Land lying fallow

v. Orchard

vi. Share cropping

Tilla Lunga

vii. Home

C. Area shown under principal food and cash crop (during the preceding year):

Food crop Area Yeild Cash crop Area Yeild in acre

acre

Kice

Jute

Wheat

Suger cane

Millet

Old

Maize

Other cash

Other food

crop

grain

(specify)

including

Rabi & Kharif Season

Name of the crop

Area

Yeild in acre

D. Live stock

Poultry Piggery Milch Other cattle Bull Buffalo

E. Implements possess

Name of the implements No.

F. Other sources of income :

Casual labour :- No. of persons working Average
income
per month

G. Expenditure (per month)

Ration Cloth Medicine Education Transport Social ceremonies

Drinking Rent Cess etc. Any other (specify) Total

How the surplus utilised How the deficit met out

H. Ownership of house :- Type

Owned Rented Employers Hut Mud Mixed Pucca house

I. Indebtedness

Outstanding How Time of Sources Security Rate debts
Amount long taking offered of loan interest

Cash

Kind

Purpose of borrowing

What amount repaid during the last year?

From what community the loan was taken?

Land sold during the last five years :-

Type of land Area Value Community Purpose of selling

J. Elite Role :-

Name of Club Library School Temple Co-Panch the mem-
commi-commi-Opt. ber ttee ttee

K. Mobility General Occupational mobility

Grand father

Grand father

Father

Father

Informant

Informant

