

THE GAROS OF TRIPURA

BY

DR. PRODIP NATH BHATTACHARJEE

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH
TRIBAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT
TRIPURA, AGARTALA

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FOREWORD

Though there are 19 Nos. of tribal communities in Tripura, all of them are not original inhabitants. Some of them are commonly known as immigrant tribes. Garos are one of them. Unfortunately, there is no exhaustive report or book on the Garos of Tripura. In this background, the Directorate of Research felt it necessary to undertake a study on the Garos of Tripura and subsequently the same work was entrusted to Dr. P. N. Bhattacharjee.

2. In this context, the monograph prepared by Dr. P. N. Bhattacharjee has fulfilled the long gap. Though himself a non-Garo, Dr. Bhattacharjee's labour and dedication to the Research work have brought all the colourful aspects of the Garo community and their customs to light.

3. We hope the book will be of immense help with administration, scholars and the community at large.

4. On behalf of the Directorate of Research, I would thank Dr. Bhattacharjee and Shri Diplash Ritchil, a member of the Garo community and Headmaster, Mairamnagar High School, who took great pains to go through the manuscript.

Dated, Agartala,
24-6-87.

A. M. Dutta.
Director of Research,
Govt. of Tripura.

PREFACE

In Tripura the Garos are a minority tribal group. The Garos are not an autochthonous tribe of Tripura. They came from the Mymensing District of Bangladesh which is the abode of a large number of the Garos. Being refugees their problem is to some extent different from that of local tribes. Due to their migratory habit the numerical strength of the Garos stands almost stagnant between the period of two censuses. If this tendency continues, in course of time they may become quite rare in Tripura. Under the above circumstances a sociological study on the Garos of Tripura is essential. Unfortunately there is not even an ordinary book on the Garos of Tripura in existence. Work on the present monograph was taken up as a time bound programme set by the Directorate of Research and therefore it is not possible to present an exhaustive account of the Garos of Tripura in this work. The present monograph is a modest attempt to fulfil the want of an introductory book only and this has no claim for a scientific study.

I convey my sincere gratitude to Professor Bela Dutta Gupta of the Department of Sociology of the Calcutta University for her affective guidance and encouragement in my work.

I am grateful to Shri Jitendrajit Singha, Lecturer, State Institute of Education, Agartala and Shri Diplash Ritchil, Headmaster of Moriomnagar S. B. School for their useful guidance.

I would like to offer my thanks to Shri Swapan Azim of Kalaban, Shri Benar Gabil of Jhorjhoria, Shri Tarip Marak and Mahendra Sangma of Pritilata, Shri Kishore Marak and Shri Ganendra Marak of Nandan Nagar who helped me by providing information on various aspects of the Garo life.

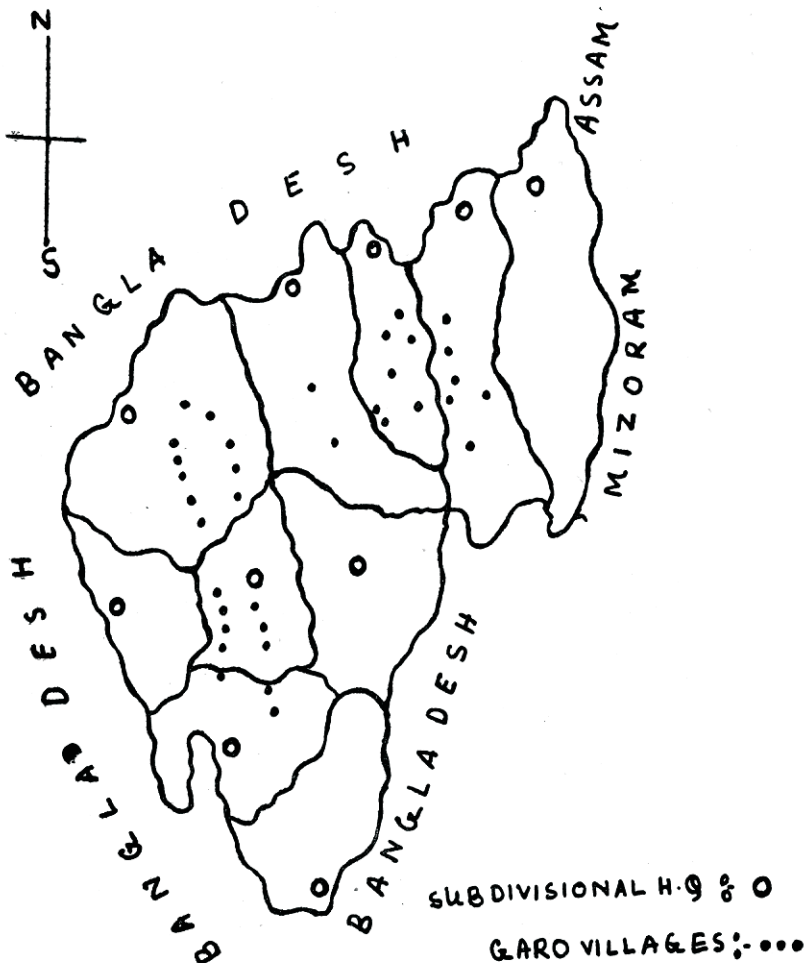
I am also thankful to Shri Tushar Chakraborty of Ramnagar, Agartala who gladly put up with the most tedious task of typing out the manuscript.

Last, but not least, I must offer my sincerest thanks to Sri P. B. Bhattacharjee, I. A. S. Director of Research for all the help, encouragement and friendly advice he and the band of dedicated workers of his organisation provided me in preparing this monograph.

I shall consider my labour amply rewarded if this book is found helpful to the researchers in this field.

Prodip Nath Bhattacharjee.

MAP OF TRIPURA (NOT TO SCALE)
PRINCIPAL GARO HABITATIONS



CHAPTER I

Introduction, Nomenclature, Origin and Dialect

The garos, one of the 19 Tribes of Tripura live largely in Udaipur, Sadar, Kamalpur and Kailashahar Sub-Division of the South Tripura, West Tripura and North Tripura District respectively. According to the Census Report of 1981 the Total population of the Garos in Tripura is 7297 which is 1.24% of the total scheduled tribe population of Tripura. In this census Report it is also found that South Tripura District has the largest Garo population, with 2997 and next to it comes North Tripura District with 2930 while West Tripura has only 1370.

According to the Census Report of 1911, 1931, 1961, 1971 and 1981 the total population of the Garo tribe was as follows :—

Persons during the Census Year :

Year	1911	1931	1961	1971	1981
Population	273	2143	5484	5559	7297

Nomenclature :

There are controversies regarding the origin of the term Garo. In this connection the view of playfair is worth mentioning here. In the book entitled 'The Garos' playfair states that "The origin of the name 'Garo' has been subject of some conjecture. In the southern portion of the hills there exists a division of the tribe who call themselves Garo or Ganching. These people are not far removed from the Mymensing District, from which direction the Garos were first approached by the Europeans and the Bengalees. It is therefore, not unlikely that this Division of the tribe first received their appellation of Garo, that the name was extended to all the inhabitants" of the hills, and that in time it became corrupted from 'Garo' to 'Garo'.

Another theory which has its foundation on the story of the migration from Thibet is that "one of the original leaders of the migration was named Garo, and that he gave his name to the tribe. In one of their old songs, I find their origin referred to as Garu—a*song, or the country of the Garu. From the fact that the Garos never use the name except in conversation with a foreigner, but call themselves A* chik (hill man), Mande' (the man), or A* chik mande, I prefer to think that the first is the correct derivation of the name, and that "Garo" is merely a corruption of the name of one of the sub-divisions of the tribe." 2.

Origin :

The Garos are a very ancient community of India as appears from the references made about them during the days of the Bedas and in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Milton S. Sangma in his book—The History and Culture of the Garos quotes S.K. Chatterjee who says that they were known as Kiratas (S. K. Chatterjee, Kirata-janakriti). Milton S. Sangma also says that in the Ramayana, they were called "Mandeha", (obviously after the term 'Mande' by which the Garos call themselves), and their habitant as "Manda Saila" in the Yogini Tantar. The Mahabharata referred to them as 'Garudas'. Thus the Garos could be said to have already settled down in their present abode when the great Epic were being composed. 3

The Garos belong to the Tibeto-Burman family of the Sino-Tibetan group. They have ethnical and linguistic affinity with the Kacharis, Rabhas, Kochs, Mikirs, Tipperas and many other tribes of North Eastern Region of India. About this affinity Playfair says "of all the different languages of the Bodo group, the one which resembles Garo more nearly than any other is Kachari and more especially the plains dialect" 4.

Regarding the origin of the Garos R.M. Nath stated that it is not unlikely that the Garos were originally the Gond tribe of Austries and then by an mixture with the Bodos they attained a separate identity—through in social matters they follow the Jaintia and the Khasi customs in a slightly modified forms. 5

About the origin and migration of the Garos there is a very popular legend prevalent among the Garos which gives a clear picture of their migration from Tibet to their next places of inhabitation. The legend as depicted by Playfair is worth mentioning here.

According to this legend, "the ancestors of the Garos inhabited a province of Thibet named Toura, Whence, without any appearent reason they started on a voyage of discovery under the leadership of two chiefs, Jappa-Jalinpa and Sukpa-Bongipa. The first place in the plains of Bengal of which they make mention is "Rangamati near Rangpur", possibly the place now known by that name in the Goalpara District, which once formed part of the Rangpur District. Thence, these people moved on to Dhubri, where regned the king Dhubani (Possibly a confusion on the part of the Garos with the name Dhubini or Neta Dhubini, the washer woman of the gods, who is said to have resided in Dhubri (see Padma Puran). This king received them in a friendly manner, but being afraid of them, he would not allow them to settle there permanently, so they moved on up the right bank of the Brahmaputra until they reached its affluent the Manas river. Here the emigrants met with their first misfortunes. The Chief of that part of the Country was both powerful and cruel. He was attracted by the beauty of Juge-Silche, the daughter of one Kangre-Jingre, and endeavoured to carry her off by force. To defeat his ends her fellow countrymen hid her in a cave at a place called Jugi-Ghopa, and a battle

ensued in which the progenitors of the Garo race were defeated. For a few years they seem to have been under subjection, and some of their headmen were poisoned by their taskmasters as a sacrifice to the latter's gods. Eventually, they succeeded in crossing the Brahmaputra on rafts of plantain stems and escaped from their oppressors. These, however, followed to effect a recapture. The Garos were eating their midday meal when their enemies came upon them, but though surprised, they fought with desperate courage, and with such success, that they were allowed to proceed on their journey without further molestation. A place called Garo-mari, or by the Garos Top lakhawa, in the Goalpara District is said to be where they made their stand.

Proceeding up the left-bank of the Brahmaputra, the wanderers at length came to the Kingdom of the Assamese raja Lilasing, from whom they suffered much persecution. A neighbouring chief, however, named Arambit, having fallen in love with a Garo maiden named Juge-Silche (possibly the same who attracted the attention of the Chief on the Manas). In a subsequent war with Lilasing he availed himself of the fighting qualities of her countrymen, and employed them as mercenaries, apparently to the discomfiture of Lilasing. Not long after, Lilasing and Arambit made peace, and the latter then turned his former warriors into slaves. With his permission, they took up their residence on Baghmela Pahar, a hill about 5 miles south-east of Boko in the Kamrup District. This hill was unfortunately also the abode of a number of demons, the Machamaru or tigermen, and for fear of their depredations, the Garos were obliged to be always under arms, and to work as the legend puts it, "with sword and shield in one hand and the implement of husbandry in the other". This fear again awoke their old roving instincts.

They started off, this time moving westwards, thus practically retracing their steps. It was in the course of this journey that the tribe broke up into the different branches. The names of the places they visited are very numerous, and it is impossible to trace them, but the most important seems to have been ola-olding-Tebrong-Changism, which the Garos now identify with the hill called Tukeswar, situated about three miles west of Krishnai, in the Goalpara District. In this neighbourhood the Garos appear to have been rich and prosperous, and according to general belief among them, a Garo Kingdom was established; of which the first reigning prince was Abrasen. He had his palace and capital at Sambol Abing, a detached hill not far from the village of Dakaitdol, in the present pargana of Habraghat, to which he is said to have given his name.

About this time dissension appears to have sprung up among the Garos, for certain persons are referred to in the story as being very wicked. Perhaps for this reason, some of these people set out on their travels again and entered the hills. One party, under the leadership of a chief named Abing-Noga moved from place to place until it settled at Nokrek, the highest range of the Tura range, where Abing-Noga resided until his death. Signs of habitation are still to be seen there, so perhaps this part of the tale may have some truth in it.⁶

It can be assumed from this that the Garos came to the Garo hills in several groups and settled in different parts of the hill at different times. This also to a great extent, accounts for the linguistic and cultural variation among their different classes which ultimately led to the evolution of the many classes among the Garos.

Physical features :

Regarding the physical features of the Garos W. W. Hunter states that the Garos are a robust, active, and, generally speaking, very strong and muscular race; capable of enduring a great amount of exertion and fatigue, and of about the middle height. They have prominent cheek-bones, a large proportion of nose as compared with the head, eyes usually hazel in colour, large ears, thick lips, little beard and of a dark brown swarthy colour.⁷

According to playfair, "as a people, the Garos, both men and women, are short, the former averaging 5 ft. 1½ ins. and the latter 4 ft. 10 ins. In build they are rather lean and wiry than stoutly made, and a fat man is quite a rarity."⁸

In the opinion of Dr. Tarun Chandra Sinha, the physical feature of the Garos indicate their Mongolian origin. They are of medium height with small eyes, high cheek bones, scanty moustaches and beards and are dark brown in complexion.

An account of the migration and settlement of the Garos in Tripura :

The Garos are generally divided between two groups, geography being the basis: (1) Achik and (2) dabeng. The Achiks are Garos that dwell high up in the hills, and dabeng is the name given to the Garos who live in the relatively plain areas—Meghalaya and Mymensing respectively being the areas of settlement of the groups in question.

Regional disparities divide the Garos into three further categories: (1) Migam (2) Attong and (3) Sagichang. The Migams and Attongs with a dialect no other Garo clan can decipher, are concentrated around the Sumamgnj Sub-Division of the Sylhet District of Bangladesh. The Sagichang Garos have four Sub-Divisions amongst them: (i) Brak (ii) Dual (iii) Sommon and (iv) Kotchu. Inter divisional marriage is not looked up on with favour. Their language, however, is understood to all other classes.

The Garos of Tripura belong to the dabeng Division and have migrated to India from the Mymensing and Sylhet Districts of Bangladesh. The prime reasons for their migration are seen to be as follows:

(1) Scarcity of sufficient land for jhuming in Mymensing and Sylhet District.

(2) Communal disturbance in Pakistan immediately after the partition of India.

(3) The lure of Tripura's vast of uncultivated land.

(4) The affinity to hillocks with adjacent plain land that Tripura has in plenty.

(5) Their long standing socio-cultural relation with the Bengalees was also another factor that induced them to settle in Tripura.

The Indranagar and Nandannagar areas in the neighbourhood of Agartala were the places to become first Garo settlement in the State. About 200 Garo families came to live there. Simen Sangma of Bhawal of Mymensing in Bangladesh is known to be the first Garo to have migrated to Indranagar. There is a rather interesting story related to his migration. It is said Simon made an unsuccessful bid to shoot a tiger, injuring it but mildly. The Garos have a belief that an injured tiger averages itself without fail, and taking this into consideration the residents of Bhawal persuaded Sangma to run away to Tripura. Strange are the ways of fate, for Sangma was killed by a tiger after he had shifted to Potichori of the Udaipur Sub-Division.

It was only later that they began moving to the various places of the Sadar Sub-Division, namely Monainagar, Nagichara, Dhupchara and Noabadi mainly in search of agricultural lands.

Wild elephant menace forced the Garos of Monainagar to shift to Chonkhola, Jhorjhoria, Bagachatra, Kanchanmala, Sephaijola, Mohishkhola, and Pritilata of the Sadar Sub-Division. Some times later they established matrimonial relationship with the Bengalees and the Nepalees of these areas.

Many Garo families of Monainagar also shifted to Hulakhet which is the first settlement of the Garos in the Udaipur Sub-Division. Later on many families of Hulakhet settled at Hatipocha, Buridepa, Peratia, Bosonkhola, Garji, Kalaban, Potichori, Rajapur and Banikila.

In 1955-56 about 20 Garo families of Udaipur shifted to Nutan Bazar of the Amarpur Sub-Division. However, at present there are only 6 Garo families in Nutan Bazar area.

The Garos of Kamalpur Sub-Division went there from Kalapani area of the Sadar Sub-Division. In Kamalpur Sub-Division they first settled at Basudeb of Kulai and then to the neighbouring areas of Bagmara, Kochuchara, Ambassa etc.

In 1942 the christian Missionaries were sanctioned at Kathalchara of Kailashahar Sub-Division some land by the King of Tripura for the settlement of Darlongs. In 1952 a good number of Garo families of Jhor Jhoria of the Sadar Sub-Division shifted to Kathalcharra. Now they live in the villages of Kathalcherra No. 1 and No. 2, Nepal Tila, Kochuchera, Morshumpathar, Karaticherra, etc.

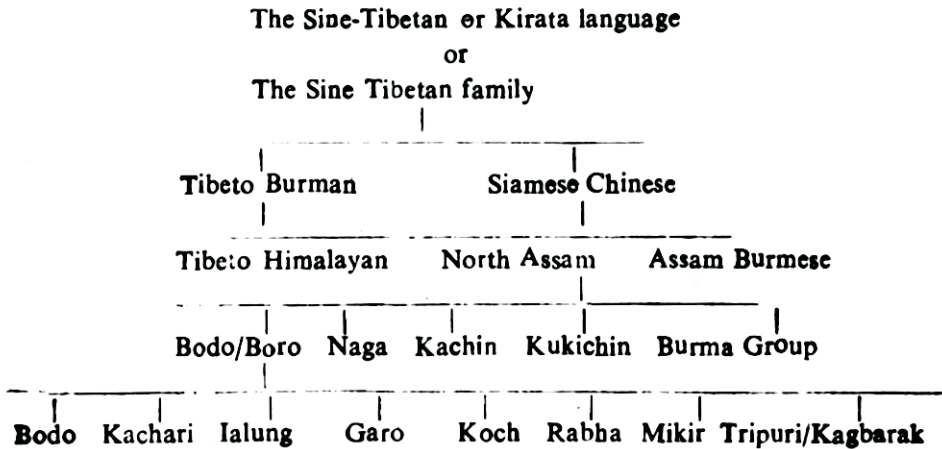
Later, 30 to 35 families shifted from Kathalcherra to Dhumcherra, Betcherra and Kanchancherra.

There are 3 Garo families at Santinagar of Belonia Sub-Division now.

The Garos of Santinagar of the Khowai Sub-Division had migrated from Harincherra tea estate of adjacent Sylhet District of Bangladesh in 1959.

LANGUAGE

The Garo language belongs to the Bedo language group. The language belonging to this group originated from the Sine-Tibetan language in which the second longest number of the people of the world speak. The process how the Garo language has come into being with its root in the Sine-Tibetan language group may be shown in the following chart :



The following list of a few Garo words with their Tibetan and Kacharie equivalents show the close connection of the vocabulary of the three languages :

English :	Garo :	Tibetan :	Kachari :	Tripuri :
Six	dok	Truk	Da°, ra°	Dok
Nine	Sku	gu	skho, sikho	Chuku
Five	Bonga	Nga	Ba	Ba
Two	Gni	Nyi	Ne, gne	Nui
Ten	Chi, Chikin	Chu	Zi	Chi
Sixteen	Chidok	Chu-Trik	—	Chidok
I	Anga	Nga	Ang	Ang
Water	Chi	Chhu	dui, di	Twy
Father	Pa°a	Apha	Fa	Fa
Mother	Ma°a, Ama	A-ma	Ma	Ama
Fish	Na, Natok	Nya	Na, gna	Aa
Nose	Ginting	Na-khu	ganthang	Bukung
Mouth	Ku, Kud sik	Kha	Khuga	Bukhuk
Eye	Mikron	Mik	Megan	Mokol
Wine	Chu	Chhang	Zau	

Note [The Tibetan (Spelled Thibetan in Play fair's book) and Kachari words are taken from 'the Garos' by playfair]

Some structural pattern of the language of the Garos of Tripura are given below :

(1) The usual order of words is subject + object + verb e. g.

a) Anga mi changa = I eat rice
Sub + Obj + verb.

b) Bia ball khallounga = He plays football.
Sub + Obj + Verb.

(2) Adjective usually takes position before the noun e. g.

a) Ram saksa naama bisa = Ram is a good boy.
Adj + Noun

b) Bisa de nitua = Beautiful child.
Noun + Adjective

(3) In interrogative sentences the suffix 'ma' is added to the verb. The word 'bo' indicating order is also added to the verb in the imperative mood.

a) Bia mi Changama ? = Does he eat rice ?

b) Anga mi changama ? = Do I eat rice ?

c) Naa dao reang bo = You go now (order)

(4) Generally the word 'da' and 'be' are used to denote imperative negative to express don't e. g.

a) Da chanchia = Don't think.

b) Mikka wachi chakna be = Don't go in raun.

c) Naa mi chana be = You should not take rice.

(5) The suffix 'jonga' is added to the verb to indicate simple negative sentence. e. g.

a) Anga mi chajonga = I do not eat rice.

b) Bia Skulshi reangjonga = He does not go to School.

(Here the word cha (to eat) and reang (to go) are the verbs and 'jonga' is the suffix to denote negation.)

(6) Generally the gender is determined according to the nature of the concerning noun. There are different ways of forming the male and the female genders e. g.

a) By using entirely different words : e.g.

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| i) Say (Husband) | — Jik (wife) |
| ii) Panthe (Youth) | — Nomul/Mitra |
| iii) Measa (Man) | — Michiksa (Woman) |

b) By adding a particle or suffix like bipa and bima. e. g.

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| i) Achak = Dog | Achak <u>bipa</u> = Male dog |
| | Achak <u>bima</u> = Female dog |
| ii) Domok = goat | Domok <u>bipa</u> = Male goat |
| | Domok <u>bima</u> = Female goat |
| iii) Dee = Fowl | <u>Dobipa</u> = Male fowl |
| | <u>Dobima</u> = Female fowl. |

c) In case of common gender suffix like pisha is added e. g.

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| i) Dee = Fowl | Deepisha = chicken |
| ii) Achak = Dog | Achakpisha = puppy |
| iii) Domok = goat | Domok pisha = young goat |

(7) Pronouns :

The followings are some personal pronouns :

Anga = I	Chinga = We
Angni = My	Anchingni = Our
Angka = Me	Chingka = Us
Naa = You	Naasong
	Naasimangsong = You (Plural)
Nangke = Your	Naasongni = Your
Nangke = You	Nasongke = To you
Ua/Bia = He	Uarang/
	Uamang = They
Bini/Uni = His	Uasongni/
	Uamangni/
	Bisongni = Their
Uke/Bina/Una = Him	Uasongna/
	Uamangke/
	Umamangna/
	Uarangke = Them

Demonstrative pronouns :

This = Ia	This way = Hindiki
It = Ia/Ua/Uke	That way = Uadake/Indake
That = Ua	Here = Hine/Ianum

Interrogative Pronouns :

Sawa/Sa = Who

Sani/Sawani = Whose

Maia/Mua/Mai = What

Bachchasa/

Bachi/Bao/Badio/

Baoni = Where

Badia/Bake = Which

Basake/

Baseake = When

Sana/Sake

Maina/Maini = Why

Sarangna (Phnal)/

Sarangke (Phnal) = Whom

It's = Uni.

(8) Numerals:

Sa	—One
Gni	—Two
Gittam	—Three
Bri	—Four
Bonga	—Five
Dok	—Six
Sni	—Seven
Chet	—Eight
Sku	—Nine
Chikin	—Ten
Chisa	—Eleven
Chigni	—Twelve
Khol	—Twenty
Kholtachi	—Thirty
Sotbri	—Forty
Sotbenga	—Fifty
Sotdek	—Sixty
Sotsni	—Seventy
Sotchet	—Eighty
Sotsku	—Ninty
Ritchasa	—Hundred
Hajalsa	—Thousand

(9) In expressing the number of an object they use different words meaning length, size, shape etc. before them according to the object they qualify. There are fixed rules about the words to be used with a particular object while counting it. e. g.

a) Sak gni mande	—Two men.
b) Mang bri matchu, masu	—Four cows.
c) Mang gitom matcha	—Three tigers.
d) Pang bri pang/bol	—Four trees.
e) Ronggni bitchi/deochi	—Two eggs.
f) Kingsa bijak	—One leaf.
g) Khansa wa	—One bamboo.
h) Rongbri tangka	—Four rupees.

Here the words sak, mang, pang, rong, king, khan, etc. are used while counting them.

10. The different tense forms of the verb *chaa* (to eat), *ona* (to give) and *daka* (to do) as used among the Garos of Tripura have been given below :

Present tense		Chaa (To eat)
Singular		Plural
1st person	Anga Changa I eat	Phnal Chinga Chinga We eat
2nd person	Naa changa You eat	Naa song changa You eat
3rd person	Bia changa He eats	Uasong Changa They eat.
Daka (to do)		
1st person	Anga daka I do	Chinga daka We do
2nd person	Naa daka You do	Naa song daka You do
3rd person	Bia daka He does	Uasong daka They do
Ona (to give)		
1st person	Anga ona I give	Chinga ona We give
2nd person	Naa ona You give	Naa song ona You give
3rd person	Bia ona He gives	Uasong ona They give

(present tense is formed by adding a as suffix to the verb)

Past Tense cha (eat)

1st person Anga chajok
I ate
2nd person Naa chajok
You ate
3rd person Bia chajok
He ate

Chinga chajok
We ate.
Naasong chajok
You ate
Bisong chajok
They ate

dak (do)

1st person Anga dakjok
I did
2nd person Naa dakjok
You did
3rd person Bia dakjok
He did

Chinga dakjok
we did
Naa song dakjok
You did
Bisong/ussong dakjok
They did.

Ona (To give)

1st person Anga onajok
I gave
2nd person Naa onajok
You gave
3rd person Bia onajok
He gave

Chinga onajok
We gave
Naasong onajok
You gave
Bisong/Uasong onajok
They gave

(Past tense is formed by using 'Jok' as suffix to the verb)

Future Tense

1st person Anga chaanua
I shall eat
2nd person Naa Chanua
You will eat
3rd person Bia Chanua
He will eat

Chinga chanua
We shall eat
Naa song chanua
You will eat
Bisong/Chanua Uasong
They will eat.

Daka (To do)

1st person Anga dakanua
I shall do
2nd person Naa dakanua
You will do
3rd person Bia dakanua
He will do

Chinga dakanua
We will do
Na asong dakanua
You will do
Biasong/dakanua Uasong
They will do.

Ona (To give)

1st person	Anga on nua I shall give	Chinga on nua You will give
2nd person	Naa on nua You will give	Na asong on nua You will eat
3rd person	Bia on nua He will give	Bisong/uason on nua They will give.

(Future tense is formed by adding nua as suffix to the verb).

11) Comparison is denoted by the addition of certain words such as bate, bata and in case of superlative degree the word chongmota is added as suffix to the adjective e. g.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a) Ram is a good boy(Positive) | = Ram saksa nam a bisa |
| b) Shyam is better than Ram | = Ramna bate shyam nam a. |
| c) Ram is the best boy | = Ram namchongmota bisa. |

A Select Vocabulary of the Garos of Tripura.

Words relating to different parts human body ;—

Cheek	—	Phitop
Ear	—	Nachil
Eye	—	Mikron
Eyelid	—	Mikgil
Face	—	Mikhang
Female	—	Meohik/Bima
Forehead	—	Mikhing/Cheek
Humanbeing	—	Mande
Hair	—	Kini/Kimil (Body hair)
Head	—	Ske/Skotong (Head of the family or village)
Male	—	Meoafa/Meoasa
Mouth	—	Kusik
Nose	—	Ging
Neck	—	Gidokreng/Gitok
Teeth	—	Wa/Wagan
Tongue	—	Sre/Serebak
Penis	—	Rigong

Vagina	—	Si
Beard	—	Kusumang

Insects (Jong)

Ant	—	Sirampu
Butterfly	—	Phakmari
Grasshopper	—	Aguk/Adusrang
Mosquito	—	Gangua.
Spider	—	Guang
Leech	—	Elu/Ruat.
Snake	—	Chipu
Fish	—	Natok.
Python	—	Chipujada
Crab	—	Hanki
Snail (Big)	—	Aofu
Snail (Small)	—	Chetoehro
Frog	—	Bengo blok/Bengo bong.
Squirrel	—	Mat
Mongoose	—	Biji/Bijari
Tortoise	—	Chijong
Crocodile	—	Aringa
Rat	—	Misi
Louse	—	Thik
Crieket	—	Jongdol/Asilik

Fowls

Dogor	—	gagak/Dogop
Pigeon	—	Dogugu
Parrot	—	Do. sik
Crow	—	Doka
Kite	—	Doreng
Vulture	—	Sekin/Sogin.
Dove	—	Dukru
Fowl	—	Doo

Words relating to the Animal World

Animal	—Matbrung
Pig	—Wak
Dog	—Achak
Cow	—Matchu/Masu
Horse	—Gora/Gure
Cat	—Menggong
Tiger	—Mateha
Bear	—Makbil
Elephant	—Ati
Deer	—Maraka
Jackel	—Bel
Monkey	—Hamak

Words relating to plants :

Jungle	—Brung
Tree	—Bipang
Jhum	—Aoba/Apal

Cultivated plants :

Paddy	—Mi/Migil
Arum	—Chigi
Brinjal	—Baring
Green Chilli	—Jollik
Chilli	—Jalluk gisi
Ginger	—Eching
Mango	—Tegachu
Banana	—Tirik
Sweet Gourd	—Gominoda
Chalkumra	—Akkharo
Jackfruit	—Tibrong
Mustard	—Sulsu
Lemon	—Lemu
Betelnut	—Gua/Gue
Orange	—Narang
Bamboo	—Waa

Different Parts of Plants :

Branch	—Balni Cheksi
Leaf	—Bijak
Bark of the tree	—Bolbigil

Flower	—Bibal
Fruit	—Beti
Root	—Jaodil
Creeper	—Bidu
Stem	—Gatong
Seed	—Bigron
Bitichri (Seeds of crops such as paddy, mustard etc.)	

The House (Nok

Dwelling House	—Nok
Dormitory	—Nokpante
Granary	—Jamnok/Jam
Roof	—Nokking
Posts	—Krong
Wall	—Bera/Pakma/Bare
Door	—Dooga/Doogachol
Thatch	—Hampang
Room	—Nok khondok/ Kuturi
Hearth	—Ghoka
Kitchen	—Songoani nok/ Songchakani nok
Verandah	—Ballim/Ballim/ Nokgil
Latrine	—Kidiknok/Kiocha- kaninok
Split bamboo	—Waosi
Platform of the house	—Ganosang
Inside of the house	—Nokning
Outside of the house	—Agadi
Pigsty	—Waknol
Floor	—Nokni Gadang

Household Articles :

Furniture	—Nokninanga- bosturang
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Bed	—Churan/Palong
Cot	—Tuchakanikat
Gun	—Chandal
Loom	—Baradokkanikel
Spear	—Jata/Sel/u/SI/uchi
Axe	—Rua
Plough	—Nangol/Nanggri/- Rangol.

Utensils (Boste) :

Quilt	—Lep
Cooking pot	—Midik
Pan	—Sam/dik
Basket	—Thura/kok/Nera
Loin cloth	—Gendo/Lenkota
Ladle	—Migon
Dish	—Rangtal/Cha ^o anirangko ra ^o chakani

Counting of Time :

Day	—Sal
Month	—Ja
Year	—Bilsi
Winter	—Sin ^o kari
Summer	—Ding ^o kari
Rainy Season	—Wachi
To-day	—lasal/Da ^o asal
Yesterday	—Mejasal/Meja mangmang
Tomorrow	—Ambono/Knal
Morning	—Walni
Dawn	—Pring/Sengba ^o chiba
Noon	—Saljatchi
Afternoon	—Anthamo/Saljatchipaksa/Atamchibara
Night	—Walo/Wal
Light	—Sing ^o a/Ching ^o a
Dark	—Andala

Nature :

Earth	—A ^o gimik
World	—A ^o gilsaka.

Soil	--A ^o a
Air	--Balwa
Cloud	—Gadala/Aram/Mika
Water	—Chi
Spring	—Chimik
Thunder	—Goira/Mikka Kima
Hill	—A ^o bri/Arong
Dew	—Guri/Ripangchi/Su ^o suri
Moon	—Jajong
Sun	—Sal
Star	--Ase ^o ki
Sunshine	—Salseng ^o a/Saltenga
Moonlight	—Jaleng ^o a
Sky	Silga/Salgi
Stone	--Rong ^o te/Re ^o ong
River	—Gang/Chibima
Stream	—Chahara/Chiring
Rain	—Mikka
Fire	—Wa ^o al

Disease :

Disease	--Jommasaa/Rok
Patient	—Jomgipa/Sagipa
Medicineman	--Jommake-Tharigipa/Sam jakkalgipa
Cough	—Gusu
Headache	--Skosa ^o
Toothache	—Wasa/Wagamsa
Fever	—Jomma/Jommasa
Pox	--Wakala/Chisata
Ringworm	—Dad/Akat
Diarrhoea	—Bokmakhata/okre ^o ani/Kicbraka
Dysentry	—Okgitchaksa

Some Astract words :

Good	—Name/Namgipa
Bad	—Namja/Namgijagipa
Happiness	—Kusiong ^a ani
Mind	—Gisik
To think	—Chanchia
Anger	—Bikkasua/Ka ^a onanga
Love	—Namnika/Ka ^a asa
Faith	—Bebe/Torombebera ^a ni
Help	—Dakehaka
Gentle	—Sontolgipa/Rinokgipa
Sweet	—Chi ^a a

Taste :

Bitter	—Ka ^a a
Sour	—Misenga
Hot	—Ding ^a a
Salty	—Kabraka

Colour :

Red	—Gitchak
Black	—Gisim
White	—Gibok
Dirty	—Moila/Jabal
Clean	—Chironga/Rongtala
Yellow	—Rimita/Rimitgipa
Brown	—Giohakmrang
Green	—Tangsek (Colour)/ gitang(Row)

Direction :

East	—Salaram
West	—Saliram
North	—Salgro
South	—Salgipang

Words indicating Relations etc. :

Guest	—Chatchi/Sokgipa
Family	—Nokgimikni manderang
Friend	—Baju/Ripeng/Rorimgipa
Relative	—Chatchi

Some important Prnouns :

I	—Ang ^a a
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We	—Ching ^{0a}
You	—Na ^{0a} / Na ⁰ simang (honorific)
He/She	—Bia
They	—Wa song
Me	—Angna/Angke
Us	—Chinga/Chingko
Your	—Nangni/Nasimangni
Him/her	—Bini, U ko/Una
Them	—Isongna/Uamangko/ Uamangna
This	—Ia
That	—Ua
Here	—Iano/Ia/Biapo
There	—Uano/Uchi
Where	—Batcha
When	—Basako
Now	...Da ^{0o}
From here	—Ianoni
Which	—Bake
Those	—Uarang (Article)/ Ua song (Himan being/Uamang

Some important verbs :

Keep	—Dona/Rakkia
Get	—Man na
Drink	—Ringa
Sit	—Asonga
Do	—Daka/Ka ^{0a}
Build	—Tharia/Bika/Turia
Wear	—Gana/China
Go	—Re ^{0a} anga/Re ^{0a}
Sow	—Gua/Bitchrisata/Gia
Come	—Re ⁰ baa
Give	—Onna
Bring	—Ra ⁰ baa
Cry	—Grapa
Lough	—Ka ⁰ dinga
Talk	—Agana
Kill	—So ⁰ ota/Gima ⁰ ta/Nisiata

Look	—Nia/Niani
Take	—Ra ^o a
Dig	—Khita/Cho ^o a
Speak	—Agana/Janapa
Sweep	—Ita/Itroka
Bath	—Abua/Aua
Cook	—Songa
To walk	Re ^o a/Roa
To run	- Kata
Sleep	—Tua/Tusia (Deep sleep)
Stand	—Chadenga
Weave	—Baradokka
Fall	—Ga ^o aka
Beat	—Doka
Stand	—Chadinga
Crawl	—Malama
Weep	—Grapa
Bite	—Chika
To burn	—Kama/Wa ^o al kama (Burning)
Bite (of a snake)	—Chopusua
To sell	—Fala/Palecha ^o a
Carry	—Chila/Rabita (To carry along) ola (to carry on head load on a basket/ Ripa, Itchila (to bear on the shoulders).

Adjectives :

Sharp	—Mata/Matgipa
Ripe	—Mina/Mingimin
Boiled	—Rita/Mindita (half boiled)
Weak	—Nomma/Bilgri
Need	—Nanga
Faithful	—Bebegipa

Hilly	—Aronga/A ^o briranggipa
Little	—Chona (size)/on ^o titi (Quantity)/on ^o tisa
Broken	—Bia/Bipri/Biginchi
Torn	—Gitchita/Gitchitgimin/
Fair	.. Nitoe/Dak ^o nanga
New	—Gital/Daldal
Old	—Gitcham (Article)/ Skangni (past)/Budipa (Oldman)/Budima (oldwomen)
True	—Bebe/Kakket
Useful	—Chalia/Chaligipa
Lazy	—Alsia/Aratgipa
Wise	—Singipa/Uigipa/Sengae
Beautiful	—Nitoe/Nitogipa
Dancing	Ansenga/Messa
<u>Words relating to Court and Administration :</u>	
Judgement	—Grodoka/Bichalni rae
Judge	—Kamal/Bichalka ^o gipa
Law	—Niam Dakbewal/ Grokupa
Theft	—Cha ^o u ^o a
Punishment	—Sasti
Fine	—Gama/Gamgipa
Order	—Agana/Ge ^o eta/Dakata Biata
Jail	—Patoknok
Argument	—Jegrika/Ag ^o angrika
Enquire	—Sandia/Sing ^o a
<u>Words relating to Ward and chase :</u>	
Gun	—Chandal/Slai
Victory	—Manna/Amma
Bow	—Batil/Chri/Gonggonga (Bow down)/Bama
Arrow	Tir/Bra
Spear	—Jata/Sel ^o u
Ammunition	—Gulibarud
Attack	—Dakgrika/Dingrika
War	—Dakgrika

Defeat	—Amatja/Manohakja
Enemy	—Bobil
Meeting	—Ton ^o a/Chimonga

Some other important words :

Road	—Rama/Sarak
Boat	—Ring
Play	—Kal ^o a
At first	—Skang
Start	—Aba Chenga
Believe	—Bebera ^o a/Ka ^o donga
Under a tree	—Bolsalikun/Bolgrim/ Belgrimni Sam ^o ba
And	—Are
Quickly	—Tengri/Gong ^o rake/ Bakbak
Slowly	→Ka ^o sine/Nom ^o e
Nicely	—Name/Nitae
Secretly	—Gripgrip/Sruk sruk/ Dongnue
Openly	—Parake

Note :— In giving the pronunciation of Garo words and their spelling I have followed the versions produced and used by the native Garo speakers of this state whom I consulted or investigated for the purpose. Since there is no standardised spoken or written form of the language in this state, They may, in many cases, vary from the forms and varieties used by the Garos of Meghalaya or other places.

CHAPTER—I

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CHAPTER—II

SOCIAL LIFE

MATRIARCHY

The Garo is a matriarchal tribe. Several reasons might have given rise to this system.

In the early days menfolk of the village could not give attention to the way of their living because they always remained busy with warfare in order to defend themselves and their villages from the enemy attacks.

Earlier concept of sex relation and progenition were different from the present day ones. Pre-marital sex relation was not a serious offence. Due to free mixing illegitimate children were quite common. Since illegitimate children as a rule were brought up by the mother they also bore her name. The maternal uncle could exert a great deal of control over these nephews and nieces.

In the Garo society the property is inherited by the daughter. In case of more than one daughters, the mother names her successor (**Nokma**) who usually is the youngest daughter. She gets most of the property. Other daughters are given some share of the property at the time of their marriage according to the wish of their mother. The relationship between the brother and sister in the Garo society is very sweet. There is a popular saying current among the Garos: 'mana nona ok, jikna dena kok' which signifies that when a man goes to his mother's or sister's house, he takes with him his empty stomach to be filled in, and when he goes to his wife and children he carries a basket full of provisions to feed them.

The authority of the maternal uncle is an accepted thing in the Garo society. The Garo youth leaves home for a long spell in the **nokpanti** (Bachelors' dormitory). The sisters stay behind with their parents. After the marriage, the brother leaves for his inlaw's house where he settles down. The sister too may get married in the meanwhile and her husband comes to stay at her house. In this way, both the boys who goes to stay at their inlaw's house as a result of marriage has not much of a say in their wife's house.

NOKPANTI

'Nok' means the home and 'Panti' the young bachelor in Garo. **Nokpanti** therefore means the bachelor's home or dormitory. The **nokpanti** is exclusively for the boys. Every large village has a **nokpanti**. The Garo boys go to the **nokpanti** at the tender age of seven or eight. They stay there till they are married. After marriage either they go to their inlaw's house or set up their own house elsewhere. The young men

in the **nokpanti** are not permitted to visit their mother's house except for taking meals or taking part in certain celebrations. The able bodied youths help their parents in their manial work. At night they beat the **Kranu** (kind of drum) and sing songs. The **nokpanti** also serves as guest house and the law court of the village.

MACHONG

The Garo term **machong** means an exogamous sub-clan of any of the three major clans known as **chatchi**. It is believed that the members of the same **machong** are descendants of the same ancient mother. One of the most important functions of the **machong** is to regulate marriage relationships. Marriage within the same **machong** is strictly prohibited and such marriages are condemned as **madong** which means to marry one's own mother. In all social affairs the **chras** (youths of the **machong**) play very prominent roles. The bond of unity among the members of the **machong** is very close. In case of any conflict between two persons belonging to two different **machongs** the say of the **chras** of both of the **machongs** is more important than the statements of the accused and the complainant.

Play fair in his book 'The Garos listed some 158 **machongs** among the Garos. In Tripura, there are about 54 **machongs** living in various places of Sadar and Khowai Sub-Division, Udaipur, Belonia and Amarapur Sub-Division and Kailashahar and Kamalpur Sub-Division of West, South and North Tripura Districts respectively.

Names of some of the **machongs** of the Garos of Tripura have been given below :

1. Richil	11. Chiran	21. Rema	31. Sku	41. Rongmudu
2. Dufu	12. Pantra	22. Sampal	32. Ghura	42. Ati
3. Mrong	13. Chisim	23. Ruga	33. Daru	43. Ghagra
4. Chicham	14. Chigichak	24. Jedra	34. Toju	44. Dalbot
5. Chisik	15. Chambugong	25. Jencham	35. Hamphang	45. Nokrek
6. Dibra	16. Areng	26. Simsaang	36. Rongdi	46. Azim
7. Dadok	17. Rangsa	27. Bagna	37. Mankhwin	47. Deo
8. Dango	18. Hagidok	28. Thigidi	38. Jalluk	
9. Khoksi	19. Dajel	29. Hadima	39. Hawe	
10. Gabul	20. Mansang	30. Maji	40. Hajong	

In an analysis of the meanings of the various names of the above mentioned **machongs**, it seems that they were mostly derived from birds, plants, rock, hill, river, etc. with which the Garos were very close in their sylvan life.

Some examples are given below :—

1. The meaning of the word **Jalluk** of the **Jalluk machong** is Chilly.
2. The meaning of the term **dufu** of the **dufu machong** is owl.
3. The meaning of the word **hamphang** of the **hamphang machong** is thetch.

4. The meaning of the word **ati** of the **ati machong** is elephant.
5. The meaning of the word **rong** of the **rongdik machong** is rock.
6. The meaning of the word **khoksi** of the **khoksi machong** is the basket for keeping fish.
7. The meaning of the word **nokrek** of the **nokrek machong** is hill.

MAHARI

The functions of a **machong** is performed by the groups of people belonging to it and these groups are called **mahari's**. It is believed that in the past all the **machongs** had one **mahari** each. But in course of time due to the increase of population and growth of new villages many new **maharies** emerged. A **mahari** thus is a village level organisation of a **machong**. All the members of a **mahari** originated from the same mother. They are very closely related with each other. It is the duty of the **chras** (youths) of the **maharis** to look after the problems of all the members of the **mahari** collectively. If any of the member has to pay fine for any offence committed by him all the members bear it collectively. So a Garo owes more allegiance to his **mahari** than to his village. Regarding the difference of functions of a **machong** and a **mahari**.

A **mahari** thus functioned as a commune, while a **machong** was the union of the several **maharis**. For all political purposes, however, every **machong** was an independent unit under a **Nokma**.²

CHATCHI

The word **chatchi** means a clan while the word **machong** stands for a sub-clan. There are three major **chatchis** or clans of the Garos in Tripura Sangma, Marak, and Momin. They are divided into more than one hundred **machongs**. In Tripura some of the Garos use the name of their **machong** and some use the name of their **chatchis** with their names. Marriage within the same **chatchi** (clan) is less strict than marriage within the same **machong** (Sub-clan).

MARRIAGE

In the Garo Society marriage is considered a permanent bond between the members of two **machongs** (exogamous group). Marriage is not desirable between the members of the same **chatchi** and is never allowed between the members of the same **machong**. Marriage within the same **machong** is considered as **madong** (to marry one's one mother). Both

the bride and the groom represent their own **machong** till death. But their descendants become the member of their mother's **machong** and use their mother's title. The wife remains the heiress of the family property and in case of her death her younger sister is married to her husband. If it is not possible it is the duty of the deceased wife's **machong** to provide a wife belong to her same **machong** for her husband. Similarly in the case of death of the husband the widow is married to her husband's younger brother or any member of his **machong**. As the husband remains a member his own **machong** till his death if he commits any wrong and is liable to pay fines for it, his sister's family (the original **machong**) has to pay the fine. His wife's **machong** is not liable to pay the fine. In the case of his wife's death, he handing over the property to the **nokma** (daughter) and leaves for his sister's house (his original house). In the Garo society the maternal uncle has sufficient hold over his nephews and nieces.

There are various customs regarding marriage among the Garos. Generally two forms of marriages are prevalent among them. In one, the groom resides in the wife's family after marriage and becomes a member of that family. In the other, the groom does not reside in wife's house but sets a new house.

The marriage between one's own daughter with the son of his sister is considered the best one. Generally, marriage is held after prolonged negotiation between the two parties. When the groom's party goes with the proposal for marriage it is called **namchik singa** or **chawrai singa** and when the bride's party comes with the proposal it is called **chauari singia**. The formal asking of groom's consent for the marriage is called 'Swnga'. Either the bride or the bridegroom's family puts forward the proposal and if it is accepted the marriage takes place. It should be mentioned here that only when the girl gives the go ahead signal the parents take the talks in earnest.

On the otherhand, if the boy is not willing and the girl insists on the alliance, then the boy is dragged willy-nilly to the altar, physical violence being no bar. Often the groom is trussed up like a chicken and the youths of her **machong** (sub-clan) known as **Chra** keep vigil until the ceremony is well over. If he makes good his escape, the members of the bride's house-hold track him down and drag him back. But if he continues to give them the slip, then village elders get together and decides upon divorce proceedings.

Another custom is the secret understanding between the boy and the girl. The boy creeps into the house long after the rest of the members of the household have gone to bed and spends the night with the girl. If he happens to get caught in the morning, then marriage is thrust upon the couple. But should he get away, and the clandestine affair comes to light, then he is liable to severe punishment with marriage thrown in or a fine.

Yet another custom is marriage by elopement. The boy and girl run away together and begin living as husband and wife outside the village precincts. When friend and family members succeed in locating the errant

couple marriage ceremony takes place officially. This type of marriage is called 'Chunapa' marriage.

Generally the bachelor boys marry unmarried girls. If a bachelor marries a widow (randi) having daughter of her earlier husband then this daughter will also be an additional wife (chapa).

If the wife of a person is sick or barren a second wife is taken from among the younger sisters of the wife. The first wife is called Jikpangma and the second wife is known as Jigidi.

Some times a childless parents take a girl of their close relative or of the same machong as adopted daughter known as 'mekaa songa'. After her marriage she becomes the heiress of the property.

The marriage ceremony of the Garos is a simple, unpretentious affair. The bride and the groom sit side by side, on the floor, at the bride's house. The priest or the Kamal chants sacred hymns and dodokka or sacrifice of fowl takes place. A cock and a hen are battered mercilessly on the head with a wooden club and then left to die on the earthen floor. Then the heads are torn and the blood of both the cock and the hen are mixed together. The Kamal then beats the bride with the cock and the groom with the hen. The success of a marriage can be foretold by the Kamal and the elders present by reading certain auguries.

If, before dying, the cock and the hen approach each other then it is taken as a sure sign of a happy married life. But should they be away from each other and what is more, if they happened to face the opposite direction, then the marriage would crack up sooner or later.

The next step is the slitting of the abdomen of the cock and the hen and the testing of the intestine by the Kamal. If the two entrails happened to be of the same length then it was taken to be a good augur. But if the two ends were unequal, then it was considered to be a bad women.

On the otherhand should the ~~stomach~~ ^{stomach} of the pair be stuffed with fowl, then it was a happy sign.

If reasonably well-off, the bride's party take it upon themselves to feed the village people. The bride and the groom partake of food from the same dish. The function can take place at any given time.

BIRTH

During the latter stages of pregnancy, the expectant mother stays at home for most of the time. She is not called upon to perform any of the heavy menial chores normally required of her. A female Kamal or midwife is summoned during confinement. A male is barred entrance to this room for two to three days. Only married women are permitted to stay during delivery. Of course at times unmarried girls are asked to attend to the would be mother. Apart from severing the naval chord, the mid-wife also officiates at certain rituals.

The prime function is one in which the worship of **darichik** is performed. It is of the utmost importance to propitiate this particular deity, for according to Garos, it is he who presides over the birth of the child. A little offering will go a long way in placating the malevolent deity.

The offering is very simple one. The female **Kamal** places eggs or fowl along with some wine in front of the house. At some villages, deities namely **darichik** and **saljong** are worshipped at the time of birth of a baby. It is the **Kamal** names the baby through a ceremony.

DEATH

In the Garo society, more importance is attached to death than birth or marriage.

When one dies his close relatives have to be given the sad news without the least delay. It is only when the near relations of the deceased gather the bereaved family that the funeral takes place. The dead body is washed with water in which silver coins are dipped. Generally, the village headman keeps such coins ready with him.

A bamboo structure known as **sansuri** is built before the body is taken for cremating around the central post of house. Wine is also kept near this **sansuri** and before each meal, some food is also offered. The **sansuri** is kept for a year until the **delangsua** ceremony in which the burning of the **mimang's** hut is performed. **Mimang** means the soul of the dead who dwells in a hut called '**delang**' which is erected especially near the house for it. The hut is burnt down during **Wangala** festival.

The village folk drink wine and beat **kram** (a kind of drum) until the dead body is carried out of the house for cremation. A fire is kept burning through out the night. A person keeps watch beside the dead body. Food and wine are placed before the body in honour of the **mimang** until the body is burnt to ashes. From then on, regularly food and wine are placed in **sansuri** till the **delangsua** (burning of the house of the **mimang**) ceremony is performed during the annual festival of **Wangala**.

The Garos carve an image out of wood and place it on the left side of the courtyard and this image is referred to as **Kima**. As a rule this image is dressed in the robes of the deceased. The **Kima** is preserved in memory of the dead till it is destroyed naturally.

At the time of the funeral, a few bones are collected and placed in an urn known as **garendik**. It is buried near the house of the deceased. The place where it is buried is called **khapak**.

Delang :

The next morning a hut is constructed with a bamboo fencing near the cremation ground which is called **delang**. The relatives remain mourning till the construction of the **delang**. The morning after the **delang** has

been built, a puja is offered to the **saljong** deity. Delang is not constructed in the case of children below 2 years. In such cases the baby is buried rather than cremated.

In case of death due to accident, the rules and regulations are relaxed. If the person is drowned or is eaten by a tiger and the corpse is not recovered another replica is made with straw and cremated in the manner be fitting the living. Generally these rituals are performed in the place where the death took place. The personal belongings of the deceased are also thrown away. The **darichik** deity is held responsible for miscarriage and death of children. Until and unless the **delangsua** ceremony is performed the **mimang** (spirit of the deceased) remains in the vicinity of the house. There is a close link between the last rites of the deceased and the annual **Wangala** festival which is performed in the month of October-November. If during the period between two **Wangalas** a person of a village dies in the following festival is termed as **Saramsoa** and not **Wangala**. During this festival the relatives bring wine, fowl, pig etc. Then a puja is performed and the **Kamal** addresses the **mimang** all your relatives who have passed away before you, now reside in **Balpakram**. It is now your turn to join them. The **mimang** which had taken up residence in that room starts in alarm at the sound of the **krum** and leaves for **Balpakram**.

Animal sacrifice is made in front of the house where the bones of the deceased had been buried. It is believed that this animal will accompany the **mimang** to **Balpakram**, when the **mimang** leaves the **delang** the **sansuri** is destroyed. The belongings of the deceased are carried to the **delang**. Pigs and fowls are sacrificed there. Next, fire is set to the **delang** which is known as **delangsua** ceremony. This is the last rite of the deceased.

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGIES OF THE GAROS

Father's father	=Atchu
Father's mother	=Ambi
Mother's father	=Atchu
Mother's mother	=Ambi
Father	=Apa
Mother	=Aai. Ama
Father's elder Brother	=Pajong
Father's elder Brother's wife	=Ajong
Father's younger brother	=Awang
Father's younger brother's wife	=Adi
Father's sister	=Mani
Father's sister's husband	=Mama

Mother's elder brother	=Dalgipa mama
Mother's elder brother's wife	=Mani
Mother's elder sister	=Ajong
Mother's elder sister's husband	=Pa-jong.
Mother's younger sister	=Adi
Mother's younger sister's husband	=Awang
Husband's father	=Mama
Husband's mother	=Mani
Wife's father	=Mama
Wife's mother	=Mani
Husband's mother's brother	=Awang
Elder brother	=Ada
Wife's Elder Brother	Roning
Wife's Elder Sister's Husband	=Ang Sadu
Husband's Elder Brother	=Ada
Elder Sister	=A-bi
Wife's Elder sister	=Ada
Husbands' Elder Sister	=Sari
Son's Wife's Father	=Nok Chami
Son's Wife's Mother	=Ang Sari
Younger brother	=Jong
Wife's Younger Brother	=Jong Sari
Son	=Depante
Husband's younger brother	=Jong Sari
Brother's son	=Depante
Elder sister's son	=Depante
Elder sister's son	=Gri
Younger sister's son	=Noni Bisa/gri
Elder sister's Husband	=Gumi
Son's son	=Angsu
Sister's Daughter's Husband	=Chawari
Son's Daughter	=Angsu
Husband	=Se
Wife	=Jik
Son's wife	=Namchik
Younger brother's wife	=Jongni jik
Elder Brother's wife	=Buji
Widow	=Se gri/Randi
Widower	=Jik-gri
Adopted son	=Mitanga bisa

FOOD HABIT OF THE GAROS

In the past the Garos used to consume rice, flesh of various kinds of animals and birds, fish, roots, of various kinds of creeper and plants, shoots of bamboo, dry fish etc. They did not take dals (pulses) and did not use mustard oil in cooking their meals. The process of preparation of their food articles was very simple. Their food habit was in accordance with their environments and the availability of materials. They had no demand for variety and were happy with what was readily available in their surroundings. Emphasis was more on quantity than on quality.

The Garos were very much fond of roasted food items than boiled in water. Instead of mustard oil they used to take **wakmiddim** (fat of the pig) which was stored in a bamboo tube. The pig's fat taken with hot rice was considered a great delicacy. **Atap** (Sunned rice) was commonly consumed.

Some of the traditional food items of the Garos of Tripura are given below :

(1) **Kharichi**—It is one of the most favourite food items of the Garos. It is prepared with **nakhham** (a kind of dehydrated puti fish) and suda water (alkaline water). The alkaline water was prepared indigenously.

(2) **Godok** :—It is also a delicious food item of the Garos. It is prepared with different kinds of vegetable like **baring** (bringal), **Jaminda** (gourd), **mia** (bamboo shoot), **genasi** (bean), etc. First, the vegetable is cut into pieces and then stuffed them into a bamboo tube along with **nakhham**, **shom** (salt), **Jallik** (green chilly) etc. and the tube is put on burning charcoal. After a short while the tube is taken out. The content is scooped out and ground with a stick.

Among the roasted food items special mention can be made of **gobba** and **sua**.

Gabba :—

It is prepared with vegetables like **gensi** (bean), lotsoi etc. **Gabba** may be prepared only with fish or **nakkham** (a kind dry fish) vegetable or fish or **nakkham** is first of all cut into pieces and then mixed with **nakhham**, green chilly, salt, onion etc. and wrapped up in tender banana leaf three to four folds and put on the burning charcoal. After a short-while it is taken out of the woven and ground by hand.

The gobba is known in different names according to the name of the vegetables or name of the fish with which it is prepared. For example, when it is prepared only with **nakhham** it is called **nakhham gobba**, when it is prepared with **gensi** (bean) it is called **genasi gobba**. Similarly when gobba is prepared with **kuicha** fish or **laganatok** fish these are called **kuicha gobba** or **laganatok gobba** respectively. When gobba is prepared with the flesh of **wak** (boar) **maraka** (deer), or **putiya** (hare) or **domok** (goat) etc. it is known as **wak gobba**, **maraka gobba**, **putiya gobba**, and **domok gobba** respectively.

Sua :—

It is also a kind of roasted item. Unlike **gobba** it is not wrapped in banana leaf. It is prepared with the flesh of birds like **dukuru** (dove), **du** (fowl), **gagak** (duck) etc. In its preparation, first the feathers of the bird are burnt in fire and the intestine is taken out and mixed with chilly, salt, green turmeric and then put on the burning charcoal. After some times it is taken out and cut into pieces and served.

The **sua** is known by the name of the bird with which it is prepared. For example—when it prepared with **du** (fowl), **dukuruk** (dove), **gagak** (duck) etc. it is known as **dusua**, **dukuruk sua** and **gagak sua** respectively.

The Garos are also fond of **yamti** (cake). The process of their preparation is very simple. They do not use milk in their cakes. They mainly use **mironggonti** (rice powder) and salt. They do not take care for variety. **Sada ampilkha**, **dariyamti**, **hariyamti** etc. are some of the notable cakes of the Garos of Tripura.

(1) Dariyamti :

It is prepared with rice powder, egg, banana. All these articles are mixed together with an amount of water and made into a paste. Then a little amount of oil is added. When the oil becomes hot the paste is thrown into the pot and stirred with a stick. As this cake looks like **dari** (bamboo made mat used for drying paddy in the sun) it is known as **dariyamti**.

(2) Hariyamti :

It is prepared with a paste made of rice powder, banana, eggs, orinon, sugar, suda etc. As it is prepared in a **hari** (earthen pot) it is known as **hariyamti**.

(3) Sada ampilkha :

It is prepared with the mixture of rice powder and salt. This mixture is dissolved in water and then stirred in a pot. Then the semi liquid is put inside hot pot and covered with a veil. The name **sada ampilkha** has been derived from the words **sada** which means white and **am** means flat and **pilkha** means equal. So the literal meaning of **sada Ampilkha** means the white coloured substance which is flat on either sides.

At the time of going to the **Jhum** the Garos take **mimiddim—brenge** to have their lunch there. In its preparation, **wachunga** (a green bamboo tube) is stuffed with **middim** (binni rice) an amount of water and the mouth of the tube is closed with a leaf. Then it is placed on the burning charcoal. After some times it is taken out from the fire and carried to the **Jhum**. The content is taken out breaking the tube. The name **mimiddim brenge** probably has been derived from the Garo words **mi** which means rice, **middim** which means **binnirice** (a variety of rice) and **brenge** which means tightly closed. So its literal meaning may be **binni rice** in a tight condition.

THE WINE AND THE GAROS

Wine has an important role in the socio-religious life of the Garos. In all important or unimportant social or religious functions the use of wine is a quite common. So they use wine all their life, from birth till death, in all ceremonies. Like all other tribes of Tripura wine is not used merely as an intoxicating drink it is also used as medicine for the patient, an offering for the angry deities, means of hospitality to the guests and as an intoxicating drink used for merry making in social functions. Generally, the women are skilled in preparing it.

There are different categories of wine with names. The wine of the Garos may broadly be divided into two categories (1) **arak chu** (the refined wine) and (2) **bwtchichu mandi** (the unrefined wine prepared from boiled rice). Here are some varieties of wine :—

Chwanchi :

The most essential ingredient to prepare wine is chwanchi. It is the chief fermenting agency. The burk or leaf of '**Samakhi**' tree and the powder of sunned rice (mironggindi) are required to prepare **chwanchi**. Besides these, sugar cane leaf (grik bijak), Chilli (Jellik), jackfruit leaf (thibrong bijjak) etc. are also added for the better taste of the wine. All these articles are pounded together into powdery form and then made into round shaped cakes by mixing water. The cakes are then dried in the sun.

Bwtchi/Chu-mandi (unrefined wine :

It is prepared only from rice. First the rice is boiled. The quality of wine depends on the quality of rice. The **bwtchi** prepared from '**mimid-dim**' (a variety of rice) is the best of its kind. When the boiled rice becomes cool '**chwanchi**' is made into powder and mixed with the rice. Then this boiled rice is stuffed into an earthen pot the mouth of which is covered with banana leaf. The earthen pot is placed on a bed of straw for three days for fermentation. The '**Chwanchi**' mixed rice is called '**chusti**' by the Garos.

Generally, **chusti** is stuffed in an earthen jar in which a net made of bamboo strip is placed upright. The '**Chusti**' is stuffed inside of the earthen jar and outside of the net. When the **chusti** is fermented, an amount of drinking water is poured into the jar 10 to 15 minutes ahead of drinking. The juice inside the earthen jar is soaked into the net and it is taken out with the help of a '**phong**' (a scooped gourd) and is ready for distribution among the consumers. This system of drinking is known as '**langi**' taking. The container is known as '**dikthem dika** (big sized earthen jar).

When **bwtchi/Chumandi** is prepared in a pot called '**rondik**' (a container of middle or smallest size) falls within the category of **rondik**. Unlike '**dikthom**' the **bwtchi** is sucked with a bamboo pipe (watek). Wine taking from the **rondik** is called '**wathokthekga**'.

Arakchu :—

Arakchu is prepared both from rice and treacle. The **arakchu** prepared from treacle is known as '**gurumani arak**' and the **arakchu** prepared from rice is known as '**miniarak**'.

The preparation of **arakchu** (refined wine): first, the **chusti** is stuffed into a pot known as **chustimidik**. Now an earthen pot called **hanimidik** with a hole on the side is placed upside down on the mouth of the **chustimidik**. The point at which the two pots are joined is covered with mud so that the vapour does not escape. Then one end of a bamboo pipe (**watok**) is tucked in the hole of the **hanimidik** and the other end is fitted to a container called **chumidik**. When the **chusti** brewed the vapour comes out through the **watok** and is collected in the **chumidik** in the form of wine. In this process of distillation **chusti** is brewed and wine is prepared.

Both men and women take wine together without any restriction. Of course, **watok tekga** and **langa** are favourite to the women folk.

The wine is shared equally by the consumers. The person who arranges the containers for distribution is known as '**dwkhol**' and the person who serves the wine is known as '**Chukhangipa**'. Generally the **Kamal** is offered the wine first during group drinking.

FOLK GAMES AND SPORTS

The folk games and sports of the Garos of Tripura play an important role in forming their social habits. Generally, most of their games and sports are played in the month of Aagrahayana and Pous (December-January). Of Course, some of the games are played in the rainy season. Their folk games and sports are similar to those of the people of other communities living in their neighbourhood in many ways. Upto a certain age both boys and girls play together but with adolescence segregation takes place. There is no guide or organised institution to train the children with the rules and regulations of these games and sports. The young children pick up these rules and regulations either through participation or observation.

The folk games and sports of the Garos can broadly be divided into following types :

1. Indoor games
2. Outdoor games

It should be noted here that there is no games and sports among the Garos meant for the oldmen and women. All of them are exclusively for the children and the youth.

A brief description of some common games and sports of the Garos are given below :

1. Thumui Khalla (Hide and seek) ;

This game is played by two groups consisting of equal number of players on each side. First, the leaders of both teams decide which group will play first by drawing a kind of lot. In this test one of the players hold ten leaves including a leaf with a hole. And the leader of both the teams draw a definite number of leaves and the leader that gets the leaf with the hole will be seekers while the other party will be hiding. The game is played within a definite area and when they make the 'Khuk' sound the other party begins to search them out. The searching party wins the game if they can find out all the hiding players. In case, they find out all the players except one the other party gives them a fixed time to find him out. If they fail, the other party wins the game.

2. Mughom Kaimuna Khalla (Blind man's buff) :

It is a game of individual performance. In this game one of the players holds some leaves of a tree. The number of the leaves equal to the number of players. In one of the leaves a hole is made. The players take these leaves one by one and the player who gets that leaf with the hole is made blind man's buff. And his eyes are covered with a piece of cloth. He tries to catch the others who move around him uttering the word 'Peng chuechuch'. If he can catch one and tell his name, the one caught has to act the blind man. The game continues.

3. Khadi Khadi Gulla Chud Khalla :

It is also a popular game. It is played by two groups with equal number of players in each group. The captains of both the teams decide which party is to play first through a toss. The winning team with its captain stands inside the circle drawn on the ground. The other team stands outside the circle. Those inside dashes out and tries to reach a fixed spot, a goal. Those outside obstruct them. If a player while trying to reach the goal is touched by the player of the other party he becomes 'dead'.

The captain singly or the group as a whole must reach the goal in order to win. Sometimes the players who reach the goal successfully may come back, form a second 'station' like the first circle transfer the captain and others there and make attempts to reach the goal. The station in this way can be moved forward with successful members towards the goal. The success of the game depends much on the cunning and ingenuity of the captain.

4. Kut Kut Khalla :

It is generally played by the girls. It is not a team game. All the players play individually. A court consisting of eight rooms is

drawn on the ground. Now one of the players throws a **Hani midika bia** (the broken piece of an earthen pot) in one of the rooms and goes towards it limpingly and brings it back by pushing it with her toe—uttering the words **Kut Kut** in a single breath. In this way she throws **hani m kik bia** in all the eight rooms and collects them back. If she fails to complete all the rooms on a single turn she gets another chance to complete it. In this game credit goes to that player who completes the round in the shortest time. If the **hani midik bia** drops out side or on the boundary lines of either the court or the inner rooms the player is disqualified for that chance. She is also disqualified if she falls down on the court or steps on the boundary lines.

5. **Tem dam :**

This game is played between two groups consisting of equal numbers of players. Two sticks are required in this game, one about one cubit long which is known as **dam** and the other about four to five inches long which is called **tem**. A toss decides which party will take the **dam** first. The player hits the **tem** with the **dam** and sends it flying. The **tem** lands at a distance. The distance is measured with the **dam**, uttering **goya,, dua, tena, chara, panja, soil, korom** and **gud** for one, two, three, four, five, six, seven and eight. According to rule eight **dams** make a **gud**. Before starting of the game the number of **guds** to be played are fixed and the credit goes to the party that completes the target number of **guds** first.

This game may be played in a different way also. Here at first, the **tem** is placed on a hole on the ground vertically. The player lightly hits on one end of the **tem** and as soon as it jumps up he hits it again. After this the **dam** is placed over the hole in lying position. Now the player of the rival party picks up the **tem** and throws it aiming the **dam**. If it hits the **dam** the player becomes 'dead' or 'Out'. If the **tem** misses, the player gets a point. The player is out or dead also when his **tem** is caught in the air.

6. **Lai Khalla :**

Any number of players can take part in it. A player is declared **lai** through a kind of toss. The player who has become the **lai** shows his hands to the rest of the players and asks 'What is this?' the others reply 'Ura', then he again utters 'saradin doura' (run all day-long) and at once starts running to touch others. The other players run to avoid being touched by him. If a player is touched he becomes 'Lai' and he in his turn tries to make another player lie. In this way the game continues.

7. **Putul Khal'a (Playing with the dolls) :**

This game is very popular among the children. In this game various types of dolls are made with clay and torn cloth pieces.

8. **Bol bipango gachre gachre khalla** (There are monkeys on every tree:)

It is not a team game. It is a game of individual performance. In this game seven to eight players are required. First one player is made 'tiger' through a kind of tossing. For the purpose of tossing one of the players holds some leaves, the number of the leaves being equal to the number of players. One of the leaves has a hole in it. The players draw out a leave one by one, and the player who gets the leaf with the hole has to act the 'tiger' and the rest of the players act the monkeys. The tiger stays on the ground within a circle. The monkeys climb up the tree and utter a rhyme while the tiger attempts to touch them. As soon as he touches any of the monkeys that monkey has to act monkey climbing up the tree. If any monkey becomes a tiger seven times his eyes are covered with a piece of cloth which is followed by another game.

House

A house for dwelling purpose is called *noknandi*. There is no systematic way of constructing the houses. Generally houses are built in clusters. Hill slopes are preferred as house sites. Before constructing the house, a puja is performed. The Kamal officiates the puja. The offering consists of rice, egg and a bow and arrow. After the puja the Kamal carries out certain rituals to predict if the proposed houses will be good for its inmates which is called *chuchanna*. If he finds the result of the test is good the house is constructed. Only the north side facing of the house is considered as inauspicious. The construction of the new house is celebrated by a sacrifice. The ceremonial occupation of the new house is known as *nokragga*. In this ceremony songs are sung in the new house. In this connection a chant to celebrate the building of a house has been given below. The right column is an attempt to give the translation:

- | | |
|--|--|
| (1) Atijo anga atjo!
Imma anga imma! | (1) Atjo and Imma have no meaning, but seem to be exclamations, intended to call the audience to what the singer has to say. |
| (2) Munepanisong
dengnagita
Sanepani a chagita | (2) As the father of Mune lived (in his house).
As the father of Sane (lived) by cultivation. |
| (3) Ango mikkuri gang,
Ango salakim gnang. | (3) I have a shield,
I have a shade.
[The words shield and shade are meant for the roof of the new house.] |
| (4) Ako acha panaka,
Songo songdon panaka. | (4) (I also) cultivate land,
(I also) dwell at home in the village. |

- (5) Mini apa Nibani
Muniko,
Meja atchu jongani
chambuniko
- (5) Formerly, as my father with the
Muni of Niba,
In former days as my grand father
with the chambuni of jonga.
[Muni and chambani are two names
for the plant of sleep, in the exist-
ence of which the Garos believe.
Niba and jonga are the names of a
certain spirit who is said to be the
owner or controller of the plant.]
- (6) Pikinte ronaka,
Gorongte kalanka
- (6) Waved about,
And played (throwing up).
[Garos often dance with feathers in
their hands. Here the allusion is to
the forefathers of the singer having
danced waving about pieces of the
muni plant. As they danced, so the
singer now proposes to dance.]
- (7) Angkinte, nokapna,
Angkinte bipana.
- (7) For the site of my house,
For my own place.
[The word kinte means clod of
earth, and is here intended to convey
the meaning of the patch of ground
or site.]
- (8) Anga Doadoniko,
Anga sireng-ruramko,
- (8) I, of the Doadoni ...
And of the Sireng-ruran.
[Doadoni and sireng ruram are two
names of a mythical bird, said to
have been used for sacrifices in
ancient days. The singer likens it
to the cick which he has just killed
as an offering to the spirits.]
- (9) Anchi tokengba,
Kimil paengba.
- (9) Also am sprinkling the blood,
Also am sticking the feathers.
[The singer describes how he has
sprinkled the new house with the
blood of the bird sacrificed, and
made its feathers adhere to the posts
according to the usual custom.]
- (10) Anga songong panaka, (10) I dwell in the village
Anga a cha panaka I cultivate land. 3

The traditional houses were built on wooden piles which were tied with wooden beams and on this wooden structure mats of thick bamboo splits were placed to form the floor. Thatch is used for roofing and also the matting of split bamboo is used for walls. There were only two doors—one in the front and the other at the back.

The house were long and sometimes they exceeded 100 ft. in length and without side windows. In this context play fair writes—"When a Garo wishes to depart from the traditional custom and make one, he is supposed to pay for the privilege, and his fellow villagers expect him to give them a feast in honour of the occasion". 4

The house is divided into three parts with well defined areas although without any partition. The wall of front side of the house is decorated with pictures of various kinds of birds and animals. Under the eaves of the house, in front of the nokkra, it is customary to plant kimas or memorial posts erected for the deceased members of the family. 5

The nokpantes are often of great size, and are on much higher platforms than the older houses. To reach these platforms notched logs of wood serve as staircases, and long pieces of cane are often suspended from an overhanging beam close to the notched logs, to assist the inmates to climb up and down. The main post of the larger nokpantes are sometimes carved and coloured. The subjects of the ornamentation are human beings, tigers and other animals, and various kinds of fruit and vegetables. 6

A brief description of the different parts of the house used for different purposes is given below.—

Nokkra : It is located in the front part of the house. The floor is made of earth, firewood, pestle and mortar for husking paddy, domesticated birds and animals and all necessary household articles are kept in this part.

Nokjanchi/Pakdalla : It stands adjacent to the front door of the house. This is the living space. Generally it takes two-third of the house. The different parts of the room is used for different purposes. e.g. the foot of the centre post is the abode of spirits. The name of this place is called *maljuri*. All socio-religious functions including sacrifice is done here. The foot of the next post of the houses is called *chusimara*. The wine is brewed and the apparatus of wine brewing are kept here.

Pakchanna : It stands adjacent of the *nokajanchi*. This is a small area. Generally young children sit in this area.

Dun : This part is used as store room.

Ongari : It is a platform of bamboo matting supported by four posts on which cooking articles and liquor pots are kept. Animal flesh is also kept on it for dehydration.

Dudap : The hearth is built here. It is near the *ongari* and *chusimra*. Fire is kept burning all the time here.

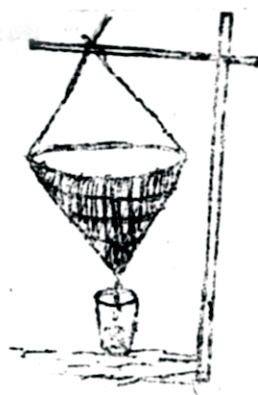
Mirong rongdik : Rice containers are kept in this place.

Household Articles

Household Articles



9



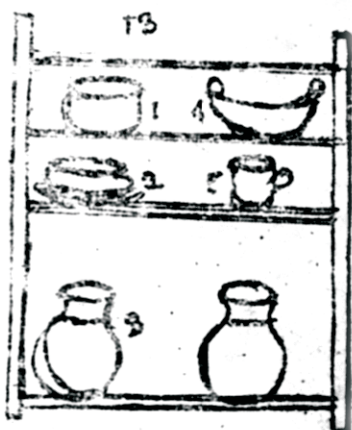
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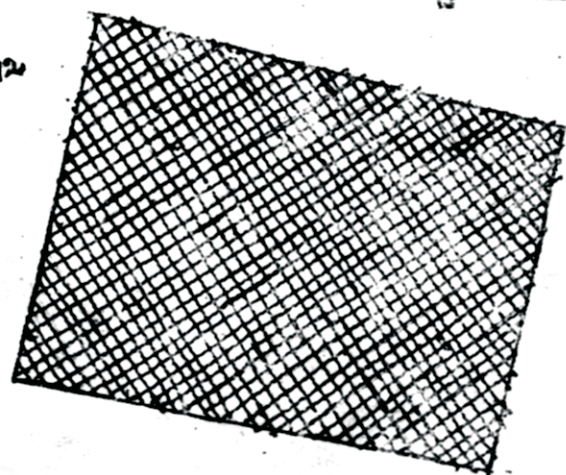
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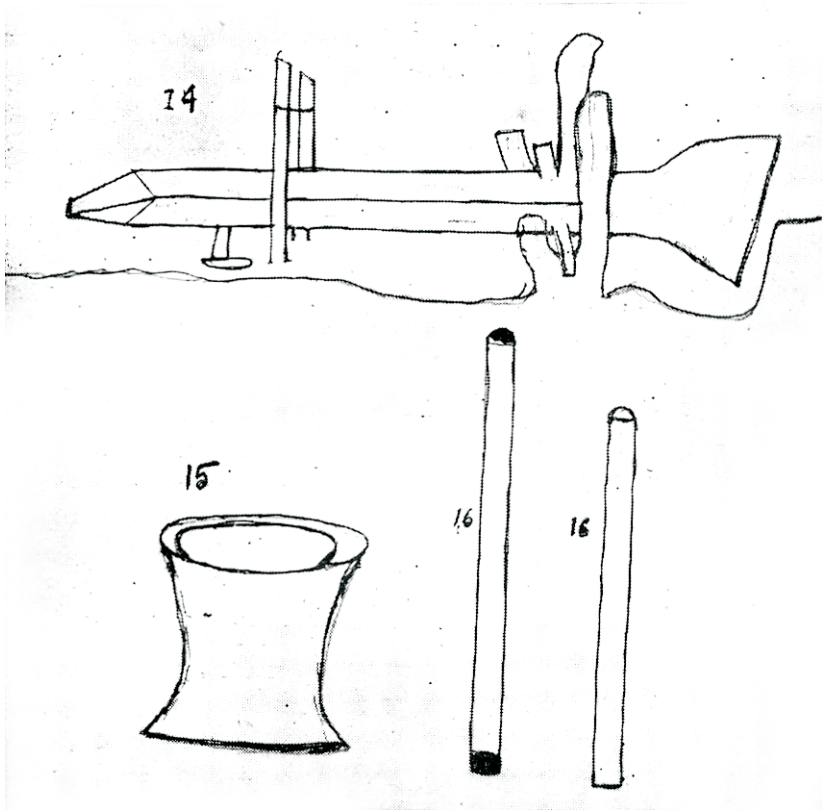


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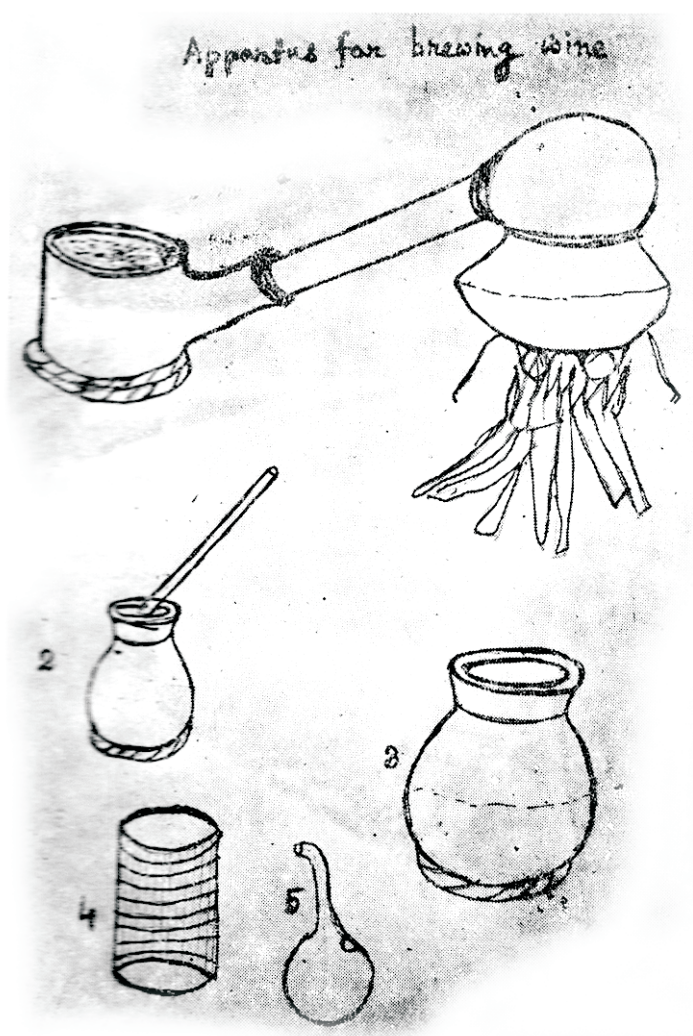


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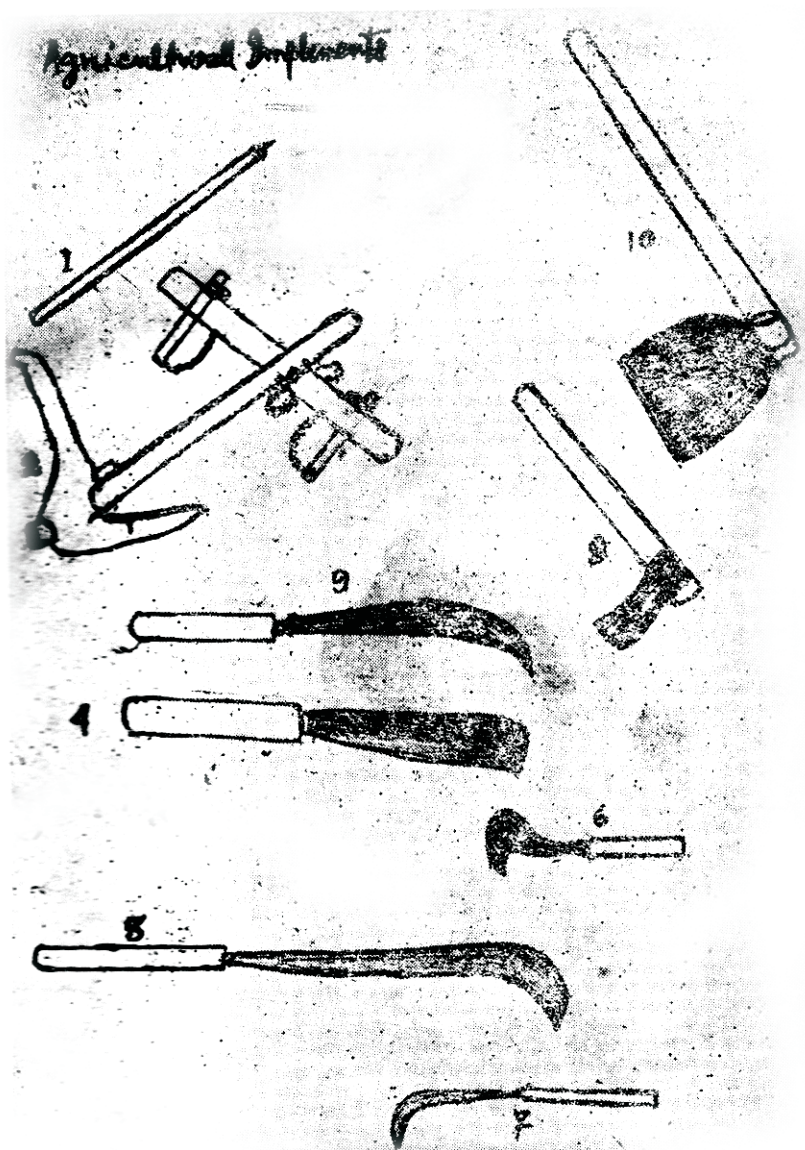




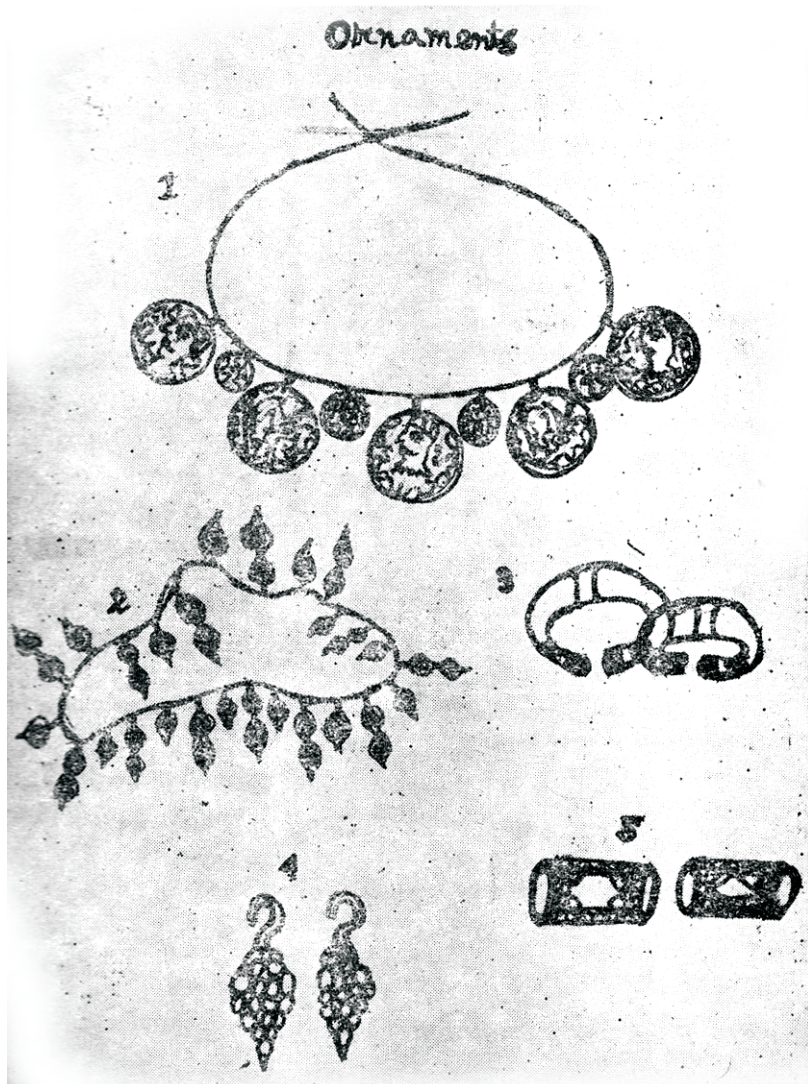
Appartus for brewing wine



Agricultural Implements



Ornaments



Dongrama :	This part is used as the drawing room.
Chidonra :	Water containers kept here.
Nokmikang dogachol :	It is the main door of the house.
Nokgildogachol :	Back door.
Nokcholdogachol :	The side door.
Ballum :	The verandah. This is the front wall of the house, facing the verandah.
Damdil :	Here Pictures of various kinds of animals and birds drawn on the wall of the main door of the house.
Gatimara :	Steps of the house.

A key to the sketches

Household Articles

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Kok | 9. Gangrang. |
| 2. Ura | 10. Machek |
| 3. Dira | 11. Kontha |
| 4. Challuni | 12. Amdhari |
| 5. Dalla | 13. Ongary |
| 6. Ruan (Rurini) | 14. Tbuanki |
| 7. Ruan (Mandini) | 15. Thuanki Cham |
| 8. Chakhi (Nathakni) | 16. Rimall. |

Apparatus for brewing wine :

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Arak Chuni Midhikok | 4. Janti. |
| 2. Wathek Chuai Midhikok | 5. Phong. |
| 3. Dikthamni Chu | |

Agricultural Implements :

- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| 1. Allni Mangadh | 6. Seni |
| 2. Nangol | 7. Katchi |
| 3. Juwal | 8. Ruwa |
| 4. Athi Pawak | 9. Athi |
| 5. Athi Gangaa | 10. Kudhal, |

Ornaments

- 1- Rigichak
2. Rigibok
3. Gongilla
4. Athonga
5. Kadubaju

CHAPTER—II

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CHAPTER III

RELIGION

In the 1911 Census all the Garos of Tripura returned themselves as Hindus. In spite of the late appearance of Christianity, in Tripura at present the Hindu Garos are outnumbered by the Christian ones. Now almost every Garo Village boasts a Church. The number of Catholic and Protestant Garos is equal. Wagers can be laid on meeting at least a couple of Bible happy Garos in every village hence, the role of Christian missionaries in this rather successful conversion can not under any circumstances, be denied. Missionaries apart, the following factors are worth mentioning in this context :—

(i) 1931 witnessed a migration of many Garos, most of them Christians, some even educated in missionary Schools to Tripura. These Garos were quick to construct small Churches in their new areas of settlement, and with Christianity forming the nucleus of their lives, enjoyed a mode of living

more organised than their non-christian counterparts. These conscientious Garos dutifully spread the word of Christ among their non-christian bretheren who had but a vague idea of Hinduism, and among whom superstition was rampant.

(2) Another point in the case is the economic viability of Christianity. The Socio religious functions involving the innumerable deities of Hinduism proved to be rather expensive affairs in contrast to the relatively few religious functions that christianity demanded. This economic aspect has no doubt influenced many a Garo.

(3) Another pertinent factor is education that Christian Missions could offer. Many were the Garo boys from the backward areas who were readily admitted to the Mission Schools and taught of Christianity. On completion of their studies they returned to their villages and rejected outright the superstitions that their traditional religion harboured and thus drew the attention of non-christian Garos. The educational facilities the missions offered certainly did their bit in the fruitful conversion of the Garos.

(4) The church, above all assured the unity and harmonious co-existence of the christian tribes of the North Eastern Zone. The Hindu Garos on the other hand were a picture of total disorganisation. Superstition was rife, and there was no leader who could serve as the integrating agent. Therefore, fortunately for christianity, it had to face no organised opposition as far the Garos were concerned.

The following 1911, 1931, 1961, 1971 and 1981 Census reports shed some light on the growth of christianity among the Garos of Tripura :-

Table.

Religion	1911	1931	1961	1971	1981
Total	273	2143	5494	5559	7297
Christian	1698 (30.96%)	2315 (41.65%)	3943 (54%)
Hindu	207 (75.82%)	2143 (100.00%)	3785 (69.02%)	3216 57.85%	3300 (45.22%)
Buddhist	1	28	54
Animist	66 (24.18%)	—	(0.62%)	(0.50%)	(0.74%)

Notwithstanding the large scale conversion of the Garos of Tripura to Christianity, some Hindu Garos do exist, albeit sparsely distributed and disorganised indeed : Tradition-bound, they observe many of the socio-religious functions, but variation has made in-roads riding on human ingenuity that stems from necessity—the causes here being economic and co-religious estrangement, for communication with the Hundi Garos of Mymansing is unheard of.

The religious figurehead of the Hindu Garo Community is the **Kamal** (Traditional priest) who retains to the day a rather influential position in the Community. Fighting the economic problems the threaten to do the dimension of disaster, these **Kamals** endeavour to preserve the age old pujas keeping in close touch with their Bengali Counterparts. The afore-mentioned **Kamals** have brought about a synthesis in the worshipping routine of the two communities. Thus to-day it comes as no surprise that religious traits of the Garos bear semblance to those of the Bengalees.

If a lucid picture of the religious behavioural pattern of the Garos is to be obtained, then the religious traits of the Hindu section of the community can not be ignored.

The traditional religion of the Garos of Tripura is an amalgam of mono and polytheism. Animism is widely practised among the Garos. Many are the deities worshipped-benevolent and malevolent as well. To the Garos the various spirits are known by the single term '**Middi**'. A **Middi** can change from at will and has no definite abode—anything under the same can house a **Middi** ?—It can afflict the non-believer with many a disease, and can exact the reverence due. Consequently propitiation is a must, and animal sacrifice is a regular feature. Moreover, dependence on agriculture also makes the appeasements of these **Middis** imperative, for the ways of nature are unpredictable and necessitates spiritual intervention interestingly, the evil **Middis** outnumber the good ones. The relationship syndrome has permitted the **Middi** sphere too. The male-female division exists males being more in number and brotherhood is not uncommon. The activities of some **Middis** even calls for assistant **Middis**.

As regards the appeasement of these spirits, the time and place varies from **Middi** to **Middi**. Some **Middis** demand propitiation in the morning some in the afternoon, and some in the evening ; the places could range from the backyard to the jungle, not to forget river sides.

The sacrificial objects vary too. Goats, pigs and fowls are offered in accordance with customs. Specifications exist for colours too. A sacrificed merarrch is even in effect and rigidly maintained. A pig is sacrificed to the elder **Middi**, a goat to his junior and fowls to their assistants.

When a Garo falls ill or gets into some kind of trouble the first person he contacts is the **Kamal**. The **Kamal** is quick to get to work on a process of divination known as **Disa** or **Samania** to trace the **Middi** responsible, and prescribes the appropriate sacrifice. The divination runs somewhat in the following pattern. The **Kamal** makes a bow known as **Phoagsi** and then hangs it up right from the **Middi**. Next pieces of thread are tied to the bow, and a recitation of the name of the probable **Middi** begins the **Middi** whose name makes the pieces of thread oscillate is held responsible. The sacrificial object is divided in a similar manner.

As no written account of the rites and rituals exists, and only oral transmission is in mode, the same **Middi** might have different names in different areas.

A short description of some malevolent **Middis** are given below :—

1. **Saljatsca** : The Garos consider this **Middi** as responsible for various diseases that afflict the children. One fowl is offered as sacrifice to him within the compound of the house at noon.

2. **Tataramhantam** : This **Middi** too is responsible for the childrens' illness. A fowl is offered as sacrifice in the compound of the house in the evening.

3. **Aning** : This **Middi** causes stomach troubles. One fowl is offered as sacrifice in a jungle in the morning.

4. **Bijabifrung** : This **Middi** is responsible for causing pain in the hands and legs of the patient. One fowl is offered as sacrifice within the compound of the house in the afternoon.

5. **Darwajongom** : This **Middi** makes an old man a child and a child an old-man. A chicken is offered as sacrifice in the backyard of the house.

6. **Oaldap** : This **Middi** is responsible for pain in the body. This patient may become lame as a result. A fowl is offered as sacrifice behind the door in the door in the morning.

7. Jogo: This Middi causes pain in the chest. They are two brothers (1) Jogowafong is the elder and Jogowafeng is the younger brother. One pig is offered as sacrifice to the elder brother and a fowl is offered as sacrifice to the younger brother.

8. Salbaman: This Middi causes pain in the eye. The patient may become blind. They are two brothers (1) Salbamanfeng is the elder and Salbaman Gardali is the younger brother. Four fowls and one egg are offered as sacrifice to the elder brother and only one fowl is offered as sacrifice to the younger brother in the compound of the house in the morning.

9. Jagkhipang: This Middi makes man suffer from swelling of the body together with ulcerations. One fowl is sacrificed beside a stream in the morning.

10. Misinna: This Middi makes a man suffer from severe headache. This Middi is propitiated by offering a fowl under Borsil tree of a nearby forest in the morning.

11. Jongkhipang: This Middi causes a disease in a child which leads to the delay in the walking of the children. A fowl is offered as sacrifice beside the door of the house with some liquor.

12. Amanda: This Middi causes pain in the stomach. An image of a tortoise is made of wood which is propitiated on the bank of a stream and a fowl is offered as sacrifice.

13. Bidacee freng: This Middi causes fever. A pig is offered as sacrifice beside a stream in the morning to please this Middi.

14. Darichwk: This Middi causes excessive discharge of blood of the mother during delivery of a baby. This Middi is worshipped after the birth of a baby. A fowl is offered as sacrifice in the compound of the house in the morning.

15. Garam: This Middi causes severe pain in the body. A black goat is offered as sacrifice in the forest.

16. Udum: This Middi makes the hands and feet of the patient leam and thin together with small rings. An image of a human being is made on the road and one banana plant is placed beside its head and another beside its legs and a piece of bamboo is placed on the chest. Then a black goat is offered as sacrifice to this Middi.

17. Goera: Goera is the Middi of strength and vigour. They believe that lightning and thunder are the flashings of sword of Goera. One pig, fowl or duck is offered as sacrifice to this Middi.

According to play fair 'He formerly lived on the earth, where he was the the owner of a wonderful sword with which he slew a monster pig as big as a mountain. He afterwards ascended to the skies and now amuses himself from time to time in martial exercises with this sword. Thunder is the noise he makes when thus engaged. Goera go a, or "shot by Goera" is the Garo translation of "Struck by Goera". 2

According to Tarun Chandra Sinha "The Garos mean that the lightning and and thunder are caused by this powerful god. When he is angry with some one the man suffers from ulceration such as from burning. They sacrifice this cock under a tree which has been burnt by a lightening generally in the morning, usually in the month of April" 3

harami: The elder brother of Goera and protector of all the creatures from disease. It removes all the evil spirits. One goat or fowl is offered as sacrifice.

According to playfair "Kalkame is Goera's brother. He is the spirit who holds in his hands the lives of all men. He is prayed to in the Asongtata or

Asongroka ceremony, and is entreated to keep the people of the village safe from all dangers of the forest during the coming year"⁴

18. **Susime**: It makes a man blind or lame. It is also known as the maker of quarrels. One pig, goat or fowl is offered as sacrifice according to the taste of the **Kamal** to propitiate this **Middi**.

19. **Skal**: It is an evil spirit. It makes a person sick. A goat is offered as sacrifice to the **Middi** to please her.

According to M. C. Goswami and D. N. Majumder "Somat the super natural manifestation in the shape of serious illness or some incurable disease in a person whose spouse is involved in extramarital Sexual relations"⁵ (P. 127).

Besides the existence of many malevolent **Middis** there are some benevolent **Middis** who ensure the welfare of a people. They are connected with their agricultural life and at different stages of their agricultural operation these **Middis** are worshipped in different manners. Among the benevolent **Middis** **Bagwba**, **Pochchim**, **Churabudi**, **Goera** and **Kharami** are noteworthy.

(1) **Bagwba**: **Bagwba** is considered as their protector **Middi**. They think that **Bagwba** keeps his people on his lap and protects them from all malevolent **Middis**. **Bagwba** is also the protector of the crops of the **Jhum**.

(2) **Chorabudi**: The Garos consider **Churabodi** as a protector of crops. Before the plucking of seasonal fruits some fruits must be offered to him. Its concept among the Garos of Tripura is similar to the concept of **Ganesh**.

CHAPTER—III

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CHAPTER - IV

FOLK MEDICINE

Like all other tribes of India, the Garos of Tripura also believe in folk medicine and use it often. The concept of folk medicine as practised by time is different from the modern concept of treatment. Regarding the cause of disease both natural and supernatural factors are considered responsible. Of course, most of the diseases are believed to be caused by supernatural agencies. Wrath of gods and goddesses, evil spirits, breach of taboo, evil eye etc. fall within the jurisdiction of supernatural causes. Divination is the technique of diagnosis propitiation of gods, use of charms, amulets, and herbal preparations as required by the medicineman is use to cure a patient.

If the gods and goddesses are not given their due pujas or recognition they feel neglected and become angry. Their wrath causes disease and even death.

So offering is required to be made for them in the performance of the ceremonies in connection with a birth.

It is believed that a sorcerer has the power to bring disease and destruction upon his enemy with his magical potency. Some times they are hired to do harm to others. (of course all sorcerers do not practice this harmful business as they believe that the sorcers vested with this harmful magical potency do not get peace life). In such cases the victim takes the aid of another sorcerer who through counter spells negates the evil intention of the sorcerer.

They believe that some cases of ill health are due to the leaving of one's soul from his body and entering another body. In this context O. P. Jaggi in his book Folk medicine says that some times the sufferer's soul can not make up its mind where to stay and is therefore, restless and uneasy. When this is the case, the person whose soul is afflicted becomes thin and emaciated, and if he dies, it is believed that the soul has entered the body of a child which is yet unborn; should the afflicted person recover, some woman will bear a dead child¹.

Illness among the Garos is sometimes attributed to the breach of a taboo prevalent among them. Garo term 'marang' is used to mean taboo. The commitment of a 'marang' is a sin and the concerning evil force is to be appeased by sacrificing of animals and observing certain rituals. It is a marang to touch an used rikhing (Piece of cloth used by a Garo woman According to the opinion of Tarun Chandra Sinha in certain cases, such as on return to the village after waging wars or bloody feuds, they

are to perform **marang harikha** which means elimination of the **marang** evil. It is a sort of cleaning up or purifying ceremony having close resemblance with **Prayaschitta** or **Suddhi** Ceremony of the Hindus. **Marang** in the sense is unholy or what the Hindus call **asuchi** (Unclean).

Some kinds of illness one also considered the result of witch-craft. the term 'skal' is the Garo word for a witch.

Mimang (the spirit of the dead) is also held responsible for the cause of harm to the people. They believe that it has the power to take any form and mislead a person to its area and cause harm to him.

DIAGNOSIS

In the case of illness household treatment by the elder members of the family is done as a preliminary step. If the household treatment fails to cure the patient they call in the traditional medicine-man of the village. And if the patient is not still cured a specialist in this line from some other village is consulted.

The first and foremost task of the medicineman in diagnosis is to ascertain whether the particular disease is due to the work of an evil spirit, the wrath of Goddesses, sorcery, breach of a taboo, or witchcraft. There are various procedures of diagnosis. Generally, investigation of the disease is done as a preliminary step of treatment. The following questions are asked by the medicineman in the course of his investigation :

- (a) Whether he has breached a taboo ;
- (b) Whether he has shown disrespect to any deity ;
- (c) Whether he has seen any strange object ;
- (d) Whether the objects of dream immediate before his illness ;
- (e) Whether he suspects any body that may do harm on him ;
- (f) At last, he asks the relatives of the patient about their idea regarding the cause of the disease.

After collecting the preliminary idea about the cause of the disease the medicineman ascertains the spirit who has caused the disease with the help of divination which is known as 'disa'. There are various methods of divination. The medicineman makes a bow known as 'phongsi' and hangs it upright by a thread. Then some pieces of threads are tied to the bow. Now the medicineman recites the names of probable deities thought to be responsible for the disease. If the mention of a particular deity makes the bow oscillate, the deity is considered responsible for the ailment. The sacrificial object is also divinised in a similar manner.

Some times the medicineman holds a piece of thread in his hand with his two fingers and recites the names of some deities suspected as responsible for the disease. The Kamal's (the medicine man's) hand begins to tremble as soon as he mentions the right name of the deity who has caused the disease. If the medicineman is possessed with the spirit the trembling becomes so violent that it begins to strike the earth.

Treatment :

The treatment is done according to the result of divination. If the supernatural agents are responsible they are appeased by pujas.

If the disease is due to the aggressive intention of a medicineman he applies counter magic. Amulets and beads are also used as preventive measure against the evil spirit. Besides these, barks, leaves, stems, roots etc. of various kinds of locally available herbs, plants and trees are also used in the preparation of a lot of medicines.

A chart showing the names of the diseases along with the name of the medicinal herbs and plants used to cure them has been given below. In some cases the procedure to their use is also given:—

- 1) Dysentery (Okkhatta): The juice of the root of Mandal plant. The juice of the bark of Bolmatra plant (Holar hena antidysentrica) Decoction of the leaves of Misinachil (Hydrocetyl asiatica).
- 2) Stomach pain: The juice of the root of Ramanisam (Zedoary). Juice of the leaves of Pathorkuchi (Bryo Phylum Calycimum) and Lime water.
- 3) Constipation: Mixture of Sangyet (glowworm) and Kitchen soot.
- 4) Catarrh: Apply a paste of Misinachil and Samkhok on the chest at night before going to bed. Smoke of burnt clothes is taken through the nose.
- 5) Cough (Khak): Take the mixture of Tulsi leaf (Ocimum sanctum), Bel leaves (aegle marmelos). Alot (Vasaka, a kind of medicinal plant), and ginger for three days.
- 6) Headache: In the case of children suffering from cold and cough waktho (old fat of boar) is warmed and applied on the chest.
- (Swkhusadika): The paste of Dukhinasin (garlic) is applied to the forehead.
- 7) Rheumatism (Hannichiga): The mixture of salt, Dutura leaf (Datura stramonium—Thorn apple) and treacle is applied on the affected area in the morning.
- 8) Swelling (Rwpmā): Cold water is applied on the affected area.
- 9) Burn (Walchcha Kamma): The mixture of coconut oil and wax is applied on affected area. The paste of Sobrikola (a kind of banana) is applied on the affected part.

- 10) Chamachi(Prickly
heat of the summer): Ghamachilot (a kind of creeper) is soaked in water before using it. The affected person wears the creeper round the neck and holds it till he is cured.
- 11) Snake-bite
(chwpuswa): The treatment of snake bite is based on the charms and incantations of the medicineman.
Three knots are given with a new napkin above the place of the bite.
A dish made of brass is placed on the back of the patient—and then charms are recited by the medicineman.
- 12) Vomitting
(Wakgala): Breaks the branch of a **Benna** tree holding a single breath. Wears a piece of it with thread round the neck holding single breath.
- 13) Toothache
(Wasadika) Tobacco leaf, bark of **bariol** tree (Jujube), and the bark of **data** (a kind of thorny plant) are first burnt and then ground together into powder. The patient uses this powder on the affected area and then closes the mouth for a few minutes and washes his mouth after that period. The patient is required to repeat this process three times in a day to be cured. If any tooth becomes loose it is pressed with a hot sickle.
- 14) Eye inflammation
(Mwkron): The juice of the leaves of **Misinachil**, onion, and watery discharge of the snails are mixed together and applied to the afflicted eye at night at the time of going to bed.
A piece of the root of **Misinachil** is tied on the thumb finger of the leg before going to bed at night.
- 15) Bites of insects: The juice of the leaves of any kind of tree or plant the taste of which is sour is applied on the affected place.
The juice of the root of **Chukaiguta** is applied on the affected part.
- 16) Daud (Ringworm): The juice of the leaves '**Daudraja gach**' is rubbed on the affected place.
The juice of the leaves of **Tulshi** plant, salt and mustard oil are mixed together and applied on the affected place.

- 17) Twisting of any part of the body (Rongreta):
A special method of hot compression is made on the twisted part of the body with a leaf the **Akondyo** (*Calotropis gigantea* madar). The leaf along with mustard oil and an amount of salt is put on burning charcoal and hot compression is given with the warm leaf.
- 18) Bone fracture (Jag jagatengbiya):
The medicineman recites charms holding a betel leaf and a **Boj** fruit in his hand. After that the betel leaf along with **Boj** is tied on the affected place.
- 19) Neasles (Hannanga):
The leaves of a **Mandijiga** tree is mildly rubbed on the body in the morning before taking bath and at night before going to bed.
- 20) Cholom (Nachikaltok):
The patient goes to a stream or a tank holding an **ukol** fish (a kind of fish like *chana punctatus*) and leaves it in that stream or tank saying 'Oh, friend, please take away my solom with you' since that day he should not take the **ukol** fish.
- 21) Scabies (Biro):
A paste of the root of **Kolaful** is applied on the affected area.
The burnt mud of woven is applied on the scabies to burst it.
The bark of a branch of **Bolbandong** tree is removed and hot mustared oil and salt are mixed together and applied on the scabies to cure it.
- 22) Cut (Matta):
The juice of the mixture of **gondaful** (*Tagetes Patula*) and **Bandorful** is applied on the cut to stop bleeding.
- 23) Post natal treatment:
In the case of excessive bleeding of the mother immediate after the delivery of the baby the mother is given the juice of **Durbaghas** (*cynodon dactylon*) to drink to stop bleeding immediately.
- 24) Puerperal disease (Sutika):
The mixture of the juice of the bark of **simultula** (silk cotton tree), **sal** (a timber tree), **Bonboroi** (a kind of jujube available in forest), and **Sapla** is boiled in an earthen pot and the patient takes it orally.

CHAPTER—IV

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CHAPTER—V

FOLK MUSIC, DANCE, RIDDLES, DREAMS. AND MYTHS SONGS

Music plays an indispensable role in the life of a Garo. Every important ceremony gets inevitably more than its share of songs and dances. The Garos possess a rich heritage of folk songs. These songs revolve around their religious beliefs, their agricultural activities, social functions and of course, their love life. *Ajia* is the Garo word for songs. They have different *Ajias* called *dukusua*, *Magongwla*, *Salaksua*, *Delangrurura*, *Amrerurua*, *Rare*, *Serjing Graba Agua*, *Wanchini*, *Soggani* etc. Their tunes are different and sung on different occasions. Several musical aids like *dama* and *kram* (two types of drums), *aduri* (pipe made out of buffalo horn), *bongsi* (bamboo flute), *rang* (Gong) etc. are also played. These songs are inevitably always followed by dancing. Below are given a few Gare songs :

1. *Dukru sua* song: This song is sung during the *Wangala* festival. Men and women tie sand bags to their waists and dance to the tune of :

“Wanna ronchu asua wanama bisiya
Hiching somwng mannadi ribau komji
Bimau manna misigiyo knogkreng ati
Manna Sompokwangu mandi Ruadio
Ringgami achchuk sigal asong song
Asok ringgami Sribima rudiya sinna
Anna rogali.”

Meaning :—O powerful one, this festival is in your honour. Where are you? Please come and grace this occasion with your omnipotent presence. We are here to please; every thing is dedicated to you and you alone. Please come and be stated.

2. *Magongwla* : This song is sung during a drought for rain along with dancing :

Goria panturan te mwkka chi baduri ko
 Kimpreti kimrurui sagil ramane
 ribok misik sakdok dwy mwygadi
 0 bako mwy hibab.

Meaning: 0 god of the rains, we humbly beg thee for immediate succour. We invoke thee: Let the dense white clouds presage thy arrival shaking the heaven and earth together.

3. Salaksua: This song is sung in order to stop heavy rains:

Hau mika sirane tobaduribane
 E kimbang keriyu
 Guja Sufui naha sat dou mina somanibo
 Te dapank dingou rigi dodisi
 Te jata adnobo pe jala doure debo
 Naku dokdou mik bagadi te norua
 Sualongbo mandina pasiyangbo.

Meaning: What a heavy rain: The day looks like a darknight. The thunder claps fills the world. What should we do? Let's go and dam the water. The rain comes for you and for me and for us all.

4. Delangrurua: This song is sung in connection with funeral ceremony:

Hay nunu nirikna nangani ghumik
 Riving riving salanga sorok gida garik
 Nogni dhuti Ko pok pok nigwnga,
 gang pal de nigwnga kubok rara barak
 Hay sari rinama habii sagna brengchama
 Nagni dudu nuriya bisi sijok ma gerongma
 Mua Kotha Ko agana angangde nagni
 kotha ko

Gisik dong jajok ro.

Meaning: Come 0 sister, let's go to your elder sister's husband. The white dhuti looks like a heron, as if a piece of cloth comes in floating like a heron. 0 sister in law come let's go to the jhum. The hens have died for want of food after laying eggs. You speak so fine. I had Forgotten you.

5. Amrerurua: It is a kind of entertainment song. Two women dance showing the plucking of fruits to the tune of:

Bolbiti agnade bolsa gadonade
 Bolaringba lagijok
 Nama kotha konanade songni moral
 lagijjok

Hay hare rabak patore lagur pailamna
 Pale ghate pailaba namna nigojwnga
 Naliani bisak ba paye saka banaina
 Barak pani pantik ghura damini douriya
 Ram Lokkon duibhai dodhurai sakajok
 Rabak mak nigiya Kading wak wak
 arijok

Meaning: A long pole of bamboo you need to pluck from fruits a tree and the village head to get good advice. Oh friends! how sad I cannot reach you. I cannot dream of good things for I don't have the good fruits. I shall make wheels of jute leaves and go around like the village head in his horse drawn carriage. Ram and Lokkon the two brothers are still alive and the village head pleased me.

6. Nokpanti song:

This song is sung in the Stet Nokpanti (bachelors' dormitory):

Gong nokpanti бага rai salong na rama
 Pitik gola renga rebeyana
 Nokpanti dipantina misi golana rama
 samnipitina

Khuchi mitana rijok
 Pathorok gating kwy twy kwy
 Reona abik jhakural Khadigeng donga
 duri gobok

Dure kikihima gongbima mitrapanti
 barama sarima

Battiya daknjok donnapa niga nosok
 jojong khudi

Mandina jijang dudu sel belna hengiya

Meaning: Young men let me pass otherwise it won't be good. You are youngmen but why are you standing in the midway like young women? Sit comfortably on block of stone. It is separate house like a mitrapanti. There is our sinior sister. Sit, don't put on airs. What shall we do now? Don't talk like younger brothers. Sit far apart.

7. Lullaby:

Miggillo tijimak srima benjima aganna
 Ja ja ama migillo siyaringa manna,
 migillo dibi daringa

Appani kuri annacha dibida dibadaru
 jonko

Kudam neudua annako sinwnga ari,
 dongko bo jonko.

Meaning: Why do you close your lids when you do not sleep? Why do you tire your poor eyes out and not let gentle sleep take over now. Your father's out to earn our bread. When he discovers that you are wide awake and not as sleep as he imagined then you will be spanked.

8. Waking up song:

Tijimak nijam srima benjima
Chana aganwnga chisiyaringa muyko
dibadi

Tengri Tengri chuchungobo
Chaka dwy se sengbo
De songpibida ay taka ribida ay taka
Risongcha chorok badio haringa tilgiba
Badi haringa til giba, badi jajaring
manadibadio.

Meaning: Open your eyes, little one, see what I have brought for you here. What, you are still asleep? Come on, wakey, wakey, If you are not up soon, you'll make a nice breakfast for Mr. Crocodile.

RARE

Rare, like serying, is a kind of love song. Only it is sung in a different tune and generally connected with festivals. Given below is a rari with its English rendering. The theme of these songs woven round the activities of everyday life. These are sung without any preparation. Thus in many places they seem to be incoherent. But the tune is very beautiful.

Rama sammu chagiba dimatiti midima
Ia mande bipade kaji chana dongtima
Hain chengchang hain chang haning
chana bidangcheng
Na'a sake sinnonga jaksi addi pinik cheng
Hading dingao b-digiba iko minga
jongkangkud

Rama samo dongi waljam biri susuko
Aggibinni kamla rua signa jagraga
Mi chana jogode nakmagiba dagila
Nangni rua sigade jade jade mungitam
Rare ringna manjaude reba chingo
salgitam

Haronggacha reango manbajokde, nargol
Duat kolom rimmana angko donjok
mastar

Haticha palgiba namma namma bogna
Rare manja adasong khai a dise magina
Buru-wani riggiko nikjok tarualgida
Ia songni mandide rare manja chinggida
Raja hati uadetjok ingragini kalo

Rare ringna manjaude reba chingni dalo
 Behalako salnade rababoda rajanko
 Maridide namjokming kat chajok jangilko
 Rawak pani digio rakta apilap gnan
 Bagiba rawak pa angko dongna aganna
 Boksariri balanggiba hadinguni gagarek
 Chingko bia kana ba nangma nangpo
 songsarek
 Nokcha watok tekabajok salli nibo
 nokchami
 Alugatni hatio kai donbo asami
 Harupang pang pang sikode bangal
 mumga barenga
 Balgisiko batjago nangko mankan aringga
 Behalako saleming gahan ringjok
 boiragi
 Chingni mako dongnade salchabakna
 urakki
 Selpu Selpu malamgiba hani serampuha
 ganna gichak jangiba chingni nokni
 mande ha
 gagzag muggna Uajabari dukuru
 Sandiksana bibide mara ganger chachuru
 Mukka Uasisiana pasim jaba riddimjok
 Uak pisako rasoti sari be ai pattigok.

Meaning: A tree has come up on the road side. Its fruit is tasteless [This perhaps an allusion to a worthless lover]. The man has come to take khaji (prasad) [Perhaps the man has come to convey his love]. Go under the ground first and show you love. [These show that you have to perform a hard task to prove your love]. The Jongkangduk live in the ground (these are a kind of insect. They keep their heads sticking out and small children fish them out with an angle like contraption made of bamboo strips and threads).

Waljam lights a bidi on the road side. Other people's workers can transplant paddy saplings quicker. The master calls at meal time. The plants you have transplanted are of three kinds.

If you cannot sing a rare, visit our house for three days. From Harangashao you brought coconuts. The master has asked me to hold the pen and paper [Perhaps the allusion is for writing love letters]. Brothers we do not know Rare. The tops of ripe bamboos look like swords. The people of this village do not know how to sing rare like us. The king has sent a vehicle. If you cannot sing a Rare come to our place. Come playing a violin.

The man is good. But he has a wound on his back [The allusion is to a small defect of the lover]. In the tank of Rawak's father red lotuses have come out. Some one wants to marry me. White flowers float in the air. If we want to be married your father is a Hindu. I have brewed liquor at home would you taste it a little?

In the market of Alughat keep your convict tightly reped. The low caste people are called Barenga in Bengali (Carrier of loads). When you pass over the dried wood may the crocodiles catch you. The Bairagi is begging alms playing a violin. If you want to marry some one from our clan you have to swear looking at the sun. The man in the red dress is from our house. The spotted dove is singing in the bamboo clumps. Just a few snails have been found on the dried river. The trees have put forth leaves with the rains. Brothers in law has cut the piglet and started the negotiation for new relation.

SEREJING

Serejing is a kind of love song. In the old days boys and girls sat together in drinking sessions and expressed their hearts desires in their songs which were always full of allusions. In the Garo language the word serejing has been derived from the ward sere which means a female companion. Here is a serejing:

(1)

Silgachakni mikka chiko sangdecna ram
Hanko jakko selam ja ua chithi ranne
selam

Mikka uana takra jana hanba susi jaua
Nangko mikkang nigrigoba gisik gual
jana

Sakse seli demeseli rijok balmaridri
Jeol tangko nig gi mingna rijok
bamjejeli

Alo daning kasabia gidelni gisik laba
zaodgija mikka uajak ua daonaba
Lekha pora mangibade raja deon singha
Sattor sangjit mani pante iko aganiha
Rimit rimit bolenggiba pul mandal bibal
Sakgibinko kimioba da a gisikk gual.

Bring the rain water down to the sea. Don't make obeisance with your hands. Do it with a letter instead. The rain does not freshing. Nor does it drench my body. Even when I see you face to face. I don't know I am fully satisfied. A wind comes whirling up (This perhaps indicates the flutter that arose in his heart). You see your wife long separaed now. Your head drops. The new heart grieves (Perhaps the sight of the old wife has changed her heart). The rain still falls (It perhaps indicates the condition of his mind which now melted into sorrow). Only the King Dewan sng can read and write (Perhaps the reference to his ability to write letters).

(2)

This serejing hints to the obstacles that stand in the way of two lovers. At first they seem to be impossible to cross. There are some bickerings also. But it hints to a final solution.

Here is the serejing :

Chi-cham chik badnade chicham chike-
jongranza
Biri piyi ringnade waljam jakgo samrara
Chidariko muchchuna gong bijak akkuna
Dasukucheng waljemba bara sari tomkuna
Chara gidal jambura chaye niyo khabiya
Serejing ming waljemmi miko chaye
nibya
ganni runa innude gong bhaja silliding
Hay baju rinnama angya mirong
tumiding.

The translation of the serejing :

I have to wade through the water full of worms. I have to break the bidi with a bottle of medicine in one hand (The allusion is to a difficult task). With leaves of tara (a kind of plant) I have to stop of the spring (an impossible task). Wait Wangjam a while I do the pecking (It will take time). The lemon of the new tree I find bitter. (the experience of the first love making is not pleasant). The serejing and the waljam quarrel (the nearness leads to bickering).

I adron myself with Tara flowers (she tries to make herself more attractive). Come, lets measure the rice (they will have the meal together).

(3)

Ganna gisim rarako ganna chinga dalbajok
Mi akam rarako chae chinga rebajok
Salni dinga jani senga salni saljachio
Gitko ringe janeng takna bolni salikumo
Ama dongja apa dongja gisik apsan ongja
Chinga mande kopalpura donga apa grigida
gulapfulni bibal bala balde balgaujokma
Kasiruru aganako na ade gualjokma
Kna nu kna nu angni agannako
Nang manide wotjanona nangna singibako
Apillakni bibal bala chini chijang chio
Ama nangko jumang nikjok walni
waljachio.

Translation :

We have been dressed in rags since your birth. For food we had only the rice that was badly brunt. The sunrays and the moon beams

we get the most at mid day and mid night. We relax singing under the tree. We have no mother, no father. Now our mind free from worries. We are unfortunate, we have lost our father. Has the water lily bloomed. Have you forgotten all that we told you softly.

My little sister, I'll tell you one thing. Our aunt will not let you have the boy you like. The water lily is blooming in the water. Mother saw you in her dream in the midnight of the last night. [This means there is still a faint ray of hope].

Here are some more Serejings:

1. Silai matlai manggni, Silai Sachi go gui.
Isel jora onode Mechik nangko manggni Aiao ..
2. Gokkarek gok mukua Burungni domisal
Iasongni nomilde Ja gam gala pangmisil.
3. Bildek bildek mukua burungni do bildek
Sere nangona raobara chola gisim dmadok.
4. Chiringoni nongtike pildeng pildong ga mana.
In songri nomilke pile pile nimana.
5. Chidariko mutchuna gong bijak akkuna.
Sere nangke nirikna baora duti gankuna.
6. Bol gongsi gongdangko denoja anga nengaori
Mamatangni nokohado rojawa chawari.
7. Pan chaojak Gua Chaojok nakkumacha napake
pajok gotatjok.
8. Silgading ding bilgipa, doreng ganggabok.
Angni mik chagipade han hanogibok.
Dada han hanogibok.
9. Riting riting geogipa tha bolohumung Mendumung.
Angna Chiti Segipa Chalakimung denggumung.
10. Ali jol jol bitgipa uko minga Misi sa.
Kutup gibok Kagipa uamangni gumisa.
11. Rama samsi digako Kudal raoc Bakrokna.
Sere nangoni mikchike rumal raoc ripakna.

The translation of the Serejing:

1. Oh! (girl) If god unites us the
Bullets cannot tear us apart.
2. The wild fowl calls 'Gokkarok gok'
The girls of the village perhaps walk with soles the
otherway about.

3. The call of the Basantapuri (a kind of bird) comes from the jungle--Dear, I have brought black blouse for six annas for you.
4. My foot steps keep slipping on the stones in the water of the spring. I see the girls of that village again and again.
5. The lover has not worn her dress before I depart.
6. What use would the twisted tree be. why should fell it. I am not going to marry my own ~~uncles~~ (maternal) daughter. So why try in vain.
7. I ate the bettle leaves and the nut and than went under the cot. But uncle petted and drove me out.
8. My lovers complexion is as white as the flying kite.
9. The Topioca and the adhar are planted in the same row. And they have written to me (she is both naughty and clever (like two dfferent kinds of trees in a row, my lover is both naughty and clever at the same time).
10. The field rat has dug a hollōw in the fields' edge. Your brother in law (sister's husband) has tied the turban over his head.
11. The weed has covered the path. It has to be cleared with a spade. Friend wipe out your tears with a kerchief.

Wanchini

In their traditional pujas the Garos cook pieces of meat vegetable etc. and mix them with powdered rice and distribute the mixture as prasads. They call the prasad wanchini. They use plenty of this rice powder or wanchinis in one of their important festivals known as wangala. In fact the name Wanchini is connected with festival Wangala. During Wangala and Ronchugala they smear the wall of the houses with rice powder. Also they paint their bodies with it at the time of dancing. This is known as wanchitōka.

There is a beautiful legend among the Caros about the origin of the wanchitōka. One day, long long ago they sent Matfru, a lizard to their ancestors who lived in the world of the dead to learn from them the art of painting their bodies for the festival of Wangala.

Matfru went there, painted its body following their instructions. But as it was climbing up the mouth of the under-ground tunnel the paints were rubbed off. Once again he went down and tried to come up with his body painted. Again the paints were off. **Matfru** told the people that if they painted their bodies in the manner as his that would become the mark of **Wanchitokka**. From then on the Garos paint their bodies in the fashion of a lizard as **Wanchitokka**.

The following **wanchini** song also alludes to the use of **Wanchitokka**.

Dasio wanmaha ranchua
 Sa manba a sa nikba a
 Batchako kna sengsang
 Batchako nikgagrenge.
 Appade saljengde
 Manbaja nikbaja
 Appade miside appade saljonde
 Io manbakoja io nikbakoja
 Icha haning middapeha
 Tekjagna gejong³ ana
 Appa Susimi achchu karippade
 Pusilko haning nabamget dongjok.

Translation :—

In days gone by who saw, who had brought the **wangala** and **Ronchugala**? Did you see it or did you hear it any where. Our fathers, the male folks could not do it. There were great rejoicings in the nether world in the long days past. And our ancestors sent **Matfru** there. And he brought the mark here. It was the mark of the **wangala**.

Soggani

Soggani is a kind of song sung in **Ronchugala** festival. During this festival the Garo youths—boys and girls dance and sing together gay abundance. They visit every house and sing and dance there. Usually the dance and music begins in the house of **Nokma**, the village chief. A **soggani** with its translation is given below :

Wanama⁰a rongchua ching a misi de
Nokma Wangalansa reba a
 Sero apalonā sa bi baa
 Sa kumansia nasangko misiko
 Sa Ualdu Ka masengko saljongko
 Nasang saljong in kumansia
 Nasang denggiba ualdu ka
 Batcha kumansia nasang ko
 Batcha walduka nasangko saljongko
 Nasang chagiba kumansia walduka
 Raja hati gataena kumansia
 Sojon dukan hannacha walduka.

Translation :

We **misis** (the young girls) are celebrating **wangala** and **Ronchugala**. The **Nokma** has joined us. The **mynas** have come too (usually these birds come to feed on the insects found on the newly ploughed fields). The **misis** have been invited who has asked the **saljongs** over here. You ; the **saljongs** have come here on your own. You who come to take your meals here might have given news to **Sajna** (the shopkeeper) in the market of the king (Probably then market of the **Nokma**).

Wangala Song

Song sung at the Wangala festival. Part of the song is sung is sung by a man to a young woman, then follows her reply and lastly the man's final rejoinder.

(1) Ama, giting changiting
amasongba Mima ja^opang
rongtambing dongasongba

(1) My mother, thou growest like the
banyan tree,

Like a grain of new pounded rice art
thou, my dear.

[The words "mother" and "father" are used through out this and other songs as terms of respect, quite irrespective of the fact that the parties singing may be young men and girls. **Dongasong** is an **Abeng** word. It is best translated "my dear", and is supposed to be used only by persons between whom marriage is possible.]

(2) Salna skang baesa
imjima amaba. Gangorako
song esa tang sima
dongaba

(2) Before the sun shouldst thou have
been created,

Thou art as the blue of new drawn
indigo.

(3) Durarikim bolgrim bol
namgija chachenga,

(3) Though in the dark forests of Tura
the bad tree grows, the good trees are
there too,

Songdu ancheng sridim
chi namjia chi senga

Though in the midst of the **Brahmaputra**
sand there is bad water, good water is
there too.

(4) Na^osong ma^o masam-
ung ? bipa singe nikuna,
Bolni majingkasamung
ake songa cha^okuna.

(4) From what motherhood art thou ?
I, asking, shall know,

Plucking the **majingka** from the tree,
I will cook and eat it.

[The word **ma sa** has the same meaning as **ma chong** or motherhood. **Majingka** is the name of an odible creeper. The simile is that the man would like to carry off the girl as he would collect **majingka** leaves. The man refers to himself as **bipa**, lit. "the male".]

(5) Bolongo do^o sik pagira
midong ratpakarina,
Chaiang anga ajora sokme
rimbakarina.

(6) Angchapakna daroba
na ng pa nang seinawa,
Ja^osi gadep^o manako rim^o
awa sala bo^onawa.

(7) Mikchi Ong^o-afuegu
nni gimbi dongsasongba,
Ka^oko dokna Durani Kimde
amasongba

(8) Do^o ka Rajabalacha
Bilangjok,
Mironk bokdanko ra^onajok
dongasongba.

The girl replies :

(9) Sio tarimesane apaba,
Kato akgnisane dongane
dongaba.

(10) Sina obakkosan sinawa
apaba, Katarama dingsan
katnawa dongaba.

Here the man interposes :

(11) Samil milangakom a
riknama amaba,
Ja^ogam chosikoma sanm-
ana dongaba

Again the girl sings :

(12) Kate cha^ona medetang
sepang apane.
Kaesina tobilbang kokang
ra jane.

(5) As the parrots of the *suolag* tree
bite off the ears of rice,
So will this one take to himself thy
breast.

[Here the singer refers to himself as
chalang]

(6) Near to me do not come lest thy
father thy husband should blame us.
On my toes do not step lest me be falsely
accused.

[Here the love-sick swain has an eye to
business, and thinks he had better be
going.]

(7) With thy tears, dear one, fill a pot
from Banjan.

With the *nahor* tree of Tura beat thy
heart.

[Banjan is corruption of the word
Bazar. The girl is expected to weep
at the idea of parting. She is to strike
her heart with a piece of *nahar*, pro-
bably because it is a very hard wood.]

(8) The crow has flown away to Raja-
bala,
And I must follow him to bring thee
white rice.

(9) Father, together let us die or as one
run away.

(10) With the same strip of bark let us
hang ourselves.
Or by one read together run away.

(11) Through the broken sesamum we
shall be chased, my mother,
By our wet foot prints we shall be
tracked, my dear.

(12) If fleeing, thou leavest me with my
stepmother, oh father,
By hanging myself to the cross-beam
of the house I will kill myself.

The man takes up the refrain :

- (13) Do^odo gita bidaling
amaba,
Raugita pinaring dongaba.
(14) Sokmo kimkarong
miting amasongba,
Japing gimbari bokgin
dongasongba.
(15) Ku^achil mandal bibalin
dongasongba,
Mikgil watre bijakin
rajasongba.

GARO' SONG

**'Do do Gita bidaling amaba
Rau gita pinaring dongaba
Sokma Kimarong miting amasongba
Japing gimbari bokgin donga gomba
Kuchil mandal bibalim dangasongba
Rikgil watri bijaking rajasongba.'**

Meaning :

Beautiful you are as a young hen,
Or like a well-shaped gourd.
Your breasts are small and beautiful.
Your thigh is white as the gimbari tree.
Your lips are like the flower of
the mandal tree,
Your eye-lids are like the leaves of the
bamboo.²

DEVOTIONAL SONGS:

The use of metaphors in various songs of the Garos is an interesting characteristic. The use of metaphors in the following devotional song as quoted from Abus Sattar's book entitled 'Tribal culture in Bangladesh' has been given below :

Aanga bakunda hinga ramak mukja
 Bhangaban na aang ne gati hangan
 na aajek kari aa.
 Guru go vaba par ne bandhuna
 hangani charan tarani
 Charan tarani hangnya hangte par go
 hangani charan tarani
 Par ghathe ney bandhu na hangani
 Guru go vaba par ne bandhu na
 hangani charan Tarani.
 Aag bela na nan charan
 Shesh bela banchik karinang
 Guru go vaba par ne bandhu na
 hangani charan tarani.
 Guru aank par kari aa sara
 Par hangna hinkjak Guru Khewa
 Ghatne par aa
 Aang nukai rung ghuria ghatte ghatte
 Aang nukai rung ghuria ghatte ghat
 Suma nadi ne suma kumer doujak balu
 chara
 Kumir ko nukai kherna aank ana
 Guru par karia aan aanka sara.
 Sewa hara hengjo kana
 Bar fang ne ning ana ning ana
 Aanak nukai fang ne bijak
 Chatai chatai gala
 An guru atil aung na hingjo aung aa
 Gaisa berhi ne par aa
 Shei buchhi hangda jaga samayak
 nukaibari

Guru go aank par karia par kari Sara.
 Meaning :

Deep is the ocean spread in front of me,
 And impossible it to cross it
 without your help
 Oh Lord, I have no friend other than you,
 And hence, your ferry-boat is my only
 hope.

Meaning :

Only your ferry-boat is it that can
 make me cross this ocean,
 And hence, your ferry boat is my only
 hope.

I have no friend other than you
 at the ferry station,
 O Lord, you are my only friend
 in crossing this ocean
 And hence, I seek the help
 of nothing but your ferry boat,

Nothing was done by me at dawn,
 And deprived I kept myself of every-
 thing in the afternoon,
 O Lord, I have no friend other than you,
 And hence, your ferry boat is my only
 hope.
 O Lord, here have I come in the
 hope of crossing the ocean,
 But I find no ferry boat here
 How can I now cross the ocean ?
 It is in the hope of going across
 That I move station after station.
 Big are the crocodiles in the big ocean
 And no sign if any island is there,
 O Lord, save me from these crocodiles
 and take me to the other side.
 O Lord, in my life I did nothing so worthy,
 that may make me cross the ocean,
 And hence, earnestly I seek your help,
 O Lord, take me to the other side. 3

In the above song ferry boat, crocodiles, ocean etc. are the metaphors and their balanced use has given an additional standard to this song.

Graba Agana

When one dies his relatives sing this song to direct his soul to the abode of his ancestors. This song is known as graba agana. The word graba in the Garo language means to wail and agana means to direct. The song is sung in a wailing tone.

The Garos believe that the soul of one's ancestors rest at one place together after death and they use the articles—clothes, fowls, animals offered to them by their relatives. In the graba agana songs the Garos mention the names of these articles and the names of their ancestors so that the departed soul find his ancestors with out difficulty.

Here is a graba agana along with its English translation.

Graba

Sku o bara gaddari nachingni amana reag bone
 Jaggu manggat ra ari machingni barana saggang bane
 Rama ratni bimako reagbane
 Achik: tengji bimako duangbane
 Rama ratni bimao dongsua

Achik tengji bimao sengsua
 Amatangko gualongno baratangko tapiungna
 Ma ariko ama mung angna magibinko ama mungangna
 Machingni amako do arokaha mungaro
 Nachingni barako de nubak michik gaddaro
 Nachingni barako de nubak michik gaddaro
 Nachingni amani dongiruako Rabanpante mungaro
 Nachingni amani dongiruako Dingron Pakte mungaro
 Nachingni amakode Miggee ha mungaro
 Nachingni barakode Milsi ha gaddaro
 Nanchingni amani dongi ruako Rampante mingaro
 Nachingni amani dongi ruako Raju Mia gaddaro
 Iko gualongnani iko taptung nane
 Nua bimauha sangdongana
 Nugul michigu ha chiringana
 Wari bimau ha songdongaha nachingni amade
 Uaji michigu ha chiringa ha machingni barade rua nare.
 Hako harikhiari donganaro mira
 Sunako jallang channary rupako riduara khari
 Kari ronchansinni paggari sangdoggana
 chiri mandisinni khiddari chiringana
 Baldak masu karamao sensuana
 Doka misal charamao nisungana
 surio dimrio masumarong rayi sengsungana
 Ambrio tabrio dumak megam salle misugana

Translation: Tie a piece of cloth¹ and go to our mother². Take this bundle of cloth and take a stick and go along path of ratni³. Don't miss your mother, don't take somebody's mother as to be yours. Our mother is called *durika* and our father⁴ *Rabanmichik*, *Rampanti* and *Rajmica*. Our cloth is known as *mishi* and *nubuk michil*. Don't forget the chief *nuyar* (the name of a chief) lives *Nuguljola* (the name of place). Our mother lives in the middle of the stream. Their clothes are in the bamboo clumps. Love your mother's land and save paddy. Make the bridge with gold and the strips with silver. When you cook add *khari*⁵ seven times. Dig seven ponds deep and live there. In the pasture where the cattles graze there is a *ladak* tree. The crow is wailing there. The bull⁶ is waiting under the *boira* tree and the goat⁷ under the *amla* tree.

Notes:

1. The relatives of the dead tie a piece of cloth round their neck. The piece of cloth, they believe helps the dead to find his way to the abode of his ancestors.

2. Mother here ancestors.
3. Ratni is the main path leading to the land of the departed ancestors.
4. Here father means the great grand father the grand father and father.
5. Khari is an alkaline substance used as an ingredient in the food prepared for the *śradha* ceremony.
6. The animals sacrificed in the name of the dead.

Funeral wail for a child by its mother :

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) Me° mangni Bogiani
Ja° nengtakram,
Katchini chanapani
Ka° siperam, | (1) In the resting place of the ghost Bogia, where the father of chana took breath, |
| (2) Apaba chochong
achonangbo ne,
Do maba dedeng
chadengang be ne | (2) Oh father, for a little while sit, Oh bird, for a little while rest.
[The deceased is spoken of here and throughout the lament as <i>apa</i> , my father (a term of respect), and <i>do°ma</i> , bird (the black cormorant)] |
| (3) Uno chikmang
asonguna re°o,
Balmang chigaona gao. | (3) When going to the country of Chik-mang, In going to the waters of Balmang.
[Chikmang is the name of the hill to which the spirits of the dead are supposed to go. Balmang is another name for the place. A°song in the first line means country, and chiga in the second a place from which drinking water is taken.] |
| (4) Me° mang misalcharam
minga.
Katchi wa°l-tot tottram
dona. | (4) It is called the place where the ghosts eat the midday meal. Where the chief of ghosts strikes the flint and steel.
[The mourner is telling the dead child spirit where it should halt by the way. |
| (5) Boldak matchu Karam
ukon minga,
Me° mang Waltat tottram
unen dona. | (5) It is called the place for tothering the bull to the boldak tree. And the place where the ghosts strike flint and steel. |

[Near the pool mentioned in verse 4 a tree is supposed to stand, to which the spirit on its way to *chikmang*, tothens the bull which it has led away with it, before partaking its midday meal.]

- (6) Me^omangni ramadito
Nawang roso^ocngwa
ne,
Katchini cholbibrao
Jungi
sengso^ocng^onawa ne
- (6) On the path of the spirit Nawang will be wandering about,
At the forked road of the demon the chief spirit will be waiting.
[Nawang is a demon who devours the souls of men on their way to *chikmang*. The only means of escaping him is indicated in the next verse.]
- (7) Nangni Jaksil
aginothkosa geangaribo,
Nangni do me
birikikosa
galangaribo.
- (7) Cast down (before him),
Your arm—rings,
Throw down your bunches
of cock's feathers.
[The *jaksil* is an iron ring worn on the arm above the elbow. The feathers are those which are placed near the head of a corpse when it is laid prior to creation. The demon is supposed to scramble for these when they are thrown down before him, and the spirit has then a chance of slipping by. Women's ear-rings are said to be the rings that Nawang likes best.]
- (8) Ukon Nawang
Tikonsilpa minga,
Jugi Rikchipbinpa
dona.
- (8) He is called Nawang the father of Tikongsil,
And the father of the spirit Rikchipbirpa.
- (9) Angni sale chakgipa-
mung, apasamung,
Chingini de^oewingipasa-
mung do^omasamung.
- (9) Those who protected me were my children.
Those who covered my head were my sons.
[The mourner is bewailing the loss of her children. The word *Chakgipa* signifies "One who defends", as with a shield, and *de^oewingipa* "One who holds up something over the head.]
- (10) Belong Rakipa gita
apara,
Bolsal Danipa gita
do^omara
- (10) Like Belong the father of Raki (art thou), my father, Like Bolsal the father of Dani art thou, my bird.
[Belong is the name of a tree

common in the Garo Hills, and Bolsal is the sai tree. The mother compares her child with two tall and straight tree.]

- (11) Stilna dongmisina
mriari dongamung,
Balwana balmisina
gongdolari reamung.
- (11) Before the hait storm (they are) strong and unbending,
To the hurricane they bend but do not break.
[Here the comparison is continued, and the beauty and strength of the dead are extolled]
- (12) Mitesa okuan sisa
pearokon,
Katchisa japa cholsisa
wangerokon
- (12) The starving spirit must have broken it (the life),
The spirit with the withered legs must have destroyed.
[The death of the child is attributed to the malevolence of an evil spirit]
- (13) Apani angr^oikiko
miteni peoko knajajok,
Domani ang kambeko
katchini wangako
haijajok.
- (13) Father, that the spirits had broken my life I did not know,
Bird, that my tender sheet had been broken I did not know.
[Here the mourner likens herself to the tree, and her young child to a Sheet.]
- (14) Mitena ritchasana
kambe dotime pineka
apaba,
Katchi hajalna ja^opang
chinoke agana do^omaba.
- (14) For a hundred 'spirits thou hast appeared as the bunchy top of a tree, my father,
For a thousand demons thou hast been as the trunk of a fine tree, my bird.
- (15) Mitena Rambudena
bijak name pineka,
Katchina Rekonpan-
tena kambe name
agana.
- (15) To the spirit Rambude the beautiful leaves have been pointed out,
The demon Rekonpante has thought my young shoots good.
- (16) Indakesa mite pea
apako,
Katchi wanga do mako^o
- (16) In this manner the spirits have broken my father,
Thou the demons have destroyed my bird.
- (17) Ruabasi te^orakcha apani
ang^orikiko pea,
Mritsamti sojakcha
domako wanga
- (17) With an axe of small size my life was cut off,
With a small and light razor my bird was cut down.
[The axe and razor are spoken of as small and light, to convey the idea that the death was a sudden one]

- (18) Hani bolong pangsamung apasamung,
Chini rongma tots^o a-
mung do^o masamung.
- (18) As the one tree on earth (Wert thou), Oh ! my son,
As the one stone in the river (Wert thou), oh ! bird.
[Her child was to her as the one tree and the one stone in the river]
- (19) Angni sinchi
ja^o niasamung apaba,
Chingnigrong rim-
rokasamung do^o maba.
- (19) For the reflection of my hump I am looking, my father,
And for the harm which I rubbed so tenderly, my bird.
[Here the simple is changed, and the mourner compares herself to a bull, and her child to her soft hump and beautiful horns.]
- (20) Grong simu sokjaoba
apara,
Kime salareng jaoba
do maba.
- (20) Though my horn (was like) the sprout of the simu grass, my father,
Though my tail was as a tufted plant, my bird.
[In spite of its beauty, my child has been cut off. (The child is still compared with the parts of the bull)]
- (21) Jolane pinekjok angnioko
keba,
Dandisile aganjok
angnijko ra^o aba.
- (21) I who bore thee, must lay thee out in death,
I who held thee in my arms, must see the lying dead.
- (22) Chochong achong-
baboda apada,
Dedeng chadengbaboda
do^o maba.
- (22) For a little while sit, stand up, oh my father,
Rise and stand for an instant, oh bird.
- (23) Ma^o na tustimjok
ku^o aganboda,
Ba^o na mokkil joma apa
ku^o mesokboda
- (23) Say, why art thou sleeping ?
Oh, show why thine eyelids are heavy.
- (24) Miteni salgirani
muniko cha^o chakakon,
Nokmani susimeni
do^o diikkiko ra^o chakakon
- (24) Perhaps the spirit **salgira** has given thee the **Muni** plant,
Or the **Nokma** **Susime** has brought thee the plant of slumber.
[The Garos believe in the existence of a plant called **Muni**, which possesses the properties of sending people to sleep. The first spirit named is that of the sun, and the second that of the moon]

- (25) Racha asongchana apa gabirangnabe,
Nengba chigachana
jangi matichangnabe.
- (25) Oh son, do not lose the way and
stray into a foreignland,
To the waters of Nengba do not
wander like the solitary wild buffalo.
[The mourner is exhorting the spirit
of the deceased to remember his
home, so that at the reincarnation
it may return there]
- (26) Amatangcha Chik-
mang, asongchana
ja re angbo,
Sokutangcha Ba'mang
chigaona jasokangbo.
- (26) Go to chikmang by the way thy
fathers trod before thee,
Reach the waters of Balmang by the
path of thy kinsmen.
- (27) A p ani mikkil tijiko
nigawe,
Kuchil rangreko
kadinge.
- (27) Father, go looking about thee with
thine eye lids raised,
And with the lip of pleasant smile.
- (28) Asongona ritchasana
jaksi perikgopa,
Darangna mikkil on
chikgope
- (28) To a hundred countries, cracking
my fingers, I go,
And before all with downcast eyes.
[This cracking of the fingers and
walking with downcast eyes is a
sign of shame, the shame of the
childless woman].
- (29) Apani ang kisango
krachajok,
Domani ang jamano
chinga jaksi chikjok.
- (29) Oh! son, behind me follows shame,
For my child I wander, biting my
fingers. 4

DANCING

Dancing is a very popular form of recreation with the Garos and they have a rich tradition of dancing accompanied by rhythmic songs. For the Garos, even entertainment has a spiritual foundation. Dancing, they believe, can appease the pricked gods and bring about peace for the whole community. As the hostile deities largely outnumber benevolent ones, every social event is closely connected with the propitiation of an unbelievably large number of gods and goddesses, thus making dancing not only essential but an integral part of the Garo life. As a result this basically folk art has been a lot of organisation. There are different types of dances prevalent among them. There are dances for men, for women, and for both. A dancer's costume consists of turbans stuck with feathers. The body is painted with symbolic drawings. In dancing, imitation of the poses of the birds and animals found around is quite common.

An account of some Garo dances have been given below :—

(1) **Magongwla** : When drought shows its cruel self, the propitiation of Goera the god of thunder is needed. The month of Chaitra (March—April) sees the **Kamal** (the priest) with an **Aduri** (Shell made of horn of a buffalo and used as a singa) leading a group of dancers from door to door. On arrival at a house the party begins to gyrate with one of the members donning monkey mask made of wood (**Amak maddi mwkhang** in the native tongue) and some others putting on tiger masks. As the dance goes on the members of the household, from time to time, spray the dancers with water making them thoroughly wet. On completion of the dance, the owner of the house makes an offering of rice, green vegetable etc. to the dance party. Following this, the whole village observes **Magangwla** festival.

In this context, the following lines of Abdus Sattar's book entitled 'Tribal culture in Bangladesh' is worth mentioning. "The Garos of Mymensing and Tangail observe **Wachhikrita** and **Salgurua Brata** in elicitation of rain. Through this brata they render homage to the rain god **Norchit Kimri Bokri**. On a fixed day all the village males raise a mound of earth. Every one will turn up at the mound carrying an earthen pitcher filled with water. **Kamal** or the priest kills a goat and every body will pour water from his pitcher and sprinkle it on the mound mixed with the blood of the sacrificed goat in imitation of rain. The **Kamal's** body is also sprayed with water. Alongside singing and dancing goes on and drums clatter. The clattering sound of the drums are imagined to be the peals of thunder 5.

(2) **Salaksua** : The **salaksua** ceremony takes place when there is excessive rainfall and consists of dancing with fire in one hand. The literal meaning of **salaksua** is combustion of the sun.

(3) **Kilpua** : This dance is performed to please the deity of the crops in the month of Chaitra (March-April). Men and women participate in the dance which enacts the entire operation of sowing of cotton seeds.

(4) **Duregata** : The **wangala** festival sees both men and women indulging in this dance in which the women try to undo the headdress of the men who resist it. The dance ended with a grand feast.

(5) **Chambil Basara** : This dance is performed on the day of Pous Sankranti only men can take part in this dance.

Ganna : This is a dance of high ranking persons usually performed on the occasion of the ceremony of wearing the ring by the newly chosen **Nokma** (village chief). The Chiefs of other neighbouring villages who assemble on the occasion and their wives perform this dance.

(7) **Ambrerurua** : Entertainment is the chief object of this dance. Two women dance enacting the plucking of fruits, Men are strictly forbidden to join in it.

(8) **Dukrusua** : It is a love dance in imitation of the doves. Two women in their dance show different actions of a pair of **dukru** (doves) eating and making love.

The Garos firmly believe that souls of the departed ones are received with favour by the god if their funeral is accompanied with dancing. The famous funeral dances are **Ajema**, **Machua Rudila**, and **Dalangrurua**.

In addition to the above mentioned dances of the Garos the following chart shows a few more Garo dances as mentioned in Milton S. Sangma's book entitled 'History and Culture of the Garos'. Milton Sangma in his turn quoted it from D. S. Rongmuthu's book 'Folk tales of the Garos'.

Sl. No.	Garo names of dances	English equivalents	Underlying meanings
1	2	3	4
1.	Gaewan- roa	Girls' dance	The spirit of the youth delights in activity.
2.	Dome gonga	Lowering Cook's tail	Sometimes we stoop to conquer
3.	Sipaiswit roa	Sepoys' frum play	Besides fighting, the warriors dance.
4.	Nomil Kambe	Girls measuring height.	Life has its aspirations.
5.	Jik seka	Eloping with a lady	The way of true love is not smooth.
6.	Chame mikkang nia	Lady love's glances	There is a sweet song in love's looks.
7.	Ambreiong Kola	Picking up hog-plum	Gather the treasures of life while you may work.
8.	Chambil Moa	Dance of the Pumelo fruit	Life with its elements of passion is an immanent activity.
9.	Memang mi sua	Ghosts pounding rice	Invisible helpers around us.
10.	Dama jonga	Drum shuffling	Life must have its diversions.
11.	Salam Ka'a	Greeting	Pay obeisance.
12.	Nomil nipila	Girls' looking behind	Past memories reflect us.
13.	Chamo changa	Pursuit of lady love	Constancy in love brings music to one's soul.
14.	Budu rateta	Cutting a rope	Life has its difficulties to overcome.
15.	Chu kanna	Wine offering	Stimulate others with the joy of living.
16.	Jik Sekako rima	Bringing back eloped wife.	Love has its correction.
17.	Nomil Donnua	To hide the girls	No man sees enough of beauty, or learns enough of truth to satisfy him in this world.
18.	Cha-vari Sika	Capturing a bridegroom	There is a compelling power in the creative urge of life.
19.	Nomil do'me sua	Girls distribute cocks' tail plumes	Women give to the world which no man can give.
20.	Nomil jajong nidoa	Girls looking up to the moon	Do not live on futile and empty dreams. 6

RIDDLES

1. Ringgamu reba junga ringam jao rebanga=Ganggua (Uninvited he comes, invitations he turs ndown=Mosquito)
2. Dinggode baju sinude bobil=Gigib (A friend in the hot weather, a foe in winter=fan)
3. Rangsa saka chani hogonna monode uako changpengna manja=Mikka. (Once he starts coming down, you can't stop him=rain)
4. Mamani noknigura rangsa domugono butchuma=Thirikbipang (The horse from the maternal uncle's house, becomes old in one lactation=banana tree)
5. Ia nika ia donja=Mika aleba (It is there now and the next moment it has gone=lightning)
6. Beano nangga mukrano nikja=Balua (You feel it but don't see it=wind)
7. Rimna ska rimna manga honkha te khaba=Khisia (I try to catch it but cannot=gas)
8. Fangnan dongga andala de dongja saksa baju ririkha=Jagring (In day time it is with you, at night it leaves you =Shadow)
9. Khusuk chonna bukma dala=Phong (The mouth is so small, the belley is so big=gourd)
10. Reo nika reo resokja=Rama (Walk on and on and it does not end=Read)

DREAMS

1. If a person sees a running horse in his dream he would be chased by a tiger.
2. If one catches fish in his dream he would get money.
3. If one sees a tiger in the dream he would be possessed by the deity/spirit named 'sarbamon' and he would become sick.
4. An elephant in the dream indicates hard labour the next day.
5. If one sees a cow in the dream he will have a quarrel on the next day.
6. If an unmarried boy sees a goat in his dream, he will get a wife who is black complexioned. The same thing will happen to a girl. Her husband will be black.
7. If any pragnent women sees a cock in her dream she would have a male child. If she sees a hen she would give birth to a female child.
8. If any young boy or girl finds a bird in dream he or she will be taller.

MYTHS

Why moon light is less powerful than the sunlight ;

It is believed that the sun and the moon were two sisters. The sun was the elder sister of the moon. But the light of the moon was more powerful than the sun. One day the sun asked the moon 'Oh sister, why do you give more light than me ?' The moon angrily replied, 'You may give more light than me if you can'. Hearing this reply the sun threw a lump of cowdung to the face of the moon. And since this incident the light of the moon is less powerful than the sun'.

Belief regarding the height of the sun (Sal) :

In the past the sun was much below than its present position and was very close to the earth. Due to the heat of the sun the earth also became heated. One day an old lady pushed the sun with a broom and it was raised to its present height.

Belief regarding the height of the sky :

In the past the sky was also very close to the earth. People could easily touch it. One day an old lady got an obstruction while she was sweeping the courtyard with her broom. She pushed the sky with her broom and it went up to its present height.

Belief regarding the creation of the cock and the hen :

There was a rocky hill beside a village inhabited by the Garos. One evening the villagers heard the sound of a cock in that rocky hill. They went to that hill in search of that bird and the sound appeared to be coming from the bottom of rock. Then they broke the rock but could not find anything. The next morning the hen came out with its chickens. There was a banyan tree beside that rock and a kite lived in that tree. When the hen came out with its chicken the kite suddenly swooped down on a chicken and flew away. Within a short time the kite was trapped and the chicken managed to escape. When some Garos found it on their way they picked it up. After a few days the hen began to lay eggs. The Garos constructed a cage of brass for the hen. But it could not hatch the eggs in that brass cage. Then they constructed a cage made of bamboo for that hen and it began to hatch the eggs in that cage. This is the belief among the Garos regarding the existence of hen on the earth.

Worship of banyan tree :

There was a banyan tree beside a junction of three roads. One day an old man was passing by this tree at night, the tree asked 'who are you ; Where did you go ? Where are you going at midnight ? The old man replied 'I am an old man, I have lost everything in the market, so I am late.' The banyan tree said 'If you are ready to propitiate me every evening I shall give you a purse of money. It warned the old man not to disclose it to anybody. The old man agreed and began to offer light and prayer to this tree. In this way the Garos began to offer their prayers to the banyan tree.

CHAPTER—V

REFERENCES

1. Play fair : The Garos, P. 133—135.
2. Sattar Abdus : Tribal Culture in Bangladesh, P. 122.
3. Ibid : P. 97-98.
4. Playfair : The Garos, P. 128-133.
5. Sattar Abdus : Tribal Culture in Bangladesh, P. 77-78.
6. Sangma S. Milton : History and Culture of the Garos, P. 166.

CHAPTER—VI

THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF THE GAROS

Garos are mainly an agriculturist tribe, and agriculture is the main source of their livelihood. According to 1971 Census 5522 Garos live in rural areas out of their total population of 5559. The economic structure of the Garos is markedly different from that of the non-tribals of the State. They have their own traditional pattern of labour, specialization, credit and value etc.

It is a significant feature of their economic structure that the women folk plays an important role in their agricultural activities.

Besides agriculture, a small number of them are also engaged in some other types work like house construction, trade and commerce, livestock and forestry etc. The following table will give an idea of the economic position of the Garos of the rural area and their relevant position with all other tribes of Tripura.

ALL SCHEDULED TRIBES (RURAL)

Total Popula- tion	Total Workers	Cultivators	Agricultural labourer :	Livestock, Forestry, fishing,hunting, and plantations orchards and allied activities.	Mining and quarry-	Manufacturing Processing and Repairs	Construction	Trade and commerce	Trans- port and commu- nication	other Set- vices ers.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (a) Household Industry	7 (b) Other than Household Industry.	8	9	10	11	12
Male :												
227,590	119,998	93,486	22,667	952	X	52	173	32	169	107	2360	107592
Female :												
217,469	20,841	13,570	5,951	982	X	117	176	X	21	1	223	196628
445,059	140,839	107,056	28,618	1734	X	169	349	32	190	108	2583	304220

GARO (RURAL)

Total Population	Total Workers	Cultivator	Agri labourer	Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, hunting and Plantations orchards and allied activities	Manufacturing processing and repairs :	Household Industry	other than Household industry	Trade and Commerce	Transport and storage communication	Other Services	Nonworkers :
1	2	3	4	5	6 (a)	6 (b)	7	8	9	10	
Male :											
2706	1384	877	402	10	1	1	6	1	86	1322	
Female :											
2816	174	97	63	2	X	X	X	X	12	2642	
5522	1558	974	465	12	1	1	6	1	98	3964	

The agricultural pattern of the Garos is a mixture of settled (Plough) cultivation and Jhuming. Jhuming is their original source of income since long past. But till to-day inspite of their advancement in settled cultivation a good number of the Garos are practising shifting cultivation on a limited scale.

Tools and implements of Jhuming :

The necessary tools and implements of jhuming primarily consist of an iron chopper (*atti pawak*) and a bamboo basket called **Kok**. The *atti pawak* is a very useful tool for them which is used for various purposes clearing jungle, cutting down branches of trees, removing the unwanted weeds, construction of houses, sacrificing of animals etc. The **Kok** is used to carry the products of the jhum. A digging implement called **konta** is an important instrument for making holes in the ground, for sowing seeds in the Jhum. The winnowing is done with a winnowing platter called **dala**. The sowing seeds are kept in **machek**, a kind of small bamboo made basket.

Stages of Jhuming :

Jhuming consists of a cycle of operations carried out in different seasons of the year. The time schedules of these operations has to be adhered to more or less strictly.

There are various stages in the Jhuming cycle. The most important stages are :

1. Selection of the spot (*a^obaniya*)
2. Clearing the spot by cutting down of the bushes and trees (*a^obahua*)
3. Spreading the cut branches, bushes etc. (*a^oba ramma*)
4. Burning the dried forest (*a^oba su^a*)
5. Removing the unburnt pieces of trees from the jhum plot (*a^oba khilla*)
6. Sowing of seeds (*a^oba mige^a*)
7. Weeding (*a^oba danga*)
8. Construction of watch shed to protect the jhum from wild beasts and birds—*Burang (nok)*
9. Harvesting (*Miaka*)
10. Threshing (*Minaka*)

A brief description of these operations are given below :—

1. Selection of the plot (*abaniya*) : In selecting a patch of forest, certain factors are taken into consideration. Firstly, preference is generally given to a bamboo forest, as the burning of such forest is easier and the bamboo ash is considered good manure. Secondly, the distance of the Jhum spot from their residence has to be taken into consideration. Thirdly, slopes of hills are preferred to other places.

The selection of the plot is generally done in the month of Agrabayana (November—December).

After the primary selection of the piece of land, the **Kamal** (Priest) performs a puja and predicts the production of crops or the influence of evil spirits in this selected plot. For this puja he drives five bamboo sticks into the round. These five bamboo pieces are the images of the five deities of jhum. The name of these deities are (1) Poschim (2) Bagoba (3) Saljong (4) Jogu (5) Churabudi. Five cocks are sacrificed to them.

2. Cutting the jungle (abahua) : The cutting of the jungle of the jhum plot starts from the month of November—December and continues till February. During this time all the members of the family are engaged in various duties in jhuming. Every one has a specific job to do. The cutting of the jungle is mainly done by the male members and the womenfolk help them. The cutting operation goes on for ten to fifteen days. Then the plants and bamboos are spread for drying.

3. Burning of the Jhum (abasua) : The dried pieces of twigs, branches and bamboos of the jhum is set fire in the month of March—April. Except on Wednesday they can set fire on any day of the week. The burning operation must be done before the rains start otherwise the jhum will not burn well. The yield would be higher and it would be less, labourious if the whole jhum is burnt into ashes completely.

4. Sowing of seeds (abamigia) : With the first rains, the preparation for sowing begins. This is generally done in the month of April—May. The whole plot of the jhum land is treated as single plot and mixture of different seeds—paddy, chilli, pumpkins, brinjals and many other hill vegetables are sown together in holes. They dig all over the plot with the *koita* (digging stick) and the seeds of various crops and vegetable are dropped together in the same hole from a *machek* (small sized bamboo made seed container for sowing) which is tied on the left side of the waist of the sower. After dropping three to four seeds in a hole, they cover it with soil with the toes of their feet. Sometime, the seeds of different crops and vegetable are scattered over a single plot of land.

5. Weeding (aba danga) : As the rain starts with the sowing operation and the whole jhum is covered with short wild grass, creepers and weeds. The weeding operation is done three times a year in June, July and finally in the August.

6. Watchshed (Burang nok) : Like all other tribes of Tripura, the Garos also construct a watchshed at a corner of the jhum. They do not keep their jhum unprotected and unwatched. The watchman of the watchshed are known as *avava chotawwa*. The watchshed is constructed on a raised platform held by bamboo posts. They keep wild beasts and birds such as pig (wok), elephant (ati), monkey (amak), dhupit (Weaver bird), Dhuchik etc. off. Various devices are used for this purpose, traps for the pigs, fire for the ~~beasts~~ and catapults to kill the birds. Sometimes they keep a piece of bamboo split along its length which produces a peculiar sound when shaken and shoots the birds and animals.

The various devices the Garos use for catching wild animals is quite interesting. Before setting traps for animals they find out the route followed by the animals to the jhum. It is not a difficult task for them as they know the ways of the wild animals, their nature, strength, habits etc. generally, the pigs like to follow the same route and it is easier to trap the pigs. A brief description of the traps used for catching pigs have been given here.

1. In setting traps for young pigs first two bamboo poles are erected on both sides of the route to the jhum. Then another bamboo pole is horizontally fixed at the height of about one foot above the ground. Then some nooses made of wire are hung from the horizontal bar each 5 to 7 inches apart. When the pigs go through these nooses they get fixed on their shoulders,

2. The traps used for catching adult pigs are different. First, two bamboo poles are erected on both sides of the route to the jhum which supports a horizontal bar. Then a strong bamboo (shib) is fixed driving it into about six feet into the ground at a distance of about 15 feet from one side of the route. The other end of the bamboo is pulled down and it remains in that position about one foot above horizontal bar. Then a strong rope noose is hung to it. And some bamboo stricks are spread over the ground under the bar. When the pig steps onto these sticks its neck is trapped into the rope noose and at once it is lifted to the air as the end of the bamboo is released. In this way the game is trapped by the Garos.

The devices they use for trapping sojaru (porcupine) and hares are different. The trapper finds out the holes in which these animals live. Then he sets a bamboo made trap on the mouth of the hole and blocks the other mouth of the hole with straw in which some chillies are added. Then they set fire to the straw in such a way that the smoke enters the hole. The animals cannot bear this smoke and try to come out through the open end of the hole and are thus easily trapped.

Sometimes the porcupines are caught by throwing banana stems over them which get stuck on their spikes and made them immobile.

7. Harvesting (Miaka) : The harvesting of the jhum crops is a continuous process. Since all the crops of the jhum do not ripe at a time, harvesting is done selectively. Generally, the harvesting of the jhum products starts in the month of June and continues till September—October. They go to their Jhum early in the morning with cooked rice along with *gaddok rwa gimbi* (Water container) and baskets to put the harvested crops in.

8. Threshing (Minaka) : The threshing is done by men and women together. Generally, they tread the ears of the Corn with their feet. Sometimes threshing is done by beating them with a wooden or bamboo club.

After threshing comes the work of winnowing. Winnowing is done with the help of two kinds of hand made trays which are called *dalla* (round shaped tray) and *ruwan* (like trays used by the neighbouring Bengalees). When the wind blows one man lifts an amount of uncleaned grain in a tray and let it fall to the ground. In this process the chaffs are blown away by the wind. After finishing of the winnowing the grains are dried in the sun. Then the husking is done by the womenfolk with help of a wooden mortar and shell and sometimes with the help of a wooden husking pedal called *tenki*.

9. Harvesting and festivity : After the harvesting of the Jhum crop *ronchugla puja* is performed in each house in the month of Vadra (August—September), the *Ka nai* officiates the Puja. Red cocks are sacrificed and *chira* (*ronchu*) is prepared in this puja. Pumpkins, gourds, lemons, etc. of the Jhum cannot be consumed before this puja. After the harvesting of the *Wani* paddy they perform the *Wangala* ceremony. In this ceremony they move from door to door in groups dancing and singing.

PLOUGH CULTIVATION.

The Garos are now mainly settled agriculturists. Now a days plough cultivation is their primary occupation, shifting cultivation is playing only a supplementary role. In settled cultivation they grow mainly three crops-Aush and Aman and Boro. Some progressive cultivators also use pesticides and fertilizers. The traditional tools of cultivation, bullocks, cows, and old type ploughs are still their tools of cultivation.

The year-round economic activities based on both plough and shifting cultivation of the Garos are shown in the table below :

LABOUR SYSTEM

The traditional labour system of the Garos, which has a significant role in the Garo economy may be grouped under the following heads :

4. Share Cropping : The system of share cropping which is in vogue among the Garos is of three kinds namely (a) Bhagi (b) Bhaga and (c) Paikas.

(a) Bhagi : In this system the share cropper cultivates the land for one year and gives half of the total product of crop to the land owner.

(b) Bhaga : In this system, the owner of the land gives land and seeds to the share cropper for one year and gets half of the total production of crops and straw in return.

(c) Paikas : In case of paikas the owner of the land takes certain amount of money in times of his need from a person by giving him a plot of his agricultural land for a definite period i.e. one or two crops only. The money lender enjoys all the rights of the land for that period. After the completion of that period the land goes back to the land owner. For example : Mr. X borrows Rs. 100/- from Mr. Y and in return he gives one Kani of paddy land to 'Y' for a single crop only. After getting one crop of that land the land goes back to Mr. X.

2. Ren : In case of ren the owner of the land borrows certain amount of money on interest from a money lender giving him a plot of agricultural land. The money lender cultivates and enjoys all the rights of the land till the owner of the land pays him back the entire amount and interest on it. If the owner of the land fails to pay the interest of the money in time after a certain period it becomes so high that it becomes impossible on his part to pay the entire amount with interest at a time. Thus the land goes to the money lender permanently. This system is very much in vogue among the Garos.

3. Domestic servant (Noko/Choakuwal) : The service of the domestic servant also plays an important role in their agricultural work. Generally, male persons are appointed for agricultural work on various conditions. In many cases they are appointed for one year and paid a certain amount of money including meals and clothings. But if the servants quits before completion of his term he is deprived from his earlier service and not paid any thing.

In some cases, monthly salaried agricultural workers are appointed, and in such cases the worker may leave the job any time he likes.

4. Exchange of labour (Bara Chotta) : In this system families help one another in agricultural of any other activities. No payment is made by either side. It is a kind of mutual help and co-operation.

5. Bagajilla : In this system a man gives his cow, goat, hen or pig to another man to look after it for a minimum period of two years. The first calf or utter of the animal or fowl becomes the property of the care taker and the young ones born thereafter are taken by the owner. In case of cow the milk of the first lactation is consumed by the care taker and milk of the subsequent lactation is consumed by the owner. If the utter is more than one they are equally distributed between the care taker and the owner.

6. Keraya : In this system of Keraya, the owner of bullock or cows takes certain amount of money from a person and gives his bullock or cow for a fixed period to use them in ploughing.

Besides cultivation the Garos are engaged in more than one occupations to supplement their income. These are selling agricultural commodities such as jute, paddy, garden products (such as pine apple, jackfruit, mango etc.), forest products (like bamboo, thatched, fire wood etc.), milk, goats, pigs, hens, rice beer etc.

Now-a-days, many Garos work as plantation labourer in the forest department. Government service is also a source of their income. In some villages 60% families are government servants. They are in different in respect of business. Of course, now a days a few persons have come forward to business, running grocers shops, dry fish shops etc.

The Garos are gradually becoming interested in pisciculture. Some Garos have constructed lakes. Government fishery department gives them financial help and technical advice.

Rubber plantation is increasing among the Garos day by day. Many of them are aware of the prospect of rubber plantation. Moreover, the subsidy sanctioned by the Rubber Board also attracts them. A few families have rubber gardens.

The Garos are now gradually becoming conscious of the functions of banks and the necessity of modern Co-operative societies. It is seen that many Garo families are members of the LAMPS and Many families received monetary assistance from LAMPS for various purposes. They are now aware of the rules and regulations of banks regarding monetary transactions and obtaining of loans. Now they are relieved of borrowing money on high rate of interest from the local money lenders.

The Co-operative societies are purchasing jute on protected prices and thus they are benefitted. Now they can purchase paper, ink, cloth, candles etc. from pex societies at fixed prices and so there is little scope to the local businessmen exploit them. Therefore, it is obvious that some changes have taken place in their economic life.

The economic condition of the Garos in general is not very well. It is astonishing that not a single brick building for any Garo family could be found. Most of them are still working as agricultural workers.

The Garos of Tripura are not conscious of reasons for their economic backwardness. As long they have money in their pocket they do not think for tomorrow. The economic crisis among the Garos may be divided into two categories (1) permanent crisis which is generally felt twice in a year i.e. in the month of (1) Chaitra (March—April) and Aswin-Kartik (October-November) (2) Self created or artificial crisis. Some of the important factors responsible for their crisis seem to be due to the following reasons :

(1) **Mobility/Shifting :** The Garos of Tripura do not live in any place for a long time. It seems that shifting from one place to another is innate in them. With the increase of population in old areas the scarcity of land for jhuming arises and then they leave their old village for better land for jhuming. Before leaving the old village they send some persons who are called **hadamneunga** (means searcher of jhum land) to find out new land for jhuming secretly. If the **hadamneungas** appreciate a place for better production they at once shift to that place. Sometimes they shift without knowing the advantages and disadvantages of the new place. They do not discuss about their plan with anybody and leave the village through jungle path.

Besides this, result of natural calamities like flood, draught, etc. they shift their village. If they find any kind of troubles in the routine of the daily life they think to leave this place. They do not think that similar situation may arise in the new place and natural calamity is universal. It is reported that in 1955 many Garo families left Madhuban of Sadar due to drought.

Due to quick shifting from one place to another they cannot settle in any place. They cannot enjoy the fruits of the labour of their forefathers. Probably 'a rolling stone gathers no moss' is the most appropriate maxim applicable to the Garos of Tripura.

(ii) **Drinking of alcohol :** Drinking of alcohol is also partly responsible for their economic backwardness. Generally, they go from house to house drinking. In this way drinking continues for fifteen days. During this period they remain absent from their agricultural work. Moreover, a good amount of rice is required to prepare beer which ultimately leads to the scarcity of rice. And as they have no income during the period of non-working days they have to sell pigs, hens, goats, etc. at low prices.

(iii) **The role of middleman :** Generally, the Garos do not sell their goods directly in the market. These are sold in the market through a middleman who controls the market. Sometimes they take loan money from the middleman who before harvesting of crops which gives them little scope to bargain with the middleman.

(iv) **Marriage system :** The traditional system of marriage of the Garos and their hereditary system of property right is also considered partly responsible for their poverty. As the property of the father goes to the daughter, the son-in-law generally they does not show any interest to preserve or try to extent it. On the other hand, the father of the Bride also does not like to extent his property for the future as he knows that the property would go to his son-in-law, not to the sons. And even after the death of his wife he will loose his property right in his lifetime. So they are guided by the policy 'it is better to think for to day than for morrow'.

CHAPTER—VII

VILLAGE STUDY REPORT

Some Garo Villages of Tripura.

In the past, one of the biggest concentrations of the Garos of Tripura was in the Madhuban area of Sadar Sub-Division. It is situated at a distance of about 8 K.M. away from the Agartala town to the south. During the last few years many Garo families shifted from this area to Kathalchara of Kailashahar Sub-Division. In Madhuban area the Garos live in three hamlets namely Mission Tila, Pritilata and Jharjoria which are closely linked with one another. A brief account of these three villages have been given below :

(1) Pritilata : It is situated about 6 K.M. away from Agartala town to the south. It is bounded on the north, south, east and west by the villages of Tukatila, colony number 2, Kumbha Gatao and 2nd group respectively. The name Pritilata has been originated from the name of the School which is known as Pritilata J. B. School. It is a mixed village inhabited by the Garos and the Bengalees. There are 18 Garos households in this village.

(2) Jhor Jhoria : It is situated at a distance of about 6½ K.M. from Agartala town to the south. It is bounded on the north, south, east and west by the villages of Kumbha Ghatao, and Ranir Khamar, Mission Tilla and chonkhola, Pritilata, and Bogachatar respectively. It is a mixed village inhabited by the Garos and the Bengalees. There are 4 Garos and 20 Bengalee households in this village. The name Jhor Jhoria has been originated from the word 'Jhor Jhor' which means perforated.

(3) Mission tila : It is situated adjacent to Jhorjhoria. It is bounded on the north, south, east and west by the villages of Chonkhola, Jhorjhoria and Kumbha Gatao, Jhorjhoria and Bogachattaer respectively. As there is an old Catholic Church and a Missionary School in this tila (high land) it is named as Mission tila. It is exclusively inhabited by the Garos. There are 18 Garo households in this village.

Besides the above mentioned three villages, in the past, the Garos lived in the two villages of chonkhola and Bogachattar. Now they have migrated from these villages to North Tripura and there is not a single Garo family in these two villages.

In order to give a clear picture of the Socio-economic condition of the Garos in Madhuban area it would be better to study them as a single unit. A picture of the Socio-economic condition of the Garos of Madhuban area has been given below :

SL. No.	Name of items :	Total number of	Percentage:
		45 families.	
1.	No. of land holding families	42	91.30%
2.	No. of landless families	4	8.69%
3.	No. of families holding 5 or more than 5 kanies of land	31	73.80%
4.	No. of families practising Jhumming	3	7.14%
5.	No. of Government service holders	28	60.86%

SL. No.	Name of items :	Total number of 46 families :	Percentage
6.	No. of Ex-serviceman	9	19.56%
7.	No. of family with Rs. 500/- or more than Rs. 500/- income per mont,	28	60.86%
8.	Land sold during the last 10 years	Nil	Nil
9.	Membership of large scale Multipurpose Co-operative society	26	56.52%
10.	No. of families received non-refundable loan from the Lamps.	26	100%
11.	No. of families engaged in paddy culti- vation and silk cultivation	3	6.52%
12.	Loan taken for Ruqber plantation	2	4.34%
13.	Loan taken for fishery	1	2.17%
Forest Products (Selling) :			
(a)	Bamboo and chon	12	26.08%
(b)	Horticulture products :		
	Jackfruits, pineapple, Mango	9	19.56%
	Marriage within the same Machong (Clan)	Nil	Nil
	Marriage between Sangma and Marak	42	91.30%
	Marriage between Garo boy and Bengali girl	3	6.52%
	No. of Divorce	Nil	Nil
	Remarriage	2	4.34%
	Hindus	24	52.17%
	Christian	20	43.47%
	Mixed	2	4.34%
	Originally migrated from Maymensingh	44	95.65%
	Assam	1	2.17%
	Meghalaya	1	2.17%
Migration Due to :			
(a)	Communal Distrurbance in East Pakistan	11	23.91%
(b)	Better economic condition	33	71.73%
(c)	Missionary work	1	2.17%
(d)	As Ghorjamai	1	2.17%

In Madhuban Gaon Shabha there are total 46 Garo households. Out of 46 families 44 (95.65%) families migrated from Mynensing District of Bangladesh, 1 (2.17%) family from Assam and 1 (2.17%) family from Meghalaya. The migration took place during the period 1945 to 1950. The following factors may be regarded responsible for their migration.

(a) Scarcity of land for Jhuming in their previous place of dwelling. It has been found that 71.73% migration of the Garos took place due to this reason.

(b) Communal disturbance in the erstwhile East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) during the period of partition of India. About 23.91% migration of the Garos took place due to communal disturbance. Only 1 (2.17%) family came as a missionary worker and 1 (2.17%) family came as Ghorjamai.

Most of the Garos of this Gaon Shabha use the name of their Chatehi as surname. Of course some of them use the name of their machong (Sub-clah) as surname.

The Garos cultivate two crops mainly Aman and Aush. Jhuming is being practiced by only 3 (7.14%) families. For higher production of crops fertilizers and insecticides are also being used by many families. But still they follow the traditional tools of cultivation. Bullocks and cows are still their important livestock.

It is pleasing to note that 91.30% percent of the Garos of Madhupur are possessing agricultural land and among these land owning families 73.80% families are holding 5 or more than 5 kanies of land. Only 8.69 Garos of this area have no agricultural land which is lower than the average level of landless of all other tribes of Tripura which is 20%.

It is found that among the land owning families 54.34% families are directly linked with cultivation and rest of the families give their land to the share croppers.

In order to supplement their income many families sell silkworm forest products, horticultural and agricultural products. It is found that about 6.52% families are engaged in silkworm cultivation, about 26.03% families earn something by selling forest products like chon, (thatch) bamboo, and fire wood. About 19.56% families earn something by selling horticultural products like mango, jackfruit, pineapple etc. in the local market.

Regarding occupational categories, government service holds an important place. There are 28 Government Service holders which is about 60.86% of the total families of this village. There are 9 (19.56%) ex-service-

men who are to some extent economically sound. Next comes the case for agricultural labourers who work as day labourer, or monthly labourer to the house of landowning families. It is pleasing to note that about 60.86 % Garo families have minimum income of Rs. 500/- per month.

The Garos of Madhuban area are now gradually becoming conscious about the function of the Bank and the necessity of modern Co-operative societies. They are now aware of the rules and regulations of the Bank regarding monetary transactions and obtaining of loans from the Bank. It has been found that about 56.52% Garo families of this area are members of the LAMPS and all of them have taken loan from it. Some families have got loans from the Banks for fisheries. Now a days some Garo families have started rubber plantation and have got loan or subsidy from the Rubber Board for rubber plantation. It is hoped that rubber plantation may start a new era in the economic life of the Garos of this area.

There is no market within the jurisdiction of these three hamlets. There are three bi-weekly and one daily market at a distance of about 2 to 4 K. m. The nearby markets are Amtali (a daily market), and Kanchanmala, (every sunday and thursday). Some villagers go to shekercoat (a bi-weekly market), sits on every Friday and Monday (, Uttar Anandanagar (sits on every Tuesday and Saturday) Dakshin Anandanagar which is also a bi-weekly market sits on every Friday and Monday).

Both men and women go to market. They are interested to go to market where they sell chillie, brinjal, pumpkin, gourd, cucumber, etc. and mostly purchase bidi, salt, dry fish, betel leaf and all necessary goods. They seldom purchase fish or meat from the market.

The level of literacy is to some extent better than the level of literacy of the average tribal villages of Tripura. The children upto primary level read in the Pritilata Junior Basic School and Kumbhagatao Junior Basic School. The nearby High school is at Kathaltali. Besides their mother tongue Garo, all of them can speak and understand Bengali very well. Some of them can speak in Hindi and English also.

The house of the Garos are constructed on the ground of tila (high land) lands. The house are built of split and flattened bamboo with thatched roof. Some of the houses are built with mud wall. The typical houses are very simple in design and rectangular in shape. The graveyard for the christian Garos is located on the Western side of Missiontila. There is no fixed cremation ground for the Hindu Garos.

The practice of child marriage is no longer in vogue among the Garos of this area. The bride is generally junior to the bridegroom in respect of age.

The average age for marriage for the boys is between 20 and 25-years and for the girls it is between 16 and 20 years. There is not a single case of divorce and inter-machong marriage in this area. There are some cases of Garo—non—garo marriage in this area. Their traditional system of marriage in which the bride groom resides in father—in—law's house is no longer popular. There is only one case of such type of marriage in this villages. The Garos of Madhuban are related within large number of Garo villages of Tripura by matrimonial relationship. Some Garo boys of this area residing in their father—in—law's house. All these factors have resulted in the synthesis of their culture with these of the non—garos.

The religion of the Garos of Madhuban area is an admixture of Hinduism and Christianity. The Hindu Garos constitute about 56.52% and the Christians are 43.47%. The religious beliefs and practices of the Hindu Garos may be characterised as polytheistic. Their beliefs and practices bear the imprints of the district reflections of the local Hinduism. The Hindu Garos worship many major deities of all India Hinduism and at the same time they observe most of the rituals connected with the human life cycle characterised by some of their distinctive traditional peculiarities.

Among the Christians there are both the protestants and catholics in the area. It should be mentioned here that the Christian Garos do not observe their traditional religious practices. They observe the religious function and festivals of Christianity. There is a Catholic Church at Mission tila and a protestant church at Pritilata.

NANDANNAGAR

In the past there were many Garo families in Domdomia, Lembuchara, and Chanmari (Near Nandannagar). Now there is no Garo family in those villages. At present there are 16 Garo families in Nandannagar. Nandannagar is situated in the Sadar Sub-Division and about 6 K.M. from Agartala towards North-east side. It is a mixed village inhabited by the Garos and the Bengalees. Out of 16 families 15 families belonging to Marak Chatchi and 1 family belongs to Sangma Chatchi. Regarding the machong composition of the village, there are 12 Chisim, 2 Chiran, 1 Rema and 1 Mrong machong in this village.

There is no landless family. Jhuming has been abandoned for a long time. 4 families have agricultural land. Besides agriculture horticulture is an additional source of income. Almost all the villagers have pineapple, Mango and jack-fruit gardens and they sell the fruits in the market. There are 15 govern

ment service holders out of which 11 males and 4 females. The earning of the Government employees strengthened their economic and social condition. There is one ex-serviceman in this village. Their livestock constitutes of pigs, cows, fowls etc.

All the Garos of Nanadannagar are bilingual. They can speak Bangali very well, it is next to their mother tongue. In respect of religion all the Garo families of Nandannagar are Hindus. They have made synthesis of their traditional system of worships with the religious functions of the Bangalee Hindus of the village.

There is no case of inter-machong marriage in this village. Polygamy and the case of divorce are not found in this village. The system of bride price is also absent. Child marriage is no longer in practice. There are cases of Garo-non-garo marriages. Out of 3 Garo boys one married Deb Barma, One Khasi and one Bangali girl.

MOHISHMARA

This village is situated about 15 K.m. away from Agartala town to the north-east. It is in the Ramchandranagar Gaon Sabha of Jirania Block of Sadar Sub-Division. It is bounded on the north, south, east and west by the villages of Kisongbari, Dinobondn, Koprapara and Chantaibari, and Cattlefarm Complex respectively. There are 13 Garo and 2 Tripuri families in this village. All the Garos including the Tripuris of this village are Hindus. This village is about 60 years old. All the Garo families of this village migrated from Nalitabari and Haluaghat of Mymensing District of Bangladesh.

There are 7 land-holding and 6 landless (agricultural land) Garo families in this village. Jhuming is being practised to some extent along with plough cultivation by the Garos of this village.

There are 2 Government service holders. Most of the villagers work as agricultural labourers. The nearby markets are Durga Chowdhury para, Khayerpur and Ranirbazar. There is no school in this village. There is no case of divorce, and polygamy in the village. There are two cases of inter-tribal marriage.

DHUPCHORA

Dhupchora is village under the Tolakona Gaon Sabha of Sadar Sub-Division of west Tripura District, about 12 K.M. to the east of Agartala. The village is bounded on the north, South, east and west by the villages of Koroi-

bari, Jarulbasa, No agaon, Anandanagar respectively. The villages got its name from small stream called Dhupchora that flows by this village. This village is about 40 years old.

It is a mixed village inhabited by the Garos, Bengalees and the Tripurians. The total number of households of the Garos is 37 with 247 souls. There are 25 Marak and 12 Sangma households in this village. All the Garo households of this village migrated to Tripura from Mymensing and Dacca Districts of Bangladesh during the period 1948-50. Out of 37 households 33 households migrated from Mymensing and 4 families from Dacca. Scarcity of land for Jhumming in their earlier places of dwelling and communal disturbance in Pakistan immediately after the partition of India are the important cause of their migration from Pakistan.

Agriculture is main source of their livelihood. The traditional way of shifting cultivation has been replaced by settled cultivation. It is a prosperous village. There is no landless Garo families in this village. Out of 37 households 35 (94.59%) families possess 5 or more than 5 Kanis of land each. Among the crops Jhum-malati lalsaban, Binni and Mikob are remarkable varieties of paddy and the principal crops grown. Besides paddy, till, pulses and Jute are also produced to some extent. Their taking to plough cultivation may be due to their long time contact with the Bengalees and the presence of a good number of ex-service men who had developed a modern outlook in respect of agriculture. Among the villagers there 16 (43.24%-households) ex-servicemen. Besides this employment in various government offices have helped to strengthen their economic condition. There are fourteen government servants in this village. The monthly income of each of the 36 families (97.35%) is Rs.300/-or more in average.

The livestock of the Garos consists of cows, pigs, fowls, goats etc. 23 households have pigs, 7 households have cows. Almost all the families sell milk.

Some villagers produce potato, gourds, pineapple etc. and sell them in the local market. The nearest market is Nuton Bazar which is 3 K.M. from the village. It is a bi-weekly market and is held on every Sunday and Thursday. Four families sell forest produce like the bamboo, thatch, fire wood etc. in market which also supplements their income. No land was transferred to the people of other communities during the last 10 years.

Out of 37 families 35 families are Christians and 2 families are Hindus. Among the Christians Catholics is the majority in number. There are two separate churches for them.

Child marriage is not in practice among the Garos of this village. The average age for marriage for the boys is between 21 and 26 and for the girls it is between 18 and 22. There is no case divorce or of polygamy in this village. Inter-machong marriage is also absent in this village.

KANCHANMALA

Kanchanmala is a village that lies about 10 K. m. away from Agartala to the south. east and west by the villages of Dakshin Anardanagar, Sekherkut and Laxmibil, Prabhapur and Gabardi and Chonkhala respectively. The name Kanchanmala has been originated from the name of Kanchanmala, a queen of Tripura. There are 5 Garo households and all the Garo households came from Mymensing District of Bangladesh for the scarcity of land for Jhuming in Mymensing. There is no landless Garo family in this village and 4 (80%) families are holding 5 or more than 5 kanies of land. There is a bi-weekly market in this village which sits on every Suuday and Thursday.

In order to give a clear cut picture of the socio economic condition of the Garos of Kanchanmala the data of 5 families of this village is given below :

Sl. No.	Name of the items	Total number of 5 families	Percentage :
1	No. of landholding families	5	100%
2	No. of landless families	nil	nil
3	No. of families holding 5 or more than 5 kanies of land	4	80%
4	No. of families practicing Jhuming	nil	nil
5	No. of employes in Government/undertaking organisation.	1	20%
6	No. of families with Rs. 500/- or more than Rs. 500/-income per month.	3	60%
7	Membership of large scale Multi-purpose co-operative Society.	nil	nil
8	Income from selling forest products, Bamboo and chon	3	60%
9	Selling milk	3	60%
10	Marriage within the same Machong	nil	nil.
11	No. of Divorce	nil	nil
12	Christian	3	60%
13	Hindus	3	40%
14	Originally migrated from Mymensingh	5	100@
15	Cause of Migration from East Pakistan		
	(a) Economic Condition	5	100%
	(b) Communal disturbance	nil	nil.

BADADEPA

Badadepa lies in the Bishalgarh Block of Sadar Sub—Division of West Tripura District. It is about 15 K. M. from Agartala towards south. The village is bounded on the north, south, east and west by the villages of B. S. F. camp of Gokulnagar, Bishalgar, Sepayjola and Madhupur respectively. The same Badadepa means a flat lowland with a dam (Bada has been derived from the word Badh which means dam and depa means a flat low land). It is a village mixed populated village consisting of the Garos, Bengalees and nepalees. There are 7 Garo household : 4 families belong to the Morong machong and to the Dupu machong. The total Garo population of this village is 32. 2 families are migrated from Assam and 5 families from the nearby Jhor Jhoria village where they originally migrated from Mymensingh District of Bangladesh.

All the Garo villagers are dependen on agriculture. Shifting cultivation is no longer in practice. There is no landless family in the village. 60% families of the village are holding 5 or more than 5 Kanies of paddy land. There are one ex-servicemen and one person serving in the B. S. F. The monthly income of all the 7 families (100%) each is Rs. 300/— or more per month. No land has been transferred to others during the last 15 years.

The Garos of this vililage are Hindu by religion. The markets namely are Bishalgar Bazar and B. S. F. Camp Bazar which are situated about 2 K M. and 1½ K. M. from the vililage respectively. Both of the markets are bi—weekly. The market days of the Bishalgar are Saturdays and Tuesdays and the B. S. F. market Wednesdays and Sundays. The villagers purchase their necessary articles from these markets.

There is not a single case of divorce and polygamy. Intertribal, tribal—non—tribal and inter machong marriage is also nil. The average age for marriage for the boys is between 21 and 26 and for the girls, 18 and 21. Child marriage is not in practice in this village.

Cows, fowls, pigs bufalo etc. constitute ihe livestocks of the villagers. All the 7 families have pigs, 5 families (71. 42% families) have milk cows, 4 families (57%) have poultry and only 1 family has buffalo.

There is a jnnior Basic School and a Sub-Post Office in this village. There is no government office in this village. No one of the village, has passed the Madhyamik Examination.

All the villagers are bi—lingual. Besides, the Garo language, they can speak and understand Bengali very well. Some of them can speak and understand Hindi also.

SIPAIJOLA

Sipaijola is located about 20 K. M. away from Agartala. It is under Gulaghati Gaon Sabha. It is bounded on the north, South, east and West by the villages of chonbaira, Charilam, Golaghati and DRF respectively. There is a stream called Burichara flows beside this village. It is a mixed village inhabited by the Garos and the Bengalees. There are 43 Garo households. All of them migrated from the Mymensing District of Bangladesh. All the Garos of this village are bi-lingual. Besides their mother tongue they can speak and understand Bengali very well. Some of them can speak a little Hindi also. All the 43 families are Hindus. There is an old temple in this village. The nearby marketing centres are at Sephaijola and Golaghati. There is a Primary School, one High School, one post-office, one forest office, one dispensary and one ring-well in this village.

HULAKHET

This village is situated at a distance of about 8 K. M. from Udaipur the district head quarters of south Tripura District. This village is bounded on the north, south, east west by the villages of Chandrapur, Joalikhamar and Gangachara, Bosonkhola and Moghpuskarini respectively. The name Hulakhet has been derived from the words 'Hula' (corruption of the Bengali word Shula which means indian cork) and 'Khet' is also Bengali word which means field, The village got its name Hulakhet as once hula (Indian cork) grew here abundantly.

It is a village inhabited by the mixed populaten of the Garos and the Bengalees. Ther are 46 Garo households in this villare. All the Garo families migrated to this village from Mymensing district of Bangladesh during the period 1945 to 1960. The following factors may be regarded as responsible for their migration :—

- (a) Scarcity of land for jhuming in their previous place of dwelling. It has been found that 65.2% migration of the Garos took place due to this reason.
- (b) Communal distrubance in the earstwhile East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh during the period of partition of India. About 34.78% migration of the Garos took place due to communal distrubance.

Most of the Garos of this village use the name of their CHATIHĪ as surname. Of course some them use the name of their MACHONG (Sub-Plan) as surnnme. It has been found that there are 28 Marak, 2 Mrong, 7 Chiran, 5 Ruga, 2 Sangma, 1 Rema and 1 Chisim family in this village and they use their abovementioned surnames.

The Garos of this village are related to the Garos in many other villages. Inter-machong marriage, polygamy and the case of divorce are not found in this village. The system of bride price is also absent. Child marriage is no longer in practice. The average age for marriage for the boys is 22-26 years and for the girls 18 and 22 years.

In respect of religion all the Garo families of this village are christians. The Catholics are in majority and there is a church built in 1956. The protestants have no separate church building and a house serves this purpose.

All the Garos of this village are bi-lingual. They can speak and understand Bengali very well, it is next to their mother tongue. Some of them have knowledge in Hindi and English also.

Hulakhet is a prosperous village. Their livestock consist of pigs, goats, milk cows, fowls etc. It has been found that out of 46 households 38 households have pigs, 40 households have one or more milk cows and fowl keeping is quite common.

The Garos of Hulakhet are dependent mainly on agriculture. There is no landless Garo family in this village. It is pleasing to note that 35 families (about 76% families) have 5 or more than 5 Kanis of land. Shifting cultivation is no longer in practice. All of them are settled cultivators. Many of them work as agricultural labourers. There are also 14 (fourteen) government employees whose earning strengthen their families economic and social status.

There is a bi-weekly market at Hulakhet which is held on every Sunday and Wednesday. There is also another market in Chandrapur colony which is located at a distance of about 2 K.M. from this village held bi-weekly on every Tuesday and Friday. The Garos of Hulakhet sell their agricultural product and purchase their necessary articles from these two markets. There is a post Office, a V. L. W. Office and a Panchayet office in this village.

BOTTOLA

Bottola is located about 8 K. M. away from Udaipur, the district head quarters of South Tripura. It is under Purba Mogh Puskurini Gaon Sabha. The village is bounded on the north, south, east and west by the villages of Hatipocha, Dataram, Julaibari, and Hulakhet respectively. It is a mixed village inhabited by the Bengalees, Riangs and Garos. The name Bottola has been derived from the words bot which means a banyan tree and tola means foot of a tree. So Bottola means foot of a banyan tree. There is cheria (stream) flows besides this village from Julaibari.

There are 15 Garo households with 89 souls in this village. Some of them use the name of their Chatchi and some use the name of their machong as surname. There are 4 Sangma, 7 Marok, and 4 Ruga households. All of them migrated from the Mymensingh District of Bangladesh during the period of 1941 to 1950. Scarcity of land for Jhuming and communal troubles in Pakistan (now Bangladesh) are mainly responsible for their migration.

All the Garos of this village are bi-lingual. Besides their mother tongue they can speak and understand Bengali very well. Some of them can speak a little English and Hindi. There is a primary School and a temporary Post Office in this village.

Child marriage is not in practice among the Garos of this village. The average age for marriage for the boys is between 21 and 25 and for the girls it is between 18 and 22. There is no case of divorce- polygamy and inter-machong marriage in this village. The village is related with some of the neighbouring Garo villages by matrimonial relationship.

The Garos of Bottola are dependent on agriculture. Shifting cultivation is no longer in practice and plough cultivation is the order of the day. There is no landless family and each of 9 families (60%) possess 5 or more than 5 kanis of land. Different kinds of livestock like pigs fowls, cows, Bullocks etc. are kept by them, some of them work as agricultural labourers also. A few families sell their agricultural products in the local market. There is a bi-weekly market at Dataram about $\frac{1}{2}$ k. m. away from the village which is held on every Tuesday and Saturday. Some of the villagers also go to Chandrapur colony market situated about $2\frac{1}{2}$ K. M. from the village, which is also a bi-weekly market and is held on every Tuesday and Friday. The minimum income of each of the 15 families is Rs. 300/ per month. There are 3 Government employees and 4 ex-servicemen in this village. There is no case of land transfer from the Garo to the non-Garo of the village during the last 10 years.

KALABAN

Kalaban is a village 14 K. M. away from Udaipur to the south. This village is in the Udaipur Sub-Division of South Tripura District. It is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ K. M. from Gorji which is a good business centre. The village is under Gorji Tehsil and Gorji Gaon Sabha. bounded on the north, south, east and west by the villages of Goalia, Potichori, Gorji and Moesum Pathor, and Tulamura respectively. The literal meaning of Kalaban is a dark forest. The village got its name Kalaban as once it was a dense forest of Shal trees.

It is a mixed village inhabited by the Garos, Tripurians and Bengalees. The total number of Garo household is 31 with a total population of 196. Out of this 31 households 30 households come from Mymensing District of Bangladesh and one from the Garo hills of Meghalaya. It has been found that all the Garo households came during the period 1930 to 1950 and about 74% families between 1947 and 1950. The main causes of their migration are scarcity of land for jhuming in Mymensing and communal disturbance in Bangladesh (earstwhile Pakistan) immediately after partition. Only one family came for preaching Christianity.

The Garos of Kalaban are dependent on agriculture. The shifting cultivation is no longer in practice. The settled cultivation is in vogue. In an investigation it has been found that out of 31 Garo families only 2 (6.46%) Garo families are landless which is much lower than the average level of landless of all the tribes of Tripura which is 20%. It is pleasing to note that 16 (51.61%) of the Garo families are holding 5 or more than 5 Kanas of agricultural land which is an indication of the soundness of the economic condition of the Garos of this Village. During agricultural season many of them work as agricultural labour and thus earn something. Selling of fruits like pineapple, jackfruits, banana, etc. in local market and forest products like bamboo and chon (thatch) also supplement their income. Besides agricultural work employment in government offices have strengthened their economic stability. There are 15 Garo households which have 16 government employees and 3 ex-servicemen.

The Garos of this village have a good number of livestock. 17 families have 70 cows and families have 33 pigs. The monthly income of each of the 28 families is above Rs. 300/—

In this village all the Garos are bilingual. Bangali is as like as their mother tongue. Besides the Garo and Bengali language some of them can speak in English and Hindi also. 21 person of this village can speak and understand English and 18 persons can speak in Hindi.

Regarding the religious belief of this village it may be said that all the Garos of this village are Christians. There is one Baptist and one Catholic Church in this village. The number of Catholics is much higher than the Protestants. The Protestants have 20 church of their own. Their Prayer is done in the house of a villager.

Regarding matrimonial relationship it may be said that child marriage is not practised in this village. The average age for marriage for the boys is between 22 and 26 years and for the girls it is between 18 and 22. The case of divorce and person with more than one wife is nil in this village. Inter-tribal marriage, tribal non-tribal marriage and inter-machon village is also absent in this village.

Electricity come to this village in 1983. There is a Senior Basic school in this village. For Secondary education they go to Gorji High School. The nearest market Place is at Gorji which is only $1\frac{1}{2}$ K. M. away from the village. The market sits on Monday and Wednesday. There is no Garo Shop Keeper. There is a market a post-Office, a panchayet office and a forest office in this villages.

PERATIA.

It is situated about 10 K. M. away from Udaipur town to the South. This village is in the Hulakhet Gaon Shabha of Udaipur Sub-Division of South Tripura District. It stands on the side of Udaipur Belonia road. It is bounded on the north, south, east and west by the village of Ichachara. Natintilla, Bosonkhola and Hulakhet respectively.

There are total 14 Garo households in this village. Most of the families migrated from Mymensing District of Bangladesh. There are 7 Christian and 7 Hindu Garo families in this village. There is no school in this village. All the families practice plough cultivation. The nearby markets are Gorji and Dataram.

LAXMICHARA

This village is situated in the Laxmichara Gaon Shabha of Belonia Sub-Division of South Tripura District. There are three Garo families in this village. The economic condition of these three Garo families is relatively good. All these 3 families have established matrimonial relationship with the neighbouring Reang and Mogh community. All these 3 families belong to the Sangma Chatchi and they are Christian by religion.

KATH ALIACHARA

Kathalichara village is situated in the Kathalia Gaon Shabha of Belonia Sub-Division of South Tripura District. It is adjacent to Birchnadra Manu. There is only one Garo family in this village who married in the Mogh community. He is a School teacher.

KAMALACHARA

The village Kamalachara lies in the Kamalpur Sub-Division of North Tripura District. It is bounded on the north, south, east and west by Khegomachara, Raipasa, Ambassa and Atharomura respectively. As this village

stands on the side of Kamalachara it is named as Kamalachara. It is about 60 years old and is inhabited by the Garos, Kukis, Molsom, Rangkols, Darlongs etc. There are 14 Garo families consisting of Rema Richil, Chisim and Dibra machongs with a population of about 100. All Garo families are migrated from the Mymensingh District of Bangladesh.

Agriculture is the main source of their livelihood. Jhuming is being practiced by 5 families, Jhum malati and binni are the main varieties of paddy. Besides paddy, til and various kinds vegetable are produced in Jhum. There is no landless family in this village and 9 families are holding 5 or more than 5 kanis of land. There are 5 Govt. service holders and the monthly income of each of 13 families is Rs. 300/-or above. There is no case of transfer of land from the Garos to the non-garos during the last 10 years. The nearest market is Ambassa which is about 2 K. M. away from this village and sits on every Saturday. The market of Kamalachara sits on every Tuesday. Pigs, cows and fowls constitute the main livestock of the Garos. Some Garos work as agricultural labourer.

Child marriage is not in practice in this village. The average age for marriage for the boys is between 22 and 25 and for the girls 18 and 21. There is no case of divorce, polygamy, Garo-Non-garo, and inter machong marriage in this village.

All the Garo villagers are bi-lingual. Besides the Garo language they can speak and understand Bengali also.

KARATICHARA

Karatichara is situated in the Karatichara Gaon Shabha of Dhumachera Block. It is located about 40 K.M. away from Kailashabar, a district town of the North Tripura District to the South. It is under the Manu Tehsil. The village is bounded on the north, south, east and west by the villages of Kathalcherra, Dhumacherra, Manu river, and Nepaltila respectively. The village is about 20 years old and the inhabitants are migrated from the villages of Jherjhorla, Missiontila, Chonkhola etc. of the Sadar Sub-Division of Agartala. There are 29 families in this village and it is exclusively inhabited by the Garos. The Karaticherra (a stream) flows besides the village and the name of the village has been originated from the name of this cherra. Besides their mother tongue Garo, all the villagers can speak and understand Bengali. 5 person can speak in Hindi and English also.

There is a primary School and a Church in the village. The Lamps, Gramin Bank and post office of this village are situated at Dhumacherra, Kanachanbari (6 K.M.) and Nepaltia (about 2 K.M.) respectively. The nearby market is at Nepaltia, a bi-weekly market (Friday and Monday) and at Karatichara which also a bi-weekly market (Sunday and Thursday.)

The following is the picture of the socio-economic condition of the village :

SL. No.	Name of the items	Total No. of families	Percentage :
1.	No. of land holding families	19	
2.	No. of landless families	10	
3.	No. of families holding 5 or more then 5 kanis of land	5	
4.	No of families practicing Jhuming	nil	nil
5.	No. of Govt. Servants	5	
6.	Land sold during the last 10 years	nil	nil
7.	Marriage within the same Machong	nil	nil
8.	No. of divorce	nil	nil
9.	No. of Hindu families	nil	nil
10.	No. of Christian families	29	100%
11.	No. of families having pineapple and jackfruit garden	5	

KATHALCHARA

This village is situated about 40 K.M away from the Kailashahar town to the south in the Moshali Gaon Shabha of Kailashahar Sub-Division of North Tripura District. This village is about 35 years old. This village got its name Kathalchara as there was a large amount of Jack fruits (Kathal) available in this village. A stream named Lalchara flows beside the village. There are about 55 Garo families in this village. Out of total 55 families there are 30 Christian and 25 Hindu families. There is a Church in this village. The nearest market is at Nepaltia which is about 2 K.M away from the village. It is a bi-weekly market and sits on every Friday and Monday. The village lies under the Jurisdiction of the LAMPS situated at Nepaltia.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the foregoing chapters an attempt has been made to portray the traditional way of life of the Garos of Tripura. During the last few years specially during the post independence period there have been enormous changes and developments in the social, political and economic life of the Garos of Tripura. All these changes have resulted in the disappearance of many of the traditional customs of the Garos of Tripura and have produced new problems of adaptation and adjustment to the changing situations. A brief account of some of these changes have been given below :

Unlike all other tribes of Tripura the Garos of Tripura came from Mymensing District of Bangladesh before and after the partition of India. Mymensing is the abode of the Garos and the Garo culture and language flourished there from time immemorial. In Mymensingh their social life was organised and united under the able leadership of the *Nokmas* (village chiefs). Moreover being a major tribe there they enjoyed many political rights and privileges.

But in Tripura they settled in scattered villages and with their poor numerical strength no longer remained a major tribe in Tripura. Most of the Garos of Tripura came as shifting cultivators and began to move from place to place in search of Jhum land. Gradually their age old tradition of compact life began to loosen. They were to adjust themselves with the neighbouring people. In marketing centres, in offices, in buses, in schools every where they were to speak in Bengali. At the first stage they became bi-lingual and subsequently their own language became obsolete to many of them.

Due to the absence of any news paper, magazine or book in the Garo language the Garo children have little scope to use their mother tongue, or to be acquainted with the Garo literature. Moreover as the Garos of Tripura originated from Mymensing the books and papers published in Garo language in Meghalaya is not comprehensible to them fully as the language of the Garos of Tripura is to some extent different from that of Meghalaya. Moreover, Meghalaya is geographically contiguous to Mymensing. Tripura is not. Therefore, the Garos of Tripura had a somewhat isolated life away from the main currents of the Garo culture.

The customary laws of the Garos are varied and intricate and no attempt has been made to preserve them by writing them down. As a result, with the death of old peoples who are of experts on their customary laws, these laws are going to disappear forever. So the Garos of the new generation cannot get any scope to be acquired with their customary laws.

It should be mentioned here that the customary laws of the Garos of Tripura are closely related with their traditional religious functions and festivals. The impact of christinity and the impact of western education may also be considered responsible for this changes in the Garo society. The manner of the christian Garos have been influenced by the Christian Missionaries mostly. They are inclined towards Western culture in respect of dress, song, music etc. They are not interested in their traditional religious functions and festivals. They have lost their folk songs and music which were closely linked with their socio-religious rites. Now as a matter of fact from the point of view of religion the Garos of Tripura are divided into two groups—christians and non-christians (the Hindu Garos that follow their traditional socio-religious functions). The number of the Christian Garos is more than the non-christian Garos. The Christian Garos are to some extent educated, organised and backed by the Christian Missions. The traditional laws concerning religion are not applicable to them.

On the other hand, the non-christian Garos still retain many of their socio-religious functions though in modified form as a result of the influence of the neighbouring Hindus.

It should be noted here that inspite of the difference of religious beliefs of the Christian and non-christian Garos, they live side by side in the same village peaceful. There is no conflict among them. This also resulted in a synthesis of the culture of the christian and the non-christian Garos.

All the above mentioned changes have brought about a change in the cultural outlook of the Garos of Tripura. Weaving with traditional loom is disappearing very fast. Use of readymade garments is on the increase. With the disappearance of the traditional loom their traditional textile motifs and arts are also disappearing rapidly.

The role of matriarchy is also loosing its hold. Many matrimonial relations with other tribals and non-tribals are also taking place and these have brought many changes in their social customs.

Nok-pante—the age-old bachelor dormitory of the Garos which served as the only institution for the transmission of their cultural heritage from generation to generation no longer exists among them.

The Garos of Tripura are now taking up plough cultivation. Their traditional method of Shifting cultivation is disappearing very quickly. The socio-religious functions of the Garos are connected with their Jhum and their traditional socio-religious functions are disappearing steadily with the replacement Jhum cultivation by plough cultivation.

Now many Garos have adopted improved method of cultivation and other techniques. Many families have reclaimed cultivable waste land. Besides their indigenous crops they are now producing potato, jute, mustard seeds, and a large variety of vegetable. They are now

growing fruit trees like—mango, jackfruit, pineapple, banana etc. The fruits are sometimes sold in the market. The Agricultural Department is providing them with irrigation facilities, land development schemes, improved seeds and plants, insecticides etc.

Pisciculture:—Pisciculture has become an important source for improving of their economic condition. Now many Garo families are re-excavating old tanks and making artificial lakes by constructing dams. A good number of them are getting fishery loans from the banks with subsidy.

Many Garo families are now habituated in cattle rearing. They sell milk through the middlemen and thus earn something to meet their daily expenses.

Quite a number of Garos now work as government employees and employees of public undertakings member of military and para-military forces like Jute Mill, Central Reserve Police, Tripura Police, Education, Forest, B.S.F., Army etc. So Government service in addition to agricultural activities have strengthen their economic stability. The Government employees are educated and economically sound. They are considered as intellectuals of their society. The leadership of their society is steadily going into their hands. Money is replacing old standard of value in social intercourse. A new class of people is emerging in their society.

Education: In the field of education also a great change has taken place among the Garos of Tripura. Initially the Christian Missions played an important role in the education of the Garos. With the opening of government schools in the interior places of Tripura the number of the Garo students are increasing day by day. Now even a good number of Garo girls are coming forward more and more for education. Many Garo students are staying in the boarding schools. Some students also go to far off places like shillong etc.

Political: With the changes of their socio-economic conditions, the political ideals of the Garos have also changed. Due to their close contact with the non-Garos, matrimonial relationship with other tribes and races, influence of Christianity and western education and association with various political parties they are now becoming aware of the ideals of national and state politics. The traditional clan solidarity is breaking down. The influence of the clan leaders has lost much of its past strength. Now they are taking more and more interest in national and state politics. The village Panchayats are more important to them than their traditional court of *Nokmas*. The elders who once enjoyed the leadership of the community are gradually becoming indifferent about their social affairs. As a result, their social cohesion is being affected.

Now a section of the Garos of Tripura are realising the need for a common platform above clan, sub-clan loyalties local differences and religious affiliations. This platform will deal exclusively with the affairs of the Garos. With this aim in view they formed a new platform of the Garos at patchary of Udaipur Sub-Division of South Tripura named 'Tripura Garo Union'. The chief aim of this Union is to the uplift of the socio economic and cultural condition of the Garos of Tripura. This Union applied for registration under the Societies Registration Act 1860 (Act XI of 1860). Its first conference was held at Poticharry in 1982 in which

Shri Nripen Chakraborty the Chief Minister of Tripura was the Chief guest. The names of office Bearers and executive members of the Tripura Garo Union' has been given below :

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. President : | Late Sarat Chisim of Madhuban. |
| 2. Secretary : | Sanjib Marak of Poticharry. |
| 3. Asstt. Secretary : | Kishore Marak of Nandannagar. |
| 4. Treasurer : | Pontish Chiran of Peratia. |

THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ARE :

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. Sanat Chisim | Madhuban |
| 2. Jonesh Chisim | Bosonkula |
| 3. Sanjib Marak | Poticharry |
| 4. Rasendra Sangma : | Basudeb-Kulai |
| 5. Kishore Marak : | Nandannagar. |
| 6. Pontish Chiran | Peratia. |
| 7. Girish Chisim : | Basonkula. |
| 8. Bibas Ghargra : | Kalaban. |
| 7. Birendra Fema : | Kalaban. |
| 10. Prohor Marak | Paticharry. |
| 11. Bimal Marak : | Molsum Pathar. |

The second conference of the 'Tripura Garo Union' was held at Kalaban of Udaipur Sub-Division in 1984. The Chief guest of the conference was Narayan Rupini—Ex-chairman of the Tripura Autonomous District Council. The new Committee consists of following office bearers :

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. President : | Anindra Chisim of Molsumpattor |
| 2. Secretary : | Giris Chisim of Bosonkula |
| 3. Treasurer : | Pontis Chiran of Peratia. |

It should be noted here that inspite of the good intentions of this Union it has not yet been heartily accepted by all sections of the Garos. Some are of the opinion that it should be a purely non-political plat-form but the others want to use this plat-form for political purposes. They think that this Union will be helpful to serve the immediate needs of the Garos. Others think that, the Garos being a minor tribe with poor numerical strength should not involve themselves into any a political party. Politics is always changing and the entire community will suffer in case a wrong step lands on the wrongside. However this union is still in its infancy without any organisational experience.

Inspite of so much acculturation and changes in the way of life of the Garos of Tripura, the process of development is arrested by some factors.

While going to write the concluding remarks of this monograph, I cannot but note here the following measures which may be taken up for the uplift of the Garos of Tripura :—

(1) The migratory habit of the Garos should be checked. It is found that they do not live in one place for a long time. During the field study I met one Garo elder who shifted place nine times in his life time. Due to this habit in the census Report of 1961 the total population of the Garos in Tripura was 5484 and in the Census Report of 1971 it is 5559. They will not get economic stability until and unless their migratory habit is checked.

(2) The matriarchal system and the laws of inheritance should be modified.

(3) They should be made aware of the evils of preparing and drinking of alcohol.

(4) The oral literature including the customary laws of the Garos should be written down for preservation.

(5) Steps should be taken to publish news paper, magazine, books etc in the Garo language. Attempt should also be made to impart primary education in the Garo language to Garo pupils in primary Schools located in the Garo populated areas.

(6) The procedure of giving loans to the tribals by the government should be made simpler.

(7) Cattle rearing and animal husbandry should be encouraged. Now many Garo families are earning money by selling milk.

(8) Rubber plantation, pine-apple plantation etc. should be encouraged. These two things may be profitable to them.

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Photographs showing Socio-cultural life of the Garos



A Garo Family.



A Garo Hut.



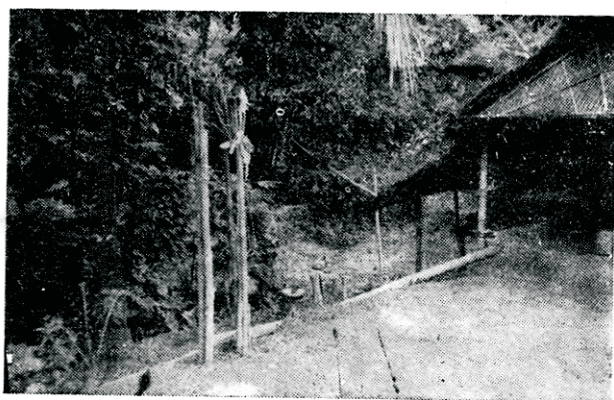
A place of warship.



Image of a Garo deity.



A mask used in traditional dance.



A place of worship.



Scene of treatment by Chanting charms.



A ceremonial dance,



A ceremonial dance.



Posing of a traditional war dance.