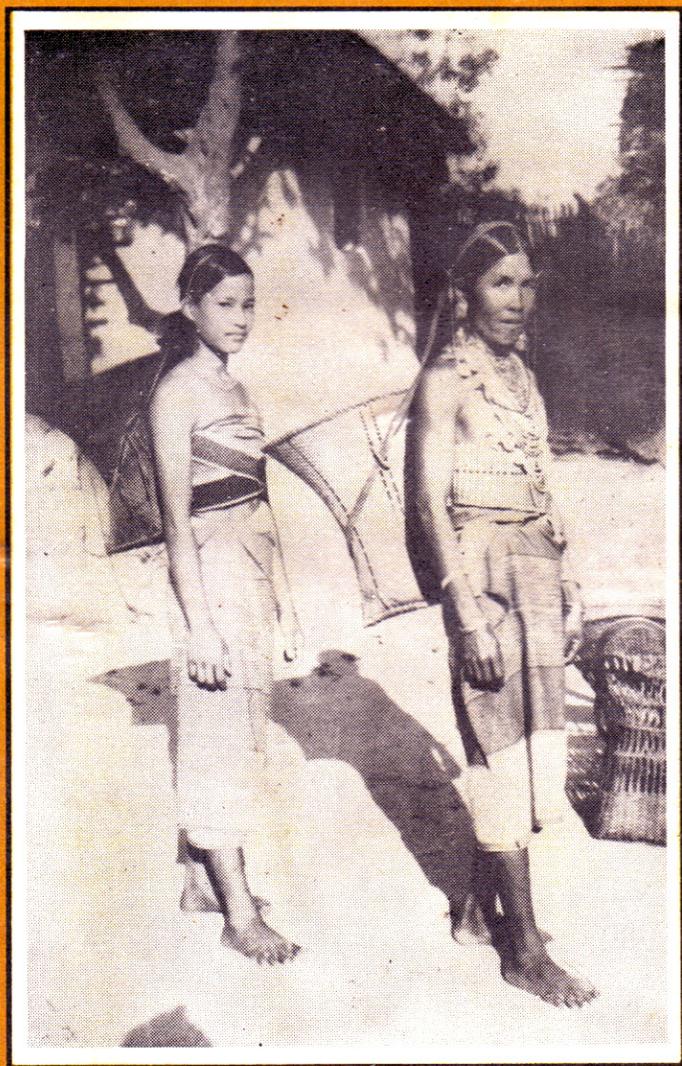


INTRODUCING MALSOM



Ramendranarayan Sen

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Tribal Research Institute

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TRIBAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE
Government of Tripura
Agartala

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INTRODUCING MALSOM
by
Ramendranarayan Sen

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*To my tribal friends who have come to the
normal life from extremism and terrorism*

Foreward

Since establishment of this Department attempts have been made to study the life and culture of the tribal communities of Tripura. The present study is a new drop to add to our previous collections.

This study has got some uniqueness as such the study conducted following Anthropological methodology of field study. In this regard our department is thankful to Mr. Ramendranarayan Sen, an young Anthropologist of Tripura for conducting such an in-depth study.

I am sure that this study will help the readers to know about life and culture of the Molsom of Tripura as well as help the scholars to study this tribe from some new dimension.

M. L. Reang
Director,
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Government of Tripura,
Agartala

PREFACE

Many tribal communities are there in Tripura as well as in other parts of the country whose life and culture have not yet been studied.

Since the first five year plan, after independence, many programmes have been taken up for developing economic condition of the tribal people but we yet to achieve our target.

The economic and cultural activities of a community is deeply dependent upon one another. So, to implement any new scheme for developing of the tribal communities is very much needed to have knowledge about the life and culture of the community concerned.

Besides, our Nation has been facing disturbances so far its communal harmony is concerned. And among the other causes the lack of knowledge about the socio-cultural aspects of a community by the others is one of the major problems. Because unless we have knowledge about the life and culture of the tribal or other communities, we shall not able to have a strong bond of harmony among the people of the various communities of our Nation.

The present study aims at highlighting comprehensive account of the culture and society of the Molsom of Tripura. Before this attempt, there was no detail study on the life and culture of these people. Therefore the present study is mainly based on the data collected from the primary sources. However, information have also been collected from the secondary sources like records, published reports etc which have been available.

In Tripura, broadly, there are two groups of people, namely the tribals and the non tribals constitute the total population of the state. The non-tribals constitute about 69 percent of the total population and mainly reside in the plain lands which constitute about 40 percent of

the total areas of the state. The tribal population constitute about 31 percent of the total state population and mainly reside in the hill areas which constitute about 60 percent of the total areas of the state.

I have received help and cooperation from many persons during the study for present paper to whom I shall remain ever grateful.

I owe deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Sharit K. Bhawmik of the University of Bombay and Prof. N.C. Chaudhury, Dr. Sanjoy K. Roy and Dr. Namita Chaudhury of the university of North Bengal for their comments, criticism and the encouragement they gave me during the study. I also am grateful to Dr. Bamapada Mukharjee of M.B.B. College, Agartala for his valuable suggestions and encouragement.

I also owe my deep gratitude and thanks to all friends of Tribal Research Institute, Government of Tripura, for their cooperation and encouragement.

I express my sincere thanks to my younger brother Sri Ranendranarayan Sen who accompanied me in some remote villages and collected some valuable photographs with his expert hands.

Finally, I owe deep sense of gratitude to Mr. R.K. Deb Burma, the then S.D.O. Udaipur and Mr. Ashis Roy, D.F.O. Manu Forest Division, Tripura and all the Molsom Friends especially Sri Akhaya Molsom of Raipasa Molsom Bari; Sri Swaran Kumar Molsom of Kalabon Molsom Bari; Sri Chandralal Molsom of Manithang Bari; Sri Kamal Bhakta Molsom of Thali Bari; Sri Bilamba Molsom of Atharabhola Barabari and all other molsom friends of my sample villages for their hospitality and cooperation who rendered during my field works.

Agartala,
The 21st June,
1995

Ramendranarayan Sen

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INTRODUCTION

The tiny and hilly state of Tripura is situated in the North Eastern region of the country. About sixty percent of the total area of the state is covered with hills and jungles and the rest is plain-land.

Opinion differs regarding the origin of the name of Tripura. Of the views, the view suggested by Sri.Kailash Chandra Singha (1985, ed :8) appears to be quite probable and significant. The name Tripura has been coined, opined Singha, from the Tripuri words-*tui* and *pra* . In Kokborak, the dialect of the Tripura, *tui* means water and *pra* means meeting point. In this regard it is believed that originally the land was known as *tuipra* meaning a land where a number of water sources are there. " It is a fact that " mentioned Menon (1975:1) " in the days of yore the boundaries of Tripura extended up to the Bay of Bengal when its rulers held sway from the Garo Hills to Arakan. It might be that the name appropriately derived its origin from its nearness to water. This Tripura has subsequently been corrupted into Tipra and from it to Tripura. It is relevant to note that even today the hill people pronounce the word as *tipra* and not Tripura. To the hill people, the water, which is the most essential thing for life to survive, is a scarce material due to the high altitude of their habitat. Naturally, for inhabitation the hill people prefers a hilly place where water is near and abundant. This is why amongst other favorable conditions the availability of water in the locality might have been specially considered and highlighted in the case of settlement in Tripura and subsequently this advantage of the land might have lent the area its name.

The present state of Tripura, as its history tells, was a princely state. A state of great antiquity, Tripura claims to be the most ancient of all the princely states of India. Its recorded history is supposed to go back to the Mahabharata. It has been claimed in Rajmala that the reference to the Frontier Kingdom in the Mahabharata, the Puranas and the Ashoke Pillars are reference to the state of Tripura. The state

has been ruled by the Maharajas for an unbroken period of thirteen hundred years before it acceded to the Indian Union on 15th October 1949 and subsequently became a part 'C' state under the Indian constitution. Tripura was, in fact, initially a union territory till 1972, and was granted statehood on 21st January 1972.

The cultural activities of a community are largely guided by its economic setup and the later depends mostly on the physical environment of the land. Hence, in order to understand the social and cultural life of a community, its surrounding environment has to taken into consideration. The state of Tripura is not very old- wrote a scholar (Gan Chaudhuri 1083:1,2) regarding the land and environment of Tripura, In the late tertiary age that is about four crores of years ago, he mentioned, the patch of land, known as Tripura, rose from a sea bottom. At present it is largely mountainous with hills and plains situated almost alternately and rivulets, brook, streams, etc cutting across its length and breadth. There are seven long ranges of hills namely Jampui, Sakhangtang, Longthorai, Atharomura, Baramura, Devtamura and Sardeng. Gomati, Manu, Haora, Longai, Juri, Deo, Dhalai, Khowai, Muhuri and Feni are the principal rivers, all of which flow into the Bay of Bengal through Bangladesh. These rivers are neither broad nor deep enough for heavy navigation. The climate is, more or less, moderate-- not too hot nor too cold. The average maximum temperature is 35 degree centigrade in May - June and the average minimum temperature is about 10 degree centigrade in December - January. The territory receives a heavy rainfall. Summer spreading over March to May, the rains lasting from late May to September, Autumn bring october and November, Winter covering December to January and Spring breezing through February are the main seasons found in the state.

The present area of the state is 10,486 square kilometers. But the records show that earlier the area of the state was quite large and its was 74,000 square miles that is 1,20,000 square kilometers. At that time the boundary of this state extended to many other adjacent areas, namely the present Lushai Hills, the South -West part of Manipur, the central and southern part of Cacher, the southern part of Sylhet, the southern part of Maimansing, the eastern part of

Dacca, Chakla Roshanabad of Comilla, the whole of Noakhali and Chittagang district of present Bangladesh(Singha 1985 :9). At present, three sides of the state are surrounded by Bangladesh covering a total international boarder of 845 kilometers and only by its north - eastern part the state is connected with the rest of the country through a part of the Cacher district of Assam, and the state of Mizoram.

Broadly, there are two groups of people, namely the tribals and non- tribals who constitute the population of the state. The tribal communities of the state have been classified, as per order of the President of India in 1956, into nineteen scheduled tribes. Among these tribals, the Tripuris, the Reangs, the Noatias, the Halams, the Jamatias, the Lushais, the Kukis, the Chaimals, the Uchois and the Mogs have been residing in the state since long past. They are the autochthonous group. The other tribes namely Garo, Munda, Oraon, Santal, Bhil, Bhutia, Lepcha, and Khasi have come later on. The tribes like Bhutia and Lepcha came from Bhutan, Sikim and North Bengal; Garo and Khasi from Meghalaya; and the Bhil, Oraon, Santal and Munda from Orissa, Bihar, Madhyapradesh and West Bengal. The later four groups actually came only when tea plantation started on a commercial scale in the state in 1916-17.

Among the autochthonous groups, the Tripuri, Noatia and Jamatia may be classified under a common groups for a lots of similarities are found in their life and culture. In fact the Noatja and Jamatia, as mentioned in the Tripura District Gazetteers (1975: 148-155), originated from the Tripuris. On the other hand the tribes like Chaimal,Kuki, Lushai and Halam may be brought under a common group due to their having a number of similarities in culture. The Chaimal, Halam, and Kuki, as stated in the above Gazetteer, follow the same culture. In fact the Chaimal and Halam are a branch of the Kukis. Those of the Kukis who had submitted to the Maharajas of Tripura came to be known as Halams. The Lushais also racially belong to the Kuki stock(Ibid: 150-158)

The Reang and Uchoi, they themselves believe, originated from a common ancestor. Basing on this belief they address each other

as *takhuk* which means brother. Besides, the life and culture of these two tribes are also, more or less, similar (Deb Burman 1986: 8). So the Reang and Uchoi may also be classified under a single group.

The non Tribal communities of the state are mainly the Bengalees- Hindus and Muslims and the Monipuris --both Bisnupriyas and Meithis. The majority of the tribal people have been residing on the hill areas whereas most of the non-tribals have settled down on the plains.

II

The present study aims at giving a comprehensive account of the culture and society of the Molsom community of Tripura. This study is mainly based on the data collected from the primary sources because before this attempt, there was no detail study on the life and culture of these people. However, information have also been collected from the secondary sources like records, published reports etc which have available.

The Molsom has been commonly recorded in government documents and census reports as Murchum or Mursum which is, in fact, a corrupted form of the original name. During the fieldwork for the present study, it has found that the members of this community refer to themselves as Molsom. In fact some of the educated memebers were upset to find that the name has been corrupted in government records. Hence in this study it has been decided to retain their original name.

In the census report of 1901 it had been mentioned that the 'Murchum' (Molsom) means 'truthful' (Chaudhury 1906). But in the present study it has been found that there is no meaning of the word 'Murchung' in Molsom.

In the census reports, except 1931 census, the Molsom were treated as one of the sub-tribes of the Halam and there was no detail study on its sub-tribes. Therefore, we do not find any information

exclusively on the Molsom from the census reports.

The Molsom form a small minority of the tribal population in the state. In 1931 the population of the Molsom in the state was recorded as 3499 of which 1817 were male and 1682 were female. they were at that time concentrated in Udaipur, Amarpur, Sadar and Khowai Sub-divisions(census 1931). Another idea of the Molsom Population can be obtained from the language census of 1961 which recorded Mursum and Mulsom as two separate language groups. The census shows that there were 4486(2356 male and 2130 female) people who spoke Mursum and 289 (153 male and 136 female) who spoke Mulsom (Menon 1975 : 408). This may of course be an under statement because it is likely that several Molsoms might not have written their language as Mursum or Mulsom. A comparative study of the 1931 census and the language census of 1961 shows that there was an increase of only 1276 people in the community during the period from 1931 to 1961, if we consider Mulsom and Mursom as one tribe. But there might have been some more increase in their population which had not been recorded. Since no datum is available after 1961 only an approximate estimation of the population of this community can be made. We have therefore tried to make this estimate based on the population of the villages which are predominantly inhabited by the Molsom.

Table : 1

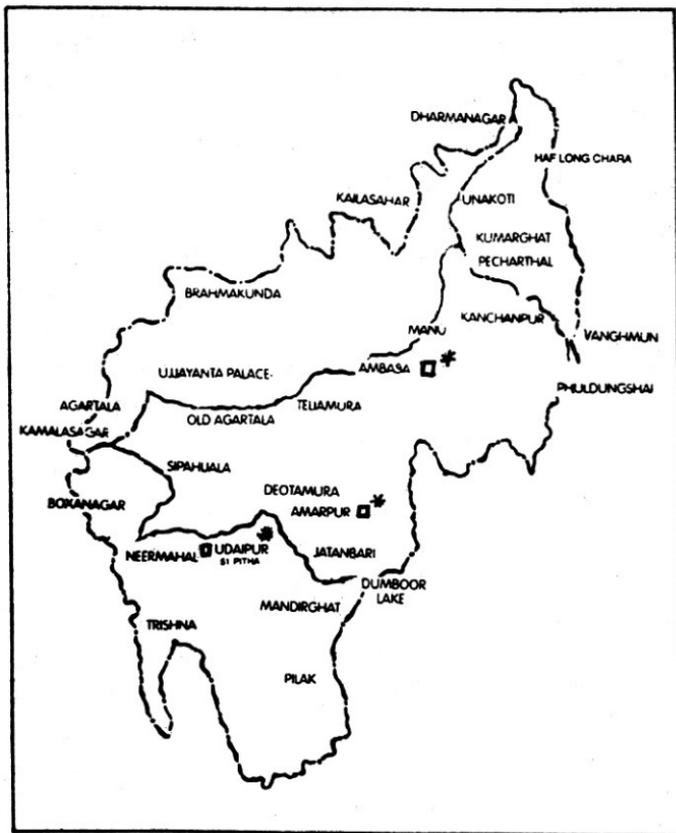
Distribution of the Molsom population in the state during 1931

Name of the Sub-Division	Total Molsom Population	Male	Female
Udaipur	1865	965	900
Amarpur	918	487	431
Sadar	626	320	306
Khowai	82	43	39
Dharmanagar	8	2	6

* Source : Census 1931

Map of Tripura

(Showing Molsom concentrated sub-divisions)



* Molsom concentrated sub-divisions.

The Molsoms are, at present mainly concentrated in the Udaipur and Amarpur Sub-Divisions of the South Tripura district where there are as many as about 32 Molsom villages. Besides, some of them have been residing in Kamalpur and Sadar Sub-divisions of North and West Tripura districts respectively, where about eight Molsom villages are there. So roughly there are forty villages which are predominantly inhabited by the Molsom. In trying to estimate the population of the Molsom, the total number of their house holds in these villages have been taken into consideration. These data were available at the Block offices. The total number of households have been multiplied by the average household-size of the sample villages covered by the present study. The average household-size is six and the total number of households in forty villages are 1238. Therefore the population of the Molsom can be approximately estimated as 7428.

According to some official documents published by the state government (Menon 1975: 150; Deb Burman 1983: 8; Dutta 1980: 1: 58) the Halam are in fact a part of the Kukis who were in constant conflict with the ruling princely family of Tripura. One section of this tribe surrendered themselves to the princely family, who incidentally belong to the dominant Tripuri tribe. That section of the Kukis later came to be known as Halams. These documents, however, do not give the data on the period of when this happened. Ramaprasad Dutta's book (1980) gives an account of the battles between the Kukis on the one end and the princely family and the British on the other which occurred during the period of 1777 (ibid:11). Hence we can presume that the Halams came to be known as a separate tribe during this period.

It is not clear as to what is the exact number of sub-tribes among the Halams. The Tripura District Gazetteer (menon 1975) notes that the Halams had twelve sub-groups which later split into sixteen. However, in an another government publication (Deb Burman 1983) it is mentioned that the Halams have seventeen sub-groups. In both the books the Molsom is included as a sub-group. The above informations reveals how little is actually known about this tribal namely Halam.

There are, however, some significant studies which provide useful information on the society and economy of some tribal groups in the state. These are studies by the J.B. Ganguly (1969); B.P. Misra (1976); S.B.K. Deb Burman (1983); P.N. Bhattacharjee (1983) and some other scholars. In addition, there are some studies and records in Bengali which also provide informations on the tribals of the state. The two more important once are-- history of the Tripura royal families known as Rajmala and Ramaprasad Dutta's work on the Lushais and Kukis(1980). The original Rajmala was written by Kaliprasanna Sen in 1458. He was patronized by Raja Dharmamanikya. Subsequent additions have been made updating the Rajmala. Some doubt have been raised by the scholars like Suniti Kumar Chatterjee and D.C. Sarkar about the historical value of the documents produced in Rajmala. However, descriptions of some of the tribal communities of the state are available in these documents. Ramaprasad Dutta's (1980) work on the Luhsais and the Kukis also through light on the origin of these two tribes. As mentioned earlier, the present study is the first one on the Molsom of Tripura. The other studies have been used while comparing ethnographic data on the Molsom and other tribal groups.

Nine villages were selected for field study, of which five namely, Kalabon Molsom Bari, Thali Bari, Raia Molsom bari, Monithang Bari and Atharobhola Boro Bari are situated in Udaipur Sub-division and four namely Raipasa Molsom Bari, patabiri Molsom Bari, Dhanchera Molso Bari and Shib Bari are in Kamalpur Sub-division. Villages were selected on the basis of the geographical location, population size and some other factors. Of the nine villages, five are situated at interior hill areas and four are closer to some twonships. Attention has also given to the population size so that it would not be too small or too large. Another consideration which also had to be made, was the accessibility of the villages selected for the study. The terrorist activities of the outlawed T.N.V extremists had made it difficult to carry on field study in the interior villages and therefore only such villages had to be selected as were easy of access from the main roads.

Quantitative data were collected with the help of a schedule

and qualitative informations were collected from some selected informants through prolonged interviews. Some case histories, genealogies etc were also recorded. To get an insight their rites and rituals the author took part in many of their social functions, ceremonies etc such as marriage, puberty initiation etc which took place during field study for the present paper.

III

Origin of The Molsom

Paucity of the written documents on the background of the Molsom makes it difficult to trace their origin. There is no recorded evidence to show where the Molsom came from, how they came and when they settled in Tripura. All we know is that the Molsom settled in Udaipur and Amarpur Sub-divisions of South Tripura several generations ago. Some of their families migrated to the Kamalpur Sub-division of North Tripura district about fifty years ago.

Perhaps one of the reasons why no one has studied this community separately is the general belief that it is a sub-group of the Halam. There are scant references to the Halams in the few discussions and studies that have been made on the Tripura tribes. The Molsom are rarely referred to in these studies, perhaps this is so because of the views that they are sub-group of the Halam. It is therefore taken for granted that the culture of the Molsom must be similar to that of the Halam and hence no separate study is required. Our findings show, on the contrary, that the little information that we have on the social life of the Halam is, in many cases, at variance with that of the Molsom. We have not studied the Halam and therefore any comparative picture of these two groups can not be produced here. However, an attempt has been made to present a comparison between the different aspects of the social and cultural life of the Molsom and those of the Halam wherever data was available on the later.

There are two things that one has to consider while trying to fit the Molsom to the Halam group. Firstly, is the evidence really

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There are two things that one has to consider while trying to fit the Molsom to the Halam group. Firstly, is the evidence really

solid or is it based on common knowledge or popular belief. One has to raise this question because there is no clear knowledge even in the administrative records regarding what the sub-groups within the Halam are. Different government records, as stated earlier, give different figures. The Molsom is always included in all the records, yet doubt can be raised on this point because of the manner in which the sub-groups have been traced and grouped. Had these been fixed on the basis of certain criteria or had the Halam themselves been ascertain about the number of their sub-groups and if so this confusion in the number of sub-groups would not have taken place.

The second point is how the Molsom view the fact that they are a part of the Halam. Our findings show that a large number of Molsom believe that they are an independent group with a separate language. It is found that a large number of Molsom are unable to speak or even understand the language of the Halam. Similarly, they claim, the Halam too do not understand their language.

Another point worth mentioning here that the earlier records show that the Halams were a part of the Kuki tribe which was in constant conflict with the ruling Tripuri tribe. The group which is known as Halam, as mentioned earlier, had broken away from the Kuki and accepted the sovereignty of the ruling family of Tripura. Even though the Halam broke away from their parent stock and became loyal to the royal family of the Tripura with which the Kukis were at enmity, there nothing on record to show that the Halams did ever fight against their parent stock, the Kuki. But there are several folk tales among the Molsom which narrate the conflicts between Molsom and Kuki. These tales also try to establish the fact that the Molsom were different from the Kuki. These points needed be dealt in greater detail and perhaps when we have more ethnographic studies on the tribes of Tripura it will be possible to come to conclusion. The scope of the present study is limited to the Molsom and it is not possible here to provide any definite answer to the points raised earlier. However, coming back to the question of the origin of the Molsom, a folk tale is stated below which is very popular in this community. It deals with how they came to the state.

According to the folk tale, the Molsom used to reside originally at Bolpuitang which was adjacent to the present Lushai hills. The particular village where they were residing consisted of ten hillocks from which the name Molsom was coined. In Molsom mol means hillock and som means ten, Molsom thus means the inhabitants of ten hillocks.

After coming from under the earth, their folk tale tells, the Molsom had been originally residing in the village named Arshiemkhosak which was situated at Bolpuitang. In this connection it may be mentioned here that the Molsom believe that all human being were once under the earth. The area of Arshiemkhosak was so large that if any one travelled all over the village with a wet wrapper made of row cotton which is locally known as *ponpui* then the wrapper would dry up by the time the walk was completed. In that village all Molsom were under the control of the community chief named Kamchikao. Along with other activities, the Kamchikao had to collect subscriptions for the annual Sangrak worship. Besides, he had to arrange for daily worship of Sangrak.

Once the Kamchikao was so busy in collecting subscription that for several days he had forgotten to arrange for hens for the daily Sangrak worship. The Sangrak became angry since no hen was offered to him on all those days and in anger he left the village and went to nearby hill. By that time an evil spirit named Rurangnu entered the village and started killing one person of the village every day. But the villagers were unaware of this in the beginning. Due to the density of the population in the village, the loss of one person every day was almost ignorant by them. But they became trance when one day the daughter of the Kamchikao was missing. Kamchikao ordered all the villagers to apprehends the person or thing responsible for the missing of his daughter. Every youth of the village then started searching day and night for the abductor. In the mean time Sangrak came to know, by the exercise of his supernatural power, all about the Ruregnu. He then got converted to a snake and entered into the village to punish the Ruregnu. But as soon as Sangrak entered the village in the form of a snake, the watch party killed it by cutting its head. The Sangrak however could save himself due to his

supernatural power. The watch party then distributed the flesh of that snake among the villagers. An old widow got its head as her share which she kept above the hearth to dry up for future consumption.

Next day early in the morning the snake-head cried out like a hen and then in clear human voice told the widow to flee elsewhere because an earthquake would destroy the village. The widow conveyed the forecast to all the villagers.

All people of the Arshiemkhosak, accordingly, vacated the village that morning with their belongings. They had to cross a river on their way to another hillock. it was too deep and the water too cold to cross. They made a rope-bridge with fibre of a local tree known as *ronsoi* and started crossing the river. The Kamchikao was supervising the safe movement of the villagers across the rope-bridge.

After all the villagers had crossed, the Kamchikao started crossing the bridge and as soon as he stepped on to the bridge, it broke down. He cried out for help. The widow then declared that it was because of the sin committed by the Kamchikao to Sangrak that he failed to cross the river. She advised him to worship Sangrak by sacrificing a hen from the tail part of which no feather is lost, and having long nail. Molsom call such hen as *archangphir*. This in fact indicate a mature hen. The widow then told the Kamchikao that only after worshipping the Sangrak he would be able to cross the river. After that the widow and other villagers left the place. They then reach a hill named Rhili Champhai where they settled for some period.

The settlement area of Rhili Champhai of the Molsom also scattered over ten smaller hilocks and as per their saying, it was situated near present Mizoram.

The area of the Rhili Champhai, as their folk tale tells, was consisted of a large quantity of plain areas on the hill tops. From Rhili Champhai they shifted to Rangdil of present Mizoram and then came to the Dumbur area of Amarpur Sub-division of Tripura while

searching for better jhum lands. From Dumbur they scattered to different parts of Amarapur and udaipur sub-divisions.

In this regard it is interesting to note that the hearsay relating to the migration of the Bongcher which is one of the sub-group of Halam is some what, especially the name of the original place of settlement, root of migration etc are similar to those part of the folk tale of the Molsom mentioned above. As per the Bongcher's hearsay, they were also inhabiting in Rilhi Champhai area of present Mizoram. Relhi, which is a big lake, lies to the east of Mizoram just within Burma and Champhai is one of the towns of Mizoram lying in the eastern side bordering Burma. Champhai has a good paddy land and is known as the granary of Mizoram. Reh lake also have good surrounding paddy fields. (Sailo 1992:4).

From the Rehli Champhai the Bongcher, as per the hearsay, moved to the North West side of Mizoram. The village they could trace was the Buarpui which is situated in the Lunglei district of Mizoram. During their migratory movement, according to the hearsay, at one place they crossed one deep river with bamboo rafts stringed together with jungle creepers. While some of them had crossed over the river, the jungle creepers got broken and the bamboo rafts capsized. Due to that mishap, some were left behind on the other side of the river and those who could cross the river proceeded further and settled on a nearby hill for some period (Ibid:5).

So far record goes, the Molsom and Bongcher are sub groups of Halam. Molsom have, as stated earlier, some folk tales where we find their rivalry relation with the Halam. In case of Bongcher also, as per their hearsay, some hostile relation was there with the Hmar. The Kuki themselves call them as Hmar. According to a story narrated by them, when they were staying at Parsonship village under the control of their chief Kawrupuia, a war held with the Hmar or Kukis where Bongcher were badly defeated and their chief were killed (Ibid:5).

Settlement Pattern and House Type

A Molsom village is generally set up on a hillock the top of which is more or less flat. Besides, a number of things are taken into consideration when a settlement area is chosen. The area, for instant, should be large enough to accommodate every households of a group; it should not be too densely forested to be cleared up easily; water sources should be available nearby; it should not be fer from jhum lands and so on.

In the village the houses are generally constructed in two rows having a vacant sapce in the middle which is used as a path way. A traditional Molsom house is known as *chungin*. It is almost the same as that of other tribal communities of the state which is commonly known as *tang*. The Chungin is generally constructed at five to eight feet height from the ground with wooden or bamboo pillars. The floor and walls are made of bamboo splits and the roof is thatched. There are two entrances to a chungin - the front door and the back door, but no window is there. In front of each door there is a balcony which is also made of bamboo splits. The front balcony is used as a place for gossiping, weaving etc and the back balcony is used to dry food grains. Some time a bamboo made platform locally known as *inchoor* is constructed adjacent to the back balcony to dry food grains. In past, a group consisting of four to six houses were connected with each other by bridges constructed between the back balconies of those houses. The inside of the house has only one room which is of multipurpose uses - used as bedroom, kitchen, store, drawing room etc. A mud platform is made at a corner, preferably near the back door of the floor of the house, where a hearth is made. The space under the floor of the house is protected with bamboos and bushes and is used as pigsty. The Houses, especially of the traditional jhumia villages, are temporary in nature and made for two / three years use.

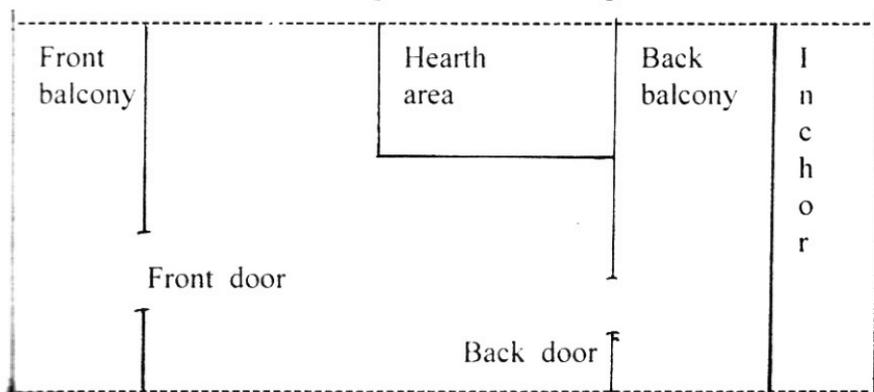
Photograph : 1



Front view of a Chungin the traditional Molsom house.

Diagram: 1

Ground plan of a chungin



Stair case

At present the trend of Molsom houses are towards the permanent type, constructed with wooden pillars or mud-walls and built on the ground level. windows are nowadays, found in these houses and door number, in some cases, more then two. The houses have generally more then one rooms and in most cases a separate house is made for kitchen. In some cases more then one bed rooms are made and, in few cases, more then one houses are constructed for a single household.

Table : 2

Type wise distribution of the Molsom houses:

Type of house:	Number of house:	Percentage to the total number of houses of the sample villages :	
1.	Mud wall with thatched roof	60	18.76
2.	Bamboo wall with thatched roof:	190	59.76
3. Chungin	70	21.87	

These sorts of changes in the type of the houses have resulted mainly from the adoption of permanent type of settled cultivation. In normal shifting economy the jhumias leave a homestead area after one or two years of inhabitation, because after a couple of years they have to shift their jhuming operation to different hillock and are obliged to stay in adjacent area. Their mode of cultivation necessitate a temporary nature of settlement. And hence the house of the jhumias construct are also of temporary nature. But in settled cultivation ceaseless use of the same plot of land requires stay of cultivators on a settled area year after year.

Food Habit

The Molsom are omnivorous so far as their food habit is concerned. Rice is their staple food. Mainly two variety of local rice namely *bati* and *sazu* are used. The former is used in common dish and the latter is taken occasionally. Vegetable, meat, fish, dry fish etc are common among their food stuff. A common Molsom meal consists of boiled rice; a preparation of dry fish, especially *putty* fish, chilli and some vegetables locally known as *annok*; a vegetable curry or fish curry or a curry preparation of either pork or chicken or other birds or reptiles etc. Mainly two methods namely boiling, locally known as *but* and roasting, locally known as *kong* are used in preparing food. Food stuffs are boiled traditionally, in bamboo pot, locally known as *bul* which nowadays is replaced, in most cases, by earthen pots or metallic cooking pails. For boiling in bamboo pot, rice and water are poured and the open end of the pot is covered tightly with grasses or banana leaves. The pot is then heated on fire. A special variety of bamboo, locally known as *rumaoru* is used to make Bul. While boiling in bamboo pot water is not strained off from boiled rice. A bamboo pot can be used only once as its outer surface gets burnt after the cooking. Traditionally meat, fish, dry fish etc are cooked by singeing which nowadays is limited to the case of dry fish only.

Traditionally no oil is used in cooking as the process of frying or roasting were absent in food preparation. Chilli, turmeric and ginger are the common spices of which the use of chilli is dominant. Curry, annok and other food preparation tests pungent due to excessive use of chilli. Locally made alkaline water known as *chaltui* is used to cook hard roots, herbs, etc. Such alkaline water is made from the ashes of dry bark of banana or bamboo plant. Keeping ashes in a funnel made of bamboo splits water is poured slowly at the open end. The alkaline water which is locally known as *chalphu* is a solution of particles of ashes, is collected in a container placed below the conical end of the funnel. Same kind of alkaline water is used also by the other tribal communities of the state and is well known as *Kharpani*. Such alkaline water makes the hard roots and herbs soft and smooth.

Annok is also popular among the other tribal communities of the state and is commonly known as *godak*. The preparation of annok or *godak* is more or less the same with a little variation in the vegetable components. For preparation of annok at first some dry fish is taken and some vegetables such as buds of bamboo plants, locally known as *toi*, wild potato, arum root, bean, etc are cut into pieces which are then put into bamboo pot along with green chillies and dry fishes and well mixed by palpating with a small bamboo or wooden stick. The bamboo pot is then heated on fire and after then the boiled mixture is taken out and kept on a piece of banana leaf for use. Some time fishes or meat also used in preparation of annok. Excess pork or other meats are cut into pieces, strung side by side with bamboo split and kept over the hearth to be dried up and thus preserved for future consumption.

It is observed that the traditional system of food preparation among the tribal communities of Tripura has got some scientific basis which has made the system itself adoptive to the local situation. Mention may be made about the boiling system. On the hills the boiling point of water decreases due to low atmospheric pressure. As a result cooking take more time as excess of heat is required for the food stuffs to be boiled. In this case cooking in air tight bamboo pot minimizes the time of cooking because the water in air tight bamboo pot boils on normal boiling point as the water vapor increase the pressure in the air tight bamboo pot. Besides, cooking in air tight bamboo pot is hygienic too. Pig bears the spores /germs of hook worm which affect human body if pork is taken without proper boiling. But the spores /germs die if the pork is boiled at a high temperature. The spores /germs die in the case of singeing also. In this regard it may be mentioned here that the pork is very favourite among the tribals of Tripura. Moreover, the food value, in case of rice especially, remains intact if it is boiled in such a pot from which no water is strained off.

Traditionally, the Molsom do not know the use of milk. milk, in fact, is nauseating to many of them. In this matter the other tribal communities of the state are their counterparts. Drinking of local alcoholic beverage namely *zukola* and the local liquor namely *rakzu*

is most popular among them, zukola is prepared, broadly, in two phases. Chall, the fermenting cake, is prepared in the first phase. Rice dust about 100 grams, sugarcane leaf one piece, *cholkung*, a local herb, two or three leaves, one ripen banana, three or four pieces of green chilli, *banchikolnum*, a local herb, three or four leaves and about half kilogram of boiled rice, for preparing chall, are mixed and grinded by the pestle and mortar. Water is added with the mixture dust converting these into paste from which cakes are prepared. Some hay are scattered on a banana leaf on which cakes are kept covering them with some more hay. These are then kept in a cool place for about three or four days and then dried in the sun light. These dry cakes are known as *chall* which are preserved in bamboo made basket known as *chall rebom*. The number and variety of leaf, root, bark etc used in chall preparation vary from place to place, person to person, but the rice dust, boiled rice and *cholkung* are used commonly as basic components. The taste and flavor of the zukola differ in accordance with the variety of other components.

Photograph : 2



Preparation of country liquor locally known as rakju

In the second phase, about one kilogram of boiled rice is spread on a bamboo mat and a chall is mixed. The mixture is then pulped by hand and put in an earthen vessel. Water is filled in the vessel and its mouth is covered with a banana leaf. The vessel is then kept untouched in a cool place for five to six days for fermentation. Fermented beverage or *zukola* is drunk through bamboo-strow locally known as *chumki*.

The local liquor namely *rakzu* is prepared, as stated earlier, from distillation of local beverage. Distillation is done in the local distiller known as *batizone* consists of three parts namely a boiler known as *bel* which is made of clay, cooler tube made of clay and locally known as *sommang* is used for cooling the liquor vapour. The liquor vapour passed through a bamboo pipe locally known as *batizone*. Another stronger liquor locally known as *rakzual* is prepared by distillation of *rakzu*.

Liquor and alcoholic beverages are prepared by the females. Some restrictions are observed by the women while preparing liquors or beverage. They take bath and wear clean dresses. Besides, the women who are in menstrual cycle are not allowed to take part in the preparation: they are even not allowed to touch the materials and the persons engaged in the preparation. There are some women, more or less, in every Molsom villages, who are well known for their speciality in liquor preparation. Some time by a taste of liquor in a village one can identify the manufacturer. These women use some special bark, roots etc which bring about the variation in taste or flavour. They generally do not disclose such special components to other. There are some women whom the Molsom believe to be gifted ones and it is thought that liquor prepared by them is bound to be better and more in quantity. Tobacco smoking is another common habit among them. This habit also analogous to the habits of other communities of the state. An indigenous implement made of bamboo and locally known as *dabo* is used for smoking.

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Minor boys or girls are not allowed to drink or smoke. In some cases, at present, molasses is used in lieu of rice especially for rakzu or rakzual preparation.

Field work

As stated earlier, present study is an ethnographic one and as no written datum is available on the life and culture of the Molsom, more attention was given on the collection of primary data. At first I did a survey on the location of the Molsom villages. Enquiries were made at various Block offices, Tribal welfare offices and some knowledgeable persons to locate these villages. I also made enquiries from the Molsoms of one village as to where the other Molsom could be found and what would be their rough population compositions of these villages. After compiling the data which I collected from the government sources and from the Molsom, I found that most of the Molsom villages are situated in different parts of the South Tripura and North Tripura districts with larger concentration in the former district. There were roughly forty Molsom villages detected in the state and I visited eighteen of them to finally select nine villages for the purpose of intensive study. I did this on the basis of the geographical location and population of the villages. Of these nine villages, five were situated, as mentioned earlier, in interior hill areas and four were closer to some townships.

At first I went to the market places where the weekly market were being held which is locally known as *haat*. I felt that this was safer because people from different villages gather at these haats. I made contact with some Molsom who had come to these haats and I spoke to them about my proposed study. I found that most of these people showed interest regarding my study and they invited me to stay in their villages. In fact these people were very hospitable. They even assured me that no harm would come to me. What was surprising here was that I had no previous acquaintance with these people. I had met them in the haats for the first time. Yet, they were hospitable. This simplicity and warmth gave me a lot of confidence in my field work. It may be mentioned here that while selecting the villages I had been advised by the officials of the Tripura

police department not to visit some of the villages in the interior areas because of the risks involved as at the time of my field work, as stated earlier, the rural areas of Tripura was disturbed by a tribal extremist group. But I did not always heed their devices and fortunately I found no problem especially from the extremists. All I had told to the people whom I met in the haats was that I wanted to write a book on their life and culture and they offered me all cooperation. In fact I had selected three of such trouble prone villages for intensive study.

I went to Raipasa Molsom Bari in the first part of 1984. I stayed there for ten days to get some primary informations on their life and culture and at the same time to become familiar with the villagers. During that period I was residing at a township called Ambasa which is situated about seven kilometers from Raipasa. I was unable to get accommodation at Raipasa then. I used to visit the village at morning and returned in the afternoon. During that time I tried to establish a rapport with the village people as this would help me later. Moreover, I had absolutely no idea about the life and culture of the Molsom. So I used this opportunity to familiarise myself with their life style. I was also able to made arrangement for my stay in the village for field work in the next phase.

Unfortunately, when I planned to return to the village in for my intensive study, a riot occurred in the village and its surroundings. Some criminals from the non-tribal population around this village attacked the tribals to seek revenge for an earlier attack on some Bengalis in Ambasa by some members of TNVs. The leader of the TNV Mr. Bijoy Hrankhol incidentally was from a village close to Raipasa. The main victim of that riot were the Molsom. Raipasa Molsom Bari was a deserted village as all its inhabitants fled to the interior forests for safety. Their houses had been squandered and many were burnt. A few Molsom were killed. Under that circumstances I decided not to cover the Raipasa Molsom Bari especially for collecting quantitative data. I then made pilot studies on some neighboring Molsom villages and decided to cover Patabiri Molsom Bari, Dhanchera Molsom Bari and Shibbari. After selecting three other Molsom villages I came back to Udaipur sub-division

of South Tripura district to start intensive study. It was because the situation of Molsom villages at Ambasa was in tense as the memory of terrible riot was still in their mind. However, the circumstances became normal when I back after conducting studies on the villages of South Tripura.

In South Tripura, I started my study from Kalabon Molsom Bari, a village situated near Tulamura bazar of Udaipur sub-division. At that time I was residing at Udaipur and used to visit the village at morning and returned in the evening. At first I began my study by having conversations with the elders about their life, customs, norms and ceremonies. These people were very interested in telling me all what I wanted to know. In this regard it should be mentioned here that the little knowledge and Experiences which I gathered from the Raipasa regarding their life and culture helped me in establishing rapport with the people of Kalabon Molsom Bari at that time. In fact they especially excited that I was going to write a book about them. After a week, I was able to made arrangement for my stay in the village. I then was also able to collect informations in a friendly atmosphere. Soon I found that the village people started to refer me as *itihās babu* that is a person who writes history. I of course took care to check whether what I was told were facts and not exaggerations. It was possible that because they were conscious of the purpose of my visit, they would give a different picture of their activities. Therefore I crossed checked everything I was told with other in the village and also in the other villages to find out how reliable my information was.

I was able to establish a better rapport with the youths because of my interest in music. I learned some of their songs which I sang to them. This made me more friendly with them. They especially impressed that an outsider and non Molsom could sing their songs. I also participated in their activities by trying to dance with them in their ceremonies. In this way I was able to get closer to them and soon bond of friendship grew with many of them.

I did not know their language though I tried to pick up some words. Most of the Molsom know Bengali and I had no problem

in communicating with them. In this sense most Molsom are bilingual as they speak their own language and Bengali. I have compiled a glossary of Molsom words with their english equivalents which is added in this book.

I stayed for two and half months in Kalabon Molsom Bari. I gained a lot from my stay here as this is where I collected my basic data. I could use this as the basis of my studies in the other villages. Since I had developed close relationship with the village folk they had no hesitation in allowing me to attend the different ceremonies which they performed. One of these was the puberty initiation ceremony. Usually no outsider is permitted to witness this ceremony as this is a highly private affair. I was interested in witnessing one such ceremony as this would give me first hand knowledge.

I had so far been given descriptions of this ceremony which is an important rite of passage among the Molsom. Initially there was some hesitation in allowing me entry but after a few weeks of my stay I was not only allowed to witness one ceremony but I also permitted to photograph it. The people requested me not to take photograph of the girl when she was unclothed. I respected their sentiments.

After collecting informations on their life and culture- their rites, rituals, ceremonies, customs etc I started conducting the household census. I framed a schedule which sought information on the household structure, sex, clan, religion, occupation, level of education, land holding, pattern of land use, type of marriage, age at marriage, place of birth etc. Some of the questions sought informations on more than one generation - the present and past generations. After completing this survey I decided to take up another of the selected villages.

The next village I went to was Manithang Bari of the same sub-division which was followed by Thali Bari, Atharobhola Boro Bari, and Raia Molsom Bari respectively. I spent about a month in each of the four villages. My experiences in Kalabon Molsom Bari

make me familiar with the Molsom and hence it did not take much time for me to establish rapport with the people in the villages. In fact the people of these villages were astonished when I explained some of their culture traits. They especially wondered that an outsider knew something about their culture. For instance, when I asked a person that what clan he belongs to-- whether Deorai, Mapu, Achep or so on, they became strange and glad that I knew the name of their clans. Thus in the villages of South Tripura I conducted studies in a friendly and favorable situation. Same sorts of experiences I gathered during my field work in the villages of North Tripura district. In Kamalpur sub-division of North Tripura district, in the second phase of my visit, at first I went to Patabiri Molsom Bari was followed by Dhanchera Molsom Bari and Sib Bari. I had to finally drop the study of the Raipasa Molsom Bari the village where I had been at first. The riots took a heavy toll on the people there. Most of them had abandoned their homes and settled elsewhere because they were under constant threat of attacks from non-tribals. The government was trying to ensure peace and encourage the people to return, but during the time of my field work this process was going on. I therefore could cover three of the selected villages especially for quantitative data. I however, collected qualitative informations from the age old persons of that village.

I conducted the household census in eight villages and collected qualitative informations on different aspects of their lives from nine villages. Most of my information in these eight villages matched with what I had collected in Kalabon Molsom Bari. There was some variations on songs especially in love songs. The content of these songs were different though the tunes were the same. There are of course differences in some aspects of the quantitative data which I collected from the eight villages.

I started writing the draft of my dissertation after the analysis of the data. I made a few trips to these villages again in order to check up some points or clear some doubts.

CHAPTER II

AUTHORITY STRUCTURE IN THE MOLSOM SOCIETY.

The conduct of the members of the Molsom society is regulated through three fold authority structure, namely the family authority structure, the village authority structure and the community authority structure. They are described in detail below.

Family authority structure

In Molsom the conduct of the members in the family is regulated and the socio-economic and politico-religious activities of the family are looked after by the head of the family. Normally the oldest male member heads the family and his wife acts as assistant. After the death or otherwise invalidation of the head, the next oldest male succeeds him. This new head could be the eldest son or eldest son-in-law incase the family has no son or the eldest son has been staying with his father-in-law's family). In case the family has no adult male member then the wife of the head takes up the responsibility.

The head represents his family at the village and community level affairs such as selection of village chief and the other members of the council and to attend village meetings called by the village council.

Table : 3

Distribution of the family -heads of the sample villages on the basis of the relation with other members of the family.

Relation of the Head with other family members	Total number of family heads	Percentage to the total no.of family of the sample villages
A husband to wife; father to children; father-in-law to son-in-law and daughter-in-law or a husband of a nuclear family.	283	88.44
Elder son of a deceased head	23	7.19
Wife of a deceased head	8	2.5
Son-in-law of. deceased head	1	1.87

He looks after the economic and socio-religious activities of the family. In shifting cultivation he is to choose the jhum-field to be cultivated by the family and has to take decision about the variety of seeds to be sown in the jhum-field. Land and other property of the family are kept under his control.

The family authority structure of the Molsom is, more or less, akin to that of the other tribes of the state with the exception that, after the death of a head among the Molsom his eldest son-in-law is also entitled to succeed him. In the villages where a sample survey has been conducted for the present study, it has been found that 1.87% of family heads are their eldest sons and 2.5% are the wives of the deceased heads.

Village authority structure

The conduct and affairs of the Molsoms at the village level are regulated and directed by the village council which also looks after the socio-economic, politico-religious and other activities of the village people. The village council of the Molsoms consists of the Khuoulm or Chaudhury that is the village chief, the Khandol loom who is the assistant to the Khuoulm and the Khamdol toum the messenger. Two youth leaders namely *tangoal oulm* the leader of the boys and the *nungyak oulm* the leader of the girls of the village, also help the council when necessary. Besides the above secular structure, there is another one-man religious institution consisting of the Awchai, the priest of the village, who, when required, helps the council in the magico-religious aspects of the problems under trial.

The village council of the Molsom is, more or less, akin to that of some other tribal communities of the state like Reang, Tripuri, Koloï, Uchoi etc though, of course, with some differences. Among the Reang and the Tripuri the village council consists of four members namely Chaudhury, Achai, Karbari and Khamdol (Gan Chaudhury 1983; Deb Burman 1983:64,30) and the Koloï village council consists of three members- one Chaudhury and two Khandols - where no Karbarior and Achai is found (ibid). The village council of the Molsoms, as we have already mentioned, consists of three members - Khuoulm, Khandol loom and Khandol toum - but occasionally they are assisted by three others i.e. the leader of the male and female youths and the village priest.

The members of the Molsom village council are selected by the villagers in a formal meeting. First of all the village chief namely the Khuoulm is selected which followed by the selection of the assistant of the chief namely Khandol loom and the messenger namely Khandol toum respectively. In the selection of the Khandol loom and Khandol toum the preference of the newly selected village-chief gets some priority. While selecting the Khu oulm, some religious rites are observed by the village priest. But such rites are not performed in selecting the other council members.

All family heads and some other adult male of the village assemble in a meeting and choose a person from among the family heads of the village for the post of Khu oulm. Usually an aged and brave man with remarkable hunting records, who is also considered intelligent and economically sound, having many young males in the family, is preferred. In the traditional jhum economy, economic status of a person is measured by the number of adults possessed by his family. It is so, probably because in jhum economy the land is a community property looked after by the village council; and a family is allowed to cultivate as much land as it can manage by its members. So, naturally, the greater is the number of adults a family possessed the wider is the stretch of land it is allowed to cultivate resulting in higher production. But in settled economy, a person's economic status is measured by the cultivable landed property he possesses. The criterion that the head of a family which has a number of adult males is generally selected as a village chief probably owes its origin to the fact that the personal family life of the village chief would be disturbed as he would have to remain engaged, most of the time, in the activities of the village council and thus he would be constrained to detach himself from the economic and other management activities of his family. The other adult males, in such cases, can look after the family.

For selecting the Village chief at first, the name of a person is proposed by any of the head of the families and if that name finds favour with the majority of the people assembled there for the purpose and if the person also is willing to take up the responsibility then the Awchai of the village arrange for a test to find out whether the choice is auspicious.

He sacrifices a hen to the *tuisangro* deity and removes the elementary canal of it. He then conceives of the elementary canal as divided into two parts namely the mouth-adjacent part, which is presumed to fall on God's side, and the rectum-adjacent part, which is considered as belonging to man's side. The Awchai then checks up whether there is any damage spot on the elementary canal. If any spot is seen on the part supposed to belong to God then no problem arises; but if there is any spot on the rectum adjacent part

or simultaneously on both the parts then the selection of the village chief is supposed to be ominous and for that case the villagers propose another name.

After the selection of Khu oulm, other members of the council namely Khandol loom and Khandol toum are selected by the village people. The personal qualities and the other criteria for selection of Khandol loom or Khandol toum are the same as those for Khu oulm selection.

Distinct work divisions are found among the council members. Khu oulm, the head of the council, who exercises supreme power in the council. He negotiates various socio-economic, politico-religious and other disputes and problems faced by the council. In traditional jhum economy the Khu oulm is to choose the jhum-field and settlement area where the villagers would shift during the jhum-cycle. He is to collect subscriptions from the villagers and arrange annual Sangrak and Khoser worship. Besides, the Khu oulm represents the village in the inter village affairs and in selection of the members for the community council.

The Khandol loom is the assistant to the khu oulm. The Khandol toum is the messenger who also arranges for dabo the smoking implement during meeting of the council. The Khandol toum also implements the physical punishments imposed by the council. Usually the house of the khu oulm is used as the office of the council. During council meetings the Khu oulm may take the help of any adult villager to solve the problem under trial.

The Tangoal oulm and Nungak oulm are selected by the youths of the village in a formal meeting. An expert hunter, having remarkable knowledge in craftsmanship and music, is preferred to be the Tangoal oulm. Similarly, preference is given to expert weaver, having special skill in Zukola preparation, dance and music, for selecting Nungak oulm.

The Awchai is selected in a formal meeting called by the village council where all the heads of the families are assembled. Personal

qualities and other criteria for selection as Awchai are all most the same as those for the selection of a khu oulm, with the exceptions that the person, in addition, must have the knowledge of the magico-religious rites and rituals. Though this religious institution is not directly comprised in the village council, yet in the arena of village administration, it works alongwith the council. The Awchai performs all pujas arranged by the families or village council and entrusted with the treatment of diseases by magic or pujas. He helps the village council with his knowledge and ideas about the magico-religious aspects of the problem under trial. The Awchai represents the village, alongwith the other council members, in selecting the members for the community council. Besides, he has to perform religious rites and tests during the selection of Khu oulm of the village council. In return of the Awchai's service, the village people cultivate his land for one season in a year.

The Tangoal oulm and Nungak oulm make inquiry about the problems especially relating to premarital sex and violence and place the report before the council. Besides they lead the youth team during the *ron*, the customary mutual exchange of labour, and other youthful group activities.

There is no fixed tenure of the office for the members of the village council, at the same time, it may not be life long. It fully depends on the working efficiency of its members. Whenever the village people find incompetence in the activity of the council, they dissolve it in a general meeting of the villagers. Besides, if any member or members of the council feel humself or themselves in any way incompetent to work, he or they may resign. But if the khu oulm resigns, then the other members of the council have also to resign because the latter do not have any executive power of their own. However, they may be selected in the next council. In case the other members or member, except Khu oulm, resign no change takes place in the overall structure of the council; only the post which is vacated by the resignation of the respective member, is filled up by selecting another suitable person in a formal meeting of the villagers.

The working tenure of the one-man religious institution namely the Awchai is life long but not hereditary. The Awchai can resign only if he feels himself in any way incompetent to work. The Tangoal oulm and Nungak oulm are relieved of their office when they get married.

To regulate the behavior and affairs of the individual in the different aspects of life and for sustaining peace, some laws are prevalent in the Molsom society, which are expected to be abided by the members of the society. The village council is vested with the power to impose fines and punishments if violation of such laws occur. The amount of fines and the forms of punishments vary with the nature of the offence. Fine in cash or kind, torture, excommunication etc. are the customary punitive action. Some of the existing laws and related forms of punishments to be imposed against the violators, are cited below.

Forms of offences	Nature of fines or punishments
For premarital sexual relation	Rs.45 and one earthen pot of zukola.
For conception by a girl before marriage.	Rs.45.one earthen pot of zukola, one bottle of country liquor (these are to be paid by the boy); besides, the boy will have to marry the girl.
For marriage of a girl before initiation of Risabomb ceremony	The parents of the girl are fined Rs.45/
For courting a person whose marriage has been socially settled.	The accused person is to compensate the amount which has spent for settling the marriage.
For marriage between tabooed relations.	The couple is fined with Rs. 45/- one earthen pot of zukola, excommunicated for a period and has to arrange a feast after the period of excommunication.
For adultery.	The adulterate is fined with Rs.120/-, one earthen pot of zukola and five bottles of rakzu.

For marring a person belonging to some other community.	:	The convicted person is fined with Rs.45/-, one earthen pot of zukola and excommunicated for a period fixed by the council and has to arrange for a community feast after the period of excommunication.
For divorce.	:	The person seeking divorce is to pay an amount of Rs.130/-and an earthen pot of zukola.
For cultivating jhum on other's demerkated land	:	The accused person is fined with Rs.5/- and two earthen pot of zukola.
For killing other's domestic animal	:	The convicted person is fined with an amount equivalent to the cost of that animal or he has to give an animal of the same species and size and an earthen pot of zukola.
For killing wild animal which is already trapped by some one else.	:	The accused person is to return the animal or an amount equivelent to the cost of that animal, a fine of Rs.5/-and an earthen pot of zukola.
For trespassing into or entering a village or going out of the	:	The convicted person is fined with an amount which has spent for the village at the day of annual respec- tive worship. Samgrak or Khoser worship.

Besides the laws mentioned above there are some norms prevailing amongst the Molsom which are expected to be followed by the member of their society. No fine or punishment is imposed for violating such norms. but a norm breaker is condemned by the village people. Some of these norms,for instance, are cited below :

- 1). If any body takes the help of physical labour of any person or persons the former is expected to return the labour when the latter is in need of the same. Such mutual exchange of labour, in Molsom, is known as Ron.
- 2). A big game is expected to be distributed among every

households of a village, whether it is hunted in group hunting or by an individual.

- 3). Every household of a village is expected to give subscription for the performances of rite, rituals, ceremonies etc. arranged by the village council.
- 4). In the holy day of Sangrak or Khohser worship, nobody of the village is expected to work in the jhum or in other land.
- 5). At least one adult member from each of the households of the village is expected to take part when the villagers customarily cultivate the land of the Awchai for one season in a year.

Community Council

The community council of the Molsom consisted of eleven members namely the Kamchikao, the head; Awchai, the priest, Yaksung and Khuksung, the assistants; Sangialean and Sangiatoum, the messengers; Sangkanta, the executor of corporal punishment; Okma, the tobacco maker; and Modi, the zukola supplier.

The members for the community council are selected by the Khuoulms, Awchais and some other influential members of the Molsom villages. The selectors gather together in a formal meeting, usually in the house of ex-Kamchikao and select the members for the community council. At first, in the process of selection, the Kamchikao, the head of the community council, is selected which is followed by the selection of the Awchai, Chapialian, Chapiatoum, yaksung, Khuksung, Sengialian, Sangiatoum, Senkkanta, Okma and Modi respectively.

The personal qualities and other criteria for choosing a person for the post of Kamchikao are the same as those which are considered in the case of selecting the chief of the village council. The method and other formalities observed for selecting the

Kamchikao are also akin to those observed during the selection of the village chief.

After the selection of the Kamchikao, the Awchai is selected. A person with sound religious Knowledge along with other personal qualities, which are taken into account for selecting the Kamchikao, is considered to be selected Awachai. Besides, the Awchai is selected from the village which is adjacent or nearer to the village of the Kamchikao. The new Kamchikao and Awchai along with other assembled members then select the other members of the community council. The same criteria, as are followed in selecting the Kamchikao, are followed for selecting the other members of the council as well. But no religious rite is performed for selecting them. The members like Chapialian, Chapiatoum, Sengialian, Sengiatoum, Okma and modi are generally selected from the village of the Kamchikao or from the adjacent villages for smooth running of the council works.

After all the council members are selected, the Kamchikao assumes the office formally when the *silungket* the magical test-stone used for identifying a sinner, is handed over to him from the outgoing Kamchikao. This *silungket* is believed to be preserved from Bolpuitang, the original place, as they believe, of their inhabitation.

Clear hierarchy and functional division are there among the members of the community council. The Kamchikao acts as the Chairman and exercises supreme power among the council members. He gives the final decision in solving the problems faced by the council; constitutionally he controls all activities - economic, social, political, religious etc. of the Molsom community as a whole. The hierarchy follows down to the Awchai, Chapialian, Yaksung, Khuksung, Sengialian, Sengiatoum, Sengkanta, Okma and Modi respectively.

The Awchai acts as the religious advisor to the Kamchikao, helping him with his magico-religious knowledge in solving the problem under trial. Besides, the Awchai performs the Sangrak and Khoser worship and other rite, rituals, ceremonies etc arranged by

the community council.

Chapialian and Chapiatoum act as the deputy chiefs of the community council. They are assisted by the Yaksung and Khuksung Sengialian and Sengiatoum communicate the decisions and other informations of the community council to the village councils. They invite the members of the community council to attend council's meeting whenever necessary. Sengkanta execute corporal punishment conferred to a guilty by the community council. Okma and Modi arrange for and serve tobacco and liquor during the meeting of the community council.

Usually the problems which are not solved in the trial of the village council are filed before the community council. This council tries problems in two ways. It sends representative namely Chapialian and Chapiatoum to the village council from where the disputes has been filed. The Chapialian or Chapiatoum on behalf of the council, tries the case in a meeting arranged by the village council and settles the problem. Secondly, the community council solves the problem in a formal meeting in the house of the Kamchikao.

If any dispute remains undecided after the trial in the court of community council then the Kamchikao takes the matter on his hand and solves it with the help of a magical test-stone known as silungket. The silungket is put on the palm of accused person and if the person fails to keep the stone on his hand then the charge brought against him is supposed to be proved finally. The silungket, as they believe, would be hot on hand of a guilty and a real sinner would not be able to keep the stone on his hand, on the contrary, it would remain cool on the palm of a innocent person. But the silungket is rarely used for judgement as most of the problems are settled in the trial of the community council. The forms and measure of fines and punishments exercised by the community council are mostly the same as those imposed by the village council with some little differences in the severity of the corporal punishments.

Besides looking into intra-community affairs, the Kamchikao

also represents the community in inter community affairs. He had to represent the community during the customary annual tribal gathering of the state which was traditionally held at the palace of the then Maharajas and was known as *hasam bhojan*.

The working tenure of the community council is not fixed and, at the same time, it is not life long for any of its members too. It depends, as in the case of village council, on the activities and volition of the council members especially the community chief. If the people of the community feel that the existing council has lost the efficiency then they can dissolve the council in a formal meeting. Besides, the Kamchikao or any member of the council may resign if he feels himself unable to run the office competently. Any termination in the post of Kamchikao results in the dissolution of the council as a whole. But when any other member of the council resigns, no change occurs in the over all structure of the community council; but the vacant post is filled up by selecting a suitable person in a formal meeting of the community council.

No major changes has taken place in the structure and functioning of the village and community council of the Molsom except relaxation of some traditional laws. The village council or community council, nowadays, for instance, allows community exogamy with a minimum fine of community feast only. At present their community council gives permission to the people of other community to become Molsom. The interested person, in such a case, has arrange for a community feast. The convert is allowed to choose any clan as he likes but he is to declare his choice before the council with a promise to obey all the existing laws, norms, customs, beliefs, values etc of the Molsom society.

The secular and religious components of the authority structure of the Molsom have some sorts of seperate identity so fer its frame work is concerned. The secular part is vested with actual power and it occupies higher status in the hierarchical strata. Thus the village chief in the village council and the Kamchikao in community council head the power structure whereas the Awchai forms an essential

auxiliary body. Such separation in the structure does not interfere in the functioning of the council. Rather some sorts of diverse affect is found so far as some of its activities are concerned. The Awchai, for instance, acts as the main determinant in the finally selecting the village or community chief. Therefore a person can not be selected as the village or community chief if the religious test of the Awchai proves ominous.

CHAPTER III

RITEs OF PASSAGE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Birth

After an expectant mother has passed three or four months of conception the Molsom observe *sapalang reboul* or *kabeng* rite for good health of the mother and coming issue, as a protective measure against evil's eyes and to prevent abortion. In *sapalang reboul* the Awchai worships four supernatural spirits, namely Tuior, Asengoi, Thingkungnoi and Paoenpa by sacrificing seven chicks and three pig lets. For *Kabeng* the same spirits are worshipped but no swine is sacrificed. *Kabeng* is observed, generally by the economically deficient as it is less expensive than *Sapalang reboul*. After *sapalang reboul* or *Kabeng* rite is performed the Awchai forecasts the sex of the coming issue by observing the position of the rectal cecum on the elementary canal of a sacrificed chick. Downward of the tip of the rectal cecum portends a female issue whereas an upward position is supposed to signify a male embryo.

Among the Molsom the pregnant women are to observe some restrictions. They are forbidden to sleep with their husband after seven months of conception and they are to keep covered their breasts by breast garment locally known as *risa* especially when they go outside the house. They believe that an evil spirit called *Khuri* does harm to the breast of the pregnant women with its malicious look. If the worst befalls, symptoms appear in the shape of breast pain and, some times, with cracking of nipples. To get rid of the evil, the Awchai worship *Khuri* by offering boiled rice and curry made of seven vegetables. Besides, the expectant mother is to avoid filthy places where, as they believe, the *Khuri* lives and may take possession of the mother. If it so happens, the women in the family way losses mental balance.

When the delivery pain starts, a labour-room is contrived in the house with sheets of cloth, bamboo mats etc. The Awchai worships Tuior and Arkhonthace on the bank of a stream or river by sacrificing one duck or hen for easy delivery and as a protective measure for the mother and the coming issue against evil eyes. The Awchai also forecast the time of delivery that is early or latter and the health of the issue by examining the elementary canal and the colour of the blood of the sacrificed animal respectively. The shorter is the distance between rectal caecum and rectum, the earlier is the expected time of delivery and more deep-red is the colour of the blood of the sacrificed fowl the better is supposed to be the health of the issue. If the colour of the blood is found to be blackish then it signifies that the issue may die before or after delivery.

In the labour room the expectant mother sits on the delivery bed made of bamboo mats, rests on her knees and catches hold of a post or a rope slung from a beam of the roof. At the time of delivery a local midwife and her assistant locally known as *kurma* and *lauromi* respectively, and some other elderly ladies attend on the woman. The assistant of the midwife and some other elderly ladies steadies the mother from behind and the midwife delivers the baby.

On the umbilical cord five knots, each at a distance of one inch from the other, are tied by cotton threads. The midwife cuts the umbilical cord at third knot with a sharp bamboo split locally known as *saranat*. If a son is born then the split is obtained from a bamboo post of the house and in case a daughter is born it is taken from a horizontal split of the bamboo wall of the house. The umbilical cord of a son is cut by keeping it on the handle of hand chopper of his father and that of a daughter is cut by placing it on a weaving equipment locally known as *khuroi*, of her mother. Juice of some local leaves is used to check bleeding. Placenta is put in an earthen pot or in a pot made of dry pumpkin and the father of the baby places the pot on a bamboo stand in a nearby jungle. The midwife, her assistant and other ladies who attend the mother during the delivery are entertained with *zokola*.

After the last part of the umbilical cord is removed, generally

four to six days after the birth, *abursuk* ceremony is observed when naming of the new born is done. The Awchai worships the Arthengoi by sacrificing one hen and then selects one from two or three names proposed by the baby's relatives. He takes two leaves and drops them from above uttering the proposed name. If both the leaves fall with the same side up then he rejects that name as it is supposed to be ominous. When the leaves fall with opposite side up, that is one dorsal and one ventral, it signifies that the name is auspicious and the baby is named after that name.

The names are usually chosen after local birds, flowers, remarkable incidents or happenings which might have occurred at the period of birth. A person, for instance, was born in 1952 and has been named Kuminist pada as the communist movement had entered the region during that period or a girl is named as Ration laxmi due to the fact that at the time of her birth a ration shop was set up near their village and so on. Most of the names of the present generation are corrupted form of the names prevailing among the neighboring Bengalees. For example, the Bangali name Rupabati as Rupaiti, Laxmi as Likhi, Pradip as Pudip, Kamal as Kumal etc. Two terms namely Bhagya and Bahadur are widely used with the actual name especially among the male nowadays, such as Saran Bhagya, Ninda Bhagya, Aprut Bahadur, Nago Bahadur and so on.

On any evening, within one month after the birth of the baby the Awchai worships Mukotkung Reboul at doorsill by safrificing one young swine and a chick. This is done as a protective measure against diseases for the new born. If Mukotkung reboul is not performed within one month, the evil spirit Khuri, it is feared, will cast an evil look on the baby and the baby will vomit repeatedly. Within one year after the birth, the Awchai worships Prosenpoi daity by sacrificing three hens which, they believe, will help the new born to learn speaking at an early age.

Up to four or five months, the breast feeding is the main source of food for the baby. When the child grows up to one year, he or she is provided with normal meal. The mother and other elderly relatives keep the baby on their laps or on the hammock. During

the work time the ladies tie the baby at their back with a short piece of cloth made especially for the purpose which is locally known as *ponai*.

The Molsom observes ceremonies during the first wearing of cloths. The wearing ceremony for the boys is known as *takbrokmi* and that for the girls as *punmizel*. Traditionally they do not wear dresses except warm clothing in winter before solemnization of wearing ceremony. In Takbrokmi a boy for the first time wears *takbrok*, the traditional mail dress. and in Punmizel a girl puts on *punmizel* the traditional loin cloth first time in her life. At an early stage of this initiation, the parents invite some young boys and girls to their house. Generally the ceremony takes place in the evening when the parents leave the house. The boy and girl invitees assemble in the house when they drink *zukola* and make merry. The boys help the boy or girl to put on a new piece of loincloth. The boy or girl whose initiation goes on, generally tries to oppose but the boys forcibly make him or her wear the garment. From this very day the boy or the girl starts wearing dresses.

Childhood among the Molsom is passed cherily. They play indigenous games and get training in various socioeconomic activities. The adolescent boys and girls keenly observe various work activities of their parents and other elderly persons. The boys gain knowledge of bamboo, cane and wood crafts, agricultural works, hunting, fishing etc and the girls gain skill in weaving, agricultural works and other domestic activities. Some time they participate in some minor works like rearing of animals, weedings etc.

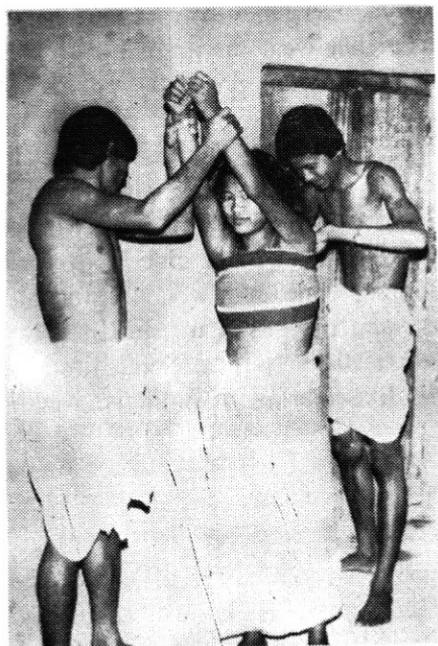
Puberty

Among Molsom a ceremony is observed when a girl steps in to puberty. The ceremony is known as *risabomb*. After first menstruation, Risabomb ceremony is performed, when a girl for the first time wears Risa the breast garment. In prsence of many boys and girls, during Risabomb, two strong boys tie a new piece of risa around the breast of the girl. The other parts of this ceremony are

same as that of Punmizel ceremony. The boys with whom the marital relation of a girl is tabooed are interdicted to attend the Risabomb ceremony of that girl. After Risabomb a girl is formally accepted as a young girl locally known as *nungak* by the society and her parents are allowed to arrange for her marriage. In Molsom society no ceremony is observed relating to initiation of the boys into puberty.

The cloth wearing ceremony namely *takbrokmi* for the boys and *punmizel* for the girls and the puberty initiation ceremony for the females namely Risabomb are unique for the Molsom so far as the other autochthonous tribals of the state are concerned except the Mog. Among the Mog of Tripura, adolescent ritual for the males namely Sangpareebui and Ranglangsa, the puberty rite for the females, are observed.

Photograph : 4



"Two strong and stout boys tie a new piece of risha on the breast of the girl during puberty initiation ceremony."

Molsom youths lead a romantic life. They lighten the hard and tedious works of jhum and other economic activities with music and marry making. They participate in all socioeconomic activities as and when necessary. In the village the youths are organized under the leadership of Tangoaloulm the leader of the boys and Nungakoulm the leader of the girls.

After the days work the young boys visit the house of the young girls and amuse themselves there by gossiping. Generally a group of boys consisting of three to six members assemble in a girl's house in the evening. This evening gossiping in Molsom is known as *leang*. Traditionally there was a room known as *lingna* or *sungna* in every Molsom house for the purpose. In *leang* the girl forms the nucleus and the boys display their special qualities in music, play on the musical instruments, and present bamboo, cane and wooden articles to the girl. The girl offers *zukola*, tobacco, betel leaf and betel nuts to the boys and observe them keenly. Ultimately one amongst the boys becomes successful in courting the girl and for this the green signal comes from the girl when she exposes symbolically.

After a period of observation one day the girl sits close to the selected boy and offer a portion of her loin cloth to him. The favored boy sits on the extended portion of loin cloth so that the girl is unable to move to attend to another boy's request for preparing smoking pipe, offering *zukola*, betel leaf etc. No rivalries grow between the selected boy and rejected ones.

A similar type of practice is found among the Lushais of Tripura. The Lushai call it *rim*. In *rim* also, like *leang*, three to six young boys gossip with a young girl at her house in the evening and try to court the girl. The other things of the *rim* are similar to those of the *leang*. the only difference is found in the symbolical declaration of the girl about her choice. The girl in *rim* take a *bailo* (a cigarette-like tobacco roll made of tobacco and paper) from the boy selected by her and tie the same to her hair and thus makes her choice known.

Sexual relation between the unmarried girl and unmarried boy is not uncommon in the Molsom society. Their society generally overlooks the matter as these sorts of relation usually lead to marriage. However, if a complaint comes from any corner regarding a delay in marriage then the village council takes up the case. The council imposes a fine of Rs.45/-, a bottle of country liquor and an earthen pot of zukola on the pair. The pair has to declare before the council that they would marry each other soon. If the premarital sexual relation results in pregnancy of the girl then the council takes up the case. The boy at first is fined Rs.45.00, an earthen pot of zukola and a bottle of country liquor. The boy in this case must marry the girl and he has to declare the date or month of the marriage which should take place before the delivery of the issue. In such a case if the boy refuses to marry the girl, then the village council hands over the case to the court of the community council. To take such a stand, the village council conducts inquiries through Nungakoulm and Tangoaloulm to be sure that the boy is responsible for the girl's pregnancy. The girl's version too given adequate weightage and is treated with some priority. If even in the court of community council the boy is refuses to marry, he is punished physically until he agrees to marry the girl. But such instances are rare in their society. Such a problem arises, generally, when two boys are found to have had physical relation with a single girl.

Biological relation of a person with whom his or her marital relation is socially tabooed is treated as a major offence in Molsom society. When such an affair comes to any body's knowledge then it is communicated to the village chief and if such affair is proved correct then the couple is fined Rs. 45.00, an earthen pot of zukola and a bottle of country liquor. Furthermore, they have to promise not to involve in such immoral relationship in future. In case the girl is pregnant due to such tabooed affairs then the pair gets excommunicated from the society with a fine of Rs.45.00, an earthen pot of zukola and a bottle of country liquor. They are also not allowed to get married socially. Such tabooed biological union, in Molsom, is known as *donkir*.

Marrige

The Molsom are monogamous. polygamy and polyandry are treated as social offence among them. They practise endogamy in community level. Their clans are neither endogamous nor exogamous. A person can choose his or her mate from among the twelve clans. After marriage the clans of the spouses remain unchanged but the children inherit their father's clan. Child marriage is not practised among them, but age for marriages not fixed. Marriage takes place at any age on attaining puberty. The groom may be younger than the bride or vice versa. But a youth, generally, prefers a younger female as his wife and a female prefers an elder mate. Both cross-cousin and parallel cousin marriage are in practise among them with some restrictions on the former type. A person is forbidden to marry his father's younger brother's daughter and vice versa. The marriage between socially permitted relatives is known as *halao ocha*. Both widow and widower marriage are in practise among them. Marriage may take place between a widow and widower or a widow and unmarried boy or a widower and unmarried girl. The rites and rituals for widow and widower marriage are the same as those of normal social marriage but fewer ceremonies are observed in case of marriage between a widow and a widower. A married person, both male and female, use no sign or symbol to indicate his or her marital status.

Negotiation, mutual consent, elopement and courthsip are the usual method for acquiring mates. As stated earlier, Leang is the customary system for developing courtship. During the watching of jhum crops the young boys and girls express their mind to each other through love song. Number of pairs are formed during the jhum-watching. Elopement usually takes place in cases of socially tabooed couples or other unions where social marriage not possible. In most cases of elopement the couple performs *baklak* worship and gains a status equal to that of socially married couple.

For negotiation, at first, a middle man known as *palai* gives proposal to the girl's or boy's parents on behalf of the girl's or boy's party. The parents and other elderly relatives of the boy and the girl

then confer at any party's house and settle an auspicious date for final discussion which is known as *adande*. The *adande* takes place at the house of girl's parents. On *adande* the parents, the head of the clan known as *pungifang* and other elderly relatives of the boy go to the girl's house with an earthen pot of *zukola*. In the girl's house her parents, *pungifang* (in case of marriage between members of two different clans) and some other relatives assemble. Having a light drink and in presence of local *Awchai* they settle the date of marriage, time period of *samak achangte* (the customary system of staying in the father-in-law's house) the quantity of *zukola* the groom's party would take with them and some other things.

photograph : 5



The female relative of the bride and groom drinks zukola and enjoy during marriage.

The marriage takes place in the bride's house and continues over a period of four successive days. The first day is known as *tusin*. On this day the groom goes to the bride's house accompanied by his parents, uncles, friends and other relatives with prefixed quantity of zukola. Besides, they customarily bring one pig, five hens, one set of ornaments such as necklace, nose ring, ear ring etc and one set of dress including one puenzel and one risa with them. The bride's party accords a respectful reception to them and ushers them to a room where they are offered comfortable seats. The groom's party then hands over the pig and hens to the relatives of the bride who ceremonially kill the animals and cook half of the pork. This pig slaughtering is known as *manrakrin*. Every body then eats, drinks, sings and make merry till all drop to sleep.

The second day is known as *pantapui*. Early in the morning the Awchai serialy puts four deities namely, Tuisangro, Arthungoi, Thingkungnoi and Samalaimilika on the courtyard. The bride and groom take bath, wear new dresses and come in front of the deities accompanied by their friends. Awchai starts worshipping the deities one after another by sacrificing two hens for each. The bride and groom follow Awchai. They bow their heads and repeat some sacred spells dictated by the Awchai. They then entre in two separate rooms arranged for them and relax there. A pig is slaughtered and half of the pork and the hens which are sacrificed in worshipping four deities, are cooked. This pig slaughtering and cooking is known as *noksag*. After *noksag* the bride, the groom, other relatives and invites have a feast and consume large quantity of zukola.

In the afternoon the bride and the groom take bath for the second time and put on new dresses. The groom wears Takbrok and put a turban on his head. The bride puts on a Puenzel, a Risa and a set of ornaments on neck, nose and ears. They are then brought in to a room where they sit side by side on a bamboo mat. The bride sits on the left of the groom. They project their feet in front. One boy friend of the groom sits at his right and one girl friend of the bride sits at her left. A stone is kept in front of them (nowadays grinding stone may be used). The Awchai worships the Moon and Sun by sacrificing two hens for each of the deities and pronounces

some sacred hymns. He then puts some sacred water, which was kept after the Tuisangro worship, on the head of the bride and groom and thus solemnization of the marriage takes place. After that the zukola which was brought by the groom's party is distributed among the relatives of the bride and the groom. Customarily, the parents and maternal uncles of the bride and groom get one pot each. The young male and female relatives of the same generation to which the bride and the groom belong get one large pot for each side and the rests stored for the next day. After distribution of the zukola, all the relatives of the bride and the groom drink, dance and make merry. This may continue through out the night.

Photograph : 6



During solemnization of marriage, "the bride and groom sit on a bamboo mat--side by side projecting their legs at the front. One boy-- friend of the groom sits on his right and one girl--friend of the bride sits on her left."

The third day is known as *dalani*. In the morning the pork which was preserved after Noksag ceremony is distributed among the parents and some other relatives of the bride and the groom. This is known as *antamingsemni*. In Antamingsemni, the front and back leg of the pork is divided in two equal parts and given to the parents of the bride and the groom. The groom's parents further divide their share into two equal halves and one half is given to the head of the clan and remaining half is kept for themselves. The parents of the bride divide their portion into four equal parts and distribute among themselves, their sons, daughters, and the maternal uncles of the bride. After Antamingsemni every body does nothing but drink, dance, sing and make merry in whatever way they like till they go to bed.

Photograph : 7



**Solemnization of marriage :
Awchai sacrificing a hen after Moon worship.**

The fourth or last day is called *oaikbulfulpantate*, when early in the morning relatives of bride and groom have a light drink and start for home. The groom remains in his father-in-laws house for *samak achangte*.

Photograph :8



A newly married couple.

During Samak Achangte the bride groom is treated as member of his father-in-law's family. The father-in-law bears all expenditures of the family of his son-in-law. The son-in-law customarily gets a portion of the agricultural products under his personal disposal. Besides, he may also practise poultry, piggery, duckery etc personally. Along with the other members of the family of the bride, the son-in-law shares ideas, experiences and knowledge of his father-in-law and thus gets training in various spheres of life. In the evening, often, the elderly married males assemble in a house of the village where they discuss on various problems and drink Zukola. The son-in-law

customarily follows the father-in-law in such assemblage where exchange of knowledge takes place. After completion of Samak Achange a person is allowed to stay with his wife and children in a separate house on the compound of his father-in-law's house or he may return to his father's family, here the choice is open to the son-in-law but leaving of father-in-law's house before completion of Samak Achange is treated as a major offence.

Adultery

Adultery is treated as a major social offence among the Molsom. The spouse of the adulterous person may claim divorce in the court of the village council. The village council imposes a fine of Rs. 120.00, an earthen pot of zukola and a bottle of country liquor along with physical punishment of five whip lashes.

Divorce

Divorce is socially permitted among the Molsom provided that the person claiming it must show sufficient reasons. Divorce is granted generally, when a charge of adultery is proved. It is also granted on a proven complaint of impotency or non-adjustment of the spouses. A divorce prayed on charges of adultery is generally granted at the out set by the village council after necessary inquiries. But a divorce claimed on the charge of the non-adjustment or impotency is more difficult to obtain. In case of the non-adjustment of the spouses the council at first tries to negotiate by reasoning with both parties and keep them under observation for a certain period. If after observation-period the person again claims divorce and at the same time the council also realises that couple cannot adjust with each other then a divorce is granted. The divorce claimed on the ground of mental imbecility is generally granted at the out set. It becomes more complicated when a divorce is claimed on the ground of impotency. The village council usually make inquiry about the reality of the problems through boyfriend or girlfriend of the husband or wife of the complainer. The Nungakoulm and Tangoaloulm of the village also help in the inquiry. After a divorce is granted the claimant has to pay Rs. 130.60 to the council from

which the divorcee gets Rs. 60.00 as compensation and the rest of the amount is divided among the council members and youth leaders of the village. A divorcee may remarry or remain alone. In case of inability to maintain the family, especially in case of women, her parents take care. Minor children stay with the mother and unmarried grown ups are allowed to live with either of their parents according to their choice.

Death

The Molsom cremate the body of the dead. But they bury the crops of a child. After death, the body is taken out from the house and is kept on the courtyard. The close male relatives of the deceased person carry the dead body on a bamboo made stretcher locally known as *tolai*, to the crematorium where the corpse is laid on a pyre and the Awchai and other relatives of deceased set on fire. After cremation, the ground is washed and boiled rice, vegetable curry and Zukola are offered at the crematorium in favor of the deceased which is known as *bisok*. Meramsi is observed up to three days by the villagers and seven days by the agnates when they take vegetarian meal. On the seventh day after death Tuisangro worship is performed by the Awchai at the house of the deceased and the villagers attend Tuisangro worship and have a feast. This is known as *samsir*. On the thirteenth day after death *ser* rite is performed when a pig is slaughtered and cooked pork, Zukola, country liquor and boiled rice are offered for the deceased. In every month of the date of death the agnates of the deceased offer cooked pork, boiled rice and Zukola at the crematorium which is known as *zu-thak*. The *zu-thak* continues for one year. After the completion of one year the *besu* rite is performed when a pig is slaughtered and the cooked pork is offered for the deceased and the relatives of the deceased have a feast. The bone-ash are committed to the Gomati river or other holy water after the Besu rite performed.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Family

The family and kinship form the most important institution of a society. Their significant is great especially in case of a tribal society because normally these ties are stronger in such societies. In this chapter we have taken up an analysis of the family and kinship ties which are found in the Molsom society. We shall first discuss the type of families in existence among the Molsom and then analyse their kinship and clan structure.

Table : 4
Distribution of the families of the sample villages based on its structure composition.

Sl. No.	Type of family	Number	Percentage to the total families of the sample villages.
1.	Nuclear	236	73.74%
2.	Extended	66	20.65%
3.	Other type	18	05.61%
	Total :	320	100.00%

Basing on the relationship among the members, Molsom families may be categorized broadly in three types, namely nuclear, extended and other type which are described below.

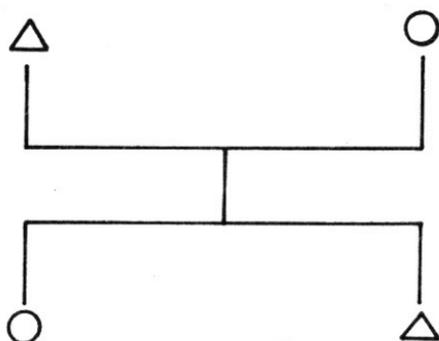
Nuclear Family

A nuclear family consists of husband, wife and their children if any. There are mainly three reasons found among the Molsom

behind the formation or continuation of a nuclear family. A nuclear family may form, due to separation of spouses along with their children, if any, from the extended family after completion of Samak Achange of a husband; or secondly, due to death of parents in an extended family resulting in separation of brothers from each other; or thirdly, due to separation of spouses from their natal houses after love marriage.

In our sample villages out of a total number of 236 nuclear families 25.42% have been formed due to the first reason mentioned above, 12.71% for the second and 61.86% due to the third case. The genealogical structure of a nuclear family may be diagrammatically represented as follows :

Diagram : 2



Diagrammatic representation of genealogical structure of nuclear family.

Table : 5

Distribution of nuclear family based on cause of formation.

Sl. No.	Cause of formation	No. of families	Percentage to total nuclear families of sample villages.	Percentage to total families of the sample villages
1.	By separation of spouses from netai houses after love marriage.	146	61.86	45.62
2.	By separation of spouses from their netai houses after samak achange.	60	23.42	18.75
3.	Due to death of the parents of spouses.	30	12.72	09.37
	Total :	236	100.00	73.74

Extended family

Among the Molsom an extended family may be described as the combination of more than one nuclear families and is formed through marriage of its member or members especially children. Thus a nuclear family may become an extended family through marriage of a son or daughter or both son and daughter. It may be pointed out here that the extended family through marriage of a daughter is formed due to the existing system of Samak Achange where, as stated earlier, a husband stays, for a prefixed period, with his father-in-law's family after marriage; and a family becomes extended through a son when, the son with his wife and children if any, reside with his parents after Samak Achange or love marriage. And when these two cases occur simultaneously then it takes the shape of an extended family through both son and daughter. In our sample villages a total of 66 families are found to be of the extended type, of which

63.64 % are formed due to the marriage of the son, 21.21% through marriage of the daughter and 15.15% through the marriage of both son and daughter. The genealogical structure of these type of extended families may be diagrammatically represented as follows:

Diagram : 3

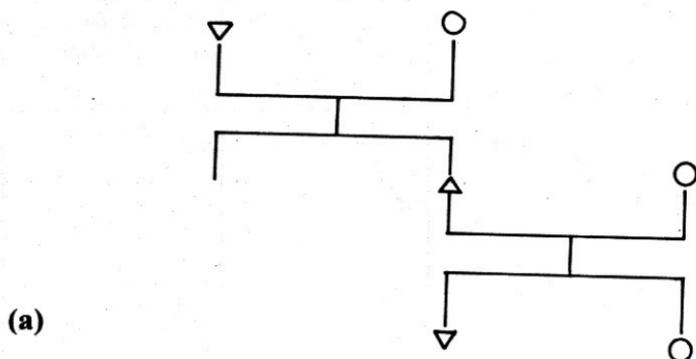


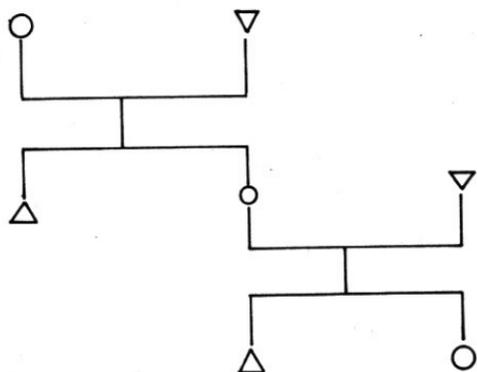
Table : 6

Distribution of extended families of sample villages based on cause of formation.

Cause of formation	Number of families	Percentages to the total extended families of sample village.	Percentages to the total families of the villages.
1	2	3	4
Due to marriage of son.	30	66.67	13.04
Due to marriage of daughter.	9	20.00	3.91
Due to marriage of both son and daughter.	6	13.00	2.61
Total =	45	100.00	19.56

* Total families of the samle villages = 320

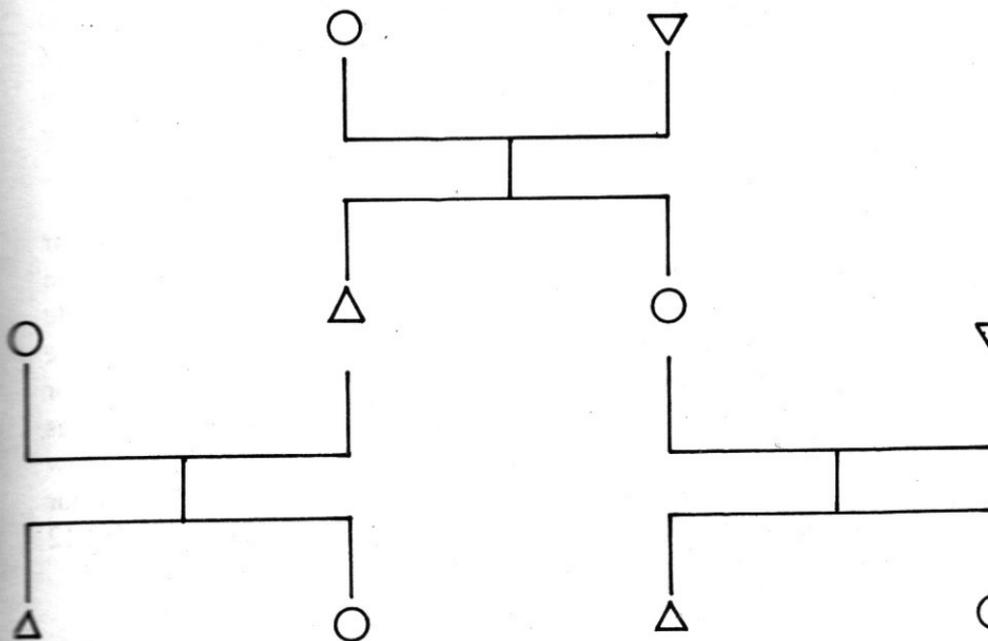
Diagram : 4



(b)

- * (a) Extended through son,
- (b) Extended through daughter.

Diagram : 5



- * (c) Extended through both son and daughter.

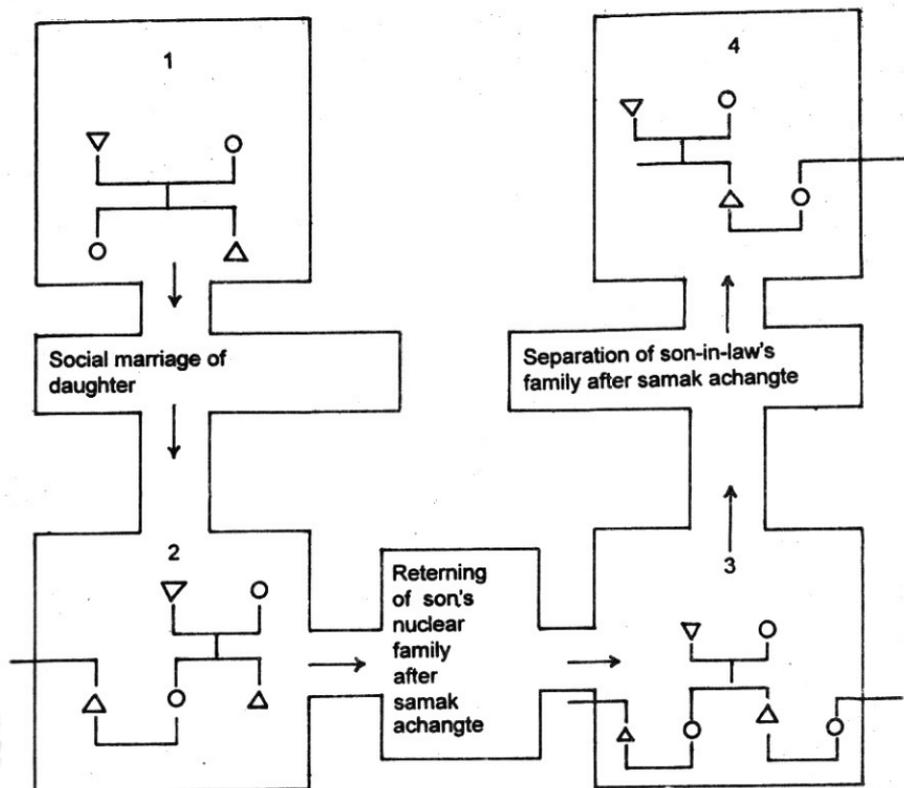
Other Type of Family

Besides nuclear and extended families described above, there are some families found in our sample villages which were formed under some special circumstances and are termed as other type. Three such type have been found so far. In the first type of cases an unmarried son or a boy is found living with the nuclear family of her or his brother, in the second type an widower is found living with his married son or daughter; and in the third type of cases an widow is seen living with her married son or daughter.

Regarding the Molsom families it may be mentioned here that for a certain period every family has got a chance to be shaped in any type of nuclear or extended family. A nuclear family, for instance, consists of husband, wife and their children-- son and daughter. Now after the social marriage of a daughter, this family has a chance to become an extended family for the period of Samak Achange of the son-in-law; it would take the shape of another type of extended family if the son of this family along with his wife resides with the parents after completion of Samak Achange or love marriage; and a third type of extended family may emerge if the two cases mentioned above occur simultaneously. The change of Molsom nuclear family into various types of extended families may be diagrammatically represented as shown in diagram - 6

Nowadays, the trend among the Molsom is towards the nuclear and extended through son type of families. This is because of the higher incidence of love marriage, preference of spouses to reside in neolocal house and reduction in the period of Samak Achange due to which a son or son-in-law returns to his parents house or to a neolocal house. Earlier when the period of Samak Achange was of longer duration, there was every possibility that the son-in-law might continue to reside with the family of his father-in-law. In our sample village as many as 73.75 % of families are nuclear and 13.12 % are extended through son type.

Diagram - 6



Diagrammatic representation of chances of conversion of a Molsom family in four major types.

1 : Nuclear family : 2 : Extended through daughter type of extended family; 3 : Extended through both son and daughter type of extended family and 4: Extended through son type of extended family).

Symbols used : = Marriage-bond; = Sibling-bond;

= Male; = Female.

Kinship

As kinship is the product of family and a family begins through marriage, the Molsom kinship may be divided into marriageable and non marriageable categories. According to the Molsom marriage rules, as mentioned earlier, in case of male, except father's younger sister's daughter and, for female, mother's elder brother's son, marriage is permissible among all of the same generation kins.

Thus a friendly, brotherly and sisterly relation prevails among the same generation kins and therefore a few kinship terms are in existence to address these kins. Other non-marriageable relatives consist of the members of one's elder and younger generations. The major kinship terms and a list of respective relations covering four generations namely one's own generation, parent's generation, grand parent's generation and children's generation are cited below :

Relationship :	Kinship terms:
A. Elder male members of one's same generation, such as :	
1. Elder sib brother.	<i>Kudod.</i>
2. Father's brother's son.	
3. Father's sister's son.	
4. Mother's brother's son.	
5. Mother's sister's son, and all such others	
B. Elder female members of one's same generation, such as :	
1. Elder sib sisters.	<i>Yeite.</i>
2. Father's brother's daughters,	
3. Father's sister's daughters,	
4. Mother's brother's daughters,	
5. Mother's sister's daughters, and all such others:	

- C. Younger male members of one's same generation such as :
1. Younger sib brothers. *Nupa.*
 2. Father's brother's sons.
 3. Father's sister's sons,
 4. Mother's brother's sons,
 5. Mother's sister's sons,
and all such others :
- D. Younger female members of one's same generation, such as :
1. Younger sib sisters. *Naunu.*
 2. Father's brother's daughters.
 3. Father's sister's daughters,
 4. Mother's brother's daughters,
 5. Mother's sister's daughters
and all such others :
- E. Husband : *Lompa.*
- F. Elder sister's husband : *Upa.*
- G. Younger sister's husband and wife's elder brother : *Waipa.*
- H. Wife : *Nupui.*
- I. Elder brother's wife : *Unu.*
- J. Younger brother's wife and *Wainu.*
- K. Wife's younger sister : *Palarangnu.*
- L. Wife's younger brother : *Palarangpa.*

Kinship terms of one's parent's generations:

1. Father, : *Kupa.*
wife's father and
Husband's father

Behavior Pattern Among The Kins

The interactional pattern among the Molsom is largely guided, as stated earlier, by their marriage rules. Thus behavioral pattern among those who are marriageable and those who are not could be differentiated. Thus members of the same generation behave with one another freely. While mixing with the members of opposite sex, the use of jokes and, at times, sex related talks are common. A joking relation is also permissible with ones brother's wife and sister's husband. Among the people of the same sex the code of expected conduct is friendly and, at the same time, brotherly or sisterly. At times, especially when a number of young males court a common girl in Leang, some rivalry may develop, but that does not last long and ultimately friendly relation prevails. During customary rites of thread wearing and puberty initiation namely Takbrokmi, Punmmizel and Risabomb, the free relation among the opposite sexes of the same generation takes a ceremonial shape. The joking relations with ones sister's husband and brother's wife help in socialization especially regarding sex knowledge and sex-life. The members among whom marriage is tabooed behave with each other as brothers and sisters. Customarily they are not permitted to attend Leang, thread wearing and puberty initiation rites of their brother or sister kins.

All members of one's parent's generation--both of father's and mother's side, are respected as parents and the behavioral code is also that of parents-child relationship. The members of this generation act as agents of socialization in all shpere of life to the kins of their children's generation. The behavioral patterns with the members of one's grand parent's generation is of affection and joke from the grand parent's side and respect and joke from the grand children's side.

All members of a Molsom village, in this or that way, are related to one another and in most of the cases overlapping of many relations occurs. Such overlapping of relations takes place due to occurrence of marriage among a wide range of kins especially of the same village. The relationship among the members of Kalabon Molsom Bari, one of our sample villages, are presented in latter

portion of this chapter. Such a case study will show how all the families of a village are related to each other.

Photograph : 9



Two females of old and new generations

portion of this chapter. Such a case study will show how all the families of a village are related to each other.

Photograph : 9



Two females of old and new generations

In Kalabon Molsom Bari, during the present study, it has found that out of a total of 42 households only six family-heads married out side the village and the remaining 36 family-heads got married with the members of the same village. In the table cited below a marriage chart stating nearest matrimonial relations of the family-heads who married within the village, is worked out. For the convenience of preparing this chart, we made numbering of all the house holds serially. The last household on the right side (from the entrance of the village) has been marked as number one and then other households have been numbered serially up to the last household on the left side (from the entrance of the village). After that the relationship, especially the nearest marital relation of a family head with the other family heads are traced and represented in the table placed below. Besides, we have also worked out diagrammatically a relation-structure based on the relationships which are in existance among the members of the Kalabon Molsom Bari. The head of the household number 13 is taken as our ego.

Table : 7

Relation of ego with other family head of the village :

House number of respective family-head.	Sex	Age-group (senior or junior to ego)	Relation of ego.	Kinship term.
1	2	3	4	5
1.	F	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's daughter.	<i>Kupungak.</i>
2.	M	Jr.	Mother's father's brother's son's son.	<i>Naupa.</i>
3.	M	Jr.	Father's sister's son.	<i>Naupa.</i>
4.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's son.	<i>Kapater.</i>
5.	M	Jr.	Father's sister's son	<i>Naupa.</i>

6.	M	Jr.	Mother's father's brother's daughter's daughter's husband.	<i>Waipa.</i>
7.	M	Jr.	Mother's father's brother's daughter's daughter's husband.	<i>Waipa.</i>
8.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's daughter's husband.	<i>Kumrang.</i>
9.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's daughter's husband.	<i>Kumrang.</i>
10.	F	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's son's son's wife.	<i>kini.</i>
11.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's son's son.	<i>Kudod.</i>
12.	M	Jr.	Sib brother.	<i>Naupa.</i>
13.	M	—	Self (ego).	—
14.	F	Sr.	Mother	<i>Tarpi/ Kunu</i>
15.	F	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's daughter.	<i>Naunu.</i>
16.	M	Jr.	Wife's father's father's brother's son's son.	<i>Naupa.</i>
17.	M	Sr.	Wife's father's father's brother's son's son.	<i>Kudod.</i>
18.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's daughter's husband.	<i>Kumrang.</i>
19.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's daughter's son.	<i>Kudod.</i>

20.	M	Sr.	Father's sister's husband.	<i>Kumrang.</i>
21.	M	Jr.	Younger sib brother	<i>Naupu.</i>
22.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's son.	<i>Kamasa.</i>
23.	M	Sr.	Mother's sister's husband.	<i>Kumrang.</i>
24.	M	Sr.	Mother's sister's husband's brother.	<i>Kumrang.</i>
25.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's daughter's daughter's Husband's Mother's brother.	<i>Kamasa.</i>
26.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's daughter's son.	<i>Kamasa.</i>
27.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's daughter's husband.	<i>Kumrang.</i>
28.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's daughter's husband's brother.	<i>Kamasa.</i>
29.	M	Jr.	Sib sister's husband.	<i>Waipa.</i>
30.	M	Sr.	Mother's younger brother.	<i>Kamasa.</i>
31.	M	Jr.	Wife's father's brother's son.	<i>Naupa.</i>
32.	M	Sr.	Wife's father's brother.	<i>Tarpa.</i>
33.	M	Sr.	Wife's elder brother.	<i>Kudod.</i>
34.	M	Sr.	Wife's elder brother.	<i>Kudod.</i>

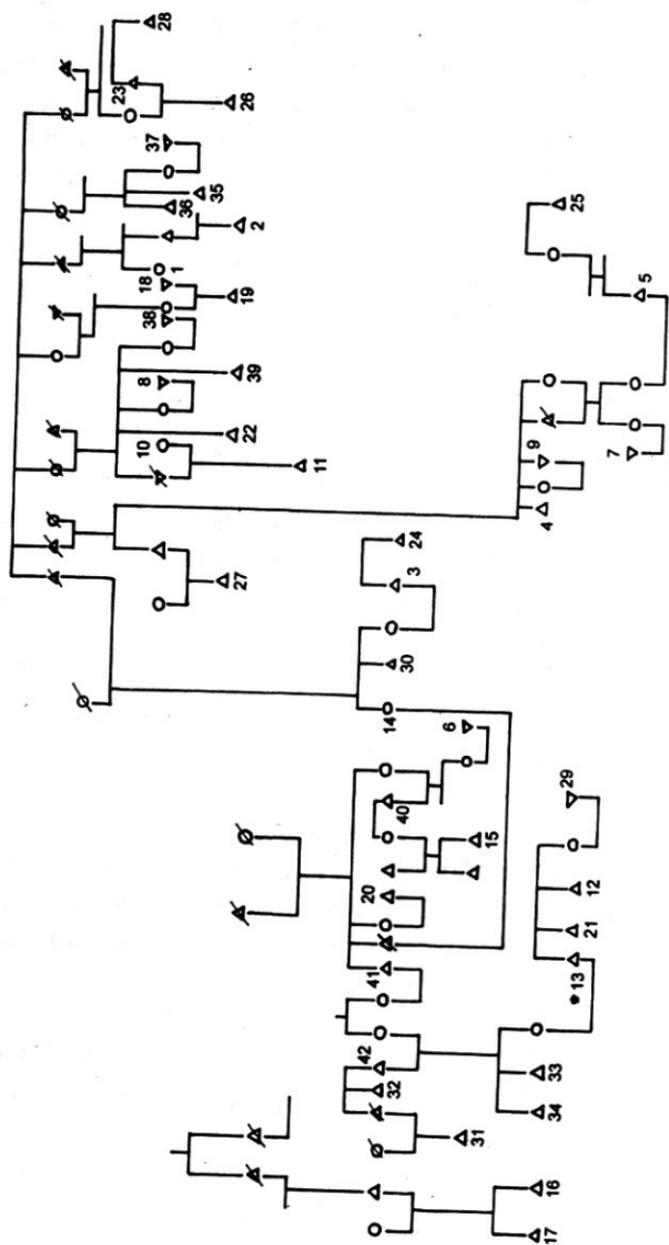
35.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's son.	<i>Kamasa.</i>
36.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's elder son.	<i>Kapater.</i>
37.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's husband.	<i>Kumrang.</i>
38.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's daughter's husband.	<i>Kumrang.</i>
39.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's son.	<i>Kapater.</i>
40.	M	Sr.	Father's sister's husband.	<i>Kumrang.</i>
41.	M	Sr.	Father's brother.	<i>Kapater.</i>
42.	F	Sr.	Father's brother's wife's sister.	<i>Kuputer.</i>

.....

Thus the Molsom village group are self-sufficient so far as place of marriage of the villagers are concerned. And a Molsom child is diversely related to the kins of his or her father's and mother's side. Such self-sufficiency in marriage place and diversity in relations occur, as stated earlier, due to wide range of marriageable relatives especially within one's own generation. In case of Kalabon Molsom Bari, for instance, the family head of the household number 41 is ego's father's brother who is also ego's wife's mother's sister's husband (diagram showing village genealogy). In case of Kinship terminology, the head of the household number 41 is ego's Kapater if the relation is considered through ego's father's side. But that person is ego's Kumrang also if the relation is considered through his wife's side.

Genealogy of the inmates of the Kalabon Molsom bari:

Symbol used : = Marriage -bond ; = Sibling-bond; = Male ; = Female; =Dead ;
 Encircled household number = member of ego's same generation: Open household
 number = member of ego's parent's generation; = Ego (household number 13).



Clan

The Molsom are divided into twelve clans. In Molsom clan is known as *punchi*. The names of these clans are Singer, Mapu, Deorai, Sung fun, Lengman, Uisha, Achep, Nompur, Lungthung, Nokham, Tuisung and Ronte. Every clan has one head man Known as Pungifang. These clans are not totemic. In fact, they are not able to trace the progenitor of their clans. However, they believe that the names of these clans originated due to some special work-activities of the head of these clans. These clans are neither exogamous nor endogamous--selection of mate, for marriage, is open among the members of all clans. The children inherit the clan of their father and the clan of a women remains unchanged after marriage. There is a myth prevailing among them regarding the origin of the names of these clans which is stated below:

In Arshiemkhosak of Bolpuitang, as per their hearsay, the Molsoms had been residing on twelve adjacent hillocks. The dwellers of each settlement area were under the supervision of a headman who maintained solidarity among the dwellers and keep connection with the Kamchikao, Suprai and other leaders of the community regarding the affairs and problems of the people of respective settlement.

In course of time, those twelve village had merged into one due to extension of homestead areas of every village because of increase of population. This sort of merger had created some problems in identifying the village people in respect of respective village and headman. To solve that problem Kamchikao and Suprai had decided to give a name to each of the settlement heads basing on the type of works he had done during the day time on a particular day.

They called all the heads of the twelve settlements to a meeting one evening at the house of Suprai and asked about the type of work they had performed during the day time. Accordingly, the twelve heads reported their deeds one by one and Kamchikao and Suprai gave a name to each of the respective heads by which the other people

of their settlement were identified.

The head of one village reported that he had repaired a supporting pillar of his house locally known as *deo*. And thus that headman and the people of his village were named *deorai*. Another head told that he had done nothing but eaten chicken and drunk zukola. That head and his village people, thus, were named *singer* owing to the fact that a wild cat which is in Molsom known as *Singer* does nothing but eat flash. The third head said that he and other adult members of his family had cleared the jungles surrounding their house. That head and all people of his village were named *mapu*. In Molsom *ma* means courtyard and *pu* means large. The head of the fourth village reported that he has visited some of his kin's house and therefore he and his village people were named *leangman*. In Molsom *leang* means to visit. The fifth village head informed that he, along with other people of his village, through over sight, had eaten the flesh of a dog mistaking it a deer, which had accidentally been burnt during jhum-fire. The head and other people of the village therefore were named *uisha*. In Molsom *ui* means a dog and *ashak* means to eat. The head of the sixth village reported that during the day he had punished a person of his village who had done some unfair deeds. In Molsom, punishment is known as *ron* therefore the village head and his people were named *ronte*, that is, the person who impose punishment. The head of the seventh village told that he, along with some youths had constructed round their village a boundary-wall of bamboos with pointed end. That head and his village people were named *sungfun*. In Molsom *sung* means pointed end and *phun* means sharp. The head of the eighth village reported that he had made a hearth on the floor of his dwelling house. that head and his village people were named *lungthung* as in Molsom, a hearth is called Lungthung. the leader of the ninth village told that he, along with youths of his village, had been detained by the people of a neighbouring village who doubted that they had burnt some of their houses; though they were not the actual culprits. The people of that village had pinched them as a form of punishment and after that they were released. The people of that village and their head were named *achep*. In Molsom Achip means pinching. The head of the tenth village reported that he had taken his launch on an unclean

leaf. He with his village people were named *nompör*. In Molsom *nom* means leaf and *por* means unclean. The head of the eleventh village told that he, along with some youths of his village, had burnt the house of a person to teach him a lesson, for the man had done some unfair deeds. The people of that village and their head were named *nokham*. In Molsom *Nokham* refers to a person who burns house. The head of the twelfth village reported that he had supplied water to the house of Kamchikao. He and other people of his village were named *tuisung*. In Molsom *tui* means water and *and sung* to supply.

Thus we find that names of the clans among the Molsom are based on activities and not on some gods and goddesses that might have been worshipped in ancient days or based on some other totemic things. Besides, the stories narrated above, we do not have any other sources from which the origin of the names of the Molsom clans could be verified.

CHAPTER V

MOLSOM ECONOMY

The Molsoms are by tradition shifting cultivators. Among them the shifting cultivation is known as *lau*. They have been surviving in a subsistence economy, cultivating just enough to meet the household needs. Shifting cultivation involves barest of implements. This type of cultivation is practised by most of the tribes of North East India. In shifting cultivation usually a few crops are grown together which are all useful for the cultivators because these are either food crops or those which are of use to their daily life. Apart from shifting cultivation, they also practise subsidiary economic activities such as animal husbandry, hunting, fishing, gathering of root, tubers etc for food and some other activities.

The present study on Molsom shows an interesting feature of their economy. It is found that most of them have adopted technique of settled agriculture and only a few households are practising shifting cultivation as their primary occupation. The reasons for this has been discussed in the latter part of this book. The traditional form of shifting cultivation and other economic activities as practised by the Molsom will be discussed now.

Shifting Cultivation

Traditional method of agriculture of the Molsom namely shifting cultivation is done in the slopes of the hills. This system of cultivation in Molsom is known as *lau* and is well known as *jhum* and the cultivator as *jhumia* in the state. After one season of cultivation a *jhum* field is to be left fallow for a successive period of nine to ten years especially in Tripura for regeneration of forests which ultimately help the land to regain productivity. This system is known as *jhum-cycle*. During *jhum-cycle* the *jhumias* shift to another place for new *jhum* land and hence the system is known as shifting cultivation. A shift in the *jhum* land results, in most cases,

a shift of the homestead area too. Because, the jhum cultivation is highly land extensive. A small group of people have to cultivate a broad area for fulfilling their economic demand. To promote easy communication from homestead area to jhum field, the settlement area shifts along with shifting of jhum areas.

In jhum economy the land is primarily owned by the group as a whole and is kept under the control of the village chief. The possession of a group on a particular jhumland is mostly temporary in nature. The jhum area which is possessed by a particular group may be occupied by another after the jhum-cycle and the latter group may also be of another tribe.

The jhum cultivation of the Molsom consists of many phases such as site selection, jungle cutting, setting of fire, clearing of debris, seed sowing, weeding, watching, harvesting etc. Mainly three tools or equipments are used in jhum cultivation namely, hand chopper locally known as *chemlu* which consisting of an iron blade with two sharp working end one at side and other at tip; for handling an wooden handle is attached to the blade, *kaichaning* a small basket used for keeping seeds and sickles.

Generally during winter in November-December a broad area is selected by the village-chief accompanied by some old villagers. Preference is given to a place where plenty of hill slopes are there and which is nearer to the homestead area. A bamboo forest area is also preferred as, according to their experience, it is more fertile. After a broad area is selected, further selection is done for the individual household by the head and other member of the household.

The area of each group is demarcated by natural marks like big tree, stream, river etc. After selecting a particular area many cross-mark made of bamboo splits known as *thorba* are put on the boarder line of the area which indicate the possession of some body on that area. The meaning of the Thorba is known to every tribal community of the state and when they see these symbols in an area, other group do not occupy that place. Another type of symbol are used after

selecting a place for the individual household cultivation. Many bamboo pieces are put on the boundary line of a selected area the height of which remain at chest level of the head of the household and about two feet of the tip of the bamboo pieces are split giving it a conical shape. A household occupies as much lands as it can manage with its members.

Site selection, both in group and individual level, is followed by some magico-religious tests. The test for the village level selection is done by the Awchai and that in household level is done by the household head. Two bamboo splits are dropped from above in favour of a particular site or plot of land. If the splits fall having opposite side up, that is one dorsal and one ventral, then it signifies that the field is auspicious and falling of splits with the same side up reveals that the field would not be favorable for cultivation. This test is locally known as *pertet*. The tests are done three times simultaneously and if at least for one time the split do not fall in auspicious manner then they leave the site or plot in question and search for another. The dorsal side of a bamboo split represents, as they believe, female and the ventral side represents male. If the splits fall with the same side up it reveals fruitlessness because only male or female can not give birth of an offspring whereas a male and a female jointly can. Basing on this concept the opposite sides of the splits are treated as the sign of productivity. The second test is done by dream revelation locally known as *remang rekai*. A lum of earth is brought home and is kept under the pillow of the village chief or household head as the case may be. The reveller wears clean cloths and sleeps alone for the dream. If he dreams a dream relating to clean water, marriage ceremony, face of unmarried girl, house, sands, or naked unmarried girl then it signifies high productivity of the land. But a dream relating to buffalo, dog, monkey, cat, face of unknown person or a married women portends low productivity of the land.

The bushes, bamboos shrubs and other wild growth on the selected land are cut down by hand choper. This jungle cutting is known as *lau oat*. The uprooted jungles are left on the field to dry up for about a month which is known as *pemphau*. Fire is set on the pithless jungles usually in the evening which is locally known

as *lau hal*. The fire continues for two or three days and only males participate in the job. During jhum-fire some magical practices are observed. Mustard seed, *ghila*, a local seed (*entada scandens*) and alkaline water (*chaltui*) are sprinkled on the field with a view to drive out the evil spirits. Minuthappa is worshipped as a protective measure against mishaps like injury from the quill of porcupine or the bite of reptile. At home women sprinkle water and place hand-fans on the courtyards with a view to relieve the mother earth from the burning sensation. Un-burnt debris are collected and set on fire which is known as *sangrukhom*. The ashes remain on the field and are used as manures.

In the first part of summer in April-May, after a few showers when the soil becomes loamy, the seed sowing starts. If there is a continuous spell of drought in the summer the Tui Pathen is worshipped for rain. Different varieties of seeds such as paddy, sesames, cotton, pumpkin, water melon, chilli etc. are mixed together and kept in the Kaichaning. Male and female members of the group of cultivators tie the Kaichening to their left waist by a tree-fibre and stand in a row to sow seeds. They make small shallow holes with the tip of hand chopper and put some seeds in it. The females predominate the sowing team. Sowing is initiated from the southeast corner of the field where, at first, on a small sacred plot of land some seeds like ginger, turmeric, mustered etc are sown. This small plot of land is known as *barmathun* and the crop of this area is not harvested. The sowing continues from the top to the bottom of the field. In some cases now a days, paddy seeds are sown on separate plots.

After the seeds have germinated and the plants have grown to a certain length, the weeds are uprooted from the field. Weeding is done four times in a season. The first weeding is known as *lauram chaul* and is done after twenty to twenty-five days of seed sowing. First weeding is to be done very carefully as at that time, crop plants remain still in their infancy. Rini chaul is the second weeding which is done after twenty to twenty-five days of first weeding and *ruthum chaul*, the third weeding is done when cornstalks grow. The fourth weeding namely *ruthen chaul* is done, if necessary, in the period

between the third weeding and harvesting. Besides, a magical rite called *sena* is also observed as a preventive measure against the excessive growth of the weeds in the field. On the seventh day of Vaisak (April - May), for Sena rite, some weeds are uprooted from here and there of the field, and kept on a leaf. The leaf then is made to float on the water of a stream or river . They believe that as the weeds goes with the current of water the probability of weeds growing on the field also goes away therewith .

When cornstalks grow, these are protected from birds and wild animals. A watch house known as *kaireng* is built up on a tree or in the top of hillock within the jhum-field. A number of bamboo made small instrument for producing sound which is locally known as *role roki hem* are erected here and there on the field and are connected by a long rope with pillar of the watch house. The watch party pull the rope and made slaping sound in *role roki hem* which drive away the birds and other animals. In some cases they bit an empty tin and make sound. At night flambeau are set especially on the probable pathway of the boars. Watching continue till the crops ripen and are harvested. The different varieties of crops ripen at different times so the watching has to be continued for a long period, though the seriousness of the job decreases after paddy has been harvested. The youths of the household shift temporarily to the watch house with essential utencils to facilitate constant vigil. The period of vigilance is also the time , as mentioned carlier, for mate selection among the Molsom and the other tribals of the state. The members of different watch house gossip together, make merry, sing songs and thus relax from the monotonous job of watching.

The crops are harvested as and when they ripen. Reaping of paddy, locally known as *song at* constitute the major harvesting activity and it is dne with sickle. A rite locally known as *sakum phai* is observed before the start of harvesting activities. For Sakum Phai a paddy plant is uprooted from the jhum field and is taken to the village where it is worshiped by sacrificing a hen. Many bunches are made from the reaped paddy shoots and those are kept on the field for two or three days. After that threshing is done on a funnel

shapd big basket locally known as *jeo bem*. The carrying of paddy from watch house to village is known as *sang rithak*. In the village paddy grains are stored in small granary known as *dal* which are constructed separately for the respective households. In the past, paddy used to be stored in warehouse locally known as *sapang* and constructed in a row at the middle part of the village. In Sapang separate warehouses were there for each and every household of the village and these were maintained collectively by the villagers. Nowadays the use of Sapang is out of practise. Other crops are harvested as and when they ripen.

Both male and female members take part in harvesting. A ceremony known as *sarbingor* is observed when new crops are cooked and eaten for the first time. In Sarbingor the Minuthhapa deity is worshipped after sun rise by sacrificing two hens. Boiled jhum rice is offered on the tip of a banana leaf. Some jhum rice kept in an earthen pot or bamboo pot and preserved in the house. This rice pot is locally known as *sairibing* and is worshipped on every full moon day for producing better crops in jhum. This practise of keeping the rice pot is found also among the Tripuris of the state, they call it *mailuma*.

In every sphere of jhum cultivation, the mutual exchange of labour locally known as *ron* takes place as and when necessary. On the field, the speed and unity of team work is maintained by humming or singing a rhythmic music.

Hunting

With a variety of indigenous weapons the Molsom hunt games. Only males take part in this job. Hunting is tabooed for the women. They believe that if women participate in hunting, then they would be attacked by the tiger. The type of hunting implements vary according to the species and nature of the game.

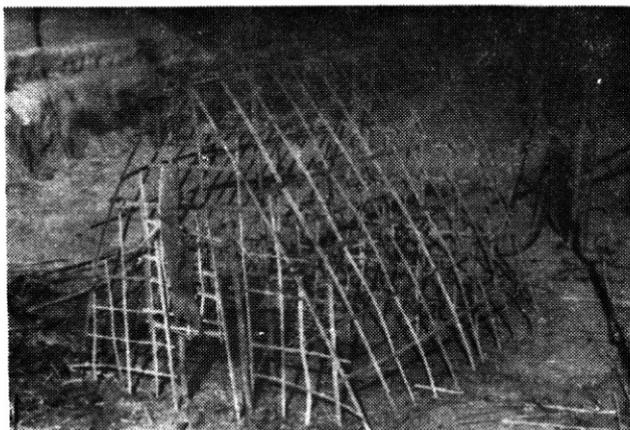
Hunting is done more or less, through out the year though the winter is treated as the prime season. The village priest worships *hasongnu pathein* the forest deity of the Molsom with an egg before

the group goes out for hunting. In this case the priest can forecast the availability of games observing the yolk of the egg. If any red spot is found in the yolk then it reveals fruitfulness of the expedition and it denotes a better hunting if the colour of the yolk is found to be more yellow.

A hunting team, generally, consisted of four to eight persons. During hunting a team is divided into two parties. One party takes food, drinks, extra weapons and some other essential things and follow the main hunters maintaining a distance from them. In deep forest the two parties maintain communication with each other through some symbolic sounds produced by them orally or with the help of a special type of bamboo reed. Generally they produce chirp, screech, chatter etc sounds so that the game remains unaware of the hunters. As and when the first party hunts a game they call the second party through symbolic sounds and hand over the prey to them. At night fire is set on some dry offshoots, around which one party sleeps and the other keeps watch by rotation. The game bagged in a group hunting is distributed among the villagers. The village chief generally gets the right leg of the big game. The people of a particular village have to hunt within its boundary. Hunting in the area of another village is treated as a social offence.

Large and ferocious games are generally trapped as risk is involved in face to face hunting, though in some cases, especially in group hunting, ferocious games are killed with hand weapons. Broadly two types of traps are used by them. Traps like *janter*, *sung chang*, *arachachang*, bird lime etc are to capture the game alive and *zuth*, *ringchang*, *phiaphachang*, *gurapchang*, *mankhawang*, etc traps are used to kill the prey. The hand weapons such as spear (*shai*), boe and arrow (*thal-phel*), sling (*phell-sylum*) etc are used to kill or injure the game. In some cases guns are also used in hunting. Among the Molsom, as also among other tribes of the state, a good hunter enjoys some special status in society. The degree of such status is determined by the skill in hunting and the number of big game a person has hunted.

Photograph : 10



"Traps are generally used to capture the large sized and ferocious game."

Fishing

Fishing is done in the stream, river and in other water sources. Both individual and group level involvement is found in fishing. Mainly two type of implements are used in fishing namely, traps such as *phol*, net, *chal*, *ahak*, *ngoi*, *ngoiinchor* etc and hand implements like *ngakoi*, *calching* etc. Besides, latex of local herb namely *ru* is used especially in community fishing. During winter and spring when the water level of a river or stream decreases a huge quantity of *Ru* is put in the river or the stream. *Ru* stupefy the fishes which are then easily collected by the villagers.

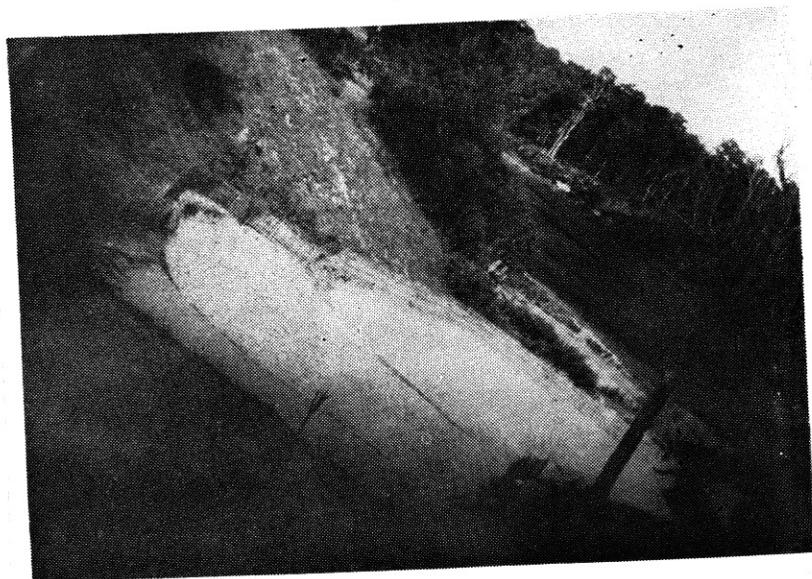
The fishing implements of the Molsom are akin to those of the neighboring plain people namely the Bengalis. Unlike hunting

expedition, no deity is propitiated before going out for fishing, nor the fishes are used in any rituals as pig and hens are used. Besides, the Molsom do not know the technique of making dry fish which they widely use. This may be supposed to indicate the fact that the Molsom have adopted the technique of fishing in large scale at a later period.

Settled Cultivation

There has been a major shift in the traditional economy of the Molsom. As mentioned earlier, many households have switched over the settled cultivation which is mainly practised on the plain lands between the foot of two hillocks and commonly known as Jul. This Jul is well-known in the state as *lunga* or *nal*. In some cases cultivation is also done on the plain surface of the hillock which is locally known as *tang*. In settled agriculture the Molsom are practising multiple cropping and they remain engaged in the job through out the year. In plain cultivation a single variety of crop is cultivated on a particular plot of land and the production is higher than that of jhum cultivation. Both cash crops and crops for foodings are cultivated in settled cultivation. Jute and sesame are the main cash crops and these are cultivated during pre-kharif and rabbi season respectively. Paddy the staple food-crop is cultivated during kharif. Other food crops such as pumpkin, vumber, chilli, arum, kidney been, pegeon-pea, sweet pumpkin etc and bringle, sweet potato, maize, *maisenga* the seed of a local herb which is used to make parched rice etc are cultivated during rabbi season. During pre-kharif and rabbi season necessary irrigation is done from nearby stream or river. Water is lifted with help of a bucket pulled and swayed by ropes hold by two persons standing on opposite sides. During kharif season the land is naturally irrigated by the rain water. However, where water sources are not nearby, irrigation is a major problem for plain land cultivation.

Photograph : 11



"Lungus are the plane lands in between two hillocks."

Tilling of land is done by spade or plough pulled by bullock. Generally male members participate in tilling or plowing. The preparation of land finally depends on the variety of crop to be sown. For paddy, for instance, the soil is first thoroughly soaked in water so that it turns muddy. The upper surface of the soil is leveled with a loader pulled by bullock or man. A big plot is divided into a number of small plot by setting up ridge of earth to hold water. A nursery bed is prepared to sow paddy seeds and grow paddy shoots. For cultivation other crops the soil need not be converted into absolute mud though it is required to be made wet especially at the time of seed germination.

The system of sowing and the nature of cultivation are also dependent on the type and variety of the crops to be cultivated. Paddy seeds, for instance, are to soaked in water and kept for two days for germination. When seeds germinate these are scattered on the nersary bed. Just after the sowing of seeds and growth of paddy shoots upto about three inches height, constant watching, especially at day time, over the nursery bed is done to protect the seeds from the birds. Usually teenagers are involvd in the job. They make sound from a *habor* or by beating an empty tin and chase the birds.

Photograph 12



Pre-kharief vagitables are being sown in lunga land

After the growth of paddy shoots upto one or two feet these are transplanted to the main field. Three to five shoots are taken together in right hand and rooted in the muddy soil. Both male and female members participate in the job. They stand in a row and do the job of transplantation. Except paddy and some other seeds like chilli, bringel etc. seeds are directly sown to the main field.

To protect crops from domestic and wild animals the field is surrounded by bamboo fancying. When crops ripen the cultivator keeps watch over the field, as in case of jhuming, all day long from a small watch house constructed at a corner of the field and drove away the birds and other animals by making sound and noise. At night flambeaus are kept on or near the probable pathway or boars. In some cases scarecrow locally known as *manier rimil* are set to chase away the birds and as a measure against evil eyes. An old duster or a roundish earthen vessel decorated by charcoal and lime which is locally known as *belkinot* is also set on a bamboo stand as a protective measure against the evil looks. The Molsom believe that malicious look may not be able to cause any harm to the crops if it falls in the Belkinot, Manior rimil or Lomphi first. Similar practise for protecting crops from evil eyes is found among the neighboring plain cultivators namely Bengalis. Watching over the crops continues till harvesting. Watching in settled cultivation is not as much colourful as it is in case of jhum cultivation. it is not so interesting and thrilling to the youth groups, hence no love song is sung nor do they enjoy and romance in watching.

Most of the crops such as paddy, sesame, jute etc are harvested by sickle and other crops, as and when they ripen, are harvested by hand. No rite or ritual is observed relating to harvesting in plain cultivation. Husking and grinding of paddy, sesame etc are done by pestle and mortar or by seesaw. Before using the harvested crops Sarbingor rite is observed. Mutual exchange of labour takes place, as it is found in case of jhum cultivation as well, as and when necessary in any phase of settled cultivation.

The Molsom did not know the use of animals in the field of agriculture. However, they were habituated in consuming fleshes. But

later on, with the acceptance of settled cultivation, they have adopted the use of cattle for ploughing. At present bullock and in some cases buffaloes are found in a major families especially those who have possess plain landed property.

Photograph : 13



Jute fibres are being carried to the village.

In new agricultural set up the Molsom are practising many of the socio-religious rites and rituals related to agricultural activities which were practised in jhum cultivation. They worship Sangrak and

Hasungnu before preparing a new peice of plain land with a view to getting better out puts and, at the same time, as a preventive measure against the evil eyes. They also perform Sena rite for preventing weeds in the crop-field; observe, as stated carlier, Sarbingor the festival of eating newly automnal crops and so on, though the sanctity and importance of these rites and rituals have, to some extent, been diminished. Sacrificing of hen, for instance, was a must in Hasungnu worship during selection of a jhum field, but it is not necessary while the Hasungnu is worshipped before preparing a new piece of plain land for cultivation. At the same time some of the practices relating to traditional cultivation have become out of practise in the changed agricultural set up. Mention may be made of dream revelation or Pertet which were observed for selecting a jhum land, these are not observed while a new plain land is selected for cultivation.

This is probably because of the paucity of plain land for settled cultivation, As no alternative land, in most cases, is available even if such tests forecast the law productivity or ominous. No magical test is also performed to select a site for settled cultiation. Besides, the nagico-religious rites relating to firing of jungles are also not in practise as the system of firing of jungles are also not in practise as the system of firing is absent in the processes of settled cultivation. This may be due to the fact that most of the plain land have minimum jungles which can be cleared by cutting or uprooting only and once a plain land is prepared their remain no chance for jungle to grow up as the system of jhum-cycle is absennt in settled cultivation. Over and above they use cow dung, composed manures etc. as fertilizers in plain cultivation which diminish the necessity of using ashes. Besides, there might have been some other difficulties to set fire on the jungles of the plain lands, especially when preparing it for the first time, as most of these lands are situated near the settlement or areas which are used other wise such as for grazing of animals or rearing, horticultural lands etc.where fire may cause damage.

Along with the settled agriculture the Molsom have adopted another branch of cultivation namely horticulture. They are now

cultivating jackfruits, banana, pineapple, guava, mango etc. fruits on the hill slopes near their settlement area.

Hunting among the Molsom has been limited to birds, boars and to some other reptiles. Fishing, however, is more popular than that of earlier but food gathering, more or less, has gone out of practise though during drought or other crisis period they collect fruits, roots, tubers, leaves etc. from the forest. Animal husbandary has become more popular and some new species such as duck, goat, milching cow etc. has been domesticated.

Table : 8

Distribution of the households of the sample villages basing on the type of animal husbandry in practise.

Type of animal husbandry	Number of households in practise.	Percentage to the total households of the sample villages.
1	2	3
Piggery	161	50.31%
Poultry	260	81.25%
Duccary	30	9.37%
Bullock	159	49.69%
Milching cow	77	24.06%
Goatery	102	31.88%

Having been adopted in settled cultivation, some remarkable changes have been taken place in the arena of working forces and land use pattern of the Molsom. A good number of Molsom have become landless so far as plain land cultivation is concerned because of the paucity of the plain lands. These landless Molsom have been working as agriculture labours, day labours or bargader to the neighboring Bengali or other tribal's land and doing jhum as subsidiary occupation or, in a few cases, primary occupation. In Molsom society labour is not purchasable commodity due to the existence of the system of mutual exchange of labour which, in fact, obstructs the

possibility of labour to become commodity especially within their own society. But in case of their relation with other people especially the Bengalis they are being engaged as labours. Some landowning families have surplus labour power due to the fact that unlike in jhum economy where a family could occupy as much land as it could manage to cultivate with its members, a family in settled cultivation, is not in a position to have so much lands due to the paucity of the letter. These households, in most cases, engage their surplus manpower as day labours, in fire wood selling or, if suitable land is found, in jhuming.

Table : 9

Distribution of the households of the sample villages based on occupation of the heads.

PRIMARY OCCUPATION			SECONDARY OCCUPATION		
Name of occupation	Number of households in practise	Percentage to the total sample households	Name of occupation	Number of households in practise	Percentage to the total sample households
1	2	3	4	5	6
Settled cultivation	150	46.88%	Settled cultivation	93	29.01%
Barga cultivation	28	8.76%	Agri. cum day labours	170	53.12%
Day labour	34	10.62%	Animal husbandary	300	93.75%
Agri. cum day labours	84	26.25%	Crafts	320	100.00%
Jhuming	24	6.88%	Jhuming	82	45.63%

Previously in jhum economy the land was not a commodity which in settled economy has become purchasable. Besides, there

was no unit, traditionally, to measure landed property so far as jhum area was concerned, but some descriptive explanations were used to denote the area of a jhum or other land. For example, to denote a big jhum area one might say that the jhum area of their village was so much wide that a wet warm cloth would get dry if one travelled wearing it, round the whole area or it would not be possible to hear any shout from one end to the other or one would not be able to see a big tree which stands on one end of the field if one goes to other end and so on. but nowadays the units like *kani*, *gonda*, *higha* etc. are used to denote the measurement of an area as such terms are used by the neighboring Bengalies.

Inheritance of Property

The property in the Molsom society is inherited by son or son-in-law, depending on the condition that the son or son-in-law resides permanently with the extended family. If a son-in-law, after marriage and completion of Samak Achangte, resides permanently in his father-in-law's house, he gets a share of his father-in-law's property; but if he returns to his parent's house and resides there permanently, then he does not get any share of his father-in-law's property but gets share of his parent's property. But none is allowed to enjoy the property of father and father-in-law simultaneously. A person loses right over his father's property when he enjoys the property of his father-in-law and vice versa.

In traditional Molsom society, especially in jhum economy, the inheritance of property actually means the inheritance of cultivation right on the land but not the right of permanent possession. Because, in traditional jhum economy a land is collectively owned by the village group under the control of the village council. And such ownership on a particular land is for a temporary period of two or three successive years when a household of the group cultivate, as mentioned earlier, as much lands as it can be managed by it's member. So no land needed to be allotted separately to a son-in-law as they get it for cultivation in normal course along with the other members of the household where they reside. Beside the cultivation right on jhum land, in fact, in such a society, other movable material

properties are not of much importance so far as inheritance is concerned. Because, other artifacts are mostly made with the local materials like bamboo, wood, cotton etc. which are easily available and every adult of their community can make these.

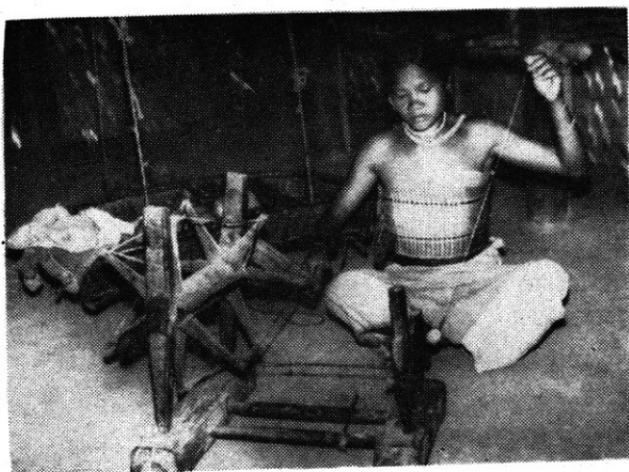
Arts and Crafts

In Molsom society every household is, more or less, self sufficient so far as making of domestic utensils and production of other essential materials are concerned. Most of their utensils are used in multiple activities and only a few utensils are used to meet all the needs of a household.

The skill in arts and crafts constitutes a major part of one's culturally transmitted qualities in their society. Some sorts of division of labour, based on sex, are found in the practices of arts and crafts. Basketry, bamboo, cane and wood crafts are usually practiced by the males and loom weaving by the females. It is tabooed for a man to weave cloth and that for a woman to practise basketry and wood crafts. If women practise cane crafts and men loom weaving then, as they believe, they would be attacked by tiger. On the other hand a Molsom female who does not know loom weaving and a male lacking the knowledge of cane-crafts are considered to be lacking essential qualifications for marriage. In fact, a good craftsman or weaver has got some special status in their society.

Basketry, bamboo-- wood crafts, cloth weaving and making ornaments are the components of arts and crafts practised by the Molsom. Baskets such as *bam* to carry rice, paddy etc.; *tuikok* to carry water pots; *kaichaning* to carry jhum seds; *rebom* to keep hen and other bamboo made articles like *lakhu* the rain shield, *reloi* the bamboo plate for drying crops, *wareng* the hammock, *sukmul* or flute, *chalphu* the small conical basket used for preparing alkaline water, *shei* the local javelin, *thal phel* the bow and arrow etc.; wooden articles such as *sum-sarhil* the local pestle and mortar, *sarinda* and *chongpreng* the local musical instruments and some other things are, as stated earlier, made by the male.

Photograph : 14



Cotton threads are being prepared from carpas.

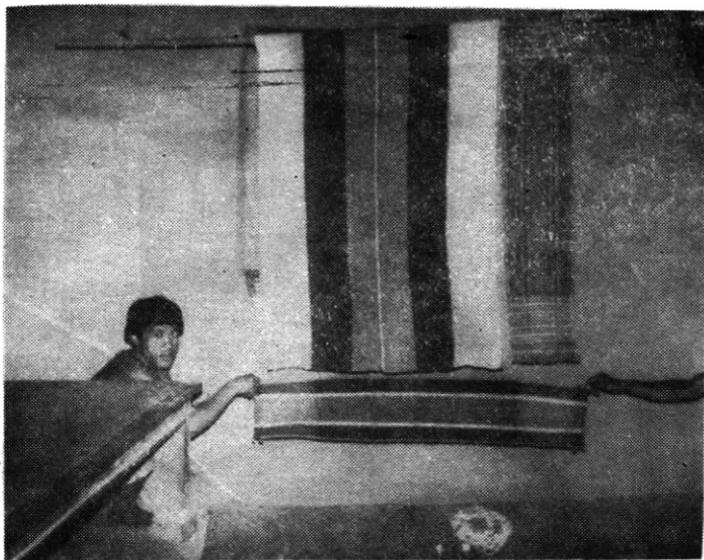
Photograph : 15



"A Molsom female without knowing of weaving is considered as a disqualification especially regarding marriage.

In dresses, the female dresses are more colourful than those of the males. Puenzel the waist garment and Risa the breast garment are two female dresses woven with colourful cotton threads. The width of the Puenzel is found in two sizes--from waist to knee and from waist to ankle. The waist-to-ankel size Puenzel is just double in length of the waist-to-knee size Puenzel. This limiting down of the size of Puenzel-in only two sizes is necessitated by the fact that the maximum length of the cloth woven for the purpose cannot go beyond the size of the full stretch of arms by the weaver. Takbrok the male waist garment, Pardari the loin cloth and Lukum the turban constitute the male dresses of which Takbrok is widely used, Lukum is used occasionally during social visit or in ceremonies and the Pardari is mainly used during work time.

Photograph : 16



Molsom female dresses -- puenzel (above) and risha (below)

Photograph : 17



*Some bamboo, cane and wood crafts of the Molsom:
(from left) chongpreng, bem (second & third) tuikok,
kaichening, sum-sarhil, sarinda & reloi(in front).*

During winter, Ponpui the worm cloth is used by both men and women. Traditionally all male dresses are of white colour but some colourful threads are used especially for weaving Takbrok. Some common designs are followed in weaving Puenzel and Risa. Dying is performed by the females and traditionally only three colours namely red, yellow and black are used in weaving these two garments. The three colours are extracted from local roots *rulum*, turmaric and seeds of a local tree respectively. But nowadays ready made coloured threads are used for the purpose. Ceremonies are performed, as mentioned earlier, when a boy or a girl wears cloths for the first time.

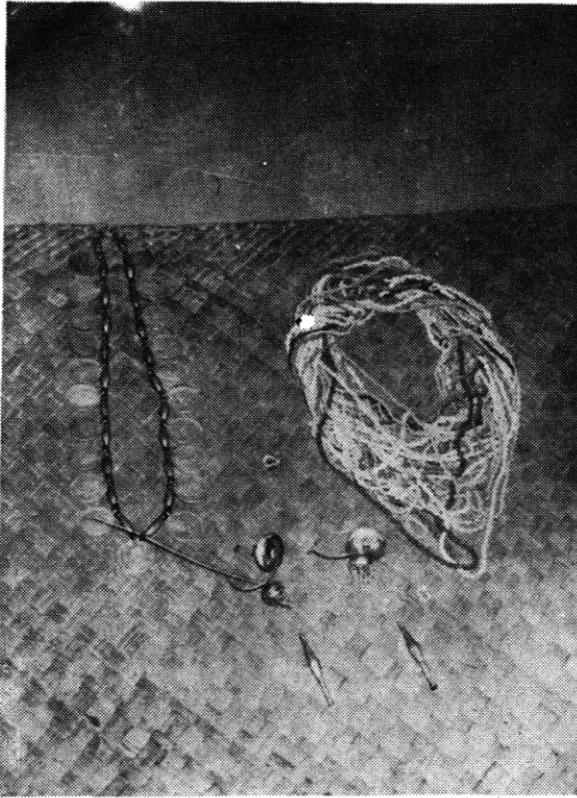
Another essential art for the female is the making of local beverage and local alcoholic liquor namely *zukola* and *rakzu*. In fact, the brewing of the high quality *zukola* is treated as an additional quality for the female in Molsom society.

A variety of ornaments are worn by the Molsom women on their nose, neck and ears. Naper and *toia*, the ear rings, are put on the lobe and upper part of the ear respectively. Noth the nose ornament is put on the bridge between the nostrils and *ruthoi* the necklace is used around the neck. All the ornaments, except Ruthoi, are made of silver or brass, and the Ruthoi is made of the seeds of wild bananas locally known as *matchi*. Nowadays the necklace are made of beads also. Except Ruthoi the Molsom do not know the technique of making any other of these ornaments. These are collected from the plain people.

The technique of iron smelting is not known to the Molsom. They also do not know the making of iron implements. The iron implements like hand chopper and sickle which they use in every day life are purchased from the Bengali blacksmiths. In fact iron smelting and making of iron implements are unknown to all the tribal communities of the state as well. The Khasis of Meghalaya used to smelt iron (Hunter 1879 :) but it is not found among the Khasis residing in the state of Tripura.

With the change of traditional production system namely, jhum cultivation, some dearth have occurred in the availability of raw materials especially for loom weaving. Cotton from which cotton thread is made, is scarcely available now as this used to be produced only in jhum and jhuming nowadays has been limited to production of food stuff only. At present cotton threads have to be purchased from the market. Previously they used to dye cotton threads, as mentioned earlier, with indigenous colouring agents but at present the cotton threads which they purchased from the market are already coloured in factory or elsewhere and this has limited down the practise of local dying. The ready availability of cotton threads of various colours has introduced novelties in motif and design of their cloths. Besides, availability of cheaper garments, especially the second hand garments coming from America and Japan via Bangladesh, has crippled household weaving.

Photograph : 18



Some traditional Mo!som ornaments.

The shortage of labour force in the craft sector has also hampered the household weaving. Settled cultivation is labour extensive, and as crops are cultivated almost through out the years, the manpower of the community is absorbed in agriculture through the year. Thus manpower stands withdrawn from crafts. Another factor that has led to the withdrawal of manpower from crafts is their lack of knowledge in making implements which they now use in settled cultivation. Since, a major portion of them have now taken settled cultivation, giving up, more or less, jhuming by and large they have to buy the artifacts like plough, loader, *pokhai* the hand implements used in irrigation, etc from the local markets.

Photograph : 19



Traditional bamboo pots are replaced by the earthen pitcher

CHAPTER VI

MUSIC DANCE AND GAMES

The Molsoms are rich with indigenous music, musical instruments and dances. In the process of socialisation, along with other culture-traits, an individual Molsom learns these music and dances. It is rare to find a Molsom without some skill, at least, in vocal music. Almost in all ceremonies, rites and rituals, especially song and dance form an invariable part. The words of a Molsom song may vary from place to place, person to person or group to group, but there is always some basic similarity. The tune of a particular type of song remains more or less akin. Such variation in lyric-composition occurs due to the fact that in most of the cases these are composed then and there by the singer or singers basing on a particular tune structure. And the basic similarity which can be found in such compositions results from the fact that the content and the environment are common for a particular type of song. However, the words of the Molsom songs are very similar, simple and most of the cases the verses do not maintain rhyme and rhythm. A particular subject, in such songs, is highlighted through some allegorical examples drawn and cited from the surrounding environment and every day experiences regarding nature and life.

The songs of the Molsom, may broadly be categories in four major types. These are the songs sung during work, love song, religious song and songs related to some other activities, rituals, ceremonies etc. The song sung during work, in most cases, are related to some work-activities like seed-sowing, weeding, harvesting etc. In jhum cultivation, such sorts of work-activities are done in group and the speed and unity of the team-work are maintained by the rhythm of music especially songs. These songs are commonly known as jhum-song, locally known as *haihak* lo. A person from a team, in jhum-song composes a few lines based on a particular tune-structure and he sings those lines loudly which the others of the team repeat in chorus maintaining some musical time-beat that is tala. The

subject matter of such composition is based on and related to the system or process of the concerning activities. The lyric of a jhum-song which is sung during the seed sowing activities, for instance, is usually composed describing the process of seed sowing such as how to dig a hole, how to put seeds in the hole or from which corner of the field sowing is to be started or any other instructions required to convey to any person of the team and so on. In most cases no drum like instrument is played on to accompany such jhum songs. Love song, generally, is also sung in the jhum field especially when growing crops are kept under watch by the youngsters.

When cornstalk grow the youths of a Molsom village shift temporarily to their watch house to facilitate constant vigil. This period of watching, traditionally is also the time for mate selection among the Molsom and other tribals of the state. In the jhum field the love song, generally, is sung by two parties - a boy's party and a girl's party. At a time, one person from each of the parties sings. Some puzzles, questions or proposals related to love and romance are put through songs to the other party which the latter replies through song sung by one of the members. In most cases, a boy and girl from each of the party lead the respective teams. Some time a competitive spirit develops between the parties which try to defeat each other through a tough puzzle or question.

Also during religious rites, ceremonies etc songs are invariably sung. The lyric of a religious song, in most of the cases, is related to various activities of the respective rite, ritual etc or, some time, those are composed to sing the glory of the respective deity or spirit. Besides the type of song mentioned above, some songs are also sung during some every day activities or during some other rituals, ceremonies related to birth, puberty, marriage etc. The lyric of such songs are also composed relating to the activities which are to be performed during the observance of respective rituals, ceremonies etc.

Musical Instruments

A variety of indigenous musical instruments are found to be in used in musical pursuits of the Molsom. Almost all of these musical

instruments are made of indigenous materials and are played generally in accompaniment with songs and dances; but some times independently well.

According to the purpose of use and the nature of sound, the Molsom musical instruments may be categorized, broadly, into two types namely *tala* (musical time beat) producing and tune producing instruments. *Tala* producing instruments are used to mark and maintain the rhythm and *laya* of the music and dance. *Khong*, *Dhakri*, *Dhelki* etc are such instruments. Brief description of the *Tala* producing instruments of the Molsom is given below.

Khong

It is made with a piece of hollow log and dry skin of goat or cow. This is played with hand or bamboo or wooden sticks. It can be played on both sides. A *khong* is generally used as an accompanying instrument with song, dances and other musical instruments or, in a few cases, independently. The size and shape of a *Khong* is more or less similar to the *dholak* used in the neighboring plain society.

Dhakri

A *dhakri* can be played on only one side and is made with wooden log and animal skin. Traditionally a *Dhakri* is used for making public announcements -- to invite for a mass gathering, to proclaim a war etc. Different specific symbolic sounds are produced on the *Dhakri* to announce publicity particular occurrences like death, mass gathering, war etc. Besides being used for public announcements, a *Dhakri* is, some time, also used as an accompanying musical instrument with songs and dances.

Dhelki

A *dhelki* is also played on only one side and is made of small, hollow wooden log and animal skin. This small conical shaped *Dhelki* is used as an accompanying instrument with song, dance or other musical instruments.

Mainly there are two types of tune producing instruments which

are found among the Molsom these are string instruments such as Chongpreng, Sarinda, Ditra etc. and flute locally known as Sukmul. In the string instruments, tune is produced through vibration of a string or strings. Some of the tune producing instruments which are found among the Mosom are described below:

Chongpreng

It is a four stringed musical instrument made of wood and bamboo. Four iron or steel strings, in chongpreng, are set on a hollow structure the length of which varies from about fourteen to eighteen inches. The base of the structure is more or less oval in shape and is connected with a semicircular platform the upper surface of which is flat. Strings are set on the plain surface of the wooden structure by fixing each of the two ends of the strings to the corresponding extreme of the structure – each string being separate from the other strings by equal distance. At the base, strings are fixed over a bamboo bridge so that the strings do not touch the body of the wooden structure and at the other end these are fixed to the structure through four bamboo rods which are inserted into four holes made at two sides of the platform. These rods can be twisted clockwise or anticlockwise making the strings tight or loose. Tune produced by the rubbing with a bow made of bamboo and tree-fibres. The intensity of the tune is regulated by controlling the working-length (length of string between two closed ends) of the strings on its base by the fingers of the left hand. Shorter the working length of the string higher is the intensity of sound produced. Tuning of the string may be done twisting the rods. Chongpreng is played independently or accompanying other musical instruments, dance or following a song. The structure and playing mechanism of a chongpreng is, more or less, similar to those of a violin.

Sarinda

The *sarinda* is also a four stringed musical instrument made of wood and bamboo. The structure, playing mechanism and tune controlling system of a Sarinda are almost similar to those of a Chongpreng. But in size and shape it is larger than a Chongpreng.

Ditra

It is a two stringed instrument. The structure and tune producing and controlling mechanism are almost the same as those of a Chongpreng with a little difference in the structure. The upper surface of the base of a *ditra* is covered with a piece of animal skin. Sound is produced, unlike from Chongpreng and Sarinda, by stroking on the strings at base with a small and sharp piece of wood or bamboo. *Ditra* is played solo or accompanying other musical instruments, songs or dance. The structure and playing mechanism of a *Ditra* are similar to those of a *Dotara* used in the neighbouring bengali rural society. In fact, the name *ditra* might be the corrupted name of *dotara*.

Flute

Among the Molsom flutes are found in various sizes. The intensity of the tune of a flute varies according to its size. Shorter the length and breadth of a flute, higher is the intensity of tune produced. The length of a Molsom flute generally varies from about eight to fourteen inches. It is made of a special variety of bamboo. At first, to make a flute, portion between two nodes of a piece of bamboo is cut and separated from the main body to obtain an open-end tube like structure. On the bamboo--tube seven small and round holes are made in a straight-line row. Of these seven holes, one made near an end of the tube which is treated as upper part. The other six holes are made on the middle part of the tube. The space between the holes remains equal in length. Air is blown, for playing a flute, through the upper most holes and the range of the tune is regulated by closing or opening the holes, through which air is allowed to pass out, by the finger of both the hands. Generally thumbs are not used. When air is allowed to pass out through the upper holes of the row, the intensity of tune becomes high and vice versa. A flute is played solo or accompanying other musical instruments, songs and dances.

Dance

A Molsom dance may be performed solo, duet or in group. Both male and female take part in dance. During various activities of the Molsom life, dances are performed. Dance in Molsom is known

as *lam*. Some of the Molsom dances are described below.

Haihak lam

It is generally performed during the customary ceremony when the new jhum crops are, for the first time cooked and taken. The ceremony is locally known as *sarbing*. In Haihak lam or jhum dance, the male and female members of a villae dance in a group imitating the movement and activities of jhum cultivation. That is jhum cutting, seed sowing, weeding, harvesting etc. A Haihak lam is generally accompanied by a *haihak lo* or jhum song and musical instruments both beating and tune producing. A Haihak lam is also performed during a galaday gathering.

Likhithak Lam

This is also a group dance performed by three persons-- one female and two males. This is performed during worship of Likhi. Through this dance sacred paddy of Likhi worship is distributed to every household of a village. The girl of the dancing team takes the sacred paddy in a bamboo basket and goes from door to door, moving her body in a style as if she is the goddess Likhi. The two male members of the team sing Likhithak lo and follow the girl. They go to every house of the village and the girl distribute the sacred paddy.

Chongpreng Lam

This dance is performed in accompaniment with only the tune of Chongpreng, hence the dance is known as *chongpreng lam*. In the galaday like the ceremonies of a social marriage, a community feast, a feast after a group hunting etc the adult members both male and female of a Molsom village dance this dance. After drinking zukola or country liquor they jump, hop, shake and move their bodies as they like without following any fixed rhythm of style. The dance does not seem to have a set style for itself. Generally no beating instrument accompanies this dance.

Muroi Lam

This dance is based on a Molsom folk lore related to a pregnant women who became a ghou for violating the norms and customs

to be followed by the pregnant woman in the Molsom society. In Molsom society a pregnant woman is called *muroi*, after which the dance is named. Three males are involved in this dance. Two males dance in the role of two vultures and the third dances in the role of a ghoul. During the dance, at first, two persons are eating a body and adopt gestures as if two vultures are eating a dead body. After that the third male comes and moves his body in a manner as he is chasing away the vulture. He then makes gesture as if a ghoul is eating the flesh of that dead body. No music or song accompanies this dance. In fact it is an acting based dance.

Sarhil Lam

This is a group dance performed mainly by the females. It is performed during a galladay or in other ceremonial gathering. Two pastels, for this dance, are kept side by side on the ground having an open space of about fourteen to sixteen inches between them. Two more pastels are then kept crosswise on the first set making a square in the open space between the four pastels. Four boys hold the tips of each set of pastels with their hand – each set of pastels are held by the two boys who sit face to face. The boys then start closing and spreading their pastel-set in a set rhythmic movement, maintaining a tempo. Thus in course of closing and spreading the pastels an open square space is formed alternately between the pastels. Some girls are made to stand in a row in that open space between the pastels. They start dancing in such a way that in course of spreading the pastels they step in the open space and before the pastels are closed, they step out. The process continues in a cyclic way. The dance starts with a slow rhythm but ends in a high tempo.

The music and dance form an essential part of the Molsom culture. In fact, these are functionally related to their way of life. The dance and music are used as the special medium of communication, expressing the mind of the group or an individual, which helps in maintaining social solidarity. The *Haihak lam*, for instance, facilitates team-work during jhuming operation, love song helps in selecting mate; *Muroi lam* is used as a means of social control especially over the pregnant woman as it threatens them again breaking the norms and other expected behaviors to be followed by them.

Games and Sports

A number of indigenous games are played by the Molsom, especially by the children and youths. In most cases these out-door games are played between two parties. Some of the Molsom games are detailed below:

Laisdi Pardi

This game is played between two parties with seed of a local plant used as striker or pawn and locally known as *poi*. The number of members for both the parties has to be equal and it varies from four to eight persons for a team. On the ground two parallel straight lines are drawn at about fifteen feet distance from each other. The game starts with one of the teams winning the toss for choosing its line and getting first strike. The toss is done with a piece of bamboo-split. The winner of the toss chooses a line on which they stand side by side each one taking a striker on his hand. The members of the other team keep their striker on the opposite line in front of every member of the toss winning team. The members of the toss-winning team try to dislodge the strikers of the opposite party from the line by striking at them with their own strikers in one chance. The players who can strike the striker of the opposite party and through them out of the line get another chance to hit at the striker again in the second round and a failure is treated as disqualification. In the second round, they go over to the line of their opponents and stand facing their own line, behind the respective striker which they dislodge in the first round. They are now to send the striker out side the line on which they stood at the start of the game. They have to do within five strokes at the maximum with the help of their own strikers. The number of strikers which cross the line is taken to be the number of points in favour of the striking team. The game continues for an equal number of rounds for both the teams and the team which gathers highest number of points is declare as the winner.

Apangte

Apangte is played by two teams having equal number of players in each side. It is played with two Pois. Here also two straight lines are drawn in the same way as in the case of Laisdi pardi and the

game starts with the toss – winning team making the first strike. It takes six successive rounds for completion. A player of the striking party, in the first round, stands on a line and throws a Poi towards the second line. If the Poi crosses or touches the second line, the player who throw the Poi is treated as disqualified and in such a case another player of the team has to play. In the second round the player takes another *poi*, which is used as a striker, and he places the Poi on his toes. He then goes and stands on the second line. He has to touch the first Poi with the striker-poi on his toes and as soon as the two Poes came in contact he lifts one of his legs from the ground and picks up the striker – poi with one of his hands. He then comes back to the first line by leaping with one leg. In the third round the player takes the striker-poi in between first and second toes of his right leg. He, then goes to the second line and stands on it. He has to touch the first poi with the striker-poi hold between his toes. If he succeeds, he returns to the first line. In the fourth round he takes the striker – poi in between his lips, start clapping, goes to the second line and stands on it. He then drops the poi from his lips on the second one and as soon as the striker-poi touches the second one, as in case of the former round, he lifts up one of his legs from the ground and comes back to the first line by leaping. In the fifth round the player keeps the poi on his head, starts clipping, goes over the second line and stands on it. He then drops the poi from his head on the second poi and as in the previous cases, comes back to the first line by leaping. He then in the sixth round, stands on the first line with his leg spread and head bent between the legs. He throw the striker – poi towards the second line in such a way that it encircles his body longitudinally before it drops on the ground, and at the same time, it must not touch or cross the second line. In this case special credit is given to the palyer if he can hit the second poi and in such a case the player is exampeted from doing other activities of his round. The player then, in case he failed to hit the second poi, goes and stand near the second Poi and throws his striker – poi in such a way that it encircles his body longitudinally before it strikes the second one lying on the ground. In this case also he has to stand with his legs apart and head bent between his legs. If he succeeds in hitting the second poi, he takes both the pois on his head and goes back to the first line. The

successful completion of all the six stages is treated as a score in favour of the respective team. Failure of any player in any of the rounds is treated as disqualification of the respective player and in such a case another player of the team gets the chance and he has to start from the stage in which the previous player failed to attain success. In case all the players of a team fail to complete all the stages of a round, the other team gets the chance and, in such a case, no point is awarded to the former team.

In successful completion of all the six stages by a team in an equal number of chances the team which scores the highest number of points is declared to be the winner.

Formit

This is also played by two teams having equal number of players on both the sides. Each team takes a coloured Poi—Pois of two different colours are taken so that a team can identify its own Poi. Two parallel straight lines, having forty to fifty cubit distance from each other, are drawn on the ground and of these two lines one is used as the starting line and other as the finishing line. The distance between the lines differ depending on the strength of the number of the team. The more the number of members in the team the greater is the distance kept between the lines. Here also the winner of the toss starts playing. The Poi of the opponent team is kept at about three cubit distance from the starting line and a player of the opponent team hits the Poi of the other team with the Poi of his team—which is used as striker—to make the latter advance towards the finishing line. A player gets five successive chances and with the endeavour of every player of a team the total number of times the second Poi takes to cross the finishing line is treated as the number of points scored by the respective team.

Poi Rukap

This game is played by two players with Pois of two different colours. In the field two straight lines are drawn in the same way, as in the case of Formit game described above. But the distance between the two lines, in this case, is ten to fifteen cubits. Here also the winner of the toss begins the game. The beginner stands

on the starting straight line and throws a Poi towards the second line in such a way that it would not touch or cross the second line. He tries to keep the Poi as near as possible to the second line. He then hits the first Poi with the second one by dropping the latter successively from the various parts of his body namely, toes, feet, in between two knees, in between two thighs, arm pit, shoulder, in between two lips, nose, eyes, forehead and head. For this, he keeps the Poi on the respective part of body, goes and stands on the second line. He drops it on the second Poi and if it hits the latter, then he collect the striker-poi and goes back to the starting line. A Player continues playing until he fails to hit the game. In case of a failure, the opponent gets a chance and the unsuccessful player, in his next chance, is to start from the stage where he failed during previous chance. In the equal number of chances the player who scores the highest point is declared as the winner.

In the games and sports of Molsom it may be observed that balance, aim, the patience are the essential qualities which are required to be achieved by a player for success. These qualities, in fact, are most essential ones which help a person to cope with the hill-entourage and life-style. Thus, through the practise of indigenous games and sports the Molsom youths can prepare themselves for hunting, fishing, climbing etc activities where balance, aim, patience etc are especially needed.

CHAPTER VII

RELIGION

We shall start this chapter with the world view of the Molsom. They believe that the man came to this world from under the earth. Long ago, according to a folk story existing in their society, the man used to live under the earth from where they tried to come out but they found no way. Fortunately, after intensive searches, the Kukis discovered a way but they had to stop coming out through that path because as soon as they came over and stepped on the ground, they were killed by a big bird locally known as Rumuluempa. By that time, the Molsom had reached there under the headship of Suprai and came to know of the Kuki's mishaps. Suprai took it as a challenge and decided to go out through that opening to face Rumuluempa. He took a bow, some arrows, a shield and his pet dog with him. As soon as he stepped out of the tunnel and stood on the ground on earth, the Rumuluempa came out, before it could strike Suprai, his pet dog subdued it and then Suprai killed the bird by shooting an arrow. In the meantime the leader of the Kuki came out and fired an arrow at the slain bird and claimed that he had killed the bird first. Suprai, hearing the Kuki-leader's claim, got angry and was waiting silently to teach him a good lesson. The Kuki-head went down underground to bring out all members of his community. By that time all Molsom came out before the Kukis arrival, the Suprai closed the passage with a big stone and thus the Kukis were trapped inside. The Kuki chief then requested Suprai to open the gate-way. Suprai told him that if the Kuki chief promised not to claim himself as the killer of Rumuluempa and not to fight with the Molsom, only then he would open the gate-way. The Kuki-chief agreed and Suprai removed the stone opening the way for the Kukis to come out.

The Molsom believe that earlier the man was immortal and was as powerful as the supernatural forces. There was an Awchai of the Molsom who actually, with his extraordinary supernatural

power, as they believe, was protecting the human being from death and other dangers. They believe that it was Asengoi, the god of death, who made the man mortal. In this regard there is a myth which goes on as follows:

Asengoi tried hard but failed to make human being mortal, because Suprai could revive everyone whom Asengoi killed. Being tired of his failure, once Asengoi asked Suprai how he could be die. Suprai told that he would die only of a snake bite. Asengoi then, with his supernatural power assumed the form of a poisonous snake and hid himself under the bed of Suprai. At night when Suprai went to sleep the snake bit him. He cried out loudly in pain and the people rushes there. Suprai told them about the mishap. He requested them to bring some leaves from a medicinal plant. He gave them a dry fish for finding out that plant and told that the dry fish would get its life back after it was touched with that plant. He also warned them that the leaves must be brought before the sun rose, else he would dye by then.

The people went to the forest and started trying to trace out that plant by touching every tree with the dry fish. Finally, they found a tree which brought the dry fish in' life. They collected some leaves from it and started for Suprai's house. Asengoi, however, came to know of their endeavour and decided to foil their attempt to save Suprai. He changed himself to a villager and reported to the people that Suprai had already died. He then took them to a place where, with his supernatural power, he had created the illusion that Suprai's house stood there and the members of Suprai's family were mourning his death. Thus the Asengoi had put the people in a trance and they believed him. The people threw away the leaves realizing that their efforts had gone in vain and they were about to leave the place in guile. But no sooner had they thrown the leaves, their trance was over and they were back to reality. They saw that the house, the dead body of Suprai and everything else that they were made to see in their illusion vanished. The people then realized that they had been foiled in their attempt to save Suprai as there was very little possibility to find out another medicinal plant in time because they had no dry fish with them. However, they rush to the village to get

another dry fish and again started searching. But it was too late as the sun was about to rise. So they could not locate the plant before sun rise and thus Suprai could not be saved. After the death of Suprai there was no other Awchai powerful enough who could protect the people from the Asengoi and therefore, they believed that man become mortal.

The Molsom has full faith in the existence of soul. They believe in the survival of soul after death. They cremate the body after death and they have been practising this since long past. The rites and rituals performed after death namely, *busak*, *samsir*, *zuthak*, *besu* etc may be considered as evidences of their belief in the survival of soul after death. But they have no clear idea or belief about the rebirth of the soul. They believe that the dead ancestor gains some higher supernatural powers and, with these, they can help the living people in time of crisis or to get rid of diseases.

Besides ancestors, some other supernatural powers and spirits are also appeased or worshipped by the Molsom. Some of these powers and spirits, as they believe, are benevolent while others are malevolent by nature. Malevolent powers and spirits are appeased to prevent them from ill doing. Such appeasement, in most cases, is done by arranging for their worship by Awchai. Benevolent powers and spirits are worshipped in the same manner as the illustrious ancestors are worshipped. The activities of some supernatural powers and spirits and how they came to be worshipped are described below :

Suprai

Molsom believe Suprai to be the most powerful ancestor-soul. He was a great Awchai of them. According to the myth mentioned above, he had been saving the human beings from death and thus he made man immortal. Suprai is worshipped by the Awchai by sacrificing two hens and offering them to him to overcome crisis.

Sangrak

Sangrak is also an ancestor soul who was, before death, a great warrior-Molsom. In every Molsom village Sangrak is worshipped collectively once in a year. The village chief has to arrange for annual

Sangrak worship by collecting subscriptions from every household of the village. The village council in a formal meeting fix a date for annual worship of Sangrak as there is no prefixed date for this. Generally it is performed after the winter harvest with the objective of defeating evils-- both natural and supernatural ; and as a preventive measure against accidents in jhum activities especially during clearing the jungles and jhum-fire. During Sangrak worship at village level, some restrictions are observed. No outsider is allowed to enter the village and no villager is allowed to go out of the village on the day of worship. If any outsider enters or any villager go out, then the worship has to begin a fresh. Beside worshipping collectively, Sangrak is also worshipped at family or individual level as and when such worship is considered necessary. Regarding the death of warrior Sangrak there is a myth prevailing in the Molsom society which is as follows :

There were, long ago, two friends named Goria and Sangrak. Both of them were brave warriors who also possessed some supernatural powers. The two friends were living together in a house where a little girl did cooking and other domestic works for them. On attaining puberty, the girl grew so beautiful that both the friends fell in love with her. One day, they expressed their minds to each other but none was ready to sacrifice his love to resolve the deadlock. However, they arranged for a test ultimately and decided that the fittest person would win the girl. The test was to be held in two rounds. In the first round, they were to sharpen their hand chopper on two separate boulders and the person who would be the first to break his boulders into two pieces would also get the first chance in the second round of test in which a supporting pillar of a house which is made with a bundle of muli bamboo and locally known as *diu* would have to be cut by hand chopper in one stroke. The other person would have to stand close behind the *Diu* so that he too may be chopped into two pieces along with the pillar.

Goria won the first round and got the first chance in second round. As per terms of the second round Sangrak stood close behind the pillar and Goria struck it with his hand chopper. But Goria was unable to slash the pillar and hence also failed to hurt Sangrak

because while sharpening his hand chopper on the boulder, he had wrongly rubbed the sharp edge holding the hand chopper vertically instead of in a slanting position which is the normal method of sharpening instruments. Due to this the blade of his chopper had got blunt instead of getting sharpened.

Then came Sangrak's turn. But when the Gorias saw the sharpness of Sangrak's chopper he immediately realized that his end was near. He therefore turned and fled. Sangrak gave him chase but Gorias used his supernatural power and sought refuge in the uterus of a pregnant woman. Sangrak too used his power and was able to detect where Gorias had hidden himself and he removed the uterus of the pregnant woman. While doing so he hurt Gorias's hip. Gorias also struck Sangrak with his hand chopper and injured his leg. Sangrak then became furious and started killing the inhabitants of neighboring villages. After some time he came to the bank of a river where he heard a woman's voice calling for help in carrying her water pot. Sangrak went towards her but as soon as she saw him she disappeared. He was puzzled by this happening but through his supernatural powers he discovered that she possessed the leaf of a particular tree which, when any one held it on his head made him invisible. He then resumed slaughtering the villagers keeping such a leaf on his head. After some time, when he had resumed his normal human self, he became thirsty and entered the house of a widow to drink water. The widow knew of his deeds and as soon as he entered her house she crippled his leg with one stroke of an axe. Sangrak became a cripple and was also unable to move. The widow called the villagers and asked them to slay Sangrak. Accordingly, the villagers attacked Sangrak but all they could do was only to injure him, for killing was beyond their power. Sangrak requested them not to torture him any more because his death would come only when he wished to die. He then told them to bring a piece of wood. They took a piece of wood and Sangrak carved out his own image on it. After having done so, he died voluntarily but his soul entered the wooden image.

After some days, he appeared in the widow's dream and told her to worship the image. The widow refused, but Sangrak kept on

persuading her in dreams. Notwithstanding Sangrak's insistence the widow persisted in her stubbornness not to worship his image. Sangrak then turned dream into nightmares, but the widow still remained steadfast in her resolution and did not relent. Sangrak, however, realized that the widow would not give in. He then requested her to hand over the image to the Molsom. The widow then gave it to the Molsom and since then, as they believe, the Molsom have been worshipping Sangrak.

Napangoi

Napangoi is a female spirit believed to reside in the forest. It can make one ill by possessing one's body or just by casting its fearsome looks. The symptoms of such illness appear usually with high temperature accompanying by headache and pain all over the body. In some cases, it causes delirium to the patient. To get rid of such possession by the evil spirit on its evil look the Awchai worships the spirit by sacrificing two hens or one pig. The process of worship, however, varies from case to case depending on the nature of symptoms. If delirium continues for a long period then it is considered that the Napangoi has dominated the soul of the patient and is trying to take possession of the patient permanently. In this case the Awchai, in addition, worships Sangrak by sacrificing two hens or a pig to drive out Napangoi. In fact, any type of mental imbalance is considered as possession of the patient by Napangoi.

Asengoi

The malevolent male spirit, Asengoi, as stated earlier in the folk tale related to mortality of human being, is believed to cause one's death. The Awchai worships this spirit, in case of serious illness, by sacrificing two hens or a pig to prevent the death of the patient.

kolopaoen

The Kolopaoen is also a malevolent male spirit believed to reside in old abandoned house. In the evening, as they believe, it comes out of its residence and moves about everywhere. If any body, especially a child, comes on its way then it possesses the body of that person and causes illness. The symptoms of such illness are rise

in body temperature accompanied by shivering. The Awchai appeases Kolopaoen through worship as a remedial measure for such illness by sacrificing a hen preferably in the evening. There are some trees which are, believed to be the dwelling places of Kolopaoen.

Tuio

This is a female spirit believed to live in water. It causes, if it possesses one's body, illness followed by lóose motion, stomach pain and rise in temperature. The Awchai appeases it through worship, by sacrificing a hen in stream or river.

Besides the powers and spirits described above, the Molsom worships some deities. These deities are supposed to be benevolent by nature and most of them are, by some means, related to social or other activities of the Molsom. Tuisangro, Arthengoi, Thingkungnoi, Samalaimilika, Baklak etc are such deities. Tuisangro is believed to be the god of femininity; Thingkungnoi of masculinity; Arthengoi of perfection and Samalaimilika of over all development of life. These four deities are collectively worshipped by the Awchai by sacrificing two hens during Pantapui ceremony of social marriage.

In Molsom society some rites and rituals are performed at important stage in the life of an individual such as birth, attainment of puberty, marriage, death etc. The Aburzuk rite is performed after the birth of a baby; Takbrokmi and Punmizel during the first occasion of wearing of cloth by the boys and girls respectively; Risabomb, when girls attain puberty; Adande, Tusin, Pantapui, Dalani, Oaikbulfulpantate etc during marriage ; Besu, Zuthak etc after death. All these rites are the rites of passage as these are associated with some transitional stage in the life of an individual member of the society. On the other hand, the religious rites like annual worship of Sangrak and Khoşer may be called the rites of intensification because these rites emphasize some basic value of their society which also promote social interaction.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Relation of Molsom with other tribals and on tribals of the state

The Molsom are by nature very simple, peace loving and hospitable. They have friendly relations with other tribals and nontribals of the state. Though in the long past, at times, some rivalry was there especially with the neighboring tribal groups. In those days, the trespassers into a Molsom village or jhum areas were severely punished some time with capital punishment by their village council. In fact, such strict restrictions were also observed by other tribal groups of the state which resulted, some time, in inter tribe conflicts. But those days are gone. Every community is at present very much acceptable to the Molsom. And thus many matrimonial relations are taking place with the members of other communities and they are permitting the people of other communities to become Molsom. They had good relations with the then rulers of Tripura especially as some of the men of the royal family had married Molsom girls. In fact the Molsom girls are Known for their beauty. Regarding the marital relations of the Molsom girls with the members of the royal family there is a hearsay popular among them which is as below :

In long past there was a king in Tripura who had two queen-one Tripuri and other Molsom. The prince born of the Molsom queen was elder. There was deep intimacy between the princes. But after the death of the king dissension arose between the queens regarding succession to the throne. Both the queens wanted to make her son the successor to the throne. At last the royal priest found a way to solve the deadlock. He arranged for a test and decided that the worthier would be the next king. The priest loose a white elephant to a nearer forest and told the queens that the prince who would first come back to the palace by riding the elephant next day before sun set would succeed to the throne. Accordingly on the next morning

the two princes went to the forest and started searching for the elephant from two different sides of the forest. Within a few hours, the elder prince found the elephant but he could not ride on it as he did not know how to command and drive an elephant. He then decided to ride on it with the help of a ladder and went to a bamboo-clump to collect bamboos for making a ladder. In the mean time the younger prince came there and found the elephant and rode on it. He thus came back to the palace riding the elephant and was declared as the successor to throne. However, the relation between the brothers remained unchanged. The new king provided the traditional throne to his elder brother in the royal court and made a new throne for himself. He used to take advice from his elder brother on matters of royal duties. Since that period, the Molsom believe, they have been getting worm reception from the royal families. And thus in the customary tribal gathering (known as *hasam bhojan*) in the palace they used to be provided with the first seat in the community dinner.

The interaction of the Molsom with the other tribal communities of the state is also deep. This may be evidenced by the fact that a number of Molsom can speak and understand some other tribal dialects such as Tripuri, Jamatia, Reang, Kuki etc. In case of interaction between the members of unknown language group, they talk in Bengali. In this regard it is worth mentioning here that a good number from all of the tribal groups of Tripura can speak in Bengali.

An intimate relation between the Molsom and the non-tribals of the state, especially the Bengalis, has been prevailing even since the first Molsom-Bengali interaction. In fact, this close relations of the Molsom with the Bengalis helped the former to accept the methods of settled cultivation.

II

Changes in authority structure : effect of panchayati raj system :

Introduction of Panchayati Raj in the Molsom villages, along with other hill villages of the state, has opened a new channel which facilitated the involvement of the Molsom in the main stream of states' administration. Though there was a Territorial Council in the state and like members of other communities, the Molsom also took part in electing the members of that Territorial Council before introduction of the Panchayati Raj, yet that institution did not have much effect on the village or community level authority of the tribals. It is, however, admitted that some new traits were introduced in the political behavior of the members of the tribal community, especially when the system of election was introduced, in place of selection to nominate members for the Territorial Council. Since that time traits like secret ballot voting, canvassing, participation of all adult males in the process of selection etc have been brought in to use. Besides, since that time the Molsom females, along with the females of the other tribal communities, for the first time, started participation in authority selection. But all those new things were confined only to their behavioral pattern and made no impact on the functioning of their self government namely village or community council. It was the Panchayati Raj which made interference in the functioning of the village and community councils of the Molsom.

However, it can not be said that the two authority structures are contradictorily related with each other. Rather, the relation between the traditional self-government and modern village panchayat is more or less, one of cooperation. Both authorities have their own influence over the people and have separate jurisdiction of work.

The problems related to sex and violence, marriage, divorce, adultery, disputes regarding jhum lands, problems related to religious activities etc are tried by the local self government. whereas the problems concerning lands, health and sanitation, education,

communication etc are dealt with by the village panchayat. In some cases especially in case of a serious or long pending problem, the traditional village council and village panchayat hold the trial jointly. Besides, the village panchayet, when necessary, also takes the help of the traditional village council.

It may be pointed out that problems which the village or community council judge are traditional in nature so far as their origin is concerned. On the other hand, the problems which the village panchayet tries are created in the new situation that is in the settled economy. As stated earlier, the traditional shifting economy of the major section of the Molsom has been changed to settled economy and as a result, the land which was the property of the community in the shifting economy, has become individual family's permanent property. Therefore, the nature of land disputes which occur nowadays, are mainly related to the right of possession which was traditionally right to cultivate only. The records of these permanent lands are maintained by the agencies of the state government. Other problems which the new authority covers in fact, have their origin in the permanent settlement. The homestead area in shifting economy, as mentioned earlier, shifted from place to place along with the shifting of jhuming from one jhumland to another during jhum cycle resulting in most temporary settlement pattern. The communication, in such temporary settlement does not develop due to the fact that once a pathway is made it is used only for three or four years successively that is, as long as jhuming and settlement continues in that area and there the pathway is abandoned when the jhuming shift to some other place. This absence of the need of a permanent type of settlement and a permanent type of road and other communication system in a shifting economy left construction of roads etc out of the preview of the activities of the traditional village council. Activities like these have now been taken up by the village panchayats without any encroachment on the scope of activities of the traditional village council.

III

Change in religious practices : influence of Hinduism & Christianity :

It is not known how and when exactly the Molsom came under the influence of Hinduism, though they claim themselves to be Hindu since the time immemorial. However, a good number of animistic traits are found in their religious activities which are in practice even today. Some of these animistic traits appear to be contradictory to Hinduism in so far as religious activities, especially prevailing among the neighbouring Bengali Hindus are concerned. Married women among the Molsom, for instance, do not use vermilion, conch bangles or iron bracelets which are commonly used as the signs of a married women especially among the neighboring Bengali Hindu women. In fact, there is no symbolic dress or ornament which can differentiate a married Molsom women from an un married one. A few of them follow vaishnabism and worship lord Krishna and Radha. These vaishnabs wear, as neighboring Bengali vaishnab do, a set of *tulshimala* around their neck and paint *tilok* (the holy clay of Ganges and other holy places) on different places of their body; but most of them take nonvegetarian food like pork, fish, dry fish, etc which the neighboring Bengali vaishnabs regard as tabooed.

They worship some of the Hindu goddesses but in their system of worship some animistic rites are also followed. They worship, for instance, the goddess of Laxmi but instead of making an idol of the goddess, they make the image of Laxmi with rice and egg. They keep some rice in an earthen pot and place an egg longitudinally on the rice. Then they place the earthen pot containing rice and egg under a bamboo made rectangular structure locally known as *roseng*. Laxmi is worship by them generally on the full-moon day by sacrificing a hen and offering local rice beer and egg. It may be worth mentioning here that the activities like sacrificing of animal, use of alcoholic liquor, egg etc are the animistic traits in their worship of Laxmi which are found to be in practice along with *pranam*, *zoker*, fasting etc which are religious activities performed by the Hindus. Thus the Molsom have been following a number of traditional religious rites along with some Hindu religious activities.

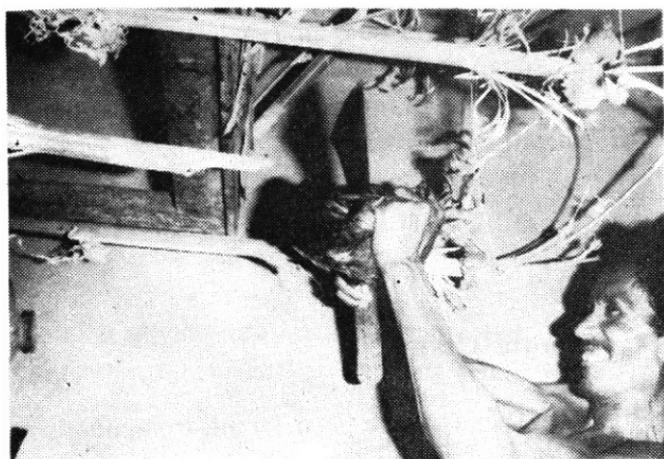
Photograph : 20



"There is no distinguishing feature in the dresses and ornaments which can be differentiated a married Molsom female from an un-married".

Photographs of two married (from left) and two un-married (from right).

Conversion to christianity started among the Molsom from the middle part of this century. Though it is not possible in this study to record the actual number of Christians, and for that matter to record the actual number of Hindus as well, among the Molsom in the State, yet it may be stated that there are quite a considerable number of Christians among the Molsom of whom some have been personally met by the author. However, the Hindus among the Molsom outnumber for the Christians among them. In our sample villages 86.88 % of the households are reported as Hindus and rest 13.12 % are Christians.



Awchai sacrificing hen during likhi worship.

Same set of things may be said about the Christian Molsom as have been said about the Molsom-vaishnabs. The Christian Molsom follow some of heir traditional customs, values, norms etc which very often go against their religious sanctity as Christians. Mention may be made about their practice of animal sacrificing during the worship of some spirits to get rid of deceases.

Table: 10

Distribution of the sample household based on religion.

Name of religion	Total Number of households practise.	Percentage to the total sample households.
Hinduism	278	86.88%
Christianity	42	13.12%
Total :	320	100.00%

The spread of Christianity among a section of them has not created any sense of isolation so far as other cultural activities, except religion, are concerned. The Christian Molsoms attend the socio-religious rites, ceremonies, etc of their Hindu neighbors. They obey, Participate in and depend on the traditional village council as do their Hindu neighbours. However, Christians Molsoms show greater preference for education.

IV

Causes of economic change

The tribals of Tripura have been facing tremendous economic crisis, for a greater section of them are still clinging to their traditional method of shifting cultivation commonly known as Jhum. A number of measures have been taken to wean them from jhuming and to persuade them to take to some other advanced economic activities, especially to settled cultivation. But with a few exceptions most of these have proved futile. In this respect the change over of shifting cultivation to settled cultivation deserves special analysis.

In trying to analyse the factors which helped the Molsoms in adopting settled cultivation we gone through some written documents relating to the past economic conditions of the Tripura tribals, interviewed some old Molsoms and some of their plain Bengali neighbors. It has been found that before the adaptation of settled cultivation their economy had been going through a period of severe crisis. The old Molsoms still remember those days when a family could hardly manage sustenance for three to four months of a year even after engaging all the hands in jhum cultivation. The remaining months of a year had to be spent in uncertainty.

The hardship in economy was not a unique event for the Molsoms. It was common to all jhumias of the state and it took a long time to come to such a condition. The process started ever since Tripura had come under the hegemony of the British in 1765 when

its rulers were burdened with bribe (*nazar*) in addition to the revenue to meet up their princely requirement. The hill subjects were increasingly pressed to contribute to the state's revenue. The hill subjects, especially the jhumias had to pay house tax known as *ghar chukti kar*. The amount was a fixed one for all jhumia households per annum irrespective of how many members it had and how much land it cultivated under jhum. The amount, however, varied from tribe to tribe.

With a view to increase income, the people from neighbouring districts of British India were encouraged to settle down on the plains of the state. A good portion of the plain lands were allotted to the non-tribal immigrants, especially the Bengalis, on payment of premium (*nazrana*) and settlement of annual land revenue. At the same time, leaders of the hill tribes from the neighbouring British District were also invited to cultivate jhum on the hill areas. Those leaders were given the titles of raja and offered a deed of grant (*samad*). By such steps the rulers of Tripura were able to increase the state's revenue and thus as early as in 1785 they paid Rs. 1,39,000 lacs as bribe to the English. Beside those who were encouraged by the rulers to settle in Tripura, a good wave of immigrants came and settled in the state due to heavy crushing burden of taxation imposed upon them by the English Trading company and their successors in the neighboring British Indian districts (Saigol 1978 : 43). It would not be proper to think that the tribals of Tripura, especially the jhumias, were in a better economic position then. "The hill people as a rule", wrote Hunter (1876: 499) describing their material condition "are very poor and improvident. A good season means with them merely plenty of pigs to eat, and plenty of spirits to drink, a bad season is next door to starvation". However, the population of the state went on increasing and by 1875 it reached the figure of 74,242 (42,345 tribals and 31,897 non tribals). It steadily increased to 1,73,325 (91,544 tribals and 81,781 non tribals) in 1901. The increasing trend in population continued steadily with the figure reaching 3,82,450 (1,90,032 tribals and 1,92,418 non tribals) in 1931; 6,45,707 (2,29,865 tribals and 4,15,842 non tribals) in 1951; 11,42,005 (3,60,070 tribals and 7,81,935 non tribals) in 1961 and so on.

Table : 11**Distribution of the state's population in various decades.**

Year	Population	Tribal	Percentage to the total population of the state :	Non tribal	Percentage to the total population of the state :
1875	74242	42345	54.04 %	31897	42.96 %
1901	173325	92544	52.82 %	81781	47.18 %
1931	382450	190032	49.69 %	192418	50.31 %
1951	645707	229865	35.60 %	415842	64.40 %
1961	1142005	360070	31.93 %	781935	31.52 %

* Source : Misra, Hunter, Deb Barman S.

It may be notice from the table that as early as in 1931 the non tribal population became the majority in comparison with the tribals of the state. But up to the middle part of the present century such increase had no detrimental impact on the economy of the tribals, mainly of the jhumias of the state. It was so, because the non tribal immigrants were mostly settled on the plain areas and the jhumias did not know the utility of those stretches of land for agricultural purpose than. Such immigration rather opened the channel for exchange of culture traits between the people of hills and plains. In fact, the technique of utilising the plain land for agricultural purposes was diffused to the tribals from those immigrant plain settlers. It has been incorrectly opined, in this regard, that, "the immigrants were from the plains driving the tribals to the hills" (Saigal : 43). the tribals in fact reside on the hill by nature and tradition in Tripura . In this regard it is worth mentioning here that in Tripura the settled cultivation started to a remarkable extent from the middle part of the nineteenth century. There was little or no plough cultivation till the last part of the eighteenth century (Hunter 1876 : 505).

Though the hill economy in the past was not in a plentiful condition, it was, however, in a hand to mouth position except during the period of droughts or other calamities as far as the productivity of the land was concerned. Lewin, the then Deputy commissioner

of Chittagang Hill Tract (1869) estimated that a jhumia couple could jhum nine kanis (3.6 acres) of land every year where the man had to put in 176 day's labour and his wife 146 day's and they produced Rs. 75 worth of paddy and cotton and Rs.4 worth of vegetables. They could make an additional thirty rupees by wood cutting, selling of fire-wood and other forest products. A couple could thus earn a total of Rs. 106/- of which about Rs. 41.00 were spent on rice, fish, oil and salt; Rs. 10.00 on betel and tobacco; Rs. 12.00 on cloth; Rs. 14.00 on rituals and festivals; Rs.7.00 for treatment; Rs.15.00 on ornaments and Rs.7.00 on seeds and implements for the jhum work (cited from Saigol 1978 :42).

The inter tribe conflict, among the other factor, hampered the production of the hills. Because due to such conflicts, the jhumias failed to move from one place to another for better jhum land during the period of jhum cycle. Regarding such hostile relation among the various groups of tribals, the political Agent of hill Tripura reported in 1874 that though there was ample land suitable for jhuming, the want of fresh jhum land was severely felt in some parts of the state because of inter tribal conflict. "Jhuming is", he reported after a journey from Udaipur to Agartala through interior tribal village, "the most exhaustive method of agriculture; three or four crops are grown at the same time on the same soil; consequently a second crop will not be a full one". Trying to analyse the cause of low yield in jhuming, he further said that for a high-yield jhuming, the land needs be allowed to lie fallow for ten years, after which period of time the jungle which has grown up in the meantime may be felled and burnt, the ashes serving as manure, But for this it is imperative that the jhumias must move to some fresh hill every year to practise jhuming on a virgin slope and return to the old spots in cyclic order after an interval of ten years. The jhumias of Tripura, unfortunately could not do this because the fear of lushais prevented them from moving east wards, the only direction where fresh virgin jhum land was available. Hence the hills near their own villages had to be jhumed at an interval of every three years or so, the consequences of which were short crops and recourse to the mahajan or moneylenders (Hunter *ibid*: 505). Such inimical relation hampered the collection of taxes also along with failure in production. Thus

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prosecuted under the penal code and be punished with rigorous imprisonment not exceeding six months and also be fined upto one hundred rupees.

4. The officials responsible for the protection of the sal forests shall take special care to this effect, and if any fault is found with them, they may also be prosecuted criminally.

After that an area of 251 square kilometers was classed as reserved and 9858 square kilometers as unclassified open forest in the year 1908-09 (Saigal 1978 : 45-46). Thus in the first quarter of the present century-- in 1915-16 -- the revenue from the forests exceeded the land revenue. In that period Rs. 3,72,477 was collected as forest revenue and Rs. 3,51,814 as land revenue. The rulers were then more interested in the forest and declared more areas as reserved. Thus by 1946 a total of 2637 square kilometers forest area had been declared as reserved and jhum cultivation made a penal offence there (ibid: 45-56).

The Bengalees who were settled on the plains achieved much progress in cultivation and raised the revenue of the state which inspired the rulers very much. The plains "where the cultivation is carried on in the same manner as in Bengal", wrote Hunter regarding the condition of the plain people, "a peasant's holding would be considered a large one if above 15 bighas or five acres in extent; and a very small one if containing only 6 bighas or two acres. A firm about 12 bighas, or four acres in extent, would be regarded as a fair-sized and comfortable holding. The oxen of the plains of Hill Tripura are small and ill-fed, and a pair can with difficulty cultivate 15 bighas or five acres of land. A husbandman, cultivating a firm of this size, would not be considered to be in such good circumstances as a respectable shopkeeper is; but he would probably be as well off as a man earning Rs.8/- a month in money wages. The classes cultivating by the plough are not generally in debt, although they do not hesitate to borrow money, especially for any domestic ceremony, such as marriage". Among the Bengalis, he mentioned, women are never employed in agricultural work especially in field labour, but the children occasionally take part in the works

of cultivation. But among the tribals like the Tripura, Kuki etc, women and children are largely employed in agriculture (ibid : 505).

Being encouraged by the increase in revenue through plain-land cultivation, the rulers intended to compel the hill people too to take to plain land cultivation. Thus in the memorandum of the first jhumia settlement scheme in 1888-89 it was mentioned that, "most of the hill people conform to their traditional habit and practise shifting cultivation instead of producing paddy by ploughing with the help of cows and buffaloes. From this cultivation often they are not able to raise enough of paddy and other grains; at the same time, because these people are not accustomed to produce crops by the method of ploughing, the speedy reclamation of waste lands is not taking place; consequently there has not been much improvement of the state and the welfare of the subject, the following rules are hereby framed to introduce plough cultivation among the hill people "(quoted from Misra 1976: 67). In that memorandum the administrators namely the Magistrates and Police Superintendents were directed to call chiefs of every tribal village and properly explain to them the usefulness of plough cultivation and advice them to adopt such method. The administrators, in that memorandum, also directed to appoint, as per necessity, experienced Bengali plough cultivators to teach tribals regarding settled cultivation.

Provisions of some other facilities like financial assistance for purchasing bullock, cow and other agricultural implements; setting up some model agricultural farms etc were also provided in the scheme (ibid).

The steps to restrict jhuming and settle the hill tribes on the plains were taken in fact primarily with a view to increase the revenue of the state making the hills free for forestry and, at the same time, utilizing waste plain lands. It was not solely intended to rehabilitate the hard pressed jhumias to wean them from jhuming to some other economic activities specially in settled cultivation. We are not aware of the after effect of such effort of rehabilitation among the tribals of Tripura. Most probably such effort failed to show any remarkable development. Thus in 1908 the Imperial Gazetteer (Vol. xiii :

P/ 120) reported that , "the nomadic tillage known as jhum cultivation is almost universal even though attempts have been made to induce the tribals to adopt plough cultivation." The step especially to rehabilitate the jhumias through settled cultivation, however, was taken during 1931-32 when an area measuring 110 square miles in the northern sub-division of khowai was declared as tribal reserve area. A restriction was imposed within those areas to all kinds of transfer like gift, sale, lease etc of land to any non tribal members. Thus we may say that no sincere thought was given to an immaculate rehabilitation plan for the tribals till 1931.

Due to utter poverty of the Jhumias large number of families were every year exempted from payment of the family tax. In 1874-75, for instance, 1914 families were exempted in the state excluding the population of Kailashahar sub-division (Hunter 1876: 510). This gives us some idea regarding the degree of indigence on the hills. Besides, customary habit of drinking liquor and use of the same in huge quantity during socio-religious activities were also a reason which increased the degree of poverty of the tribals of the state. The local liquor commonly known as *langi* (in Molsom : *zukola*) and country liquor locally known as *chuak* or in Molsom *rakzu* are prepared by, as stated earlier, fermentation and distillation of rice mixed with some leaves, bark and roots of some jungle tree. One *ser* (a little less than one kilogram) of rice yields one bottle of fermented liquor mentioned Hunter (Ibid : 510). And it is estimated that a jhumia family needed on an average at least about 400 bottles of liquor in a year in normal situation that is without any occurrence like marriage or death when a huge quantity of liquor was needed to celebrate relevant rites and rituals, which required a minimum of 400 kilograms of rice for preparation of liquor. This also added yet another dimension to the economic crisis of the tribals. Plus traditional practice of sacrificing of domestic animals in various rites, rituals ceremonies also added yet another dimension to the economic crisis of the tribals.

The poverty of the jhumias in the increased land-man ratio is reflected in Saigal's estimation. "It has been estimated ", mentioned Saigal (1976:58), "that shifting cultivation is capable of supporting

a population of only 20 per square mile. To ensure a reasonable standard of living for all the jhumias, therefore, we need an area of more than 7,500 square miles. But the total area of the state is only 4,106 square miles.

Dr. Gangully (1969 : 23-25) has also estimated the carrying capacity of land in jhum cultivation. While discussing the method of estimating the carrying capacity of land he quoted from Mr. Colin Clark and said that "in his 'The condition of economic progress' Colin Clark has made a comparative study of the density at which a primitive population can live under different forms of primitive means of subsistence. The density at which a primitive population can live, has been approximately estimated. Expressed as adult males per square kilometer, Ratzel's estimate designate the following range of possible density.

Primitive agriculture in settled village	:	0.6-2.80
Primitive herdsman.....	:	0.25--0.60
Shifting cultivation.....	:	0.06--0.25.

Shifting cultivation has thus least capacity among the different primitive forms of production. to support population per square kilometer. One form of finding out the efficiency of any method of cultivation is to calculate not simply by finding out the average requirement of land to support one person (or a consumption unit) if he depends on shifting cultivation alone on the basis of one operation only, that, after one operation, a jhum plot will remain fallow for a certain number of years, will have to be taken into consideration. William Allen calls it cultivation factor which is merely an expression of the number of garden areas required for each type to allow of the complete cycle of cultivation and regeneration normally practised on that type under the system to which the calculation applies. Area of land required to support a consumption unit under the system is worked out by multiplying cultivation factor by the average area of land required for producing one year's subsistence, requirement of a consumption unit calculated on the basis of the actual results.

"On the basis of the normal requirement of rice per

consumption unit", continued Gangully regarding the condition of the jhumias, "It is found that if the jhumias consumes the whole quantity of rice produced in the jhum and exchange sesame, cotton and gougé for rice then they are able to drive their subsistence for four months only from their jhums. Besides jhum products, each and every jhumia family has its own poultry and piggery; they also collect various forest products free of cost. During the rainy season which is the most difficult period for the jhumias many of them precariously live on various wild roots, leaves and bamboo shoots collected from forests.

"In Tripura", mention Gangully, "a particular plot of land is jhumed only once and then left fellow for about ten years for regeneration of forest. Hence the cultivation factor is 11. As 49.81 hectares of jhum provides 178 persons with 4 months' subsistence, 0.84 hectares of such jhum will be just enough to provide one full years (twelve months) subsistence for one consumption unit. But the same plot of land is not jhumed every year. In other words, to calculate the land carrying capacity, we have to take into consideration the cultivation factor which is 11. Hence the net area required per consumption unit under jhuming will be 9.24 hectares (0.84 X 11). Every year approximately 20,238 hectares of land is jhumed which means that this form of cultivation can support about 2,200 soul only. This shows the utter inadequacy of the system today."

So the economic wretchedness of the Molsom which they experienced especially before adopting the settled cultivation was not an isolated event. but it was the situation faced by all the hill people especially the jhumias of the state and the causes of such condition started since Tripura came under the hegemony of the British with an increased rate. To sum up the main causes which led to such a situation were :

- a). Increase of hill population through immigration due to the encouragement of the then rulers with a view to increase revenue.

- b) Decrease in availability of jhumable hill areas as a result of reserved forest declaration.
- c) Inter tribal conflict due to which the jhumias were not in a position to move freely from one place to another to search of suitable jhum land during a jhum cycle.
- d) Natural calamities which decreased production in jhum.
- e) The habit and custom of excessive consumption of local alcoholic liquor.
- f) Sacrificing of domestic animals during rites, rituals, ceremonies etc socio-religious activities and some other causes.

Molsom were, as stated earlier, mainly concentrated in and around the Udaipur sub-division of South Tripura. Before adopting settled cultivation, as the Molsom themselves stated, they had to cultivate a single plot of hill land for three or four years ceaselessly. Because, due to increased land-man ratio, the causes of which have been discussed earlier, there was a scarcity of suitable fallow slope where the Molsom could shift during a jhum cycle. Such type of ceaseless plain hill top cultivation is known as *tang* among the Molsom. That the Molsom practised ceaseless jhuming on a particular hill slope for three or four consecutive years may be evident from the course of migration and duration of stay on a homestead area. In normal shifting economy, as mentioned earlier, the jhumias shift to new homestead areas when they have to move to fresh hill slopes during jhum cycle. But in case of Molsom ever since the first part of the present century the duration of stay on a particular homestead area became increasingly longer. Since the first decade of the present century—around 1903-04 – they breached their normal practice. For instance, the villagers of Kalabon Molsom Bari changed their homestead area only five times during a period of 31 years

Table :12

**Distribution of the period of stay on the homestead area
of the inmates of Kalabon Molsom Bari :**

Sl. No.	Name of palce place (in k.m.)	Distance from the privious	Year of living	Year of leaving	Duration of stay
1.	Herma Bari	—	1903	1906	3 Years
2.	Sandal	9	1906	1910	4 Years
3.	Mirja Bari	8	1910	1916	6 Years
4.	Tuidhum	7	1916	1924	8 Years
5.	Tapardhum	5	1924	1934	10 Years
6.	Kalabon Molsom Bari	6	1934	Still living	—

* Source : Interviews from old villagers.

From the above table it may be seen that the villagers of Kalabon Molsom Bari had been staying for 3 years continuously at Herma Bari; for four years at Sandal; for six years at Mirza Bari; for eight years at Tuidhum; for ten years at Tapardhum and now they have been staying ever since 1934 at the present place of settlement.

The plain hinterland of Udaipur sub-division were predominantly inhabited by the Bengali's, most of whom were settled cultivators. They used to reclaim and make arable new waste lands and thus they kept on increasing their holding. The plain land was taken up under Jangal Abadi lease. The usual condition of such lease were that the land was to be rent free for a period of four to ten years, according to the nature of the jungles; then it was to be subjected to a rent at the rate of 2 or 3 *annas* per bigha gradually increasing till it reached a moderate amount, which did not yet equal the rate paid for adjoining lands in government territory (Hunter 1876 : 505).

So when the jhumias were struggling hard for the minimum requirement, the plain people were going on increasing their

production by making arable new and new waste lands. And thus by the first part of the present century the economy of the plain cultivators reached some sort of solvency.

The interaction between the Tripura tribals and Bengalis had been prevailing since long. Most probably the interaction started in the market places which traditionally known as Haat. "In the early years of the eighteenth century trade and commerce flourished even in the interior of the state there. The tribals who lived in the hills not far from Udaipur the capital of Tripura, was a very big market town. Bengali traders maintained permanent shop there. The tribals who lived in the hills not far from Udaipur, used to come regularly there for purposes of buying and selling. Paddy and cotton were the main commodities sold by them. Arum plant and its root, guard, watermelon, ginger, potato—these were the other commodities brought by the tribals to the market for sale (Tripura Buranji 1962 : 22). It may not be irrelevant to point out that the claim of Dr. Ganguli (1969 : 37-38) that the tribals (jhumias) of Tripura were constrained to consume whatever they produced and thus they were left with nothing to exchange or sell is a sweeping generalization not based on facts. Udaipur, in fact, was one of the oldest market places of the then Tripura. As early as in c. 1660 (Rajmala (ed)1967 : 80-81), the then king Gobindamanikya purchased as much as 2000 mounds of salt from a trader and the salt was consumed not only by the people living in Udaipur but also by the other people who were living in the interior places. Besides, tribals of Tripura used to sell or exchange *mesta*, jute, carpas, *till* etc.

It was during the reign of king Ratnamanikya that the Bengalis started coming from adjoining British India to settle in South Tripura – especially in and around Udaipur. At that time 4000 Bengalis were settled in four places namely Rangamati, Ratnapur, Jashpur, and Hirapur of South Tripura (Sen kaliprassanya (ed) 1926 : 69). In fact that was the first settlement of the Bengalis in Tripura. Numismatic sources testify to the fact that Ratnamanikya I was the ruler of Tripura during the period 1364-67 and as it is widely claimed that the Bengalis settled in South Tripura during his reign, it may be said that Bengali settlement in Tripura dated from 1364-67.

Another important wave of plain migrations, who were Muslim, also settled in and around Udaipur in 1728 when Tripura passed in to the hands of the Nawab of the Murshidabad (Misra 1976: 21).

It is worth mentioning that the migrants from plain land were settling down in and around the Udaipur, the Molsom who had also come to the region some time earlier were moving from hill to hill practising jhuming. As a result the Molsom, along with other jhumia tribal groups, were in economic hardship. Whereas the plain settlers, on the other hand, were in better position – they could at least produce some surplus then to manage their minimum demands.

The plain settlers were in need to engage hired laboures in their agricultural activities especially for making the fallow land arable and for cutting the jungles. Some of the Molsom were engaged as hired laboures along with other local tribal groups. Though at the out set they were engaged for cutting of jungles only, in course of time they were used in other agricultural activities like tilling of land, ploughing , planting of paddy shoots, weeding, harvesting etc. Such sort of experiences and training in settled agricultural work made Molsom interested in cultivating some lunga lands near their settlement. Generally the lunga land is fertiled naturally as the natural manures from the nearer hillocks accumulate on the lungas having been carried away by rain water. As a result, though in the begining they could not follow the proper methods of wet cultivation, the yield was very much satisfactory compared to the yield of jhum sector of that period. They then, got interested in cultivating the lungas which were nearer to their settlement areas in a large scale and this gradually withdraw a good number of jhumias from the jhum sector. It is to be worth mentioning here that the availability of fallow lunga near their settlement was one of the vital factors which facilitated such a change and helped in adopting settled economy. At present the families who are practising jhuming as their primary occupation, have been practising this due to non availability of cultivable lungas or other plain lands.

The non availability of fellow plain land, in fact is the biggest

hindrance faced by the state government in rehabilitating the jhumias since the beginning of the forth five year plan. Thus while formulating an approach regarding the problems of the jhumias for the purpose of ascertaining the fund requirements of the state during the Forth Plan it was mentioned that not much of plough-cultivable waste land was left in Tripura. And as a consequence it would not possible to settle the remaining jhumias on plain land (Misra 1976 : 106).

That the techniques of using plain lands for agricultural purposes were diffused to the Molsom from their Bengali neighbours due to close interaction between the two communities may be evidenced by the fact that the agricultural implements used by the Molsom in settle cultivation are the common ones used by their Bengali neighbors. In fact these implements such as *langol* (plough), *moi* (lodder), *Joal*, *Kodal* (spade) *dao* (hand chopper), *tukri* etc have no Molsom terms to denote them. These are the names used by the neighboring Bengalis.

So to sum up, the major causes which helped the Molsom to adopt the method of settled cultivation were mainly, contiguous settlement situation of the Molsom with the Bengali plain land cultivators which facilitated diffusion of technique of the settled cultivation from the Bengalis to the Molsom; presence of some common market places locally known as *haat* which helped close interaction between Molsom, along with other tribals, and Bengalis. In this regard it is worth mentioning here that the common market places have a vital role in socioeconomic changes. Regarding the nature and functioning of the market especially in socioeconomic changes Mr. Areuserg (1934 : 1,5) wrote that "the market, like any central ceremony of a culture, is also a channel of cultural and social changes".

The availability of fellow plain land near the settlement area of the Molsom, as mentioned earlier, was one of the most vital reasons for this change. It is found in the present study, that the Molsom who are still practising jhum cultivation, have been doing so due to non availability of cultivable fellow plain lands.

Another factor which might have helped in bringing about such a change is the psychological change among the Molsom, as also among some other tribals of Tripura, due to the influence of some political organizations. In this regard it may be worth mentioning here that from the first part of the present century some or other sort of leftist organizations had been prevailing among the Molsom along with some other tribals of Tripura. A strong organization of Gana Mukti Parisad (GMP) formerly known as *Janashikshya Samiti*, led by tribal leaders like Sri Dasharath Deb Burma, Sudhannya Deb Burma and some others, was deep rooted among the Molsom. In fact, the tribals of Tripura were already organized under some sort of a progressive political ideology even when the state was a princely kingdom. This is rather unique to the tribals of Tripura. Later on the Marxist ideology and communist movements developed some sort of an adoptability in the mental make up of the Molsom as well as in that of some other tribal groups of the state, which helped them to cope with the new situation. "When people are confronted with new opportunities," Wrote Foster (1973:130), "acceptance or rejection depends not only upon the basic cultural articulation, a favorable pattern of social relations and economic possibility, but also upon psychological factors".

GLOSSARY

ENGLISH VERSION OF SOME COMMON MOLSOM WORDS

Molsom	English	Molsom	English
<i>Human body</i>			
Ban	Arm	Nermul	Moustache
Bok	Breast	Nigtang	Back
Bunek kut	Right hand	Phaimiza	Foot print
Chang	Chest	Phaimar	Toe
Dar	Shoulder	Phai puinu	First toe
Fung	Belly	Phaichal	Second toe
Ha	Tooth	Phailai	Third toe
Kaipbai	Ankle	Phai tuck	Forth toe
Kiu	Elbow	Phai te	Fifth toe
Kothehen	Wrist	Pherlep	Foot
Kulzangul	Lower arm	Penong	Rectum
Kuth muja	Palm	Pinsabeing	Jaw
Kuth puinu	Thumb	Rekhamul	Beard
Kuth Chal	Pointed fingure	Ringal	Leg
Kuth lei	Middle fingure	Mit	Eye
Kuth teuk	Ring fingure	Ring	Neck
Kuth te	Little fingure	Rong	Backbone
Lu	Head	Rukhuk	Knee
Mai	Chik	Sam	Hair
Malai	Navel	Su	Femal genital
Mal	Thigh	Sumul	Female sex hair
Mether	Vegina	Wai kut	Left hand
Mit ruke	Eye brown	Zang	Mail genital
Mochal	Forehead	Zangtil	Testis
Moor	Throat	Zangmul	Male sex hair
Mulung	Heart		
Muloi	Tungue	<i>Vegitables, plants etc.</i>	
Mur	Mouth		
Na	Ear	Amhong	Pungent
Nar	Nose	Ankelki	Lady's finger
Ner	Lip	Beel	Marmelos

Bol	Potato	Kei	Tiger
Chongroi	Chilli	Kel	Goat
Dumbai	Cucumber	Khao	Grass hopper
Goam	Guava	Kokidik	Owl
Gaiphol	Papaya	Lei khrek	Squirrel
Jhinku	Cucurbitaceous fruit	Lim	Python
Kumoi	Pumpkin	Matho	Fly
Laiphang	Banana plant	Murul	Snake
Lau	Bottle gourd	Muzu	Ret
Laue	Jack fruit	Ngo	Fish
Lichu	Leechee	Pharva	Pigion
Mantu	Brinjal	Pholep	Butterfly
Meiser	Limon	Sai	Elephant
Michi	Salt	Sakhi	Deer
Mot	banana	Sakor	Horse
Mula	Radish	Saloi	Buffalow
Noro	Hay	Sarat	Cow
Oisul	Turmeric	Singer	Wildcat
Pasto	Cotton plant	Singmir	Ant
Ro	Bamboo	Jhakroi, Ua	Bird
Rumui	Rose-apple	Ui	Dog
Saran	Cotton thread	Uichok	Toad
Serok	Oil	Vam	Beer
Si	Seasame	Zong	Monkey
Song	Paddy	<i>Miscellaneous :</i>	
Tentra	Tamarind		
Thaihai	Mango	Argas	Lamp
Thing	Ginzer	Arshi	Star
Zing thakkutui	Sweet potato	Belkinot	Roundish
<i>Animal, birds etc.</i>			Earthen vesseel
		Bu	Boiled rice
Arjel	Hen	Chao	Cry
Aok, Uok	Pig	Chang	Trap
Arkhom	Cock	Chem	Hnad chopper
Balad	Bullock	Chungin	Machan house
Dumderta	Fire fly	Dondrai	Stair
Banthe	Dryfish	Jian	Night
Gyotak	Duck	Kosak	Village
		Kholau	Afternoon

Khozing ribet	Evening
Khuri	Ghoul
Kunou	Mother
La	Song
Lam	Dance
Lo	Jhum
Lomphi	Duster
Lungthu	Hearth
Mangkhar	Funeral pyre
Meiot	Spinning wheel
Moi	Fire
Munui	Laugh
Neing	Earth
Neupang	Child
Ni	Sun
Numoi	Widow
Nungak	Young girl
Nupui	Bride
Oareng	Hammock
Punchi	Clan
Pamai	Widower
Rekai	Marriage
Retai Nerthaitha	Divorce
Remang	Dream
Ro	Cloud
Rumui	Loom
Rukap	Sport
Samak	Bride groom
Samthi	Club
Sapang	Warehousse
Sekra	Sickle
Talai	Bier
Than	Crematorium
Thangoal	Young man
Thirti	Wind
Thow	Moon
Tui	Water
Tuikorong	Stream
Tuilom	River
Ziang	Morning

APENDIX

Some traditional Molsom songs along purport in English are cited below:

1. Love song locally known as *ro owl* :

A boy sings following a girl :

Ho ho ho ho

Kunaunu dum doinu nangma le Kuma

Ma lekoima ei mulung

A roi nung dumderta

Maisher ugan mangaiti

(Love me o beautiful girl : If you love me, I shall solve all problems of our life- however tough they may be. I shall collect fire from firefly and light lamp for our use.)

The girl replies and sings :

Ohaipa rukum kokidik kadak

O roimi rangoi asu

Lau ponkul kunte thingbu kurung oampa

Kaichu noming roimi

Aio noming do roimi.

(Your lips are as odd looking as lips of pelican, your voice is as rude as the voice of owl and you look like a half burnt tree of jhum. I don't love you).

The boy makes more protestations of love and sings :

Kunaunu vaidumnu

Nangma le Keima ei molung aroimung

Kongmui ta khrom mangeiti

Jeokoma uitang ngan mangeiti

Thakpui nom mulung mangeiti

Lai phang kung meiphum mangeiti

(O my dear, love me. I entreat you. If you love me, nothing of this world I shall care for. I shall make shoe with thorn, treat tiger as if they were pet dogs, sleep on a mat made of a poisonous leaf locally known as *thakpui* and set fire on banana plant).

Another girl from the girl's team sings to convince the girl :

*O roimioi O roimioi
Kha kha khom timrao
Thui thuii Khom timrao
Abuisu dina chu
Nidan nongchulat
O roimioi.*

(O My friend, O my friend. Don't refuse him in such a rough way. You will not remain unmarried for ever. So, it is better that you accept his proposal for you may get all sorts of help from this boy in future.)

The girl replies :

*Thing thing timaro O roimioi
Kemil munu cheno
Nunga risirong Kemil Khom aisu
Khomlung khom aisu.*

(Don't tell me to love him, my friend. I don't feel any such urge within me now. My heart is not dictating me to love now. So, Don't tell me to love now.)

Another person from the boy's party sings to convince the girl :

*Kikham osut khum khum osut
Roaknin aiomsin
O roimioi hakan timaro*

The girl replies :

*O roimioi O roimici
Kokopal aisu borok kohoipek om:ak
Kehe bauka rongo aisu
Chong bau kete nangma ket
Khomokon chinin omket*

(O my friend,O my friend. Please try to understand me. And listen to me for the last time that, I want to live like a free bird).

2. *A religious song* use to sung during the worship of goddes Lihki. This song is lically known as *Likhi thank lo*. This is accompanied by a dance. This song is sung solo or duet.

*O adunpu khuri Khomhongma
Uong khomhongma
Ainu likhi tau berai ohong
Chilo khomhongma, jaklam khomhongma
Chatrai huluin
In kaihain mohongnin panther
Phonin einu Likhirang
Hailam nin haisokhgo.*

(Hallo householder ! please open you door. Don't be afraid. No ghost or ghouel has come, but our mother Likhi has come.. So light the lamp, burn dhup and spread a new piece of cloth on the floor and place our mother on it).

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Swaralipi system. The notation is written in Bengali and wordings of lyric are written in English.

Notation of first song :
(Kunaunu dum doinu.....)

Notation of the song of frustration
(Hoia hoia kaimato.....)

Note: For our convenience, in lieu of “O” of Aker Matrik Swaralipi system we have used “O”.

MOLSOM DIGITS (1-100) AND THEIR ENGLISH EQUIVALENT :

Molsom Digit.	English equivalent.	Molsom Digit.	English equivalent.
Khatka	One	Somthumka rignaka	Thirtyfive
Nika	Two	Somthumka uruka	Thirtysix
Thumka	Three	Somthumka sirika	Thirtyseven
Mili	Four	Somthumka riatka	Thirtyeight
Ringa	Five	Somthumka kokka	Thirtynine
Urka	Six	Sommilika	Forty
Siri	Seven	Sommilika Khatka	Fortyone
Ritka	Eight	Sommilika inuika	Fortytwo
Kok	Nine	Sommilika thumka	Fortythree
Som	Ten	Sommilika uthumka	Fortyfour
Somleikhatka	Eleven	Sommilika rignaka	Fortyfive
Somleinika	Twelve	Sommilika uruka	Fortysix
Somleithumka	Thirteen	Sommilika sirika	Fortyseven
Somleimilika	Fourteen	Sommilika riatka	Fortyeight
Somleiringaka	Fifteen	Sommilika kokka	Fortynine
Somleieuruka	Sixteen	Somrignaka	Fifty
Somleisirika	Seventeen	Somrignaka Khatka	Fiftyone
Somleiriatka	Eighteen	Somrignaka inika	Fiftytwo
Somleikokka	Nineteen	Somrignaka uthumka	Fiftythree
Somnika	Twenty	Somrignaka milika	Fiftyfour
Somnika Khatka	Twentyone	Somrignaka rignaka	Fiftyfive
Somnika inika	Twentytwo	Somrignaka uruka	Fiftysix
Somnika uthumka	Twentythree	Somrignaka sirika	Fiftyseven
Somnika milika	Twentyfour	Somrignaka riatka	Fiftyeight
Somnika rignaka	Twentyfive	Somrignaka kokka	Fiftynine
Somnika uruka	Twentysix	Somrukka	Sixty
Somnika sirika	Twentyseven	Somrukka Khatka	Sixtyone
Somnika riatka	Twentyeight	Somrukka inika	Sixtytwo
Somnika kokka	Twentynine	Somrukka uthumka	Sixtythree
Somthumka	Thirty	Somrukka milika	Sixtyfour
Somthumka Khatka	Thirtyone	Somrukka rignaka	Sixtyfive
Somthumka inika	Thirtytwo	Somrukka urukka	Sixtysix
Somthumka uthumka	Thirtythree	Somrukka sirika	Sixtyseven
Somthumka milika	Thirtyfour	Somrukka riatka	Sixtyeight

Somrukka kokka	Sixtynine
Somsirika	Seventy
Somsirika Khatka	Seventyone
Somsirika inika	Seventytwo
Somsirika uthumka	Seventy three
Somsirika milika	Seventyfour
Somsirika rignaka	Seventyfive
Somsirika uruka	Seventysix
Somsirika sirika	Seventyseven
Somsirika riatka	Seventyeight
Somsirika kokka	Seventynine
Somriatka	Eighty
Somriatka Khatka	Eightyone
Somriatka inika	Eightytwo
Somriatka uthumka	Eightythree
Somriatka milika	Eightyfour
Somriatka ringnaka	Eightyfive
Somriatka uruka	Eightysix
Somriatka sirika	Eightyseven
Somriatka riatka	Eightyeight
Somriatka kokka	Eightynine
Somkokka	Ninety
Somkokka Khatka	Ninetyone
Somkokka inika	Ninetytwo
Somkokka uthumka	Ninetythree
Somkokka milika	Ninetyfour
Somkokka rignaka	Ninetyfive
Somkokka uruka	Ninety-six
Somkokka riatka	Ninetyseven
Somkokka sirika	Ninetyeight
Somkokka kokka	Ninety-nine
Rizaka	Hundred.

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CORRECTION

(1) In cover page "please read MOLSOM in place of MALSOM, and also Iner text first three page

(2) page No 16

Table No-2 please read under colum 'Type of house ' Sl.1&2) "Mud wall with thatched roof" and Bamboo wall with thatched roof" respectively. In colum No 2: SL. 1 & 2 60 & 190 respectively,

(4) Page 71 : Symbol used:

- ┌ = Marriage bond,
- └ = Sibling bond,
- ◁ = Mate
- = Female
- ☒ = dead

Notation of the song of frustretion I Hoia hoia kaimato

II	পা -y মরা	I	মা -y মগা	I	পা -y মরা	I	ম -y মগা	I
	Ho Q ia		ho Q ia		ho Q ia		ho Q ia	
I	সা রা মা	I	পা পা পা	I	মা পা মরা	I	পা রা পা	I
	Kai ma to		ko po 1		ko po lre		Q pha na	
I	মা রা মা	I	রা সা রা	I	নরা সা -y	I	-y -y -y	I
	Ja nai tau		ko ch m		pic do Q		Q Q Q	
II	পা -y মরা	I	মা -y মগা	I	পা -y মরা	I	মা -y মগা	I
	ho Q ia		ho Q ia		ho Q ia		ho Q ia	
I	সা রা মা	I	পা পা পা	I	মা পা মরা	I	পা রা রা	I
	ko ma r		ba ni on		ko ma rQ		sa ri tel	
I	মা রা মা	I	রা -সা -রা	I	নরা সা -y	I	-y -y -y	IIII
	re toi no		ko sa m		pic do Q		Q Q Q	
III	পা -y	I	পা -y	I	পা -y	I	পা -y	I
	Ho Q		ho Q		ho Q		ho Q	
I	-জা জা	I	জা	I	পা	I	পা	I
	Kuna una		dum		doi		nu	
I	জা-জা	I	জা	I	সা	I	-y	I
	nang ma		le		kuQQ		ma	
I	জা	I	জা	I	সা	I	-y	I
	Male koi		ma		eimu		lu	
I	জবজা	I	জা	I	সজা	I	রা	I
	AQQ roi		nu		ng		dumder ta	
I	সা	I	সা	I	সা	I	-y	I
	Mei Q		se		r		u	
I	সা	I	সা	I	-y	I	ga	I
	wang ei		ti		Q		n	

