JAMATIA FOLKLORE - A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

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Neheru Complex, Government of Tripura

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1st Published March, 1995

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Govt. of Tripura

Published by:
Tripura State Tribal Cultural Research Institute and Museum,
Nehru Complex, Govt. Of Tripura, Gurkhabasti, Agartala-799006

Printed at: PRINT BEST AGARTALA

Price: Rs. 67.50

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FOREWORD

I have great pleasure in introducing the book 'Jamatia Folklore - A Sociological Study' written by Dr. P. N. Bhattacharjee. It is a well documented book and may be considered as the first full length study on the life and culture and Folkore of the Jamatias which is one of the major tribes of Tripura. The book is written on the basis of his Ph. D. thesis Paper submitted to the Calcutta University in 1982. In this book Dr. Bhattacharjee has dwelt in details the life and culture of the Jamatias and also touched up on ethnographic account, social structure, traditional administrative pattern, magico-religious practices and the economic activities of the Jamatias. Impact of modernity on the traditional life of the Jamatias has also been dealth with in the book. His indepth study has highlighted and analysed various aspects of Jamatia Folklore.

The book will be of immense help of both to the research scholars and general readers in the field of ethnographic and Folklore studies and to those who want to know in details about the particular tribe and the tribes of Tripura in general.

Agartala,
8th March, 1995.

S. Sailo
Director,
Tribal Research Institute
Govt of Tripura

PREFACE

This book is based on my doctoral dissertation entitled '*Socio-Political Structure of the Jamatias* - A Critical Study and Analytical Description of the Jamatia Folklore' : submitted to the Calcutta University in 1983 and approved in 1987. It is the outcome of a strenuous work spreadover a period of three years. I had the opportunity to reside as a school teacher, at a place around which were situated a number of Jamatia villages. I came into close contact with the villagers socially and participated in many of their socio-religious functions as their guest. In the process I was inspired to undertake a research work on the folklore of the jamatias.

The work is the first of its kind on the Jamatias. It is hoped that it will open up new vistas, fresh avenues of research for the future research scholars in this field. No work just can grow out of air. Though this volume deals with a completely new area, I have drawn greatly up on the pioneer writings and studies of many scholars who worked on related fields. I have acknowledged my debt to their writings and books at appropriate places in this volume.

But there are many scholars and people in different walks of life who have helped me in a number of ways. My revered guide Prof. Bela Dutta Gupta, D. Litt, Calcutta University is the foremost among them. I am extremely grateful to her.

I am grateful to Shri Jitendrajit Sinha, M.A. of S.I.E., Agartala who helped me sincerely in a lot of ways despite his heavy schedules.

I am thankful to Shri Khagendra Jamatia, and Shri Nabakishore Jamatia, Shri Siddhiparda Jamatia, Shri Lalit Jamatia, Shri Rebati Jamatia, Shri Ganesh Kalai Singha for their assistance in my field visits and in making contact with different people in the villages.

I express my sincere respect for Shri Chaitanya Hari Jamatia of Burbura, late Braja Mohan Jamatia of Karaimura, Shri Madhuprem Jamatia of Nagrai and Shri Nirodhan Jamatia of

Twybaklai, Amarpur subdivision. These Jamatia elders are repertories of rich tradition of their folklores, songs, and tales. My work has been greatly enriched through their help. I am deeply indebted to them.

I am also thankful to Shri Krishnadhan Jamatia, a versatile Jamatia gentleman who has taught me many intricacies of the Jamatia dialect. He has so kindly acted as my interpreter on many occasions.

Here I would like to put on record a word about the spellings I have used in rendering Jamatia words and names in english. The absence of a commonly accepted practice has led me to devise my own system in these spellings.

I express my deep sense of gratitude to Shri Ramaprasad Dutta of Ramaprasad 'Gaveshnagar' of Agartala, Shri D. P. Debbarma, Shri R. K. Acharjee, Shri R. G. Singh and Shri Amarendra Deb Barman of the Directorate of Research, Government of Tripura for the immense assistance I received from them in the collection of materials for this study.

I thank Shri Tushar Kanti Chakraborty, Who gladly put up with the most tedious task of typing out the manuscript so meticulously.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge my debt to my parents and to my wife Smt. Neela Bhattacharyya for their keen interest and constant inspiration throughout my studies.

- Pradip Nath Bhattachjee

INTRODUCTION

It is quite unfortunate that at a time when there is such a lot of talk over the welfare of the tribals, there has not been any scientific study conducted on the life and culture of the Jamatias. It goes without saying that a scientific study must precede any attempt to improve the present standard of living of any people, race or tribe. A comprehensive study on the Jamatias is a desideratum.

The Jamatias are an important tribe of Tripura. Among the tribal communities, the Jamatias with a population of 44,50 i.e. 7.63% percent of the total tribal population of Tripura holds the third position in respect of numerical strength among the tribals as per census report of 1981. They are found mainly in Amarpur and Udaipur sub-divisions of the South Tripura District and Khowai sub-divisions of the West Tripura District.

As there is no separate chapter dealing with the land and people of Tripura; an attempt to furnish some information regarding the later has been made in the introduction itself. Besides, the object of the work, the methodology applied and brief surveys of the contents of each chapter have also been given in this introduction.

The Land and Peple :

Surrounded by picturesque hills and valleys, dense forests and lush fields, Tripura is situated in the north-eastern part of India. A state of great antiquity, Tripura claims to be the most ancient of all the former princely states situated in India. References of Tripura can be found in the Mahabharata and the Purans, and in the Ashoka Pillars where Tripura has been referred to as a 'Frontier Kingdom' [1].

In the British Official records Tripura was usually known as 'Hill Tipperah' and some times as 'Independent Tipperah'.

There were frequent invasions by the Muslim Sultans hailing from neighbouring Bengal and the Mughal rulers into Tripura with varying degrees of success. But the kings of Tripura, however, retained their independence.

During the British rule too Tripura continued to maintain its separate entity as a princely state.

Tripura, thus, had been ruled by the Maharajas for an unbroken period of thirteen hundred years until it acceded to the Indian Union on the 15th October, 1949 and became a part 'C' state. Tripura attained full statehood on the 21st of January, 1972.

The State is bounded on the north, West and south by Bangladesh Districts of Sylhet, Commilla, Noakhali, Chittagong and the Chittagong Hill Tracts respectively. In the east, it meets the Cachar District of Assam and the State of Mizoram.

Tripura has an area of 10,660 Sq.Kms. It lies approximately between 22.56 degree and 24.32 degree north latitudes and between 91.10degree and 92.20 degree east longitudes.

Topography:

In Tripura, 60% of the area constitutes of hills which forms a succession of ranges running mainly north-south[2]. Topographically, Tripura may be divided into the following divisions of physical features; hills, hill slopes, tilla, lunga, valley, flat and plain lands, rivers and lakes.

Hills and hill slopes:-

Deotamura, Baramura, Atharamura, Longtharai, Sakhantlang and Jampui are important among the hill ranges of Tripura. There are flat lands, bushes, Jungles and swamps in the successive gaps between hill ranges. The average distance betwen every two ranges is 12 miles. Their altitude vary from 50 ft to 2,000 ft above the sea level[3]. The hills rise in gentle slopes.

Rivers:-

The rivers of Tripura are, practically speaking, small hill streams

fed by monsoon water. As a result, during the dry months they turn into narrow ribbons of water and except for the mouth they are hardly navigable. There are twelve river basins in Tripura, seven of which are important. The drainage pours down north by the Khowai, Dalai, Manu, Juri, Langai, West by Gumti and south west by the Fenny and Muhari[4].

Climate:-

The climate of Tripura is tropical. The average annual rainfall is 299 cm.

Flora:-

In Tripura most of the forests vary considerably. Canes, Garjan, Sal, Sundi, Jarul, Senal etc. grow in them. Many of these trees are economically important. Besides, various medicinal herbs are also found in Tripura. There are also a few tea gardens in the State. Rubber plantation also has been introduced in the State.

Tripura has been renowned for its elephants since time immemorial. Besides, deer, monkeys, panthers, leopards, mongoose, bears, bats, squirrels, bisons, and a few tigers are also found in the forests.

Among the birds, the crow, the bulbul, the pigeon, the Indian hill mynah, the parakeet, the Bhringraj, the jungle fowl, the crane, the hornbill, the vulture, the kite, the dove etc. are to be found in Tripura. Different kinds of snakes, pythons, cobras, etc. are also found here. Crabs, tortoises, and different kinds of fishs are seen in the rivers and lakes.

Population:-

According to 1991 Census the total population of Tripura is 2,757,205. The total population may broadly be classified into tribals (19 scheduled tribes) and non-tribals (Bengalees mainly and Manipuries and others). Out of this 853, 345 are tribals. The tribals form 30.95% of the total population of the state.
According to 1991 Census the density of population is 263 per Sq.Km. 60.44% is the literacy rate of the people of Tripura.

The main religion of the people of Tripura is Hinduism. Apart from it, there is a scattering of Christians Buddhists and Muslims.

The tribal communities have been classified into the following 19 Schduled tribes:-

1.Tripuri 2.Reang 3.Jamatia 4.Noatia 5.Halam 6.Chakma 7.Mag 8.Lushai 9.Kuki 10.Garo 11.Chaimal 12.Khasia 13 Bhuita 14.Munda 15.Orang 16.Lepcha 17.Santal 18 Bhil 19.Uchai

In the present work, an attempt has been made to study the ethno-socio-political and economic characteristics of the Jamatias along with an analysis of the Jamatia folklore.

The impact of modernisation on the Jamatia ethos and culture the dynamic character of the Jamatia culture, the influence of other cultures - Cultural contact and acculturation have been examined in this volume. These are important from the Sociological point of view.

As for the methodology, the main emphasis has been given on the field study and the collection of primary data. Besides, all secondary and tertiary sources in connection with this study have been as far as possible, carefully varified.

The data of this study were collected by the application of various devices of primary data collection e.g. participant observation, interview, schedule and questionnaire and case study, supplemented by statistical devices according to suitability

In the collection of information regarding socio-religious functions and various economic activities, the main emphasis was put on participant observation method in order to form a clear cut idea about them.

The author had to reside in the field of research in order to observe the full cycle of a Year's activities and to acquaint himself as far as possible with socio-economic and magico-religious functions of the tribe under study.

As most of the Jamatia villages are situated in remote places, the researcher had to cover them on foot. The researcher's stay as

a teacher in their locality enabled him to establish a close rapport with them.

For the collection of information on ethnographic account of the Jamatias their traditional Socio-political organisation, stories regarding their deities and their folklore, interviewing was most necessary. While selecting the informants, due care was taken to cover almost all the categories- agewise and sexwise.

The information regarding their religious functions, including *mantras*(charms), curative medicine and the formulae dealing with evil eye, omens etc. and folksongs and folktales were obtained from their chief priest and other village priests, village medicinemen and a good number of Jamatia folksingers and old personalities respectively.

In the collection of data about economic condition and certain social conditions, schedules and questionnaires were used. As most of the people are illiterate, the cyclo-styled schedules were distributed by the auther from door to door and their answers were recorded by himself by interviewing them.

For the information regarding the impact of modernisation on the ethos and culture of the Jamatias, extensive interviews were conducted with the young generation including school and college students, school teachers, politicians at various levels, the Gaon Pradhans, and many educated persons from the Jamatia community serving in different government organisations.

The following Jamatia villages were visited in order to witness some popular festivals, rituals and worship, marriage ceremony, proceedings of the traditional Councils, economic activities etc.

Sl. No	Name of the Villagers	Sub-Divisions	Districts
a	b	c	d
1.	Singlung	Amarpur	South Tripura.
2.	Watcomberi	"	"
3.	Twybakley	"	"
4.	Kushorai Jamatia Para	"	"
5.	Nutan Nagra	"	"
6.	Purun Nagra	"	"
7.	Tingaiya	"	"
8.	Chechua	"	"
9.	Chanmanta Karbuk Para	"	"
10.	Garjan Jamatia Para	"	"
11	Totaimukha	"	"
12	Kriputtari	"	"
13.	Radharagar Para	"	"
14.	Sadagar Para	"	"
15.	Debbar	"	"
16.	Kamlai	"	"
17.	Durburia	"	"
18.	Koromura	"	"
19.	Srilighat	Udaipur	"
20.	Nagaan	"	"
21.	Ran	"	"
22.	Hadra	"	"
23.	Dagma	"	"
24.	Pitra	"	"
25.	Twikichik Para	"	"
26.	Khamerbar	Khowai	West Tripura
27.	Hatai Kwchwk	"	

The average distance of these villages are 60 to 70 km from Agartala Town.

A number of photographs of their various socio-religious activities were taken. their songs, tales were also taped. In some cases the taking of these photographs gave rise to some minor problems and difficulties due to the conservative attitude of their religious functioneries.

Secondary Sources :

Besides the primary data collected from field studies the auther

collected information from secondary sources also. He verified all relevant official, semi-official and non-official documents for this study which included many published as well as unpublished materials. They are listed elsewhere.

Brief Survey of The Contents of Each Chapter:

This study is divided into five chapters. In each chapter, paras have been given headings and sub-headings according to the necessity. A number of maps, charts, tables diagrams, sketches, pyotoghrphs, have also been presented in many places.

Abstract :

Chapter- I Contains an ethnographic account of the Jamatias including an attempt to ascertain the origin of this tribe. In doing so the main characteristics of the tribe, the meaning of the tern Jamatia, their habitats, lgends, folksongs, etc. have been critically examined.

It is seen that this tribe is basically a warrior community. The word Jamatia came from the Arabic word Jamayet meaning assemblage. The soldiers of the Kings were drawn from different tribal communities, predominant among them being the Tripuris. They lived in barracks and camps and formed themselves, incourse of time, into a new tribe called the Jamatias.

According to another interpretation, the word Jamatia came from the Arabic word 'Jama' which means taxes. The Jamatias for their military services were exempted from paying taxes. So this also points to their origin from the army class. The use of the Arabic words clearly shows that this tribe is of comparatively recent origin, as this term could originate only after the coming of the Muslim rulers in Bengal.

This Chapter also deals with the habitation pattern of the Jamatias and location of their concentration in Tripura.

The Jamatias speak, Jamatia a dialect of the Kak Barak language. A brief description of the dialect is also given in this chapter.

Chapter-II Deals with the social structure of the Jamatias. It also deals with the kinship system, kinship terms, Inter-personal relationships, the role of women in their society, the motive behind the adoption of child - a quite common practice in their society, are also dealt with in this chapter.

This chapter also describes the system of cermenial friendship which many Jamatias often go into. Their marriage customs, divorce, law of inheritance, are also dealt with in this chapter. The economic activities of the Jamatias and their polity also constitute the subject of study of this chapter.

The Jamatias are an endogamous tribe and partilineal in nature. The family is a domestic unit and its type is monogamous, where the eldest male member is usually regarded as the head of the family.

Their kinship terminology which is similar to those of the other neighbouring tribes and on which the influence of Bengalee Hindus can also be found, is of two types - classificatory and denotative. These have been dealth with in detail with examples, tables etc.

The Jamatia women play quite a vital role in their domestic and economic front. But their role in social, religious, and political sphere is quite negligible. The status assigned to them by the society in these spheres is lower than what the male counterparts enjoy.
The adoption of a child by a family, usually by a childless one, has social, religious and legal sanction among them.
The practice of getting into friendship -sexwise through religious ceremonies is quite prevalent among them.
Marriage is usually arranged by the parents of the bride and the groom. Three forms of marriage is seen among them. Of these, the oldest form is known as *chamwrwy tangmani*. In this form the would be groom has to stay at the bride's house and work for their family for a certain period of time before the marriage can take place.

The second form is known as *hanjwkrahamanan* in which the bride is taken to the groom's house by her parents, relations and friends

and married off there.
According to the third form, the groom goes to the bride's house where the marriage takes place and then returns to his house with the bride. This form is a recent development and it shows the influence of more dominant non-tribal neighbours and that of changing time and economic realities.

Another special feature of their marriage is that quite often the bride is senior in age to the groom. Often a childgroom has quite a mature young girl as wife. In a predominantly agricultural community, a grown up girl is a strong helping hand and a worker of the family. This consideration plays an important part in such marriages.

This chapter also deals with the details of their marriage customs and rituals. Their pre and extra marital sex relations, their divorce and inheritance system are also dealt with in this chapter.

Agriculture is the main source of income for the Jamatias and their economic activities revolve around it. Though Jhuming (a system of shifting cultivation) was their traditional form of agriculture, plough cultivation has replaced it. The Jamatias are now mainly plough cultivators and Jhumig now holds only a secondary position in their economic life.

Their labour system, specialisation, ceremonial exchange, credit and value, land tenure are different from their neighbouring non-tribals. These have been dealt with in this chapter.

Baga (share cropping), *Khajna*(one kind of contract), *Chuktibaga, Yagul* (exchange of labour), domestic servant, *reh* (a kind of mortgage), *kerea*(hiring), *bhagi* (a system of rearing livestock with the help of other persons by sharing their young ones), are the different kinds of their labour system. These have been discussed in this chapter.

The Jamatias weave much of the clothes they use, themselves and thus save considerable amount of money on this account.

They have a traditional system of co-operatives known as *dharmagola* which plays quite an important role in their economic life.

Though Jhuming is on its way out, it gave rise in the past to many socio-religious functions round the year as its series of operations progresed punctuated by nature's cycles. These functions have been dealt with in this chapter.

Polity:

The *hada* (the supreme council) and its sub-ordinate organisations like the *luku* (village level organisation), the *mayal* (regional level council) plays a very significant role in their tradition bound socio-political life.

Much of the strength and weakness of the Jamatia as a social functionary can be traced to this polity of theirs. A detailed discussion of this polity has been also conducted in this chapter.

Chapter-III Deals with the religion of the Jamatias. The Jamatias are Hindus. They worship tulshi plant, wear *paita* (sacrad thread) as Khatriyas and visit Hindu pilgrim centres as devoutedly as any Hindu. They also perform the pujas of many local detities such *Shani, Sitala, Saraswati* like their Bengalee Hindu neighbours. At one time they even practised *sati*.
But they also perform their traditional Pujas such as *Garia, Iampra, Ker, Gang, Naksu, Maylwngma* etc. in which their tradetional priest the *Ochai* plays quite a vital role.

In fact, their religious beliefs and practices may be charecterised as polytheistic. Their pre-vaishanavised religious structure may be said to be a system of animism or rather spiritism with a background of primitive and vague animism.

This chapter describes beliefs connected with origins of some of their *pujas*, the systems of these *pujas*, and the role of the *Ochais* of different categories, and the classification of their deities.

It also describes the origin and procedures of the *Garia Puja*, the *Ker Puja*, the *Gang Puja*, the *Lampra Puja*, the *Maytwngma Puja*, the *Naksu Puja*, the *Kwsychanaysma Puja* etc.

The construction of the images of deities with green bamboos and the specific customs in the arrangement of the bamboo sticks for specific deities are also important aspects of these pujas. These are also described there.

The mantras they chant in their traditional pujas are quite interesting. Some of the *mantras* with their English translations are given in this chapter.

Chapter-1V : deals with the folklore of the Jamatias, their beliefs about dreams, their proverbs, riddles, folksongs and folktales.

The Jamatias have a rich treasure of folklore. Even today they are a tradition bound tribe and their folklores show many interesting facets of their psychology and beliefs.

They believe that dreams presage good or evil things seen or done in the dreams. They perform pujas to ward off the evil eye predicted in the dream with the help of the *Ochais*. The *Lampra puja* is the instance of such a puja.

The sight of certain birds and animals even in real life is considered inauspicious while the sight of some other animals bring good luck;

The Jamatia proverbs and riddless come from real life experience and are quite varied and colourful. A sample collection of their proverbs and ridd es are givn in this chapter.

The Jamatias have a rich store of folksongs. They may be broadly classified therne-wise, into following categories:

a) *Gariyng song* - songs of love sung from the Jhum sheds by boys and girls working in the Jhum. They express their longings, hopes and disappointments in these songs.

b) *Garia songs* - sung during the Garia puja. One of the interesting things to note about these songs is that the language in quite a large number of them is vulgar and coarse.

c) *Amikiti songs* - These songs were sung at the time of the *Sati* ceremony. This is a reminder that at one time they observed *Sati*

The Jamatias have a rich store of folktales. These tales are still preserved orally. According to their content and theme they can abe broadly classified as below.

a) Myths and legends which tell about the origin of gods and goddesses, the creation of the birds and animals and about how the rainbow, the constellations great bear came about or why the thunder strikes or the earthquakes take place etc. These reveal their desire to know and understand the universe and the natural phenomenons that takes place around them.
b) Animal tales - There are many interesting stories about the animals, their wit, wisdom and tool hardiness. In their folktales man-animal relation is revealed in an interesting way.

   Apart from the animals, the witches and many evil spirits, too, had their roles in the folktales of the Jamatias

With the changing times, their folktales too have changed in form and content in accordance with present day out-look and attitude. The tale of *Mayung Kutur* which is included in this chapter along with some other tales, as samples is an example of this change.

This chapter also describes their traditional dress, ornaments, food habits, their folk games, and their traditional method of treatment of diseases.

Chapter-V deals with the interaction of tradition and modernity on the Jamatias and the changes it has brought about in their life and society.

There is a lot of difference between the Jamatias of today and those of the past. These changes can be visible in their life style, food habit, dress and ornaments, their attitude towards their traditional system of treatment and in their outlook on life in general.

The factors responsible for these changes are:

1) Their economic condition:
2) Environment:

3) Urbanization:
4) Education:
5) Psychological make up.

Acculturation which has taken place as a result of their contact with other ethnic groups specially the Bengalees who are their principal neighbours is also responsible for these changes.

1863, the year of Jamatia rebellion is a watershed in these changes. The quelling of the rebellion led to the formal acceptance of *vaishnavism* by many Jamatias and the emergence of many orthodox followers of that faith. The over zealous orthodoxy by the followers of this faith made many among other Jamatias feel themselves neglected. This led to the revival of traditional pre-vaishnavite Jamatia faith.

The present day Jamatia religious patten is a synthesis of *saktaism*, *vaishnavism* and their traditional system of worship.

The pre-1863 stage in the course of change can be termed as (1) non formal process of change or the pre-1863 stage and (2) formal process of change of the post-1863 stage.
The factors responsible for the non-formal process of change are:

(a) the earlier civil administration.
(b) the geographical situation.
(c) the importance of Bengali language.
(d) the royal patronge.
(e) the trade and commerce.
(f) the pattern of cultivation in the plains.
(g) the polytheistic worship.

And the factors responsible for formal process of change are :

(a) Vaishnavism.
(b) Christianity.
(c) Westernisation.
(d) Urbanisation and,
(e) Modern education.

The external influences have been constantly making their impact on the traditional Jamatia culture. And the Jamatias, while maintaining the principal aspects of their culture, are assimilating those influences which bring about acculturation in many facets of their cultural identity.

Their housing pattern and the design of their family composition, economic, social and political condition, religious beliefs and festivals and the impact of modernity on their life and resultant changes have been investigated in this study.

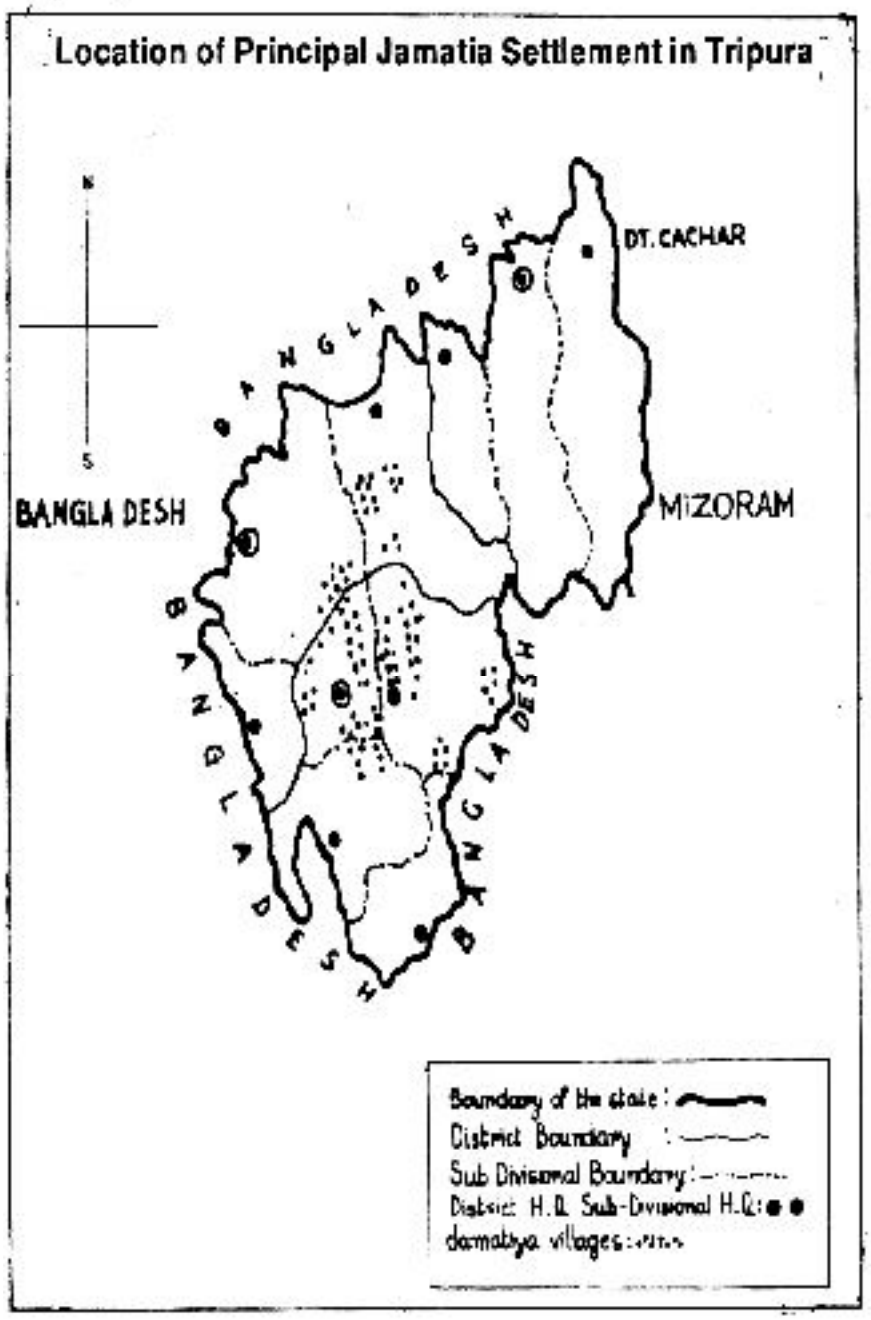
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Location of Principal Jamatia Settlement in Tripura
N
S
BANGLA DESH
DT. CACHAR
MIZORAM
BANGLADESH
BANGLADESH
BANGLADESH
Boundary of the state :
District Boundary :
Sub Divisional Boundary :
District H.Q. Sub-Divisional H.Q:
Jamatiya villages :

CHAPTER - I

Numerical Strength, Origin, Nomenclature and Dialect Of The Jamatia Tribe

Tripura, a tiny hilly state, that lies between Assam and Bangladesh, is the abode of a large number of tribes. There are as many as 19[1] tribes in Tripura out of which, the Jamatia tribe holds the third position in respect of numerical strength. The first and second being the Tripuri and Reang tribe respectively.

Though the Jamatias live largely in, Udaipur, Khowai, Amarpur, and some areas of the Sadar Sub-division of West Tripura district, they are concentrated mainly in the Amarpur and Udaipur Sub-Divisions of South Tripura district.

According to the Census Report of 1981, the total population of the Jamatias in Tripura is 44,5501 which is 7.63% of the total tribal population of Tripura[2].

In the Survey Report of Hill Tipporah(Tripura) of 1874-75 by W.W. Hunter also, the Jamatia tribe was holding the third position in respect of their numerical strength. The following table indicates the position of the Jamatia tribe in comparison with other tribes of Tripura according to that Census[3] :-

Table - I

Name of the Tribe	Numerical Strength as per 1874-75 Census Report
1. Tipperah (Tripuri)	27,148
2. Jamatyas (Jamatia)	3,000
3. Nowatias (Noatias)	2,144
4. Riangs	2,435
5. Halams	5,577

What is pretty clear from the table shown above is that the Jamatias were holding about 7.44% (seven percent) of the total tribal population of Tripura even in 1874-75.

According to the Census Report of 1901, 1911,1961, 1971 and 1981, the total population of the Jamatia tribe was[4] :-

Table - II

Persons during the Census Year

1901	1911	1961	1971	1981
49	170	24,359	34192	44,531

According to the Census Report of Tripura of 1931, the total population of the Jamatia Tribe was 11,090. The following table of 1931 Census Report of Tripura indicates the settlement of the Jamatias in the various Sub-Divisions of Tripura[5].

Table - III

Centre	Total Population	Male	Female
Agartala	1 (0.01%)	1 (100%)	X
Sadar	613 (5.53%)	323 (52.69%)	290 (47.31%)
Sonamura	877 (7.91%)	438 (49.94%)	439 (50.06%)
Udaipur	5,028 (45.34%)	2,514 (50%)	2,514 (50%)
Amarpur	3,091 (27.87%)	1,587 (51.34%)	1,504 (48.79%)
Khowai	1,452 (13.09%)	756 (52.07%)	696 (47.93%)
Kailashahar	2 (0.02%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Dharmanagar	26 (0.23%)	14 (53.85%)	12 (46.15%)
Belonia	X	X	X
Sabroom	X	X	X
Total	11,090 (100%)	5,634 (50.80%)	5,456 (49.20%)

From the above list it is found that as far as the Sub-Division wise distribution is concerned, Udaipur Sub-Division tops the list where 45.34% of the total Jamatia population of Tripura lived. Next to Udaipur comes Amarpur Sub-Division with 27.87% Khowai

Sub-Division with 13.09% Sonamura, Sub-Division with 7.91% and Sadar with 5.33% respectively. In other Sub-Divisions of Tripura, the percentage of the Jamatia population was quite negligible and it was practically non-existent in the two Sub-Divisions of Belonia and Sabroom.

From the Census Report of 1971, it is found that South Tripura District tops the list of the Jamatia population with 27,337(79.95%) and next to it comes West Tripura District with 6,644(19.43%) and North Tripura District with only 171(0.50%)[6]. In the census report of 1981 also it is seen that the position of distribution of population in the districts remain the same.

Nomenclature And Antiquity:

There are controversies regarding the origin of the term Jamatia. It is mentioned in the 'Tribes of Tripura' that from the etymology 'Jamat' - Which in Bengali/Urdu means assemblage, the tribe name Jamatia is supposed to have been derived or some believe that the Jamatias were recruited in the army which was called 'jamat' and subsequently came to be known as Jamatias[7].

The opinions of Somendra Chandra Deb Barma and Omesh Saigal are also worthmentioning here in this connection. In the opinion of Somendra Chandra DebBarma "The Jamatias in the past served in the army of Tripura. The word *Jamat* means a group or a congregation of people. The army which was formed by them was called *Jamat* Since then they have been known as Jamatias[8].

In this context Omesh Saigal holds the view that Jamat in Urdu means an assemblage of persons. The former rulers of Tripura used to recruit his army from a class of tribals who were not only warriors but also had proved their loyality to him. A fair proportion of his armed forces were drawn from amongst the Jamatias who formed a group in his army, and it was from this fact that they derived their clan name[9].

The Jamatias believe that the term jamatia is derived from the word '*jamid* (an Arabic word which means tax)and '*twid* (a kokborok word means not to bear the burden of). So the word

Jamatia means persons who do not bear the burden of taxes. They hold the opinion that the Jamatias enjoyed these privileges for their military duties.

Yet another group of elder persons among the Jamatias are of opinion that when Pubnarayan[10] (a legendry hero of the Jamatias) brought the image of *Garia* (one of the popular deities of the Jamatias) from the Kukis of Thanangchi showing great valour and presented it to the king, the king ordered him to worship the deity in a *Jamayet* or an assemblage of people. And since then the persons who worship in a gathering (Jamayet) came to be known as Jamatias.

These points will lead to the question on the antiquity of the tribe.

The term *'Jamat'* is an Arabic word and not a Bengali or Jamatia word. So if the term Jamatia is derived from the word *Jamat* then their origin is not very old because the influence of Arabic became prominent in this region during the days of the Sultans of Bengal only, when the rulers of Tripura came into the contacts of the Muslims (Sultans of Bengal) more and more chiefly through war confrontations. This contacts gradually paved the way for Arabic to make an entry in Tripura and casting its influence to a considerable extent.

The influence of Arabic at that time increased in Tripura owing to the reason of the unequivocal superiority of that language as well as the far better army set up of the Muslim rulers.

It is mentioned in Shri Rajmala (the Royal chronicle of the kings of Tripura) that Dhanya Manikya (1490-1515 A.D.), who may be regarded as the greatest rulers of the medieval period of Tripura[11] organised his army according to the military organisation pattern of the Muslim rulers of Bengal[12]. Moreover Dhanya Manikya had a protracted war engagement with Hussain Shah(1494-1520 A.D) the Sultan of Bengal with varying successes[13].

Hence it will not be far from truth if one draws the logical conclusion that this particular tribe, that is, the Jamatias did actually originate at a time between the fifteenth and sixteenth century when Arabic flourished in this territory as a result of Muslim contact.

The opinion that the Jamatias got their name from the fact that they were not required to pay taxes to the king as a concession of their military service is not borne out by the facts to a reasonable extent. The 1876 rate of *Ghar Chukti* (House tax) according Hunter[14] shows that at least in the later part of the 19th century the Jamatias were required to pay taxes equal to that paid by the Tripuris. And if the rate of texation is any indication of any concession, than the Halams (one of the nineteen tribes of Tripura) had to pay less taxes then what the Jamatias paid. So it is doubtful if the explanation of the term Jamatia as '*jami* - taxes and *twiya* i.e. people who did not have to pay taxes can be accepted.

But there is no doubt that the Jamatias were not used as forced labour for carrying the goods of the travelling officials - the system of *Twitun*[15] W.W. Hunter also supports this view. He asserts that "the Jamatias are a fighting caste of the Tipperahs (Tripuris) and are well fitted for jungle warfare. They are exempted from all forced coolie labour, a privilege to which they are very tenacious, and the infringement of which was the cause of a sanguinary rebellion some years ago.[16]

But even then, the explanation that the term Jamatia is derived from the word *Jamayet or Jama* meaning assemblage stands.

About the third opinion, it may be said that the worship of *Garia* in a *Jamayet* (assemblage) is still done by the Jamatias in assemblages. Unlike all other tribes of Tripura who perform the *Garia puja* individually or in village level, the Jamatias perform this puja in community level in. Besides, the Jamatias still worship the image of *Garia* which was brought from the Kukis.

Moreover, the conquest of Thanangchi by Raykachak, a famous General of the king Dhanya Manikya and the bringing of the idol of the lord *Siva* from the Kukis during his period giveS an idea

about the period of the formation of the Jamatias[17].

Regarding the bringing of the image of *Garia* from the Kukis the view of Shyama Charan Tripura is worth mentioning. He asserts that *Garia* the tutelary deity of the kuki king along with the property of the defeated Kuki king was brought by Raykachak, a famous hero[18]. This opinion also supports the bringing of the image of *Garia* during the period of Dhanya Manikya as Raykachak was his General during 1490 - 1515 A.D.

One is apt to find contradiction in these seemingly opposite views. But the words *Jama, Jamat and Jamayet* all came from the same language Arabic and are related to military service rendered by the Jamatias. So the three opinions as stated above form a paradox which itself is a pointer to the fact that the term is not an ancient one and the Jamatias are not a very old tribe.

In this connection, it should be noted that unlike the Tripuris or other tribes of Tripura, the Jamatias maintain very close relationship among themselves in their community. Their traditional Socio-political organisations and religious functions have contributed largely in strengthening this bond of unity. All the Jamatias are still guided by the Supreme Commander of their Community - the *Hada akra* unquestionably.

The mechanism of their social control is so well knit and strict that the violation of their customary law is seldom met with in their community.

Generelly, the Jamatia villages are mostly inhabited by the Jamatias and the villages are strung together like the links of a chain.

Thus, the spirit of *Jamayet* or assemblage is still observed in the way of the Jamatias live. So this legal pattern of their society provides ample proof in favour of the term *Jamat, Jama, or Jamayet*.

Ethnic Origin Of The Tribe :

The Jamatias though they might have a common origin with other Tibeto-Burmese (Bodo) tribes- Tripuris, Noatias, Riang etc, are now, for all practical purposes, a single endogamous tribe. According to Suhash Chottopaddhay, a noted linguist, the following eight tribes namely, the *Tripuri, Riang, Jamatia, Rupini, Koloi, Uchoi,* and *Murasing*be ong to an one and undivided group. Their spoken language is known as Kokborok. Kokborok belongs to the Bodo branch of the Tibeto-Burman language group.[19]

Regarding the ethnic origin of the Jamatias, the earlier authors have described them as a branch of the Tripuri tribe in their classification of the Tripuris. In his description of the Tipperas (Tripuris) R. H. Sneyed Hutchinson is of the opinion that "the Tipperas in the Chittagong Hill Tracts number 23,341 and are scattered through out the district. This Tribe is also called Tripura and is divided into two classes, the Tippera proper and the Jamatias[20]. In the Census Report 1901 E.A. Gait states that the Tipras are divided into Puran or Tipra proper, and Jamatia[21].

About the classification of the Tipperah, Edward Tuite Dalton is, also of opinion that The Nowatyahs, Jomatias, (sic) and Reyangs. The first is looked upon as highly respected whilst the last is held in very low estimation.[22].

Tracing the Origin of the Jamatia Tribe, Mr. Gait, in his Census Report of 1901 for Bengal, states that the Jamatias originally came from Acholong in the chittagong Hill tracts.

The above mentioned view of Gait has been accepted by sneyd Hutchinson. He also suggests the probability of the origin of the Jamatias from Achlong of chittagong Hill Tracts. Hutchinson says that Achlong is a small Tributary of the Feni River in the north of the Hill Tracts, but I can find no trace of occupancy in the neighbourhood. On the otherhand, I have visited the ruins of what is reported to have been at one time the capital of Tripura kingdom, situated on the Mynee river, a Tributry Kasalong and separated only by a range of hills from the Feni. Here there are ruins of a big house and four or five large tanks with remains of masonary,

ghats of fire, burned bricks at each corner: but wild elephants have warned this away by going to and coming from their baths. Dense tree and cane forest overgrew the site, but amongst the trees remain some fine specimens of cultivated mangoes. Ridges on the Surface of the ground are traceable in the forests giving proof of a period when the whole country was under rice cultivation and there must have been a very big settlement of Tipperahs in this parts. The sight is now in the heart of forest reserve. This was I imagine the original home of the Jamatias[23].

Besides the views of the above mentioned authors who consider the Jamatia Tribe as a branch of the Tripuri Tribe, some sorts of analysis is necessary regarding the origin of the Jamatia Tribe in the following way:

1. Has the Jamatia Tribe originated from an asseblage of warrior persons who formed a group in the royal army ?
2. In what name and shape did they exist before the formation of the Jamatia Tribe ?
3. Why did they form this new Tribe giving up the name of their original tribe ?
4. Did they belong to the same professional group and from which period were they encouraged to live unitedly ?
5. Is this tribe a mixed one ?

In answering the first question, the view of Kailash Chandra Singha may be taken into consideration. In describing the origin of the Jamatias he holds the view that 'they are a pure branch of the Tripuris. They were the chief army of Tripura during the ancient period. Their total number is not less than 4/5 (four to five) thousands.'[24]

In this respect, E.A. Gait is of the opinion that 'from them the Tipra kings formally recruited their fighting men'[25].

So from the above mentioned statement, it is clear that the Jamatias were an important fighting tribe of Tripura during the reign of the early kings. They always formed the hard core of royal army[26]. As the Jamatias were very loyal to the former rulers of Tripura,

they were given some special privileges.

In respect of Social status the Puran rank highest and then in order, the Jamatiya, Nowatia and Riyang[27].

Regarding the origin of this tribe, Ornesh saigal holds the view that the former rulers of Tripura used to recruit his (sic) army from a class of tribals who were not only warriors but also had proved their loyalty to him. A fair proportion of his armed forces were drawn from among the Jamatias who formed a group in his (sic) army and it was from this fact that they derived their clan name. They were given a special position amongst the tribals and were exempted from *Ghar Chukti* (House Tax) and given settlement of vast tracts of fertile land mainly in the Udaipur division. As a result of this, the Jamatias though they once belonged to the Tripuri tribe, managed to evolve a political system of their own and developed economically and socially[28].

The rate of *Ghar Chukti Kar* (House Tax) as described by W.W. Hunter in 1876 also supports the view that the Jamatia were enjoying some special previledges due to their military service. In this respect they were equal to the Tripuris in enjoying the highest amount of concession. The rate of *Ghar Chukti Kar* as described by W. W. Hunter in 1876 is given below[29] :

TABLE IV

Name of the Tribes	And Rate of Ghar Chukti
Tripuri	Rs. 3.8 Annas
Jamatia	Rs. 5.8 Annas
Noatia	Rs. 10.00 Annas
Riang	Rs. 10.00 Annas
Halam	Rs. 2.00 to 10 Annas
Kuki	Rs. 5.4 Annas

In reply to the second question it should be mentioned first that the term *Jamat/Jama* is a recent one. So, before assuming the name Jamatia, they were known by their original tribe names from which they had come and joined the army.

In this context the view of Thakur Nagendra Chandra Deb Barma may be stated here. He points out that, it is known from the investigation of the history of Tripura that when Udaipur was the capital of Tripura, tribal people were given permanent residence round the capital for doing various duties of the state. The system of paying monthly salaries to the soldiers did not exist at that time. Instead, they were given land settlement around the capital. This assemblage of the community gradually established matrimonial alliance and blood relationship among themselves and ultimately developed into a separate endogamous community. The assemblage (Jamyet) of the subjects came to be known as Jamatia tribe later on[30].

The view that their concentration is mainly in the erstwhile capitals of Tripura is supported by the fact that, till today, the population of the Jamatia community is concentrated chiefly in the two Sub-Divisions of Amarpur and Udaipur of South Tripura District. It should be mentioned here that Amarpur was the capital of Tripura for a short period during the reign of Amar Manikya and Rangamati which was later named as Udaipur during the reign of Uday Manikya was the capital of Tripura for a long time.

As the Jamatia community is supposed to have originated from the defence personnels of Tripura, there is every chance of the admixture of various tribes in this community. In the armed forces of previous rulers of Tripura, the influence of the Tripuris were predominent along with the Reangs and the Notias. So the Tripuri Tribe took a vital part in the formation and development of this Jamatia Tribe along with the Reang and the Notia Tribe of Tripura.

In this context, it should be mentioned that, there is a section among the Tripuris now, who at one time belonged to the Jamatia Community. At present, they use the surname Debbarma like other Tripuris. This group of Tripuris are known to the Jamatia as Kwlagna

Jamatia. The Jamatia consider them as the black sheep or a stain on their community. This section of Tripuris (Kwlagna Jamatias) are about four to five thousands (unofficially) in number and they are largely found in the Udaipur, Amarpur and Sonamura Sub-division of Tripura.

This section of Tripuris observe the rituals of Vaishnavism. They do not perform the traditional Puja of the Jamatia community. They grow pigtails (like a tuft of hair on the head of Hindu), wear Tulshimala and put sandal smash or mud of the Ganges river on the forehead or up on the bridge of the nose as a symbol of their religious sect.

Moreover, this section of the Jamatias did not give their subscription to the traditional Garia Puja of the Jamatias and did not accept the absolute authority of the *Hada Akra* (The Chief of the traditional Socio-Political institution of the Jamatias). This default was the main cause for which they were subsequently turned out from the Jamatia community by the *Hada-Akra* considering them as Kwlanga (blacksheep of the Jamatia Tribe).

Since then, this section of the Jamatia entered the Tripuri Tribe using the Surname 'Debbarma', the title of the Tripuri community because they originally belonged to this Tribe before they formed themselves into the Jamatia community along with other Tribes.

It has been revealed from an inquiry that the father of Shri Kunja Deb Barma, a seventy year old leader of this expelled section of the Jamatias of Sadhupara of Amarpur Sub-Division, whose original residence was at Nalchar of Sonamura Sub-Division, that his forefathers belonged to the Jamatias Tribe. As they did not give their subscription to the Jamatia Hada (traditional supreme council) and did not participate in the traditional Pujas of the Jamatia community, his father was expelled from the Jamatia Tribe and subsequently they took up the surname 'Debbarma' He further said that many of his relatives on both the side of his parents still belong to the Jamatia community. The name of the father of Sri Kunja Deb Barma was Bihari Jamatia and after embracing Vainshnavism he was named Bihari Das Vaishnav.

Another genealogical table of this group of Jamatias may be furnished here :

TABLE - V

Hari Das Jamatia

(Before embracing Vaishnavism)

Hari Das Vaishnav

(After embracing Vaishnavism)

Bhagirat Deb Barma

Bipranarida Deb Barma	Bikrampada Deb Barma	Gobindabashi Deb Barma	Ramananda Deb Barma

In reply to a question as to why this expelled section of the Jamatia entered the Tripuri tribe and accepted the title Debbarma, Sri Kunja Debbarma said that they originally belonged to the Tripuri tribe and after bringing of the image of Garia their forefathers formed the Jamatia tribe. So quite naturally after coming out of the Jamatia tribe they entered their original tribe, and are now using their original title.

The Jamatias of Tripura, till to-day, are in marriage relation with this section of Tripuris (Kwtanga Jamatias). But they do not encourage their sons to marry a girl of this section of Tripuris in the Chamurwy Tangmani system of marriage, a system in which the bridegroom has to stay in the bride's house for a certain period of time. Instead of it, the marriage is performed in *Hanjwk Rahamwng* system in which the bride goes to the bridegroom's house one day ahead of the date of marriage.

It should be noted that generally the Jamatia girls do not marry a boy of this section of Tripuris of course they can marry a boy of this section of the Tripuris with the permission of the Hada-kara if the boy enters the Jamatia community. He then enjoys all the rights and previleges as the other Jamatia do.

In this context of relationship of the Jamatia with the Tripuris of Kwlanga group, it may further be mentioned here that the Jamatias some times select their adopted sons from this section of Tripuris. It has been noticed that Sri Nirodhon Jamatia of Amarpur Sub-Division adopted a Tripuri boy of this section about 30 years ago. Now this adopted son has taken his adopted father's surname.

In connection with the origin of the Jamatia tribe, Kailash Chandra Singha also holds the view that, the Jamatia tribe is a branch of the tribe. In his 'Rajmala', he has mentioned that 'The Twipras are chiefly divided into four branches e.g., i. Tipra, ii. Jamatia, iii. Noatia and iv. Reang. These branches are further sub-divided into various branches.'[31]

The view regarding the influence of the Tripuri Tribe in the formation of the Jamatia Tribe has been further emphasised by Somendra Deb Barma in the Census Report of 1931. He holds the view that 'Tripuri Khatrias are divided into five groups : (i) Puran Tripura (ii) Deshi Tripura (iii) Jamatia (iv) Riang and (v) Notia. These five groups belong to the Khatriya Varna. But intermarriage among them is not in practice'[32].

What follows from the above discussion is that the Jamatia tribe is by and large combination of the Tripuri and the Notia tribe. The view of the admixture of the Jamatia tribe with the Notia tribe has also been mentioned in the 'Tripurar Census Bibarani'. It has been mentioned there that the Social customs of the Notia are quite skin to those of the Jamatia in many respects'[33].

Moreover, an investigation has revealed that Pub Narayan, a legendary hero of the Jamatia community who brought the image of Garia (the most popular deity) from the land of the Kukis (Thanangchi) also came of a Notia family.

Ethnologically the Jamatias too are akin to the Tripuris and their physical characterstice also resemble those of the Tripuris. Their language is also the same. They speak Tripuri language with a drawl'[34]. Though the Tripuris the Notias and the Jamatias speak the same Kokborok language, the Jamatia follow a middle course

between the Tripuris and the Reangs in their pronunciation. The socio-religious functions of the Tripuris Noatas and the Jamatias are very much similiar to one another.

Moreover, each and every tirbe has its own peculiar traditional folksongs, folkdance, folktales etc. Unlike the Tripuri and the Reang tribes who have rich traditions of folk dance and song, the Jamatia have very little songs and dance of their own. The folk songs, tales and legends which are in vogue in the Jamatia community are to a great extent similiar to those of the Tripuris and the Noatias.

In this respect it should be mentioned here that the Jamatias have taken resorted to Jatra(Village opera) following the Bengali Jatra (Village Opera) system. They are very much fond of those Jatra songs. Old members of this community say that they have been performing the Jatra songs following the Bengalees for about a century.

In answering the Third question as to why they formed this new tribe giving up their original tribe name, it may be said that as the Jamatia tribe came into being from a military class which was formed by the admixture of various tribal groups - they did not like to continue thier separate individual identity which would weaken their unity militarily. Matrimonial relationship among them also played an important role as a melting pot in this respect.

Besides this, much of their original folksongs and dances are lost to them to-day owing mainly to the fact that they practised them less in order to preserve their new integrated indentity. In this context Sri Chaitanya Hari Jamatia of Bur Buria of Amarpur Sub-Division, told a story about how they lost their songs and dances. The original songs of the Jamatias were written and preserved in a jackfruit leaf and a goat ate up this leaf and thus their traditional songs, dances could no more be traced. This story also indicates that before the formation of the Jamatias tribe from a military class of different tribal communities, each individual tribal community had their own traditional songs, but after the formation of this now tribe they had deliberately given up their separate original identity.

As this newly formed tribe originated from a military class, they had a broader outlook than that of other tribes. So they became interested in the *Jatra* songs of the neighbouring plains people as they had greater scops to mix with them.

In this context the opinion of E. A. Gait is that unlike all other tirbes of Tripura, which have different *Daphas* or Sub-Divisions among them, the Jamatia is a single endogamous tribe without having any sub-class in it[35]. This endogamous character is also pointer to their army origin.

Besides this, they have abandoned *Jhum* cultivations (Shifting cultivation) and started wet cultivation since the formation of this new tribe. One probable reason for this is that their military posts in the plains gradually led to the agricultural practice of the settled people - the plough cultivation. In this context the view of Omesh Saigal may be stated here. He holds the view that "Lewin has described the Tripuris as a 'restless' tribe, shifting their villages every now and then in a nomadic fashion. The Jamatias have however disproved this thesis. They have shown that given the necessary incentives and facilities and cultivable and fertile lands, the tribals are as much able to settle down as any other plains community. By 1931, almost all of them, had given up *Jhuming* and taken to plough cultivation (1931 Census Report). During my tour of some of the Jamatia areas of Tripura, especially in Maharani area of Udaipur, I, however found a tendency amongest them to *Jhum* (Shifting cultivation) in the nearby hillocks to supplement their income[36].

In short, as this military class was more disciplined in their life pattern and advanced in their outlook they set up their own administrative system and ultimately formed a separate tribal group and subsquently came to be knwon as Jamatia.

It is also known from some sources that, at the first stage of the formation of the Jamatia tribe, they were knwon by their individual military ranks of the army. In 1888, A.D. Mr. F. Loyall, teh Commissioner of Chittagang in his report to the Governor of

Dacca regarding the practice of *Sati* (burning of a chaste wife on the funeral pile of her husband) in the Jamatia community of Sonamura Sub-Division of Tripura mentioned the Jamatia as a seperate tribe. But when he wrote the names of individuals in connection with the *Sati* rites, the Surnames given were all military ranks. The names, for example were like these :-

Wife of Charan Senapati, Wife of Gangamohan Senapati and wife of Milaram Burma. This also shows that the Jamatias were originally army personnels.

Mention can also be made here of a letter of Mr. F. Loyall to the Maharaja of Tripura printed in the Shri Rajmala. :-

"During my recent movements in the Sonamura Division in March last, I heard of three cases of the kind having occured amongst Jamatias in the course of the last two or three years. These cases are noted in margins :-

1. Wife of Charan Senapati of Burma Cherra about three years ago.
2. Wife of Ganga Mohon Senapati, named Bani Lakshmi of Failong Cherra in about Baisak before last.
3. Wife of Milaram Burma of Hantari Chowdhury's para on Tuirupa Cherra, in about Magh last."[37].

In an old and torn flag of the 17th. Century found in the house of Sri Vikram Jamatia of Twikuchui village of Udaipur Sub-Division, it is observed that the Jamatias were known by their individual military ranks even in the 17th century. The inscription of the flag is as follows :-

Translation of the inscription in English

Sri Sri Jay Kali.

In the year 111 Tring, during the reign of the venerable Vijoy Manikya Bahadur at the time of an war expedition led by Purbanaran Jamadar the Goddess Jay Kalika along with the idol of Hanumanji.

The year 111 Tring means, the year of 1011 Tripura Era. This calculation is based on the Sri Rajmala. According to the Sri

Rajmala, 'zero' was not used in inscriptions as it was considered inuspicious. If 590 is added to Tripura Era the calendar introduced by the rulers of Tripura the year in A.D. is found. So 1011 Tripura Era means 1601 A.D. i.e. the 17th. century.

This is also a proof of their using military ranks with their names which in turn is a pointer to their military origin.

In reply to the fourth and the fifth question as to whether this Jamatia tribe is an admixture of various tribal groups, it may be said that at the first stage of the formation of this tribe, it consisted of the persons of the same professional class i.e. the army personnels who came from various tribes of Tripura, and were mostly from the Tripuris.

In the later stage those tribals who were attracted by their superior culture and settled cultivation entered this community by matrimonial relationship.

The bringing of the image *Biyagwnang Garia* by Pubnaran, a legendary hero by snatching it through a war with the Kukis of Thanngchi and the Jamatia rebellion of 1863 under the leadership of Parikshit, a great Jamatia hero also indicate the warrior-like qualities of the Jamatias

It is also evident from the above mentioned facts that the Jamatia were on admixture of the Tripuris, the Noatias and the Riang. There is also a little trace of the Kuki tribe in the formation of this tribe as some Kukis were brought with the image of the *Biyagwang Garia* when Pubnaran brought it from Thanangchi. They were brought to Tripura to officiate the PUJA of the image of *Biyagwang Garia*. Till to-day they are the only hereditary office bearers of the *Biyagwnang Garia*. They are called *Kherfang*. The image of the *Garia* is worshipped in their house all the year round except the seven days of the *Garia Puja* which begins on the last day of *Chaitra* (March-April) every year.

Dialect :

The Jamatia dialect is one of the eight dialects of the *Kokborok* language[24]. According to the Census Report of 1971 the total

number of the *Kokborok*speaking persons in Tripura is 3,60,654 which is 79.97% of the total tribal population of Tripura. It should be noted that the *Rupini*, the mursasing and the Kalai sub-tribes were not reported as *Kokborok*speaking tribe in the 1971 Census Report though their mother tongue is also *Kokborok*. *Kokborok* language has been scheduled as a tribal language by a presidential order published in the Gazette of India, Part-II Section I dated August 13, 1960.39. And now it is one of the two official language of Tripura.

The *Kokborok*speaking tribe and sub-tribes of Tripura are[40] :

1. Tripura/Tipra
2. Riang
3. Jamatia
4. Noatia
5. Rupini
6. Koloi
7. Uchoi
8. Murasing

The phonetic, morphemic and syntactic characters of their dialects have close affinity with each other, though they have their own individual characteristics as is usual with dialects of almost every languages. But the degree of difference of these eight dialects is not so much as is found in the case of Bengali or Hindi language.

The view of Dr. Suhas Chottopadhyay regarding the close affinity of the eight dialects of Kokborok language is worth mentioning here. According to him, "The extent of dialectical difference among the differnet dialects of Kokborok is not as wide as is found in the cases of Bengali, English or German. The phonimic structure of the dialects of Kokborok are almost identical. Their grammatical structures are also wonderfully similar to each other. And the differences in their vocabulary are very negligible[41]

The Jamatia dialect of the Kagbarak language belongs to the *Bodo* language group. The languages belonging to this group originated from the Sino-Tibetan language. The process of how the Jamatia dialect has come into being with its root in the

Sino-Tibetan language group may be shown in the following chart :-

The Sino-Tibetan or Kirta Language

The Sino-Tibetan Family

Tibeto Burman		Siamese Chinese
Tibeto Himalayan	North-Assam	Assam-Burmese

Bodo Boro Naga Kachin Kuluchin Burma Group

Bodo Kachari Lalung Garo Koch Rabha Mikir TripuriKaibarak

Tripuri Riang Jamatia Noatia Murasing Koloi Ruprai Utsoi

NOTE: [The above mentioned chart is based on :

1. Grierson, G.A. : Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. III, Part II, P. 111-113.
2. Majumder, S. N. : Maxism and Language Problem in India, (Delhi, 1970), P. 18, 21.
3. Chottopadhyay, Suhash : Kokbarak Bhasher Likhito Rupe Uttoran :(Calcutta, 1972) P. I.

The following list of a few Jamatia words with their Boro (A language belonging to the Bodo/Boro group, spoken in Assam by the Bodos) equivalent show the close connection of the voccabulary of the two languages :

Jamatia dialect	Boro	English
Mwtay	Moday	God/Spirit
Sal	san	sun
Twy	Du	Water
Bukur	Bigur	Skin
Twyma	Duma	River
Tao	Dau	Bird
Firkung	Birkung	Back
Na	Na	Ear
Thaytwy	Thaili	Plantain

The affinity of the Jamatia dialect with other branches of the *Bodo* language group in vocabulary is shown in the following list :

English	Bara	Rabha	Lalung	Dimasa	Hojai	Garo	Jamatia	Chwlya
Ear	man	man	man	mai	mai	man	man	nan
Ash	Sang	sng	sang	sang	shng	sang	sa	sh

NOTE: [The above lists are prepared on the basis of the list prepared by G. A. Grierson, Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. III, Part-II, Page-111-113.]

In spite of the structural and morphological affinity between the Jamatia dialect and the eight dialects of the Kakbarak language, t differs a great deal from them phonologically. The phonetic peculiarity and use of shortened forms of pronunciation of words or change of pronunciations in the subtraction of one or more alphabet either from the first or last part of a word make it difficult for the speakers of other dialects of Kakbarak to speak this dialect correctly. Partial or full realisation is also another characteristic of the Jamatia dialect.

The followings are some of the characteristics of the Jamatia dialect :

i. The Jamatia dialect belongs to Sino-Tebetan family of the Tebete-Burman Sub-family of the Assam Burmese branch of the Bodo/Boro group of the Kakbarak language.

ii. Inspite of its morphological and syntactical affinity with the other dialects the Kakbarak language, it differs from them phonetically to some extent.

a. Partial or full nasalisation is a feature of this dialect.
b. The using of short forms of pronunciation is also a feature of it.

iii. Another feature is the presence of many borrowed words from non-tribal languages, mainly from the local Bengali.

iv. The Jamatia dialect is still at the oral stage. Not much has been done to study this language properly so far.

The need for a new comprehensive survey of the Jamatia dialect in the light of modern methods of linguistic investigation is an urgent need not only for academic purposes but also for other practical purposes.

The poor numerical strength of the Jamatia speaking persons cannot be the only yard stick of the standard of this language. The richness of oral literature should also be taken into consideration in this context.

The Jamatia dialect possess a rich oral literature, songs, legends, tales, proverbs, riddles etc. The lyrics give glimpses of their life. Linguists will be able to discover the vast treasure of their dialect if they study it as one of the sources to the origin and development of the Tibeto-Burman Sub-family of languages.

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14. Hunter, W. W. : *Statistical Account of Bengal, Volume VI*, Reprinted in India. 1973. P. 510.

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"Under the system of 'sathuma' (Twitch) when the officials of the king moved into the hills, the hill people had to provide them with guides and labour for carrying the goods without any charge".

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CHAPTER - II

Social Structure

Socially the Jamatias are endogamous. They are partilineal in the matter of descent, inheritance and succession customs. Father is the head of the family and the superiority of the position of the male over the female is acknowledged in the society every where.

Exogamous totemistic sibs or *gotras* which are found among a few other tribal groups of india are absent amont them. They say that all of them belong to *kashyapa gotra*'. But this does not prevent them from marrying within the same *gotra* which is not usual among others. From this it can be concluded that the concept of *gotra* in its practical sense does not exist among them.

(A) Family:

The Jamatia family usually consists of a man and his wife. Sometimes one may find a man with two wives or a polygynous type of family. But they are just exceptions and not the rule. And one may never come across polyandry among them.

The eldest male member of the family occupies the position of the head of the family, the Naglang. His decision in all matters domestic, social, religious, and political is respected.

(i) Composition of Family :

From the nature of the composition of the family members of the Jamatias of Twybaklay a backward Jamatia village situated in an interenior place, five types of families may be categorised comsidering the number of members using the same kitchen and having economic relations.

TYPE 1 : This type of family consists of a married couple with its unmarried childern or married couple having no children. Sometimes a divorced women or a widow is marred to a widower or divorced man with his/her unmarried children of previous marriage or a widower or divorced man is married to an unmarried woman. This type of family may be termed as unclear; simple or

independent type of family.

TYPE 2 : This type of family is composed of a married couple and their unmarried children together with the parent or parents of the man.

TYPE 3 : Next comes the joint or extended type of family which consists of several married brothers with their spouses and children as well as parents and unmarried siblings, also married son or sons with their wives and children as well as their unmarried sons.

TYPE 4 : A polygynous type of family which consists of a man with more then one wife, unmarried children and married sons and their spouses and children, unmarried siblings, parents, or widowed parent.

TYPE 5 : This is the last type of family consisting of widowed or divorced daughters living with their children and/ or with their parents and/ or with different adhesions related through husband's or wife's side living with type-I or type 2 families[2].

The distribution of the above types of families with their percentage among the Jamatia Tribe of twybakly village of Amarpur Sub Division, South Tripura is given below and this may be taken as the representative picture of the whole of the Jamatias of Tripura.

TABLE - I

Total No. Of Surveyed families	Type - 1	Type - 2	Type - 3	Type - 4	Type - 5
93	56	19	12	X	6
Percentage	60.21%	20.43%	12.93%	X	6.45%

The above stated Table shows that the nuclear, simple or independent type of family (Type-1) has the highest frequency with 56 families to its credit forming 60.21% of the total 93 Jamatias

families of *Twybaklay* village. Next in order comes the type of family composed of married couple and their unmarried children together with the parent or parents of the man (Type-2) having 19 (20.43%) families to its credit.

Next comes the extended or joint type of family (Type-3) with 12 families forming 12.93% to its credit. The next type of family (Type-5) is (6.45%) in number.

It should be noted here that the polygynous type of family (Type-4) is absent in *Twybaklay* village out of 93 families. This is due to the fact that the present day Jamatia society condemns this type of polygynous marriage except in some specific cases where barrenness or sickness of a wife compels a man to take another wife.

(ii) Break up of Family:

The pattern of the family is undergoing constant changes owing to many factors, external and internal. Those changes occur in a family in the same generation or in subsequent generation. And it is quite difficult to ascertain any definite pattern of such changes. The followings are a few of the main causes responsible for the break up of the Jamatia family.[9]

1. Quarrel among the family members.
2. Death of the father or the head of the family.
3. Unwillingness to work in a co-operative way.
4. Migration.
5. Other causes like disparity in income, immorality, lack of obedience to elders etc.

The following table gives the frequency of different causes responsible for the family break-up among the Jamatias of Twybaklay village. In the year 1970 there were in total 55 Jamatia families and due to break-up of families there is now 93 families. So from 1970 to 1978 (with in a period of eight years) 38 new families were created due to this break-up of families.

TABLE - II

Table showing the Census responsible for break of Jamatia families in Twybaklay Village.

Quarrel among the family members	Death of father or head of the family	Unwillingness to work in a Co-Operative way	Migration	Other causes
1	2	3	4	5
3 (7.89%)	X (0.00%)	3 (7.89%)	X (0.00%)	32 (84.21%)

From the above table it is evident that in 84.21 cases (being the highest) families broke up due to disparity in income and lack of obedience to elder of family members. On the other hand, quarrel among the family members(being 7.89%) and unwillingness to work in a co-operative way being 7.89 % were also responsible in breaking up of the families to some extent.

But death of the head of the family and migration did not take any role in breaking up of the family of Twybaklai village. This is due to the fact that the head of the families of the Jamatia Community, generally divide their property among the family members during their life time.

In respect of migration, it should be noted that the percentage of migration in the Jamatia community is very poor. Moreover, in case of migration, the Jamatias migrate in groups.

(iii) Econimic Activity of Different Members of the Family :

As regards the econimic activities of the members of a Jamatia family, they differ from family to family. However, they may be grouped in a general way as under:

Status of the Members	Economic Activities
Father :	Ploughing and shifting cultivation, selling of agricultural products etc.

Mother	Cooking food, house Management, assisting in agricultural work, collection of fuel and vegetables from the Jhum.
Children :	Helping in domestic affairs, attending cattle and agricultural work etc.
Old persons :	Weaving, assisting in Cultivation, looking after animals, domestic works and making of bamboo made articles for agricultural works and others for household work.
Widows :	Household work.

It has been noticed that if the father is old and cannot work properly, the eldest son bears the responsibility of headship of the family but the consent of the father in certain matters is necessary. A widow, if living in her father-in-law's house, is treated politely. If she finds life harsh she may leave for her parents house.

(B) Kinship System Of The Jamatias :

The members of the Jamatia Society of Tripura are tied together in groups by various types of bonds of which the lineal descent and marriage ties are important. The types of their relationship thus built up, are as follows[4] :-

a. Consenguineal- one between parents, children and succeeding generations, and
b. Affinal relationship between spouses and their relatives on either side.

(i) Terminologies:

Kinship terminologies of the Jamatias may be divided mainly into two systems.

(a) Classificatory, and
(b) Denotative.

The classificatory system is regarded as the traditional norm of the Jamatia society and the denotative terms, that are now found may be due to the adoption of the terms from their neighbouring castes and communities.

Moreover, the terminologies used by the Jamatias of Tripura are quite similar in most of the cases to those of the some neighbouring tribes of Tripura e.g. the Tripuris. The classificatory terms *Charnay* (son's wife's father), *Charnayjwk* (sons wife's mother), *Kwmwy* (elder sister's husband) *Bachwy* (elder brother's wife), *Randa* (widower) etc. used for respective relatives among the Jamatias of Tripura are quite similar to those of the Tripuris.

The Jamatias of Tripura are surrounded by different Bengalees Hindu castes. These castes and communities have exerted their influence to a varied degree on the life of the Jamatias for years which can easily be visualised from the kinship terminology used by them. The terms *Baba* (father), *Kaka* (Father's younger brother), *Maa* (Mother's younger brother), *Dada* (Elder brother) etc. used for the respective relatives by the Jamatias have definitely been borrowed from the Bengalee kinship terminology which are used by the local Hindu castes.

Moreover, before the partition of India in 1947 most of the Jamatia villages were surrounded by the Bengalee Muslims. So the influence of Muslim Kinship terminology can also be visualised to some extent among the Jamatias. The terms *Nani* (Father's mother), is the corrupted form of *Nana*. *Chuchu* (Father's father's younger brother) is the corrupted form of *Chacha*. The term *Chacha* is used for the father's brother by the Muslims. It may be due to the influence of the local Muslims.

It should be mantioned here that some of the kinship terminologies used by the Jamatias are to some extent similar to those of the Oraons of Chota nagpur. The terms *Engbari* (Father's elder brother), *Engbari* (Father's elder brother's wife, and mother's elder sister) used the Oraons of Chota Nagpur can also be found to some extent among the Jamatias. The following Table shows their similarity [5]:

TABLE III

Table showing the similarity of the Kinship terminologies of the Jamatias and the orangs of Chok'a Nayoh.

Terms in English	Terms used by the Jamatias	Terms used by the Oraons	Terms used by the Tripuris
1	2	3	4
1. Father's Elder brother's wife	Yangbwray	Eng Bari	Goth
2. Mother's Elder sister	Yangbwrwy	Eng Bari	Moi
3 Father's Father's Mother	Yangbwrwy	Eng Bar	Makata
4. Mother's Mother's mother	Yangbwrwy	Eng Bari	Makata

The Jamatias use the word yang to denote something or someone superior or big e.g. *Ochai* means priest, *Ochai Yang* means the supreme or the head priest.

In the above list, it is observed that the kinship terms *Yangbwrwy* which denotes Father's Elder Brother's wife, Mother's Elder sister, Mother's mother, Father's mother are commonly used by both the Jamatia and the *Oraons* of Cholanagpur. It can be specifically noted here that in Tripura, the above mentioned terms are in use only among the Jamatia. No other tribe of Tripura use the above mentioned kinship terminologies. A study of the commonness of such terms of Jamatia with those of the *Oraons* may be interesting.

Moreover, many prefixing terms of some kinship terminologies of the Jamatias and the oraons of Cholanagpur. i.e *Yang/Eng* is common. The followings are a few examples of this.

TABLE - IV

Table showing kinship terminologies used by the Jamatias, Oraons and Tripuris.

Terms in English	Terms used by the Jamatias	Terms used by the Oraons	Terms used by the Tripuris
1	2	3	4
1. Father's elder brother	Yangchwla	Eng Bara	Jetha
2. Mother's elder brother	Yangchwla	Eng Mamus	Mama
3. Husband's Mother's elder brother	Yangchwla	Eng Mamu Sasrus	Mama
4. Younger brother's son	Yangchwla	Eng Barabeta	Banasa

(ii) Analytical Study Of Kinship Terminology :

An anyalysis of the Jamatia kinship terms is made here. The abbreviations are used for convenience only.

Father - Fa
Mother - Mo
Son - So
Daughter - Da
Sister - Si
Husband - Hu
Wife - Wi
Elder - El
Younger - Yo

The classificatary kinship Terminology :-

A large number of classificatory terms are found in the list of the kinship terminologies of the Jamatias along with a few denotative terms.

A Jamatia addressess his Fa Fa Fa, Fa El Br, Mo El Br, and Hu Mo El Br by a single common term *Yangchwla*

In this case, it is seen that the members of the first and the third generation of both paternal and maternal lineage of the Ego are given the same term.

In the same way, Fa Fa Mo, Mo Mo Mo, Fa El Br Wi, Fa El Si, Mo El Br Wi and Mo El Si are also addresed by a common term *Yangbwrwy*. Here also female members of the first and the third generations of both paternal and maternal lineages of the Ego are addressed by the same term.

In this context, it can be mentioned here that the same type of relationship also exists among the Oraons of Chotanagpur.

The Fa Fa Fa, Mo Mo Fa, Mo El Si Hu and Fa El Br are termed as *Jetha* or *Jetharnosar*. In this case it is seen that the members of the first and third generations of both paternal and maternal lineages of the Ego are given the same term[6].

The Fa Fa, Fa Fa El Br, Fa Fa Yo Br, and Mo Fa, of the ego in the Jamatia community are termed as *Chuchu*.

The So Wi Fa and Da Hu Fa are termed as *Chamay* and So Wi Mo and Da Hu Mo as *Chamayjwk*. These terms are also used by the *Tripuris*.

The So So and the So Da are called by a common term (Bw)/(Ang) *Suk, which is similar to the Tripuris*.

In the Jamatia community widow, widower and adopted sons are termed as Randi, Randa and *Lirmachwla*.

Though the influence of the classificatary terms in the Jamatia kinship relations may be markedly noticed, yet, due to the influence of the local castes and other tribal communities, they have developed some denotative terms.

(iii) General Rules of The Kinship Nomenclature:

a) Age differentiation:-

The Jamatias use certain words which show the position of the kin, whether he is junior or senior to a particular relative with whom the reference is made.

Thus, by using these terms, the seniority or juniority of a particular relative is denoted. The followings are a few examples of the indication of such differentiation of age:

(i) Father's elder brother (Fa El Br) is *Yangchwla*, Father's younger brother (Fa Yo Br) is *Kaka*.

(ii) Father's elder brother's wife (Fa El Br Wi) is *Yangbwrwy*, Father's Younger Brother's wife (Fa Yo Br Wi) is *Kaki*.

(iii) Father's elder sister is *Yangbwrwy*, Father's Younger sister is Pi.

(iv) Father's elder sister's husband is *Yangchwla*, Father's Younger sister's husband is Phay.

(v) Mother's elder brother is *Yangchwla*, Mother's Younger brother is *Mama*.

(vi) Mother's elder Brother's wife is *Yangbwrwy*, Mother's Younger brother's wife is *Mami*.

(vii) Mother's elder sister *Yangbwrwy*, Mother's younger sister is *Tatay*.

(viii) Mother's elder sister's husband is *Yangchwla*, Mother's younger sister's husband is *Mama*.

(ix) Husband's mother's elder brother is *Yangchwla*, husband's mother's Younger brother is *Mamasang*.

(x) Elder brother is *Dada*, Younger brother is *Fayung*.

(xi) Wife's elder sister *Baysang/Buwayjwkrog*, younger sister is *Buprangjwk*.

(xii) Husband's elder brother is *Dasang/Dada*, younger brother is *Buprang/Buprangrag*.

(xiii) Husband's elder sister *Baysang/Buwayywkra*, younger sister is *Buprangjwk*.

(xiv) Elder brother's wife is *Bachuwy*,younger brother's wife is *Dayjwk*.

(xv) Elder sister's husband is *Kumwy*, younger sister's husband is *Buwaysang*.

Again it is also often seen that the differentiation of age has been marked by the application of certain suffix or prefix terms such as :-

Katar means eldest.
Kwchar means middle or second eldest.
Kusu means next to *Kwchar*.
Bwsa means next to *Kusu*

By Using these suffix terms, the seniority or juniority of particular relationships in order of positin is indicated.

The term *Da* means senior brother of the ego. Thus *Dakatar, Dakwchar, Dakusu, Dabwsa* indicate the eldest brother, middle or second eldest brother, third eldest brother, fourth eldelst brother (next to *Kusu*) of the ego respectively.
In the the same way *Bay* means senior sister of the ego. Thus:

Baykatar means eldest sister.
Bay Kwchar means middle or second eldest sister.
Baybwsa means third eldest sister.
Baykatar means the fourth eldest sister of the ego in order of seniority.

It may be mentioned here that unlike the Bengalee kinship terminologies, in the Jamatia kinship terminilogies, the adjectives are always added at the end of a term. Thus whereas *Bay* indicates sister, *Baykatar* means eldest sister. This system is also prevailing among the Tripuris.

b) Intimacy Of Relationship:

The Jamatias, like many other tribes and communities also distinguish their relationship by the degree of their intimacy and nearness. The relatives of the same paternal lineage are considered as near relatives and they are known as *Santay*. The term *Santay* means those persons of paternal lineage who can perform *Sraddha* ceremony and offer funeral cake on the thirteenth/eighth day after the death of a person i.e. blood relation of paternal side who presents the funeral cake to deceased's ancestors. On the otherhand, those relations

of daughter's lineage who perform the *Sraddha* ceremony on the third day are known as Tripuri. Whereas all other relatives except of the same lineage are considered as distant relatives and they are known as *Jayti*.

One's own elder brother is *Dada* but a non-related person of the same age of one's elder brother is addressed is *Takuk*.

(c) Sex Differentiation :

The terms to indicate sex differentiation in the kinship terminology is also prevalent among the Jamatias as is among other communities and tribes of Tripura. In this respect the influence of local castes and communities cannot be ignored.

The term *Yangchwla* denotes Fa Fa Fa, Fa El Br, Mo El Br whereas the term *Yangbwrwy* indicates Fa Fa Mo, Mo Mo Mo, Fa El Brwi, Mo El Br Wi.

A list consisting of a few of these kinship terminologies indicating sex differentiation is given in the following table.

TABLE - VI

Table indicating sex differentiation in Kinship terminologies

Male	Female
Baba (Fa)	Ama (Mo)
Busai (Hu)	Binik (Wi)
Dasong/Dada/Buayakma (Hu El Br)	Bachwy (Hu El Br/Wi)
Chamay (So Wi Fa)	Kaki (Fa Yo Br Wi)
Chuchu (Fa Fa Fa, Fa Fa Yo Br, Fa Fa El Br)	Nai (Mo Mo, Fa Mo)
Mama (Mo Yo Br)	Mama (Mo Yo Br)

Thus from the above discussions, it may be mentioned here that though the kinship vocabulary of the Jamatias is limited, still it covers their whole web of kinship by the application of some special

terms. These terms are: Firstly, the use of the same kinship term for more than one incumbent;

Secondly, by qualifying of the same term with some kinship terms used by some local castes, tribes and communities without any change;

Thirdly, by adjusting or fitting some local terms though they have their own pronunciation of them and

Fourthly, by describing the relationship indirectly by using the respective generic terms.

(iv) Kinship Usages :

(a) Marriage Regulations:-

The jamatia tribe is an endogamous tribe. They always like to get spouses within their own community. The consideration of kinship plays an important role in their marriage. They are restricted to get spouses within the blood relationship up to three generations both on mother's or father's side. Marriage can be performed from the fourth generation on mother's side but on father's side upto *santay's* side.

Cross cousin marriage is prohibited in the Jamatia society, junior sororate (The marrying of decessed wife's younger sisters) is practised in the Jamatia soceity but junior levirate (an younger brother marrying his elder brother's widow), senior sororate (Elder brother marrying younger brother's wife), and marriage between a man and his wife's elder sister are strictly prohibited among the Jamatias.

The brothers and sisters of the same parents, of the same mother but of different fathers, and of the same father but of different mothers are not allowed to marry. The adopted child is also not allowed to marry the daughter of his adoptee parent's or the collateral brother's and sisters. The marriage between the son or daughter of an adopted son/daughter of a person and the grandson or the grand daughter of his step brother/sister is in practice in their community.

In the twybaklay village of Tripura, such a marriage was allowed to perform between the son of the adopted son of Sri Nirodhan

Jamatia, the leader of the Twybaklay village and the grand daughter of his hall brother.

(b) Name Taboo :-

Like many other tribes of Tripura the Jamatias also observe name taboos. It holds good especially in cases where there is rule of avoidance. There are certain restrictions in the utterances of the names relations. For instance a woman cannot utter the name of her husband, husband's elder brother, father-in-law and mother-in-law. In the same way a widower does not utter the name of his deceased wife.

(c) Joking Relationship :-

Joking relationship is also in existance among the different relatives in the Jamatia society of Tripura and these relationships are socially permitted in their Society. The grandfather is often seen to cut jokes with the young grand daughters and grandsons who in trun do the same with him. The same is found between grandmother and grand-sons and daughters. Such type of joking relationships also exist between the wife of a man and her husband's younger brothers and sisters.

It is often seen that when the bride-groom's party reaches the house of the bride the younger brothers of the bridegroom cut various types of jokes with the bride before the marriage ceremony starts. Then they enter the room of the bride in a group and make some unreasonable demands out of jokes i.e. they demand water to take liquor or various kinds of food of her.

The husband of a woman is often seen cutting jokes with his wife's younger sisters who in turn also do the same. The special characteristic of jokings in the Jamatia society is that they are very free with the persons having joking relationship. Even they do not hesitate to use some swear words and obscene languages jokingly infromt of juniours or senior persons with whom the rule of avoidance exists.

(d) Teknonymy:-

According to the Jamatia kinship terminology, the wife of a person

is generally termed as *Bihik* But the husband often addresses her the mother of so and so i.e. the mother of kali (his son). Kalini burna/kalima), the mother of Rakhi (her daughter) (Rakhini burna) etc. The husband of a woman does not address the name of his wife. The husband sometimes addresses his wife in the second person as 'You'(Nung). In the same way, a married woman does not utter the name of her husband while dincussion with him, and she also refers to the neighbouring woman about her husband as 'the father of kali' (Kalini bufa) etc. In times of her discussion with her husband she a so use the term 'You'(Nung). The wife a person some times uses the term *'Nagfang'* to indicate her husband if he is the head of the family. Similarly, the husband of a woman also uses the term *'Nagfangjwk'* to indicate his wife if she is the housewife.

The father-in-law and the mother-in-law of a woman often address her as *Hansa* in stead of using her name, which is similar to the Bengalee term *'Bouma'* (Daughter-in-law).

(c) Avoidance:-

The rule of avoidance present in the Jamatia society is between a man and his wife's elder sister and that of between a man and his younger brother's wife. The same rule is also applied between a woman and her younger sister's husband and between a woman and her husbnand's elder brother. But it should be specifically mentioned here that the above mentioned rule of avoidance is not observed very strictly in Jamatia community as it is observed in other tribes and communities. The reason behind this is that the Jamatias live in a compact area and their numerical strength is limited and they are some how related to one another or atleast known to one another before marriage.

v) Kinship and Training:

Small children learn manners and etiquettes from their parents and if they are found lacking in them usually their parents are held responsible for such lapses. Jamatias are very strict in the matters of discipline within the family and it is the moral duties of the younger ones to show proper respect to their elders. From early childhood children are taught their duties and responsibilities.

Children are trained usually by their mother in the early part of their life. Boys, when they become a little grown up are trained by their fathers for agricultural duties. Girls come under the supervision of their mothers who trains them domestic jobs such as cooking, collection firewoods, drawing water, nursing children etc.

Children learn the habit of cleanliness from their mothers in a direct way by observing how she runs the house and how she keeps it clean. Grand parents also play an important role in bringing up the children. A child's constant companion is his grand father or grand mother. The grand parents cut jokes with them which often borders up on obscenties, tells them stories and plays pranks on them. They are the store house of traditional tales and songs. With their stories, jokes they fill the lives of the young ones whose parents are away on work in the field or the *Jhum*. 'Would you marry a girl like me' ? The grand mother asks the grand child. The child shies away. Indirectly, from such jokes, the child learn many things about the adult world and the mystries of sex. Life's training for a Jamatia child thus begins from the grand father or the grand mother.

Next to the grand parents, it is the duty of child's elder brother or sister to do the baby sitting, to look after it and to be its companion at games. Only when, besides her parents, the baby has none to look after her in the household, she is taken to the field by parents. She is left at a suitable place there where it can be watched by them while working.

In a Jamatia household, the worship of the family deity is generally done by the head of the family. When he becomes too old or infirm to perform this, he voluntarily transmits the details of the rituals of the family deity to the next eldest male member who succeeds to this post.

(vi) Care of the Young Children:

Bringing up children is mainly a mother's duty. A Jamatia mother takes up the task of bringing up her child. But it is often seen that she cannot devote her full attention to the baby on account of the

pressure of the household work and also of economic activities. In this matter the elder brothers and sisters of the child also takes an important role. In joint family, the other grown up female relatives share with the mother, the duty of nursing the baby.

There is one thing worthmentioning here about carrying of babies on a sling. Almost all other tribes of Tripura carry their babies with a sling on their back. But the Jamatia carry them with a sling at sides.

Kinship Terminologies of the Jamatias

Terms in English	Terms used by the Jamatias
1. Father's Father	- Chuchu
2. Father's mother	- Nany
3. Mother's father	- Chuchu
4. Mother's mother	- Nany
5. Father	- Baaba
6. Mother	- Ama
7. Father's elder brother	- Yang Chwla
8. Father's elder brother's wife	- Yangbwrwy
9. Father's younger brother	- Kaka
10. Father's younger brother's wife	- Kaki
11. Father's elder sister	- Yangbwrwy
12. Father's younger sister	- Pi
13. Father's elder sister's husband	- Yangchwla
14. Father's younger sister's husband	- Piyay
15. Mother's elder brother	- Yangchwla
16. Mother's elder brother's wife	- Yangchwla
17. Mother's younger brother	- Mama
18. Mother's younger brother's wife	- Mami
19. Mother's elder sister	- Yangbwrwy
20. Mother's elder sister's husband	- Yangchwla
21. Mother's younger sister	- Tatay
22. Mother's younger sister's husband	- Mama
23. Husband's father	Baaba/Baabasang/ Kwraa
24. Husband's mother	- Ama/Kwrajwk/ Amasang
25. Wife's father	- Baaba/Kwraa/Baabasang
26. Wife's mother	- Ama/Amasang/Kwrajwk
27. Husband's mother's elder brother	- Yangchwla
28. Husband's mother's younger brother	- Mama
29. Elder brother	- Dada.
30. Wife's elder brother	- Dasang

31. Husband's elder brother	= Dasang/Dada
32. Elder sister	= Bay
33. Wife's elder sister	= Bay/Baysang
34. Husband's elder sister	= Bay/Baysang
35. Wife's elder sister's husband	= Kwmwy
36. Husband's elder sister's husband	= Kwimwy
37. Son's Wife's father	= Chamay
38. Son's wife's mother	= Chamayjwk
39. Daughter	= Sajwk/Sajwkman
40. Daughter's husband	= Chamwnwysa
41. Younger brother	= Fayan/Fayang
42. Wife's younger brother	= Prans/Angprang/Buprang
43. Husband's younger brother	= Prang/Angprang/Buprang
44. Son	= Sa/Ansajwa/Busajwa
45. Son's son	= Suk/Ansuk/Achu
46. Brother's son	= Batja/Dadanibwsa
47. Elder sister's son	= Baygna/Baaynibwsa
48. Younger sister's son	= Yangchwla/Ang hannakjwknibusala
49. Wife's younger sister's son	= Yangchwla/ Ayang/ Ayangchwla
50. Son's Daugher	= Suk/Anasuk/Busuk
51. Husband	= Say/Angsay/Busay
52. Wife	= Hwwy/Ang hwwy/Bihik
53. Son's wife	= Hanjwk/Hanjwksa/Hansa
54. Younger brother's wife	= Oayjwk/Buwayjwksang /Buwayjwkrag
55. Elder brother's wife	= Bachuwy
56. Widow	= Randi
57. Widower	= Randa
58. Acopted son	= Rimanchwla.

(vii) Patterns of Inter-Personal Relationship :

To judge the behaviour pattern of the Jamatias, the interpersonal relationship pattern between different relatives of this community should be studied. The relationship pattern of different primary relations of the Jamatia community has been discussed below:

(a) Husband and Wife:-

In the houses the husband plays a vital role in the management of the external affairs of the family and the wife manages the internal affairs of the family. Generally, the wife does not interfere in the external affairs of the house.

The wife perpares food and performs other household chores and does the religious duties. The husband also helps her when he is free to do it.

In agricultural affair, the wife always assists her husband. In fact, the wife is a partner of the husband in agricultural work and due to this fact, the bride in the Jamatia community is usually senior to the bridegroom in age. The wife also helps the husband in bringing of firewood from nearby forests. She sometimes goes to the nearby market on the market day with her husband to bring various articles of daily necessities.

Sex life also has an importance in the family life of the Jamatia couple. There is social prohibition of pre and extra-marital activities in the Jamatia community. It should be mentioned here that the conflict between husband and wife is usually settled by compromise. Occassionally, according to the gravity of the circumstances, the *Chakdin* has to step in to settle a domestic quarrrel. But generally the Jamatia family life is peaceful and happy.

(b) Father and son:-

Like in all other societies, in this society also, the father is the guide, philosopher and trainer of the child till he attains the period of adolesence. After attaining the period of adolescene, the father acquaints him with the outer world and also leads him to the agricultural field and trains him in farming.

The father also scolds his son if he is disobedient. When the child grows up, he helps his father in agricultural work according to his ability. At this stage the opinion and views of the grown up sons are respected by their fathers in various socio-economic and other important matters of the family. At the old age, the father divides the family property among his sons and helps them in every way to raise a family.

(c) Father and Daughter:-

The father-daughter relation among the Jamatia is quite sweet. The father trains her to become a good agricultural worker so that she may help her husband after her marriage. The father sometimes

purchases ornaments and clothes from the nearby *Hats* (weekly markets) for his daughter. The daughter also takes care of her father.

(d) Mother and Son :-

The role of the mother in bringing up the children is quite significant. The mother is the only person who takes the whole responsibility of bringing up the child. She also scolds her son incase of disobedience. After the marriage of the son, the authority of the mother on her son gradually diminish. During the old age of the mother, the son takes care of her.

(e) Mother and Daughter :-

Generally, the mother loves her daughter in the same way she does her son. During the childhood, the daughter helps her mother by taking care of the younger ones, feeding domestic animals, bringing fuel and preparing food for the family. At this stage the mother trains her in domestic and agricultural works so that she may not face any difficulty in her husband's house.

(f) Brother and Brother :-

There is always a tender feeling between the elder and the younger brothers. The elder brothers some times take care of the younger brother and usually dominates over the younger brother. In their early youth they may be playmates, when they grow older, they become more and more self preserved. There is a higher degree of co-operation between them so long they are bachelors and remains in a joint family. But after the death of the father or after their seperation the degree of co-operation between them begins decreasing day by day and they remain not as intimate with each other as they used to be earlier. At this stage, generally a secondary relation is found among them. All types of conflict arises in connection with the shares of different types of property etc. But inspite of the conflicts on the whole, the elder brother is respected by the younger brothers.

(g) Sister and Sister :-

In the Jamatia community, there exists a sweet relation between two sisters. They are very much co-operative since their childhood.

The elder sister always takes care of her younger sister affectionately. During their childhood, they play together, rejoice together and some times even quarrel with each other. unlike the relationship between brother and brother, as the sisters grow older, they become more and more friendly.

After their marriage also, they keep close relation between them. It is often seen that the younger sister learns mysteries of the grown up life from her elder or grown up sisters.

(h) Brothers and Sisters :-

In the Jamatia community, the relation between a brother and a sister is very much cordial. During their childhood they play together, sleep together and eat together. But when they grow up, they enter into separate groups. The sister then engages herself to the household activities and spends her time with other female members of the family and with the other girls of the village. On the other hand, the brother engages himself to the external affairs of the family. He then plays and works together with the other male members of the family and the village of his age.

It may be noted here that ulike the boys, when the girls grow older, the degree of intimacy between the sister and other senior and junior female members of the family and of the village becomes more friendly.

The boys mostly mix other boys of their age intimately. After maturity the brother and the sister do not play together. But when the brother falls ill, the sister nurse him or when the sister falls ill, the brother nurses her. The brother also takes care of an unmarried or widow sister for the whole life.

(i) Grand Parent and Grand Children :-

In all the Jamatia villages of Tripura, it is a common picture that a grand father becomes a playmate of his grand son or a grand daughter and they are seen hearing stories sitting on her grand mother's lap. Joking relationship often exists between them.

The Grand father often cuts joke with the grand daughter and calls her as his little wife. But it should be noted that or any other type of relation between these two grades of relatives, is totally unfounded.

(j) Parents-in-law and Daughter-in-law :-

The daughter-in-law tries to adjust herself with her parents-in-laws in her domestic duties and takes care of her father-in-law. A tender feeling thus grows between them gradually.

The daughter-in-law always treats her parents-in-law as her own parents. She always obeys the commands of her own parents-in-law. The parents-in-law also treats her as their daughter. They are very much free in their behaviour and do not maintain the same degree of restriction as is observed by the non-tribals of their locality.

(k) Parents-in law and son-in law :-

After the marriage ceremony the son-in-law becomes very much close to his parents-in-law. Of course, the relationship between them depends on the system of marriage. If the marriage is performed in *Chamwrwy Tisamani/ Chamwrwy Naharnani/Chamwrwy Kamani* system which are all marriages through service rendered by the groom at the bride's house, the son-in law remains in his father-in-law's house. In such system of marriage, the son-in-law becomes very much close to his parents-in-law, though that relationship does not remain in the same degree after a few years of their marriage as it was in the begining due mainly to economic factor.

In case of *Hanjwk Rahamani* system of marriage where the bride stays in the bridegroom's house after their marriage, they occassionally come to the house of the bride's parent's house. He is also invited to attend all socio-religious functions of his parents-in-law's house.

The bnef discussion as mentioned above about the interpersonal relationship pattern that exists between different primary relatives of the Jamatia gives a picture of their social profile in this respect.

(viii) Position Of Woman :

The fabric of Jamatia life will be weak without the sincere co-operation of their women. Generally her status is the same as that of her husband's. Not only in domestic affairs but in economic matters also her consent is sought. She is a hard worker and she works harder than a man in many respects. But still, the status of a Jamatia women is recognised not by her own merit but by her position as a daughter, wife, or mother of a men.

Usually the man dominates over the woman. The women help the men to earn money but the male members spends it as they like. The women never challanges the superiority of the men due partly to the tradition and partly to the physiological handicap in which they remain during certain period of her life. We may judge the status of Jamatia woman by her activities in the domestic, economic, social, political and religious spheres.

(a) Domestic Sphere :-

The woman mainly performs the houshold duties of the family. She prepares food and cleans the house. Besides this, she does such other diverse activities as bringing water and fuel, washing domestic utensils and clothes. All these give her very little time for leisure and recreation. Before her marriage she helps her mother in her father's family and after marriage, she helps her mother-in-law in her father-in-law's house.

In her husband's family, she has manifold duties to attend to. They do not end with working and cleaning only. There are many dependents, both juniors and seniors to her. She has to look after them also. Then there are animals and poultry also. Her duties extend to their care also.

(b) Economic sphere :-

Along with wet cultivation, they practise shifting cultivation *(Jhuming)* also to some extent. The female members help the male members of their families in different agricultural activities, such as weeding, transplanting, harvesting etc. They also carry vegetables and other farm produce from their *Jhums*. She also

helps her family members in weaving their traditional clothes on their indigeneous looms.

(c) Social sphere:-

The social status of Jamatia woman depends upon the economic and social status of her father, husband or father-in-law. The wife of the *Hada akra*, or other officials of the Jamatia Supreme Council, regional Council or village council or of the *Ochai* (priest) of the Jamatia community is no doubt higher than the wife of an ordinary Jamatia.

Besides this, the strength of relatives of a woman also determines her status. It is somet mes noticed in their community that the sister of powerful brothers or the wife of a powerful husband or any powerful person of her husband's family also plays as an important role in determining the status of a woman. The status of the woman is also dependent on her personal character both moral and religious.

Of course, now-a-days, the soundness of economic condition, education, Govt. service and participation in politics by any member of either parents side or husband's side also increases the social status of a woman in the community.

With the attaining of puberty, a girl is subjected to certain restrictions and she is not allowed to mix freely with the boys from now.

But still, it should be mentioned here that the Jamatia girls can mix with the male members of their community with greater liberty than the other non-tribal girls of their locality.

In the Jamatia community, generally, a girl is not seen to select her life's partner. A wife has to observe a strict moral code. A man may have more than one wife, but a wife remains satisfied with a single husband. After the marriage of a girl, she has to observe the taboos and restrictions which are imposed up on her by her mother-in-law. She has to accommodate with the all these norms and restrictions of her father-in-law's house. In this way, a girl has

to sacrifice most of her liberty she enjoyed at her parent's house.

(d) Political Sphere :-

The Jamatia woman plays a passive role in the political sphere of their community. She cannot take part in traditional village councils. A woman has no right to participate in any discussion in the meeting of their traditional village level regional level and community level organisations.

However, a *Jamatia* woman is now free to cast her vote in the General Elections and the Election of the *Gaon Panchayat* etc.

(e) Religious Sphere :-

In the matter of religious rites also the status of a woman is much lower than that of a man in the Jamatia community. A woman cannot take any direct part in their traditional *Pujas*. The women are prohibited from becoming an *Ochai* (traditional priest) of their community. They also cannot function as medicine men. In almost all the religious festivities the males take the dominant role.

The status of the Jamatia women as discussed above clearly indicates that the social status of the Jamatia woamn is much lower than a male member of their community. In this respect, their position is to some extent similar to those of all other tribal and non-tribal castes and communities of Tripura.

(ix) Sikwla Bwtwk Nwnglaymwng (wine drinking ceremony of the youth) :-

The Jamatia boys and girls enjoy the ceremony of *Sikwla Bwtwk* together. This is a function of wine drinking. The name *Sikwla Bwtwk* probably orginated from the Jamatia word Sikwla which means 'Youth' and Bwtwk which means 'rice beer'. It is organised by the unmarried young boys and girls. During this function boys and girls of the village meet together in a selected house at night.

The function generally takes place on the night of *Hojagiri* (on the day of laxmi puja) or on the night of *Paus Sankranti*. During this function they take *Bwtwk* i.e. wine and meat and spend the whole night in singing and merry making. It's the girls duty to collect

Bwtwk and the boys all other necessary articles. There is no restriction on the boys and girls mixing freely during this ceremony. The closeneses is not prelude to sex. Infect this ritual does not grant any sexual license at all and is in no way a place to choose an official marriage partner.

There is difference of opinion over the name for this function and at least three are ascribed to this function:-

I. Sikwla Bathap
II. Sikwla Buthup
III. Sikwla Bwtwk

If we take the first name i.e. *Sikwla Bathap* which is originated from the word *Sikwla* means youth and bathap means house, hence it is a sort of youths' dormitory. In this context the bachelors' dormitories of the *Garos* of Assam may be referred to. The bachelors' dormitories of the *Garos* are called *Nakpante*.[7] The word Nak means house and *Panthe* means a young bachelor, hence it is a bachelors' house where he spends the youthful days of his life.

To go by the second name i.e. the phrase *Sikwla Buthup* means a group of the youth, *Sikwla* (the youth) and *Buthup* (a group). This means it is an essential functioning of the young, where they come together for marry-making on group.

If we elaborate the third name, it means the ritual of wine drinking of the youth, *Sikwla* (the youth) and *Bwtwk* (the wine).

There are names and names but the most popular one is the third one i.e. *Sikwla Bwtwk*.

However, we detect that all the names ascribed to this particular function are in some way related to one another.

As the word *Sikwla* (the youth) can be found in all the three names of the function and the words *Bathap* (house), *Buthup* (group) and *Bwtwk* (wine) connected with the common word *Sikwla* it is quite likely that the function originated from the institution of

bachelors' dormitory and at one time such institutions existed among the Jamatia.

Like the bachelors dormitories of the various tribal communities as mentioned earlier, the entrance to the *Sikwla BWtwk* function is granted to the bachelor's only and the boys and girls gain access to them only when they attain puberty etc. A Jamatia girl can participate in the *Sikwla Bwtwk* only when she reaches the stage when a breast cloth or a *Risa* is needed. This is marked by a certain ceremony usually held on an auspicious day such as the *Gana Puja, Hajagori* (the day of *Laxmi Puja)* etc. This ceremony resembles in many ways the young maiden of the Nocte tribe of Arunachal Pradesh when they join a girl's dormitory[8].

This shows that the function of *Sikwla Bwtwk* was in the remote past connected with the institution of bachelors' dormitory. In course of time, with the advent of the modern age and many of its influences the dormitory become extinct but one of its manifold functions, one the recreational side survived perhaps in a greatly altered form in the *Sikwla Bwtwk* which now means only wine drinking ceremony of the youth.

(ix) Adoption of a Child :-

Adoption of a child-boy or girl is quite frequent among the Jamatia. But generally, only childless well-to-do couples indulge in such practices. They adopt a child from a poor relative or a poor person occassionally. This is done some times through religious functions and sometimes without any such function.

Generally, the motive behind this is to get a helper in the old age. There is also a religious motive. The adopted son is authorised to perform the *Sraddha*(funeral ceremony) ceremony. In such case, the real parents of the adopted son voluntarily handover their child to his adopted parents though they are not compelled by their custom to do so. Nor do they get any money in exchange of the children they so handover.

Generally they prefer that the adopted child should be of their own agnates, particularly the sons of their siblings. But there is

no hard and fast rule in this respect. The adopted son is called *'Pushimani bwsa'*. He gives up his real parent's title and takes the new title.

In my survey, I came across one instance of inter-tribal adoption in Twibaklay village of Amarpur Sub-Division. A well-to-do Jamatia named Sri Nirodhon Jamatia adopted the child belonging to the Tripuri tribe of Sadhupara of that Sub-Division. The name of that child is Sri Badhu Mohan Deb Barma (at present Jamatia). This adopted son of Sri Nirondhon Jamatia has been staying with him for about thirty years and both of them are very happy.

An adopted child inherits the property of his adopter parents and succeeds him both legally and socially. The adopted sons also take care about their adopted parents. Generally, adopted sons are taken mostly by elementary families and not by joint families.

It has also been observed in their community that, if the adopted son performs the *Sraddha* ceremony of his real parents, he is deprived of the right to inherit the entire property of his adopted father. He is also deprived of the right to perform the *Sraddha* ceremony of his adopted father. One of such cases may be referred in this context.

Incidently it happend to the same Sri Nirodhan Jamatia of Twybaklay village. He arranged the marriage ceremony of his adopted son and gave him a share of his property and it was also decided that the adopted son would inherit the entire property of Sri Nirodhan Jamatia after his death. But as the adopted son, on hearing the death news of his original father, went to his house and performed the *Sraddha* of his original father. Sri Nirodhan Jamatia has changed his decision now to give him the entire property after his death. His view is that a son can not have two fathers. Now his adopted son has no right to perform his *Sraddha* ceremony and as he has no right to perform his *Sraddha*ceremony, he has no right to inherit his property.

Some times, are also adopted in their community. In such cases, the adopted daughter is married in *Charmwwy Tisaman* system of marriage in which the bridegroom stays in his father-in-law's house. Generally a person who, has a daughter does not take any adopted son.

(xi) Ceremonial Friendship :

The practice of ceremonial friendship is in vogue in the Jamatia community. In this system a person selects another man of his age group and of similar nature and sends his proposal to be his friend formally by a third person or sometimes he himself expresses his desire that he wants to be in a ceremonial friendship with that man. Generally, such proposals are seldom turned down. The other party also agrees to such proposals.

A date is then fixed by them for this ceremony in the house of either of them. The *Ochai* (Traditional priest) is invited to officiate this ceremony. Some relatives and friends of both sides are also invited to the ceremony. A feast is arranged on that day and the expenditure on major items of the feast such as meat, wine, etc. is borne by both of them jointly. The *Ochai* is not paid for this ceremony. He is only invited to take his meal and drinks.

The Jamatias give much importance to this ceremonial friendship. The girls and women have also their ceremonial friends. The arrangement of ceremonial friendship of the females is similar to that of the males.

A Jamatia may enter into the ceremonial friendship not only with another Jamatia but also with a man of any other tribe or race. In the Twybakhwy village, many Jamatias have such friendship with Tripuris, Reangs, Bengalees etc. The only restriction is that the male persons friendship is restricted to a male only. Similarly a female's ceremonial friendship must be with a female only.

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A pseudo-kinship or unilateral extended lineage group in a community.

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3. Ibid. : P. 105
4. Ibid. : P. 106
5. Ibid. : P. 108-111. 'For the source of the Oraon words used in Table No III and IV.
6. Ibid. : P. 113.
7. Shashi, S.S. : Night life of Indian Tribes, Agam. Prakashan, Delh, P. 27
8. Dutta, Parul : The Nocles, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Shillong, 1978, P. 146, 147. 'When a girl attains puberty, a Neom (custom) called jansokne (ritual performed by the young maiden to join a girls dormitory) similar to Pamiche (a ritual performed for admission into the *morung* or bachelor's dormitory) is performed. The girl gives a chicken and some rice beer to the morung (bachelor's dormitory) of her chum (Sub-division of a village). From this day a girl, who was called lec or lechi (girl) becomes janso (young maiden), and is entitled to join other maidens in the girls morung (bachelor's dormitory).

MARRIAGE

The Jamatias of Tripura, attach some degree of religious values in the performance of marriage ceremony on the part of a man or a woman. Some religious functions are observed in this ceremony. They think that a man is not complete without marriage. So, some special privileges and importance are generally given to the married persons in their society. There are some socio-religious functions in which only the married persons are allowed to participate. i.e. in the election of their village organisations, only the married persons can take part. So marriage is considered as one of the three important events on the part of a man or woman i.e. birth, marriage and death by the *Jamatias*.

I. TYPE :

Monogamy is general practice, and one comes across cases of polygamy though very rarely. Polyandrous type of marriage is strictly prohibited in their society.

Like many other tribes of Tripura there are two systems of marriage prevailing in the Jamatia society. The first type of marriage is marriage by service, a system in which the groom lives in his father-in-law's house. It is known as *Chamwrwy Nahamwng/Nahamani*. It is their original system of marriage. In this system of marriage, the proposal is initiated from the bride's side. The marriage ceremony is performed in the house of the bride.

According to their custom, after marriage, the bridegroom has to stay for a minimum period of two years in his father-in-law's house. He may remain there for whole life and make his permanent settlement there. Generally, the father-in-law gives him a separate house and land for this purpose. But before the completion of two years, if he returns to his house due to his maladjustment with his wife or any member of his father-in-law's family, the elders take decision after negotiation with both the parties.

Such a type of marriage is known by the following three names which have certain special characteristics. These names are:-

(i) *Chamwrwy Tisamwng*
(ii) *Chamwrwy Nahamani/Nahamwng and*
(iii) *Chamwrwy Kamani*

(i) Chamwrwy Tisamani/Tisamwng :-
It indicates the dominance of the parents-in-law of the groom over him. This is purely a system of marriage by service. In this system the to be groom goes to the brides house to work there in the month of *Agrahayana*(November-December). The marriage may come off in *Magh* (January-February) or *Falgoon*or *Baisakh* (April-May) usually. The groom may be turned out at any time before the marriage if he or his work proves dissatisfactory to the bride or her parents. Of course, this *Chamwrwy Tisamani/Tisamwng* system of marriage is declining day by day.

(ii) Chamwrwy Nehamwng/Nahamani :
It indicates that both sides have equal interest in the marriage. In this system the groom goes to the bride's house only on the previous day of the marriage.

(iii) Chamwrwy Kamani :
It indicates that the interest of the groom is more than that of the bride's side. In it, the groom goes to live at the brides house permanently. The role or the consent of the groom's parent is less important in it. The marriage is held in groom's decision.

The above mentioned three names of marriage are called only by the bride's side. But to the grooms side these are known as *Chamwrwy Rahamwng/Rahamani*(sending of the groom) except the *Chamwrwy Kamani* system. The term *Chamwrwy Kamani* is used by both the parties as the parents of the groom does not send him to the brides house.

The second type of marriage is known as *Hajnwk Nahamani/Nahamwng and Hanjwk Rahamwng/Rahamani*. This system of marriage is a later developent in the Jamatia society. Under this system, the marriage ceremony is performed in the bride groom's house. The bride with her party is sent to the groom's village one day before the date of marriage. After marriage, the

bride stays in husbands house. In this system of marriage the proposal is initiated by the groom's side. Th bride's side calls this marriage as *Hanjwk Rahamwng/Rahamani* (sending of the bride). On the otherhand the groom's side calls this system of marriage as *Hanjwk Nahamani/Nahamwng* (accepting of the bride).

At present, due to influence of modern education, contact with the people of other communities and urbanization, a new trend of marriage has also been developed in their society. In this system the marriage is held in the bride's house and on the second day after the completion of the mariage ceremony the bridegroom returns to his house with his newly married wife who stays in her husband's house. Though this system of marriage is socially sanctioned but still the practice of it, is relatively infrequent being mainly confined to comparatively few unbanized and educated persons. This new pattern of marriage can be described as an attempt at synthesising the two existing systems.

II. The Age For Marriage :

The average age for marriage in the Jamatia community of Tripura living in the interior and backwad villages differ from that of those living in advanced and urbanized villages. In the backward villages, child marriage is still prevailing in a large scale and the bride is senior to the bridegroom in respect of age. The average age of first marriage among the Jamatia varies from 12 to 16 years incase of males and 15 to 18 years in case of females. The arguments advanced by the bride's parent for such age range of the girls is that the girls should be physically fit for domestic and agricultural work before their mariage and they should not face any difficulty in helping their husbands. The groom's family also consider it a gain to have a bride who is already quite fit for domestic and agricultural duties.

It can be safely argued that this trend for preference for the aged girls clearly shows how inportant are the womenfolk in the agricultural life of this tribe.

Now-a-day's this disparity of age for marriage sometimes create family troubles. The newly married bride grooms often complain

to the *Chakdin* of the village that their wives are neglecting them due to their tender age. In this way misunderstandings grow between them and sometimes it results in divorce. It is also heard that these matured girls being dissatisfied with their minor husbands sometimes engage in certain types of illicit relations with their relatives.

Among the Jamatia of advanced villages or urban areas, adult marriage is the general rule. In this kind of marriage the average age varies from 20 to 25 years in case of males, and 15 to 20 years in case of females. This is a slight departure from their traditional pattern of age difference between the groom and the bride. Here the bride is generally junior to bridegroom in respect of age.

3. The Arrangement of The Marriage:
The marriage ceremony of the Jamatias is generally arranged by the parents of both sides. The system of professional match makers do not exist among them. If the parents of a boy chooses a girl for his son or if the parent of a girl choose a boy for his daughter they then send an informal proposal to the guardian of the boy or of the girl.

After this informal discussion, the formal discussion takes place. If the marriage is to be held in the boy's house i.e. in the *Hanjwk Rahamani* system of marriage his guardian has to send the formal proposal to that effect to the girl's house. If the marriage ceremony is to be held in the Girl's house i.e. in the *Chamwrwy Nahamani* system of marriage, her guardian is required to send the formal proposal to the boy's guardian for it. On this occasion, the party that sends the proposal arranges a feast with meat and that feast is called *Takchamay Chalaymwng*.

In this first proposal some relatives of both sides generally attend. The final word is not given in this first formal talk. It is postponed to a later date. They promise to send their consent (the return information) later and leave. This return information is not given in case of disagreement of a proposal instead of directly rejecting it. So both the parties can understand each other's view within

a few days of this first proposal.

After the first proposal is over if the return information is given by the proposing party, they again go for the final discussion. This final discussion is called *Kakswgmwng*. The date of marriage is not fixed in that ceremony. Only the date of *Chakkhamani* or *Chakkhalaymwngw*hich means offering of drinks is settled in this ceremony.

In the *Chakkhamani* ceremony, the party that will go with the proposal will go with *Chak*(rice beer) with them. If the bridegroom's party goes to the bride's house, they are required to take with them 8 (eight) bottles of *Chak* (seven bottles for the function and one bottle for *Yakpay*). Besides this they also take with them sweets, betelnut and betel leaves. It should be mentioned here that the bride's party also offers one bottle of liquor to the groom's party as courtsey in exchange of the bottle for *Yakpay*. On that day another date is fixed and on the fixed day the groom's party takes another 8 (eight) bottles of wine to the bride's house.

After the completion of all these customary functions, the date of marriage is fixed according to the *Panjika (Almance)*in a ceremony called *Dinkara Chamani*. For this ceremony also, the bride groom's party takes another 8 (7+1) bottles of wine to the bride's house with them.

Similarly if the bride's guardian proposes for *Chamwrwi Nahamani* system of marriage, they are also required to take 24 bottles (8x3) of wine to the bridegroom's house.

Now a days, at the third function of *Chakkamani*,the *Dinkara Chamani*is also observed on the same day. The date of marriage is also fixed on that date. They are also required to take sweets and betel nuts with them.

In respect of selection of the marriage date, besides their traditional *Lampra Puja* the Jamatias put emphasis on an auspicious date according to the *Panjaka*. They consider the month of *Magh* (February) as the best month for their marriage ceremony and

most of the marriages of their community take place in this month. Moreover, in this month they are free from agricultural duties. Besie this, marriage may be performed in all the nine months of the year except the months of *Chaitra* (April), *Vadhra* (Septmamber) and *Paush* (January). But marriages in these months other than *Magh* is relatively infrequent.

The date of marriage may be fixed on any day of a week. In this respect except the time of *Purba Jogini* marriage may be performed on any day. Generally, most of the Jamat a marriages are performed in the second half of the morning.

4. Construction of Marriage Pandel :
For the purpose of marriage ceremony, the Jamatias prepare two pandels with bamboo. One pandel is for worshipping of the fourteen Deities (*Ashan* of the *Chauddha Devata* and the other is for the functioning of the marriage ceremony. Before entering the marriage altar (*Hata*) both the bride and the bridegroom come before the *Ashana* of the fourteen Deities and bow down their heads and pray for their happy married life.

The *Ashana* of the fourteen Deities are prepared with bamboo pieces in a special manner. This *Ashan* is prepared in the court yard in square size with four pieces of bamboo and a passage is kept open on the Western side of the *Ashan*. In the name of the fourteen Deities, fourteen *Khangs* (made with bamboo strips bent into arcs) are kept on the four sides of the *Ashana*. Out of these fourteen *Khangs*, eight *Khangs* are fixed on the eastern side of the *Ashana* in the name of eight Gods and Goddesses and they are:-

1. *Srimahadev.*
2. *Srimadev,*
3. *Sriakatha.*
4. *Sribikhata.*
5. *Taibukalkiraja.*
6. *Masangrang.*
7. *Srichandi.*
8. *Srilaktrai.*

These eight Deities are worshipped first. It should be mentioned here that *Sriakatha* and *Sribikhata* are also the Deities of *Lampra Puja*.

Next, the two *Khangs* are placed on the northern side of the *Ashana* are worshipped. These *Khangs* are known as *Jamadu* and their names are *Srikalkutu* and *Srikulukatu*.

Thirdly, the worship of the two Deities of the southern side of the *Ashana* are performed and they are also two *Khangs*. They are the Deities of forest (they ae also called *Burasa* and *Burasa Busa*). The name of these two Deities are *Srikrishana Krabanmaliraja* and *Babajanapiraraja*.

The above mentioned worship is performed by the *Ochai*. The bride and the bridegroom enter this *Ashana* of the *Chauddha Devata* together and offer their prayer before they go up the *Haiya*.

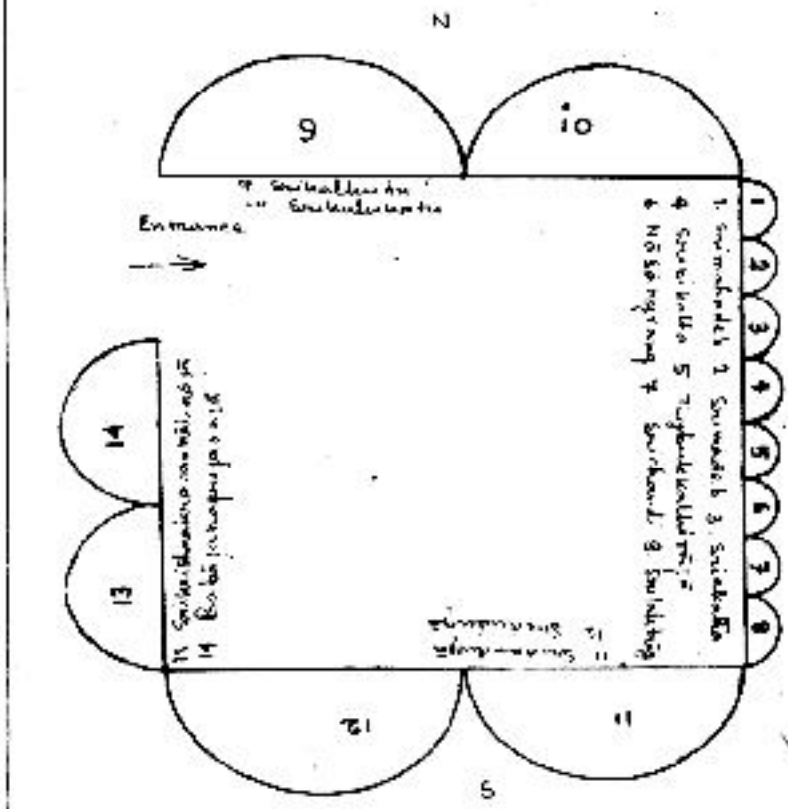
Construction of The Marriage Platfrom:

The altar on which the marriage ceremony is performed is called *Haiya*. The *Haiya* is constructed in the court yard of the house, in which the marriage ceremony is performed. It is made of clay with three steps. The *Haiya* (altar) is surrounded by bamboo made fancing with two passages on the eastern and the southern side. A slab of a stone is placed at top of the altar and it is covered with a piece of new cloth. The system of hanging of conopies (*Chadwa*) is also prevalant in the Jamatia community.

5. Marriage Regulations:

The Jamatia is an endogamous tribe. Marriage with a parallel cousin as well as with a cross cousin is forbidden among them. The system of circular marriage is also not in practice in their community. The selection of mates with in the blood relationship up to three generations from the maternal side and of the same parental sides are strictly prohibited in the Jamatia community. Moreover, a Jamatia is not socially permitted to marry the widow of his younger/elder brother or his wife's elder sister.

Diagram of Ashana of Fourteen Deites



On the other hand, there is no bar for a man in marrying his wife's younger sister. However, this seldom happens especially when the wife is living. In their society, a widower generally marries a widow and a widow is also required to marry a widower. A widow cannot marry a bachelor.

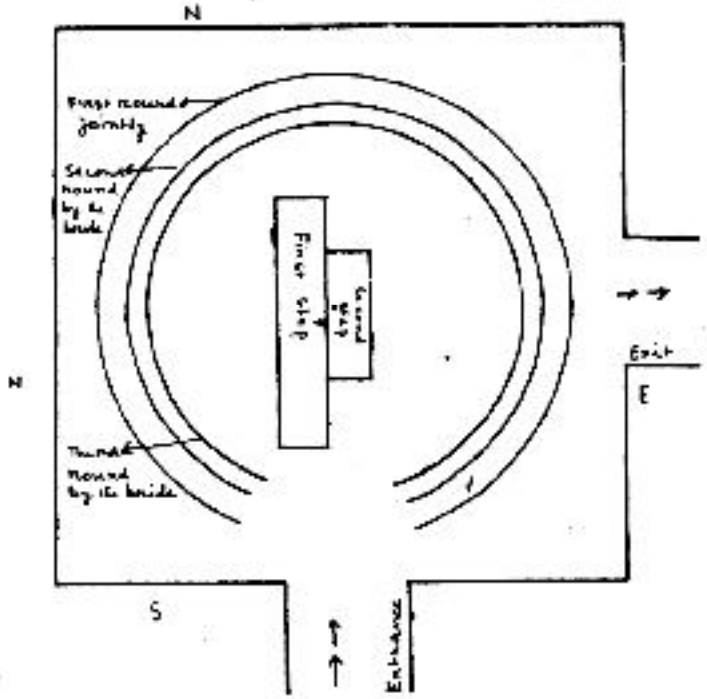
The reason for such marriages, according to the Jamatia is that a widow once in the past at the time of the first marriage went up the *haiya*, the platform on which the marriage was solemnized. She cannot go up there a second time in her life.

6. Performance of Marriage :

If the marriage is held in the bridegroom's house, some close relatives of the bridegroom go to the bride's house with a music party one day a head of the marriage date to bring the bride. Those who go to bring the bride are called as *Hanjwk Nay Nay Mwng*. The bride then is brought to the bridegroom's house on that day. The bridegroom's party call this ceremony as *Hanjwk Naymani* and the bride's party calls this ceremony as *Hanjwk Rahamani/Rahamwng*. Some close relatives and friends of the bride also accompany her to attend this ceremony. They are called *Hanjwk Twlaynay*.

In the party of the *Hanjwk Nay Nay* (the party that goes from the bridegroom's house to bring the bride) there are two *Aias* (two helpers of the bride) and one *Randhuni* (that carries the clothes, ornaments and all other articles of the bride). Two *Aias* carry one *Langi* (earthen jar of rice beer) to the bride's house putting the jar on a *Walikhak* (a contraption to carry the earthen jar containing the liquor *Langi*). They place the *Langi* on the right side of the maindoor of the main house of the bride. Then another *Langi* on a bamboo made *Walikhak* is also placed on the left side of the door. These two *Langis (Walikhaks)* are covered with two new napkins from th bride groom's house. The *Hanjwknaynay* enter the room after the recitation of *Mantras* by the *Ochai*. After the completion of the *Mantras* by the *Ochai* these napkins are taken by anyone who can lay his hand on it first. Then the napkns are brought back in exchange of one bottle of liquor. All persons present in the ceremony take this liquor along with the liquor from the two

Diagram of Marriage Alter



Langis

It should be mentioned here that immediately after entering the bride's house, the bridegroom's party handover all the ornaments and articles to the *Bhandaris* (Store Keeper) of the bride's side. Along with the ornaments one *Bati* (bowl of white brass) is offerred from bridegroom's side to the mother of the bride as a symbol of gratitude to her as she brought up the bride. This is called *Abaktwysay*. After formal acceptance of the article, the mother gives it back to the bridegroom's party. On that day two *Awas* will invite all the villagers of the bride with a betel nut and a betel leaf to attend the marriage ceremony. The young boys and girls of the bridegrooms' side also invite the young boys and girls of the bride's village respectively.

According to a custom, the bride hides in a neighbouring house as soon as the bridegroom's party enters the village to take her. After taking their launch, a group of young girls (*Bwrwy Sikwlas*) go to the place of hiding with a music party to bring her out. These young girls help her in taking her bath and after completion of her bath, they dress her with the clothes and ornaments of the bridegroom's house.

At the time of her farewell the bride sits on a thin mat in the court yard facing the mainhouse. The *Ochai* (the traditional priest) utters a *Mantra* (spell) for the safe journey and well being of the bridegroom. One sacred light is placed infront of the main door of the house. One decorated gate is also constructed infornt of the house of the bride. The bride bows to the respectable relatives and departs to the bridegroom's house. Her relatives bid adieu to her in tearful eyes.

When they go near the village of the bridegroom, some persons of the bredegroom's side come forward to welcome the bride. They welcome her with the accompaniment of various songs and after this they go to the bridegroom's house. Here also, the *Ochai* utters a *Mantra* to welcome the bride in the bridegroom's house and after this welcomming ceremony the bride enters the house of the bridegroom.

In their marriage ceremony the two *Aiyajwks*(female helpers of the bride) and the two *Aiyachwlas* (male helpers of the bridegroom) are selected from the village in which the marriage ceremony is held. At the time of marriage ceremony the bride and the bridegroom go to the *Ashana* of the *Chauddha Devata* first and then to the *Haiya* with the help of the *Aiyajwks* and the *Aiyachwlas*Before entering the *Ashana* of *Chaudddha Devata* the bridegroom comes to the courtyard from a room and the bride comes from another room. The bride first of all bows to the bride groom.

There is a custom in their society that on their way to the *Ashana* of *Chauddha Devata*and to the *Haiya* their feet should not touch the earth. So plantain leaves are placed on the way to the *Ashana* of the fourteen Gods and to the *Haiya*. At that time the clothes of the bride and groom are tied into a knot by placing a *Bakla* (myrobalan seed) and a *Sukuy*(seed of mimosa scandens). Then they proceed towards the *Ashana* of the *Chauddha Devata* and to the *Haiya*. At the time of their entering the *Ashana* of the foruteen Deities and the *Haiya* the bride covers her eyes with her hands and the bridegroom covers his eye's with a bamboo made handfan so that they cannot see any evil signs at that time. The bride and the bride groom jointly bow down their heads before the *Ashana* of the fourteen Deities.

Then they enter the marriage altar through the passage of the southern side of the altar and bow their heads together facing the passage of the eastern side of the alter. After this they circle jointly round the altar thrice anti-clockwise and bow before it. Then the bridegroom stands on the top step of the *Haiya*and the bride stands on the second step. Twenty *Langis*(small waterpot) fitted with wicks are kindled at the time of the marriage. These lighted langies are kept on the side of the bride, bridegroom and on the *Haiya*. First, the *Ochai*and then the *Ochaijwk*(wife of the *(Ochai*) pours sacrad water on their heads. That is why the *Ochais* should always be married with wife living. From the bride's side then, 5 or 7 pairs of husband and wife will pour the sacrad water on the head of the bride and the bride groom one by one. It should be menboned here that the widow and wodowers are prohibited from attending

this ceremony. All of them pour water uttering the following *Mantra* :-

"*A haya da ...*
tini dinwo, tini salwo, jal jal, mal mal, khwlay nukhung gwnang, mayrung gwnang khwlay, chagwnang, nwnggwnang khwlay bangsa maykhasa, twykhasa knwi hwisangnwi kwlalay nwbag layuwy bangsani chati, wng tang baydi da."

Meaning : (Both you, husband and wife live happily and shine as brightly as the light and give food and drinks to your sons and daughters, to your friends and relatives.)

After this ceremony, both the bride and the bridegroom are brought to the *Bankebari* (bride chamber). On the way to *Bankebari* some joking relatives e.g. elder brother's wife and grandfather etc. close the door of the main house out of joke and tell the couple that there is no room for them in this house. Their *Bhandari* tells them to open the door in exchange of money. Then they (joking relatives) give one wooden mortar and pestle for husking paddy to the couple and ask the bridegroom to lift the bride and cross the wooden mortar. All the persons laugh in case of the failure of the bride groom.

Then they are brought into the *Bankebari*. There is a new earthen pot in this room filled with water and two balls of cotton, one red and one white are immersed in it. The red thread (*Ranchak*) and the white thread (*Ruklay*) are taken as a symbol of gold and silver. Then the *Ochai* utters a *Mantra* over this new earthen pot.

First, the bridegroom lifts the cover of the earthen pot and then replaces it again. The bride next does the same. In this manner they lift and replace the cover of the earthen pot thrice alternately. The *Ochai* tries to detect some omen during this function.

Then the bride and the groom bring out the balls thrice alternately all the while keeping their faces turned away. From the colour of the balls one knows whether they will have a son or a daughter. Here also the *Ochai* looks for some omen. After that, the bride and the groom the *Aryajwks* and *Aryachwlas* take their meal

together.

In the evening, the *Ochai* lights two lamps and keeps them on both sides of the door and the *Ulu* sound is given three times at that time. This is a test for the *Ochai* to understand something about the matching of this newly married couple. This function is called *Chatisakmani*. All the villagers are invited to attend this ceremony. Those who invite the villagers on behalf of the owner of the house where the marriage is held are called *Pushun*. This light should burn the whole night in the *Bankebari*. The invitees are given two bottles of liquor at the time of lighting the *Chati* (light).

The next day of marriage is called *Risumanidin* (the day to wash the clothes). On that day they go to a nearby tank or a water source together and wash their clothes formally. The *Ochai* also accompanies with them and if possible one hegoat is sacificed here for the well being of the newly married couple.

In the *Ashan* of the fourteen Deities, one white coloured *Risa* (a traditional handwoven piece of cloth which is used by the Jamatia girls as breastcover) is fixed on an iron rod with a rupee coin smeared with vermillion on the day of the marriage ceremony. This vermillion coated coin is called *Binayginirang*. Earlier one piece of bamboo had been cut according to the length of the *Risa*. On the day of *Risumani*, the *Risa* is again measured with the bamboo piece by the *Ochai*. If the length of the *Risa* and of the piece of bamboo remains the same then it is understood that both the husband and the wife would die at the proper age. If the length of the *Risa* increases, it is understood that one of them would have longer life. If the *Risa* becomes shorter than the bamboo piece, it is assumed that either the husband or the wife would have premature death. On that day all the predictions of the marriage are made by the *Ochai* to the head of the family. Many respected and old persons also attend this ceremony to know about the predictions of the *Ochai*.

Later on, this *Binayginirang* is kept very carefully by the mother-in-law or the mother as the case may be, of the bride. After the birth of one or two children this is returned to the bride. She

TABLE - IV

Routine Of Engagements Month By Month

Name of the month :	Corresponding English calender :	Economic activities :	Festivals :
1. Baishakh	April - May	Preparation of the plot by ploughing and sowing the seeds of Aush paddy and Jute seeds. This is the best month for sowing in the Jhum. The sowing of the Jhum continues up to the last part of this month though they mostly finish it within the 20th. Baishakh. In the Jhum besides paddy they also sow the seeds of cotton, chilly, pumpkins, Brinjals and many other hilly vegetables in the holes prepared by their traditional dabarak wedding starts during the last part of Baishakh.	The most importar festival is the Garia Puja. It starts from last day of Chaitra continues for 7 da On the 8th day, th of god Garia is immersed. On that perform sena puja Mailungma Puja.
2. Jaishtha	May - June	This month is very suitable for wedding in their Jhums and also in the paddy fields.	
3. Ashar	June - July	Transplantation of Aman paddy takes place in the month of Ashar and it takes the whole month. Wedding of Jhum also continues upto this month.	
4. Sravana	July - August	Ploughing and levelling for Aman paddy takes place in this month and transplaning of Aman paddy also takes place in this month. The harvesting of vegetables from the Jhum starts from the month of Sravana.	

(Mother-in-law or the mother) tells her (the bride) that who dies earlier between them would get the coin. This indicates that after death of any one, the rupee would be put on the cremation place of the dead. This is to purchase the cremation place. This is called *Simalwng Paimani/Paimwng(Simalwng* means cremation ground and *Paimwng/Paimani* means to purchase) i.e. to purchase the cremation place.

7. **Construction of *Bankebari*** (Making Of Bride-Chamber) :
The Jamatias construct a *Bankebari*(a separate room for the bride and the bride groom) during the time of the construction of their marriage altar *(Haiya)*. Generally, the newly married bride and the bridegroom do not sleep in a separate house after their marriage like other castes and communities and instead of this, they sleep in the same house with other members of the family. This system may be due to the existence of child marriage in their society and the maladjustment of age between the bride and the bridegroom i.e. the bride is senior to the bridegroom. They think that if the newly married couple lives in the some room, the guardians will be able to observe the behaviour of the couple and in case of any maladjustment, they will be able to point out their defects and thus make necessary corrections.

They make a separate room in their main dwelling house by placing two partitions for the newly married couple. They sleep together in this room after one day of their marriage. Generally, at day time they remain separate from each other.

The *Bankebari*is a temporary room. A few days after the marriage ceremony, they (bride's house or the bride groom's house in which the marriage ceremony is performed) invite their relatives and the neighbours of the village to take some thing in their house on a convenient day. This ceremony is called *Dukmanmanichak* which means to have their drinks for their labour and the trouble they took for the marriage ceremony. In this function male and the female invitees are invited seperately on two separate days. The males are invited only to have their drinks. In this function the male invitees give presentation only to the bridegroom and this presentation is often in cash and not in kind. After taking their drinks, the male

5. Vadra	August - September	Harvesting of Aush paddy and Jhum paddy takes place in the month Vadra and it is the best month for harvesting. In this month the incomplete work of transplantation of Aman plants which starts in the month of Vadra is complete. The collecting of vegetables from the Jhum takes place in this month. Cutting and re retting of Suthi Path also takes place in this month.	
6. Aswin	September - October	The cutting and retting of bangi naliya (a variety of jute) starts from the last part of Vadra to the first part of Aswin. The cutting and retting of nalyamwkhwy (a variety of jute) starts from the last part of Aswin.| The collecting of vegetables from the Jhum still continues.	
7. Kartik	October - November	The harvesting of cotton (Khul) from the Jhum takes place in this month and cutting and retting of nalyamwkhwy till continues. The harvesting of sesame from the Jhum field also takes place in this month and the collecting of vegetables from the Jhum continues up to Kartik.	
8. Agrahayana	November - December	Harvesting of Aman paddy takes place in this month and they begin to cut their Jhum in the selected plots and prepare the land for their Jhum cultivation for the next year.	Mayiwngma (the d who rules over cro Puja and the maykwtaichaman eating of new rice) ceremony takes pl this month.
9. Paus	November - December	In this month also, the harvesting of Aman paddy and the cutting of jungles for the next Jhum cultivation still continues upto this month.	

10. Magh	January - February	This is a month of rest on their agricultural calander. There is no important agricultural work in this month. In this month the construction of new houses or necessary repairing of existing houses take place. They also perform various dramas in the villages in this month. The cutting of jungles are engaged in Jhum cultivation also continues for those who are engaged in Jhum cultivation.
11. Phalgoon	February - March	There is no agricultural work of any importance in this month.
12. Chaitra	March - April	In this month the ploughing and levelling for Aman cultivation takes place. In this month, they set fire to the Jhum plot and the task of Jhum burning is completed in this month. They clear the burnt jungle patches by throwing away the unburnt pieces of trees, plant etc. in this month.

invitees remove the partition of the one side of the *Bankebari* at the time of their returning home.

The female members are invited on another day. In the past, they were given feasts and drinks. But at present they are offered only drinks. The female invitees give their presentations only to the bride and this is also in cash. After completion of their drinks they also remove the remaining partition of the *Bankebari*. Then the main dwelling house remains opened and the bride and the bridegroom sleep in this house along with all other members of the family openly.

8. Special Features :

The construction of marriage altar is prohibited in case of a marriage of a widow with an unmarried boy. This restriction is due to the custom of their society that a woman cannot go to the *Haiya* more than once in her life time.

On the otherhand, the *Haiya* (marriage alter) is prepared incase of marriage of a widower with an unmaried girl. Unlike the women, men are allowed to climb the altar not more than seven times in his life time.

In case of the marriage of a widow with an unmarried boy, the bridegroom brings one he goat or some kind of meat and comes to the house of the bride. Then, after the performance of some ceremonial rites, the *Ochai* pours blessed water on the heads of both the bride and the bridegroom and the marriage ceremony is completed.

It is a custom of their society that, a widower should marry a widow and a widow should marry a widower. But in some cases there are some exceptions also.

In the Jamatia community the system of bride price has been in existence since time immemorial in the form of *Chamarwy Twisarmwrg* which is a kind of marriage by service. The practice of dowry is still prohibited in their society and this has been handed down from generation to generation in their society. In the marriage ceremony, the parents of the bride do not give any ornaments.

If the marriage ceremony is performed in the bridegroom's house the bride groom's guardians give various kinds of articles to the bride e.g. clothes, ornaments, cosmetics etc. as gifts.

But at present, due to their contact with the plains people the dowry system is being observed among some educated and unbanized sections of the community to some extent.

The *Wathap Puja* is not performed in the marriage ceremony and only the worship of the foruteen gods is performed with an offering consisting of rice, plantain, sugar etc. After the marriage ceremony, the *Wathap Puja* is performed in the name of the newly married couple during the time of the *Gangpuja*.

The system of exchanging of garlands is not in existence among the Jamatias.

The system of scattering of flowers at wedding is not in existence among the Jamatias.
It is a significant feature of the Jamatias that the Jamatia girls generally do not marry outside of their own tribe. This type of marriage was not found in some 20 villages I visited.

A few inter-tribal marriages that were held between a Jamatia girl with a Non-Jamatia boy, the boys (bride grooms) had to enter to the Jamatia community and adopt the Jamatia title with the permission of the *Hada Akra* (chief of the supreme council) of the Jamatia community.

This marriage between a Jamatia girl and a Non-Jamatia boy is performed in a *Chamwrwy Tangmwng* system of marriage in which the bridegroom stays in the house of the bride.

But in case of marriage of a Jamatia boy with a Non-Jamatia girl marriage is to be performed in *Hanjwk Nahamwng* system of mariage in which the bride stays in bride groom's house instead of *Chamwrwy Tisamwng* system of marriage.

It is worth mentioning that, though the Jamatia feel the necessity of family planning, still they are not coming forward to adopt this due to various factors. Most of them still think that it would be bad for their health. Some of them also think it as a sinful act from the religious point of view. Some ignorant Jamatia also think that family planning programme is a conspiracy of the government to decrease the numerical strength of the Tribal peoples. So many of them are opposing this plan still today.

9. Pre-Marital and Extra-Marital Sex Relations :
Adultery and premarital sex relations are forbidden. If a girl gets pregnant the man responsible for it is first asked by the family members of the girls' side to marry her. But if he disagrees, the case is brought to the notice of the Head of the village Counil, who subsequently informs the matter to the Head of the Regional Council and Supreme Council. Even then if he disagrees to marry the girl, he is compelled to bear all the expenses of the girl for her whole life. However such cases seldom happens.

But the case of extra marital sex relation is looked up on as a serious offence. In such cases both the parties are punished by the Head of the Supreme Council in the presence of all the villagers.

Preveiously, in such cases a cat was tied on the penis of the man and chilly powder was applied on the vagina of the female offender. But such punishments are to some extent relaxed today. Still it should be mentioned that the case of extra marita relation is commonly and unanimously condemned in the Jamatia society and so this is a rare occurance in their community.

10. Divorce (Kaglaymwng) :
In the interior villages of the Jamatias, the rate of divorce is quite high. Previously, divorce cases were dealt with by the *Hada Akra* but now the *Mayal Panchai* (Head of the Regional Council) deals with such cases. The *Chakdiri* of the village council is not empowered to deal with divorce cases, as the *Chakdiri's* power is limited only within the boundary of the village. So if the bride or the bridegroom belong to diferent villages, the *Chakdiri* is not empowered to impose his order upon him/her. So the *Mayal*

Panchai has been reasonably vested with such power as he has jurisdiction over 15 to 20 village councils.

But in case one of the party belongs to a village beyond his jurisdiction, the *Mayal Panchayat* of that region is also invited to settle the case jointly.

Divorce can be sought on the ground of madness, impotence, barrenness, adultery and being quarrelsome to the *Mayal Panchai* of that region. The *Mayal Panchay* then calls a meeting in the house of the *Chakdiri* of that village. The *Chakdiri* also attends. The *Mayal Panchay* gives his verdict only after hearing the version of both the sides.

According to custom, the party which divorces has to pay the fees of divorce (which is six score rupees i.e. Rs. 120/-, Six *adhulies* (six fifty paise), six *sikies* (six twenty five paise), six *duanies*, six *annas* and six paise (About 96 paise). Thus the total amount stands as Rs. 125.68) to the *Mayal Panchay*. But it is some times found that both the parties play various tricks to avoid this fine.

If a bride goes to the *Mayal Panchay* for a divorce on ground of torture by her husband, the husband tactfully says to the *Mayal Panchai* that he will neither divorce his wife nor torture her. The *Mayal Panchay* orders the wife to return to him. If the wife does not agree to carry out the order of the *Mayal Panchay*, she is held guilty and she has to pay the fine. On the other hand, if the wife agrees to live with the husband and goes back to his house the husband begins torturing her again so that the wife is compelled to divorce him. In such cases finding no other alternative, the wife requests for a divorce and bears the fees of the divorce. In this way the husband often escapes the payment of divorce fee.

One of the common causes of divorce is child marriage and disparity of age between the husband and the wife.

Some times pressure applied by the parents on both the sides also plays an important role in divorce cases of the Jamatia society.

In case of divorce between a couple with children, the husband rarely demands that the custody of his children be remanded to him. It is a common occurence in the Jamatia community that after divorce the child still a minor is left with the mother.

11. Inheritance and Partition of Property :
A Jamatia father generally divides his property among his children during his life time though there are cases when the division takes place posthumously. The father generally divides his property towards the later period of his life in order to avoid any possible quarrel that might arise after his death among his sons. Sometimes the married sons also press their father to divide the property in order to start their own independant establishments.

In the Jamatia tribe, the property is passed from father to son and if there is more than one then the property is equally divided among them. At the time of division of property the father keeps a share for himself which goes to his wife after his death. The rest is equally distributed among the sons.

In the past the daughters were entitled to enjoy two sixteenth part of the property. Of course, now-a-days they are entitled to get equal share like the sons, yet even today such demands are very rare. If any girl remains unmarried, the father also keeps a share of the property aside for her maintenance, till she decides to get married. If there is any minor or unmarried son at the time of division of the property, the father looks after his share.

If a man has sons by more than one wife, the property is inherited by all of them. No discrimination is made among the sons of different wives in this respect.

If a person leaves behind no other heir except an adopted son the property legally goes to the later.

In case the son(s) dies during his father's life time then the children of the former get to inherit all the property.
When a man dies without son, the property is inherited by his brothers of the same father. If there is no sibling left the property

TABLE - II

ALL TRIBES (Rural)

Total Persons	Total Workers	Cultivators	Agricultural labourers	Livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting and Plantations, Orchards and allied activities	Construction	Trade Commerce	Transport & Communication	Other service	Non worke
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
Male 2,27,590 (51.41%)	1,19,998 (52.73%)	93,486 (41.08%)	22,667 (9.96%)	952 (0.42%)	32 (0.01%)	169 (0.07%)	107 (0.05%)	2,360 (1.04%)	1,07,59 (47.27%
Female 2,17,469 (49.86%)	20,841 (9.58%)	13,570 (6.24%)	5,951 (2.74%)	782 (0.36%)	X	21 (0.01%)	1 (.000004%)	223 (0.10%)	1,96,62 (90.42%
Total 4,45,059 (100%)	1,40,839 (31.66%)	1,07,056 (24.05%)	28,618 (6.43%)	1,734 (0.39%)	31 (0.01%)	290 (0.02%)	108 (0.02%)	2,583 (0.45%)	3,04,22 (68.35%

(☆ Based on the Census Report of India 1971, Tripura Series 20 Tripura, Part II C(I), P. 84-89

goes to his half brother.

When a man has neither son nor grandson or brother, then the property passes on to his brother's sons.

In the absence of son, grandson, brother, brother's son etc. the property of a man is inherited by the father's brothers and in their absence by the father's brother's son.

If a person dies without children, his wife gets the share of property of her husband, and after her death or if she remarries an outsider, the property goes to her original husband's brother or his sons or to their descendants.

After the death of the mother, her ornaments and other belongings are given to the unmarried daughters and daughters-in-law.

If a childless widow remarries then, she is not given her due share and that property is divided between the brothers of her deceased husband. But if widow with child remarries and if later the child returns to his grand father then the grand father gives him a share of his property.

It is also seen that if a divorced wife with child is remarried to another person, and if the child after growing up returns to his father, then the father gives him share of the property and the son also helps his father in his agricultural work forgetting his mother.

It is also a custom of the Jamatia society that if a person marries a divorced woman or a widow with children, then though these children may address him as father, they do not get the share of property of their foster father.

12. Succession To Social Posts :

As far as succession to office of the traditional socio-political organisation of the Jamatia is concerned it should be mentioned that there is no henditary post in their three tier traditional administrative pattern i.e. from the village council to their community level Supreme Council. All the officials of these councils are elected

by a democratic process. They are elected for a certain period and after the completion of their term they resign their offices. There is no such case in the long history of their traditional Supreme Council of a person appointed as a *Hada Akra* by his father.

They lay emphasis on efficiency, rather than hereditary right in the selection of their village, regional and community level office bearers.

But the post of the *Kherlang* of the *Gania Puja* the hereditary right is maintained. The posts of *Ochais* (village level traditional priest) are also some times filled in by their sons as the sons of these specialists generally get better opportunity to learn the ropes of their father's trade.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Jamatias are mainly an agriculturist tribe and agriculture is the main source of their livelihood. According to 1971 Census, 99.80% of the total population of 34,192 of the Jamatia live in rural areas. The percentage of tribal rural population of Tripura is 98.80%. The economic structure of the Jamatias is markedly different from that of the non-tribals or the advanced groups of people. In order to satisfy their primary needs they follow the "Marginal Economy[1]". They have their own traditional pattern of labour, specialisation, ceremonial exchange, trade and barter, co-operative society, credit and value, land tenure etc. which differ from the local non-tribals.

In the Jamatia society, the family works as an unit of production. All the members of the family are the workers of this unit of production. The production of the family unit is geared to the requirements of the family. The division of labour is generally made according to sex and age. Both male and the female folk work according to their physical capacity. The boys and girls are alloted different jobs suited to their age.

It is a significant feature of their economic structure that the women folk plays an important role in thier agricultural work. According to the 1971 Census out of the total rural population of the Jamatia tribe 30.66% are agricultural working force and out of 30.66% of their agricultural working force, 9% is the female working force as against the average of the total rural tribal population of Tripura where 9.58% is the female working force out 31.66% of the total rural tribal agricultural working force in Tripura.

Besides the agricultural work, a small number of them are also engaged in some other types of work like house construction, trade and commerce, transport and communication, but they are also directly or indirectly linked with agriculture. The following tables will give an idea of the economic position of the Jamatia of rural area and their relevant position with all other tribes of Tripura[2].

The rural economy of the Jamatia is a mixture of settled (plough) cultivation and *Jhuming* (shifting cultivation). *Jhuming* is their

TABLE - I

Jamatia (Rural)

Total Persons	Total Workers	Cultivators	Agricultural labourers	Livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting and Plantations, Orchards and allied activities	Construction	Trade Commerce	Transport & Communication	Other service	Non workers
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
Male 17. 229 (50.48%)	8, 945 (51.92%)	7, 801 (45.28%)	1, 051 (6.10%)	3 (0.02%)	1 (0.01%)	4 (0.02%)	8 (0.05%)	77 (0.45%)	8, 284 (48.08%)
Female 16, 903 (49.52%)	1,521 (9%)	991 (5.86%)	522 (3.09%)	X (0.00%)	X (0.00%)	X (0.00%)	1 (0.01%)	7 (0.04%)	15, 382 (69.34%)
Total 34. 132 (100%)	10, 466 (30.66%)	8, 792 (22.5%)	1, 573 (4. 61%)	3 (0.01%)	1 (.002%)	4 (.026%)	9 (0.03%)	84 (0.03%)	23, 666 (69.34%)

original source of income since long past. But till today inspite of their advancement in settled cultivation, a good number of the Jamatias are practising shifting cultivation in a limited scale. They do *Jhuming* mainly due to the close relationship between their economic life and the natural environment which is, in general, the forest.

It should be noted here that, though the Jamatia practice *Jhuming* as a part of their agriculture, they are not *Jhumias* in the truest sense of the term as their *Jhuming* is to supplement their income. They generally produce paddy, cotton, jute, mustard seeds and various types of vegetable in their *Jhum*.

Tools And Implements Of Jhuming

The necessary tools and implements of *Jhuming* primarily consist of an iron chopper, *Dabark* (special type of *Da* used by the tribals) and a bamboo made basket called *Langa*. The *Dabarak* is the most important tool for Jhuming and other agricultural works. In fact, like all other tribals of rural areas, a Jamatia cultivator cannot be thought of without a *Dabark*. This *Dabark* is used for clearing jungle, cutting the branches of trees, removing the unwanted weeds, cutting of bamboos, construction of their houses, sacrificing of animals, making of baskets, cutting of vegetables etc.

Next to the *Dabark* is their hand made basket called *Langa*. They carry the products of the *Jhum* in this *Langa*. The women folk of the Jamatia society collect their fuels with the help of it. They keep the *Langa* slinging on their back from their head with the help of a fiber made string. A Jamatia women with a *Langa* is a very common scene in any Jamatia village.

The digging stick is also an important instrument for making holes in the ground for sowing seeds in the *Jhum*. The winnowing platter which is known as *Bayliyng* is also an important tool for *Jhuming*.

Stages Of Jhuming

It should be noted here that *Jhuming* is closely related with nature. It is a series of functions carried out according to the change of the season. So every thing must be done in proper time. They remain extremely busy during the *Jhum* season because, one step of operation leads to the next step. So if a single step is missed the entire operation will fail.

There are various stages of the *Jhuming* cycle. The most important stages are (1) Selection of the spot, (2) Worshipping of God for good crop and protection, (3) Cutting of the bush, (4) Spreading it for drying, (5) Collecting pieces of wood as fuel, (6) Burning the dried forest into ashes, (7) Clearance of the unburnt pieces of forest trees from the *Jhum*,(8) Sowing of seeds,(9) Weeding, (10) Construction of watch shed (*Gaynying*) to protect the *Jhum* from wild animals, (11) Harvesting and storing, (12) Worshipping and (13) Merry making.

A brief description of the various stages of Jhuming are given below:-

1. Selection of the plot:-

In the past the Jamatia like all other tribes of Tripura enjoyed full freedom to cut and burn any forest patch for *Jhuming*. But at present, due to some restrictions of the forest department, they are not absolutely free to choose any plot of land for *Jhuming*. In selecting a patch of forest, certain factors are taken into consideration by them and these are:

Firstly, they give preference to a bamboo forest as they think that such a field yields higher crops and it requires less labour to cut, burn and weed a bamboo forest. In fact the burning of a bamboo forest is easier. Nothing is left unburnt in such forests. Moreover, the bamboo ashes are considered as a good manure by them.

Secondly, the distance of the *Jhum* from their residence is also taken into consideration. This distance involves wastage of time and energy in various work of the *Jhum* and protection of it from wild animals.

Thirdly, slopes of the hills are given first preference due to the fact that the water of the hill does not remain stagnant and as a result the growth of weed is not very dense there. The Jamatias who practise the *Jhuming* are fully aware of the environmental condition of the *Jhum* plot. The selection of the *Jhum* plot is generally done in the month of November-December.

2. Worshipping :

After considering the above mentioned factors, they provisionally select their *Jhum* plot. This selection is finalised only when it is predicted by the *Ochai* (traditional priest) as an acceptable one. For this the *Ochai* performs some magico-religious functions in selecting the *Jhum* land. These magico-religious functions are part and parcel of *Jhuming*. If the *Ochai* rejects any piece of land as inauspicious for *Jhuming*, they reject it without any question even after preliminarily selecting it.

These magico-religious functions has been in practice in their community from time immemorial. A brief description of the magico-religious functions and customary laws of the Jamatia society in connection with *Jhuming* operation is given below:-

After primary slection of a piece of land *Wakakchakmwng* (three pieces of bamboo were fixed on the slected plot vartically) was placed in each plot. Three earthen *Dalis* (pots) were placed under these three *Wakakchakmwng*. These three *Dalis* are the symbols of three deities viz. *Akatharaja*, *Bikatharaja* and the *Masangrangma*. Then the *Ochai* tells about the production of crops or the influence of evil sprits in this selected place through his pujas.

Producers :

The *Ochai* takes two bamboo pieces, the length of which is equal to the length of eight fingers. Then he drops these pieces from a certain height on the earth with recitation of some mantras. The *Ochai* can understand the wish of Gods and Goddess form the position of the fall of the bamboo pieces.

The *Mantra* recited by the *Ochai* is as follows:-

Ang Haya Da Sakha
Akatharaja, Biktharaja
Ma Sangrangmga Achaak Faydi
Bacha Faydi, Tinidinwo
Tini Salwo Hachani Humchani Hinuwy
Niragna Swnguy Nayni
Kuwy Nayni Hunuwy
Nwsa Fanale Swnguwa
A har Ha Kwtwy Do Tang
Ha Kwachk Do Tang
Dangar Sikwla Do Tang
Twy Faykhwlay Do Tang
Chauwy Ra Faydi, Kuwy Ra Faydi
O Hukuna Say Tanguwyba
Kereng Khwlay Nay D Tang
Kata Khwlay Nay Do Tang
Aya Khwlay Nay Do Tang
Achi Khwlay Nay De Tang
Da Kebeyng Khay Hay, Kata Khay Nay
Aya Khay Nay Achi Khay Tang Khwlay
O Wakhak Kaysa Bala Khay Makhai
Whgna Dak Pat Karkha.

English Rendering :-

Here the *Ochai* is praying to *Akatharaja, Bikatharaja* (another name of Bura Devata) and *Ma Sangrangma* (Bana Devi), to come and to take their seats. He says, "to day, your son named... has selected this plot of land for *Jhuming* for this year. So pray tell us whether there is any *Hakwtwy, Dangar Sikwla* etc. in this selected plot of land'.

Here *Hakwtwy* means a place where evil spirits take shelter and dogs, cats, monkeys etc. died earlier. *Hakasak* means a place where some specific animals defecate and urinate. *Dangar Sikwla* means the slopes of hills where water becomes stagnent. *Twykhaklay* is a point of a hill where water enters in one side and comes out on another side. All such places, they believe are inauspicious for *Jhuming*.

The *Ochai* further prays to the God 'Oh the Gods and Goddesses speak truly to me if the jhuming is performed in this plot of land for this year will the evil eyes fall on it ?'

After dropping the two pieces of bamboo to the earth if the *Ochai* understands that there is no evil spirit, then, he again drops the bamboo pieces in a similar manner to know about the production of the crop with uttering the following *Mantra*. The *Mantra* is as follows:-

Da Tabak Chauwy Ralaykha
Kuwy Ra Faykha
Kereng Khwlay Nay Kwrwy
Kata Khwlay Nay Kwrwy
Aya Khwlay Nay Kwrwy
Achi Khwlay Nay Kwrwy
Da Wohukna Chauwyba
Wa Hana Chauwyba
Nwsa Fanani Falimay Rwbade Pungna
Falimay Rwba Pungna Tang Khwlay
Kaysa Bal. Kaysa Matal
Wngna Dak

The meaning of the *Mantra* :
Here the *Ochai* prays that the evil eyes of the evil spirits will not fall on this *Jhumfield*. Pray, tell me whether the production of crop of this *Jhumfield* will be good or bad in this year. Whether the *Fali* (handmade basket to keep paddy) will be filled up or not.

In this ceremony, the *Ochai* can understand the wishes of the God and goddesses regarding the welfare of the *Jhum* plot through some special procedures.

Then *Semaswngmwng* ceremony is performed. In this ceremony the owner of the *Jhum* first of all, sharpens his *Dabarak* (scythe) on a piece of stone. Then he produces fire by rubbing two pieces of bamboo and prepares tobacco in a fresh *Daba* (habul babul)

with this fire and offers it to the *Ochai* with pranam and wants to know the wishes of the God and Goddesses regarding the production of crops from the *Ochai*. Then the *Ochai* tells everything about the good and bad side of the *Jhum* plot to him.

Ceremonies on the day of the first burning of the *Jhum* :
Certain special ceremonies are held on the day of the first burning of the *Jhum* plot. On that day, first of all, the court yard of the cultivator is cleaned very nicely early in the morning. Then *bimy* rice (a variety of rice) is made soft in an earthen pot in a special process. In this process, the *bimy* rice becomes as soft as cooked rice. Then a hole is made at the bottom of this earthen pot and this pot is called *Awatwk*.

Then this *Awatwk* is brought to the courtyard and is placed upside down. Then the handle of a bamboo fan is inserted into this hole of the *Awatwk* vertically.

Now the courtyard is examined to see how perfect has been the cleaning operation. They believe that the more perfect is the cleaning of the court yard, the better will be the yield.

The handfan is the symbol of the wind which they believe will help in burning of the *Jhum*.

They believe that the good burning of the *Jhum* will depend on how black has the bottom of the *Awatwk* becomes as a result of cooking in it. The lesser the degree of blackness the lesssr will be the cleaning of the *Jhum*.

3. Cutting the Jungle *(Hukhagmwng/ Hukhagmani)* :-
The cutting of the jungle of the *Jhum* plot starts from the month of November-December and continues till February. In this period all the membes of the family remain very busy. They cut the jungle in groups. This is a group work. From the senior most mamber to the little boys and girls ranging from ten to fifteen years in a family, all have their specific duty in *Jhuming*. But the cutting of the Jungle is mainly done by the male members and the women folk help them. Generally the extension and preparation of the *Jhum*

field by cutting the Jungle is done by the male members and it is the duty of the female members to make it beautiful and charming.

In this stage they cut the bamboos, plants and creepers of the *Jhum* plot up to the ground level. The smaller trees and the branches of bigger trees are chopped off at this stage. This work takes ten to fifteen days. The good burning of the *Jhum* depends partly on the well cutting of the jungle.

4. Spreading of the Bamboos and plants for drying(*Huklammwng/ Huklarmani* **)** :-
This is done immediately after cutting the jungle of the *Jhum*. This is an intermediate period between the cutting and burning of the jungle of the *Jhum* plot. The plants and bamboos are spread in such a way that they become completely dried by heat of the sun during the month of February-March and first part of. The good burning of the *Jhum* depends on drying of the branches and bamboos of the *Jhum*.

5. Collecting logs of Branches of Trees :-
While drying takes place, the female members of the family carry the branches of trees and pieces of logs with their *Tisiyng* (hand made basket for carrying fire woods) to their houses to be used as fuel all round the year.

6. Burning of the *Jhum* (Hukswgmwng) :-
They set fire to the falled trees and branches of the *Jhum* land generally in the month of *March-April (Chaitra)*. Except wednesday, they can set fire on any day of the week. It is done when they are satisfied that every thing has dried up well and there is wind to help. The *Jhum* would yield higher production and it will be less laborious if the whole *Jhum* is burnt into ashes with out leaving anything unburnt. The ashes of the *Jhum* is considered as good manure.

It should be noted hare that setting of fire in the *Jhum* must be done before the rains. If there is any possibility of rain, they set fire before hand, otherwise, *Jhum* will be wet and will not burn well. At this period, they remain very cautious about weather. The

logs and undergrowths take four to five days for complete burning and the ashes becomes cool in another four to six days.

7. Clearance of the Unburnt pieces of Forest Trees :-
The clearance of unburnt materials from the *Jhum* is a very difficult work. The production of the *Jhum* also depends partly on this clearence of the unburnt materials from the *Jhum*. The unburnt and half burnt roots and trees are cut down and removed from the *Jhum* land. It is to be noted that the bigger trees are not cut to the root, they are left up to certain height so that creepers cannot climb up them.

8. Sowing of Seeds (*Hukwomayrag Kaymwng*) :-
With the completion of the above mentioned stages, the *Jhum* is ready for sowing. After the first rains when the hard soil becomes wet, preparation for sowing starts. This is generally done in the month of April-May (Baishakh). It is a special feature of the *Jhum* cultivation that the whole *Jhum* plot is treated as single one and a mixture of the differnet seeds - paddy, cotton, sesame, chilli, pumpkins, brinjals and many other hilly vegetable are sown together on the same plot. They do not make separate plots of the *Jhum* for differnet crops. The Sowing of the *Jhum* are mostly finished by the third week of *Baisakh* (First week of May).

In the sowing operation, they use *Damra* (one special type of iron scythe) instead of plough for digging holes. They dig small holes about 2 and half inches deep with the *Damra* and drop the seeds of various crops and vegetable together in this single hole from a *paykang* (a small sized bamboo made seed container) which is tied in the left waist of the sower. The distance from between holes is about 8 inches. Both the digging of holes and sowing of seeds are done simultaneously. After dropping three or four seeds in a hole, they cover it with the toe of their feet.

It should be noted here that the sowing operation is done mainly by the women folk. All the members of the family also take part in it. They start at digging and sowing from the top of the hill and then gradually come to bottom of the hill in a line. After completing the first line they climb up the hill and again starts digging and

sowing. This process continues till the completion of the sowing operation. Mention may be made here that the crops which are sown by digging holes are paddy, cotton and sesame chiefly. Not much care is taken in the sowing of other seeds and they are mostly just cast.

9. Weeding (*Huksaymani*) :
After the sowing of seeds, they wait for rains. Then within a month, the *Jhum* is covered with short wild grass and creepers which is known as *Jabra*. They remove this *Jabra* with the help of their *Daharak*. This weeding of *Jabra* starts from the month of May-June (*Jaistha*).

There are three stages of weeding. Generally, the first weeding starts in the second week of June. The second stage of weeding takes place in the month of July and the third stage of weeding in the month of August. The weeding operation depends on the strength in numbers and the growth of wild grass. All the members of family including the children play an important role in the weeding operation.

10. The Construction of the Watch Shed (*Gayriyng*) :-
Though the *Jhum* field stands at a certain distance from the residence of the cultivators, they do not keep their *Jhum* unprotected and unwatched. Like all other tribes of Tripura, the Jamatias, also construct a watch shed at a corner of the *Jhum*. This shed is known as *Garying*.

The *Garying* is made of bamboo and thatched roof and its measurement is generally 15'X9'. It is constructed like a *Machan* on a raised platform. Its roof slopes down on two sides and it has fencing in three sides and opened in one side, so that they can have an unobstructed view towards the *Jhum* field. The platform is made of bamboo and its height is about six to seven feet from the ground. There is a ladder or steps made of bamboo to climb up to the platform.

It is worth mentioning that their whole family shifts to *Garying* during the *Jhum* season. They also take their livestock along with them,

which live below the platform of the *Garying*. Only the old and infirm members of the family are left behind.

The various tools used and techniques applied by them to protect the Jhum are of two types. One type is the application of simple methods to drive away the birds and animals by poducing various sounds, such as clapping, uttering loud cries etc. In driving away the birds and animals, they also use another thechnique. In this technique they keep a piece of bamboo split into two along its length to some extent hanging from a string, one end of which is tied to a post. The other end of the string is led to the *Gayring*. When the string is pulled suddenly the split bamboo produces a peculiar loud sound. The sound shoos the birds and animals.

The tools which are used to kill or trap the birds or animals generally consist of *Dabarak* bamboo made sticks, muzzle loading guns, and various types of traditional traps and snares. Out of various types of traps used by the Jamatias, the name of *Mankhang* may be mentioned.

The common enemy of the *Jhum* crops are generally pigs (Wak), elephant (Maiyung), monkeys(Mwkwra) and various types of birds.

It should be noted here that theft case for stealing of *Jhum* crops of one person by another is a very rare occurance and dispute regarding the boundary of the *Jhum* land is also very rare.

11. Harvesting :-

Unlike plough cultivation, the harvesting of *Jhum* crops is a continuous process and not seasonal activities. It goes on all the year round. Generally the harvesting of the *Jhum* products starts in the month of June and it continues up to Septembr-October. This harvesting is done stage by stage as the different kinds of crops of the same *Jhum* ripe, mature or becomes ready for harvesting at different times.

All the able members of the family participate in harvesting duty. They put the harvested crops in their hand made basket which is called *Nakhay* and carry it back home. They go to their *Jhum*

field early in the morning with cooked rice called *maychu* along with a water container called *Twylak*. This *Twylak* is a kind of scooped out forest gourd. The water ramains cool in such a container. In the interior Jamatia villages of Tripura, it is very common to find men and women of their community with a *Langa* on the back slung from their forehead with string made of fibre and a *Twylak* in their hand.

The following table shows the period of harvesting of different *Jhum* crops:-

TABLE - III

Name of the crops :	Period of harvesting :
1. Thaichumu (Cucumis) 2. Mampha (Melon) 3. Sash (Cucumber) 4. Magda (Mesa)	June
1. Maisinga (Sugar cane) 2. Khakoo (White gourd) 3. Chakumra (Pumpkin) 4. Milak (Gourd) 5. Bandar (Ocimum basilicum) 6. Khunjuru jwy (Coriander)	First half of July
1. Maychwla (Paddy) 2. Fantak (Brinjal) 3. Thema (Arum) 4. Maysu (Kaon)	Second hal of July
1. Rubiya (Redbean) 2. Sopeyng (Sesame) 3. Salsay (Long bean) 4. Daspiya (Hibiscus)	August
1. Salwy (Turmeric) 2. Mosta naiya (Variety of Jute) 3. Khul (Cotton)	September

i) Threshing *(Bukhwraymwng)*:

The threshing operation of the *Jhum* paddy, sesame and mustard seeds are done in a special process. In this process, they place the ears of the corn in the mouth of a *Maydum* (a handmade large

hollow basket for keeping grains. It can contain 150 to 200 kg of paddy) lying on the ground and beat them (the earns of the corn) with a wooden club as a result of which the corn is collected inside the *Maydum* neat and clean.

The threshing duty is generally done by the men folk. But the seed paddy is generally threshed by their female folk with special care. The women folk very carefully examine the best quality of seeds of *Binny* (a variety of paddy which is used for preparing cakes) paddy. In their community the apprectation for good quality of cakes generally go to the credit of the female folk. So they take special care in this respect.

ii) Winnowing *(Chakmwng)*:
The winnowing work of the *Jhum* paddy is not so difficult as in the case of plough cultivation. This is due to their special process of threshing operation. The winnowing work is mainly done by the female folk with the help of a round shaped hand made tray which is called *Bayliyng*. In this process, the wind blows away the chaffs which is lighter leaving the corn clean in the *Bayliyng*. After finishing of the winnowing, the grains are dried on a bamboo mat in the sun. It is worth mentioning here that the Jamatias do not depend on natural wind for winnowing.

iii) Husking *(Sugmwng)*:
The Jamatias take *Atap* rice. So they do not need to boil the paddy for husking. The husking operation is done by the female members. For husking of paddy they use wooden made mortar and a shell which is called *Rusan* and *Raman* and wooden made hushking pedal which called *Dingi*. These are the traditional tools of husking. It should be noted here that they primarily husk twenty to thirty maunds of paddy at a time and store it in a handmade hollow basket. But they finally husk only that amount of rice that will be required immediately or for one or two days for their consumption. They take only freshly husked rice in small quantities regularly.

12. Worshipping :-
After harvesting of the *Jhum* crop, they perform the *Maylwngma Puja* (Goddess of Paddy) and *Khulwngma Puja* (Goddess of

Cotton). The *Maykwtaichamwng* (The testing of first harvest) ceremony is also done at this time. All these celebrations take place in the month of *Agrahayana*.

13. *Jhuming* and Festivity :-

Jhuming is not only an agricultural activity for these folks. It has a deep rooted connection with their cultural life. At different stages of *Jhuming*, from the beginning to the end, there are many celebrations, festivities and merry making which are woven around the *Jhuming*. Romances among young boys and girls often develop while working in the *Jhum*. Thus in it can be traced as the origin of many folk songs and love lyrics of the Jamatias. *Jhuming* has a significant role to play on the cultural life of the Jamatias. To them it is more than a means of food production.

PLOUGH CULTIVATION

Though the Jamatias were *Jhum* cultivators originally, and though till today they partly practise it, they are now mainly settled agriculturists.

Now-a-days, plough cultivation is their primary occupation and basic economic activity which is often supplemented by shifting cultivation, by working as daily labourers, Government service, small business, fishing etc. The plough cultivation alone cannot provide them with sufficient means of livelihood through out the year as the landholding in comparison to population is much less and use of old tools of agriculture is proving uneconomical.

In comparison with other tribes of Tripura, Jamatias are far advanced in settled cultivation. The Census Report of 1931 states that almost all of them have given up *Jhuming* and taken to plough cultivation.

In the context of the advancement of the Jamatias in respect of settled agriculture, the view of Ornesh Saigol may be referred to here. According to him "Lewin has described the Tripuries as a 'restless' tribe shifting their villages every now and then in a nomadic fashion, the Jamatias have disproved this thesis. They have shown that given the necessary incentives and facilities and cultivable and fertile lands, the tribals are as much able to settle

down as any other plains community[3].

In settled cultivation, they produce two crops mainly *Aush* and *Aman* paddy. Jute and tobacco are also produced in settled cultivation. Some progressive cultivators of their community use insectisides and fertilizers. The traditional tools of cultivation, bullock, cows and old type of agricultural plough still are their only tools of cultivation.

The agricultural implements used by the Jamatias for plough cultivation are:-

1. *Langal/Langan* (The plough).
2. *Jungal* (The yoke).
3. *Godal* (The hoe).
4. *Chekwra* (The sickle).
5. *Chaka* (The leveller).
6. *Ura* (The basket).
7. *Dasa* (The scythe).
8. *Ruwa* (The axe).
9. *Dabarak* (A kind of scythe).

The year round economic activities based on both plough and shifting cultivation of the Jamatias are shown in a tabular form below :-

In order to present a clear out picture of the Jamatia tribe in relation to their agricultural activities, the analysis of the data of 142 Jamatia families of shilighati village of Udaipur Sub-Division is given below which may be taken as the general picture of the Jamatias of all other villages of Tripura as far as their agricultural activity is concerned:-

TABLE - V

Name of the village : Shilighati
Total number of families : 142 nos.

Sl. No.	Name of the items :	Total number of families with percentage :

1. No. of land holding families	= 120 (84.51%)
2. No. of landless families	= 22 (15.49%)
3. No. of families holding 5 or more than 5 kanies of land	= 67 (47.18%)
4. No. of families partly dependent on Jhum (Shifting cultivation) and partly on settled cultivation	= 114 (80.28%)
5. No. of families wholly dependent on shifting cultivation	= 16 (11.27%)
6. Land taken on share cropping basis	= 55 (38.73%)
7. Traditional skill in the family (weaving)	= 141 (99.30%)
8. No. of families indebted to money landers, traders etc.	= 94 (66.20%)
9. No. of members of the local Co-operative society.	= 73 (51.41%)
10. Assistance from the Govt. since 1970 : a. Agricultural activity = 51 b. Village and small scale industries. = 1 c. Irrigation = 2 d. Others = 42. (This is excluding educational help)	= 96 (67.61%)

From the above Table it will be clear that only 15.49% of the Jamatias of the village are landless which is lower than average level of landless of all other tribes of Tripura in comparison with other tribes of Tripura which is 20%. It is pleasing to note that 47.18% of the Jamatias families are holding five or more than five *Kanis* of agricultural land which clearly indicated the soundness of their economic condition. In order to supplement their income most of the Jamatias practice *Jhum* (shifting) Cultivation besides the plough cultivation.

In the Shilighati villages 80.28% of families practise shifting cultivation along with the plough cultivation. In this village only 11.25% families depend wholly on *Jhum* cultivation or working as *Jhum* labourers.

In the Jamatia community there are some persons who practise share cropping inspite of having their own land. In the shilighati village 38.73% families are engaged in share cropping. The landless families are mostly engaged in share cropping and they also work as agricultural labourer and sometimes as day labourer along with practising of *Jhum* cultivation. In this way the landless persons are sometimes engaged in more than one occupation.

Besides the above mentioned functions, both the land owner and the landless (here landless means a person who has no agricultural land but has his own homestead) persons earn some cash money throughout the year. These are selling of different agricultural commodities such as garden products (Pineapple, fishes, eggs, fowls, rice beer, seasonal vegetables etc.) in the local market or through agents. The selling of jute, mustard seeds, cotton, paddy etc. also are an important source of their income. The priests (*Ochai*) of their community also earn something in addition to their other sources of income.

Now a days, many Jamatias work in the forest department during its plantation season and in the P.W.D department in the construction works. Government service is also a recent source of income. Jamatias are employed in the various government departments.

The occupational pattern of the Jamatias of Tripura is almost similar to that of Tripuri tribe. It should be mentioned here that a Jamatia boy or a girl seldom serves as a domestic or agricultural servant in a Non-Jamatia house. Begging is also absent in their community. In respect of business, they are very much indifferent. Of course, now a days, a few persons have come forward in business (groocer's shop, tea stall in village markets and in carpentary works).

Labour System:

The labour system in vegue in the Jamatia community in connection with agriculture may be grouped under the following heads:

1. Baga (Share Cropping) :-

The system of share cropping in the Jamatia society is called *Baga*. In this system the land owner gives his land to a person for one year for cultivation and the crop production is divided between the landowner and the cultivator equally. In the past the land owner used to give seeds and bullock to the cultivator. But now a days, they give the seeds only. No document is executed in this respect. The owner of the land gives his land orally. This system is known as *Baga* among the Tripuris also. But they do not give anything to the cultivator.

ii). Khajna :-

In this system, the owner of the land gives his land to a cultivator on the condition of certain amount of paddy per *Kani* for a year. Gnerally 3 Maunds or 114 kg of paddy is paid to the owner of the land annually irrespective of the product. In the this system, the owner of the land does not give anything to the cultivator except the land. This contract is made for one year and it is also orally decided. This is known as *Khajna* among the Jamatias and *Pattam* among the Tripuri community and as *Chuktibaga* among the local Bengalees.

iii). Yagul (Exchange Of Labour) :-

In this system, one family helps another family in his agricultural or any other type of work and in return the other family also helps

this family in its work. No payment is made by either side in this connection. It is a kind of mutual help. The system in which the party that works first is called *Yagulkhilmwng* and the system in which the party that renders its service in return of it is called *Yagul Swmwng*.

iv). Domestic Servent :-
In the Jamatia Society the domestic servent also plays an important role in their agricultural work. The domestic servent is called *Badar*. He is generally appointed for one year and is paid both in cash and kind as per previous contract. No female servent is engaged for their agricultural work. Generally, a Servent is taken on one year contract on payment of 15 to 16 maunds of paddy (550 to 600 k.g.) plus their fooding.

But now, they keep domestic servents only for agricultural season i.e. for two to three months in a year on payment of one to two *maunds* of paddy per month plus their fooding. At the time of payment, the servant is paid the value of paddy according to the current market rate of that time. The increase or decrease of the price of paddy at the time of payment does not affect this contract.

v). Ren :
In this system the owner of the land takes a certain amount of money in times of his need from a certain wealthy person of the village by giving him a plot of agricultural land to him for a certain period. The money lender cultivates and enjoys all the rights of theland till the owner of the land pays him back the entire amount. No registration is done in this system. Now a days, the money lender takes a handnote from the owner of the land in this respect.

vi). Kerea :-
In this system, a person hires out his bullock to another person for his agricultural work for one year in exchange of 200 k.g. of paddy per bullock.

vii). Bhagi :-
In the Jamatia community, if an owner of a cow, goat, hen or any other kind of livestock cannot take proper care of them, he gives

these livestocks to another person to look after them. This is generally done for a minimum period of two years. This system is called *Bhagi*. In this system the first born of calf or utter of a cattle or goat are given to the care taker and the young one born there after are given to the owner of the livestock.

The Other Sides Of The Economic Activities Of The Jamatia Community :

Weaving :-

Weaving is also a vital factor to strengthen their economic condition. In the past they did not purchase their clothes from the market. Now a days, the influence of mill made cloths is gradually increasing. But till today, the garments of the female folk, bed covers, wrappers, napkins etc. are made from their indigeneious handlooms. Their women are very skilled in this matter.

In my visit to Twibaklwy and Shilighati village, it was observed that about 99% of the families work with indigeneous looms. They collect cotton from their *Jhum* and spin it in their traditional method. Now a days some of them purchase mill made yarns from the local markets and then weave it. The male folks also help them in this work. So they hardly purchase their women's garment and all other necessary articles from the market which helps them to save to some extent on this accounts.

Mustichaul (Mayrum Macha) :

A Traditional Co-Operative :

The Jamatias of Tripura were very conscious about the necessity of traditional village co-operative society even before the launching of co-operative movement by the Government. The aim of this Society was to assist the people in time of their distress. Such co-operative Societies were in existence in the Jamatia villages of Shilighat, Pithra, and Hadra of Udaipur Sub-Division.

The membership of these traditional co-operative Societies were confined to respective villages and the membership was compulsory. This was called *Mustichaul* (handful of rice). The aim of this Society was to perform various socio-religious functions of the village. In this system two assistants (*Khandal*) of the *Chakdin*

(Headman of the village) collected a certain quantity of rice once in a week from each house of the village and deposited the whole quantity of rice to the *Chakdiri* of the village Council. The rice thus collected was spent only for the performance of village *Pujas* and no body was allowed to take any loan from this stock for persoal use.

The customary law was that after meeting the annual expediture of the *Puja*, the surplus amount of money had to be deposited to the fund of the *Hada Akra* (Supreme Council). But generally, the *Chakdiri* used to spend all the rice as per their annual budget in such a way that no surplus was left.

It should be mentioned here that the poor and incapable persons of the village were generally exempted from this weekly collection but they were allowed to enjoy all the privileges of the village equally. This system of *Mustichaul* discontinued five to six years ago. Now, for the performance of any socio-religious function they collect subscription from each house at the time of a *Puja*.

Dharmagola :

The Jamatias of Shilighati, Pitra and Hadra have replaced their traditional *Mustichaul* co-operative by another kind of co-operative known as *Dharmagola*. The aim of this *Dharmagola* is different from that of the *Mustichaul*. Its purpose is not to meet the expenses of any socio-religious function. The aim of this *Dharmagola* is to provide monetary assistance to the villagers, in times, of their need. All the villagers of the village where the *Dharmagola* exists have to become its member compulsorily. No outsider can become its member.

Each individual family of a village has to deposit 10 kg of paddy in the *Dharmagola* as a first instalment to become its member. If a family is incapable to deposit the required 10kg of paddy, the other villagers help him to contribute his share from their stock. Any villager can take loan from this *Dharmagola* in times of his urgent need very promptly at a certain rate of interest which is generally lower than that of the village *Mahajans* (money lenders). In this way, the capital of this *Dharmagola* has been increasing

day by day. In some villages the capital of this *Dharmagola* is now about 75 to 80 quintal of paddy.

Modern co-operative Societies :-

As the Jamatias are habituated in their traditional village wise co-operative Societies, they are now more conscious about the advantages of the government aided Rural Co-operative in the agricultural work. It has been noticed that in the Shilighati village of Udaipur Sub-Division more than 51% of the villagers are holding the membership of the Large scale Multi Purpose Co-operative Society. This membership is increasing day by day. They take loans from these co-operative Societies.

Besides this, many of them are now acquainted with the rules and regulations of these Co-operative Societies and the Gramin Banks.

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Traditional Administrative System Of The Jamatias

The Jamatia generally like to live in groups. They have a high degree of social cohesion and social identity. This is mainly due to the gift of their traditional administrative structure. The whole Jamatia community of Tripura is socially controlled by their *Hada* (The Supreme Council of their traditional and social organisation). This *Hada* exercises the highest degree of administrative, and judicial powers within the Jamatia community. This self governing institution is an important factor of their discipline and unity. The Jamatia *Hada* has been functioning as an important institution of their social control since time immemorial. It is vested with all sorts of social, political, and religious functions of the Jamatia community. The fear of common dangers and the will for common good appeared to have created this age old administrative institution. The functions of the *Hada* has been working according to its customary and conventional rules.

According to some elderly Jamatia, their traditional administrative system underwent a change during the reign of Birchandra Manikya Bhandhur (1862-1897 A.D.) and the *Akras* (Chiefs) have been nominated by the brothers of the Maharaja since then. The power and the position of the *Akra* was recognised by the rulers of Tripura. The *Hada Akra* was given a rope and a cane by the king of Tripura as a token of his authority to maintain law and order in their community. The *Hada Akra* still retains this rope and cane as a symbol of his judicial and administrative authority. In course of time, the system of the nomination of *Akras* has been replaced by the democratic process of election and the *Akras* are now indirectly elected by the members of their community.

For the decentralisation of the powers of the *Hada* it is divided into three distinct separate units viz:

(1) *Luku* (village level Council)
(2) *Mayar* (Regional level Council)
(3) *Hada* (Community level Supreme Council)

The head of the *Luku* is *Chakdiri*, the head of the *Mayal* is *Mayal Panchayat* and the head of the *Hada* is the *Hada* Akra.

Besides the above mentioned three tier system of their administration, there is an Advisory Committee of eight executive members *(Upadesta)* drawn from all over the Jamatia community.

The Officials of their self governing institution can be removed by the members of the community as and when required. Custom does not permit their women folk to take part in the election of the traditional councils. The officials of this three tier administrative system are required to be married and financially secured.

1. The Village Council :

The village level Council of the Jamatias is called *Luku*. In the Social administrative structure of the Jamatia there is a distinction between a village *(Kami)* and a village state *(Luku)*. All the residents of a village *(Kami)* may not be the member of *Luku*. This is their community organisation. A non-Jamatia person living in a Jamatia village cannot become a member of their *Luku*. So a *Luku* is constituated by persons living in a village, belonging to the Jamatia community, following their customs and traditions and are ready to abide by their unwritten community Constitution. *Luku* (village Stage) is the medium of unity of the Jamatia of a *Kami* (village). It is a political and communal organisation.

The village Council mainly consists of one headman *(Chakdiri)* and two or more assistant *(Khandal)*. Usually the *Chakdiri* is directly elected by the senior male members of the *Luku* (village State). Only married persons with children and wife can participate in the election of members of the Council. Generally, the election of the *Chakdiri* takes place during the festival of *Ker Puja* which is held in the month of *Agrahayana*. This election takes place in the house of the outgoing *Chakdiri*. Generally, there is no contest for this election. Before the scheduled date of the election, all the senior members of the *Luku* vote unanimously for a person after considering his personality, character and all other qualities required for this post. In the pre-election meeting all the differences of opinion are mitigated by the joint endeavours of the senior

members of the *Luku*. After the election of a *Chakdiri*, the *Ker Puja* is performed in the name of the newly nominated *Chakdiri* for the well being of members of the village Council.

Justice is done according to the traditional rules. Generally, *Chakdin* has no judicial authority of his own. But he has the power to call a meeting *(Kakmalaymwng)* of the village Council to settle all the problems of the village i.e. theft, robbery, village development, funeral ceremony, assistance to the needy etc. The members of the *Luku* are informed of the date of the meeting via the *Khandals* (Asistants to or massengers of the *Chakdin*). This meeting is generally held in the house of the *Chakdin*. Besides the *Chakdin* and his assistants, some old and influential persons (i.e. *ex Chakdin*, educated people, etc) of the village also attend the Council meeting and they constitute the jury. These elders play a prominent role in this village council meeting and they generally give the verdict after weighing the pros and cons of the case among themselves. On a complaint lodged by an individual of the community, the complainant has to offer one bottle of wine or Rs 1/- to *Chakdin* as fee. The headman has no coercive authority. He cannot punish anybody of his own accord nor has he any powers vested unto him. The verdict of this village council is not binding or absolute and appeal may be made to the Regional Council or the Supreme Council against this verdict.

The *chadkin* is generally elected for a long period and there is no fixed period to his tenure. He can hold his office as long as he commands the respect of the members of his *Luku*. Of course there is no such evidence of a *Chakdin* in the history of any village council who held this post for life. If any natural calamity takes place during the period of *Chakdin*, he regards it as a symbol of his misfortune and at once resigns from his office.

Chakdin is the formal head of the village Council. All matters of significance are brought to his notice and his opinion and participation is desired on all important matters. He is the formal spokesman of the village. He is often financially better off, partially due to some financial expenditure associated with his office. All disputes must be brought to his notice. It is his duty to see that

the village Council deals only with the minor socio-economic disputes. The function of the *Chakdim* is to supervise all sorts of social functions like marriage, death or any other rituals and also to look after the law and order and welfare activity of the village. In case of serious breach of conduct by a resident of another village, the *Chakdim* should send or himself lead a quest to that village to demand justice. The *Chakdim* also maintains a good relationship with the *Mayal Panchay* (Head of the Regional Council) and the *Hada Akra* (Head of the Supreme Council) and participates or sends two representatives (Adangs) to the annual Supreme Council meeting (Agan Kakmalaymwng) held on the occasion of the 'Gang' festival (Goddess of water). The *Hada Akara* and all officials of the Supreme Council are elected in this meeting. *Adangs* (representatives) are temporarily selected by the *Chakdim* to attend certain meetings of the Supreme Councils on behalf of him. They are only the representative of the *Luku*.

2. Regional Council (*Mayal Panchay*)

The *Mayal Panchay* (Regional Council) is the next higher level administrative Organisation to the *Luku*. A *Mayal Panchay* generally consists of 30 to 50 *Lukus* of a compact geographical area. There are 13 *Mayals* of the Jamatia of Tripura. In each mayal; there are two *Panchays* (Headman) who are elected by *Adangs* of all the *Lukus* under the jurisdiction of that particular *Mayal*. The election of *Mayal Panchays* is usually held at an interval of 3 to 5 years on the occasion of regional *Gang* festivals *(Gang Puja)*. A *Mayal Panchay* may resign his office if he so wished but he cannot remain in his office after the completion of his term. If the electors want be can be re-elected to his office.

The *Mayal Panchays* always keep a close contact with the *Hada Akra*. The annual conference of the *Hada* which is generally held in the month of *Agrahanaya* is very important to the *Panchays*. In this conference, the *Panchays* are required to submit the annual report of his *Mayal* (Region) to the *Hada Akra*. This annual report of the *Panchay* must contain the accounts of the previous year, number of judgements made, total amount of the money collected as fine by inflicting of punishments and the number of undecided

disputes. Without submitting this annual report, a *Panchay* can neither resign his office, nor can he be re-elected for the next term. The audience have the right to protest against any wrong statement made by *Panchay*. In this way, the *Akras* collect data regarding their areas and accordingly make their speeches.

The *Mayal Panchays* are given some judicial powers. They act as judges and give their verdict on cases tried by them under their jurisdictions. But the judgement of a *Mayal Panchay* is not final, he may send a case to the *Hada Akra* for final judgement. When the *Chakdin* of the *Luku* fails to settle any dispute, he sends it to the *Mayal Panchay* for further judgement.

The *Akras* or the *Panchay* do not call meeting for the trial of cases to his own house. He may select any *Luku* under his jurisdiction as a place of trial to settle any dispute. The *Panchays* or the *Akras* invite the *Chakdin* of the village council whose members are involved in the case at the time of trial. The *Panchay* may try a case until his verdict is given. But his verdict is not final.

The *Mayal Panchays* of Kalyanpur and Reima-sharma have been vested with some exceptional powers. Their power is partly equal to that of the *Hada Akra*. In certain specific cases their judgement is final and they can inflict punishment on an offender. Of course, they have to inform the *Hada Akra* of these cases during the annual conference of the *Hada (Kakmalaymwng)* and take necessary advice from him.

3. **Supreme Council *(Hada)*** :-

Hada is the Supreme Council of the Jamatia community. The head of this *Hada* is called *Hada Akra*. Previously there was only one *Akra* in the whole of Jamatia community. But in course of time, the system of two *Akras* were introduced for better administration. Generally, these two *Akras* are elected from two regions i.e. Eastern Region (Amarpur) and Western Region (Udaipur). These *Akras* are indirectly elected by the two representatives *(Adangs)* from each *Luku* during the Annual Conference of the *Hada* which takes place in the month of *Agrahayan* (November-December). This conference of the hada is of great significance of the entire Jamatia

community. The *Akras* are elected for a period of 5 years. But usually they express their desire to retire at every annual Conference as a matter of formality. But the electors generally request them to continue in the office. At the end of this 5 year term they can be relected.

The two *Akras* jointly preside over the Annual Conference of the *Hada* and give the annual reports of their respective areas to the audience in their speeches. In these annual reports they are required to state the annual income and expenditure of the *Hada* amount of income inflicting punishments, number of divorces and the fees which is Rs. 5/- for each case deposited in the fund of the *Hada*. The number of undecided cases, and transactions made with the different *Mayais*. The amount of expenditure in various *Pujas* is also given in their speches. The *Akras* can neither resign nor be re-elected without submitting this annual report.

The *Adanags* of the *kuku* elect the *Akras* by raising their hands. Generally, after the completion of five years term, *Akras* are not re-elected. But in the year 1978 the two *Akras* Sri Siddhi Kumar Jamatia and Sri Birendra Kumar Jamatia have been re-elected for another term.

Generally, there is hardly any difference of opinion in the election of the *Akras* because the candidates are previously screened and selected by the leaders of their community. Usually, all internal conflicts and differences of opinions are settled by discussions among the influential leaders of their community and they arrive at an unanimous decision ultimately regarding the selection of the *Akras* before the Annual Conference on which the election takes place. So, in this process the *Akras* are selected ratherthan elected. But incase of failure of all these discussions, if there is any contest for the post of *Akra* the candidate backed by the minimum number of persons, will keep hands down. If a confusing situation arises in which elections cannot be held smoothly, a candidate who is first garlanded is declared elected. But such a situation seldom arises.

It has become customary for the Jamatia community that every year, during the period of Annual Conference both the *Akras* have to formally resign from their posts on the pretext of personal affairs and their inability to spare time for *Hada* duty. In this respect, even the willing *Akras* also have to pretend that they want to resign from their offices. But the acceptance of the resignation depends on the members of the conference. If the reasons showed by an *Akra* are genuine, and if he is determined to resign, then his resignation is accepted by the members, otherwise the members of the *Hada* request him to withdraw his resignation. So an inefficient *Akra* has no scope to remain in office for a full term and if he loses the confidence of the members of his community, his resignation (at the time of annual confeence) is accepted with alacrity by the members of the conference. So this Annual Conference is a formal check of the powers of the *Akras*.

As regards the qualifications for the post of an *Akra*, he must be a God fearing well known personality with adequate experience of the functions of their socio-political organisations. He must also be acquainted with the customs of their community and impartial in his treatment towards all. Previously all the *Akras* were above 50 years. But at present, this age bar is minimum 35 to 40 years.

It is also a custom of the Jamatias that the *Akras* should be married with wife and children.

There is no specific areas allotted to the administration of these two *Akras*. Both of them attend all the meetings of the *Hada*. They can attend any meeting of any *Maya* and *Luku*. And in this way their area of work often overlep each other. But generally, the two *Akras* are elected from two areas and they supervise their local areas.

Both of them have equal powers, though these power and position depend on the personality of the individual concerned. If any difference of opinion arises between the two *Akras*, then the dispute is settled by the joint endeavours of the members of the *Hada*, *Maya*(*Panchayand* the *Kherfang*, *Dariya* etc. who are the officials of the *Garia Puja*. But such situation seldom arises.

The annual conference of the Jamatia *Hada* can be held in any villages informing the *Chakdim* of that *Luku* previously about it.

The *Akras* are the chiefs of the Jamatia community. The aims and objectives of the Jamatia *Hada* are determined by these two *Akras*. This supreme council is the absolute authority to execute any customary law within their community. All types of modifications or amendments of the customs lie in the hands of this Supreme Council. The function of the *Hada* is to arrange for some annual festivals like *Garia Puja, Ganj Puja, Batang Swamani*, etc. Besides the religious function the *Hada* has judicial functions too. It is their highest organ of judicial authority. All kinds of cases like divorce, adultry, kidnapping, love affairs and all sorts of anti-social activities and complicated cases which could not be solved by the *Chakdims Mayal Panchays* are dealt with by the *Akras*. The verdict of the *Akra* is final. It is a not necessary for both the *Akras* to be present in all the cases. Thus, the *Hada* is vested with highest degree of legislative, administrative and judicial powers.

Dongduba Ramang Ceremony :
The *Akras* and other officials of the *Hada* and *Garia Puja* i.e. *Kherfang, Mwtaybalnay, Ochay, Dana* etc. after being elected to the posts are welcomed with some rituals. This function is officiated by the *Ochai* of the *Hada*. In this ceremony, first their feet is washed with water and after this they are led to their respective seats. After this, each of them is offered a little paddy, *Dubra*, cotton, money and a new cloth on a dish according to the instruction of the *Ochai* of their *Hada* who welcomes them.

This *Dangubaceremony* is also performed during all meetings and auspicious ceremonies in which the above mentioned officials of the *Hada* take part. It is also a custom of their society that each *Luku* has to welcome the *Akras* or their representatives when they visit the *Lukus*.

Takmari Ceremony :
After the election of the *Akras* and other officials of the *Hada* in the Annual Conference a special community level feast is held.

This feast is called *Takmari*

Advisory Council (Upadusta Committee):
Besides the above mentioned three tier system of the community organisation of the Jamatias i.e. (i) *Luku Panchayet* (ii) *Mayal Panchayet* (iii) *Hada* there is a powerful Advisory Council consisting of eight Executive Members to be selected from all the Jamatias to aid and advice the *Akras* in the execution of their functions. This advisory council is a later development and it was introduced in 1968, in the administrative system of the Jamatia community to give an opportunity to the young and educated Jamatias to enter this council and to reflect their modern and scientific out look in their community. They are the best media to import modern culture and to remove superstitions from their community. This council also acts as a check on the dictatorial tendencies of the *Akras*.

It has been laid down in their conventional *Hada* Constitution (*Jamatia Hada Gathantantra*) that a powerful advisory council should be formed consisting of persons who are free from superstitions, progressive in outlook, well conversant with worldly affairs, and have fellow feelings for the members of their community from all regional areas to assist the *Akras* in the execution of their functions.

The minimum age for its membership is twenty and the term of the Council is five years. A member of this advisory council cannot hold any other post or posts of their administrative organisation.

All the members of the advisory Council are selected by the two *Akras* unanimously during the Annual Conference of the *Hada*.

It is also mentioned in the Jamatia *Hada Gathantantra* that it is also the duty of the Advisory Council to assist the *Akras* to implement the aims and ideals of *Hada* and to uplift the standard of living of the common people of their community.

The members of the Advisory Council are answerable to the *Akras* for any failure on their part which may impede the development of the *Hada*. The *Akras* may even censure them on such occasions.

The Advisory Council is also duty bound to encourage the people of their community in their economical, moral and educational activities. It also looks after the efficient arrangements of various types of religious functions, fairs and festivals and to create a congenial atmosphere for bringing happiness, peace and prosperity in the midst of their community.

The annual budget and expenditure of the *hada* are also verified by this Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council has the power to suspend a despotic *Akra* from his office till the assemblance of the next session by a resolution adopted by a majority of the two third of the members of the Advisory Council.

It should be mentioned here that during the period of emergency, the members of the Advisory Council are also authorised to give their decision on any problem in their capacity of being a member of the Advisory Council. But these decisions are to be approved by the *Akras* of the Supreme Council.

Procedure Of The Traditional Council :
The village council deals only with minor socio-economic disputes. If any one lodges any complaint he has to offer one bottle of wine to the *Chakdiri* as fee. Then the *Chakdiri* fixes the date and time of the meeting and informs all the elderly members of the village via the *Khandais* (assistants) of his *Luku*. The *Chakdiri* and some elder members of the village consititute the jury. After hearing the statements of both sides, the members of the jury weigh the various pros and cons of the case among themselves and give their judgement. In this matter, they generally follow their traditional customs and repetition of cases. But their judgement is not final.

In case of failure of the *Luku* to settle any case or if its judgement is not accepted by either of the parties, the case is referred to the Regional Council. The *Mayal Panchay* does not call the meeting in his own house. He sends the case to a non-related village council and also informs the *Chakdiri* of the village council to which the

complainant belongs to be present there on the fixed date. The *panchay* of the *Mayal* the *Chakdiri* of the concerning *Luku* connected with this case and some senior members of their community consititute the jury of the case. Both the complainant and the defendant are bound to appear before the jury with the required witnesses and proofs in connection with the dispute. After this, the jury takes down the statement from both sides and discusses the matter in detail among themselves. At last the *Panchay* gives his judgement on the case. The *Panchays* are authorised to deal only with minor cases and give their judgemennt. But his judgement is not final even here and one can appeal against his judgement to the Supreme Council (*Hada*). serious cases are not dealt with by the *Panchay* and they are referred to the Supreme Council.

The *Akras* do not call a meeting for judgement of a case in their own houses. The *Akra* can select any *Luki* (village council) as a place for hearing of the case. But in this matter, the *Mayal Panchay* of a Regional Council and the *Chakdiri* to whose jurisdiction the case originally belonged must be present during the trial of the case. On receiving an appeal against the judgement of the Regional Council the *Hada Akra* visits the place of occurance of the dispute for an on the spot study of the case. He then issues Summons through a massenger to both the parties involved to appear before the court on a fixed day at a fixed hour with the particulars. The messenger is called *Plakda*. The parties are under obligation to appear before the court on recaipt of the summons. The *Chakdiri* of the *Luku* at whose place the case will be tried is also informed by the *Plakda* in advance.

The *Chakdiri* of the village council (Where the case will be tried is to be offered 5 (five) rupes and one bottle of wine by the complainant as admission fees to use his *Kachari Ghar* (Court house) for the case. This system is called *Kachari Painamwng* (to get the court house). Some old persons of their community constitute the jury to help the *Akra* in the trial

The *Chakdin* and the *Mayal Panchay* also help the *Akra* in this matter. After taking his seat as Chief justice, the *Akra* directs the plaintiff to place his case before the court. Then the accused is asked to defend himself. Witnesses of both the parties are also asked to give their statements. Then the *Akra* discusses the pros and cons of the case with the members of the jury and comes to a decision. In his descussion the opinion of the *Chakdin* of the *Lokul* and some elder persons of the village are sought first. After this, the *Akra* leaves the case to the people for some time to discuss about the case. This is done to give a chance for free discussion on all the various aspects of the case by the people. At that time, a serious debate is often held between the supporters of both the parties. When the *Akra* finds any justified argument in this debate, he at once stops it. Then the *Akra* comes to a decision and gives his verdict. The *Akra's* decision is final and is usually accepted by all including the plaintiff and the defendant.

Previously, in case of minor offences they used to put into practise several ordeals and tests in order to detect the guilty. In these cases, a person suspected of theft was asked to swear in the name of Gods i.e. fourteen deities *(Chaudda Devata)* or Goddess *Kali* of Udaipur etc. or he was asked to eat a small quantity of rice sanctified by *Mantra* (*Chaul Para*) or he was asked to drink a little water purified by *Mantras (Jal Para)*. It was believed that if he were guilty he would be sick. But this method was practised only for minor cases either by individuals or village councils. For major cases, in which the *Akras* or the *Mayal Panchays* were present, these techniques were not applied.

Now a days, the above mentioned method for detection is no longer used.

Punishment :

The Supreme council or the Regional councils or the village councils inflict punishment in different ways, such as fine in cash or kind, atrocities on a person from the society and so on. Fine in cash is recent development. In the past, to use the cane was very much in vogue. Their methods for social control is so organised and strict that the violtion of law is very few in number in their

community. Punishment to the female offender is sympathetically considered. The *Akra* may impose any amount of fine without considering the gravity of the case and without thinking of the financial ability of the offender.

Previously, for a divorce case, an amount, *Chay Kuri, Chay Taka, Chay Adhuli, Chaysiki, Chay Ani* (Rs. 131-37) was imposed on the husband according to their customary rule. But at present this amount has been relaxed to some extent.

In case of a love affair between a boy and girl, they are generally married. If the boy does not agree to marry he has to bear all the expenses of the girl for her entire life.

Generally, heavy punishments are inflicted for adultery. In the past, if a married man or a woman were proved guilty of infidelity or illicit relation with others, chilly power was applied on the vagina of the female offender and a cat was tied on the penis (male organ) of the male offender. Whipping was also inflicted. Now a days this type of physical punishment has been gradually declining in in their community.

In cases of offence of theft and robbery, heavy physical punishment including whipping is inflicted on the guilty person according to the judgement of the *Hada Akra*. In such cases, the stolen goods are also returned to the owner. Physical punishment has been relaxed in this case also. Now a days, government help is also sought in such cases.

There is a custom in the judicial system of the the Jamatias by which, if a party disregards or does not agree to abide by the verdict of the Supreme Council, he is arbitrarily judged as guilty in the proceedings and is punished accordingly. As for example if a wife lodges a complaint of physical violence by her husband and if the Supreme Council after hearing of the case censures her husband and orders the wife to stay with her husband, the wife is under an obligation to honour the judgement of the supreme Council. If she disregards this order, the supreme council would arbitrarily decide her to be guilty.

CHAPTER-III

RELIGION

The Jamatias are Hindus. The present day Jamatia religion may be characterised as mixture of *Vaishnavism* and *Animism*. They are divided into two main sects of *Vaishnava* and *Saktas*. Many of them are *Vaishanava* mendicants who are called *Sadhus*[1].

During the Census of 1901, 1911 and 1961 the entire Jamatia population returned themelves as Hindus[2]. During the Census of 1971 the percentage of Hindus among the Jamatias is 99.99% and during the Census of 1981 the percentage of Hindus and Christians among the Jamatias is 97.76% and 1.11% respectively. The Census reports in connection with their religion is furnished below :-

TABLE - I
Persons during the Census Years

Religion	1901	1911	1961	1971	1981
Total Population	4910	178	24339	34192	44501
Hindu	4910	178	24339	34191	43988
Christian	—	—	—	1	501

The Jamatias of Tripura accepted *Vaishnavism* during the reign of Maharaja Birchandra Manikya (1861-1896). The 1931 Census Report mentions how they came to embrace *Vaishnavism*. During the reign of Maharaja Birchandra Manikya there was an official named *Oakhirai Hazari* who was a tyrant. The Jamatias rose in revolt against his oppression in 1862 under the leadership of *Parikshit Jamatia*. The Maharaja Succeded in crushing the rebellion with the help of the *Darlongs* (one of the Sub-tribe of Tripura). Birchandra, however, did not punish their leader and spared him his life. Touched by this gesture, the *Sardar*(leader) accepted

Vaishnavism and promised to follow its customs. After that, the whole community came to accept *Vaishnavism*. So this armed rebellion of the Jamatias was turned into a cultural revolution by Bir Chandra[3].

It is also mentioned in the 1931 Census Report that the religiousness of the Jamatia is appreciable. They are the followers of the *Sakta* doctrine. They accepted *Vishnu Mantra* under the guidance of the *Gosvamis*. In the Census of this year 10,267 *Saktas* and 803 *Vaishnavas* were found in their community. All of them use *Mala* and *Chandan*. They thought it as their duty to go on pilgrimage every year and usually visit holy places like *Kashi* (varanasi), *Brindaban* etc. *Harisankirtan* (singing of the holy songs of the God *Hari*) is considered as one of the most important religious duties among them[4].

The role of religion in the Jamatia community was so solemn that even the practice of *Sati* was found among some members of this community. The information regarding the practice of *Sati* came to the notice of the British government in 1888 A.D[5].

Regarding the practice of Vaishnavism a picture of the Jamatia community may be drawn from the tour diary of Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya during his visit to Sonamura and Udaipur Division (1334 Tring). It states that from 10 to 12 A.M. I met the tribal subjects and their sardars. About three hundred tribal subjects came. Many persons of the Jamatia community have become *Vekdhari Bairagi* (wearing the garb of a religious mendicant) and they are hindering the progress of the Jamatia community. They keep three to four *Vaishnavies* (female vaishnavs) who are childless. The Jamatia Sardars appealed to me to stop this practice in their community or otherwise, their numerical strength would decrease.[6]

It should be mentioned here that as a result of adopting *Vaishanavism* they gave up rearing and eating of pig and fowl. They began to wear the sacred thread and worship the *Tulshi* plant. They also started to appoint Brahmin priests for the performance of religious functions.

The Jamatias of Tripura consider the *Ramayana, Mahavarata, Gita* etc. as their holy books. Besides the worshiping of many God and Goddesses of Hindu belief such as *Kali, Durga* and observance of certain customary rituals connected with birth and death they also perform their traditional and local *Pujas*. Their traditional *Pujas* are to some extent similar to that of the Tripuris, Noatias and Reangs. They have *Pujas* connected with all their day to day activities. In their religious affairs, there is a synthesis of *Vaishnavism, Shaktaism* and their traditional system of worship.

Though the present day Jamatias have re-established some of the past habits such as drinking of *Chak* (rice beer) and rearing of fowl, pig etc. and some of their traditional *Pujas* which they gave up just after the mass adoption of *Vaishnavism*. They still follow, in their social and religious functions the all India Hindu rites as much as they can.

It should be mentioned here that their traditional *Pujas* are officiated by their traditional priests and other non-traditional *Pujas* may be performed by a non-tribal Brahmin priest.

The religious beliefs and practices of the Jamatias may be termed as polythesitic. Animism or rather spiritism is an important factor of the Jamatia religion.

The traditional system of worship which is prevalent among the Jamatias can be termed as *Wathapism*. This *Wathap* is a bamboo made altar and it is needed in most of their traditional *Pujas*. The *Wathap* is generally prepared with six pieces of bamboos of equal length. According to the view of some elderly persons of their community, the term *Wathap* is derived from the *Kakbarak* language of the Jamatia word WA means bamboo and *Wathap* which means the nest of the birds. But in the context of their *Pujas*, the term *bathap* stands for the abode of the supernatural power or spirit instead of the nest of a bird.

Like the Tripuris, Noatias and many other tribes and sub tribes of Tripura, the image of most of the gods and goddesses of the Jamatias are also made of bamboo. Bamboo plays an important

role in their religious affairs. They prepare their *Puja* panda and the images of various gods and goddesses according to the procedure and instructions of *Ochai*.

Story Of The Traditional System Of Worship Of The Jamatias: The origin of their traditional *Pujas* has a very old history according to some elderly persons of their community who are well conversant with their religious affairs, namely Sri Chaitanya Hari Jamatia of Sur Dura and Sri Braja Mohan Jamatia of Karaimura their traditional worship was first propagated by an *Ochai* named Ding Ding Khiri during the reign of the King Trilochan (popularly known as Subray Raja). Regarding the propagation of this *Wathapism* there is a story which is in vogue in the Jamatia community.

A part of this story tells us that once Maharaja Trilochan (Subray Raja) became sick with *Jalpindi* (dropsy pot belly) disease. Then a saint told him that he would be cured only by the treatment of an *Ochai* named Ding Ding Khiri who was living in a distant place (beyond of seven seas and seven rivers). Two fishes named *Asul* (mahasoor, tor tor) and *Aprang* (eel, anguila bengalensis) knew the whereabouts of Ding Ding Khiri *Ochai*. These two fishes told Subray Raja about the dwelling place of Ding Ding Khiri *Ochai* and Subray Raja accordingly assigned them with the duty of bringing him to Tripura. These two fishes brought Ding Ding Khiri to Tripura.

Ding Ding Khiri then examined the symptoms of the king and ultimately said that the king became sick by evil eyes of the seven Swkals (evil spirits). The name of these seven *Swkals* are :

I) Jahari
II) Prahari
III) Promchari
IV) Dakini
V) Jogini
VI) Magini
VII) Magadchar

The *Ochai* said that the Swkals have cast their evil eye on the king as he did not invite their youngest sister named *Magadchari*

to attend his marriage ceremony. So being aggrieved they had attacked the king. The *Ochai* then told the king that he would be cured only by sacrificing seven animals in the name of those seven sisters on the bank of a river.

The king then began to think about the animals which could be sacrificed for his life. At that time one buffalo came to the king and requested him to sacrifice its son so that with the king's blessing its son might become a king in its next birth. The buffalo that was sacrificed was named as *Jalamashyak Kumar Raja*. After this, a goat came with its son to the king with the same request. The name of this sacrificed goat was *Anabw Raja*. Next, a sheep came with its son and its name was *Narasingh Raja*. In this way a pig, a pigeon, a duck and fowl came with their sons to the king accordingly for sacrificing for him. The name of their sons were *Suravi, Urupakhi Raja, Balihangha Raja* and *Anapakhi Raja* respectively.

Then Ding Khiri *Ochai* told that those who would live in this *Kirat* land should start chanting their mantras with the word *'a haya'*. After this worship the king was cured and Ding Ding Khiri returned to his state. The the type of structure of the deity of *Puja* which was made of bamboo by Ding Ding Khiri is still in vogue in the Jamatia community.

But after the recovery of the king, his subjects were attacked with this disease. Then the subjects again went to Ding Ding Khiri. He told them that after seven days, he would send *Thyunayrag* as his representative. He *(Thunayrag)* would visit the houses and when he would ask the patient whether he was good or bad, if the patient or his family members replied that 'He was Good' the patient would automatically be cured. *Thunayrag* tied a *Vamra* (Wasp) on a bamboo piece and it would make a sound when the bamboo piece was spun and that sound would indicate the presence of *Thyyunayrag*.

At last Ding Ding Khiri *Ochai* came and taught the *Chantay* the customs and regulations of the *Puja*. *Chantay* taught *Swanta* and *Manta Ochais* and from them all other *Ochais* of Tripura learned

the customs and *Mantra* of the *Puja* subsequently.

It should be mentioned here that till today, after the completion of the *Ker puja*, the *Ochai* asks all the present devotees "are you all in good health"? All the present devotees reply in the affirmative.

Magico - Religious Functionary :
There are two types of Magico-religious functionaries (priests). One type is concerned only with the magico-religious function of locality. The second type is concerned with the whole Jamatia community. He is their community priest.

In the Jamatia community, the person who knows the rituals of propitiation of one or more than one deity is known as *Ochai*. The person who performs the *Lampra Puja* for the peace and welfare of the families is also called *Ochai*. The person who is entrusted with the task of propitiation of the *Bwrwyrag* e.g. *Dakini, Jogini, Thunayrag, Bamrag, Nakri, Burasse* etc. is also addressed as *Ochai*. Again, the term *Ochai* is also applied to a person who performs various types of magical ceremonies for destruction of other or a person who can cure a person who suffers from a desease afflicted by an evil spirit transmitted by some other person or *Ochai* by detecting the name of the evil spirit and propitiating it. Generally, the *Ochai* also makes various indigenous medicines from various kinds of herbs, plants etc.

So an *Ochai* may be defined as a person who can remove misfortune and is entrusted with the task of the welfare of the members of the community.

The village *Ochai's* post is not hereditary. In most cases he is selected on the basis of his efficiency. Generally, the village priest continues functioning till he is disabled or dead. One of his most efficient and active disciples is generally groomed to succed him. In some cases the son of an *Ochai* gets more opportunities to learn his father's trade than other disciples do, no supernatural process is observed for the selection of an *Ochai*.

The system of separate *Ochais* for the performance of separate *Pujas* is not in practice in the Jamatia community. An *Ochai* is called as an *Ochai* of a particular deity so long he performs the *Puja* of that particular deity. So when an *Ochai* who officiates a marriage ceremony, he is known as an *Padani Ochai* and when he officiates the *Lampra Puja* he is known as *Lampra Puja*.

In considering the environmental and paychological factor of the *Jamatias*, it can be said that the customs of the traditioal *Pujas* which are officiated by the *Ochai* is mixed up with their folk psychology. Till today, most of the Jamatias of Tripura surrender to the *Ochai* if any one falls ill. Their dependance on the *Ochai* may be partly due to their mental faculty, the fear of the unknown and a sense of total helplessness in the absence of the facilities of the modern medicine and many otherlike scientific aids in the face of a hostile environment.

The *Ochai* detects the aggrieved deity and tells him how to propitiate it to get cured by offering *Puja*. But with increasing modern medical facilities and the spread of modern education, the dependence of the people on the *Ochai* is decreasing gradually. The modern educated youths do not respect them in the same degree as did their ancestors. Of course, the *Ochai* who uses magic espicially for evil purposes (witchcrafts) are atleast superficially respected by the modern youths and this respect is usually out of fear.

Generally, very few persons in their community has the boldness to protest against or to go against the *Ochai* on any matter except when drinking in socio-religious functions, quarrel among the children or conflict of property shakes one's tolerance. The Jamatia fear the *Ochai* as they believe that they can do any kind of harm to a person or his family if they become incensed.

At last, it may be said that though the *Ochai* performs his function as a priest, as a magician and village medicine man and though his service is required from birth to death of a person in their society, today his position as an *Ochai* is decaying in the Jamatia community and his status in his society is determined more by his social position and personal influence, his strength of men and money than by

his profession of *Ochaiship.*

Besides the village priests, who perform various kinds of magico-religious functions of the people of their respective villages, the *Hada Ochai* (community priest) do the magico-religious functions for the welfare of the entire Jamatia community. As he is vested with the selfare of the entire community, his responsibility and status is undoubtedly higher than a village priest.

The *Hada Ochai* is selected during the annual conference of the *Hada* (supreme council) along with the election of other officials of the *Hada* Council. The Community level (Hada) *Pujas* such as *Garia Puja, Gang Puja* etc. are officiated by the *Hada Ochai.* He is helped by his assistants. Generally, religious minded person who is well conversent and experienced with the customs, rituals and *Mantras* of their traditional *Pujas* is selected as an *Ochai.* The *Ochai* should also possess a sound health as he has to observe several restrictions. Generally, a person acts as a *Hada Ochai* for not more than five to six years.

A *Hada Ochai* is required to lead a holy life and has to observe the following restrictions for as long he acts a *Hada Ochai* :

1. He should maintain abstinence of and should not sleep with his wife.

2. The dishes from which he takes food should be in good condition and these should not be broken or cracked.

3. He should not observe the period of impurity due to the birth or death of any of his relatives. He should not take his meal in a house which is observing the period of impurity. It is their belief that if an *Ochai* observes the period of impurity, then his body would also be impured. So he is not required to observe the period of impurity.

4. The *Ochai* should wear sacrad thread. He should also wear *Dhuties* without border.

3. *Maylwngma* : A female deity who rules over rice and crops.
4. *Khulwngma* : The goddess of cotton and weaving.
5. *Garia* : The fulfiller of one's wishes.
6. *Akatha, Bikatha or Sukundray, Mukundray and Twybuk* : Jointly worshipped in the Lanpra Puja. They are auspicious deities.
7. *Twyma* : The Goddess of Water.
8. *Sangrang* : Godess of Wealth and prosperity.
9. *Nagsu* : The Goddess who is the protector of the homestead.

The malevolent deities are :
1. *Burasa* : A male deity who causes diseases and suffering to others.
2. *Haychukma* : The goddess who rules over the animals and the forests.
3. *Thunnayrag and Banirag* : The co lectors of death news.
4. *Swkal/Mang* : Witches.
5. *Srijamdu and Srijadu* : They cause barrenness in the woman.

Besides these, there are seven types of Swkals (evil spirits) who are known for their evil eyes. They are :

1. *Jahari.*
2. *Prahari.*
3. *Premchari.*
4. *Dakini.*
5. *Jogini.*
6. *Magini and*
7. *Magadhchari.*

In addition to the above mentioned seven malevolent deities, there are eighteen more. A patient may be cured by their propitiation. These malevolent deities are :

1. *Sunamati,*
2. *Kahanmati,*
3. *Aychuti,*
4. *Aluti,*
5. *Berua,*
6. *Kherua,*

5. He is also required to take his bath in a flowing stream and not in stagnent water.

The above mentioned restrictions are also required to be observed by all other officials of *Garia Puja*. i.e. *Kherlang, the Mwtaybalnay, the Darrya* etc.

The Jamatia deities may broadly be grouped under two categories - the deibes worshipped by the Jamatia *Hada*council for the welfare of the entire community and the deities worshipped in regional level, village level and house level for the welfare of the people belonging to above mentioned levels.

It may be mentioned here that the various deities worshipped by the *Hada*are also worshipped by the regional council, village council and individual houses. The *Puja*of the *Hada*and *Mayal*are officiated by the *Hada Ochar*and *Mayal Ochar*respectively. The *Puja* of the *Lukur*and individual households are officiated by the general *Ochar* of the village concerned.

Classification Of Deities, Spirits And Other Super Natural Agencies:

The Jamatias in their polytheistic religious structure recognise a number of deities, spirits and other supernatural agencies which may be put under the following categories.

1. The worship of the deities, spirsts etc. which have come from their traditional culture are the *Kerpuja, the Lampra Puja, the Mayliwrigma Puja, the Naksu Puja, the Burasa Puja, the Bwrwyrag Puja, the Mahadev and Madev Puja, the Gania Puja, the Chauddadevata Puja and Mwytamwng Or Twymakermwng.*

2. The worship of the deities, spirits etc. which have been borrowd from the neighbouring castes and communities as a result of acculturation are the *Sani Puja*, the *Trinath Puja*, the *Laxmi Puja, the Saraswati Puja, the Rakshakali Puja, the Rathajatra* festival and the Janmastami festival.

The deities of the Jamatias may be grouped under two classes namely - malevolent and benevolent. The benevolent deibes are:

1. *Mwtay Katar* :The Supreme deity.
2. *Hskwcharmama* :Tripura Sundari.

Jamatias. *Garia* is considered to be a benevolent male deity by them. He fulfils the desires of his worshippers. Unlike all other *Kok Borok* speaking tribes of Tripura, who perform the *Garia Puja* in thier houses, the Jamatias perform this *Puja* as a community festival.

There are differences of opinions among the scholars regarding the identity of the *Garia*. Some consider *Garia* as a form of *Ganesh*. Some consider it as a form of *Narashingha*. Some consider *Garia* as a form of shiva.

There are reasons to regard *Garia* as *Narasingha* or *Shiva*. *Narasingha* is considered to be a very powerful god by the *Jamatias* and some other tribal communities. He is supposed to be the destroyer of evil forces. Many utter his name when in danger or in fear. So *Garia* the protector, is naturally looked upon as *Narasingha*.

Shiva is the god of agriculture and famous for his unsocial ways and that strange aloofness. *Garia* too has these traits of character. *Garia Puja* is held on *Mahabishu* day, the last day of the Bengali month of *Chaitra*. This day is considered as an ausuicious day from the religious point of view to the non-tribal Hindus of this area also. Moreover, the most popular form of *Shiva* worship, the *Charak Puja* is also held about this time in this region. Besides, the trident which *Shiva* holds in his hand is also implanted before the image of *Garia*. Perhaps these similarities gave rise to these ideas of equating *Garia* with these deities.

But still others think that *Garia* is *Garia* and it is futile to identify him with any other deity. Both the Jamatias and the neighbouring non-tribal Hindus are polytheistic by nature. So as a result of interaction in many cases the Jamatia deities whose nature and functions appeared similar to those of the deities of the neighbouring non-tribal Hindus got the name of the more familiar non-tribal deities.

In the past only one image *Garia* was worshipped. Later on, since Pubnarayan's bringing of the image of *Garia* from the land of the

TABLE - II

Household, Village, Region and Community level Pujas of the Jamatias

Name of the Puja	Household level	Village level	Region level	Community level
1. Garia Puja	No	No	No	Yes
2. Ker Puja	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Twybuk Khulumwng a. Nukhungsamwng b. Luku samwng c. Mayal Mwytanmwng d. Hada mwyttanmwng	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Maylwngma Puja	Yes	No	No	No
5. Khulwngma Puja	Yes	No	No	No
6. Lampra Puja	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7. Nagsu Puja	Yes	No	No	No
8. Sangatran Puja	Yes	No	No	No
9. Kuwaychanayma Puja	Yes	No	No	No
10. Burasa Puja	Yes	No	No	No
11. Harmuthu Puja	Yes	No	No	No
12. Balangswa Puja	No	No	No	Yes
13. Nakri	No	Yes	No	No

The Traditional Puja Of The Jamatias:

I. The *Garia Puja*:

The significance of the various names of the two immages of *Garia* :-

The *Garia Puja* is the biggest annual religious festival of the

7. Narite,
8. Nakete,
9. Lankhele,
10. Patalkainya,
11. Surung Kainya,
12. Hadini.
13. Medini,
14. Sukala,
15. Rangkhal,
16. Susugini,
17. Tangburi, and
18. Balsingraja.

Except the last mentioned deity *Balsingraja* all are female deities. No sacrificing is done in their *Puja*. Only *Naibadaya* with banana is offered. There is a custom in this *Puja* that banana should, be called *Rambafal* to obtain the desired result otherwise, the object of the *Puja* would be in vain. This *Puja* is performed by the *Ochai* The propitiation of these deities is also performed for the welfare the village.

Besides the above mentioned classifications, the worshipping of the Jamatia deities may again be grouped under four types more, namely.

1. Household level worship for the welfare of a particular household.
2. Village level worship which is arranged by the *Chakdiri* of a village Council for the welfare of the village.
3. *Mayal* level worship which is arranged by a *Mayal Panchay* for the welfare of a particular *Mayal*
4. *HADA* level worship which is performed on behalf of the *Hada* Council for the welfare of the entire Jamatia community.

It should be mentioned here that on some occassions a particular deity may be worshipped by the above mentioned four levels. Of Couse, the aim and objective of these four types of *Pujas* are to some extent different for different types.

Kukis, the worship of the two images began among them. And since then, the original image is now known as the elder (brother) *Garia*.

The image brought from the land of the Kukis is a three tier bamboo construction. These three tiers are considered as hands and legs of the image and is known as *Biyagwnang* (BIYA = hands and legs+ GWNANG = in possession) or the one who has hands and legs.

On the other hand, as the original image is constructed with a single piece of bamboo without any tiers i.e. without any hand and feet it is known as *Biyakwnwy* (BIYA = hands and legs + KWNWY = does not exist) - the one who has no hands and legs. However, a few years ago with the consent of the *Hada* this image was provided with two hands.

The image of the *Biyagwnang Garia* is also known as *Bwlaygwnang Gari* (BWLAY = leaves + *Gwnang* = in possession) which means possessing leaves. This term might have been confusedly used by them due to misunderstanding of the clothes used in decoration of the image of the *Biyagwnang Garia* as leaves. Which hang down like leaves around the image.

On the other hand, the original image is known as *Bwlaykwnwy* (bwlay =leaves +kwnwy = does not exist) which means the *Garia* without leaves. Obviously, the name was given when the new image of the *Garia* which has leaves was accuired.

Besides this, the traditional deity is also known as *Tokchakfa Mwtay* (the deity of *Tokchakfa*). *Tokchakfa* was the friend and disciple of *Garia* and was the first man to construct an image of the *Garia* and to worship him. It was the beginning of the *Garia Puja* among the Jamatia.

The *Garia Puja* has a deeply rooted significance on the socio-political and religious life of the Jamatia. In order to understand the religious life of the Jamatias one must possess a clear cut idea of the role of the *Garia Puja*. It is also necessary

to know the origin of the system of worship of the two *Garia* images i.e. *Biakwrwy* and *biyagwnang* among them.

The legend of the *Biyakwrwy Garia* (The *Garia* without hands and legs):-
Long long ago, there was a vilage boasting around 126 households (*Kami Nag Kuri Dak Nag Dak*) in a valley in *Langteray* hill range of Tripura. A rich couple named *Laktak* and *Hachakti* dwelt there. They helped the villagers in many ways and the villagers also respected them.

They had no children and were now growing old. They had no peace of mind. The villagers were full of sympathy for them and regularly prayed to god to bless them with bonny baby. But to no avail. At last they approched an old man of a neighbouring village for guidance.

The old man told them that he had heard it said from his forefathers that if any childless couple adopted an orphan boy god become pleased and granted them a baby. The villagers themselves rounded up two orphan brothers *Sukumdray* and *Mukundray* for *Laktak* and *Hachakti* to adopt. The couple began to bring up these two brothers with love and affection. But after a few days the two lads died suddenly.

Laktak and *Hachakti* were deeply shocked. They prayed and prayed to god for a child. At last, one night god appeared to them in the r dream and told them that he would be born as their son.

In course of time *Hachakti* became pregnant and gave birth to a son. But the waist of the newly born babay was so rigid and unsupple that it could scarcely be bent. Due to this, the *Aburswmwng* ceremony of the mother (the ceremonial bathing to end the impure state of the mother after child birth) and the name giving ceremony of the child could not be held. So the child had no name and he was known to the villagers as *Seyngkwrak* (*Sewyng* means waist and *Kwrak* means stiff, i.e. the one with a stiff waist).

Seven years passed in this manner and then the boy began to

develop rapidly. *Hachakti* now performed the *Aburswrnwng* ceremony and the *Ochar*named the boy *Naraseyng*(Naran = Soft + Swyng = Waist) or the one with a supple waist so that people began to call him by that name. It was hoped that by the dint of power of the human tongue (Bangsani Khuk Rwbay) the child might overcome his physical handicap.

*Naraseyng*continued to grow up and gradually became very strong and hardy. The villagers looked favourably upon him as their village had gained prosperity since his birth. He became popular among the villagers for his valour too. They were proud to have a hero like *Naraseyng* among them.

At that time *Pralhad*, the son of *Haranya Kashipu*came to the village of Naraseyng in search of *Lord Hari*. There he met *Naraseyng*and the recognition was mutual. Then *Pralhad* returned to his father and told him that he had met *Hari*. On hearing this, *Hiranya Kashipu* became furious and came out with *Pralhad*to slay *Hari*.

Naraseyng's came to know of *Hiranya Kashipur's* expedition and got ready. When *Hiranya Kashipu* was entering their village he suddenly attacked him and killed him. *Hiranya Kashipu's* soldiers fled. The villagers now revered *Naraseyng* more than ever.

Now *Naraseyng's* parents began preparation for his marriage. His marriage ceremony was now performed. But his wife left him after one year of marriage as he had not established any sexual relationship with her.

After this, his parents and friends married him off to a more beautiful girl. But again separation took place on the same grounds.

In the same way he married and divorced six girls one after another. So his grand parents and friends gave him the nick-name, *Gara* out of joke. *Gara* literally means the one who canot adjust (Gara =adjustment +ya =lacking).

His parents arranged his marriage for the seventh time. They thought that he had no sexual desire. Therfore, this time, on the

seventh day of his marriage (in the past the functions of the marriage ceremony of the Jamatias lasted for seven days) *Baglas* (friends of *Garia*) through enacting mock sex act, mimes gestures and erotic songs tried to give him sex education and to rouse his sexual desire.

One day, *Naraseyng* told his closest friend *Takchakfa* that he had no need for a family life as he himself was a combination of the male and female entity. He also said that he would be leaving them soon.

Takchakfa tried to prevent him from departing but failed. As the news reached the villagers, they came to dissuade him from leaving but they also failed to change his mind. Then *Takchakfa* told him that in his absence there would be none to save the villagers when there was an external aggression or when there was scarcity of food. *Naraseyng* told him that he would come to help them whenever they would remember him.

Then he went away, with a spear in his hand. When he was passing through the neighbouring villages he told the villagers that he was going away for good. The villagers asked him who would save them from difficulties. *Naraseyng* gave his spear to them and told them that he would help them whenever they would remember him by worshipping the spear which was his symbol.

Then he came to another village with a *Wasuk* (a young bamboo) in his hand. When the villagers came to know about his departure they were very much shocked. They also said that they would become helpless in his absence. *Naraseyng* gave them the *Wasuk* and told them that he would help them whenever they would remember him by offering *Puja* to that *Wasuk*. Then he left that village and proceded towards the land of the *Kukis*.

After the departure of *Naraseyng*, there was a famine in Tripura. Then *Takchakfa* prayed to him to save them. *Naraseyng* appeared in *Takchakfa's* dream and told him to make a life size image of him with bamboo (*Watwy Fang*) collected from a clean place and cut sacradly and to offer *Puja* to the image.

Takchakfa made an image of *Naraseyng* and worshipped it. This image came to be known as *Takchakfa Mwtay* (Takchakfa's deity). This image is also known as *Biyakwrwy Garia* or *Bwlaykwrwy Garia*.

The Legend Viewed In The Light Of Realism :
Till today the *Garia Puja* is performed for seven days and seven nights which bears a relation with the seven marriages of *Naraseyng*. Besides, the marriage ceremony used to continue for seven days and seven nights among the Jamatia in the past which too was in conformity with the seven marriages of *Garia*.

Moreover, the *Garia Puja* is also known as *Garia Kaymwng* (gariya = *Garia* + *Kaymwng* = marriage) which means the marriage of *Garia*.

All the male *Jatnis* (devotees present) are addressed as *Kumuwy* (brother-in-law) and all the female *Jatnis* are addressed as *Bachuwy* (sister -in-law). During the period of *Puja* they forget their previous relationships. There is an atmosphere of gay abandon. This can still be found in the *Garia Puja*.

Till today, most of the songs that are sung during the Puja contain many words and passages which may sound obscene and are rather erotic. It is seen that these songs are directed towards the male folks to rouse their sexual desire.

Even now, the *Baglas* (considered as friends of *Garia*) during the seven days of the *Puja* dress like men and women and enact mock sex act. Thus the songs and role of the *Baglas* of today reminds one of the marriage ceremony of *Naraseyng*.

Even today, the Jamatias like many other tribes of Tripura belive that all the evil spirits of the world cannot harm a person if he takes the name of *Naraseyng*. If any one goes out of the house at night he says '(*Fa Naraseyng*' *(Oh' Naraseyng*).

The Legend As Seen In Connection With The Image Of Biyagwnang Garia :
Strictly speaking the *Biyagwnang Garia* is not a traditional deity of the Jamatias. But the worship of this image began such a long

time ago that it is considered almost as a traditional image of the Jamatias.

There is a legend prevalent among the Jamatias in connection with the bringing of this image of *Gana* from *Thanangchi*, the land of the Kukis by a great hero, named Pubnarayan. He came of a *Noatiya* family (one of the 19 tribes of Tripura) and his mother was a Swkal (evil spirit). One day, during his childhood, he with his mother fortunately met the goddess *Kali*. Being pleased with him, goddess *Kali* granted the boon to him that one day he would become a very powerful warrior and would hold a high rank in the army.

In course of time *Pubnarayan* grew up to be a young man with a strong healthy body. Oneday, at night, *Pubnarayan dreamt of a person sporting matted hair and holding a trident in his hand in dream. This person said to him, 'I am Gania.* I am spending my days in the land of the *Kukis*. The king *Kherengmwa's* is worshipping me. I do'not like to part take of the flesh of pigs every day. You take me away from here.'

Pubnarayan told his mother about his dream. Next morning he was ordered by the king to meet him. When he met the king, he was ordered to invade the land of the *Kukis* as they had stopped paying revenues to the king of Tripura and were engaged in robbery in the eastern border of the state under the leadership of the *Kuki* king *Kherengmwa*. *Pubnarayan* then told the king that *Kherengmwa's* source of strength was the living deity *Garia*. He wished to conquer their land to bring *Garia*.

The king was very much pleased to hear *Pubnarayan's* plan. *Pubnarayan* started for the land of the *Kukis* in 1011 *Tripura Era* (1601 A.D.). After a few days he reached there with much difficulty as it was situated in an inaccessessible area.

The *Kuki* soldiers were residing on the top of a very high hill. *Pubnarayan* found that it was quite absured to climb up the slope. Besides, big sized boulders were tied on these slopes so that nobody could climb up.

Disappointed, *Pubnarayan* then prayed to *Kali* to bless him with success. That night he saw goddess *Kali* in his dream. She told him that next morning he would find a big sized *Mufuk* (lizard) with a long tail on the upward slopes of the hill and *Pubnarayan's* soldiers would be able to climb up this hill by catching hold of the tail of this *Mufuk*.

The next morning, *Pubnarayan* found that *Mufuk* and climbed up the hill with his soldiers and defeated the *Kherengmwa*. *Kherengmwa* then agreed to pay revenue to the king of *Tripura*. He also handed over the image of *Garia* to Pubnarayan. The head of *Garia* was made of a alloy of eight different metals.

As *Pubnarayan* and his soldiers did not know the customs employed by the *Kukis* to worship the image of *Garia*, he brought the *Kuki* priest of *Garia* along with him.

An Analysis of The Legend In The Light Of Realism :
The following facts may be revealed from the above stated legend by an analysis of it from the geographical position of the state, the history of warfares of the kings of *Tripura* and the customs of the *Garia Puja*.

1. Till today, the *Kherfang* (the hereditary priest of the image of Garia) of the the *Biyagwnang Garia* must belong to the lineage of the *Kherfng of Biyagwnang Garia* which is supposed to have been originated from the *Kuki* tribe.
2. The description of invasion and conquest of the *Kukis* of *Thanangchi* by *Roy Kachak*, the General of the king *Dhanya Manikya* (1490-1515 A.D.) as mentioned in the *Shri Rajmala* (the royal chronicle of the kings of *Tripura*) has a similarity to that of the invasion of *Pubnarayan*.

Moreover, *Pubnarayan* may not be the original name of the person who had brought forth the image of *Garia* from the land of the kumis as there was a custom of holding the title *Narayan* by the generals of Tripura during the reign of the early kings.

Besides, *Thanangchi*, the land of the Kukis stands on the eastern side of Tripura. The Jamatia word *Pub* means east. So the name *Pubnarayan* might have stood for the general (Narayan) who conquered the land in the east.

In this connection, the following piece from the book *TripurSanghita* written by *Sri Alindralal Tripura* will be of interest.

"when the army of *Tripura* went up along the narrow path, th *Kukis* cut down the ropes that held the boulders thus killing a lot of soldiers while a helpless *Raykachak* the chief looked on Mother *Tripura Sundari* who came in his dream and said 'you will find a lizard tomorrow morning near your camp. Tie a long piece of cane to it and let it go to the fort of the *Kukis*. Catch hold of the cane and go up and with my blessing, you will kill the *Kukis*. *Raykachak* did so and rained the *Kukis* with the arms in great valour. The *Narayan* of the east and the *Dewan* of the south fought heroically and advanced and in a few moments conquered the Kirat. The Jamatias got *Garia* of eight metals, the trident of *Kalaya* did others get and still others captured only the *Wasuk*. Others among things took the swords, the musical instruments, and the *Ghung* that gives out a deep *'Ghung'* sound. Different sections got different articles of *Garia* Which they still worship. In this way the loot of the war was shared by all and *GARIA* remained in Tripura even now[7]."

The Customs Of The Garia Puja :

(a) Points of differences :

The customs and rituals prevalent among the Jamatias regarding the worship of both the images is almost the same except in certain aspects. First, the major points of differences.

The image of the *Biyakwnwy Garia* is a piece of bamboo. On the other hand, the image of the *Biyakwnwy Garia* possesses limbs - hands and legs. The image has three tiers.

After the performance of the *Puja*, the image of the *Biyagwnang Garia* is taken out from the *Puja* pandal and carried through the villages in procession. On the other hand the image of the *Biyakwnwy Garia* is not taken out in procession.

The *Kherfang* (the hereditary priest) of the *Biyakwnwy Garia* must belong to the lineage of the *Kherfang* of the *Biyakwnwy Garia*. On the other hand the Kherfang of the lineage of the *Biyagwnang Garia* must belong to the lineage of the *Kherfang* of the *Biyagwnang Garia*. This lineage is originated from the *Kuki* tribe of Thanangchi.

The image of the *Biyakwnwy Garia* is not decked with clothes as is done in the case of the *Biyagwnang Garia*.

In spite of the above mentioned differences the customs and rituals observed for both the images are almost the same.

(b) Common features in the worship of both the images :

Every year the *Garia puja* starts from the day of *Mahabishu Snakrant* i.e. from the last day of the Bengali month of *Chaitra* (March-April) and continues for seven days and seven nights. The day on which the *Garia Puja* starts is called *Buisa* by the Jamatias.

There is no permanent place or temple dedicated to this deity. The *Puja* is performed in the open Courtyard. *Garia* is very dear to them and the *Puja* is performed socially. The *Puja* is held in a village as decided in the annual meeting of the *Hada*. The village where the venue of the *Puja* is decided has to take the responsibility of the *Puja*. From time to time the venue is changed with the consent of the villages changing over and taking over the *Puja*.

The *Gari Puja* is performed by collecting *Khains* (subscription) from among the members of their community. The *Mwtay Balnays* (the carriers of the image of the Garia) go out for collecting *Khains* about two and half months before the date of the *Puja*. The subscription is fixed according to the ability of the payee. Of course, well to do persons are consulted before fixation of the amount of their subscriptions.

The officials recruited for the *Puja* are selected during the annual conference of the *Hada*. These officials are:

1. *Kherfang* : For the two images there are two separate *Kherfang* lineages i.e. the *Biyakwnwy Kherfang* lineage and the *Biyagwnang Kherfang* lineage. The Jamatia term *Kherfang* is supposed to have

been derived fro the word *Kernay Nagfang* (Kernay=Worshier+Nagfang=Head Of The Family) which means the head of the worshippers.

The duty of *Kherfang* is to preserve the image and the materials of the *Puja*the whole year sacredly and the annual *Puja*if performed in the courtyard of his house. If any officiating *Kherfang* expresses his unwillingness to continue to function as a *Kherfang*, in that case any willing person belonging to that *Kherfang* lineage is entrusted with the duty. Of course, in such case generally a person of another village is selected.

2. *Ochai* : He is the chief priest of the *Puja*. It is not a hereditary post.

3. *Mwtaybalnay* : He is the bearer of the image of the *Garia*.

4. *Daniya* : He is the drumbeater of the *Garia*.
5. *Bagla* : They are considered as companions of *Garia*.

6. *Bhandari* : They act as store Keeper for the *Puja*.

The *Ochai, Mwtaybalnay, Daniya* and many other distinguished persons of the Jamatia society become busy in the decoration of the image of *Garia* one day ahead of the *Puja*. On the previous day of the *Puja* any six persons go to a nearby forest wearing sacrad garmants to bring three spotless green bamboos. They detect the spotless bamboos by a special spiritual manner which is traditional with them. This system of detection is called *Patkarmwng*.

In the system of *Patkarmwng* they take a length of green bamboo of about one cubit long and splits it into two vertically or take two betel leaves or two banana leaves and throw them on the ground from a certain height after reciting of *Mantra* on it. If one leaf or piece of bamboo falls on the ground with its back side up and the other with its frontside up it is assumed as a Good sign. If the two leaves fall on the ground in the same manner, it is assumed as a bad sign.

After detecting the auspicious bamboo they offer a *Bhog* under this bamboo. Then one of them cut this by a single stroke holding his breath. The other two bamboos are cut in an ordinary manner. The first mentioned bamboo which is cut in a special manner is called *Wathwyfangraja*

These bamboos are then taken to the *Mwtaybalnay*. Although he was not present at the time of the selection of the *Wathwyfangraja* (The main bamboo) by reciting *Mantras* he can point out exactly the bamboo that was cut as the main bamboo. Then the *Mwtaybalnay* cuts two pieces of bamboos of 7 (seven) cubits in length. The limbs of the image of *Garia* are made from these two pieces of bamboos. The remaining bamboos are kept intact. The *Wathwfangraja* is covered with white thread and cloth.

A pandal is constructed in the court yeard of the house where the *Puja* is to be performed. This pandal is made of bamboo and decorated with their hand woven *Risa* (the breast cloth used by tribal women) *Chaddar* etc. During the time of *Puja* a white thread is tied to the pedestal of the deity. The other end of this thread is tied to a post of the fencing beyond which the worshippers stand.

One trident is fixed on the ground infront of the image of *Garia* at a distance of one cubit from it. Besides this trident, twenty other tridents each about of ten kg in weight are fixed infront the image. These tridents are eight to nine cubits long. A boundary is marked by two white threads from these tridents to the fencing mentioned above. None is allowed within this boundary at the time of the *Puja* only the *Ochai* the *Mwtaybalnay* and the *Dariyas* are permitted to enter this sacred area. Before the start of the *Puja*, the *Ochai* the *Mwtaybalnay* and the *Dariya* sprinkle sacred water in this area which is demarcated by these white threads.

On the first day of the *Puja* the male and female devotees present are required to observe fast. The *Mwtaybalnay* and the *Ochai* after reciting *Mantra* performs the rite of inspinting the image of the *Garia* made of rice paste. At this time the image is kept lying. Afterwards it is put on a wooden platform in sitting position and then in standing

position. The *Ochai* then repeats a mantra and offers a *naibadya* (offering) to this image.

Besides this, the *Ochai* offers a naibadaya to the bamboo made image of *Garia* also and put a sacrad thread on its shoulders. After the performance of this ceremony, the bamboo made image of *Garia* is handed to the *Mwtabalnay*. The *Mwtaybalnay* holds the image in his hands and kicks on the earth thrice and says *'Ekhan Amar'* (now mine). He then takes the image of *Garia* on his shoulder and goes to the *Kherfang*. The *Daniya* then beat the drums and follow the *Mwtaubalnay* along with the devotees. The devotees of *Garia* who moved for seven days and seven nights with the image are called *'jatri'*

After taking the image to the house of *Kherfang*, the *Mwtaybalnay* goes round a *Tulshi* (holy basil) altar called *Bangchay* three times (Bangchay is the alter of combibnations of *Tulshi* and many other sacred plants). After completion of these threee rounds of the *Bangchay* the image of *Gana* is fixed near the *Bangchay*. Then the *Kherfang*, the *Ochai*, the *Mwtaybalnay*, the *Daniay Akra* and some distinguished persons of their community wash the feet of the image of *Garia*.

After this the present devotees are asked to offer their *Bhog* (offering) if they are willing. Generally, the *Puja* begins at 8/9 A.M. with sacrificing ceremony. The sacrificing of the buffalo of the *Hade* (community) is done first. This is called *Hadani Misib* (the buffalo which is purchased with the subscription of the members of the community for the general welfare of the community). Next to it, the sacrificing of the he goats of the *Hadas* is done.

Then the sacrificing of promised buffaloes and hegoats from the devotees are performed. At this point also, the buffaloes are sacrificed first and the he goats next to it. A buffalo can not be sacrificed alone. It must be accompanied by the sacrificing of a he goat and a new napk n. These sacrificing are performed by any one from among the *Mwtaybalnays*.

After the completion of the *Puja* the *Prasad* (food offered to the deity) is returned to the devotees who offered them. Beside this, the community offerings which is offered from the *Hada* is also distributed among the persons present.

It should be mentioned here that, after the completion of the *Puja*, six officials of the *Puja* namely, the *Ochai*, the *Kherlang*, the *Mwtaybalnays*, the *Dariya Akra* and two *Sarders* go inside a fixed room in sacred garments. There the *Ochai* takes his seat first and then the *Kherlang*, the *Mwtaybalnay*, the *Dariya Akra* and the two *Sardars* take their seats in this order. They are welcomed with paddy, *Durba* grass, cotton and *Sepeyngc* linseed).

Then the *Mwtaybalnay* offers one cup of rice beer (Arak) covered with a leaf to the *Ochai* and asks him about the results of the *Puja*. The *Ochai* does not take it at the first instance instead he gives it to the *Mwtaybalnay*. The *Ochai* takes rice beer when he is offered a second time.

After this, they visit many households of the village and take rice beer there. When the wine taking function is over, arrangments are made for their meals.

A special separate room is arranged for taking of their meals. They are to observe certain customs at the time of taking their meals. The *Ochai*, the *Kherlang*, the *Mwtaybalnay*, the *Dariya Akra* and the two *Akras* (two heads of Supreme Council) take their seats in the order mentioned above. The four officials take their seats face to face. The two *Akras* sit separately. The dish of the *Ochai* is specially arranged. The rice for these above mentioned six officials of *Garia* is sacredly and separately prepared. The cook has also to observe purity during this period. They take their meals for seven days in this way.

Besides this, during the time of their taking the meals, sneezing and entrance of any outsider in this room is strictly prohibited. Even movement of outsiders by the side of this room is also prohibited. After completion of their meal they are required to get up all at a time. After washing their hands and mouth, they take their

respective seats and *Kuwayfatwy* (betal leaf and betel nut), *Duma* (tobacco) are offered to them. Here also the *Ochari* is required to take them first.

After taking their meals, the officials of *Garia* take rest for about an hour. Then they get ready to carry the image *Garia* to the scheduled villages. On the first day, they start at about 3 P.M. All the villagers are required to keep their boxes, safes, doors etc. open before *Garia* enters that village. In case of impunity in any village *Garia* is not taken in the village.

The owner of a house welcomes the people who follow *Garia* on its movements around the village cordially, when the *Garia* is taken to house. The owner of the house tried his level best to satisfy them. He offers them varous kinds of food items, clothes etc. Then the *Ochari* and the *Mwtaybalnay* bless the owner of the house saying that his wishes will be fulfilled.

In this way, they go from door to doer, from village to village with the image of the *Garia* and dance for five to ten minutes in each house and bless the owner of the houses. This continues for seven days. The officials of *Garia* remain very busy at that time. During the movement at least three officials of *Garia* out six officials are required to remain nearly the image of the *Garia* always. One egg of duck is kept on the pedestal of the image during this journey of *Garia*. At the time of this journey ducks, he goats, pigeons, buffaloes etc. are also sacrificed by many persons individually for the welbeing of their families.

There is another group of persons to accompany *Garia* during its movements. This group of persons is called baglas.

The leader of the *Baglas* is called *Mahanta*. The *Baglas* are very jolly persons. The *Mahanta* himself also makes jokes with the spectators and the followers. There are hundreds of *Baglas* in the party of the *Mahanta*.

If any man, woman or any one from among the spectetor requests the *Mahanta* to cure him or her of an ailment suffered for his or

her neglect or disrespect of *Garia*, the *Mahanta* takes the *Charanamrita* of *Garia* or a little holy water and chants some *Mantras* on it and gives it to the patient. Some times, instead of giving this holy water to the patient, he simply tells the patient *Ta-wanadi* (don't worry). The pranks of the *Baglas* are just not taken seriously and there are nothing harmful in them.

The *Baglas* demand various items of food from the owner of the houses during their movement with *Gana*. The owner of the house tries his level best to satisfy them. The owner of the houses believe that the dissatisfaction of the *Baglas* maybe harmful to them. At the time of blessings the baglas tell the owner of the houses that his offerings are quite impressive. He will be happy and will go to the heaven for such offerings. Being glad by these appreciations, the owner of the houses offer them. money, clothes, threads etc. These threads are kept in house of the *Kherfang* after completion of the *Puja*.

At the end of the seventh day of the puja, the image of *Garia* is again taken to the *Kherfang's* house. There, the image of *Gana* is placed infront of the *Bangchay* and a *Puja* is performed. Then offerings are given by individual mamebrs of the community and also by the members of their community as a whole. At that time only pigeons and he goats are sacrificed and hemp is offered to the *Garia*.

After completion of the *Puja*, the *Mwtalaybalnays* take their bath and go to the house of the *Kherfang*. Then anyone of the distinguished officials of the *Garia* asks them about the latest resluts of the *Puja*. After this, the *Mwtabalnays* ask all to immerse the image of *Garia*.

At the time of the immerson they remove all the clothes of the image. Any one can take off these clothes. Then any one of the *Mwtaybalnays* immerses the image of *Gana*.

After this, they take mud from the side of the *Bangchay* and play with this mud among themselves and then after taking their bath, they go to the house of the *Kherfang*. At that tme, they are welcomed

with six bottles of rice beer and they take their meals in the house of the *Kherfang*.

The two *Bhandaris* and the *Mahanta* are also offered three bottles of rice beer in the same way. Then the six officials of the *Garia Puja* call all the persons to collect allthe materials and put them into the cane made basket and put it on the ceiling of the house of the *Kherfang* for the next year. Many *Jatris* take pieces of clothes removed from the image of *Garia* as the God's blessing at that time.

It should be mentioned here that on the day of immerson of the image of *Garia*, *Sena Puja* is performed in every houses of the Jamatia community individually. The seventh day of the Bengali month of Baishakh is an auspicious day to them as the day of the *Sena Puja* is held on that day. The *Mayliwngma* and the *Khuliwngma Pujas* are also performed on the day of the *Sena Puja*.

2. Lampra Puja :

One of the most important and significant religious functions of the Jamatias is the *Lampra Puja*. This Puja is performed at the household level, village level, regional level and community level for the welfare of the people at the respective levels.

There are two types of the *Lampra Puja*. One is held in the morning (till the sun is in the mid sky) and is known as *Fuwayni Lampra* and the other is an afternoon *Puja* i.e. when the sun begins to descend and is known as *Sanni Lampra*. Of course, the *Lampra Puja* in connection with all important affairs (birth, marriage, death etc) are performed in the morning. And that way they fall in the type of *Fuwyni Lampra*. But in the case of ordinary matters like widow marriage, the marriage of a divorced women, ceremonial friendship etc. The *Sanni Lampra Puja* is performed.

The term *Lampra* is derived from the Jamatia words lan = way/ road and pra= junction. So *Lampra* literally means cross roads and it is not the name of a deity, it means the puja which is performed at the cross road. But in practice the *Puja* is usually performed in the court yard of a house.

There are six deities for worship in the *Lampra Puja*. But in each type of *Puja* only four deities are worshiped. These dieties are :

1. *Akatha*
2. *Bikatha*
3. *Sukundray*
4. *Mukundray*
5. *Twybuk*
6. *Sangrang.*

The deities which are worshipped during the morning *Lampra* are :

1. *Akatha*
2. *Bikatha*
3. *Twybuk and*
4. *Sangrang.*

And the deities which are worshipped during the *Sarini Lampra* are :

1. *Sukundray*
2. *Mukundray*
3. *Twybuk and*
4. *Sangrang.*

Thus it will be seen that *Twybuk* and *Sangrang* are worshipped in both the *Pujas*.

The Purpose of the *Puja*:

The *Lampra Puja* is performed for the various kinds of welfare purposes. With this *Puja* any kind of impurity or the period of mourning is ended.

The *Lampra Puja* has an important place in the socio-religious life of a Jamatia. This *Puja* must be performed to mark every important stages in man's life-birth, marriage and death. The manyfold purposes of the *Lampra Puja* may broadly be divided into two categories-1. essential and 2. general purpose.

1. After the birth of a baby when its umbilical cord comes off or drops down the *Lampra Puja* is performed in the name of the baby.

2. Before settlement of one's marriage *Lampra Puja* is performed for the welfare of the couple.

3. In the case of *Sraddha* ceremony (funeral ceremony) the *Lampra Puja* is performed to end the mourning period for the peace of the departed soul.

4. The *Lampra Puja* must necessarily precede the performance of the *Puja* of any benevolent deity.

The general purpose for which the *Lampra Puja* is performed are many e.g. before the starting of a new work, or for the success of any important task, for the construction of a new house etc. The individual household performs this *Puja* once in a month for the general welfare of the family. If any one of the village dies the village headman is required to perform the *Lampra Puja* on behalf of the villagers so that the soul of the dead does not bring any harm to the village.

Generally, the *Ochai* officiates this puja. He is required to observe fasting to officiate this *Puja*. This *Puja* is performed in two ways - (1) by sacrificing a fowl and (2) by offering *Naibaday*. But at present, the practice of offering of *Naibaday* is in vogue in their community.

The articles generally required for this *Puja* are the banana leaf, *Dhup* (incence), flower, *Tulshi* leaf and a *Naibaday* consisting of banana, sugarpole, atap rice etc. Generally, the fees of the *Ochai* is not paid in cash, he is offered rice beer instead of it.

It has been said before that though the *Lampra* literally means a cross road the *Puja* is not usually performed at the cross road. In the context of religion *Lampra* does not mean cross road. Its inner significance is something more than this.

The philosophical truth lying behind the concept of *Lampra* may be that as the human beings of this world roll in the cross roads *(Lampra)* of life, the four deities of the *Lampra* are worshipped to have their blessings to choose the proper way (lama) of life so that they would not roll in the cross roads of life. The aforesaid conception of the *Lampra Puja* probably has given it a dominant status as an suspicious *Puja* in the life cycles of the Jamatia.

Though four deities are worshipped in the *Lamra Puja* it is seen that these four deities are related to the *Garia* some elders of the community say that as the *Garia Puja* in formal way takes place only once in a year, they have no scope to worship *Garia* in their day to day family affairs, so the *Lampra Puja* may be regarded as a simple form of the *Garia Puja*.

3. **The Maylwngma And Khulwngma Puja:**
They are the two benevolent female deities worshipped in each Jamatia house. The word *Maylwngma* (may=paddy +lwng=land +ama=mother) means the deity who rules over paddy fields. The words *Khulwngma*(khul=cotton+lwng=land +ama=mother) means the deity who rules over cotton crops is known as *Khulwngma*. As weaving, the art of preparing clothes etc. are related to cotton, *Khulwngma* is also considered as goddess of wisdom.

The *Maylwngma Puja* and *Khulwngma Puja* are performed twice in a year. The first one is performed in the month of Baishakh, on the day of the *Sena Puja*, the day on which the image of *Gana* is immersed. The second *Puja* is celebrated on the fist day of eating new rice. The time of this puja is not fixed everywhere. In some places harvesting of paddy is done in the month of *Agrahanaya* and in others it is done in the month of *Bhadra/Aswin*. So the second time *Puja* is performed between the month of *Bhadra* and *Aswin*.

In this puja, two earthen pots *(Randak)* are decoreated with rice paste and are tied with handmade cotton thread. These two pots are considered as symbols of these two deities and they are filled with newly harvested rice on the day of the *Puja*. They believe that their families will prosper in both wealth and progeny if these two earthen pots remain filled to the brim. Some egg shaped

pebbles painted with vermillion are place inside these earthen pots. These pebbles are considered to be symbols of good fortune. They keep a little cotton in the pot of the *Khulwngma*

These two pots are placed in a neat and clean protion of the house on two pieces of banana leaves. They offer flowers and light candles infront of the two earthen pots of *Maylwngma*and *Khulwngma*every day sacredly.

The worship of *Maylwngma* and *Khulwngm* being the deities of paddy land and cotton clearly shows the importance given by the earlier people to these two basic needs of humanity. The concept of *Maylwngma*is similar to the concept of *Laxmi*(goddess of paddy and wealth) among the neighbouring Bengalees. Besides this, the concept of *Khulwngma* being the deity of learning as she rules over cotton which is related to the art of weaving is similar with the concept of *Saraswati*(goddess oflearning) by the neighbouring Bengales Hindus. The image of *Saraswati* is also as white as the colour of cotton.

4. The *Mwytamwng Puja* (Worshiping of River/Stream):
The *Mwytamwng or Twyman*pujais performed by community level, regional level and village level organisations along with certain individual families for the welfare of the members within in the jurisdiction of the above level organisations. In the community level (hada) *Puja* one baffalo is sacrificed on the bank of the *Gomoti* river, one on the *Bijoy* river of Bishlagar, one on the *Khowai* river and one buffalo and male goat are sacrificed at *Matabari (Tripura Sundari* tample) of Udaipur. Besieds this one buffalo is sacrificed in the *Puja* of each regional level organisations for the welfare of the people of each regions.

The *Puja* which is held in the village is called *Luku Samwng*. The Jamatia word *Luku Samwng* is derived from the words *Luku* = village council +samwng= work. So it means the work of village council. As buffalo is not sacrificed in this *Puja* it is not called luku mwytanmwng. Here importance has been stressd on the work of the village council than the sacrificed animal.

5. Nakhung Samwng (Household Puja Of Water) :
It is not a compulsory *Puja* for the family members. The word *Nakhung* has been derived from the words nag meaning house and *Samwng* meaning work/function. So *Nakhung Samwng* literally means the function of a family. But here *Nakhung Samwng* means the worshipping of the deity of water by a household. Here too two male goats are sacrificed. In this puja also the importance of work has more importance than that of the animal to be sacrificed.

6. The *Ker Puja* :
Generally the *Ker Puja* is officiated by an *Ochai*. It can take place on any saturday or tuesday. Unlike the *Gana Puja*, this puja is full of restrictions and taboos. The *Ochai* and the devotees remain extremely alert over the violation of the taboos connected with this *ker*. This puja is performed in order to protect the people of a particular area from disease, anxiety, epidemic etc.

The chief characteristic of the *Ker* is *Mudra* which incidates binding or fastening with seal of an area. For the protection of the villagers the *Ochai* draws the boundary of the village in which the *Puja* would be held by planting sanctified bamboo sticks. These sticks indicate the area of the *Puja*. This demarcation of area is called *Mudra/Khamwng* and it is done prior to the performance of the *Puja*.

1. *Saon Puja,*
2. *Agan Puja/Balang Katerama,*
3. *Chaitra Chaynggwra.*

***Saon Puja** : This Puja is performed by the hada* for the welfare of the people of their community. In this *Puja* they pray to the goddess of paddy to protect the country from scarcity.

Agan Puja/Balang Katerama :
This Puja is done by the *hada* for the welfare of those who go into deep forests for the purpose of cultivation. The worship of *Sangrangma* is mainly performed in this *Puja*. The name of the *Puja Balang Katerama* may be derived from the Jamatia words *Balangni Kri-Karani Kateromani* [Bolongni = of the forest + Kri =

fear + *Kara* = hesitation + *Kate* = removal + *Ramani* = giving) meaning removal of the fear of the forest.

In this *Puja* a live pigeon is buried in the ground outside of the boundary of the village which is known as *Khibwtharmani* This is also done with a view to remove fear as *Khibwtharmani* (Khi=fear+bwtharmani=killing) means killings of fear.

Chaitra Chayngwra :

This *Puja* is performed to protect the villagers from the attack of various diseases like cholera, pox etc wh ch generally takes place in the month of *Chaitra*. It is believed that in the month of *Chaitra*, the evil spirits make fun (chayngwra) with the people through these diseases.

6. **The Nagsu Mwtay Puja :**

Nagsu is not a common household deity of the Jamatias. The term *Nagsu Mwtay* (Nag = House+Su=corner+ *Mwtay*=god) means the goddess of house. It is considered as a female deity. It is believed that in some cases a woman is possessed by the *Nagsu* and she receives *Puja* of the *Nagsu Mwtay* as a medium.

The *Nagsu Puja* is performed on the day of the *Gana Puja* only in those homes where *Nagsu* exists. The *Puja* is officiated by an *Ochai*. All *Ochai* do not know the mantras of this PUJA. The *Ochai* constructs a *Yafwra* (a bamboo cane made small square sized platform with small holes on it). After the completion of the *Puja* the *Yafwra* is placed on the grilling of the roof at the south east corner of the house and the old one is immersed in water. The south east corner of the house has a special significance among the Jamatias. Generally oblation is offered to the *Nagsumwtay* but animals are sacrificed if the *Ochai* feels the necessity.

When a man has a sudden attack of diarrhoea, vomitting, fite, headache etc. he promises gifts to the *Nagsu*. In such cases he offers something to the woman possessed by the *Nagsumwtayes*. It is believed that with the acceptance of the offering by the possessed the patient will recover. The offering may range from a banana to a sugar cane etc.

7. The Sangatran Puja :

The *Sangatran* is a benevolent female deity. She is worshipped to get relief from all problems and sufferings like to rediscover a lost article, to win a case at the Court, to get back a lover, to have a child etc. In this *Puja* the worshipper promises an offering to *Sangatran*.

An earthen cone represents this deity. The *Puja* is performed by the worshipper himself. In this *Puja* the tale of *Kamalapati* is recited on a sunday. The tale of *Kamalapati* deals with the glory of the SANGATRAN and how *Kamalapati* was relieved from her suffering. Generally a *Naibadyam* offered in this *Puja*. But a sacrifical is also done if the worshipper promises it to the *Sangatran*. In case of such a happening the *Ochai* officiates the *Puja*.

8. The Kuwaychanayma Puja :

Kuwaychanayma is a malevolent female deity. This name is derived from the *Jamatia* word Kuway=betel nut or mixture of betel nut and betel leaf+*Chaawani* one who eats+ama-mother. As offering of *Kuway* is a must in this *Puja* the deity is known as *Kuwaychanayam*.

This puja is performed if the Ochai prescribes the propitiation of *Kuwychamayma* to a patient suffering from a disease sent by her. She leaves the patient alone only, if she is offered the coveted dish. Some people promise an annual propitiation to the *Kuwaychanayma*. In such cases the *Puja* is performed on the day of *Mahaastami* (during the period of *Durga Puja*. The *Ochai* officiates the *Puja*. The *Puja* is held in one corner of the village.

9. The Swkal/Mang/Bwrwyrag Puja :

When the spirit of a witch comes in the form of a bluish flame at night and makes a man sick so that the man makes an offering to placate the spirit it is known as *Swkal*. As most of the *Swkals* are females they are also known as *Bwrwyrag* (female). So *Swkals* and *bwrwyrag* are the same.

Usually, the *Swkals* are common woman belonging to their community. The *Swkals* generally learn the art of witchcraft from another *Swkal* The first stage or crude form of a *Swkal is Mang*. *Mang* literally means the body. So a witch which come with a physical form is known as *Mang*. The *Swkal* is a higher form of *Mang* it need not take a form, it appears as a bluish flame. To make one suffer a *Swkal* has not to perform any physical feat or even go near him. The spirit in the bluish form does the job. Though the *Swkals* can attack any one, they generally like a diseased person, children or a pregnant woman.

Regarding the *Mangs*, it is said that at night the *Mangs* come out in search of food to gargabe dumps and pick up fish bones, human skulls etc, and such thc. At such times she roams about naked specially if she is young, with hair falling over her shoulders and her face takes an elongated shape. For the elongation of her face she holds her bands over the fire of the oven and with the warm hads elongates her face. It any person of weak mind comes across her in such a state at night she does him or her great harm. Of course, *Mang* need not be propitiated to cure a person attacked by her. Only courage is necessary to absorb the shock of seeing her.

Though the *Swkals* are common men and women belonging to their community, but all people do not know who is a *Swkal* among them. Only the *Ochai* has the power to recognise a *Swkal or Mang* among them, And he reveals the identity of a *Swkal* secretly to the patient or in a few cases, only to his relations.

When a person suffers from any diseases, he is generally treated by an *Ochai* The *Ochai* first of all observes the patient very carefully and after performing some magico-religious rites, if he feels the worship of *Swkal* or *Bwnwyrags* is necessary, he recommends for it.

In this *Puja*, a platform is made of green bamboo, and a *Naibadya* is offered to the *Swkal* or *Bwnwyrag* consisting of rice cakes and other things. If the *Ochai* feels the necessity of sacrificing fowl, duck, pigeon or he-goats to satisfy *Bwnwyrag* or *Swkal*, he

recommends for it.

If the *Ochai* feels the necessity of the *Harmuthu Puja* to satisfy the *Swkabr Bwrwyrag* and to get rid of sickness he recommends for it. The *HarmuthuPuja* is officiated by the *Ochai*. In the *Harmuthu Puja* turtle or he-goats are sacrified if the Ochai feels the necessity of sacrificing them to please the *Swkal*.

The term *Harmuthu* probably has been derived from the Jamatia words *Har* and *Muthu*. The word *Har* means night and *Muthu* means to lull to sleep. This *Puja* is performed not in the courtyard or inside a house but where the garbage of the household is generally deposited. After the PUJA, a little amount of flesh from each part (nose, brow tail, ear, liver, feet, legs etc.) of the sacrificed animal is put on a *Bayling* (winnowing fan) which is covered by another winnowing fan and left on the garbage heap so that the *Swkals* eats it all throughout the night.

They believe that the *Swkal* eats them throughout the night and being satisfied leaves the body of the victim. In the next morning, the *Ochai* comes and examines the flesh and tells the result of the *Puja* to the owner of the house.

10. The Daykang Bwrwyrag Puja :
This *Puja* is also performed to get rid of a patient of the *Swkal*. This *Puja* is performed if the Ochai feels the necessity of it. Unlike the *Harmuthu Puja* it is performed at the *Daykang* the border of the village. The *Ochai* gives the name of the animal to be sacrificed to propitiate the *Swkal* or the *Bwrwyrag*. The flesh of the animal is taken by the *Ochai* and his party at the spot of the *Puja* and it cannot be taken to house. At the end the *Puja* the *Ochai* tells the result of the *Puja* to owner of the house.

11. The Burasa Puja :
Burasa is a malevolent male deity. It is believed that *Burasa* was a human being in the past. He turned into an evil spirit as he learnt only the evil sides of *Ochaiship*. He can assume any form by dint of *Mantra* and harms the human beings. Sometimes he whists the little children away and keeps them hidden. Their parents then

promise to sacrifice a fowl in the name of *Burasa*. It is believed that BURASA does not kill any one. Although he is fun loving he has a sadistic streak in him. The name *Burasa* is derived fromm the Jamatia word means small statured old man. This may be due to the fact that *Burasa* can assume any form that is, the semblance of a child or the form of an old man.

The worship of *Burasa* is performed only if the *Ochai* feels the necessity of it. The *Ochai* also prescribes the name of the animal to be sacrificed to propitiate *Burasa*. The *Puja* may be held on any day out side the boundary of the Village. Generally, fowl, duck, pigeon etc, are liked by the *Burasa*. In this *Puja*, the *Ochai* inspirits a piece of bamboo by the power of his *Mantra*.
It should be noted here that, in the performance of any PUJA, they generally clean and wash the house and the courtyard. They do not consider cowdung as an essential means of purification for the performance of religious functions.

Pujas and religious functions borrowed from the neighbouring People :
Besides their traditional deities and other magico-religious functions which are officiated by their traditional priests, the Jamatias of Tripura also perform many *Pujas* and religious functions, according to the almanac which are borrowed by them from their neighbouring castes and communities. This is the result of their long days of acculturation with their neighbouring non-tribal castes and communities. The worship of these deities may be performed by their traditional *Ochais* or by a local non-tribal *Brahmin* priest. But it should be mentioned here that the worship of all borrowed deities is not a common practice in their community. These are performed in a limited scale. A description of these borrowed deities from the local castes and communities are given below :-

1. The Shani Puja :
Many of the Jamatia households perform the *Shani Puja*. It is performed by the recitation of the *Panchali* of *Jyastha*. This *Puja* is performed once in a year and generally in the Bengali month of *Jyastha* (May-June). In this *Puja* the presence of the *Ochai* is

not a must. The owner of the household can perform this *Puja*. In this *Puja* he recites the glory of Shani from the *Shani Panchali* (Poems glorifying *Shani*) written in Bengali. If the *Shani Panchali* is not available, they hail *Shani* publicly. On the day of the *Shani Puja* one of the male members of the household (generally the head of the family) has to observe fast till the *Puja* ends. There is no sacrifice in this *Puja*, when the *Puja* is over, all the members of the family take *prasad*.

2. The Trinath Puja :

The worship of *Trinath* is also prevalent among the Jamatias of Tripura. This *Puja* is performed once in a year. Generally in the month of *Baisak* (April-May) or *Jaistha* (May-June). Again the presence of an *Ochai* is not a must in the *Puja*. Generally, the person who knows how to perform this *Puja*, recites the glory of *Trinath* from the *Panchali* (Poem glorifying *Trinath*) or tells the story of *Trinath*. Three certain pots, three lamps, three *kalkies* of (hemp) and a *naibadya* are required for this *Puja*. There is no sacrifice. After the completion of the *Puja* they sing some spiritual songs. This *Puja* is also identical with that of the local castes and communities.

3. **The Saraswati Puja :**

The *Saraswati Puja* is not done in individual houses. But this goddess of learning is worshipped by the students and teachers in their Schools.

4. The Durga Puja :

In general, the Jamatia do not perform the *Durga Puja* except for a few well to do families. They have almost similar types of conception regarding the form of *Durga* as that of the local non-tribal Hindu castes and communities.

Besides the above mentioned *Pujas*, the Jamatias also observe some other ceremonies and festivals according to the date and *Tithi* (lunar day) of the almanac.

A list of these festivals and auspicious *Tithis* (lunar day) are given below :-

1. **Pous Sankranti :**

On the day of *Pous Sankranti*, the female members of the households clean the house and the court-yard as is done during other festivals. On that day almost all of them get up early in the morning and take their bath. They prepare cakes made out of *Binny* rice on that day. Many Jamatias go to Dumbur at Thiltharmukh in Amarpur Sub-division, South Tripura, where a hydro electric project has come up now (a holy place in Tripura) to attend the religious fair. They take their religious bath in the holy water on the day of *Pous Sankranti* and offer various types of *Pujas*.

2. Rathajatra :

The *Rathajatra* festival is also observed in some Jamatia villages of Tripura. On the day of Rathajatra, they offer *naibadya* consisting of fruits, sugarpole (Batasa) and atap rice in the morning. On this occasion, they also offer cooked rice to the *Lord Jagannath Dev*. After performance of some rituals, they sing some religious songs and then distribute the *Prasad* among all those present.

One notable omission in this festival is that unlike others, they have no chariot of Lord Jagannath to pull to and fro on this occasion.

3. **Dol Purnima :**

This festival is also observed in some Jamatia villages according to the rituals followed by the local caste and communities.

Besides these, *Janma Astami, Vimekadasi, Parsa Ekadasi, Sayan Ekadasi etc. according to the dates fixed by the Panjika* are observed by young unmarried Jamatia girls. The male members do not observe these festivals.

Mantras :

It is customary for the *Ochai* to study the result of the *Puja* he has officiated. If the result is bad, he has to find out which deity is dissatisfied. In this matter, the house-holder demands to know the results of the *Puja* with a cup of *Chwak* (rice beer) to the *Ochai*. This asking for the result is known as *Semaswngmwng*. The revealing of the result by the *Ochai* is known as *Sema Samwng*.

Semanaymwng is the ritual of ascertaining by the *Ochai* the fortune or misfortune of the man who offers the *Puja*. In this process the *Ochai* picks up a handful of rice. He decides from beforehand what will be the fate of the man if the number of rice grains in his hand turns out to be odd or even.

If the result is bad, the *Ochai* has to find out which god has to be appeased for the desired result. Here again the same process of counting a handful of rice is gone through to find out the identity of the aggrieved deity.

It should been mentioned here that the *mantra* of the *Lampra Puja* is common to all the *Pujas* with a change of the names of the deities who are to be worshipped. In the worship of the deity of water only the name *Twybuk Kalkiraja* is mentioned in the place of the name of the four deities of the *Lampra Puja*. e.g. *Ang Hiya Twybuk Kalkiraja*.

Similarly, in the worship of the deity of big rivers the *Ochai* utters only the *Gunabati Rupabati* in the palce of the names of the deities. The bank of a big stream where the *Puja* is performed is known as *Gunabati* and the other bank is known as *Rupabati*.

In the *Puja* of a full flooded river the Ochai utters the only the name *Tarangini Ama* in the place of the names of deities. The name *Tarangini Ama* means a full flooded river in the dialect of the *Ochai*.

The custom of uttering the name of the deity to be worshipped in the common mantra of the *LampraPuja* for the *Pujas* which are performed only with *Naibadya* (without sacrificing).

In case of *Pujas* where animal sacrifice is involved the same *Mantra* is used only with a difference. In such cases the name of the sacrificial animal is mentioned in place of the name of the articles of *Naibadya*.

It should be noted here that the various animals which are sacrificed in the performance of a *Puja* have special names in the dialect of the *Ochai*. The specific names of the animals according to the dialect of the *Ochai* are as follows :

TABLE - III

Sl. NO.	Names of the birds and animals in English	In the dialect of the ocahi
1.	Fowl	Anapakhraja
2.	Duck	Balhangsaraja
3.	He goat	Anaowraja
4.	Sheep	Birsingaraja
5.	Pigeon	Urupakhraja
6.	Buffalo	Jalamashyak Kumariaja
7.	Pig	Surabhi

An extract drawn from the *Mantra* of the *Lampra Puja* as uttered by a Jamatia *Ochai* has been given below along with its English translation.

Ang Hiya Dau Sakha
Sin Akatha, Sin Bikatha
Ama Twybuk, Ama Sangrang
Niragsi Ma Fayjanay
Uttar Tangbw, Dakkin Tangbw
Pube Tangbw, Paschim Tangbw
Rajsinghasan Rokha
Achak Faybay Jadi
A Takle Achak Faybay Jakha Ba
Niragna Chaswmay Rojakha
Nung Swmay Rojakha
Yasu-Jaknay Twy Rojakha
Yasu Bay Jasidi
(Twy Kisa Kisa Hawo lu Khwlayuwy
Yaksu Rwkha)
A Takle Yasu Bay Jakha Ba
Nwsa Fana (Bwmwng) Kwnwyja Twlay Fanw,
Bikhwra Khangwra Jafanw
Niragna Khulunasajawani Banguwy

Niragna Suri Sajawani Banguwy
Niragni Thani Kisa Kay Jawani Banguwy
Niragni Thani Mansa Jawni Banguwy
Chgajaya Tulayfanw
Niragna Maynum Kisa Rambafal (Thaaylwy) Kisa
Batasa Kisa Khwlay Jaguwy
Chaswmay Rojajaguw
Chaswmay Rojajaguw
A Thaguw Thagya Fanw
Chaja Baykha
A Takle Chabay Jakha Nungbay Jakhaba
Yasu Bay Jasidi
Bukhuk Su Bay Jasidi
A Takle Yasu Bay Jakha Ba
Bukhuk Su Bay Jakha Ba
Swrasa Fale Leyngla Lang Bay Jadi
(Pasa/Chaswmay Raranany Tey Bani Nag Baragragni Hamnani
Nayuwy Mwthay Ragni Thani Ochaini Kabakmwng Kaymwng Tey
Samwng)
Dau A Danda Kwrwy Dasa Kwrwy
Ayakwrwy Achi Kwrwy
Kungtwy Kwrwy, Mwktwy Kwrwy
Ayakwrwy Achi Kwrwy
Kungtwy Kwrwy, Mwktwy Kwrwy
Hener Kwrwy Sakron Kwrwy
Akasa Kwrwy Khasa Kwrwy
Baban Kwray Rway Kwrwy
Kulun Kwrwy Kwma Kwrwy
Rajdanda Kwrwy Debadanda Kwrwy
Khwlayuwy Tang Rajadai, Hwnwy
Kabakjani Banguwy,
Nwsa Fanani (Bwmwng...) Banguwy.
Ang Bachuw
(Twy Ma Lunay)
Dau A Takle Nwsa Fanani (Bwmwng) Banguwy
Ayuk Tabakha Thaluk Tabakha
Dhan Tabakha Jan Tabakha
May Bw Tabakhe Khul Bw Tabakha
Dau Nwsa Fanana Kasang Khwngchunwy Lakruwy

Kebeng Faklay Taranwy
Naksing Siniya Chayaalak Nakhawo
Rimwing Siniya Ribagnuwy
Charnwng Siniya Charanuwy
Ayuk Barey Thaluk Barey
Dhan Baroy Jambarey
Ayuk Kwchang Thaluk Kwchang
Jala Jala Mal Mal Khwlayuwy
Tinini Sasimi Tangrojadi Dak ... Baba
[Maynum Agnauwy Sarna Naylaha/Thikana Nayleha]
A Takle Chabaykha Nujgbaykha Tei
Le Bw Leyngia Bayjakha Ba
Je Niraq Thangwan Muchuk Thani
Thangbay Jasidi

(Twy Kisa Kisa Lu Khwlayuwy Biday Robaykha]

Translation in English :
The Ochai Utters :
These are not my words ;
Siri Akatha, Siri Bikatha
Masangrangma and Matwybuk.

Please to make an appearance.
Be you in the east, be you in the south
The throne has been laid out for you
Please to take a seat.
For your pleasure, I have placed food and drinks
And water too, for washing your hands
Please to wash them.
(The priest now pours some water on the earth and performs certain acts to signify the washing of the hands)
Alright its over now
When your son (here the worshipper)
Albeit poor and of humble origins
Incapable of great pomp and show
Pays his obeisance
In order to invoke you
And place before you

Some requests, some prayers.
Though he can hardly afford it
offers you some rice, a few bananas
Please to partake a little of the humble offerings.
(The priest carries out certain acts which signify the terminal of the meal)
Now that you have finished your food
Please to wash your hands
(The priest again carries out certain acts)
Now I pray you, indulge in some rest.
(In order to increase the general welfare of the house-holder, the priest propitiates and pleads with the deity)
God that never deals a bad blow
Keep him forever free from pain and disease
Please see to it that there is never cause to weep
Wail or suffer from stomach disorder or cold or languish in fever.
I pray to you, O omnipotent god,
On behalf of your son,
Preside over this household
Keep it forever free from your wrath and Shield him from the king's displeasure.
(Water is scattered on the ground)

Grant him a long, healthy, happy life
Wealth in quantities large
Let his family members augment, prosper
Replenish his stock of cotton and care of corn
Now, let your son possess such a physique
That his head brushes with the roof-top
His breadth be equal to the beam of his ceiling
Let his house stock so much food and clothing
That he cannot even keep take on them
Give mental peace that he may dwell
Happily from the day onwards, O god.
[The priest meditates with a handful of grain and satisfies himself as to whether the result is favourable or not.]

Now comes the bidding farewell to the deity bit.
The Priest utters :
Now that you have partaken of the refreshment
Rested, you can return to your original
dwelling place or anywhere you choose
(Farewell is bid by scattering some water on the ground.)

After the *Puja*, the *Prasad* is distributed among the devotees that flock there. Now the house-holder demands to know the results with a cup of *Chuak* (rice beer). The Ochai reveals it to him.

Construction Of The Images Of Customary Deities :

The images of the traditional deities of the Jamatia community are made of bamboo instead of clay. Bamboo plays a vital role in their religious functions. Their inherent craftsmanship is evident from the art of construction of these images. The bamboo is as important to the Jamatia community in their traditional *Puja* as it has been in their day to day works since time immemorial. In fact, bamboo is an essential element in the life of a Jamatia since his brith to even after death.

The green bamboos are first cut into pieces and then designed for making the images of various deities according to their custom. The structures and designs of various deities differ to a great extent. There are specific designs in constructing of specific deities.

Besides this, there are specific customs in the arrangement of the bamboo sticks for specific deities. The Ochai is the only authorised man to give necessary instructions regarding the structure of the images and arrangement of bamboo pieces in the *Pujas* of various deities.

The various types of bamboo made images and other articles which are generally required in their traditional *Puja* are :
1. Wathap 2. Dip 3. Lankhang/Chaufang 4. Tharuma 5. Nakri 6. Khulong. 7. Charthangmani. 8. Yakbar. 9. Thapna. 10. Mwylaobar. 11. Kwindak and 12. Wakhar.

A short description of the above mentioned articles are given below :-

1. **Wathap** : The altar which is made of bamboo for the performance of *Puja* is known as *Wathap* in their language. The term *Wathap* has been derived from the words WA (bamboo) and bathap (means nest of the birds). The platform or altar of a deity is known as *Wathap* as they are made of bamboo. The wathap is required in the performance of *Lampra Puja*, *Thunairag Bonirag Puja Bolongwwamani Puja*, *Burasa Puja* etc.

Construction :

The *Wathap* is constructed with six (three pairs) green bamboo sticks of one cubit length. In its construction, two pairs of bamboo sticks are fixed on the ground at a distance of about one cubit and the another pair of sticks are tied to the upper portion of the two pairs of sticks which were fixed on the ground earlier with bamboo cane. These bamboo sticks are designed by the *Ochai* according to custom with the help of a scyth. The holes at the top of the bamboo sticks are covered with bamboo leaves.

2. **Langkhang/Chulang** :

The *Langkhangs* and *Chulangs* are used in all *Pujas*. During the time of *Puja*, the deities are offered water and rice beer (Chuak) through these *Langkhangs and Chulangs*. These are made of two green bamboo pieces in such a manner that they may contain water and rice beer. The bamboo made container which is used to offer water to a deity is called *Langkhang* and the container which is used to offer rice beer to a deity is called *Chulang*.

3. **Dip** :

In making of a *Dip*, a bamboo piece of a certain length is first of all stripped vertically into two flat pieces and then one flat strip is designed in its both sides. The designs of this bamboo strip are fashioned to look like flower and are called *Matra*.

It may be noted here that different number of *Matras* are made for different deities. As for example, the *Dip* which is required for *Swkaljwk Mwtay or Bwrwyrag Puja* must have nine *Matras* (flowers). But in all other *Pujas* five *Matras* of a Dip are required.

4. **Khang :**

It is made of bamboo strip which has designs on both sides and bent into arcs. Both the ends of this bamboo strip are fixed on the ground. This *Khang* is required for *Sangrang Puja, Gang Puja, Ker Puja,* marriage ceremonies etc.

5. **Tharuma :**

It is a bamboo piece of one cubit length and it is fixed on the ground before the image of the deity. The hole of this bamboo piece is covered with bamboo leaves.

6. **Khoulong :**

It is a small sized bamboo made basket which is required only for the purpose of *Burasa Puja.*

7. **Nakri :**

This *Puja* is done in the month of *Chaitra* for the welfare of the village.

The image of the *Nakri* can be made in two ways. Generally, a *Muli* (a variety of bamboo) bamboo piece of a certain length is designed according to the instruction of the *Ochai* and a small quantity of cotton is tied to the middle part of this bamboo stick and is fixed on the ground. There are also certain restrictions regarding the use of thread. In the performance of the *Burasa Puja* both black and white coloured thread can be used.

On the otherhand, a *Nakri* can also be made by fixing Jhum cotton on a branch of a *Dexaram* tree. Both white and black thread can be used in this type of *Nakri.*

8. **Charthangmani :**

The *Charthangmani* is made during the time of *Gang Puja* to satisfy *Twikhulumani* (Goddess of Water). In its construction four bamboo pieces are fixed on the ground first and then six flat bamboo pieces are arranged at the top of these four bamboo poles. At the centre part of the bamboo poles, one platform is also made with flat bamboo pieces which is called *'Changni'.*

9. **Thapna :**

The two flat bamboo pieces which are fixed on the two sides of the *Charthangmani* are called *Thapna*.

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2. Roy Barman, B. K. : *'Demographic and Socio-economic Profiles of the Hill areas of North East India'*, Census of India, 1961, P. 62.

3. Deb Barma, Somendra Chandra : *'Tripura Census Bibarani'* 1931 A.D., Tripura State Press, 1933. P. 60

4. Deb Barma, Somendra Chandra : Ibid. P. 60.

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6. *'Rajgi Tripurar Sarkari Bangla'*. Agartala 1976. P. 105.

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CHAPTER - IV

FOLKLORE

Introduction : In dealing with the Jamatia folklore it is essential to give an idea of what is meant by the term folklore and what are the items that come under the heading of folklore. In this context, it is also essential to give a brief account of the collection of Jamatia folklore in Tripura made by different people.

What is folklore? The following definations will help us to understand what it is. Accordingt to the Oxford English Dictionary "the word folklore is the study of trandtional beliefs, legends, and customs current among the common people. Properly speaking folklore is only concerned with the legends, customs, beliefs of the folk of the people[1]". And according to International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences 'Folkore means folk learning ; it comprehends all knowledge that is transmitted by word of mouth and all crafts and techniques that are learned by imitation or example, as well as the products of these crafts. Folklore includes folkart, folkcrafts, folktools, folk costume, folk custom, folk belief, folk medicine, folk recipes, folk music, folk dance, folk games, folk gestures and folk speech, as well those verbal forms of expression which have been called folk literature but which are better described as verbal art[2]."

According to L.P. Vidyarthi "folklore is the oral literature of the simpler societies and is perpetuated by oral traditions. There is usually no technique, certainly no formal technique connected with the making and singing of songs, they are learnt by the ear and transmitted in this fashion from generation to generation. Nor is there a conscious awareness of forms or construction on the part or the folk singer or folk teller, there is no aesthetic or analytic theory in his mind[3]"

The word folklore was first used by william John Thomas in 1846 to mean popular antiquities. It came from the German work Volkslehre which means "people's customs". The word folk means a compact community bound by racial, linguistic and cultural

affinities. Lore means learning or knowledge. So the word folklore means the common pool of the knowledge of a group of people. It is not an individual people's collection.

Folklore lives mostly in the oral tradition of a society and they have universal acceptance in that society.

From the above discussion it is quite clear that the folklore reflects the life pattern of a tribe or a race. It may be taken as the unwritten evidence of their cultural heritage. The folklore of a particular tribal community is a part of the culture of the people. "It reflects the culture of the people and also brings solidarity, continuity and consistency in a cultural group."[4]

Thus folk psychology, folk beliefs, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles, folk songs and folk music nursary rhymes, folk ballads, folk tales, folk festivals, folk arts and crafts, folk ornaments and dress, food habits, folk games, folk medicine all came under the ambit of folklore.

The folklore uses old forms of languages in the legneds riddles etc. So they help us to understand the linguistic characteristic of preliterate people of a region through the study of their folklore.

In the field of ethnology also the folklore proves very useful. In the folklore one comes across many social habits and customs which are not in existence now. So the folklore provides an useful means to trace the course of the developmental stages of the society.

Apart from being an aid to the study of ethnology, the folklore also serves as the source of anthropological studies.

The course of the development of a human society is closely linked with the course of the development of the folklore of that society.

By studying the folklore deeply one can understand how in the past different races interacted with a particular race, mingled with

it and influenced it.

One of the characteristics of the folklore is that it keeps paces with the evolution of the society. "It is always dynamic. It is always grafting the new on to the old[5]".

So the folklore is one of the important means to follow the gradual development of the men's character pattern through the course of social evolution.

Folklore is clearly linked with the masses. It develops with the intergration of the people, it falls with their disintegration. It depicts the picture of the past of a society. Folklore thus, if analysed methodically may serve as a vital source of history. Robest Redfield described it as "a history from the bottom up. According to him the local historical elements are deposited in the boltom of the society concerned[6]."

A Brief Account Of The Collection Of The Jamatia Folklore :

The first thing that can be said about the collection of the folklore of the Jamatias is that no step has so far been taken to get them penned down.

The Jamatias are ethnically related to the Tripuris and the Jamatia speak Jamatia a dialect of Kok Borok language which is also the language of the *Tripuris*. Their folklores are also related to each other. Therefore it is possible to get an idea of the Jamatia folklore from the songs, music, fairy tales and games of the *Tripuris*.

A brief account of the collection of the folklores of the Kok Borok speaking *Tripuris* is given here as it is relevant to the discussion of the history and study of the collection of Jamatia folklores.

The number of the collection of Tripuri folktales, rhymes, songs etc is very small. Before independence, the political status of Tripura was different from that of many of the regions of the North East India. Tripura was a princely state. As a result, British Civil servants and Christian Missionaries who usually pioneer any work based

upon the folklores in other regions, did not show much interest in the collection of folklores of Tripura since their work did not bring them to this state often enough.

The books written under the auspices of the rulers of Tripura usually contained the stories of their glories and victories and the common people usually had very little or no place in them.

This is why the history of the collection of the folklores of Tripura is somewhat different from that of the other places. The history of the collection of the folklores of the *Tripuris* may be classified into two phases :

(i) From the ancient days to 1945 A.D. which is the first phase. This phase may be termed as old period or pre 1945 period.

(ii) The second phase begun from 1945 with the starting of the *Janasiksha Samiti* that year, till to-day.

Of the stories collected during the old period, mention can be made of the following :

1. The stories '*Sweta Hastir Janmakatha*' (The birth of the white element), *Bishlatar Utpatti* (The origin of the poisonous creeper), the story of *Katal Kakchad* collected in the *Shri Rajmala* (The Royal Chronicle of Tripura Rulers).

2. *Tripur Kathamala* (1900 A.D.) written by Radhamohan Thakur contains a fairy tale in Kok-Borok language.

3. Samarendra Deb Barma's '*Tripurar Smriti*' (1937) contains a *Tripuri* song with *Swaralipi* (notations).

The post 1945 period :

Some educated tribal youths of Tripura established *Janasiksha Samiti* in 1945 for the eradication of illeteracy from among the tribal people of Tripura. This *Samity* opened 488 primary Schools. Shri Dasarath Dev, Shri Sudhanya Deb Barma, Sri Mahendra Deb Barma, Shri Ramchandra Deb Barma, the late Hemanta Deb Barma, Rabindra Deb Barma, were prominent among these tribal

youths.

Influenced by the *Janasiksha Samiti* the *Tripuris* began to feel the need for the collection of their old folklores, many of which were now on their way towards extinction. From that time onwards their old tales, songs etc. began to appear in literary magazines, newspapers etc.

The newspapers were mostly in Bengali and they were the only source of publication of the folklore for the Kok Borok speaking people. *Janasiksha Samiti* can be truly termed a mile stone in the history of the progress of the collection of the folklore of the Kok-Borok speaking tribes of Tripura.

Given below is brief list of newspapers and magazine and articles on folklore of Tripura published during this period :

(i) **Chiniha** - Ed. Prabhat Roy (1948). The important writers on folkore were Lalitmohan Jamatiya and Dharani Kanta Deb Barma.

(ii) **Tripura Sanghati** (A Bengali bi-weekly) - Ed. Ajitbandhu Deb Barma and Bipin Behari Deb Barma. The names of the writers/collectors which are worthy to be mentioned are - Shrimati Priyangbada Devi, Dharendra Deb Barma, Ajitbandhu Deb Barma and Subinay Deb Barma. Priyangbada Devi published the following Folk tales under the heading *'Tripurar Galpa'* :-

(a) *Sa Kalak Matam* (July 19th, 26th, August 2nd, 9th, 1962).
(b) *Kamalabatini Kak* (August 23rd, 30th, September 13th, 20th and October 4th, 1962).
(c) *Milak Lepsa* (October 25th, November 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th, 1962).
(d) *Khumpui Bamuruk* (January 25th, February 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th, 1962).
(e) *Mayung Kufuri* (December 14th, 21st, 28th, 1961 and January 4th, 1962).
(f) *Mokhrasa* (December 28th, 1961).

The folk beliefs and tales prevailing among *Tripuri*s as collected and published by Dharendra Deb Barma are :

(a) *Tiprader Mritu O Paraloker Biswas.*
(September 14th, 1961).
(b) *Haihir Katha* (August 31st, 1961).
(c) *Noa* (September 21st, 1961).
(d) *Tiprader Khela* (August 3rd, 1961).

Ajitbandhu Deb Barma's *Kanchanmala* (October 18th, 1962) and Subinay Deb Barma's *Boch Bar* (January 11th, 18th, 1961) are also important in the list of the folktales as published in the *Tripura Sanghati*.

(iii) *Kwtalkatam* (Kok-Borok) : Sudhanya Deb Barma, 1954.
(iv) *Kaktun* : Ajoy Deb Barma and Surje Reang (1958-59)
(v) *Yapri* - bilingual (Bengali and Kok-Borok) :
A tribal weekly, Mahendra Deb Barma, 1974.
(vi) *Chinikok* : Benu Deb Barma and Mrinal Deb Barma.
(vii) *Aithorma* : Shyamlal Deb Barma.
(viii) *Lama (Kok-Borok)* : Dasarath Deb.
(ix) *Triha* : Ganga Manikya Deb Barma.
(x) *Dungur (Kok-Borok)* : Nagendra Jamatia
(xi) *Ha Ni Kak* : Brojobihari Roy.
(xii) *Gumti* : Directorate of Public Relations and Tourism, Government of Tripura, Agartala.
(xiii) Agartala : Mrinal Deb Barma, 1978.
(xiv) *Tripura Kagtoon (Kok-Borok)* : Directorate of Information, Cultural affairs and Tourism, Government of Tripura, Agartala.
(xv) *Samebesh* : Haralal Deb.

Besides, the references and sometimes collection of *Tripuri* folktales and folksongs are also found in the books dealing with the *Kok-Borok*speaking tribes of Tripura. Some of them are :

(a) Devi, Priyongbada and Deb Barma, Ajitbandhu-Tipra-Directorate of Education, 1962.
(b) Chakraborty, Santimay and Bondopadhayay, Suprasanna 'Reang' Directorate of Education, 1968.
(c) Bhattacharjee, Pradipnath : Lokobritter Aloke Kalai Sampradhay - Directorate of Tribal Research, Tripura.

Some of the books dealing only with the folklores and folksongs of the Tripunes are :

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PROVERBS

The Jamatia folk literature is rich in proverbs and riddles. Their proverbs touch almost every aspects of life and activity. These proverbs are thought provoking and a rich store house of the guiding principles of life. They are neat, sharp, keen and artistic.

These guiding principles show the wisdom the people have acquired from the life experience of every day life. Their proverbs reflect many of their norms and values.

1. *Yakung Ni Char Hankhayae.*
   The thorn in the feet never becomes one with the flesh.

2. *Kuuk Bay Thaysa, Tak Bay Salsa*
   It is only one work for the mouth but a whole day for the hand. (Easier said than done)

3. *Mekal Ni Fan Yakung Ni Char.*
   Dust in the eye and thorn in the feet. (An eye sore).

4. *Gari Lesra Mamla Naysiyng.*
   Maytwk Lesra Kajiya Naysiyng.
   The cart goes slow and the trouble waits for you. The rice pot takes time to boil - the quarrel is sure to follow. (One should not waste time)

5. *Ta Kuluk Di Han Khwlay Bakaa Jaanggiri*
   You tell him to hush and he shakes the shell in the kitchen. (To make public some secret)

6. *Tanlaywanni Fara Seyng*
   To look for the sword when the fight is already on. (Unready for an occassion)

7. *Baska Lenja Lenja*
   A dragon fly in the box. (An unhelpful companion)

8. *Chaanany Ble Tak, Takjaknany Ble Rajang*
The bird eats the corn and the bamboo stumps take the beating. (Passing the back)

9. *Dakhwlay Ler.*
Too much hurry will lead to delay.

10. *Manni Kok Naya*
Fani Kok Naya.
Dukha Daridra Kakya.
Does not listen to the mother,
Does not listen to the father and
The poverty remains for ever.
(One should not be disobedient to his parents)

11. *Maynum Khagnany Manjakya,*
Gundak Khagnany Majakuw
The rice thief escapes but the husk thief is found out.
(The big thieves are never caught but the small thieves are caught.)

12. *Akwa Chumanle Samni Banta,*
Changwa Nermanle Kichiyng Ni Banta.
To fill the stomach for the self and to tuck in the cloth at the waist for the friend
(For yourself you eat, for your friend you take).

13. *Saka Rang Kwchak Bisiyng Wo Siyngja Khi*
Gold on the surface and rat droppings in side.
(All that glitters is not gold).

14. *Kharak Dugin, Chang Wa Pudiri*
Rags around the head and rags around the waist.

15. *Lukuwy Makal Futtasa*
A rice bowl contains lot of rice, and the village has many eyes.
(Crime does not pay).

16. *Sabay Lay Satara.*
Pull a creeper of the bean plant and the creeper comes off.

17. *Kwpal Hanya Say Manfara Chwba Khniuw.*
When the girl with bad luck is about to get a husband, the foreigner invasion takes place.

18. *Akni Saya Le Saya.*
The adopted son can never be your own.

19. *Diyngi Bakmanswk.*
The husking pedal is always straight.
(Go straight).

20. *Mwkhwra Thaaybay Man*
The monkey gets the *thaybay* fruits
(To be too happy).

21. *Lata Twy Bw Paaylang Manmwy Hanya Bw Matang Lang.*
The pot has become empty,
My hands have become dirty.
(Not to get something at the moment of need).

22. *Khwtwng Chapri*
The heap of unreeled thread.

23. *Kha Bisiyng Bisiyng Baga Sada San.*
The stork hopes to get tobacco leaf.
(To hope for something unattainable)

24. *Huk Seylay Ta Chaadi Hwy SEylay Ta Nadi.*
Do not go for jhurning in a disputed plot,
do not take wife through a fight.
(Not to involve in any questionable thing).

25. *Takani Bukhuk Chwy Si Bandur Wanmw.*
Pasan Le pasan Pasan.
The beak of the little bird will loose its sharpness, but the

rock will not change.
(To attempt something impossible).

26. *Chwla Kwbang Fakwlay Sakya*
Bwnwy Kwbang Naliya Manya
Too many men shortens the rafter,
too many women and the jute never rote.
(Too many cooks spoil the broth).

27. *Saman Ba Hada, Kanman Ba Gunda*
Speak of the whole *Hada* and wears only a net
(To talk big).

28. *Tangman Ble Twwylang,*
Chaman Ble Laylang
He has to work like a supervisor but has to eat only banana plant.
(To work much but to eat less.)

29. *Tangwan Ble Seler Man*
Chaawan Ble Barwma
Good for nothing at the time of work but has sidal (A kind of dehydrated *Puti* fish) for the meals.

30. *Twyman Bar Fanw Mwsa Bumul Kamalya*
Even after crossing the stream the tiger does not change its stripe (Black will take no other hue).

RIDDLES

Like the proverbs, riddles also occupy an important place in the Jamatia folk literature. The objects of their riddles are mainly the environment in which they live. These riddles give an excellent picture of their community life and their way of looking at the activities around them.

The riddles and their solutions show the working of their mind. Without an analysis of these components of their folk literature, any attempt to understand the Jamatia culture will be fruitless.

It should be noted that the elderly persons are still the most important media of them. And through them they come down to successive generations.

1. *Tanrwrwk Tanwrwk = Pukhiri*
   The more you cut the more it increase= a pond.

2. *Bwman Kharwrwk. Bwsa Tanwrwk Chakumra Khakufu*
   The more the mother runs the bigger the child grows - a creeper plant and its fruit such as the gourd.

3. *Bwman Karwrwk, Bwsa Tanwrwk = Charka*
   The more the mother wails, the bigger the child grows - The thread spun by the spinning wheel.

4. *Bwman Gang Gang, Bwsa Bathreyng Bathreyng = Diyngi*
   The mother sits back and the child goes on jumping - A husking pedal.

5. *Twy Kwrwy Rungchak = Wayiyng*
   To row a boat in a waterless place = a cradle.
6. *Achu Gujasa Twy Wa Lakwrak = Basay*
   The hunchback takes a dip - A fish tackle

7. *Thang Kagya Hakag = Yasitan*
   Only the earth comes off not the post - a ring.

8. *Mayung Sak Sagya Lata Sak Sag = Siyan.*
The elephant you can't see, but the pot you can see - fog.

9. *Sarga Naysay Muri Susa - Thaiwi Bwlay Kwlwy.*
The play of the flute looking towards the heavan - The inner part of the banana plant.

10. *Ransay Manauw Naysay Nug Saya = Kwpal.*
If you extend your hand upwards you can touch it, but if you look above you don't see it - The forehead.

11. *Bwlang Fangsa, Bwlay Laysa = Kisi.*
The plant which has only one leaf = A hand fan.

12. *Jattani Nagwa Mayung Masa Masa = Sanduk.*
The elephant that every house has - A safe.

13. *Jattani Nagwa Sikwla Daisa Daisa = Batal*
A bevy of young girls in every house - Bottles.

14. *Bwlang Fangsa Bedcy Doeysa Tey Bwthaay Thaysa - Daba*
One tree, one branch and one fruit = A hookah/ hubble-bubble.

15. *Bathay Thaysa Bakhar Lansini - Bakharak*
A hill with seven holes = The head.

16. *Rajani Kentha Misimanya - Muytul Bwlay.*
The royal quilt which does not get wet - The aram leaf.

17. *Rajani Kentha Ranra Manya - Bwswlay.*
The royal quilt which is always wet - The tongue.

18. *Rajani Raydang = Chibuk*
The king's cane stick = The snake.

19. *Rajani Kaangsa - Piyabatha*
The king's ball - A bee hive.

20. *Bakar Kharsawo Rukdaymi Mala = Burwa.*
A silver chain in a hole - The set of teeth.

21. *Mwkthwy Bara Thang Uw Fauw = Bwkha.*
That which comes and goes in the twinkling of an eye - The mind.

22. *Negsu Kangwa Mwkthwy Ray Ray = Chakhwy Khak.*
The shedding of tears drop by drop in a corner of the house - The dropping of *khar* liquid through a strainer.

23. *Bukhuk Twy Chauw Khunju Twy Khiuw = Sacheyng.*
Eats by the mouth and relieves through the ear - A bamboo made fish trap, the Sacheyng.

24. *Khwnaymy Sachiy Waraykluk = Miyaleymanni*
Throwing into the trap by catching the hair - To gather bamboo shoots.

25. *Takma Kukur Bikhwleymanni Birmani Manya = Khukthwy.*
The white bird which comes out from the nest but can't fly above - Spitting.

26. *Chayy Bw Twksa, Chaa Yayay Bw Twksa = Sikanbuk*
A bowlfull, you eat or don't - A snail (eatable).

Classification of riddles :

The riddless as stated above may broadly be classified into the following categories :-

(i) Riddles about parts of the body : These riddles are perhaps the result of the curiosity of the early Jamatia to know about the different organs of human body. e.g. teeth, head, tongue, forehead, mouth etc.

(ii) Riddles about worms and insects : These riddles are concerned with worms and insects which are quite familiar to them e.g. bees, snails, snakes, etc.

(iii) Riddles about the utensils and other necessary articles : These riddles are connected with the utensils and articles which are used by the Jamatias in their every day life e.g. *Ghoti* (small

jar), husking pedal, sechaying, mosquito curtain etc.
(iv) Riddles about plants and trees : These riddles are also based on plants and creepers. Many of these plants and creepers constitute important food items in their manu e.g. gourd, pumpkin, cane etc.
(v) The riddles concerning planetary nebula, natural objects and habits of human beings are also found in Jamatia folk-literature e.g. the fog, the mind, the cutting of a pond, plucking of bamboo shoots etc.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that the theme of their proverbs and riddles are similar to those of many other tribal and non-tribal communities. The difference is only in their presentation. Here their environmental context naturally show up at many points.

FOLKSONGS

For the maintainence and protection of the *Jhum* crop, the Jamatias construct a *Gayniyng* (temporary shed). All the able members of a family stay in this shed at the time of *Jhuming*. At such times competitions to increase the beauty of the *Gayniyng* among the belles of the neighbouring *Gayrings* take place.

While working together in the *Jhum* various incidents of joy and sorrow occur among the young boys and girls. Boys and girls wish to get their lovers from the nearby *Gayriyngs*. Some succeed some do not.

The Jamatias express their longings and distresses, their joys and agonies in their songs. Some of these are given here :

1. *Dipar Jarawo Twilak Twy Kwchang*
   Nwngni Nayfara Lakkhi
   Mwthwwy Kha Khwlay Khaka Di
   Tini Jorate Daada ...
   Wngkhwna Ani Mwng Khukhwna
   Han Nuwy Wan Sagwwy Tang Di.

English rendering :

[When at noon you go and drink the water cooled in a *Twilak* and catch cold and sneeze oh dear, know, your beloved is thinking about you.]

Notes : *Twilak* is a kind of water container used by the Jamatias while working at the *Jhum* prepared from the skin of gourd.

b) *Aychuk Siyari Kukyakha Sani*
Takthu Si Swkang Kuuw
Anni Nagar Bay Kakyakha Sani
Khuk Wa Kaamwng Si Faiuw
Baya Khaa Baksa Tanguwy Thangtwkha
Khaawo Changuwy Nwng Tang Di
Kakuwy Thaang Fanwo Jara Waysaswk
Mwyta Khwlayuwy Naydi.

English rendering :

[The dove is cooing before the morning mist lifts. Before my lover leaves me tears fall from my eyes.
Please forget me not, we were together as friends. Even in separation think of me please.]

c) *Baari Khwtwysa Bayrwnwk Mantanrwrwk*
Anni Baya Na Dwkrwnwk Khatangrawrwk.

English rendering :-

[The more the *Khwtwysa* flower dries, the more fragrant it becomes. So the more the days pass the greater the longing for the friend becomes.]

d) *Sary Ni Yang Sany Na Yengh Yengh Khedagenany*
Taksani Khug Wo Thaang Thwng
Aychuk Ni Takla Ray Ray Khe Kakchiynany
Takma Bay Nagar Chathwng.

English rendering :-

[The Crickets chirrup yengh yengh ;
And call the eveing to come.
Oh curse them ;
And let the little birds eat them up.

The cock calls loud ;
And the morning comes.
Oh bless him ;
And let him get his hen sharp.

d) *Nini Gayriyng Le Swy Gayriyng Gayriyng*
Thanpwyman Parang Parang
Ani Gayriyng Le Chuk Sara Sara
Nakbar Bw Nang Sara Sara.

English rendering :-

[Your *gayriyng* only a kennel. So low, full of flies and dirty.
My gayriyng.
Ah : So high and so breezy.]

1) *Mare Chwng Kwnwy, Kwar Khurmani Twy Chwwgman Naydi,*
Asbaarsa Takiy Bayliy.

English rendering :-

[Friend : We two have dug this well ;
The water so clean and clear,
Look, the darkina fish swimming here.]

2. Abisa Khilimnai (Lullaby) :

As among all other tirbes and races there are also a planty of lullabies to lull the babies into sleep among the Jamatia. Generally, the elder members of a family who cannot occupy themselves with agricultural work usually do baby sitting and sing these songs. An old lullaby is given below :

Le Le Le Le
Nuchule Wamanni
Wayiyngle Rangchakni
Nwtale Myask Te Manni,
Durile Rukfayani
Thuuwy Mwktwry Thaang Sidi Da
Le Le Le Le Le
A Baing De parbatwo Guriuwy Nayuwy Bw
Wasakna Bakea Nugya Dw
Desa Suburwy Guriuwy Naiuwy Bw
Babu Swk Kwnhan Nugya Dw,
A Matan Kharisa Matanzak Hay
Matan Khunkhari Bahayyay
Thuja Sidi Da - Afuyay.
Le Le Le Le Le
Rajang Kangsani Tapang Kangsini,
Chechernan Khilimanni
Nafuyay Dipar Jarawa
Numan Khilijamanni
Thuja Sidi Da Bulangyay
Le Le Le Le Le.

English rendering :

[My dear child sleep in this cradle of gold which your grand father

has woven and whose silver strings your father has made. No where in the forests have I seen the bamboo grow to equal heights and in the four corners of this earth none equal to my child in goodness.

Oh my child you are as fragrant as a basket full of sweet smelling flowers. Sleep my dear sleep.
It is noon and your mother is singing this lullaby to you as does a *Chechernan* (cricket) to a stump and seven shoots of bamboo.]

3. Huk Hakmanni Rwcharnwng :

The earlier Jamatia society was completely dependent on *Huk* (Jhuming or shifting cultivation). Gradually settled cultivation developed in their society. While working at the *Huk* they amused themselves by a variety of songs and dances. In this way the cultural and artistic taste grew in them. The cutting of *Huk* is known as *Maykaya* and the songs related to it is known as *Huk Hakmanni Rwcharnung* A song of this variety is as follows :

i) *Balang Hakwra Huk Hin Hakyay Ba Falimay Rwban Chini Twmankhey Pwngnany.*

Anima Baaba Hakuwy Fay Ya Do
Twman Hin Hak Yay Tangnany

Balang Hakwra Huk Hin Hakyay Ba
Falimay Rwban chini Twmankhey Pwngnany
Paay Khwlay Paaythwwng, Paayakhey Tang Thwwng.
Fay Do Tanraka Tannany

Anima Baaba Ba Hakuwy Fay Ya Do
Twntan Hin Hasyay Tangnany.

Hakkhwlay Hak Thwwng, Bakyakhey Tang Thwwng
Fay De Tanraka Tannany.

English rendering :

[If the jungle is not cleared and the virgin and fertile land made fit for the *Jhum* how will the granaries be full ? Did our parents not clear the jungles at their times ? Why should we not do it then ? We could complete the work or not but let us do it and cut them

clean. Let others come or not, but let us do it still.)

May Kaymanni Rwchamwng :

Like *Jhum* cutting, there are also a good number of songs connected with the Jhum plantation state. The planting of *Jhum* is known as *Maykaymanni* and the songs related to *Maykaymanni* are known as *Maykaymanni Rwchamwng*. A song of this type is given below :-

ii) *Mayung Kataman Ada chaauwy Ba*
Churuysa Channi Tanba

Desa Katama Kulak Chaauwyba
Ang Saychung Chaani Tanba

Mayung Katama Ada Chaauwy Ba
Churuysa Chaani Tanba

Mayung Katama Kulak Chaauwy Ba
Ang Saychung Channi Tanba

Anima Baaba Ba Tang Uwy Chaay De
Ang TangUwy Chaani Tanba

Mayung Katama Ada Chaauwy Ba
Churuysa Chaani Tanba

Desa Kataman Kulak Chaauwy Ba
Ang Saychung Chaani Tanba

Anima Baaba Ba Tang Uwy Chaaya Do
Ang TangUwy Chaani Tanba.

Mayung Katama Ada Chaauwy Ba
Churuysa Chaani Tanba.

English rendering :

(If the big elephant can eat its fill, how much will the sparrow need. And if all the people of the earth have enough food, how

much will I need.

If the food is sufficient for the whole year for the elephant how much will I alone need. Did my parents not live with labour? What is there for me to work then?

4. *Garia Rwcharnwng*
Siri Garia Raja Yay-Bayliy Baysiy Wnlaydey
Baaba Garia Raja Yay-bayliy Baysiy Wnlayddey

Aya Beta Makal Chepta Khikrak Leta peta (2)
Siri Garia Raja Yay
Baaba Yay (8)
Bayliy Baysiy Wnlaydey,
Suy Suy Nali Silay Duy Nali

Fwngsa Kagmanni Mari (2)
Cheche Rukma Bakarang Kangnwy
kangsa Khe Manni Mari
Checherudkna Bakarang Kangnwy
Kangsa Khemanni Mari
Bwrwy Masa na Weysa, Waysa Khay Uwy Bw

Waysa Khaymanni Mari (2)
Checherukman Bakarang Kangnwy
Kangsa Khemanni Man
Ayya Beta Makal Chepta Khikrak Leta peta (2)

Baaba Yay (4)
Bayliy Baylay Wnlaydey (2)
Iwysa Khaanggwray Yakwra Kwrak
Watwyna Rwma Khwna

Uparani Sikwlarag Bw
Chwla Na Rwma Khwnaou
Baloure Balou Balou
Suuy Suuy Nali Silay Duy Nali
Fwngsa Kagmanni Mari Man Man Mari Mari

Suuy suuy Nali Silay Dwy Nali
Waysa Kaganni Mari Mari Mari Mari Mari Mari
Sipak Kharsa Na Hajarfa Khaydi
Waysa Khaymanni Mari Mari Mari Mari

Ayyabeta Makal chepta Khikrak Leta Peta (2)

Suuy Suuy Nali Silay Duy Nali
Fwngsa Kagmani Mari Mari

Baaba Yay (4)

Baayliy Baysiy Wnfaydey (3)
Baaba yay (3)

Atka bakharak Lupe (2)
U Para Ni Sikwla Rag Lo Silay Lupe Lupe

Baloure Balou Balou (2)
Ayabeta Makal Chepta Kikrak Leta Peta (2)

Suy Suy Nali Silay Duynali
Fwngsa Kagmanni Mari

Nini Nuguchuk Kaliya Twysa
Fwngsa Khuur Faydey Waysa
Nini Nuguchuk Kaliya Twysa
Athuk Khuur Faydey Waysa

Uparani Sikwlaragna
Tabak Nugfaykha Waysa
Aya Beta Makal Chepta Khikrak Leta Peta(2)

English rendering : :

Oh : Baba Sri Gan a come and wave to and from and be merry. Oh you with flat eyes and bottom smeared with mud and dirt you come. Oh Gana Raja. Baba Gana come and make merry.

The two barrels of the double barrel gun fires but at the same time and the two pincers of the *Chechenukma* become one when it bites.

Fuck a woman once or a thousand times, she looks the same.

The powerful crabs of the little streams long for the rains ardently. So perhaps do the village belles for the village youths of this village.

Fuck a cunt once or a thousand times. It'll look the same.

The clitories of the village girls emerge from the fold of their vaginas slightly like the heads of a parrot that comes out of the hole in the hole of a tree. Behind your house flows the *Kaliyacherra* (stream) come and cast your net there to make a catch of shrimps enough for the day.

Belief Regarding The Origin Of The Obscene Songs Of The Garia Puja :-

The songs of the *Garia Puja* of the contain many words which may seem obscene and passages which are erotic in their import. But it will be seen that these songs of the *Garia* are directed towards the male folks to rouse their sexual desire. Also the *Baglas* during the *Puja* dress like men and women and enact mock sex act. There is a story among the Jamatias about the origin of these obscene songs :-

The real name of the lord *Garia* was *Nara Seying*. Nara Seying in the Jamatia means the soft backboned one. His backbone was very hard, so his mother thought that if people called him soft backboned it will have some affect on him, and his backbone will soften. In course of time he became a very strong man. But as he was the combination of both male and female entity he had no desire to lead the life of a common people. As he was the only son of parents, at the repeated persuation of them he agreed to get married at last. But after one year his wife left him as he had not established any sexual relationship with her.

After this, his parents and friends married him to a more beautiful girl. But again separation took place on the same ground.

In this way he married and divorced six girls one after another as he could not establish any sexual relation with any of these six wives. So his grand parents and friends gave him the nickname, *Gana* out of joke which literally means the one who cannot adjust (Ga = adjustment + Ya = lacking).

Now his parents arranged his marriage for the seventh time. His friends *(Baglas)* thought that he had no sexual desire. So on the seventh day of his marriage (In the past the marriage ceremony of the Jamatias lasted for seven days) they through their mimes, gestures and erotic songs tried to rouse his sexual desire.

Ruwaynamanni Rwchamwng :

There is a good number of marriage songs in the Jamatia folk songs. Generally these songs are sang by an elder person in the marriage ceremony before the party of the bridegroom and the guests. Such a song has been given below :-

Lage Lage Lage
Uttarni Kakbay Dakhinni Takbay
Takbay Tak Malaymanni
O baya rag O Chari Rag
Rasiya nagar rag yay

Lage Lage Lage
O Bayarag. O Chari Rag
Rasiya Nagar Rag Yay
Lesa bw Saya Lenwy bw saya
Khuni Asiba Nay Uw
O Bayarag O Charirag
Rasiya Nagar Rag Yay
Miya Sany Wo Layfang Khukmanni
Layfang Chang Sarang Sarang

Chwray Khasiya Khulu Jamanni
Khulu Chang Sarang Sarang
O Baya Rag O Chari Rag
Rasiya Nagar Rag Yay.

Bar Gurung Gurung Bar yay Tatangdi
Kanggal Na Bay Nayoey
O Bayrag O Chan Rag
Rasiya Nagar Rag Yay.

Chini Parani Para Chakdiri
Ruwayna Wanni Faybay Dey Gurung Gurung
Deykang Bura Ni Suburay Khuntang,
Sujakya Bwtang Bwtang.

Perani Ochay Na Ruwaynwanni
Faybay Di Bwtang Bwtang
O Bayarag O Chari Rag
Rasiya Nagar Rag Yay
Utar Ni Takbay Dakhini Takbay
Takbay Tak Malay Manni (2)

Lage Lage Lage
Lage Tu Pariya Hagyay
O Bayarag O Chan Rag
Rasiya Nagar Rag Yay.

English rendering :

[The fowl from the north has met the fowl from the south. Oh friends and fun loving folks come and bless them.

We want no money, only blessings will do. The banana trunks that were cut for cooking last night now lies in heaps high. This young fellow's pose in pranam looks as incongruous.

Do jump up and down but don't forget this poor fellows. Make merry but don't forget them.

Come you all and take the blessings of our Chakdin (the village headman). The *Subray* followers at the end of the village though unstrung look like a long garland. Like them, come you all in rows to take the blessings of *Ochari* (priest) of our village.]

6. Amikiti :

Although the practice of *Sati* was not common among the Jamatias, some songs of the *Sati* practice are found in their folk songs. A letter of Mr. Lowell, Commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1868 to the king of Tripura also contains some cases of *Sati* among the Jamatias. To the Jamatias practice of *Sati* is known as *Amikiti*.

The song given below is believed to be song by a Jamatia woman while she was going to threw herself in the pyre of her husband as a *Sati* :-

Thaay Kiliyng Thaaynanyle Satakara.
Thaay Buthu Thaanayle Nanwkwra.

Amiku Buta Yay Naysiynggwra (2)
Gaynyng Ni Bisiyng Wo Yang Khung Dalsa
Yangkhung Ni Bisiyng Wo Ranthay Dalsa
Ranthay Ni Bisiyng Wo Laydal Dalsa
Laydal Ni Bisiyng Wo Sumukoongsa
Sumu Ni Bisiyng Wo Kukthar Masa
Kuktha No Chaananyle Taksa Masa
Taksa Na Chaananyle Anni Masa
Amiku Bwlayay Naysiyng Gwra.

English rendering :

[The round shaped fruit is *Satwkwra* and the fruits that grow in bunches are the coconuts. *Aamuku's* father wait for a while.

In the *Gayning* there is a rolled bamboo mat and inside it a cane mat. Inside that are rolled banana leaves and inside them is a flute. And inside it is a dragonfly.

A little bird eats that insect. And that bird is eaten by a cat. So *Amiku's* father wait, wait for me.

FOLK-LITERATURE

The folk-literature of the Jamatia has a significant place in their social and cultural life. The Jamatia folk-literature is very rich and this richness perhaps owes much to their ethnic origin. This tribe is an admixture of the Tripuris, Reangs, Noatias and the *Kukis*. And the traces of the elements of the respective cultures of these tribes can be found in Jamatia folk-literature.

In the past the careers of the Jamatias were mostly in the army and their life in the barracks brought them into close contact with the people from out side, mostly with the neighbouring Bengalee community.

Also being *Vaishnaba* by faith they often went on visiting different places of pilgrimages of Eastern, Northern, North-Eastern India and came in contact with different communities. These factors have left traces of other cultures, among which Bengali showed predominent strains on their folk-literature.

In Tripura, the Jamatia are famous for their love of humour and wit. Their wealth of jokes and humourous anecdotes in almost inexhaustible. The jokes of the *Baglas* of the *Gana* and their humourous songs often bordering the obscene is an exmaple of this. The Jamatias are also well known for their love of *Jatra* (folk opera). And the comedian is the one who steals the show often in these *Jatra*.

The Chapter on the Jamatia folk literature consists of their folk-tales, folk-beliefs, riddles and folk-songs and the changes that have occured to them through the ages. The wealth of the folk-literature is said to be orally transmitted by father to son before coming to be finally written down.

In order to give a systematic analysis of the folk-literature it is proper to consider their folk-tales first.

The Jamatia term for folk-tale is *Kerang Kok-Twma*. There are different opinions regarding the origin of the term *Kerang*

Kok-Twma. The most common view in this respect is that the word *Kerang Kok-Twma* has been derived from the Jamatia word *Kerang* (a kind of small tortoise that lives subterranceanly abode in the hills. They often come out of their under ground cells when the *Jhum* is burnt) and *Kok-Twma* means history.

The supporters of this view are of the opinion that the Jamatia folk-tales have been originated from the tales of the *Kerangs*. These *Kerangs* are very closely linked with their *Jhuming*. There are a large number of tales featuring the *Kerangs* among the Jamatias.

Some elder persons of their community said that *Kerangs* were regarded as a symbol of bumper *Jhum* crop. There is also a taboo regarding the picking up *Kerangs* off the ground straight away. According to this taboo one is required to bark thrice like a dog before picking up the *Kerang* "of course one do it only if there is no dog present with him. Even if it does n't bark, there is no harm done. Its very presence will enable you to pick the *Kerang* without endangering yourself".

A nursery rhyme regarding *Kerang* which is prevalent among the Jamatia is given here :

Kerang Kerang Biaiya Bny Khagwi Rukhnai Bekreng Kurwng Karang

English rendering :
[Oh *Kerang*, oh *Kerang*, you have no leg. Only bones are available after cutting you.]

It is also a custom of the Jamatias to sacrifice a *Kerang* in the *Hamuthu Puja* to cure a man possessed by evil spirits.

But the above mentioned view regarding the origin of the term *Kerang Kok-Twma* is not accepted by a section of educated youths. They say that this term has been derived from the Jamatia words *Kwra* meaning ancient and *Kok-Twma* meaning history/story. So, in their opinion, the term *Kerang Kok-Twma* is the corruption of *Kwra Kok-Twma* which means ancient history.

There is still another view on the origin of the term *Kerang Kok-Twma*. According to this, the term is the corruption of the *Kherang Kok-Twma*. The Jamatia word *Kherang* is used to mean to remember something.

For example, the bamboo strips that run across the bamboo walls of the house to keep them erect and fastened to the posts of the house are known as *Kharang*. They push their chopper and other house hold articles into it and leave them tagging there so that they do not forget or misplace them.

Whatever may be the origin of the term *Kerang Kok-Twma*, the differences of opinion in this regard shows a change in the working of the Jamat a mind. The old persons are very superstitious & simple in their outlook and often accept things without questioning.

But the educated young generation is different. Their way of thinking is also different. They want to analyse and explain things by the dint of logic and reasoning.

Classification Of The Jamatia Folktales:

The folk-tales of the Jamatia may be classified mainly into two groups.

(a) **Myths or legends :**

One group may be termed as myths or legends. To this category belong the beliefs of the Jamatias in connection with creation, the cause and origin of gods and goddesses, birds and animals, the thunder, the rainbow, the constellation, the great bear, the earthquake, diseases, etc. These myths are conjured up by the imagination of the earlier tribal folk. These myths reveal the desire of the earlier people to understand the natural phanomenons of the universe.

The myths created by the earlier tribal imagination may appear to a modern mind childish or fictitious. And it is not possible to explain fully these myths and legends and lend them credibility logically. But the Jamatias like all other proliterate communities of that period had a curiousity to know the unknown. What they

observed in nature they tried to explain with the help of their imagination and myths and legends. These were handed down to their kiths and kins. It was the beginning of a stage in their life when they began to look beyond the problems of their physical existence, which dealt mainly with eating, drinking and amassing food.

(b) **Animal tales :**

To the latter category of folk-tales belong a good number of animal tales. Those tales deal with animals domestic and wild, various types of birds, tortoise, snakes, helpful & friendly animals, friendship between animals etc. These tales reflect the attitude of the early Jamatias towards their neighbours that is the animals.

The animal tales give us a picture of the primitive Jamatia society. These tales show that the primitive Jamatias possessed a deep insight into the natures of the animals. The early animal tales of the Jamatias were based on man - animal relationships. In these tales incidents of marriage between man and animal are given. It is also observed that they could communicate with each other.

From these animal tales one draws the conclusion that in that stage people did not find any difference between the animals & themselves. They did not consider the animals as their enemies. This was the early attitude and ways of thinking about the animals.

(c) **Role of witches in the Jamatia of Folk-tales :**

Then arrived the period when witches and evil spirits played key roles in their folk-tales. At this stage, the evil spirits or witches considerably influenced the Jamatia folk-tales.

From these tales, one draws the conclusion that at that stage when people could not protect themselves from death, disease, rain, thunder, flood and all types of natural calamities they put them down as the activities of the evil spirits. Here lies the difference between animals and the evil spirits. People did not fear the animals as their enemies, whereas the evil spirits, witches, and sorcerers were greatly feared.

(d) **Changing Pattern** :

But at a later stage, the shape of their earlier and simple folk-tales began to change. At this stage, they started plain land cultivation instead of shifting cultivation. The artistic and aesthetic sense in them began to aquire a new dimension with the starting of plain land cultivation.

Their folk-tales now appeared more logical, the plots more complex and the events more credible. Insertion of certain well planned plots with their earlier subjects was started at this stage.

In earlier folk tales names of places were omitted nor were there any historical personalities. Now those folk-tales reappeared with historical personalities and names of places. The famous folk-tale of *Mayung Kuburi* is an example of such development. In its earlier version there was no place name and historic personality. But king Udaimanikya, who was a king of Tripura and certain place names appeared in the later and now current version of that tale.

From this, the dynamic character of the Jamatia folk-tale is seen. With the changing of the socio-economic condition, the plots are also changed to some extent to satisfy the curiosity of the listeners. So their folk-tales reflect the development of the Jamatia society to a great extent.

Shialsani Kok-twma
Or Thaaysuamani Kok-twma :

A jackel lived near a village. It ate either the carcases or the live domestic animals of the villagers. But due to a femine the villagers fell in a wretched condition. Nearly all their domestic animals and birds were sold in the market. So the jackel had nothing to eat and passed a few days without any food.

At last it left the village with its wife and children. After crossing many streams and hills it reached a spring and drank its water. Hunger and the long journey had taken their toll on it and it felt very tired. The water could not appease its hunger. So leaving its wife and children there, it went out in search of food.

After a short while, it found a ripe *Thaaysua*(a kind of wild fruit) and immediately gobbled it up. Looking up at the tree, it found a monkey busy devouring the luscious fruits. The jackal looked at the monkey and thought that as it could not climb the tree it had to depend on the monkey for the fruits. It then very politely said to the monkey. "Oh my dear friend, have you eaten the fruits to your heart's content? I would be grateful to you if you please drop a few fruits for me."

The monkey was very much pleased by this friendly greeting of the jackal and dropped a few fruits for it. The jackal ate the fruits and satisfied its hunger. Then it thought of its wife and children.

It thought of a plan. It told the monkey that human beings liked this fruit very much. If they found them they would surely finish them all in no time. So the monkey should drop all the fuits. The monkey told that human beings were incapable of climbing up such a high tree. The sly jackal then said that nothing was impossible for the human beings and it would be wise to drip the fruits and thus preserve them. The monkey swallowed the bait the wily jackal had thrown and dropped all the fruits.

The jackal collected them and covered them with dried leaves. When the monkey got down from the tree, the jackal said, "friend, you are tired to-day. I am keeing watch on these fruits for you. You take rest for to-night and come to-morrow morning." the monkey went away satisfied. The jackal with its family ate up all the fruits and left the place at dawn.

Next morning the monkey was horrified at the wicked deed of the jackal and resolved to take revenge. It trailed the jackal by following its foot prints. Meanwhile the jackal felt hungry and found the cave of a tigress nearby. It studied the pugs of the tigress and was certain that she was away. It then quietly entered the cave. There it discovered a few cubs of the tigress and also the carcases of a few cows killed by her.

The jackal quietely cleared up everything in the cave. But before it could come out it saw the tigress approaching. The jackal did

not lose its presence of mind. Quickly it began beating its own children and shouting all the while "My children, do not weep. Though you have eaten the cubs, you say you are still hungry. Alright let the tigress come. I shall give her flesh to you. But if you cry, she will not come." About to enter the cave, the tigress heard this and grew frightened. She could not ascertain what beast this was and thought it prudent to leave the place while the going was still good. She was grief-striken about the loss of her children but her own skin was much more important to her.

The monkey had observed every thing from a tree top and revealed to the tigress that it was only a jackal in the cave. He then told the tigress the trick the cunning jackal had played upon him and labelled it a traitor. They both then made a plan to take revenge.

They would first examine the foot prints in front of the cave to make sure they were indeed the jackal's. Then both of them would rush the cave together and the tigress would kill the jackal.

All the while the jackal was observing the activities of the tigress and the monkey from the interior of the cave. He decided not to leave the cave just then. When the tigress and the monkey were proceeding towards the cave the jackal again played a trick. It began to beat the younger jackals and said, 'Shut up; how can I give tigress's flesh to-day ? I have sent my monkey friend to bring her to the cave. But he has not arrived yet.

When the tigress heard these words, she grew suspicious of the monkey and out of fear, hurriedly left the place. The monkey again convinced her that it was indeed the jackal playing tricks and aroused in her the spirit of revenge.

The tigress then proposed that the monkey should enter the cave first and she would follow him. The monkey thought that she was planning to leave him in the lurch and would not agree to the proposal.

At last, to remove each other's suspicious they bound themselves together with a creeper as that none could leave the other and run away.

The jackal saw every thing from the cave. When the monkey came in front of the cave with the tigress trailing behind, he remained silent. This sudden silence made the tigress more frightended. When the monkey brought the tigress in front of the cave, the jackal suddenly shouted from the cave and said to the monkey "You have brought only one tigress : All right give her to me quickly."

Hearing this the tigress lost her senses and began to run for dear life and dragging the monkey behind her. Bruised and battered beyond recognition the monkey finally succumbed to its wounds.

Now the jackal came out from the cave and returned to its previous place.

But the villagers of this certain village were disturbed by a tiger. The villagers could not sleep at night due to this tiger. Every night it took domestic animals from the villagers. For the safety of the village, the villagers made a *Jangtar* (trap) to catch the tiger. At night when the tiger came, it fell into the trap. It tried its level best to come out but all its strivings were in vain.

In the morning, an oldman came there and was delighted to see the tiger in the *Jangtar*. He said "Oh tiger, how do you do? As you sow, so you reap." The tiger then began to weep and said. "Oh, DADU save me please. I shall not come to your village any more. Please save my life otherwise my wife and children will die of starvation. At least be kind to them and rescue me for the sake of my children.

The tiger's appeal melted the old man's heart. He said "All the villagers will be angry if I release you." The tiger said with tears in his eye" I shall live quietly and nonody will know anything."

The old man released the tiger from the trap. But the tiger did not delay in showing its ingratitude. As it was extremely hungry

it came out baring its hideous mouth in a snarl to eat the old man. The old man said, "Why do you come to eat me now? Have you not promised to leave the village." The tiger said "I have promised only to leave the village. Did I promise not to eat you?"

The old said "All right but before killing me, let us go to *Watwyfang raja* for justice. The *Watwyfabg raja* said "You human beings are committing injustice. Why do you use me to put down the fire of your hearth and funeral pyre? What is my offence? Oh, tiger kill at once." The tiger came forward to kill him.

But the old man requested for permission to appeal to the Twybuk raja. The tiger agreed. The old man said to Twybuk raja 'Oh, Twybuk raja, what is my fault in saying the life of the tiger? you tell me please." Twybuk raja in reply said "You human beings depend on my water for your life. But you possess no gratitude. You wash your dirty clothes and pass you stool and urine on me. Tiger kill him at once." The tiger again came forward to kill him. But the old man requested him to grant him a last chance for an appeal. The tiger acquiesced.

Meanwhile our old friend, the jackal was passing by. The old man said 'Let us go to the jackal for the final judgment." The tiger again agreed. The old man told the jackal the whole sordid tale. The jackal was very much pleased. It was then searching for food as it had just returned from the deep forest and was hungry. But outwardly it showed disgust and indifference when the old man approached it. It said "I am tired of giving judgements. I could not sleep last night due to the trial of cases. I came for an evening walk. Here again I meet the same trouble. Now tell me quickly what is wrong?"

The old man told him that he had saved the life of this tiger from a *Jangtar*. But it wanted to kill him now. The jackal pretended that he had never seen a *Jangtar*. It told them it was very difficult to give judgment without seeing the *Jangtar* and its serving purpose. So the old man took him to show the *Jangtar* along with the tiger.

The jackal knowing fully well that its weight would not move the *Jangtar* to action jumped on to it as if to ascertain how the tiger was traped and how the old man had saved him. As expected nothing happened. It pretended to very angry and said, "All false. A *Jangtar* can't trap any body "

The jackal then politely asked the tiger "Were you really trapped in this *Jangtar*?" The tiger said "Yes, I was. It is a fact." The jackal requested the tiger to show him how he was detained. Foregetting about his past experience the tiger jumped on the *Jangtar* and was at once trapped. The jackal jumped with joy and said "This is the judgement that an ungrateful person deserves." The jackal thus saved the life of the old man.

After this, the old man treated the jackal as his life saver. He became its disciple and wanted its blessing. The jackal blessed him like a priest. The old man invited it to visit his house. The jackal did not agree at first. But later agreed due to earnest pressing of th old man. The old man carried the jackal on a *Langa* (bamboo made basket ot carry goods) to his house. At night he offered it cooked meat.

The jackal was also given a special bed to sleep on. But slumber eluded him due to the howling of other jackals outside. Old habits diehard. The jackal too suddenly strated howling. Hearing it the old man came out with a stick. The jackal escaped through a hole in the room. But a broken basket which was used to covur the hole got stuck to its shoulder as it came out.

The jackal tried hard to get rid off this basket but did not succeed. It then thought of taking ths help of a tigress, the wife of the tiger it had helped to put in the trap to shake off the basket. It called on the tigress and said "Oh, tigress, where is your tiger?" The tigress said that the tiger was out for a few days. The jackal then began to abuse the tiger in foul terms saying that he had borrowed bear meat from him but had not returned it yet. The jackal showed the basket stuck to its neck and said that it was the very basket by which the tiger took the meat.

It then asked the tigress to remove the basket from his neck. It said it would come to next day for the meat and to tell the tiger to remain at home. Meanwhile the tiger had managed to come out of the *Jangtar* and returned home.

The tigress told the tiger every thing. The tiger then resolved to take revenge. The jackal also came to know that the tiger had escaped.

The jackal knew that the tiger would take revenge. So it did not go to the tiger's home the next day. Instead, he went there a day later hoping that the tiger was out. But to make sure he began calling the tiger in a loud voice. The tigress came out and said that the tiger had gone out. The jackal then said that he would come the next day. The tiger eagerly awaited the jackal the whole of the next day and yet the jackal did not turn up.

Waiting for a few more days the jackal thought that the tiger would be out. It went to see the tigress. The tiger was present but the tigress hid him and told the jackal that the tiger was out. But the jackal could not fully rely on the tigress as he could not see the foot prints of the tiger leading away from the cave. So it began abusing the tiger standing at the mouth of the cave. The tiger could not tolerate the jackal's insulting language. He growled suddenly and rushed out from the cave in order to catch the jackal. The jackal began to run for the dear life.

But the jackal knew that it could not outrun the tiger. So it planned to play its last card. Meanwhile it found a pair of trees standing very close together. The small gap between them closed and widened as the wind blew. The jackal entered the gap followed by the tiger. The jackal's body got stuck between the trees. But as the tiger's body was bigger it acted like a wedge and the jackal slipped off. The tiger was left helplessly stuck between those two trees. The jackal then bit off the scrotum of the tiger and showed it triumphantly to the tigress. It then threatened her that unless she returned his meal, he would kill her children. Being frightened the tigress married it and began to live with it as its wife in the cave.

One day jackal went out with his foster children - the tiger cubs for a hunt. On the way they encountered a river which the cubs crossed easily. But the jackal was almost drowned in the mid stream when the cubs rescued him. The jackal said "I was enjoying a swim and you pulled me out. You are all very naughty fellows".

They continued on their journey. Suddenly they met with a herd of pigs. The jackal asked the young tigers to capture them and he would kill them. But he could not kill any when they were brought to him. Then the tiger cubs killed one and came to him. The jackal told them "What is the use of killing them? They are tasteless : That's why I did not kill them." He then abused them for wanton killing and then said again "Now that you have killed them throw away the intestines and go home." When they left, the jackal secretly ate up the intestines.

The jackal took great care not to reveal its lack of physical strength to the tigress and her cubs. Again they came across a river on their way. The young tigers crossed the river easily. But the jackal was about to go down. This time the cubs did not come to its rescue. The jackal reached the other bank far below down stream tired and hungry.

Fortunately, he found the body of a dead cow. But his strength was at such a low ebb that he could not even tear the hide of the cow in order to get at its flesh. So he sang a song :

Twyma Tariang, Twysa Tariang
Kasay Harsa Thulang
Wakbuk Chakbwi,
Kuriya Ragni Mwy.

English rendering :

[When the great river or small streams come to a flood, you be my guest. The intestines of a pig or a goat boiled in soda water is the only food fit for the weak persons.]

Hearing this song a crocodile approached the jackal and asked him how it had learned this song. The jackal said "Well its a religious song. Though I look like a jackal actually I am a *Barman*(Brahmin)". The crocodile then requested the jackal to impart the knowledge of scriptures to her young children. The jackal agreed. It asked the crocodile to dig seven holes for them. She did so and handed over her children to the jackal for schooling. The jackal told her

to come after seven days.

In the meantime, the jackal gobbled up all the children of the crocodile. On the seventh day, the crocodile arrived earlier than expected. She realised the wicked deed of the jackal. She lay in wait in a hole for the jackal. The jackal came and suspecting the crocodile's presence, shouted "Oh, my wife, where are you ? Why are you so quiet ? Give response if you are in the hole."

The crocodile thought that it would be wiser to respond since it would bring the jackal to the hole. So she responded. The jackal did not enter the hole and instead backed away to the bank of the river. After waiting for a long time, the crocodile came out and found the jackal on the bank. She then pretended to be dead and floated downstream. The jackal understood her motive. It said "A dead body floats upstream." The foolish crocodile quickly changed her course and the cunning jackal sped away.

But the crocodile could not forget the loss of her children. She lay in wait for an oppurtunity to teach a good lesson to the jackal. One day when the jackal came to the river to drink water, the crocodile caught him by his leg and made a *Hum* sound. The jackal said "How foolish you are to say *'hum'* when you should say *Han*. The gullible crocodile tried to imitate the *Han* sound and the jackal slipped from her mouth.

The crocodile then began chasing it. The jackal saw the dead body of an elephant in front of it and in desperation entered its body through the annus. The crocodile lay in wait beside the elephant to catch it as soon as it came out. But the jackal had begun eating the flesh of the belly of the elephant. After a few days the crocodile could not wait any longer and departed.

Meanwhile the skin of the elephant turned dry, this shutting up the annul opening and the jackal could not come out. But he did not lose hope. Soon after, a troop of the king's army passed by the elephant. The jackal shouted from the inside of the elephant "A dead elephant is worth one lakh of rupees. If any one rubs oil and ghee on my annus I shall be alive again. And what a big

price I would fetch."

The soldiers heard this and began rubbing the anus of the elephant with oil and ghee. This rubbing of oil and ghee made the skin of the elephant soft. The jackla then said "All of you stand at a distance. I shall stand up now." When all the soldiers had retrestred at a distance, the jackal suddenly came out and vanished in the forest.

In that forest it came across a deer. A desire rose in him to eat the soft flesh of the deer. He aproached it and said "Oh dear, would you accept me as your friend?" The deer had a crow-friend. It discussed with it about the jackal's proposal and then accepted the jackal as its friend.

One day, the jackal showed a *Jhum* with full of tender jute leaves to the deer. The deer did not understand the motive of the jackal. So, since then, it frequented the place to relish the jute leaves. The owner of the *Jhum* had placed a *Khwwy* (One kind of bamboo made trap) on its path.

Next day, the deer fell into this trap. The jackal was very much pleased to see this - "How the farmer will come" he thought, 'will kill it, take its flesh and throw away the entrails which will be mine." So thinking, he waited patiently hiding in a bush nearby for the farmer to turn up. But the crow came in the evening and advised the deer to lie listlessly feigning death and to runaway when the owner of the *Jhum* discarded him as dead.

Soon after, the owner of the *Jhum* came with a big *Dabarak* (scythe) in his hand and was pleased to find the deer in the trap. But when he came near it, he found it dead and as expected threw it away. Meanwhile, the jackal was slowly advancing towards the *Jhum* in order to eat the entrails of the deer. But the deer without warning sprung up and ran away. The owner of the *Jhum* saw this and at once threw its *Dabarak* at it. The jackal thought the *Dabarak* to be the entrails of the deer and went forward to take it. The sharp *Dabarak* split the head of the jackal into two.

In this incident lies the origin of the Jamatia proverb '*Shialsa Dasa Bay Bayjakthay*', meaning 'Too much cunning ever reaches itself' or 'every fox must pay his skin to the furrier'.

(a) Comments :

This is an animal tale. The main motif of this tale is the portrayal of the wiliness of the jackal and in contrast the extreme foolishness of the monkey, the tiger, the crocodile, the kings' soldiers and the deer. All of them were duped by the jackal.

The ultimate result of the jackal's excessive cunning and greed is also an important motif of this tale. The result of such excessive greed of a jackal is a very common feature of Bengali folk-tale. In English proverb 'Every fox must pay his skin to the furrier' also indicates the universal character of this motif.

(b) Various Divisions Of This Folk-Tale :

This animal tale may be divided into seven parts. they are :

The first Part :	**The deceiving of the monkey by the Jackal.**
The second Part :	**the deceiving of the tigress and the monkey by the jackal.**
The Third Part :	**The jackal as the life saver of an old and the dealer of the punishment to the ungrateful tiger.**
The Fourth Part :	**The jackal as a killer of the tiger.**
The Fifth Part :	**The jackal as a teacher of the young crocodiles.**
The Sixth Part :	**The deceiving of the soldiers by the jackal.**
The Seventh Part :	**The jackal as a traitor to the deer.**

Similarity With Bengali Folk-Tales :

Among the above mentioned seven parts of this tale, the followings are common to Bengalee animal tales. These are :

1. The Second part of this tale is similar to a Bengalee tale titled '*Shialer Faki*'[1]
2. The Third part of this tale is similar to a Bengalee tale titled '*Khaichar Bagh*'[2]
3. The fourth part is similar to the Bengali tale '*Antimhasto*' where a cat has been shown as the killer of the tiger.[3]

4. The Fifth part is similar to the Bengali tale titled '*Shial Pandit*'[4]

5. The sixth part is similar to the Bengali tale titled '*Chalaki*' which also indicates the cunning of the jackal.[5]

No. II : Nouway :

Once, two sisters of a certain village went to *Jhum* to see the crops. The *Jhum* was full of various types of crops, vegetables and fruits. There they began to eat *Thaaysumu*(Melon) fruits. The elder sister began to eat all the fruits that came her way green or ripe. But the younger sister was much more prudent. She devoured only the ripe ones. Suddenly, the younger sister discovered a *Thaaysum Alampa* fruit and showed it joyfully to the elder sister. The elder was of a greedy type and she proposed that they eat it together. First the younger one was loath to eat up such a lovely fruit. But as the elder sister prossed, she told her that they would eat it on the side of a river near their grand mother's house.

When they reached there, the younger sister told the elder one they should go to the side of the pond of their maternal aunt. The latter agreed. But upon reaching the place the younger sister said they should better go to their own bathing place on a stream that flows near their house. The elder sister agreed again. There, at last the two sisters ate this fruit together.

Then the younger sister told the elder to sit on the *Leyngak*(one kind of creeper which is used as a swing) The latter sat on the *Leyngak* first and the younger sister pushed it gently. But when the younger sister sat on the *Leyngak* the elder sister began pushing it very forcefully. The speed became dangerous. The younger sister grew scared and asked her sister to stop pushing. But this only made the elder sister to push the *Leyngak* even more vigorously. The creeper snapped suddenly and the poor girl was thrown into the deep water of the river where she was eaten up by *Boal*fish (a kind sheat fish).

In the evening, when the elder sister returned home alone, her mother asked her about the young daughter. The elder daughter told her that she had gone to their neighbour's house to see a newly born goat.

On the next day, the mother went to the river to wash her clothes on a big block of wood. As soon as she stepped on the wood she heard a peculiar noise. Returning home she told her husband all about it and he at once went to his room to bring the *Chekhay Bay Fuleyng* (a kind of fishing trap) to catch this peculiar fish. But on his way the piteous tone of kwai bird made him forget all about it and he brought a *Dul* (a kind of hollow basket for keeping grains in) instead.

The wife asked him to bring the *Chelwyng*. The old man then went to fetch it. He kept on repeating the name. But this time the sound of a *Mandar* (Squirrel) distracted him and he came out instead with a sickle. This made his wife very angry. He went in again and this time brought it. Then both of them caught the fish.

Returning home, when they were ready with a chopper to cut the fish, a human voice emerged from within "Here is my head, Don't cut open here." So they slit open the belley of the fish and out came their younger daughter. She described every thing to her father and mother.

Since then, the elder sister was hated by her parents. One day, her father constructed a big cage of bamboo and told the elder daughter to enter it and find out whether it was suitable for her fowls or not. She entered it unsuspectingly. Her father shut the door as soon as she entered. He told her to remain in this cage as a punishment for her previous wicked deed. The girl entreated her father to release her but his decision remained firm. The cage was placed in a corner of the house.

On the next day, when all of them went to the *Jhum*, the elder sister asked the younger one to supply her with food. The younger sister served faeces according to the orders of her mother.

When the younger sister was taking betel leaf, the elder sister requested her to give one to her also. This time also the mother told the former what to do and so she gave the elder a leaf with a patch of bird faeces to serve as lime and goat droppings as

nuts.

After a shorhwhile, when the younger sister was working with a *Dabarak* (a kind of chopper) the elder sister asked her to give it to her. Again the mother heard it and told the younger daughter to give the latter blow with the *Dabarak*. The younger daughter accordingly hit her on the forehead. The cage got slightly broken by the forces of the blow and the elder sister slowly emerged from within.

After coming out from the cage, the elder sister sat on *Nugul* (a kind of bamboo made bench). She saw a flock of *Nouway* (a kind of crane) birds flying freely in the sky. She wished she were as free as these birds and wanted to fly with them in the open sky. She did not like her confined life any more. She addressed the *Nouway* birds in a sweet tone :

Nouway Yay Yay
Nouway Yay Yay
Anabw Bwkwrang Kangsaraja
Anabw Bwkwrang Kangsaraja

English rendering :

[Oh dear *Nouway* birds, give me a feather, I shal also fly].

The *Nouway* birds said *Hau Hau*(Yes, Yes). And dropped some feathers. Then came another flock. They too gave her some feathers. And then another flock gave her two legs and two beaks. She sewed them on to her body. Then she wanted to test her flying capacity. At first she flew a little and sat on the *Dangdal*(a bamboo bar fixed in the court yard for hanging clothes to dry).

The elder sister told the younger sister that she would leave them and fly away with the *Nouway* birds. Her mother observed every thing. She tried with a long bamboo pole to get her down but she flew higher and higher. Meanwhile, her father came and requested her to come down. But she did not care anymore and flew away singing a song describing her grief :

Anna May Kaasa Hwawy Sankha
Bukhuk Wa Khisany Rwnay

English rendering :

[When I was hungry you gave me faeces instead of rice, When I was thirsty urine was given instead of water.]

Later on, one day, while relaxing on a *Nugu*the younger sister saw a flock of *Nauway* birds and asked them :

Nouway yayay
Nouway Yayay
Bayde Faykha Fayakha

English rendering :

[Oh the *Nouway* birds, is my sister in your flock.]

Nibi Nouwayraja Bay Patta
Khwlay Jakhay Nay Tanguw.

English rendering :

[Your sister is going to be married with the *Nouway* king.]

Then a second flock of the *Nouway* birds came and they said that the marriage ceremony had already begun.

Then a third flock came and said that the marriage ceremony was going to be over any minute now. They sang :

Maydu Bay Mwydu
Mwydu Bay Maydu Kaklay
Thapa Haar Thwyya
Dangay Wa Twy Khwlay
Grungni Saka Grung Khwlay
Patta Khwlay Jak Tanguw.

English rendering :

[The rice and curry is more than what the invitees can consume. So they make them into balls and throw them to each other in merriment. The fire in the oven keeps burning. And the wooden trough is full of water. The music goes on. The wedding function is in progress.]

Then a fourth flock came. They said that her sister was coming this way with her husband. The younger sister was very much pleased and informed her parents. At last, the elder sister arrived with her husband. The *Nouwayking* brought a big drum and the elder daughter came with *Duttara* (a kind of musical instrument) in her hand.

At night, the elder daughter told her mother to get inside the mosquito net and they would play a musical instrument. Then the daughter began to sing and her husband began to play the drum. In this way when the music reached its climax the *Nouwaying* forcefully struck the drum and the drum was broken and a swarm of vimrul (hornet) came out from within. They then fastened the door from out side and flew away. In this way the elder sister took vengeance on her parents.

For this wicked deed on the part of her daughter, her mother cursed her saying that when she comes near the water for eating fishes a hunter would kill her.

In reply, the daughter cursed her mother saying "When you sit weaving and your grand children are around you and there is not enough light, the broken threads will come flying towards you and pierce your chest like arrows" and so saying she flew away.

Comments:

This is a very popular tale of the Jamatias. It is also prevalent among other tribal communities of Tripura with variations here and there. There is also a tale of somewhat similar nature among the Manipuris - The Manipuri tale is known as *Uchek Langmeidong* [5].

The story has also a faint parallel in Bengali. The gulping of a human being by a big fish - a *Boal* is found in Bengali also. The story has three different motifs :

1. Elder sister's jealousy of the younger sister.
2. The marriage between human beings and birds or animals.

And

3. the curse and recurse.

No. III. Mayung Kufur
Or Fate Bay Rangia :

Once, there lived a man named Chaifak in Kaliatwysa village. He was a notorious sorcerer. Chaifak had seven daughters who were also witches (Swkals). His six daughters were married. He was now searching for a bridegroom for his youngest daughter. But he could not find any as he had a bad name as a sorcerer.

At last, a young boy named Amichamrai of Rudrananda Twisa village agreed to marry her. So one day in the month of *Agrahayana* Amichamrai's friends took him to his would be father-in-law's house. There he would stay for about a month as the marriage was to take place in *Magh*, the following month.

The bridegroom's party stayed that day in the bride's house. They spent the night in making great merriment. At night Chaifak asked his daughters to catch fish in order to prepare food for the bridegroom's party who would take it on their way to the village the next day.

The daughters took *Langa* (bamboo made basket), *Sulan* (bamboo made instrument to catch fish) etc. to catch fish. They caught *Enbru*(tedpole), *Latiya Barak* (a kind of fish) that live on faeces and returned home. They turned the worms into a *Kerang* (turtle) and various types of fishes with the help of witch craft. Next day, they prepared various items with these things. They prepared Bharta (mixture) with the *Kerang*, *Godak*fish and other fishes were fried with rice paste.

Then they packed the prepared rice with leaf cones and stuffed the *Bharta* and *Godak* in bamboo tubes. They gave a cone of rice and a bamboo tube of *Godak* to each of the thirty members in the bridegroom party. Before their departure, the mother of the bride who was also a witch told the leader of the bridegroom party to eat the food before crossing the next *Cherra* (stream) on their way, otherwise she said "the *Bharta* will turn into insects, the fried items into faeces and the *Godak* into tadpole."

The bridegroom's party reached the *Cherra* at noon. They took their meals there. But fifteen of them crossed to the other side and opening their cones and the tubes found only faeces inside and so they threw every thing away. They did not discuss this amongst themselves at that time. When they returned home the leader admitted that the mother-in-law of *Amichamrai* had told him about it earlier. He said "Well don't say anything about it now or the witches will do us great harm".

In his father-in-law's house *Amichamrai* began spending his days by somehow conforming to the ways of the family. He remained alone at night as the daughters of *Chaifak* went out every night.

One day *Amichamrai's* mother-in-law met a young woman with her baby when she was returning from the *Jhum*. She praised the handsomeness of the baby. That night the baby fell ill due to the evil glance of the *Chaifak's* wife.

Next day, the woman did not visit the *Jhum* due to the illness of her baby. Chaifak's wife went to see the baby at noon. The woman told her about the sudden illness of the baby. The witch (Chaifak's wife) gave the baby a little water with a spell in it and expressed her wonder at the sudden sickness of the baby. She returned home but had no peace of mind since the baby did not die yet. The condition of the baby deteriorated further and the mother sent for an *Ochai*. Chaifak's seven daughters were all roaming about the house and trying hard with their magic spells to destroy the life of the baby.

At night Chaifak asked Amichamrai to cut open the turtle (Kerang) that he had brought from the Jhum, Amichamrai heard the sound of crying from his neighbour's house at midnight and hesitated. But his father-in-law was telling him again and again to cut the turtle. He then rose and went for the turtle. But when he found that the head of the turtle resembled that of human head he ran away in fear and hid under the *machan* (bamboo made plateform to sleep) of his father-in-law.

When the father-in-law came and found that the turtle still possessed a human head he began abusing his wife and daughters in the *Swkals* (witchs') dialect. He abused them saying "Why can't you take the life of a mere child yet?" Then he began to utter spells. The half turtle and half human object turned now into a complete turtle and the baby too died at the same time.

Then the father-in-law asked Amichamrai to cut the turtle. He told Amichamrai that the turtle meat would be taken to the *Jhum* on the next morning as there would be many *Yagulkhilmwng* (exchange labourers) in the *Jhum* and wil eat it. *Amichamrai* then killed the turtle and cut it into pieces. The head of the turtle was specially kept aside for his mother-in-law.

They then sat down to take their meals. Amichamrai sat on the *Nagud* (platform on the varandah) of the *Gayriyng*. He realised that the turtle was actually the baby. So he did not touch the meat. Instead he chewed the *Kalki* (bowl of hooka which holds tobaco) that he had brought with him when he came as *Gharjamai*. He dropped the meat under the *Machan* (bamboo made platform) secretly. But his mother-in-law chewed the head of the turtle with apparent relish.

When his mother-in-law came to sweep the room, she found the untouched meat. She realised that Amichamrai had understood everything. There would be much trouble, she thought, if Amichamrai told others about it. Then she made Amichamrai sit on a *Piri* (a wooden seat) and asked him to take an oath in the name of God not to disclose to any one the truth about the meat.

She said, "Your family will prosper both in wealth and power if you keep your promise. But if you do'nt your family will suffer." Then she pushed the point of a sickle on to his forehead and said "You will live as long as this *Chuli* (top of the sickle) remains on your forehead. It will come off if you don't keep your word. And there won't be any descendants to follow you."

So Amichamrai did not tell it to any body. In the month of *Magh* his marriage was cerebrated and he stayed there as a *Gharjamai*

In the course of time his father-in-law and mother-in-law became old and died. He too became old. His family became prosperous both in wealth and man. One day, he called all his people to his house. All of them turned up. Only one pregnant woman who went ot the *Jhum* to bring fuel and a cow which had stayed away from the village grazing could not make it.

In front of all his people Amichamrai said "Live you all happily. Don't hate any one. Your grandmother is a *Siwkal*(witch). But don't hate her on that account. Think of her with respect when I am no more. My wealth and prosperity are all due to her. Don't be jealous of any one".

As he said, the *Chuli* of the sickle in his forehead dropped and he died. His wife (the witch) became very angry with the turn of events. She looked at her descendants with her evil eyes and all of them along with their domestic animals died on the spot. The witch too died. Only the woman who went to *Jhum* and the cow that was out of the village were saved.

The woman now lived on one side of the village on a Gayriyng. The cow lived below the *Gayring* She earned her daily bread by weaving. As she weaved, her *Thun* (the shuttle) fell below the *Gayring*often. And the cow lifted it to her as often as it fell. But as the shuttle was falling down too often, the cow did not agree to lift it.

The woman said to her "I am pregnant. I can't get down again and again. Help me please." The cow replied "I am also pregnant. I can't do it again and again. I can help you only on one condition, if you and I give brith to male children, the children will be friends. But if yours is a daughter and mine a son they will be married." The woman agreed.

Then one day the woman told the cow that her labour pains had begun. The cow gave a gentle push with her horns on the woman's belly and she gave brith to a daughter. After a short while, the cow gave birth to a male calf.

The daughter of the woman and the calf played together. Gradually, both of them grew up. The calf never left the girl for a moment. One day she told her mother "Why does this calf always follow me?" The mother told her daughter about their promises. She said perhpas the calf had come to know about this promise from its mother.

The daughter felt greatly embarrassed. She thought every one would laugh at her if she married the calf. One day she went to their old abandoned house and hung herself from a mango tree. The calf came in search of her there and found her body. It hit its head on the mango tree out of grief and died. After some time, the mango tree bore two fruits.

Udaimanikya, the king of Tripura was childless. He passed his days with a heavy heart. Two *Shaliks*(mynas) rested in the King's room. The King's attendant saw that these birds kept their eyes shut whenever they went out. One day he asked the birds "Why do you close your eyes when you go out?"

The birds replied "It is inauspicious to see the childless king when one goes out to work". The men said to himself "I am the first man to see the king every morning. That's why I remain poor." Since then the servant began to clean the king's room either early in the morning while the king was still in bed or at noon.

The king observed the change in his behaviour and the hours of his work. He enquired of the servant the reason for it. At first, the latter tried to evade answering. But due to the pressure of the king he said "Oh my lord, I can't tell you. My body is trembling out of fear. Put me in an iron cage. I shall tell you."

He then told the king about the incident with the birds. The king was very much shocked to hear this. He decided to renounce the world and go to the forest. On his journey to the forest he came to the deserted house of Amicharnrai. He slept under the mango tree as he was very tired.

Suddenly he heard a voice from heaven "Oh king, don't worry, you will be a father. There are two mangoes in this tree. You eat one and give the other to the queen. You will have a beautiful daughter. Call her Hirabati. The King at once got up. He plucked one mango and gave it to the queen to eat. He did not succeed in plucking the other mango. Udaimanikya then returned to the palace.

Udaimanikya had a deep friendship with the Magh King, who helped him to introduce the spinning wheel (*chaakha*) in his kingdom. One day the elephant of the Magh King ate up the seed of the mango which the queen of Udaimanikya had thrown away on her way to the palace of Udaimanikya. As a result, the elephant too became pregnant.

In due time, the queen gave birth to a beautiful daughter. The king was very much pleased with the child. He named her Hirabati. After a few days Udaimanikya threw a great feast. The Magh King was also invited. He came to Udaimanikya's palace on the elephant that had eaten up the seed of the mango. It had also given birth to a beautiful white male calf which was called *Mayung Kafur.*

This young elephant had also come to the palace with its mother. It liked Hirabati very such. Hirabati was also pleased to see such a beautiful white elephant. Since then the young elephant often came to the palace secretly.

One day, Hirabati's gardener informed the king about the presence of the white elephant (*Mayung Kufur*) in the garden. The king sent a man of great strength named Rangia to catch it. Rangia immediately came back to the king with the elephant on his shoulder. The king gave this *Mayung Kufur* to to Hiabati. From then on Hirabati and the *Mayung Kufur* always played together. And every evening Hirbati took a ride on the elephant.

In this way both of them grew up together and the *Mayung Kufur* began to love Hirabati more deeply. One day, the Magh King saw Hirabati and was greatly charmed by her beauty. He told *Mayung Kufur* to run away with Hirabati when she took her evening ride

to guard Hirabati alternately all through the night.

At first, Rangia was on guard. The evil spirits came and asked from outside "*Kate kata Jange?*" (Who are here ?). Rangia replied "Rangia Jange" (Rangia is on guard). Hearing that they went away. Then Fate came to guard. Rangia went to sleep. Before going to sleep Rangia said, "*Lie Fate*, if any one comes, you will say that Rangia is on guard."

The evil spirits came three times when Fate was on guard. But they went away when Fate said "Rangia Jange". But the evil spirits kept coming again and again.

Fate thought "true they go away upon hearing my younger brother's name but they return again. They would not come anymore if I tell my name." So when the evil spirits came again, he said "Fate Jange" (Fate is on guard). The evil spirits broke the door at once and slapped Fate. He could not call Rangia as his face was stunned by the impact of the blow. They carried away Hirabati. Rangia did not learn anything at this since he was fast asleep. So Fate poked him with a spear on his ear and made him awake. Seeing the condition of Fate Rangia said "If God wishes that the tale of me and my brother be spread far and wide let my brother be alright." So saying he slapped on Fate's face and it turned right. Fate then showed the path used by the abductors of Hirabati.

Hirabati threw her ornaments and pieces of her garments to indicate her path to Rangia. Rangia entered a hill following those pieces. There he found a hole surrounded by dense forest. There was no way to enter this hole. He then saw a *Sukuy* creeper (a kind of creeper grows in plenty in Tripura) beside it. Rangia told his brother that he would enter the hole with the help of that creeper. He said "Be careful, the evil spirits will come in the shape of mosquito; fly, leech etc. and will bite you. But don't kill a single of them. The creeper will be broken as soon as you kill a single insect. I shall not be able to come up then.

Rangia entered the hole. He saw that the evil spirits were playing together. Hirabati was killing the louses from *Haychukma's* head. Rangia came to *Haychukma* and took Hirabati on his shoulder and came out of the hole with the help of the creeper. But when they came out Hirabati found that her *Sanggeyng* was missing. She told Rangia to retrieve it from below. She said "This *Sanggeyng* was used in killing *Mayung Kufur*. I shall not go witnout it.

Rangia agreed to bring it. He kept Hirabati above the hole and told her not to kill any insect till he returned.

Rangia entered the hole again. But *Haychukma* delayed unnecessarily in giving *Sanggeyng* to him.

The bites of the insects had become quite unbearble to Fate. He could not tolerate any more and suddenly drove away a leech. The creeper broke and Rangia fell below. He could not come up.

Fate waited a long time for Rangia. At last, losing all hopes about him, he came to the palace with Hirabati. Fate told the king that he had killed *Mayung Kufur* and rescued Hirabati. Now he wished to marry Hirabati. The king too agreed. So arrangements were made for Hirabati's marriage with Fate. But Hirabati asked for seven days' time before the marriage took place..

Rangia requested *Haychukma* to tell him how he could get out to the hole. *Haychukma* said "You can't get out as the *Sukuy* creeper has been broken. Sow the seed of a *Sukuy* creeper, it will grow and get out in three days." After a short while Rangia saw that two evil spirits *Thunnayra* and *Bamrag* were playing with the *Sukuy* seeds. He requested them to give a seed to him. They said "We can give you a seed only if you consent to give an amount of flesh from your thigh equal to the wight to the *Sukuy* seed."

Rangia did so and received the seed. He then sowed it and within three days the top of the creeper came out of the hole and Rangia managed to scramble out. He proceeded towards the palace with the cooking utensils and the *Sanggeyng*. He arrived to the palace two days before the marriage of Hirabati with Fate. Seeing Rangia

Hirabati said "Rangia is my husband. He killed *Mayung Kufur* and rescued me." Rangia showed the *Sanggeyng* as evidence. Hearing about Rangia's arrival Fate committed suicide taking the poison used to kill *Takthu* (dove) bird.

Then Udaymanikya arranged the marriage of Hirabati with Rangia. He made him the Administrator of Udaipur as he was the would be king of Tripura. From then on Udaipur also came to be known as *Rangamati*

(a) Comments :

The folktale *Mayung Kufur* (The white elephant) resemble a folktale of the TRIPURI tribe narrated in the *Rajmala* (Royal chronicle) entitled *Swet Hastir Janmakatha*[7] (The birth of the white elephant) in many respects. The Jamatia version may be a combination of five different folktales with different motifs which have been woven into one tale. The plots are so neatly inter woven with each other that, on the whole, the tale never seems strained and the listeners are never tired of listening to it though it is very long and it takes quite a lot of time to narrate it at one sitting. On the contrary, it is a very popular tale among the Jamatias. The five parts of the *Mayung Kufur* are :-

1. To the first part belongs the role of Chailak, his wife and daughter as witchcraft.

2. The second part deals with the promise of the woman made to the cow.

3. The third part deals with the magical birth of Hirabati and *Mayung Kufur*, the white elephant.

4. The fourth part deals with the kidnapping of Hirabati by *Mayung Kufur*. The heroic deeds of Rangia who rescued Hirabati and the death of Mayung Kufur also belong to this part.

5. The fifth part deals with the death of Fate and the marriage of Hirabati and Rangia.

The main motif of the first part of the tale is to show the role

of ogre. The motif of the second part is the talking cow. The motif of the third part of the tale is conception of the queen by eating the magical mango. The conception of the elephant and the brith of *Mayung Kufur* also belong to this motif.

The motif of the fourth part is the successful younger brother. This is a very common motif of the Bengali folktale.

The supernatural helper, the reward of Rangia and the death of Fate for his misdeed are the main motifs of the fifth part of this tale.

(b) **Sweta Hastir Janmakatha And Mayung Kufur - A comparison :**

The folktale entitled *Swet Hastir Janmakatha* as described in the *Shri Rajmala* is similar to that of the *Mayung Kufur* of the Jamatias in many respects. But in some points they differ too. The following analysis of the differences will show the trend of the Jamatia tale.

The differneces between them are :-

1. The Jamatia folk tale *Mayung Kufur* means a white elephant. In Jamatia language *Mayung* means elephant and *Kufur* means white. The title *Swet Hastir Janmakatha* is a Bengali term which means the birth of a white elephat.
2. The folktale *Mayung Kufur* is longer than *Swet Hastir Janmkatha* due to some sub plots which have been added to the main plot to make it more credible and more convincing to the listeners.

The characters of Chaitak, his wife and daughter, *Amichamrai*, his wife and their descendants, the bridegroom party, the role of the *Shalik's* (the house hold *Mayana*), the sweepers, the role to *Ochai* who predicts the whereabouts of Hirabati, the heavenly voice, the fight between Fate and the wild bear, the journey by bamboo raft, the maid servant of *Maghraja*, the role of hariclip in killing of the *Mayung Kufur*, kdnapping of Hirabati by *Haychukma*, breaking of the *Sukuy* creeper, the sufferings of Rangia in the hole and the death of Fate are absent in the *Swet Hasrit Janmakatha*.

According to *Swet Hastir Janmakatha* - "near *Nana Gomati*, a pregnant woman was weaving in a tangghar. At that time,

a pregnant cow too came there and started chewing cud under the *tangghar*. Suddenly the shuttle of the woman fell down below the *tangghar* from her hand[6].

This beginning of the tale is similar to the Second part of the tale *Mayung Kufur*. In this context it may be said that the first part of the *Mayung Kufur* that has been added to the Second part is more logical and consistent.

On the otherhand, the beginning of the tale of the *Shri Rajmala* is inconsistent to some extent. One may ask the question here "why was there none to help the woman ?" There is no answer to this question. But the Jamatia tale explains the reason of the woman being there alone when it says that as a result of the wrath of the witch all had died except the woman and the cow.

In the Jamatia tale the king, the princess and the kingdom have been specified as Udaymanikya, Hirabati and Tripura. So here we find that historic persons have been used in this tale to make it more credible. And the place is also a particular state. But the approach of the tale of *Swet Hastir Janmakatha* is different. There is no name of the King, the princess and the king.

The tale of *Swet Hastir Janmakatha* ended in the Union of Bhutia Rangia and the princess. But the tale of *Mayung Kufur* ends with the death of Fate. So the endings also differ.

C. Historical Materials In The Folktale Of Mayung Kufur :

Mayung Kufur is not a historical tale and so it cannot serve as a source of history like any other folktale directly. Certain elements found in this folktale may be interpreted historically. These elements are :-

i. The role played by *Mayung Kufur* (White elephant) indicates the availability of white elephants in Tripura in the past.
There cannot be any confusion regarding the historicity of this statement as Tripura is on the borderline of Burma which is famous for white elephants. The mention of *Shri Rajmala* in this respect is worthmentioning where a white elephant has been described as cause of war between Dhanyamanikya, and the

king of Thanangchi. The mention of the *Shri Rajmala* is *Thanangchi Te Ek Hasti Dhaval Achila* (There wa a white elephant in Thanangchi).

ii. In the Jamatia tale, the name of the king is Udaymanikya. There really was a king of this name in Tripura. He was the ruler of Tripura for only five years (1572 - 1576 A.D.) and Rangamati (Capital of Tripura) was named as Udaipur after his name in his time.

iii. The relation between the king of Tripura and Maghraja (King of Arakan) as mentioned in the Jamatia tale is a historical fact.

iv. The name of Hirabati as mentioned in the tale of *Mayung Kufur* is also a historical name. Hirabati was the queen of King Udaymanikya. Udaymanikya changed the name Laxmipur and named it Hirapur after the name of his wife Hirabati. The reference of Rajmala may be cited in this context :—

Hirapur Nam Purbe Laxmipur Chila
Udaymanikya Rani Hirabati Kaila

v. The role of the evil of spirit as mentioned in the first part of the tale was also prevalent in the state in the past. The reference to the evil spirits as mentioned in the *Shri Rajmala* is "in Tripuri language *Dain* is called *Swkal* People think that they can do all impossible things. It was quite easy for them to stop the flow of river, move about in air and kill human beings by the power of *Mangra* (spells).

vi. *Twikichikpara* : It is also a real village and is situated in between Maharani and Amarpur of South Tripura District. This village is absolutely innibited by the Jamatis.

vii. *Mayamtala* : This is also a real place. It is situated on the bank of Mynee river, a tributary of kassalong and is separated only by a range of hills from the Feni.

viii. *Ryma-Sarma* : They are the two hilly streams of Amarpur Sub-Division which have formed the river Gomoti.

ix *Mayani Twysa* : The *Mayani* river is called *Mayani Twysa*. In Jamatia language *Twysa* means the stream.

IV. Takllyng Khetri Bay Chibuk Hasikiri
Or Mwswysa Bay Kerangsa

There was a *Mandwy* tree in a *Chari*(Thatch) forest. A deer used to visit the place for the ripe fruit of the tree. One day, a tortoise being attracted by the sweet smell of the fruits appeared there. The tortoise made a lot of noise on the dried leaves as it crawled towards the tree. This frightened the deer and it ran away. The fright of the deer amused the tortoise very much. But when the deer found that it was only a tortoise it came back. The deer told the tortoise to approach quietly. For the noise it made might become the cause of their death. The tortoise said that the sound was due to its short legs and when he moved his chest dragged on the ground.

Then both of them partook of the fruits to their hearts content. The deer then told the tortoise that if he came daily then the fruits would be collected by the one who arrived earlier and who would also divide the fruits equally between them. The tortoise replied that he did not know how to divide things. Then the deer said the tortoise that they were friends from that day onwards and both of them would live together and come to this place together at the same time. The tortoise agreed to the proposal. Since then the tortoise and the deer stayed together and shared the fruits.

One day, the deer thought of a plan to deceive the tortoise. It decided to kill the tortoise so that it could take the fruits all alone. The tortoise knew nothing of this wicked scheme. One day, while gathering the fruit both of them came near a hole. The deer then proposed that they would play a new game. The tortoise agreed. The deer told the tortoise to jump over the hole. The tortoise did not agree. 'His short legs' it said 'would not carry him over'. But as the deer insisted it agreed at last. As a demonstration, the deer jumped and crossed the hole singing a song :

Kwtal Waswyma Balang :
Kwwlaywanw Naydey

Hang Mwswy Hang.
English rendering:
[The stems of the young bamboos are standing like spears.]

Then the turn of the tortoise came. It came to jump over the hole singing :
Keran Sani Fut Fat.
Mwswy Sani Hang Hang
Oh deer - knowing about the short legs of the tortoise are you requesting to jump across the hole.]

Singing, the tortoise jumped but it could not cross the hole and fell into it. He requested the deer to lift him up but the deer did not oblige, saying that he would die if he tried to rescue him.

The deer then warned the tortoise to take care of the eggs of the *Hasikiri*so that they were not broken. The tortoise froze to hear the name of *Hasikiri* because it had heard the name of this dangerous snake king earlier. It started weeping and appealed to the deer again and again to pull him up. He also promised that he would not come to eat the *Mandwy* fruits any more. The deer melted when he heard that it would not come to share the fruits. He then dropped a creeper into the hole and lifted the tortoise and told him to run away from that place before the arrival of the *Hasikiri* to its hole. Then the tortoise started running for its life. It crossed many streams, forests, hills etc. but still there was in him the perpetual fear of the *Hasikiri*

After a some time *Hasikiri* came to its hole and when it saw the condition of its broken eggs it became furious. It was sure that this was done by the tortoise as it found the footprints of the tortoise in its hole. It resolved to kill the tortoise and began to stalk the tortoise with its gignatic body. All the wild animals hid themselves as they saw the furious *Hasikiri*Meanwhile the tortoise came across a very big boar. Seeing the wretched condition of this poor tortoise, the boar asked the tortoise why it was crying. The tortoise, then told it about the wrath of the *Hasikiri*. The boar told the tortoise to take shelter under its big body. Soon *Hasikiri* appeared there with a terrific roar. Hearing the gruesome sound made by the

Hasikiri, the boar told the tortoise to immediately go away. The tortoise started running again.

A Takliyng Khetri (a kind of big bird) was flying nearly. Suudenly it saw the tortoise in a tagged out condition. She asked him why he was crying. The tortoise told her every thing. The *Takliyng Khetri* told him that she would protect him. The tortoise surrendered himself to *Taklying Khetri* and took shelter in its nest which was on the top of a very big banyan tree.

After a short while *Hasikiri* came there in search of the tortoise and quizzed her about the whereabouts of the tortoise. *Taklying Khetri* replied her that she did not knwo anything about the tortoise. She asked *Hasikiri* why he was so angry. The tortoise was a gentle creature and could not do any harm to him. *Hasikiri* then told her that it had broken its eggs, and she meant to kill him. *Hasikiri* now understood that *Taklying Khetri* had hidden the trotoise.

Hasikiri told her to hand the tortoise over to her immediately, otherwise, she would kill her too along with the tortoise. *Taklying Khetri* said that she would not return the tortoise without a fight. They began preparing for a fight. *Hasikiri* invited all the animals on the earth to side with her. Tigers, lions, elephants and all the animals on earth came to fight for *Hasikiri*.

Taklying Khetri decided to call all birds to her help and asked *Takpipi* (the Tailor bird) to take this news to all the brids. But *Takpila*, the son of *Takpipi* was very sick. He called *Kuksoma* (the grasshopper) to perform the function of the *Ochai* (the medicineman) and to look after her son. *Takpipi* then invited all the birds and insects to take part in this fight in favour of *Taklying Khetri*. All the birds and insects who can fly including the vultures, kites, the horn bills came to fight. But the problem began with the bat. He was neither a bird nor an animal. So both the parties demanded the bat and ultimately it had to remain neutral.

The fight started with the cock from the bird's side and the frog from the land creatures. In this fight the frog became victorious. Next came the owl from the bird's side and the crab from the land creatures side. In this fight the crab was defeated. The next fight

was with the vulture from the bird's side and the monkey from the land creature's side. In this fight the vulture lifted the monkey in the sky and dropped it to the earth. The vultures became victorious. The monkeys then began to flee from the battle-field out of fear. At last *Taklying Khetri* ordered all the birds of her side to attack jointly *Hasikiri's* party. Then the party of the *Hasikiri* began to fly away from the battle field. *Hasikiri* too was trying to escape. But *Taklying Khetri* arrived specially there and attacked *Haskiri*. She defeated *Hasikiri* but did not kill her. Instead she let her go away.

The tortoise who was in the nest of the *Taklying Khetri* at this time suddenly broke an egg of the *Taklying Khetri* by accidently stepping on it. The tortoise began crying out of fear and embarassament. He thought that *Talying Khetri* would surely kill him. *Taklying Khetri* came back to its nest after a tremendous victory. But she was very kind to see the tearful eyes of the tortoise. She asked the tortoise why he was so grief-stricken. The tortoise then told her that it had broken one of her eggs. *Taklying Khetri* told the tortoise to eat this egg as he had not eatern anythign for the last few days and must be very hungry. Her kind and sympathetic words uplifted the sagging spirits of the tortoise. At last *Taklying Khetri* lowered it on the ground. In this way *Taklying Khetri* kept her word.

Comments :

This is a mixture of two animal tales. The first part of the tale shows the friendship between the deer and the tortoise and the deception of the tortoise by the deer.

The significant thing about this story is the deception of the deer. Usually, in folktales it is the deer that is deceived often. A cunning deer is a rare thing in folktales.

The second part of the story deals with the help of *Taklying Khetri* bird rendered to the tortoise. Helpful animals are the motif of this part of the tale.

The anger of the snake is a very common feature of the Indian folktales. The question whether the bat is an animal or a bird that came up at the time of fighting, is also significant.

(V) Mwkhwra Sani Kok Twma:

A woman became a widow just immediately after her marriage. Being without any child, she went to stay at her father's house after her husband's death. But her brothers and sister-in-laws did not like her due to her early widowhood. They thought she was a witch with an evil power. She then prayed to God for her death.

One day, when she was sleeping in the forenoon she became pregnant by *Pabandev* (the God of air). In due course of time, she gave birth to a monkey. The hatred of her brother and sister-in-law was further intensified by this birth. She then left her brother's house and went to live in a cottage in the forest with her monkey child.

The monkey child grew up in due course of time. He wanted to know all about his father. But his mother could not tell him anything about his father. He then resolved to find out his father. His mother gave him one year's food and he went away in search of his father.

He then began to pray to all the God and Goddesses to help him in his work. One day he met *Pabandev* and told him about his grief. *Pabandev* told him his body only was covered with a skin of a monkey and he could cast off this skin whenever he wished. *Pabandev* then taught him how to cast off his skin. He wanted him not to open this covering in front of human beings.

The boy returned home. At home he used to take his bath casting off his skin in a secret place. Under the cover of the monkey skin he had a handsome body. His cousin who had hated his monkey body earlier suddenly saw his handsome human form while he was taking his bath secretly. Being attacked by this handsome body she fell in love with him.

One day she took the cast off monkey skin of the boy and burnt it and held him in a warm embrace. They were married. The fishes

of the *Chuma* (stream) were the witness of their marriage.

Comments :

This story indicates the unnatural pregnancy of woman by *Pabandev*. This type of birth is not uncommon in India. The first motif of this tale is giving birth to an animal by a woman. The next motif is the transformation from an animal to human being.

In the *Mahabharat* we read the story how *Kunti* got her sons by *Gods* - *Karna* by the Sun God, *Yudhisthir* by *Dharmaraja* etc. *Hanuman's* mother *Anjana* was conceived by *Pabandev* the God of the wind in this way. These are all stories of such pregnancy.

(VI) Taksn Bay Tenene Mani Kok Twma :

After creating the owl and the wood packer simultaneously, God appeared before them with a *Rangchak Thapa* (crown) and asked who among them deserved it.

The owl said "Oh God, I deserve this *Rangchak Thapa* So give me this."

The wood packer said "Oh God, I am the fittest one to get it. Give it to me."

The God then fell in a dilema and could not make up his mind. At last he told them both that he would give it to one who would awaken him first from his bed in the morning the next day.

This led to a competition between the owl and the wood packer. The owl spent the whole night sleeplessly but at the last hour of the night he fell asleep and could not get up in time. On the otherhand, the wood packer slept the whole night and woke up at the last hour of the night. It reached God early in the morning. The God gave him the crown.

A short while after, the owl woke up suddenly and came to God crest fallen. But the wood packer had the *Rangchak Thapa* by that time and appeared before the owl with it.

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then gave the owl an old an wornout quilt *(Kentha Bura)*. He told him that as he did not sleep the whole night, he deserved this wornout quilt. Since then, the owl does not sleep at night.

Comments :

This is an animal tale. The mythological motif of this animal tale is concerned with animals.

(VII) Kwthwyragni Khum:

There is a kind of flowering tree in Tripura, the flowers of this tree is red, its corrola white and the leaves green in colour. It is similar to that of a *Ashwata Bat* (Peepul tree) to some extent.

There is a story regarding the flower of this tree. According to this story, in a certain village there lived a boy named Nanai and a girl named Sunali. They were neighbours. A deep love blossomed between them as they grew up. In course of time, a quarrel developed between their families.

Since then, their guardians did not approve of their meeting. The parents of the girl took her away to a Jhum in order to stop their meetings. But still, their secret clandestine meetings continued. A graveyard was their rendezvous and they used to meet there often. One day the girl came to the graveyard before her lover and she was suddenly attacked by a tiger. She turn threw her *Risa* at the tiger and climbed up a nearby tree. The tiger thought the *Risa* to be the girl and tore at it fiercely. It had also killed a cow earlier and there were blood marks scattered near the *Risa*.

After a short while, the boy arrived on the scene and found the torn *Risa* of his beloved along with the blood spots. He naturally concluded that the tiger had killed his beloved. Overcome by grief he then took a spear made out of bamboo and stabbed himself to death.

After a little while the girl came down from the tree and discovered her dead lover. She then started wailing pitiously uttering the following :

O Annikhani Jadu Nwng
Ba Hayba Angle Nana
Naysiyng Uwy Tangjamani Si.
Nwng Ba Ang Bay Manlay Fayay Ba
Bay Khey Ba Thwywanni Nay Tang Jalang.
O Jadu Ana Bwlage Wa Twwyja Sidi
Ang Bwnim Lage Wa Hiyng Jasingay.

English Rendering :
[Oh my dear lover why are you in this state? I was waiting for you and you have committed suicide without meeting me. I shall also die along with you.]

Then she pulled off the spear from the dead body of her lover and stabbed herself with it saying :
O Desha Ni Mwtayrag Tini Le
Nirag Nay-Khwlay Nay Bay Ja Sidi
O Desha Ni Barakrag Tini Le
Nirag Buchiuwy Nay Bay Ja Sidi.
Hanjak Lay Mwng
U Desha Ni Bwswk Katar
Bwlang, Wafang, Taksa, Takmwlwy :
Chini Anma Baba Nay Tuk Uwy Faykhe
Nirag Saapak Ja Sidi.
O Gandar Ni Bwlang Chwng Kwnwy
Khaa Kwthar Twwy Uwy Thwymanni
Lage Lage Wa Chini Thwy Nang Uwy
Nwng Kwthwy Ni Khum Wng Uwy
Tang Ja Sidi.

English Rendering :
[Oh the Gods and Goddesses of the world, Oh the human society of the whole world, behold to-day the depth of our love. Oh trees, creepers and all the creatures of the forest - tell about us to our parents if they come in search of us. Oh nearby trees, both of us are innocent and by the touch of our holy blood you shall be named *Kwthwy Ragikhum* (The Jamatia word *Kwthwy* means dead and *Khum* means flower i.e. dead flower]

It is believed in the Jamatia tribe that since this incident the flowers of this tree are red in colour due to the touch of their holy blood and the bud of this flower is white since the *Risa* of the girl was white.

Comments :

This folktale deals with the irony of fate in the case of the lovers. The transformation of colour of the flower is the main motif of this folktale.

(VIII) Beliefs Regarding The Origin Of The Bear And Hulak :

One day, a pair of lovers wandered under a very strong smelling flower tree named *Khelang Bubar*. There, the girl asked the boy to pluck her a flower from the tree. The boy then climbed up the tree and began to pluck flowers and drop them below. The girl was collecting them. There is a belief that if any one inhales the perfume of the flower then the person on the tree cannot get down.

As the girl could not resist the temptation of breathing in the fragrance of the flowers the boy could not come down. He then called down curse upon the girl so that she turned into a bear. The girl too recursed the boy who become a *Hulak* (a kind of ape).

The Jamatia believe that the spot around the neck of the bear is the symbol of the necklace of the girl. The red and yellow spot on the head of the *Hulak* is the *Risa* (the piece of cloth used by the Jamatia girls on the upper portion of their body) which the boy used as his turban. Thus the Jamatia believe that the bears and the hulaks have originated in this way.

Comments :

This is an animal tale. The mythological motif of this animal tale is regarding the origin of the bears and *Hulaks*. The breaking of taboos and transformation from human beings to animals are also the motifs of this animal tale.

(IX) Story Regarding The Origin Of Elephants :

Once, a boy took his bath in the poisonous water of a *Chera*. The poisonous water affected his body badly and his body began

to itch. Then he began to disturb his mother while she was weaving nearby. The excessive disturbance of the boy made his mother angry and she suddenly hit her son with the *Rwanbi* (the shuttle) on the nose. The blow cut the nose of the boy and it hung downwards like a trunk and consequently his nose turned into the trunk of the elephant. This is the story prevailing in the Jamatia community regarding the development of the elephant and its origin.

Comments :

This is an animal tale. The mythological motif is regarding the transformation from human beings to the elephant.

(X) Belief Regarding The Cause Of The Earthquake :

Regarding the cause of the earthquake, the Jamatias believe that the earth reposes on the back of a very big tortoise. The beetle which is known as *Khibukma* (live on human faeces and supplies human faeces to the tortoise. But when they become tired they inform the tortoise that the earth has become devoid of human beings and they cannot supply any more. At this, the tortoise shakes its body to be sure about the report of the *Khibuma* and the earthquake takes place as result of it. When the earthquake takes place the womenfolk make *Ulu* sound, out of fear and from this sound, the tortoise comes to know about the false information and comes to rest again. This is how the earthquake takes place.

Comments :

This is a myth regarding the origin of the earthquake. Similar types of myths are also found among the *Bodos* of Assam and many other tribes of Tripura.

(XI) Belief Regarding The Cause of Thunder Clap :

The Jamatias believe that one female demon (ogress) rolls a *Awaan* (husking mortar) when she finishes husking rice. This is how the sound of thunder clap originates.

Comments :

This is a myth. It is about the mythological belief regarding the origin of the thunder clap. Such myths are also available among many other tribes of Tripura.

(XII) Belief Regarding the Rainbow :

The Jamatias believe that the rainbow is the ladder of the fairies who live in the sky. They come down to the sea by way of this ladder to fetch water from the ocean.

Comments :

This is a myth. The mythological belief is regarding the cause of rainbow.

(XIII) Belief Regarding The Great Bear :

In a certain family there lived a widow. She had seven sons. When she died four of her sons carried her on their shoulder. One son held a light to show the way. Another son went along with a length of cotton thread (Khutwy) to make bridges across *Charas* (Streams) or canals. The third one scattered cotton and paddy on both sides of the road. These seven brothers are known as *Saptarshimandals* the Great Bear).

Comments :

This is also a myth. The mythological belief is regarding the origin of the Great bear.

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FOLK PSYCHOLOGY AND FOLK BELIEFS

Significance of Dream on the Life of the Jamatias :

They sincerely believe that certain dreams definitely mean certain things. Some of the dreams with their related beliefs in connection with the Jamatias are as follows :

If a person sees a funeral ceremony or death of any person or has the feeling that he or she was cohabiting with another in the dream, there will be a better meal for him.

The landing of a plane or passing of a car in the dream means death in the house

The flooding of the house or the destruction of it by the heavy storm or cyclone indicate the death of one of the parents.

The fall of the teeth indicates the death of a child especially the teeth of the front side of both of the jaws.

The fall of the ornament of a woman or the missing of it in water indicates the widwhood of the woman.

The missing of a pot or slipping of clothes off one's hand into water indicates the death of a child of that house.

If one dreams of female child on his lap, his wealth increases.

The dream of eating of human flesh or biel indicates better crop production.

The dream of human faeces or the touch of it on one's body also indicates better crop.

The dream of domestication of a bird by a youngman or woman indicates his or her marriage in that year.

If one sees a turtle, or an egg or a metal coin the person goes to travel on the next day.

A pregnant woman's or her husband's dreams of ornament indicate the birth of daughter, the dream of a gun indicates the birth of a son and the dream of double barralled gun indicates the birth of twin child.

If a person dreams the passing of stool something will be missing from his house.

If some one sees that he was jumping in the dream he will become taller.

Dream of eating of rice indicates the suffering of him.

The dream of bath indicates the *Mukti* (Salvation) of that person from the world and it is considered as a very good dream.

There is also belief among the Jamatias that something opposite to what one sees in the dream happens in reality in certain cases.

The dream of fire indicates quarrelling.

The dream of movement of a person by a car towards west indicates the death of that person.

The dream of the police in a house indicates death of some person of that house.

Seeing an elephant or a buffalo in the dream is very harmful. They are believed to be the signs of evil spirits. In case of such dreams *Lampra puja* is required to be performed by the *Ochai*.

If a boy meets a girl in the dream the result will be very bad. This girl is considered as *Swkal* (witch). The flying of a girl in the dream is also considered very inauspicious. The flying girl is also considered as *Swkal*.

If there is a fighting in the dream the strength of the defeated person will increase and that of the winner will decrease.

The dream of cutting of hand is a bad sign.

The dream of the tiger indicates a very hot day.

The dream of stinging by a *Ashnighfish* is the symbol of danger.

If a person sees a scaly fish in dream he will get money.

If one sees a living man dead in the dream there will be good meal. But if a deadman appears as a living in the dream there will be rain.

Some Events Of Good And Bad Omens :

It is believed that if a person bites another, the disease of the bitten person would be transferred to him.

Makal Farmani (the jumping of an eye) indicates the coming of a sad news for which he will have shed his tears.

The falling down in a latrine is a very bad sign.

The crossing of a person by a cat is a symbol of misfortune.

The eating of ashes of the hearth in a house by a *Take* (gecko) is harmful for that house.

To see a *Bairagi* (monk) or a dead body of a person at the time when one starts for an important work is a bad sign.

The itching of the rectum indicates the death of a *Muslim* neighbour.

The sight of the secret organ of a man or woman exposed due to their carelessness promises a good meal.

The discussion of a dream that was dreamt in the previous night

brings sorrow.

The watering of the mouth indicates that there will be a good meal.

The sitting of a vulture or an eagle on the roof of a house is a very bad sign.

It is believed that a pregnant woman would face difficulties at the time of delivery if she crosses the court of *Pany* (Shulogoti) which is drawn on the floor at the time of play. So they wipe out the court as soon as the game is over.

There is also belief that in case of delayed delivery of a woman if an aeroplane ticket is soaked in water and if this water is taken by her the delivery would be quicker.

A flat footed person is a rich person.

The gap between the fingers of a person after he closes his fist indicates extravagent nature. It is believed that the fingers of miser remains closed after the clenching of his fist.

The meeting of the eyebrows of a person is considered as a bad sign.

If a girl's hair comes down to her forehead even after combing she may be lauxarious in nature. She may have illicit love affair.

More than one *Thalok*(coil or ring shape) on the head of a person indicates more than one marriage of him.

If the manner of walk of a woman produce sound, she is a sinister woman.

The presence of a Jaa (mole) on the thigh of a woman indicate her bad character. The mole on the lip of a male indicates his tendency towards illicit love.

If a person sees a pitcher full of water at the time he starts for a place or for an important work good result will follow.

If a person finds a crow on a dead branch of a tree at the time of departure of hunting or fishing his mission will be successful. The sitting of a crow in a special posture also indicates success.

It is a good sign to see a snake on the left side of the road.

The sneezing at the time of departure is a bad sign.

If one's head or leg hits the door's frame at the time of departure there will be a ill luck for him.

The sound of *Uwang* (a kind of fish owl) is considered as the most inauspicious sign by them. They believe that the soul of the *Swkal* (witch) moves about in the shape of this bird. The chief object of this bird is to make a man sick and to kill him. This bird makes sound while men are in deep slumber. This is a *Swkal* bird (witch).

The birds which are looked up on with respect are *Fantak Cnaakhwy* (Common Indian Cuckoo), *Mannany* (Indian hill myna), *Dnoe* (Shama) and *Bhringrel* (It is black in colour and wings are about half cubit long).

The inauspicious birds are the *Sukuru* (Vulture) and the crow.

They believe that the touching of vulture faeces make a person sick.

The touching of a vulture or a dead crow makes a person impure for the time being. He enters the house after taking his bath.

Among the animals, the cow is the most respected animal.

FOLK DRESS, ORNAMENTS AND HANDICRAFTS

The traditional dress and ornaments and the pattern of wearing the same by the Jamatias is similar to those of the Tripuris and many other tribal communities of Tripura. The dress of the men is similar to those of the neighbouring Bengalees. Men wear dhuti, shirt, vests etc. The use of *Kanchwlwy Borok* (a kind of traditional jacket worn at the time of agricultural work) is very common among them.

The dress and ornaments of the female folk is still free from the influence of the plains people. Most of the Jamatia women still weave their own clothes. Their handloom clothes are beautifully designed and long lasting. Among their garments the *Rinanyborok* (a pice of cloth for covering the lower part of the body - waist down ward), the *Risa* (a piece of cloth to cover the breasts of the girls) are worth mentioning. The design of *Swastik* symbol was a very common design in their *Rinanyborok* and *Rizukuk* (a kind of chaddar, mostly of white colour). The use of black cotton vest was also in vogue among their women folk.

It is to be noted the Jamatias prepare the colour for their yarns in their own indigenous process. They prepare these colours by boiling the fruits, barks and leaves of various kinds of wild trees and plants.

The black colour is made from the fruits of *Nota* tree, red colour from the fruits of *Aswng* tree and yellow from *Donlai* fruits. They know the technique to make these colours permanent. But now a days due to the influence of the machine made yarn, the previous practice of the Jamatias has been declining.

In the past, the Jamatia woman were very fond of various kinds of ornaments. They purchased them from the nearby markets. In the past almost all the village markets were visited by goldsmiths skilled in making these traditional ornaments. They came on the market day and sold those ornaments and took orders to make them.

The ornaments used by them were *Rangbwlang* (a chain or thread studded with coin for wearing round their necks), *Brindabanful* (a kind of brass or silver ear rings), *Baliya* (a kind of thick bangle made of different metals), *Sanggeyng* (a kind of metal made hair clip used in their bun). The *Sanggeyngs* have club, heart, diamond and spade shaping designs attached to them. The use of strings of beads of different colours was also in vogue among them.

But the above mentioned traditional ornaments have been abandoned by them for a long time. It is now a matter of byegone period to them. Many youngsters of their community do not know the names of them even.

Now a days, the girls use gold, silver, gilt, glass and plastic ornaments which are available in market. The use of *Risa* is being gradually replaced by tailor made shirts, brassiers etc. Some of them also use *Sarees*.

Bmboo holds an important role in the Jamatia Community. In fact, bamboo is so indispensible in their life that their daily life cannot be thought of without bamboo. They preserve their necessary articles of daily use in various kinds of baskets, pipes etc. These articles of daily use reflect their artistic sense and superb craftmenship. The various bamboo made articles of the Jamatias are as follows :-

1. **Khuturuk :**

It is a kind of bamboo made basket used for storing various necessary and important things e.g. clothes, money, and all other valuable articles. Its function is similar to that of a trunk.

2. **Langa :**

It is a basket made of bamboo strips. It is used for carry clothes, paddy, rice, vegetables etc from one place to another. It is noteworthy that at the marriage ceremoney of the Jamatias, a *Langa* is given to the bride from her family.

3. Chepay:
It is a miniature form of *Langa* It is mostly used to carry paddy-seeds, crops and vegetable to the *Jhum* It is also used as a container at the time of fishing.

4. Tisiyng :
Its structure is also similar to that of a *Langa* with the difference that there are gaps in the waves in it. It is generally used to carry firewood, water pitcher, green vegetable etc. It is to be noted that the *Tisiyng* used by the Jamatias do not have bamboo frames or *Bekhre*. The *Tisiyng* without *Bekhre* indicates that it belongs to the Jamatia community.

5. Dul :
It is a large bamboo made hollow basket for storing grains in it after harvesting.

6. Khakley:
It is a miniature form of *Dul* It is also used to store paddy-seeds, rice, etc.

7. Yakhung:
It is a kind of coarse net woven from bamboo strips. It is for drying paddy in the sun.

8. Kariya:
It is made by rolling a long *Yakhung* into a drum like shape and is placed on a platform. Paddy is stored in it. it can be unrolled back into a *Yukhung* after use.

9. Ruwa :
Its purpose is similar to that of the *Kariya* It is made of flat bamboo strips and placed on a platform. The difference between a *Kariya* and *Ruwa* is that the latter is made of thicker bamboo laths. It is more permanent in nature. It is not unrolled back into a mat.

10. Bayliyng :
It is a bamboo made roundshaped tray used to winnow paddy, rice etc.

11. Wasung :

It is a bamboo made tube which is used as a container for various kinds of cooking materials.

They have different *Wasungs* for different purposes and the *Wasung* is named according to which it contains. So a *Wasung* for salt is called *San Wasung* (san means salt). But the *Wasung* for tobacco is known as *Duma Katra*.

Besides the use of above mentioned articles they are also skilled in making various kinds of articles to catch fish. These tools and articles distinctly bear the high standard of Jamatia craftmanship. The tools are as follows :-

A. Sudan :

The *Sudan* is a kind of fishing net made from bamboo strips.

B. Sacheyng :

It is a round shaped box made of bamboo sticks to trap fish. It is placed down stream flow and the fish once entering it cannot come out.

C. Jurka :

It is a funnel shaped fish trap made by splitting the end of a piece of bamboo. It is usually placed upstream.

FOLK FOOD ARTICLES

The Jamatias food articles are a mixture of both the vegetarian and non-vegetarian of food articles. Like many other tribes of Tripura, their method of preparing food is very simple. In some food items, the marks of the neighbouring Bengalees are also distinct.

The chief characteristic of their preparation of food articles are :

a. The use of very little quantity of oil or no oil at all.
b. Use of fresh vegetables and *Mayrum Atuwa* (Atap rice).
c. Mixing of *Chaakhwy* (alkali) in the preparation of curry.
d. Excessive use of green chilly and mixing of *Berman* (a kind of strong secented small dry fish) in preparing even non-vegetarian food items.

The major kinds of vegetable used in preparing food items are various types of roots, stems, leaves. A dish prepared from young bamboo shoots is very favourable to them.

All kinds of fishes and fowl, tortoise, pig, he-goat, sheep, snail are taken by them.

The chief spices used by the Jamatias are *Masa* (chilly), *Satwwy* (turmeric) *Khunjurupwy* (Jhum Dhania) *Haychiyng* (Ginger), *Sam* (Salt), *Sikan Daniya* (Dhania Leaf) etc. Oil, Onion, Tejpata, cardamom and many other fragnant spices are found in their food stuff.

The names of different food articles of the Jamatias and the methods of their preparation are as follows :

i. Chakhwy :

The term *Chaakhwy* means alkali. At the time of getting down of a curry an amount of paste of *Atap* rice along with an amount of *Chaakhwy* is mixed in it. This makes the curry thick and tasteful. Its colour is brown.

ii. Awanduru :

It is also a kind of curry in which only the paste of rice is mixed. *Chaakhwy* water is not mixed in it.

iii. **Gudak :**

In its preparation various kinds of kitchen vegetable (pot herbs), *Berman* (dry fish made from a small type of fish), green

chilly, turmeric and salt are put into a *Wasung*(bamboo made tube) and its mouth is closed with leaves. This pipe is then put into fire and after a short time it is taken out. Then the materials of the pipe are grinded with a bamboo stick. This is a very delicious food item of all the tribes of Tripura.

iv. **Alani :**

Any kind of pot herb or the seeds of some kinds of fruit is put into a green bamboo tubes. The mouth of the tube is tightened with some leaves. e.g. *Thaylwy Bwlay*(banana leaf), *Chakumura Bwlay, Mwylak Bwlay*(Gourd leaf), *Salwy Bwlay* (turmeric leaf) etc. and put to fire. Its taste is sweet.

v. Akatha :

It is a kind of curry without chilly. This is generally given to the woman during their post delivery period.

vi. Neransi :

It is made of vegetables only. Meat, fish, dry fish etc are not applied in it.

vii. Mwyturu :

The ordinary curry which is served to the invitees as a principal curry is known as *Mwyturu*. It may be a vegetarian preparation or fish or meat may also be added ot it. This curry gets the name *Mwyturu* only when it is served in community feasts for religious functions, marriage ceremony or *Sraddha* ceremony etc.

viii. Peyngjakmani :

Fish or meat or vegetable along with an amount of chilly, salt, turmeric and onion are stuffed into a *Wasung*(bamboo made tube), its mouth stoppered with leaves of plantain, gourd, turmeric etc. Then it is cooked in burning charcoal. It is not grounded into paste like *Godak* Its difference from *Alani* is that chilly and oil are used in the preparation of *peyngjakmani*.

ix. Iymani :

In its preparation vegetables or small fishes with salt, turmeric, chilly etc. are wrapped up with plantain, gourd or turmeric leaf and is placed on burning charcoal.

Besides the above mentioned food stuff, they also take some kinds of burnt food staff. The name of *Masakelwa* is worthmentioning here. In its preparation chilly and *Berman* are burnt and them grinded together with an amount of salt. This is a common food item of the Jamatias.

In this context it should be noted that when any other substance is mixed with *Masakelwa* is is named by the substance which is mixed. For exmaple - when *Aakwra* (dry fish) is mixed (either by boiling or burning) it is known as *Aakwra-Masa.* When *Layfang* (banana leaf) is mixed (by boiling) with *Masakelwa* it is knwon as *Layfang-Masa.* In this way *Alumasa* (when potato is mixed), *Miyamasa* (when bamboo shoot is mixed) etc. are prepared.

It is to be noted that the Jamatias prefer roasted food to boiled food. Fish and meat row or dehydrated are often roasted than boiled.

Awa (Cakes) :

There is no elaborate process of preparing cakes among the Jamatias. Cakes are baked from *Awamaayrum* (a kind of rice) and known as *Awa.* They prepare different kinds of cakes and they are known in different names. These are :-

1. Awa Sakwrang :

Awa Mayrum (Rice) wet from soaking in water is put into an earthen pot with perforated bottom. It is now placed on another earthen pot containing water. A lid is placed on the upper pot. Sometimes mud lining is applied where the two pots join to prevent the escape of vapour from the pot below. Now it is heated over an oven. The rice in the upper pot is cooked with the vapour rising from the pot below. The cake baked in this way is known as *Awa Sakwrang.*

2. Awa Peyngjak :

Awa Mayrum is first washed and soaked in water and then stuffed into a *Wasung* and baked on burning charcoal untill ready for serving.

3. Awa Bwlhay :

It is prepared and taken during winter. In its baking already washed *Awamayrum* (Rice) is wrapped in *Awabwlay* (a kind of leaf used specially for this purpose) and left on burning charcoal for baking.

It is again roasted in fire next morning before taking. In winter mornings it is quite a delicacy.

FOLK GAMES AND SPORTS

The folk games of the Jamatias are similar to those of the Tripuris and in many respects of the neighbouring tribal and non-tribal communities. Up to a certain age, both the boys and the girls play together. But with adolescence, segregation takes place. Difference of age among the girls does not affect their companionship up to a certain age group. But the playmates of the boys generally belong to the same age group.

The folk sports and games of the Jamatias is a social activity. It can be classified as :-

1. Games for men, and
2. Games for women.

This can be divided again according to the types :-

1. Games of skill,
2. Games of Chance, and
3. Games of imitation.

There are different types of out-door games, such as :-

i. *Dudu*,
ii. *Hari*,
iii. *Matha*,
iv. *Golachut* etc.

Among the in-door games :-

i. *Pany*,
i. *Bagakana*,
ii. Sukuy,
v. *Dekhe Dere* etc.

The childrens play consists of :-

1. Kakwrayman,
2. Maymwy Swngmwng etc.

There are also both aquatic and land games among them.

The different types of sports and games of the Jamatias can be classified as per the following table :-

TABLE-I
Different Types Of Sports And Games

S. No.	Classified as :	Name of the games & sports :
1	2	3
1.	Physical	Dudu, Gotichat, Hari.
2.	Amusemental	Pay, Bagakana, Sukuyawray, Sukuychwla, Dekhe Dera, Mankhacobamsk, Sharri, Kadang, Budu Khum, Rinudo,
3	Aquatic	Swimming, Matha.
4.	Doggeral and riddle	Ashyngjang, Ayiwk, Mayiak Twylak
5.	Educative	Kakwrayman, Maymwy Swngkhang

In addition to above list, there prevail a good number of sports and games among the Jamatias. The brief description of a few of them are given below :-

I. Hari :

It is generally played in an open field or in a large courtyard. In this game first one team leader is selected. He then selects a *Hari* from among the players. It is not a team game and is played only by the boys. The selected *Hari* tries to touch one of the players who run about to avoid him. The player he touches becomes *Hari* and now it is the new *Hari* to make another player *Hari*. The play goes on like this.

This is generally played in moonlit night. The fun of the game is running about to save oneself from becoming a *Hari*.

II. Matha :

This is also a kind of *Hari* game. The only difference is that it is played only in water. The rules are the same. Here the *Hari* drives into water and tries to catch another player unaware from under the water and makes him *Hari*.

III. Bagakana :

This game is also like *Hari* with certain differences. Here the players have to remain in a limited area or a court. At first, the eye of a player is blind folded with a piece of cloth so that he cannot see the other players. He tries to touch a player and the touched player then is blind folded and it is now his turn to touch another.

The player goes out side the court to save himself is disqualified. This game is very popular among the girls.

IV. Kakwraymwng :

Kakwraymwng means a play with dolls. It is also a very popular game among the little girls. In this game the little children make dolls with clay and torn cloth pieces. These dolls really look very beautiful and indicate that their makers will be good artists in the future.

The boys, particularly very young boys also take part in the doll games. But they use clay made dolls mostly. They also make toys, cows, buffaloes etc. The marriage of the dolls and their family life is the most attractive feature of this game.

V. Maymwy Swngmwng (The game of Cooking) :

This is also a popular game with the children. The materials of this game generally are - jackfruit leaves, old bottle or corcks, various types of flowers, wild fruits, dried plants, sands etc.

They make small houses with sand, leaves etc. One or two of them sit inside these houses. Then the game starts with their collected materials.

In this game, they exchange curry with one another and invite other children to take curry.

The game then switches over to wedding game called *Kaklaymanni* where bride and grooms are selected. Then the wedding day is selected and the dolls marriage take place. The ornaments of the bride are made of various flowers and creepers. At that time tins are beaten in the imitation of music party. The game ends with the marriage of the dolls.

VI Dekhe Dere :

This game is played in a dwelling house or in the verandha or in a cowshed. This is played in day time. There is no specific number of the players. The number of players depend on the number of poles of the house, the vernadha, or the cowshed. Only a player would be one to many.

At the start of the game every player except one will be standing touching a pole which is called *Nag*. The one left out will go to

each player and say *Dekhe Dere* (where to go ?). They will reply *O Gala Ja* (Go there). As he turns back the player will change their poles. This changing of poles is called *Nagwlaynnwng*. The man without a pole will take this opportunity to hold a pole displacing an original occupant. The displaced player will now go and say *Dekhe Dere* and the game will go on like this.

VII. Mankha De Bamak (bama) :

This game is similar to hide and seek play. All the players except one will hide in secret places inside a house. One player waits outside. When all the players have hidden inside the house, the player standing outside utters the crammed speech *Mankha Do ?* (are you ready ?).

Then the players who have hidden will reply *Malanha* (ready) and the players who have not hidden will repeatedly utter the crammed speech makha do ? When all the players have hidden and utter *Manlanha* in a body, the player standing outside will enter the house to find out them.

The player first searched out will accompany him in searching out all other hidden players. But will not help in searching out other players. In this way he will find out all the hidden players.

When the searcher fails to find out all the hidden players even after a long search, he is given a chance e.g. by giving him three possible places of the house to search. If he fails then he is taken to a place by one of the dead players who closes his (searcher's) eyes with his hands and utters the word :

Day, day, khara day ;
Day, day, khara day.

Then the hidden player will come out and winnow on his (searcher's) forehead with a sound and will hide again. The dead player then twist him slightly so that he cannot detect the direction of the hidding player and then he is released.

The searcher again sets out to find out the hidden player. If he fails this time also after searching three to four possible places, his eyes are again closed by a dead player who utters the previous crammed words again. In this way the game is ended.

In this game the credit goes to a player whom cannot be searched out in the first chance. He need not go outside the house. The game starts again with him inside. This game is played in the afternoon.

VIII. **Achiyng Jang :**

This game is played with litle children to keep them amused so that they do not disturb their parents in their domestic work. In this game, certain old male or female members of the family sits with little children in a place. He stretches out his hand, his palm touching the ground. Now the children put their hands one on the other.

Then the old person will utter a nursary rhyme and the hands of the children sways rhythmically keeping time and remove their hands at once when the rhyme ends. The children are thus kept distracted. The rhyme is as follows :

Achiyngjang, Achiyngjang
Maama Takaa Rajamanni.Gundak Eruwy Chaajamanni
Dang Khoraying Bauwy Tang Ja Manni.
Achu Burasa Dasa Wanjwy Bay
Haay Hin Hwnwy-Kaguwy Ramak
Frutsa Birlangkha

[The rhyme is addressed to *Achiyagjang*, a kind of fish - *O Achinyngjang*, the chicken which my maternal uncle sent and which pecked at the chaff and perched on the top of the bamboo clump was shooed away by grand father who threw a dao to it uttering a *Haay* cry. And the bird flew away.]

IX. **Aytwk Mwylak Twylak :**

The game is played by the children in the moonlit night in an open courtyard during any community festival or family festival like religious song, marriage etc.

In this game a strong and stout boy is selected as the leader of a team and he is called *Nany* (grand mother). He sits in a place holding a pole tightly and the other players sit in a row each clasping the waist of the one before him tightly with his hands.

Another player remains out but side of this row. He now comes forward with a stick and touches the heads of all the players of the row with the stick uttering the following rhyme :

Aytwk Mwylak Twylak
Nandray Kha Mwya Kha
Faah Faah Nany Nany
Ana Bw Mwylak Thaysa Rajajadi
English Rendering :
[O grand mother be pleased to give me a gourd.]

In this game the players of the row are treated as *Mwylak* (gourd) and the leader is treated as the gourd plant. The player who comes with a stick wants to take the gourd, its creepers etc from the plant. He asks the leader of the team (gourd plant) to take a gourd but the leader pretends that there is no gourd :
Tabak, Bubar Bar Dara Si Kha
[The flower has just bloomed]
But the player outside the row comes again and again and asks for a gourd uttering the above mentioned rhyme.

The *Nany* tells him to take one. He comes and takes one player by force. Then he comes for a *Chekhwra* (Scythe) to cut the gourd. The leader then utters the word :
Han, Chekhwra Naadi,
(Take the sickle.]
and with the uttering of *Nany* all players loose their hands and are taken by him. Only the leader remains alone and the game ends for the first time. Generally ten to fifteen boys participate in this game.

X. Sikam :

There are two parties in this game. Each party consists of ten to twelve boys. Of course there is no fixed number of players in this game. One of the parties are called *Sikam*. Both parties are

to be the *Sikam* at one time. The party that acts *Sikam* has sticks in their hands as symbol of scythe. The players of the other party hide in a definite area and the group of *Sikam* search out them. The group of *Sikam* hit on their shoulders with the stick gently which is the symbol of killing them. Now the other party becomes *Sikam* and the game goes on.

It should be noted here that the *Kukis* of Tripura are called *Sikam* by the Jamatias. There was a fight between the Jamatias and the *Kukis* at the time of bringing of the idol of *Biyagwmang Garia* from the Kuki Land. Perhaps this game is a reminiscent of that fight.

XI. Sukuy Chwla :

The *Sukuy* game a very popular game among the Jamatias since time immemorial. The rules and regulations of this game are very complex and interesting. The game, is played between two teams of 5 to 6 members in each team. There are different stages of this game. And each party has to go through all the stages inorder to complete the game and to decide victory or defeat. Both *Chwlarag* (boys) and the *Swmyrag* (girls) can play this game.

Originally it was played with *Sukuy*, the seed of a kind of plant (mimosa scandens) but now a days only the girls play with the natural *Sukuy* and the boys play with *Sukuy* made of wood. These wooden *Sukuy* are little bigger. The boys game consists of eleven steps or stages. They are :

i. Dan
ii. Yachu
iii. Faka
iv. Karay
v. Mwkter
vi. Fatwk
vii Suku
viii. Fangchul
ix. Kal
x. Khar and
xi. Marang.

Dan :

It is the first step of the game. A court is prepared on the ground. At each end of the Court a line is drawn. The team playing the game stands behind one line known as *Gang*. Beyond the other line five *Sukuys* are set upright in a row. And this area is known as *Twy*.

Now one team begins the play. The players stand behind the *Gang* and one player throws a *Sukuy* and tries to hit and displace as many *Sukuys* as possible from the *Twy* area. The hit must displace the *Sukuy* at least *Khukta Sa* (half a cubit) away. If a player cannot hit and displace the *Sukuy* he is dead and his turn is over.

Another player of his team will take his play and repeat the attempt. In this way the game continues upto the last step of the game if any player of the team remains alive up to this step. But when the turn of all the five players is over, the opposite team will come to play. Again the five *Sukuy* will be arranged. When all the five players of this team have their chances, the first team will come to play for the next step or innings.

Each party has to strike and displace all the five *Sukuys* whatever may be the number of turns it takes to do so. Only the team that succeeds in striking and displacing all the *Sukuys* is allowed to move on the second innings of the game.

The special manner in which the *Sukuy* is thrown is noteworthy. The player raises his right leg and holds the right ankle with his left hand. Now he inserts his right hand holding the *Suky* in the arch thus formed and throws it forward.

Yochu :

It is the second step of the game. The party lagging behind will now set as many *Sukuys* as there are players in the team in upright position in a circle, each *Sukuy* standing on its end at an equal distance from the next one. Behind each *Sukuy* will stand a player of the rival group.

Now each player throws a *Sukuy* straight to the target *Sukuy* in such a way that the *Sukuy* does not hit its target or land with n less than a closefist's distance from the target. Now he will again throw the *Sukuy* from its landing place in the special process of *Sukuy* throwing to hit and displace the previous target *Sukuy*.

If the thrown *Sukuy* of the player hits the target in the first chance or his *Sukuy* falls at a point within the distance equal to the length covered by a closed fist he has to suffer two penalities.

First, a player of the rival team will spit on a side of the *Sukuy* and leave it lying on the ground with the spat side down. Then the thrower will get three chances to hit the lying *Sukuy* in the special process of *Sukuy* throwing to over turn it. If he fails he is dead for the turn. If he succeds, the rival player will give a leap clasping the *Sukuy* between his feet. He will place it where he lands. The thrower now has to hit and displace the previous target *Sukuy* at least half a cubit away by his thrown *Sukuy* in the special process of *Sukuy* throwing. Otherwise, he would be dead for that turn.

If any player remains unmindful when his turn of throwing comes and forgets to throw and if any player of the rival team cries *Fwyrang* the party is dead. But if any member of his team says the word *Fwyrang* before the rivals utter it, they are saved. So every player remains very alert during the game.

Of the next steps except *Khar* and *Marang* all other steps are similar to *Yachu* in many respects.

Khar :

In this step the *Sukuys* are set as in *Yachu*. But the method of throwing is different. Here the thrower stands with the target *Sukuy* behind him. Now he bends forward and throws the *Sukuy* between his legs backwards. The thrown *Sukuy* should not hit the target or land within less than a close fist's distance. From this place he will again throw the *Sukuy* in the special process of *Sukuy* throwing to hit and displace the previous target *Sukuy* to a distance of half cubit from it. Otherwise, he would dead.

Marang :

Marang is also like *Yachu*. Only the first throw is different from that of *Yachu*. Here the thrower sits with back to the arranged *Sukuys* of the TWY area.

Now he places a *Sukuy* on the instep of his right leg and throws it to the target *Sukuy*. The distance between the spot it lands and the target *Sukuy* should at least the length of one fist. From here he will again throw the *Sukuy* in the special process of *Sukuy* throwing to the previous target *Sukuy* and to displace it to a minimum distance of half a cubit. All other regulations are similar to *Yachu*.

xii. Bwrwyrag Sukuy :-

The rules and regulations of the *Bwrwyrag Sukuy* (the *Sukuy* of the girls) are to some extent similar to *Chwla Sukuy* (males's *Sukuy*) in many respects. The difference is mainly in respect of method of throwing of the *Sukuy*.

The girls cannot throw the *Sukuy* as the boys do rising their legs. And while the boys play it in eleven stages the girls play it in thirteen stages. The team that completes the last stage first wins the game. The stages are :

i. Khukbuk
ii. Chau
iii. Yak Rap
iv. Jantiboara.
v. Janti Kalak.
vi. Siriyng.
vii. Yakheyng.
viii. Sal.
ix. Suy.
x. Chakaybara.
x . Chakaykalak.
xi Musel.
xii Raytwy.

i. Khukbuk :

One player from the *Gang* takes a *sukuy* in her lip, runs to *Twy* area and lets it slip on a *Sukuy* there. It should displace the target *Skuy* at least half a cubit away.

She alone can bring the game to an end by playing all the stages thorough alone, or if she fails, others in the team can carry on the game from the stage at which she leaves.

ii. **Chu :**

In this stage, the player runs from the *Gang* to the *Twy* with a *Sukuy* in the palm of her hand holding the hand against her bosom and drops it on the target *Sukuy* uttering *Chu* and displaces to a minimum half a cubit away. If it is not displaced that much she will be dead.

iii. **Yak Rap :**

In it the thrower picks up the *Sukuy* with the help of her two thumbs in a special way and transfers it to her palms which close over the *Sukuy*. She now goes to *Twy* area and thrown it.

iv. **Jantibara :**

Here the *Sukuy* is held between the thumbs of the thrower and is not transferred to the palms as in the previous stage. In this way she goes to throw it to hit and displace the target *Sukuy* to a distance of half a cubit away.

v. **Jantikalak :**

It is similar to the previous stage, only the *Sukuy* is taken by the forefingers, and not by the thumb.

vi. **Siriyng :**

In it the player stands on the *Gang* area with her back towards the *Twy*. Now she bends forward and throws the *Sukuy* between her legs backwards. This *Sukuy* should not touch the target *Sukuy* nor should land within less than a close fist's distance.

Now from the landing place, the player will again throw the *Sukuy* according to the previous process and should displace the target *Sukuy* to half a cubit distance failing which the thrower will be dead for this stage.

It should be noted that at the time of throwing of the *Sukuy* from the *Gang* to the *Twy*, if the thrown *Sukuy* lands within a distance

of about one cubit from the target *Sukuy*, a rival player will give a leap clasping the *Sukuy* between her feet. She will place it where she lands. The thrower now has to hit and displace the previous target *Sukuy* at least half a cubit away by his thrown *Sukuy* in the process of *Sukuy* throwing. Otherwise, she would be dead.

Now a days, the thrower throws it from the final landing place to the previous target *Sukuy* closing her eyes in previous method uttering *Siniyng*.

vii. **Yakhayng :**

In it the player places a *Sukuy* in the gap of the thumb finger of the right leg and goes to the *Twy* area limping and hits and displaces all the *SukuyS* of the *Twy*, one by one without a break. Only one player of a team plays on behalf of the team.

viii. **Sal :**

In it the player places a *Sukuy* under the toe of her right leg. She then proceeds to the target sukuy of the *Twy* limpingly pushing the *Sukuy* and hits and displaces the targets to a distance of half a cubit. The *Sukuy* under the toe should not be detached at the time of limping, hitting and displacing of the target *Sukuy*.

ix. **Suy :**

The thrower places a *Sukuy* on the instep of her right foot standing in the *Gang* with her left foot behind. Now she takes a forward step with the left leg towards the *Twy* and immediately throws the *Sukuy* of the right instep towards any *Sukuy* of the *Twy*. The target *Sukuy* should be displaced at half a cubit away. Otherwise, she shall be declared *out* for that turn.

x. **Chakaybara :**

Here the player places *Sukuy* on the instep of her right leg. Now she proceeds towards the *Twy* limping and hits and displaces the *Sukuy* of the *Twy* as she did in the earlier stage. The foot on which the *Sukuy* is placed should not touch the earth at the time of limping.

xi. **Chakaykalak :**

The player places the *Sukuy* on the instep of her right foot and then she moves around the *twy* and the *Gang* the number of times decided earlier. Then she hits and displaces the *SukuyS* of *Twy* to a minimum half a cubit away.

xii. Musal :

In it the thrower bends down her body on the *Gang* with her back towards the *Twy*. Now she throws the *Sukuy* between her legs aiming at a *Sukuy* of the *Twy*. But this thrown *Sukuy* should not touch the target *Sukuy*. It should land to a minimum distance of one close fist's away from the aimed *Sukuy*.

Now she will again throw the *Sukuy* from that place to the previously aimed *Sukuy* and displace it to a minimum distance of half a cubit away.

xiii. Raytwy :

In this stage, the thrower stands beside the *Twy* placing the *Sukuy* on her head. Then she takes the *Sukuy* in her hand from the head twice uttering *Raytwy Raytwy*. On the third time she throws the *Sukuy* from her head directly to one of the *Sukuy* of the *Twy* and displaces it to minimum half a cubit away.

Conclusion :

The folk games and sports of the Jamatias play an important role in the acquisition of social qualities and development of individual personality among the members of their society. The complex rules and sub-rules of their games are in use since time immemorial to test the physical ability, skill, tactic, team spirit etc. of the players. Undoubtedly, their keen intellect is reflected in framing these rules and conduct of the games according to these rules.

The followings are a few significant characteristics of the Jamatia games and sports :-

(a) The folk games and sports of the Jamatia have been influenced by the other tribal and non-tribal games and sports to some extent.

(b) The importance of physical, mental and amusemental aspects of human life in their games and sports.

(c) Through the various games with dolls the children get training for their future domestic life.

(d) The segregation of games according to the psycho-physical condition of boys, girls, and children is a significant pointer to their mental make-up.

To a great extent their games foster the spirit of communal unity for which the Jamatias are famous.

CURATIVE MEDICINES AND HERBS

Conception of Disease :

The Jamatias take disease as a matter of great mental concern and feel a lot of anxiety about them. They fear the disease but at the same time have the mentality to take it as something to fight against. These are parts of Jamatia mental make up and a common feature of their society.

Whenever a person suffers from a disease, the first thing that comes to his mind is to know the cause of the disease. The conception of disease of the Jamatias is similar those of the Tripuris and many other tribes of India i.e. Some external agents are responsible for any disease. The agents which are mainly considered to make a man sick are as follows :

i. The witch,
ii. Malevolent or non-human evil spirit,
iii. The aggressive intention of an *Ochai*
iv. Infection or contagion, and
v. The wrath of the *Mahakali*

I. Witchcraft :

Generally, the cause of illness is attributed to witchcraft, the witches in the Jamatia community are known as *Swkal* and *Mang* which are to some extent similar to the idea of *Dain* among the Bengalees. When the evil spirit of a witch comes in the form of a bluish flame it is called *Swkal* and when it comes, taking a physical form it is called *Mang*.

The *Swkal* are common men and women belonging to their own community. Though some men and women possess evil potency from birth, not all people know who is a *Swkal* among them. Only the *Ochai* has the power to recognise them. And he reveals the identity of a *Swkal* secretly to the patient or in a few cases, only to his relations.

A *Swkal* can be a man or a woman. But for most diseases the female *Swkal* are held responsible.

It is believed that the *Swkal* can perform many evil deeds impossible to ordinary man and woman. They can make a healthy person sick or even kill him. To make one suffer, a *Swkal* has to perform any physical feats or even go near him. Only his evil spirit comes out in the form of a bluish flame and makes the victim sick.

Though the *SwkalS* can attack any one, they generally prefer a diseased person or a pregnant woman. There is a note in the *Rajmala*(The Royal chronicle of the kings of Tripura) on the popular belief concerning the *SwkalS* among theTripuris which is quite similar to those of the Jamatias.

Regarding the *Mangs* it is said that at night the *Swkal* who come out in search of food are known as *Manys*. She frequent garvage dumps and pick up fish bones, human skulls etc and suck them. At such times she roams about naked - specially if she is young with hair falling over shoulders and her face elongated. For the elongation of her face she holds her hands over the fire and with the warm hands elongates her face. If any person of weak mind comes across her in such a state at night she does him/his great harm.

ii. Malevolent/Non-Human Evil Spirit:

The Jamatias also believe that there are many non human evil spirits who become angry with a man for showing them neglect or worshipping them defectively and makes him so ill that he eventually dies. Such, evil spirits are known as *Mwtaylamya*. In the performance of marriage ceremoney, *Sraddha*ceremoney and in any important religious function a *Naibadya* has to be offered to the evil spirits to please them.

There are 25 (twenty five) such evil spints. Of them, 7 (seven) have to be offered fowls, goats, eggs etc. They are :

i. Jahari
ii. Prahari
iii. Premchari
iv. Dakini
v. Jogini
vi. Magini and
vii. Magadinchori

Only *Naibadya* is offered to the rest 18 (eighteen) spirits and no sacrificing of animal is required in their *Puja*.These 18 (eighteen) spirits are :

i. Sunarmati.
ii. Kahanmati
iii. Aychwti
iv. Auti
v. Berua

vi. Kherua
vii. Narita
viii. Nakhete
ix. Lankhete
x. Patal Kainya
xi. Swrwng Kainya
xii. Hadini
xiii. Medini
xiv. Sukala
xv. Rangkhal
xvi. Susugin
xvii. Tangburi
xviii. Balshingraja.

iii. Aggressive Intention Of An Ochai :

It is also believed that a person may be attacked with a disease due to the aggressive intention of an *Ochai* vested with magical potency to do harm to others out of envy, jealousy, anger or in retaliation or accepting bribe from others.

In their society whenever one suffers from a disease the first question that crops up in the mind of the diseased or his relatives is why this disease? Is some one behind it? This is one of the reasons that no body dares to oppose even a misdeed of an *Ochai*

Transferring of Disease :

They believe that certain diseases like dysentry, headache etc. can be transferred from the diseased person's body to others by certain magical processes.

iv. Infection or Contagions :

Small pox and cholera are considered as infectious disease. So a patient of small pox is taken outside the village and his dead body is immediately buried.

v. The Wrath of the Mahakali :

Diseases like cholera and pox are considered the result of the wrath of the *Mahakali*

Changes of Seasons :

They believe that certain diseases generally occur during the certain specific period of the year. So some diseases take place due to change of seasons.

Methods of Treatment :

The system and methods of treatments used by the Jamatias for their ailments can be classified into the following categories :

1. House-hold treatment,
2. Treatment by the *Ochai*,
3. Faithhealing,
4. Modern alopathic or homeopathic treatment by the quack or village doctors, and
5. Treatment by qualified Doctors.

1. House-hold Treatment :

In the case of most ordinary diseases or at the first stage of any disease, a patient is treated by some old and experienced members of his family.

2. Treatment by the *Ochai* :

When the disease goes beyond the range of House-hold treatment the village *Ochais* treatment is required. If the village *Ochai* fails to cure the patient the help of a famous *Ochai* from other village is taken.

The mode of *Ochai's* treatment varies from patient ot patient according to the nature of the disease. The *Ochai* conducts the treatment through the following methods :

a. Divination to ascertion the cause of the diseases,
b. The application of charms and incantations,
c. The use of medicine prepared from various roots and herbs,
d. The distribution of amulets and sanctified water,
e. The worship and propitiation of the aggrieved spirit, and
f. The neutralisation of the affect of an evil eye etc.

The divination is the chief weapon of an *Ochai* to cure a patient. Through divination, he ascertains the evil spirits or the aggrieved deity responsible for disease and tries to cure the patient through propitation of it. The method of divination used by the *Ochai* is very interesting. The *Ochai* first of all finds out the identity of the agrieved deity or Swkal that is to be propitated to neutralise the disease. This method is called *Thikana Naymanni* (finding out the identity). There are various methods of *Thikana Naymanni* applied by the *Ochais*. Some of these methods are :

The *Ochai* prepares a few offerings consisting of *Atap* rice and green turmeric in banana leaves in the names of the spirits and

arranges them in a row on the earth in the court yard.

Then he places his right hand horizontally on the earth at a distance of about one cubit from the offerings and begins to recite *Mantras* (charms) over his hand. Then his hand begins to move towards one of the offerings and from the direction of his hand towards a particular offerings, he divinates the name of the aggrieved spirit to be propitiated.

Sometimes the *Ochai* applies oil on the nail of his thumb and by intent scrutinisation of the thumb comes to know the name of the aggrieved spirit and the *Puja* required to be done to propitiate him.

Some *Ochais* draw lines on the ground and these lines help them recognise the aggrieved *Swkal*S causing the disease. This stage of divination is known as *Thikana Naymanni*. It is a process of diagnosis only.

The next stage is called *Sema Naymanni* in which the *Ochai* tells what should be done for the cure. Then the *Ochai*Y performs the required *Puja* which is known as *Samwng Mamanni* and tells the result of it, Which is called *Sema Naymanni or Sema Samanni*. The term *Sema* means result.

They believe that the *Ochai*is the only competent medicineman to bring relief to a patient due to the aggressive intention of another *Ochai*.

Sacrificing of fowls, goats, eggs etc. constitute an important element of the *Ochai's* treatment. At the time of *Thikana Naymanni* the *Ochai* comes to know the kind of the animal to be sacrificed. Generally, *Swkal,lwk Mwtay* or *Bwrwyrag* prefers tortoise and goats. The *Buras* likes chicken, eggs etc. In some cases the colur of the sacrificed animal has also to be determined according to the wish of the a grieved evil spirit. The worship may be simply performed by offering a *Naibedya* if the spirit wished it.

In some cases the *Ochai*gives amulets to the patient for wearing on the arms, neck, or waist to ward off the evil eye. Restriction on diets are also prescribed by the *Ochai*according to the nature of the disease.

3. Faith Healing :

Faith healing plays a very important role in the Jamatia community. During the movement of the *Biyagwnang Garia* if any devotee requests the *Mahanta* to cure him of his ailment he takes a little *Charanamrita* of the *Garia*, chants some mantras on it and gives it to the patient.

Sometimes instead of giving *Charanamrita* the mahanta simply says *Ta-Wanadi* (do'nt worry). And it is found that the patient is cured.

At the time of the annual *Ker Puja* of the village, the *Ochai* after the completion of the *Puja* asks all the devotees "Are you in good health ?" The answer should be in the positive. They believe that this positive answer also helps the people to live in good health.

The practice of promising an animal e.g. goat, buffalo etc. or a *Naibadya* to a deity is also prevalent among the Jamatias of Tripura. This vow is made to win the favour of a particular deity. The fulfilment of a vow is a must on the part of a Jamatia.

In this context, it is to be mentioned that the important underlying motive of all religious functions of the Jamatias is the seeking of the protection of the natural forces and evil spirits from the attack of diseases, famine, flood and crop destruction.

Now-a-days, due to urban contact certain modern alopathic medicines for ordinary common diseases are available in most of the village markets. So in the case of delay in curing of a patient in their traditional system of treatment he takes alopathic medicine from the market or goes to a quack. The treatment by a modern medicineman is also considered a status symbol in the Jamatia community. But if this medicine also fails to cure him he is taken to the hospital. In case of failure of hospital treatment the patient is taken back home and the treatment of the *Ochai* is solicited.

There are also such cases a patient comes back to the *Ochai* when hospital treatment fails. The *Ochai* cures him.

The *Ochai* are not paid any fees as such in cash for his services. He is given a meal and a drink of chak/chuwak. But the cost of materials for a *Puja* which includes the price of a goat, a fowl has become very high now-a-days. Then one or two helpers of the

Ochai who are known as *Banias* are also given meals. It is to be mentioned that any person can be taken as *Bania*. The help of the *Bania* is taken only in case of *Samwag Ramanni* (performance of Puja) in which sacrifice of animal is made. He is just an helper and need not know any *Mantra*.

And if one has to bring a non-local *Ochai* or an *Ochai* from another tribe the cost shots up further. Besides these, the *Ochai* is also to be paid an amount for the medicine prepared by him. Totally one has to spend a lot of money for the *Puja* of the *Ochai*. This prohibitage cost has made Jamatiyas turn from traditional system of treatment to the hospital system of treatment.

Diseases- Their Management And Treatment- Plants And Herbs Used :

1. *Kangwray* (Catarrh) :

The Jamatia name for catarrh is *Kangwray*. The Jamatia medicineman divides catarrh into three types according to the season of occurance. These are :-

A. *Satung Kangwray* (the summer cold),
B. *Watwy Kangwray* (the rain cold), and
C. *Kwchangma* (the winter cold).

Sneezing and coughing are the main symptoms of this disease.

The composition of the medicine for the Summer catarrh is *Thentharay* (tamarind) and *Mwkhwy Chuchay* (a kind of thorny plant) with an amount of salt and green chilly. These substances are put together into a bamboo pipe and grounded into paste with the help of a bamboo pestle. Then the mouth of the pipe is closed with a cork and put on the fire to be heated. This hot substance is taken by the patient three to four times a day. It gives relief. By this system of treatment the discharge from the nose dries up quickly. This stage is called *Kangwray Manna*.

The treatment of rain catarrh is similar to that of the summer catarrh. But in case of little children, warm water and hot rice are recommended. In addition to it, they are protected from external cold and are also not allowed to eat and drink cold food.

The treatment of the winter catarrh is also similar to the treatment of the other two.

The very effective medicine for cold and fever used by the Jamatias is *Chakhwy Bwthwy* (Alkali water). This is taken luxewarmly. It stops sneezing. Some times the paste of *Sarwwy*

Kwthwng (green turmeric) is added of this water. This medicine is called *Chakhwy Bwthwy Kwthwng*.

2. *Kuchukma Ni/Kaa* (Cough) :-

According to the Jamatia medicinemen there are three types of coughs and they are :

A. *Kangwray-Kuchukma* (hawking cough) :
B. *Kangwray-Hulak* (hooping cough) : and
C. *Kash* (Asthma).

In the treatment of *Kangwray-Kuchukma*, the patient is given the warm juice of the young white leaves of the pineapple plant.

The juice of *Sichuk Bwlay* (the leaf of a kind of thorny plant which is occassionlly used as fencing of the Jamatia house) is also a very good midicine for this disease.

The young leaves of *Mwylak* (White gourd) and some tamarinds are heated in bamboo pipe and this hot substance is given to the patient.

There is no remarkable treatment of *Kash* (Asthma) in the Jamatia tribe except observing restrictions on certain kinds of food.

It should be noted that sweet is strictly vetood in case of cough and cold in their community.

3. Luma (Fever) :-

The Jamatia term for fever is *lumtang*. As there are to thermester the temperature of a patient is felt by touching their wrist, forehead or body. Temperature is called *Kulu*.

The head and the chest of a patient is sponged with water. In case of very high temperature a special method of treatment is applied to bring it down. The root of *Kutulia Plant* (a kind of thorny plant) is pasted and filtered with a pices of cloth. The filtrate is mixed with the water with which *Atap* rice has been washed. The body of the patient is sponged with this mixture.

The leaf of *Maytra* (This is a kind of plant similar to *Tulshi* only its leaves are bigger and the smell more intense) also cools water. The temperature also comes down if the patient is sponged with the water so coolud. The soft boiled *Atap* rice or the mixture of an amount of water with it is the traditional diet of the patient. In case of vomitting tendency, an amount of roasted *Berman* (in

Bengali called shidhol) is added to it.

It is worth mentioning here that like the Tripuris, the Jamatias also consider *Berman* as an effective medicine and preventive of malaria. In fact malaria is the most common type of disease in their locality. When a person feels feverish, he at once takes some *Berman* mixed with water. Thus *Berman* may be termed as the quinine among the Jamatias.

In case of severe headache the astringent juice of *Thaaylwy Hathiya* (seedy banana) or the juice of *Mwylak Bwlay* (gourd leaf) is applied on the forehead. A gentle massage is also administered. Some times mild taps are given on the affected part.

4. Khakwla Saman Ni/Khakwla Riyakma Ni (Chest pain) :-

The burning sensation on the chest is called *Kha*. When this burning sensation repeatedly occurs it is called *Khar*. Besides the charms and incantations of the *Ochai* the application of *Hakuchu* is in vogue in the Jamatia community. The term *Hakuchu* means hot compression.

5. Colic Pain :-

In case of colic pain, three to four leaves of *Lonrak* (Castor oil plant) plant are folded together and an amount of burning charcoal including ashes is put on these leaves. Then this is warpped up with a piece of cloth. The affected place is fomented with it. The patient is advised to take rest for a few days.

6. *Kulu Samanni* (Faint due to high fever) :-

The fainting of the children due to thigh fever is called *Kulu-Samanni*. In this case, the body of the patient is kept cold with water and air.

The patient is forbidden to take excessive sour foods at that stage. When he comes to his senses, he is placed besides the fire place which is situated in the middle of the room. This helps to reduce the pain of his body. The Jamatias believe that fire is necessary since it protects the patient from the evil spirit. So in every Jamatia house, there is a fire place.

7. Piya/Piyakarama/Bakmaga Chwkmanni (All kinds of bee sting) :-

In case of bee sting, the stings are first taken out and then a little amount of honey is rubbed on the affected area. In case of

excessive pain, the afflicted person is given a hot bath. It should be noted that the same type of treatment is done by the Tripuris and the Manipuris of Tripura. The mixture of *Kwtwra* (treacle) and *Chunduy* (lime) is also applied on the wound.

8. Yankhe. Asiyngi Chwkmannl (Heterep neustis fossilis sting) :-

In such cases, the patient is given wine to drink. An amount of wine is also applied on the affected place. Sometimes, the person is given *Haychiyng* (ginger) to eat and placed before the fire to relieve the pain.

9. Mangtay (Diarrhoeah) :-

The Jamatias believe that once a person is attacked by this disease, he will be attacked by it again about the same time the following year. Some elder persons have the view that it visits the person for three consecutive years. The symptoms of *Mangtay* is like that of cholera. The only difference is that *Mangtay* is not a infectious disease according to them.

In this disease, the patient is exposed to sufficient light and air. The bark of *chenyng thuwang* (Alstenia xchelaris) tree is grounded into a paste and it is soaked in water for a short while. This water is given to the patient. It stops the vomitting tendency and motion immediately. If the first dose fails a second one is given.

Besides the above mentioned medicine the patient is also given a mixture of *Taki a Hakaya* and *Satwwy Kwthwwng*. The meaning of *Taksa Hakaya* is the chicken that has just been hatched and has not touched the earth yet. The term *Satwwy Kwthwng* means green turmeric. The chicken is boiled with green turmeric in a pipe. The patient has to take rest for a few days.

10. *Harkhamanni* (Burn) :-

The affected place should not be touched and application of water to it is also restricted. The astringent juice *Kasay Bwtay* (been leaf) mixed with an amount of *Sam* (Salt) is applied to the affected area. The mixture of *Chundur Bwthwy* (lime water) and *Nanwkwra Theg* (coconut oil) is also used. The cold mud collected from the place where the earthen pitcher is also applied to relieve the burning sensation.

11. *Mwksa* (Eye disease) :-
In case of pain in the eye, a few lemon leaved are boiled in water and applied to the eye. The hot copression of boiled rice is also used. The breast milk of the mother of a suckling baby is also considered as an effective medicine. It is dropped in the affected eye.

The astringment juice of *Duk Mangkhung* (a kind creeper-its leaves are similar to arum leave but smaller is size. Its white flowers look into oleander flower. This plant is also called *Mwkhwra ata* The creeper is like a pipe and a kind of cold astringent juice comes out from the one end of the pipe if one blows by the mouth at the other end) creeper is a very effective medicine for eye disease. This cold juice is applied to the eye.

In case of seven eye trouble, the Jamatias apply finely powdered salt to affected eye with the help of an arum stalk from which the outer skin has been removed. This is used three to four times in a day and the patient recovers. In some cases only salt water is applied to the eye. Eating of sour food and arum is forbidden in the disease.

12. Fera (Measles) :-
It is mainly, the children who are attacked by this disease. This disease generally takes place in the summer. The face of the patient becomes red and he runs a temperture.

The patient is not allowed to go out and should not remain bare bodied. His body is always covered with a cloth. The disease first of all appears in the inside of the body of the patient and then eruptions appear. When these dry up, the patient completely cured. They think that if the patient comes in contact with cold air or water the disease will remain suppressed inside and the eruption will not appear which indicates cure. This suppression of measles may be fatal. The suppression of measles is called *Akulwk* and it may lead to death. So at this stage, the treatment of the patient is taken more seriously.

At the stage of *Akulwk* the patient may have frequent motions. The faeces may be of different colours. The Juice of *Gayang Bwlay* (Guava leaves) or *Khunpwla-Chwla* is given to the patient to stop the motion.

13. Rabam (Swelling) :-
In case of swelling of any part of the body a *Chuwan* tablet is made into a paste with hot water and the paste is applied on the attached place.

The *Chuwan* is used as an ingredient to prepare rice beer. This is a composition of the leaf of *Chuwan Thwwy* tree, *Atap* rice, jackfruit leaf, garlic, chilly, ginger, *Mwkhwra Atabwlay* (the leaf of a kind of tree, the seeds of which look like monkey's paw) etc. All These materials are grounded into powder mixed with water and made into tablets. The leaf of *Chuwan Thwwy* tree is the main intoxicating element. The name *Chuwanes* has been taken from the *Chuwan thwwy* Plant.

This *Chuwwn* is a very effective meidicine and its use is in vogue in the Jamatia community.

14. Rabam Ruway (Swelling) :-
Hot compression of the *Angan-Bwlay* (Mudar plant leaf) is given to the affected part. It helps reduce swelling.
The application of the paste of *Ochay/Hangray* (Char-Coal) around the swallen place also reduce swelling.

15. Khar (Rheumatism) :-
In case of rheumatic pain the root (Yarung) of *San-Sunduruk* (Mimosa pudic linn, family leguminosae) is used. A piece of root is tied to the affected place.

16. *Sak-Mechermanni* (Urinary Disease) :-
In case of urinary diseases like feeling of burning sensation at the time of passing frequent urination, the seeds of the *Takhumu* plant is kept soaked in water for an hour. Then the mixture is taken by the patient.

17. Takmakal (Corn) :-
To remove the corn the patient steps on a bamboo cinder in such a way that the corn comes in contact with the cinder. The repeatation of the process for three to four times cures the patient.

18. *Charpamanni* (Thornprick) :-

This is a very common disease. It happens when a thorn or a foreign body remains stuck in the sole of the foot of a person for a long time. If the thorn is not removed the affected place is swollen and the patient cannot walk properly.

In this disease, the paste of *Musuk Buwa Wafwagma* (the powder of cow's teeth of the lower jaw) is mixed with water and applied to the affected place. This helps the healing of the affected part.

19. Rangfa (A kind of ring worm) :-

It looks like a ring worm. But unlike ringworm it is accompanied by severe pain. It appears as a small vesicle on the body. A layer of wood charcoal paste is applied on the affected place.

20. Bukhuk Hamya And Musa (Mouthsore and Gum infection) :-

Mouthsore is called *Bukhuk Hamya* and gum infection is called *Muwa* by the Jamatias. The mouthsore is cured by gurgling with warm water mixded with the leaf of *Usundwy* (a kind of plant with flowers like that of marigold).

The gum infection (Muwa) is cured by the application of the ashes obtained by burning the bark of a certain kind of tree. It takes three to four days to cure it.

21. Gamasi (Prickly heat of the summer) :-

It is cured with the application of rain water. The rubbing of *Basti Bumuthu* (the piece of cloth which is used for filtering the wine) on the body also reduces the prickly heat of the summer.

22. Khukchwy-Pakhakmanni (Cracking of lips) :-

The dew collected from the *Danadal* (bamboo frames erected on one's court yard to dry the wet clothes in the sun) early in the morning is applied to the cracked lips.

23. Thuya-Swtwymanni (Bedwetting) :-

The bed wetting by grown up children is cured by eating roasted *Kuluma* (Cockroach).

24. ***Bislmatak*** (Scabies, a kind of skin disease with itching) :-

In this disease the paste of the composition of *Abithibukur* and *Gandhok* (Sulpher) is applied to the affected place. *Abithibukur* is the bark of a kind of poisonous tree which is used in the water of a stream or lake to catch fish.

The paste of *Thaylwy-Barabak-Bwlay* (Young banana leaf) is also used on the affected place.

The application of the paste of *Santhay Ulta* (a kind of achyranthes aspera) on the wound is also effective.

There is a current belief among the Jamatias about the curative property of the *Santhay Ulta* plant. If a sick cow is struck with a stalk of this plant and then the stalk is placed on the back of a healthy cow for a while the disease is transferred to the body of the latter.

25. **Ak-Kiyarmanni/Thwwy-Khimanni And Rajra**(Dysentry and Blood Dysentry) :-

In this disease, generally cold food stuff is given to the patient. In case of children the juice of the leaves of *Kenchay* or *Khumplachwla* are given to the patient.

The juice of *Thaychuk Bukur* (the bark of mango tree) is also an effective medicine. The *Thaychuk-Bukur* is kept soaked in water in the previous night and the water is taken by the patient in the next morning. The use of *Chirata* water is also in vogue in the Jamatia community.

Besides general dysentry, there is a different type of dysentry which is called *Rajra*. In this case the patient passes loose stool spattered with blood repeatedly. The stool may be of different colours. At the critical stage of the patient the colour of stool becomes completely black.

In this disease, the patient is given the mixture of the juice of the followings :-

Thaysitay Bukur (the bark of Olive tree);

Thaypala-Belayng Twy (the jelly like substance found inside a kind of acid fruit known as *Chalita* in Bengali *Pundad*) (Goat milk).

The composition of the paste of *Bakhwla* (myroba an fruit), the young leaf of *Geyang* (Guava leaves), the *Bel-Bwlay* (leaf of wood apple) and an amount of honey is also given to the patient. This

composition is generally given three times a day and for five to six days. And the patient gets cured.

In respect of diet, meat and milk is forbidden.

There is a belief current among the Jamatias regarding the treatment of *Ak-Kiyarmanni*. According to it, if a patient touches his anus after passing his stool with a bamboo strip and then leaves it on a road, this disease is transferred to the first person who crosses the strip.

26. Muisu (Eye sore) :-

The juice of *Mwyfwray Bakang* (Pui creeper) is applied to the affected part of the eye.

Treatment with plants, herbs and magico-religious functions :

In the treatment of the above mentioned diseases, wounds and injuries the charms and the service of the *Ochais* incantations of the Ochais are not generally required. They are done only by using herbs, plants and roots etc.

But in the following cases though the treatment is mainly based on herbs and creepers available in the neighbourhood, in certain diseases various types of magico-religious functions are performed by the *Ochais* in addition. These diseases are :

27. *Bissi and Paniyaluti* (Small Pox and Chicken Pox) :-

In the past pox was a very common disease. There is no specific medicine for pox worthy to be mentioned. They try to cure the patient by charms and incantations. Certain deities are also propitiated to cure a patient.

When a person is attacked by this disease he is taken to an isolated place away from the village and left there. All the villagers are given *khwtwng* by the *Ochai*. It is a piece of thread to act as a charm against the disease. The villagers keep this *khwtwng* tied on their arms as a preventive measure.

The belief current among the Jamatias regarding this disease is that it breaks out due to the wrath of *Mahakali*. So they propitiate the goddess *Mahakali* through her Puja. The paramudra (sanctification of the whole village through the performance of puja so that this disease does not enter the village) is also performed.

There is a similar belief current in the neighbouring Bengalees where it is believed that this disease is the result of the Goddess *Sitala's* wrath.

If this disease spreads through out the village even after the performance of *paramudra* they vacate the village and take shelter in another village.

The dead body of a Jamatia who dies of pox is not cremated. It is burried in a nearby lowland. They believe that this disease may spread throughout the village more furiously if the dead body is cremated. When the spread of the disease dies down the dead bodies are taken out from their temporary graves and ceremonially cremated. And their relatives observe the usual mourning period of thirteen days at the end of which they perform the *Sraddha* ceremony for the dead.

28. Khi-Kwba/Khi-Kara/Bak (Cholara) :-

The Jamatia term of cholera is *Khi-kara or bak*. Like pox it is also considered to break out from the wrath of goddess *Mahakali*. The *Ochai* is the chief medicineman of this disease and he gives *khwtwng* (sanctified thread) to all the villagers. The *paramudra* (sanctification of the para) is also done in addition to the puja of *Mahakali*.

The dead body in this case of course, is cremated immediately. Vegetarian food is prohibited as long as this disease is present in the village. Only after the disease leaves the village a date is fixed by the *Ochai* to begin the thirteen day period of mourning by the persons having blood relationship with the dead. They take only vegetarian food during this period.

29. Sakwla-Khwlay (A kind of boil) :-

This is a very common disease among the Jamatias. It may

appear on any part of the body like a small boil. When the boil bursts it leaves behind a small wound which itches. The affected place also becomes swollen. The wound increases day by day. In this way, after a few days pus (*Kubuiwy*) is formed there and begins to ooze. A black spot around the wound appears gradually. The pain in the wound increases when in contact with water. At last the wound touches the bone and the patient dies in severe pain.

The treatment of this disease mainly depends on the performance of certain magico-religious functions of the *Ochai*. First of all, the *Ochai* stops the further development of the wound by the power of charms and incantations which they call *Khukkharna*. Then the treatment to dry the wound is started.

The application of the paste prepared by grounding a creeper called *mwyfwray kufur* on the affected place is an effective medicine. The layer of the paste of *gacha* (hemp) and *bakhwla* (myrobalan fruit) which is kept on a young banana leaf is also applied on the affected place.

The patient is kept to bed under a mosquito curtain for protection from flies. All kinds of burnt or roasted food is restricted.

30. Chibuk-Sukmanni (Snake biting) :-

The treatment of snake bite is also done by the *Ochai* through charms and incantations. Generally, the upper portion of the affected place is tied with a rope very tightly to stop blood circulation of that place.

31. Bumi Tuta (Child Vomiting) :-

Generally, the babies suffer from this disease. They suffer from nausa and vomiting again and again and pass liquid stool. In this disease, the breast of the mother of the baby is exorcised by the Ochai.

Besides this, the juice of Khurpla chwla (a kind of grass) is also given to the patient. And cold water of *maykwchang bwtwy* (boiled rice steeped in cold water) is poured on the head of the patient.

32. Muwa/Buwa-Samanni (Tooth troubles) :-

In this disease pus is formed in the gums and bad smell comes out from the mouth. Even tooth are also affected by this disease.

Besides the application of charms and incantations by the *Ochai* the composition of the following ingredients are also used by the patient *khakaleyng bwlay* (Arhar leaf), *thaychuk bwlay bakang* (stem of the mango leave), *jay-thaylwyyarwng* (the root of a kind of plantain plant - sabri kala in Bengali) and *takbusuksy bukur* (the skin of the lever of chicken). All these elements are burnt together in fire and a paste is prepared from ash which is applied on the gum and affected tooth.

33. Bwsa baya khasani tay Bwsa babayuwy (Pre-natal and post-natal treatment) :-

The pregnancy stage of the women is considered as one of the critical stages of their life. Though they become physically weak, household duties do not allow them any rest. Some times as a result of excessive hard work miscarriage takes place. When miscarriage takes place within the first three months of pregnancy it is called *kwchak kutunmanni*. If it takes place after that period it is called *tal saksa*.

The normal delivery of the mother is called *baa*. After delivery, the mother is washed with *twy tung* (warm water) and is sealed beside fire. This is called *siyngthangmwng*. It reduces the pain of the mother and stops unwanted discharge. At this stage chilly, magur fish, singh fish, fruits of creepers are restricted.

In case of excessive discharge she is given water with which *dalkwchak* (mashuri dal) was washed as medicine to take. The water with which *dalkarma* (Khashari dal) is washed is given to her incase of insufficient discharge. In such cases of irregularity of discharge charms and incantations by the *Ochai* is done in addition to above mentioned treatment. This kind of post-natal state is called *kwchak baauwor kwchak baya* by the Jamatias.

In case of complications of delivery, the belief current in the *Jamatia* community is that the husband of the woman is required

to tell his wife that he is going to catch crab and goes out from the house with some articles for the time being. This they believe helps speedy delivery.

If the breast milk of the mother does not appear within five days of delivery, a ceremony called *abakhwy khangmwng or bimwng* (Wanting of milk) is performed. This ceremony is conducted by the female members of the family. It is held in the evening and supply of milk for the body is wished.

In this ceremony, seven cakes are prepared with the powder of *atap* rice and an amount of water is added to some rice powder and stirred to look like milk. Then this white mixture is boiled in a pot and those cakes are dropped into it. Then the liquid and cakes are offered as oblation in the name of the seven deities.

These seven deities who are sisters called *bukhuk sini*. These seven sisters are also known as *bwrwyrag*. These *bwrwyrags* are the notorious evil spirits known as *swkal*. Their names are :-

1. Dakini :
2. Jogini :
3. Magini :
4. Khagini :
5. Lahan :
6. Prahari : and
7. Premsari.

They are propitiated in *abak twy khangmang/ ceremony*. The ceremony is officiated by the *Ochai*. Seven *naibedyas* are offered on banana leaves in the courtyard. After the completion of the *puja*, the *Ochai* is required to ask the mother "Has the milk appeared for the baby ?" The assistants of her reply "Yes, yes, it has apeared and has filled up the jars." The *Ochai* again asks "Is it true ?" They reply "Yes it is true". Then the ceremony ends. The mantra of the puja is as follows :-

Achwy-katar, Achwy Kwchar, Achwy Kusu,
Achwy chikan, niragna tinile chwng
Changwa pudiri, Kharakdugiri khwtay
Jugaiwy tabay, nana rafaykha.
Nirag kungchuk gwnangsa, khukchwy

Kwchaksa, Khunju nepoyngbar - Telani
Banguwy abak baysa galasa khwlayuwy
bana rejasidi

English Rendering:

[Oh :- *Achwy katar* (the eldest grand mother), *Achwy kwchar* (the second grand mother), *Achwy kusu* (the younger grand mother, the third), *Achwy chikan* (the youngest grand mother) today we have offered you food brought by us tying small pieces of cloth on our heads and wearing loin cloths. Pray to give one jar of milk in each of her (the mother of the baby) breasts for Tate (the baby) who has an aquiline nose, red lips and sesame flower like ears.]

34. Bahak Samanni/Ak Samanni (Stomach pain) :-

In case of severe stomach pain, a special type of treatment is given. The pain suddenly appears. It starts as a pinch in the stomach and the pain gradually moves upward towards the heart. The rubbing of mustard oil on the affected part some times reduce the pain for the time being. But permanent relief can be obtained by a special type of treatment called *harkamanni*.

In this treatment, the point of a *damwra* (Chopper) or a ploughshare is heated red hot. Then the affected part of the patient is rubbed with sufficient mustard oil. The *Ochai* also rubs oil on his own hand and heal. The the *Ochai* gives speedy taps on the red hot *damwra* and then quickly apply the hot oil of his hand on the affected place of the patient with gentle taps. This is done very speedily, in quick successions some times the *Ochai* uses his heals to give the taps. Three to four repetations of such treatment at several times cures the patient. The patient does not require to take any oral medicine.

35. Kharak-Samanni (Headache) :-

The Jamatia medicineman divides headache into two types. One is general headache which may be due to cold, heat, excessive thinking, hardwork etc. In this type of headache, the head of the patient is massaged by some one. Sometime, the head is washed with cold water and layer of the paste of durba (a kind of grass) is applied on the forehead of the patient.

The other type of headache is called *Surjabari* It starts at the time of sun rise and sun set only. Generally this type of headache is felt from the eye brow upward to a part of the forehead. In the treatment of this type of headache the *Jamatias* believe that if the area of headache is measured with a bamboo stick and then it is thrown to the junction of two roads, the headache would be transferred to that person who would cross the stick first.

The second type of the treatment of *Surjabarta* as used in the *Jamatias* is that if the patient looks at the half risen sun in the morning or when it goes half way down the horizon and prays to the sun to cure him the headache leaves him.

There is still another treatment for this disease. The *Jamatias* believe that if the patient lightly butts a half dead tree (the half portion of the tree is dried and the other half is alive) with the affected part of his head, he gets cured.

Besides these, charms and incantations are also applied by the *Ochai* to cure patient. This type of headache is called *abikwpai samanni* (pain at the half portion of the forehead).

36. Jarakepeloymanni tey bekereyngbaymanni (Dislocation and fracture of bone) :-

In the treatment of breaking or dislocation of bone, the role of charms and incantations by the *Ochai* is quite essential. In addition to it certain medicines are also applied.

One such medicine is the paste of black coloured chicken. This paste is applied on the affected part and then the affected portion is held securely in bamboo strips and a piece of string. After a few days the broken bones are joined and strips are taken off.

In case of dislocation of bones in any portion of the body it is a common practice to apply *chuwan* paste on that affected portion.

37. Kwsa (cuts) :-

In case of any injury or cut by *dabarak*, bamboo etc. the bleeding is stopped by the application of charms and incantations by the

Ochai

Besides this, *mwytul bakang bwtwy* (the juice of aram, colocesia antiquorum) is also applied to stop bleeding. In some cases, mwswy hankwrwng bukur (skin of a kind of tree) is made into a paste and a layer of it is applied on the wound. But a small circular space is left at the centre which is covered with a leaf of that tree.

The juice of the leaf of *san berwman bwlay* (leaf of a kind medicinal herb), *kwsa kwthang bithi* (Bryo phyllum calycinum), *Tulshi bwlay* (leaf of ocimum sanctum), *durba bwlay* (Cynodon dact ylom) and *salara mangal bwtwy* (leaf of marigold) are also applied on the wound.

Charms And InCantations :

The role of charms and incantations as used by the *Ochai* in the treatment of a patient is very significant. Besides the use of various types of indigenous medicines, they use certain *mantras*. The *Jamatias* have unquestionable faith both in the efficacy of such medicines and in the efficacy of the *mantra*. The followings are a few such mantras as used by the *Ochai* :-

A. Bakharak Samanni (Headache) :-

Owng tiyng owag kriya,
Owng chuwan chu saha fa.

Application :

The *Ochai* takes a little mustard oil in his hands and recites this *mantra* three times mentioning the name of the patient and applies it on the head of the patient three times consecutively.

B. Muwa (Bleeding from the gum of the children) :-

To cure the bleeding from the gum of the children the following mantra is recited by the *Ochai* :-

Kalamuwa dalamuwa rangamuwa.
Kalapani dalapani rangapani
Salmuwa salfushka fa
Bish namie jao.

Application :-

At the time of the treatment of this disease, the *Ochai* takes a

piece of *hangar* (Coal) and recites the above mentioned *mantra* rotating the *hangar* around the face of the patient three times. Generally, this *mantra* is recited in odd numbers e.g. three, or five times. After the recitation of the *mantra*, the *Ochai* takes a little *haychiyng* (ginger). It is believed that the *Ochai* may be attacked by this disease if he does not take the *haychiyng*.

A Chart Showing The Modes of Folk Treatment By The Jamatias-With The Names of The Diseases And The Names of The Herbs And Plants Used by Them.

Name of the diseases :	Name of the medicinal herbs, Creepers, plants and other ingredients used :	Method of use or application :
1	2	3
1. *Kangwray* (Catarrh)	1. a. *Makhwy Chuchay* (a kind of thorny plant). b. *Thantharay* (tamarind) ☆ Tamarindus indica. c. Salt (Salt). d. *Masalamthang* (green chilly) ☆ Capsicum annum.	1. Few of all the leaf of *makhwy chuchay* plants, tamarind, green chilly and an amount of salt are grounded into paste. Then this paste is heated in a special process and taken orally.
	2. a. *Chwakhwy bwthwy* (Alkali water). b. *Sulwy Kwthwng* (green turmeric) ☆ Curcuma longa.	2. Mixture of the juice of green turmeric and alkali water are boiled together and taken orally
2. Kuchukmanni (Cough)	1. *Anarasa borabak bwtwy* (Pine-apple) ☆ Ananas comosus	1. The juice of the white portion of the young leaf of pine apple plant is taken orally.
	2. *Sichuk bwtay* ☆ Euphorbia neriifolia.	2. The juice of the leaf of *sichuk* plant is taken orally.

	3. a. *Mwylak bwlay kwlay* (gourd) ☆ Benincasa cerifera. b. *Thenthwray* (Tamarind)	3. The young leaf of the gourd plant and some tamarinds are heated in bamboo pipe and this hot substance is taken orally.
	4. *Tulsi Kasa bwlay* ☆ Ocimum sanctum.	4. The juice of the leaf of ocimum sanctum plant is orally taken.
	5. *Nisum Tay hayrathag* (garlic and mustard oil) ☆ Allium sativum and Bassica campestris.	5. Garlic mixed with mustard oil is warmed and rubbed on the chest.
3. Lumé (Fever)	1. *Kutuliya yarung* (Head of ☆ Amaranthus sanosus)	1. The root of *kutuliya* plant is pasted and filtered with a piece of cloth. The filtrate is mixed with water in which a rice has been washed. The body of the patient is sponged with this mixture.
	2. *Maytra bwlay* (leaf ☆ of Ocimum gratissimum).	2. The leaf of *maytra* cools the water. The temperature of the patient comes down if the patient is sponged with the water so cool.
	3. *Bemian* (Dehydrated puti fish) ☆ *Rumfus satan*	3. The sauce prepared from *bemian* (a kind of dehydrated puti fish) is taken.
4. Khakwla Samanni Khakwla nyakmanni (Chest Pain)	*Hakruchu bay siyngmang*	Simply hot compress on is applied on the chest.

5. Nagbar Kaiwy sahak samsamni (Colic)	*Lontak bwiky* (leaf of Castor oil plant) ☆ Ricinus communis	Fomentation with the leaf of *Iwitar plant* on the affected place
6. Pyar/ Pryakarma Baxmasa Chwkmanni (All kinds bee sting)	1. *Mwytul bakang bwiwy* (juice of arum stem) ☆ Colocasia esculenta. 2. *Pya bwiwy* (Honey) 3. a. *Kwiwira* (Treacle) b. *Chunbiwy* (Lime paste)	1. Extringent juice of the arum stem is applied on the affected place. 2. The rubbing of honey on the wound. 3. The rubbing of the mixture of treacle and limepaste on the affected place.
7. Yankuch Asymgi Chwkmanni (Scorpion and sting fish sting)	1. *Chuswak/Chak* (Wine) 2. *Haychoying* (ginger) ☆ Zingiber officinale.	1. The rubbing of wine on the affected place. 2. Ginger is taken orally
8. Mangtay (Diarrhoeah)	1. *Chenyngchuwang lang* Alstonia scholaris. 2. a. *Taksa hakaya* (The chicken that has just been hatched) b. *Sahwy kwmwng* (green turmeric) ☆ Curcuma longa. 3. *Chwmabwy bukur* (the bark of a kind of medicinal plant).	1. The juice of the bark of alstonia scholans plant is taken orally. 2. The chicken that has just been hatched is boiled with green turmeric in a bamboo pipe and taken orally 3. The juice of the bark of *Chwmabwy* plant is taken orally
9. Harkhamanni (Burns)	1. a. *Kasay bwiky bwiwy* (the juice of bean leaf) ☆ Vicia faba b. San (Salt) 2. a. *Chunbiwy* (lime paste). b. *Narkwra jiag* (Coconut oil) ☆ Cocos nucifera.	1. The juice of the bean leaf mixed with an amount of salt is applied to the affected area. 2. The application of the mixture of lime paste and coconut oil to the affected area.

	3. *Gala banna talaru ha* (Mud which clings to the bottom of an earthen pitcher).	3. Application of the mud which clings to the bottom of an earthen pitcher.
10 Mwksa (Eye trouble)	1. *Jambr bwlay nugak bwlwy* (Lemon). ☆ Citrus auramiola.	1. Application of water boiled with lemon leaf to the eye.
	2. Maykutung haku (Fomentation of hot rice)	2. Fomentation of hot rice on the eye.
	3. *Abwlwy* (Breast milk).	3. The application of breast milk on the eye.
	4. *Dug mwnkhung* (a kind of medicinal herb).	4. The astringent juice the *dugmwnkhung* creeper is applied to the eye.
	5. a. *Mwytu bakang* (Arum Stem)	5. The application of finely powdered salt with the help of an arum stalk from which the outer skin has been removed.
	6. *Gandwlwy barapak bakang* (A kind of medicinal plant)	6. The juice of the stem of *gandwlwy* plant is applied on the affected place.
Fera (Measles)	1. *Gayang bwlay bwlwy* (Leaves of guava plant); ☆ Pisidum guayava.	1. The juice of the leaf of guava plant is taken orally.
12 Raban (Swelling)	1. *Chuwan* (It is a kind of leaflet used for fermentation in the preparation of chak/chwak/wine).	1. The rubbing of the paste of *Chuwan* on the affected place.
	2. *Mwkhwra ata bwlay* (a kind of plant)	2. The rubbing of the juice of the leaves of *mwkhwra ata* plant.
13. *Raban ruway* (Swelling)	1. *Angan bwlay* ☆ Celetropis gigantica.	1. Hot compression of the leaf of angan plant on the affected place.
	2. *Ochay hangray* (Charcoal)	2. Charcoal used by the Ochai

14. Khar (Rheumatism)	*San sundwruk yarung* (Mimosa plant) ☆ Mimosa pudica	The root of the mimosa plant tied to the affected place.
15. Sak mecherma- nni (Urinary disease)	*Takunu bwchiwley* ☆ *Hiptis suaveolens*	The drinking of water mixed with the seeds of *takunu*.
16. Takmakal (Corn)	*Sakjak kwrwng* (Hot compression of burning bamboo.)	The hot compression of burning bamboo is applied to the affected place.
17. Charpamanni (Thorn prick)	*Mwsuk bukwi* wathmgyrtan (Powder of cow's teeth).	Application of the powder of cow's teeth on the affected place.
18. Gamasi	*Baafi bumuthu* (Cloth used for filtering the wine).	The rubbing of the cloth used for filtering the wine.
19. Khukchwy Pachakm- anni (Leap crack)	Pantwy (Morning dew).	Application of morning dew collected from the bamboo frames erected on one's courtyard to dry the wet cloths in the sun
20. Thuya-sarw-ymanni (Bed wetting)	Kuluma (Cock roach).	Roasted cockroach is taken orally.
21. Busimatak (Scabies)	1. a. *Abithi bukur* (A kind of poisonous creeper generally used in catching fish). b. Gandak (Sulphar). 2. *Thaayley barabak bwlay* (Banana leaf) 3. *Santhaay utta* ☆ Crysopogon aciculatus.	1. A paste of the composition of the bark of *abithi* plant and sulphar is applied to the affected place. 2. The paste of the leaf of banana plant is applied. 3. The paste of *santhaay utta* is applied.
22. AK- kyarmanni thawy -khm- anni and Rajan (Dysentry and blood dysentry)	1. *Kuychemman*	1. The juice of the bark of *Kuychemman* plant is taken orally.

	2. *Khunpla chwla* (A kind of medicinal plant)	2. The juice of the leaf of *Khunpla chwla* plant is taken orally.
	3. *Thaaychuk bukur* (Bark of the mango tree) ☆ Mangifera indica.	3. The bark of mango tree is soaked in an amount of water in the previous night and the water is taken in the next morning orally.
	4. Chirata (A kind of medicinal plant).	4. The water soaked with Chirata is taken.
	5. a. *Thaysitay bukur* (Bark of hegpium tree) ☆ Spondias. Family. anacardaceas	5. The juice of the bark of hogpium tree, the jelly like substance found inside of the *thaypala* fruit and goatmilk are mixed together and taken orally.
	b. Thaypala belengiwy ☆ Dillenia indica fruit c. *Pundud* (goat milk).	
	6. a. *Bakhkida* (Myrobalan fruit) ☆ Terminalia chebula. b. *Gayang owlay* (Leaves of guava tree) ☆ Psidium guyava. c. *Bel bwlay* (Leaves of wood apple tree) ☆ Aegle marmelos.	6. The composition prepared from the paste of myrobalan fruits, young guava leaves, leaves of wood apple plant, mixed together and taken orally.
	7. *Sansita* ☆ Hydrocotyl asiatica	7. The juice of sansita leaves is taken orally.
23. Sakwla khwlay (A kind of boil)	1. *Mwy hway kufur* ☆ Basella rubra	1. Application of the juice of *mwy hway kufur* plant
	2. *Ganchia* (Hemp) ☆ Cannabis sativa	2. The application of the leaves of the ganchia plant.
	3. *Bakhwla* ☆ Myroberan fruit	3. The application of the paste of the myrobaran fruits.
24. Bumi-tuta (Child vomiting)	1. *Khupla chwla* (A kind of medicinal plant)	1. The juice of the leaves of *khunpla chwla* is taken orally.

	2. *May kwchang bwlay* (Cold water of boiled rice soaked in water)	2. Washing the head with the cold water of boiled rice steeped in water.
25. Muwa/Buwa Samanni (Tooth troubles)	a. *Khakleyng bwlay* (Arhar pulse) b. *Thasychuk bwlay bakang* (Stem of mango leaf). c. *Jay thaayaky kanwng* (A variety of banana plant) ☆ *Musa paradisiaca* d. *Takbsuklay bukan* (The skin of the liver of chicken).	All these elements are burnt together in like a kind of paste is prepared from the ash which is applied on the gum and affected tooth
26. Bwsa baaya Khasani tey bwsa baabauwy (Pre natal and post-natal treatment)	1. *Twy'ung* (Warm water)	1. Washing the lower part of the abdomen with warm water.
	2. *Dalkwchak chanjak bwlay* (Mugari pulse washed water) ☆ Lens culinaris	2. The water soaked with *dal kwchak* is taken.
	3. *Dal Kamra chanjak bwlay* (Khesari pulse washed water) ☆ *Lathyrus sativus*	3. Taking of *dal Kamra* soaked water.
	4. *Asingi* (Shing han) ☆ Heterop neuris fostilis.	4. Soup of *asingi* is taken
	5. *Chuwan Kwchan* (Wine preparing ingredient). 6. *Chalk Khora* (Strong wine)	5. Taking of *Chuwan kwchan* 6. Taking a cup of strong wine.
27. Bahak sanaani/ Aks-amanni (Stomach ache)	a. *Hayra shag* (Mustard oil) ☆ Brassica campestris. b. Ham kamanni (A Special method of hot compression) c. Damwra (Unused scythe)	First of all mustard oil is rubbed on the affected place in warm condition. Then the *Ochang* gives hot compress on on the affected place with the help of a hot *damwra* in a special process
28. Jara kaclaym- anni aweraying baaymanni (Twisting or bone fracture)	1. *Chuwan* (It is a kind of tablet used for fermentation in the preparation of wine.	1. The application of the paste of *chuwan* on the affected place.

	2. *Dugbekeveyng bwlay* (A kind of medicinal herb)	2. The juice of the leaf of *dugbekeveyng* is applied on the affected place.
☆ Kwsa (Cuts/ Wounds)	1. *Mwsay hankwang bukay/bwlay* (Bark or leaf of a kind of medicinal herb)	1. The juice and paste of the leaf or bark of *mwsay hankwang* plant is applied.
	2. *Sahamma bwlay bwlay* (Juice of the leaf of a kind of plant)	2. The juice of the leaf of *sahamma* plant is applied.
	3. *Mwytol bakang bwlay* (The juice of drum stem) ☆ Colocasia antiquorum	3. The juice of drum stem is applied.
	4. *Durba bwlay bwlay* ☆ Cynodon dactylon	4. The juice of durbans applied.
	5. *Tulsi bwlay bwlay* (The juice of the leaf of ☆ Ocimum sanctum).	5. The juice of the leaf of *Tulsi* plant applied.
	6. *Kwsa kwthang kithi bwlay* (The juice of the leaf of ☆ Bryophyllum calycinum).	6. The juice of the leaf of *Kwsa kwthang kithi* is applied.
	7. *Satava mangal bwlay* (The juice of the leaf of mangalic plant) ☆ Tagetes patula.	7. The juice of the leaf of *satava mangal* plant is applied.

☆ Indicates Scientific name.

CHAPTER-V

TRADITION AND MODERNISATION

The Jamatia do not live in isolation, economically, politically and socially they are in contact with many other tribal and non-tribal communities of Tripura. The closeness of the Jamatias with other neighbouring communities has altered and is constantly altering their traditional ways of life in all respects. Their present style of living is far deviated from their traditional and customery ways and represents an admixture of tradition and modernity now. The important factors responsible for these changes are :-

i) Economic conditions ;
ii) Environments ;
iii) Urbanization ;
iv) Education ;
v) Political Situations and
vi) Psychological make up.

i) Economic factors :

The economic factors may be considered as one of the most important factors in changing the traditional pattern of their life. Their traditional pattern of economy has rapidly undergone a transformation. In the past, shifting cultivation played an important role in bringing self-sufficiency to a *Jamatia* family. There was enough virgin land available for Jhum cultivation. There was no daily market nearby. They did not purchase cotton, jute, rice, firewood, fish, vegetables etc. from the market. Their chief marketting commodity was salt, kerosine oil and dry fish. The man-land ratio was quite comfortable.

But the situation altered rapidly due to independence when thousands of Hindu Bengalee refugees of East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) entered Tripura. In some areas these refugees out-numbered the Jamatias. The ratio of the land-people now showed a distinct change. There were too many people and too little land. This affected the self sufficiency of their economy and gradually shrunken additional source of income. They then began to work as daily labourer in the forest Department, P.W.D. etc.

In the past, the system of reciprocal labour system existed among the Jamatias. The exchange of labour for agricultural or house construction work was their traditional system. But now they are very much commercialised. The system of reciprocal labour has been replaced by labour for cash payment.

Government service is now a subsidiary source of income to the educated section of the Jamatias. The younger generation is very much attracted by goverment service which is regarded as a boost to their social status. Government employees who own agricultural land in addition are held in high esteem. Many of them are busy in extending their property and providing better education for their children. The economic disparity has been growing bigger and bigger within their community. Thus, the emergence of landholding and landless classes in the traditionally classless Jamatia community may now be described as a new dimension to their economic life.

With the development of communication, markets, and business centres have come up in their localities. Many of them purchase their essential commodities from these markets. Many small traders often come to these villages to purchase agricultural products and take them to the urban centres. This has produced a number of go-getters in the community who are aware of the current market prices of each and every agricultural commodity.

The involvement of the Jamatias in trade and commerce was almost nil even a few years ago. They were completely dependent on agriculture. But now they are gradually taking up this line of profession. Now Jamatias, though few in number, are engaged in the business of dry fish, timber, transport, fishery etc.

The modern economic organisations like insurance, large scale multipurpose Co-operative Societies, Gramin Banks and agents of various so called investment companies have now been succesful to a great extent in changing their age-old custom of borrowing form local money lenders under heavy interest.

The extension of the facility of the cattle insurance scheme has saved them from the danger of any sudden death amidst their bullocks, cows. Now they had no need to go to the village *mahajans* (money lenders) to borrow money at an exorbitant rate of interest.

Now modern Co-operative societies have branches in all the Jamatia areas. These societies purchase jute, cotton, etc. directly from the producer. This has helped them to get just price, for their products. The steady growth of the number of Jamatia share-holders in these Co-operatives indicate their popularity. These modern Co-operative Societies are gradually replacing their indigeneous traditional Co-operatives.

The Gramin Bank is also playing an important role in changing their traditional economic system. The Jamatias are now aware of the rules and regulation of bank loans. Many of them have transaction with banks.

Though even to-day, the Jamatias are following the traditional method of cultivation, their gradual awarness regarding the utility of manure, insecticides, hybrid seeds, irrigation facilities undoubtedly shows the trends of modernization.

In this way, the Jamatias got mixed up with numerous urban characteristics which has greatly affectd the homogeneous and traditional ways of life.

(II) Environmental Factors :

The early Jamatia hamlets were surrounded by small hills, and jungles. They produced various kinds of agricultural products, hunted wild animals, and collected firewood, sheets of bamboos and roots of various kinds of herbs and creepers which were used in the preparation of food item.

But urbanization, deforestation and the growth of population have changed the ecological balance and also their traditional ways of life. Their forests which meant so much to them at one time are now no longer all that precious. They now have to purchase bamboo, shan (Shan grass) etc. for the construction of their houses,

which was unthinkable to them even forty years ago. The early Jamatia folk songs, folk literature and folk festivals which developed and flourished around the forest and Jhuming has been gradually disappearing due to the extinction of Jhuming.

(iii) The Impact of Education :

With the spread of modern education many *Jamatias* are residing in School and College hostels in Tripura and other places. As result of this contact with the outside world they are becoming aware of the customs and traditions of other communities tribal and non-tribal. Consequently their outlook, attitude etc. have undergone quite a remarkable change. This change is reflected in their words, actions, modes of behaviour etc.

Owing to their stay in hostels, far away from home in early childhood they have little scope to get acqainted with their own traditions and customs. Moreover owing to the influence of urban life, they fail to form any high opinion about their own culture and traditions. This attitude of the young generation is gradually weakening the age-old socio-religious beliefs of the Jamatias.

In the past, the *jatra* (folk opera) song was very popular among the Jamatias. The *jatra* on historical themes with plenty of sword fights and songs, jokes were very much popular among them. But now-a-days the *jatras* dealing with social problems have replaced the former in the hearts of the Jamatias.

Their traditional songs are now sung to the tunes of popular Hindi and Bengali film songs. The traditional Jamatia songs are on their way towards extinction.

Similarly, folk riddles, proverbs and folk tales are liked only by females and elder personalities of their community. The young generation is completely indifferent.

(iv) The Impact of Politics :

The Jamatias are still wellknown for their unity. The power and authority enjoyed by the Chief (hada-akra) of their *hada* is unparalleled. He holds an unquestionable command over the

members of his community.

But since independence, the various elections of Parliament, State Legislature and Village Panchyats have created a new awareness among them in the matter of political rights and privileges.

All India Political Parties like Congress, C.P.I.(M) and regional party like I.U.J.S have followers in them. With the emergence of diverse political parties with different political ideologies - the once united Jamatias are now politically divided. All these various groups are now guided by their respective party leaders and not by their traditional chief.

Now-a-days, possession of western education, secular outlook, sound economic condition and oratory capability are receiving more importance than the age old leadership of the village councils.

There is a change in the values, too. The old and experienced village leaders are gradually fading out of the limelight due to the newly emerged concept of political leadership. The young generation more than makes up for any gap created by the non-participation of the older generation in the present political activities.

The changes that occured in the economic, social, political and environmental condition of the Jamatias have left distinct marks on their food habits, dressess and ornaments, games and sports, their attitude towards traditional system of treatment of any illness etc.

Food habits :

In the past, partaking of chicken and pork was pronibited among them. But the young boys now enjoy it without any hesitation what-so-ever. The use of chira, muri (a kind of fried rice), and tea is a new addition to their food and drink items. The use of spices and other modern devices is gradually replacing the old ways of preparation of food by boiling, grilling roasting over an open fire etc. Many of them now relish non-traditional food items as a result

of living in boarding houses etc.

The gradual deforestation has also changed their food habit to some extent. Their traditional cakes *awais* not as popular as sweets available in shops now. In the past they used to take it during cold, wet mornings, sitting around a fire and warming their shivering bodies at the same time. But it is a rare sight now-a-days.

The change that has come over their dresses, ornaments and also the style of sporting them is also significant. Tailor made shirts and trousers have replaced dhuties and *Kanchwlwyborok* (a kind of shirt). In the past, the Jamatia women used to wear black coloured ganjees (vests), risa, pasra etc. But the ganjee has been replaced by tailor-made-shirts. Their traditional ornaments have been replaced by glass bangles and imitation jewelleries, earrings, necklaces etc. from the local market.

In the past, their necessary clothes were woven on their traditional handlooms. The yarns of the clothes were spun from the cotton collected from their Jhum. Now-a-days ready-made coloured yarns from the market has replaced it.

In respect of hosue-hold articles also, a change can be seen. Modern suitcase, cup and saucer, various kinds of aluminium utensils, buckets etc. have replaced their traditional bamboo and earthenware articles and utensils.

Their traditional games like *sukuy, bakhadebarnak, mwlsakwylak, aching jang, bagakana, kakrima* etc. have been replaced by foot-ball, volley-ball, card game etc. The mode of recreation has also changed. The folk games for sports of the *Jamatias* are on their way out.

The traditional systems of treatment by the *Ochai* (medicine man) is losing its popularity day by day. They no longer depend completely on the magical formulae of the *Ochai* for their treatment. The villagers now want immediate result. Unlike the older generation, they have no time to wait and see.

The expansion of modern medical facilities in the tribal areas, the availability of medicines for certain common diseases like malaria, dysentry etc. in the nearby markets, and the immediate result of these patent medicines are the important factors for this changing attitude of the Jamatias

The negligent attitude of the modern doctors and the educated section of the Jamatias towards their traditional system of treatment is discouraging the young generation to learn this profession.

But still to-day, the traditional system is popular among the women folk. A good number of tradition-oriented Jamatias, however, take the story of the efficacy of the *Ochais* treatment with a pinch of salt. In the present adverse economic situation, it has become very difficult on the part of the traditional *Ochai* to survive due to the hard competition on the part of modern alopathic medicinemen.

Culture is dynamic, the culture which ceases to be dynamic becomes a burden to its people. The *Jamatia* culture is also dynamic and it has been enriched by the influence of different tribal and non-tribal culture from time immemorial. Since, the *Jamatia* tribe is an admixture of different tribes of Tripura from ethnological point of view, the assimilation of the cultures of those constituting tribes took place in the remote past. This may be considered as inter-tribal acculturation. The distinct marks of this inter tribal acculturation are still perceptible in their different socio-religious functions.

It should be noted that the Jamatia culture is based mainly on their different socio-religious functions which include the rites, rituals, ceremonies, worships, customs, manner, beliefs and the folk literature connected with them. So in discussing the influence of other culture, cultural contact, conflict and acculturation in Jamatia tribe attention should be paid to the above mentioned socio-religious institutions and functions.

Though the contact of the Jamatias with the plains people (the Bengalees) and the influence of modern factors have moulded and

monotheism of the Mohamadens was perhaps one of main obstacles in their acculturation with the polytheist Jamatias in matter of religious beliefs and practices.

The formal process :

The preaching of *Vaishnavism* started among the Jamatia in a formal manner from 1863 under the patronage of king Birchandra Manikya who was a devout Vaishnav. In 1863, Jamatia revolt took place under the leadership of a Jamatia headman, Parikshit Jamatia.

Bir Chandra Manikya suppressed the revolution with the help of the Kuki tribe and arrested Parikshit Jamatia along with his followers. He however, adopted a lenient view towards Parikshit's attitude and pardoned him and his followers and asked them to embrace Vaishnavism. Parikshit and his followers were the Vaishnavised and were given sacred thread. They pilgrimaged to sacred places like Brindaban, Nabadwip, Puri etc. Since this revolution, they were accepted as *Kshatriya* by the king of Tripura.

The Jamatias changed their traditional food habits. Rearing of pig, fowl etc. were given up, *Tulshi* plants were planted in every house. *Tulshi* beads were used. *Hari Sankirtan* was sung in order to follow the paths of *Vaishnavism*. In this way, their whole way of life was very much influenced by *Vaishnav* practice. This new way of life led them to think of themselves as superior to all other neighbouring tribes. The non-Jamatias were not allowed in kitchens. The Jamatias began to wear sacred thread. They came in close contact with the non-tribal *Goswami* (spiritual guide). In this way the Jamatia revolt of 1863 led them to embrace *Vaishnavism* which ultimately transformed this antagonistic warrior tribe to a tamed one.

But the rigidity of the *Vaishnav* practices and the impact of neighbouring plains people led to the growth of an orthodox section amidst them, with an extremely neglecting attitude towards their own traditional socio-religious practices. This negligent attitude of the orthodox *Vaishnavas* gradually started a chain reaction among them.

purchased jute, cotton, mustard seeds, sesame etc. from them at the marketing centres of the interior areas. On the other hand the Jamatias purchased mainly salt, dry fish, various types of ornaments made of silver, beads, agricultural tools such as scythe, potterieres etc. They were dependent on the Bengalees for the necessary articles of their every day life except agricultural products. The Bengalees were in most cases their teacher, barber, priest, tailor, shopkeeper, black smith etc. They were the most common businessmen, the Jamatias ever came in contact with in those days. Slowly small business centres and market places came up in the midst of their settlements as a result of business activities with the plains people, The Jamatias in this manner grew close to the Bengalees.

Their shifting to the plain areas with the starting of the wet cultivation which were easily accessible to the plain people also brought them in closer contact with the plain people.

Religious custom : Above all, the polytheism of the Jamatias were similar to the polytheistic neighbouring Bengalee Hindus in many respects. They also worshipped plants, trees, rivers, stones and propitiated evil spirits as part of their regional religious culture in addition to all India deities of Hinduism.

Moreover, the concepts of many traditional deities and ceremonies of the Jamatias were similar to those of the deities of the neighbouring Bengalee Hindus. The objectives were also in many cases almost the same. As for example the *Maylwngma* is the deity of paddy to the Jamatias, the *Twyma* is the deity of river, *Maykwtal Chamani* is the festival of the eating of new rice, *Ker Puja* for protection from the evil spirit etc. have close affinity with aims and purposes of the *Laxmi Puja*, *Ganga Puja*, *Nabanna* festival, *Kali Puja* etc. of the neighbouring Bengalee Hindus. Thus the polytheism of both the neighbouring communities helped the process of acculturation to a greater extent.

In this context it should be noted that though the Jamatias lived near the Bengalee Mohamadan villages for a long time, acculturation between these two communities is negligible. The

Moreover, the *Vekdhari Vaishnavs* (a kind of vaishnav mendicants who wore a special type of dress) began to keep three to four *Vekdhari Vaishnavies*(Vaishnava Women) who remained childless. The Jamatia leaders were worried as it would decrease their population strength and lead to their extinction.

The sudden general transformation of the Jamatias into *Vaishnavism* without preparing the necessary foundation for it did not suit them all. The Jamatias who were once a ferocious warrior tribe, fond of meat and wine, expert at hunting were finding it difficult to give up their age-old habits.

So a large number of them began to revive their traditional deities in addition to performing *Vaishnav Rituals* But the orthodox section of the *Vaishnavs* of the Jamatias who did not agree to perform the *Gania Puja* were subsequntly expelled from their community. They were known as *Kulanga Jamatia*

In the *Gania Puja* of the Jamatias, sacrificing of goat, buffalo and wine to the lord *Gania* is essential. They now eat meat and fish. But the observance of *Vaishanavism* for a long time by the Jamatias has undoubtedly left its distinctive marks in the cultural life of the Jamatias. Still today pig and fowl keeping are rare among them. Some of them are still vegetarians. *Tulshi* plant is required in their traditional *Gania Puja* and observed as a sacred plant.

The present day Jamatia religion is a synthesis of *Saktaism Vaishnavism* and their traditional system of worship. Their traditional *Pujas* are officiated by the *Ochais* and non-traditional *Pujas* and rituals officiated by the neighbouring *Brahmin* priest.

The Modern Factor :

In discussing the influence of the modern factors which played important roles in the transformation of the traditional socio-religious and political structure of the Jamatia tribe mention can mainly be made of Christianity, westernization, urbanization and modern educaiton.

Christianity :

The influence of Christianity began very recently. Educational facility and other sorts of assistance provided by the missionaries and their services have been attracting the Jamatias, mainly the youths, towards Christianity.

Very recently, a new group of non-christian young Jamatias named *Lampra Garia Mission* has emerged under the leadership of *Sri Krishnadhan Jamatia* an educated youth from Haihai Kwchuk village of Teliamura in West Tripura District.

The aim of this mission is to revive their traditional socio-religious functions through a reformation movement. The chief aims of this movement are - i. Prohibition of offering of wine and sacrificing of animals and birds. in the *Pujas*, ii. to stop the worshipping of the evil spirits, iii. to appoint only the *Jamatia Ochai* (Priest) in their *Pujas* and iv. to begin the worship of only the *Garia* and the *Lampra*.

But a section of non-christian Jamatias oppose this movement as it is a deviationof their traditional rites and rituals. The offering of wine, sacrificing of animlas and propitiation of evil spirits are considered essential for their religious functions. They believe that those deviations would be harmful to them. Prohibition of wine and sacrificing of animals in the *Pujas* are unthinkable to thim.

However, in spite of the opposition of the older generation, the movement is gaining support from the young and educated section of the Jamatias. This trend is leading to the emergence of a new pattern of the Jamatia socio-religious functions without wine and sacrificing of animals and thus a new type of the Jamatia Society.

In conclusion, it may be said that in spite of this influence of *Vaishnavism* and their close contact with the neighbouring non-tribals for a long time, they have maintained the principal characteristic of their traditional culture. They have made a synthesis in this respect. Along with the performance of their traditional pujas and festivals like *Garia Puja, Ker Puja, Lampra Puja, Maykwtai Charnani, Gang Puja* etc. they perform pujas of

certain regional deities worshipped by the neighbouring Bengalee Hindus like *Sani Puja, Laxmi Puja, Trinath Puja* etc.

In respect of *Sraddha* (death rites), going by the *Panjika* (almanac) for times and *Tithies*, the wearing of sacred thread, reading of holy books like *the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Gita, the Chaitanya Charitamrita* prohibition of certain food articles, and the pilgrimage to the sacred places of the Hindus like Varanasi, Haridwar, Brindaban etc. are all connected with all India Hinduism.

Thus the present day Jamatia culture is a synthesis of their traditional culture, *Vaishnav* culture, regional non-tribal Hindu culture and all India Hindu Culture.

In this way the external influence enumerated above have been constantly bringing down their impacts on the traditional Jamatia culture. And the Jamatias, while maintaining the principal aspects of the culture, are assimilating those influence bringing about acculturation in many facets of their cultural identity.

GLOSSARY

Ak-kiyarmanni	- Dysentry.
Ak-Samanni	- Stomach pain.
Abaktwy	- Breast milk.
Abaktwy sey	= The bowl offered to the mother of the bride by the mother of the groom, as a token of grattude to her during the marriage ceremony.
Abaktwykhangman	= A ceremonial prayer for milk in the mother's breast.
Abisakhilimanni	= Lullaby.
Aburawngmwng	= The ceremonial bathing to end the impure state of the mother after child birth.
Achiyngjang	- A kind of game.
Adang	- Representative of the village Council.
Agan kak malaymwng	= The annual conference of the hada that takes place in the month of Agrahayana (November - December).
Akatharaja	= One of the six deities of the lanpra.
Alani	= Vegetarian curry.
Aluli	- An evil spirit.
Aman	= Mother.
Anapakhiraja	- A special term used by the Ochai to mean fowl.
Anabwraja	- A he goat according to the Ochai term.
Amikiti	- Songs sung during the Sati practice.
Awaduru	= Curry prepared mainly with the paste of rice
Anwapeyngjak	= A variety of cake.
Arak	- Rice beer.
Aprang	= Eel fish - Anguila benglensis.
Asiyngi	= Hateropneustis fossilis.
Asul	- Mahassor fish - Tar tar.
Aswng	- A kind of fruit used to prepare red dye.
Atap	= Sunned rice.
Awan	- Cake.
Awansakwrang	- A variety of cake.
Aya	= Assistant of the bride and the groom.
Ayangchwla	= Male assistant of the bridegroom in the marriage ceremony.
Ayajwk	= Female assistant of the bride.

Aychuli	- An evil spirit.
Aytwkmwylak	- A kind of game
Bachwy	- The wife of the elder brother.
Bailak samanni	- Stomach pain.
Baga	- Share cropping.
Bagla	- The friends and followers of Gana.
Bagi	- The system in which the owner of the live stock appoints another person to look after them on the basis of sharing their off springs.
Balang	- Forest.
Balang swamanni	- The worship of the forest.
Balasingraja	- An evil spirit.
Baliya	- Thick bungle made of different metals.
Bandari	- The store-keeper.
Bangchay	- Altar consisting of Tulsi (holy basil) and some sacred plants required in the Garia Puja.
Basay	- Fish tackle.
Bayliyng	- Winnowing fan.
Bay katar	- The eldest sister.
Bay kwchar	- The second eldest sister.
Baysang	- Wife's elder sister, Husband's elder sister.
Benkebari	- Bridal chamber.
Bekersyng baymanni	- Breaking of bone.
Berua	- An evil spirit.
Berman/Berwman	Strong scented dehydraded puti (Puntius sarana) fish.
Bhog	- Offering.
Bikatha	- One of the six deities of the lampra.
Binanyginirang	- A rupee coin smeared with vermilion.
Bisi	- Small pox.
Bisimatak	- A kind of skin disease with itching.
Biyagwnang Garia	- The image of the Garia possessing hands and legs.
Biyakwnwy Garia	- The image of the Garia without hands and legs.
Bukhuk Sini	- The seven sisters (Evil spirits).
Bumituta	- Child vomiting.
Burasa	- A malignant male deity.
Buwa samanni	- Toothache.
Buwayjwkrag	- Wife's elder sister.
Buwaysang	- Younger sister's husband.
Buysu	- The day on which the Garia Puja begins.
Bwlaygwrang Garia	- The *Biyagwnang Gana*

Bwaa baya Khasani tey bwma babayuwy	- Pre natal and post natal treatment
Bwrwyrag	- The female evil spirits.
Chaknwy bwtwy	- Alkaline water.
Chagwnang	- Who has enough to eat i.e. rich.
Chakmwng	- Winnowing.
Chak	- Rice beer/Wine.
Chaka	- The spinning sheel.
Chakhay bara	- One of the several steps of the sukuy game played by the females.
Chakdiri	- Head of the village Council.
Chakumra	- Pumpkin.
Chamay	- Bride/Bridegroom's father.
Chamayjwk	- Son's wife's mother.
Chamwnwy	- Son in law.
Chamwnwy tisamanni/Chamwnwy nahamanni/ Chamwnwy kamannni	- The system of marriage in which the groom has to reside at the house of the bride and work for her family before the weeding is solemnized.
Chanduwa	- Canopies
Charpanpani	- Thorn prick.
Chati	- Light.
Chatisakmanni	- One of the function connected with marriage ceremony.
Chaudda devata	- The fourteen gods.
Chaitra cheeynggwra	- A kind of *Ker Puja*.
Chekwra	- Sickle.
Cheprang	- A fly.
Chibuk sukmanni	- Snake bite.
Chu	- One of the several steps of the *sukuy*game played by the females.
Chuchu	- Father's father.
Chufang	- A bamboo pipe used as container to offer wine to the deity.
Chuwan	- Tablet made of different articles used as chief farmenting agent in the preparation of wine
Chundwy bwtwy	- Lime water.
Chuli	- The pointed end of a sickle.
Dabarak	- A chopper.
Daba	- The habul babul.
Dada	- An elder brother.
Dakini	- An evil spirit.

Dakhin = South.
Dali = The earthen pot containing offerings to the god in a puja.

Damra = An unused chopper.
Dan A step of the *sukuy* game.
Dangdal = Bamboo bar erected in the courtyard for hanging clothes to dry.

Dangduba ramwng = A ceremony to welcome the officials of traditional administration.

Dangar sikwla = Slopes of hills where water becomes stagnant.

Dariya = The drum beater of *Garia*
Darlang = A subtribe of Tripura.
Dasa = A small sized chopper.
Denlai = Artocarpus lakoocha -monkey jack.
Dharmagola = The name of a traditional Jamatia Co-operative Society.

Dyngi = A wooden husking pedal.
Dinkara Chamanni = The function in which the date of a marriage ceremony is fixed.

Dutura = A musical instrument.
Dukmannichak = The function connected with marriage ceremony in which wine is offered to the friends and relatives.

Fali = Bamboo made cage for packing cotton.
Fantak = Brinjal.
Fayang = The younger brother.
Faykhwtay = Coming down.
Fera = Measles.
Fuwayni lanpra = The morning *lanpra puja*
Gamasi = Prickly heat of the Summer.
Gang Puja = The worship of water.
Garia = A deity.
Garia kaymwng = Marriage ceremony of the lord Garia.
Gayriyng = A watch shed in the Jhum/a temporary house.

Godak = A delicious food item.
Hada = The traditional supreme Council of the Jamatias.

Hada Ochai = The priest of the *hada*
Hada akra = The chief of the supreme Council of the Jamatias.

Hadani misi = Buffalo sacrificed on behalf of the *hada*

Hajagiri	= The day of the *Sazny Purnima*.
Harmuthu	= The puja offered in order to get rid of the evil spirit.
Hadini	= An evil spirit.
Hakasak	= Rotten soil.
Hakwthwy	- Barren land/dead soil.
Hanjwknaymwng	- A system of marriage.
Hanjwknayrag	- Those who go to bring the bride from the groom's house.
Hanjwkdunlaynay	- Those who accompany the bride to the marriage ceremony.
Hanjwkrahamwng	= A system of marriage.
Hanjwknahomanni	- The system of marriage in which the wedding ceremony takes place in the groom's house.
Hansa	= The daughter in law.
Han	= A kind of game played in the Courtyard.
Haychukma	= An evil spirit.
Haychyng	= Ginger.
Haya	= Marriage altar.
Huk	- Shifting cultivation/Jhum.
Huksaymwng	= Clearance of the unburnt forest trees from the Jhum.
Hukhagmwng	- Method of cutting down plants and trees as a step of Jhuming preparation.
Hukhagmanni rwchamwng	= Jhum song.
Hulak	- A kind of ape.
Jahan	= An evil spirit.
Jala jala	= To shine.
Jalamahishyak kumarraja	= The Ochai term for the buffalo.
Jalapindi	- A kind of disease.
Jangtar	= A kind of trap.
Jarakeplomanni	= The dislocation of bone.
Jabra	- Weeds.
Jatibera	- A step of the sukuy game played by the females.
Jatikalak	- A step of the sukuy game played by the females.
Jayti	- Relatives outside blood relationship.
Jhum	= Shifting cultivation.
Jogini	- An evil spirit.

Jungal	- The yoke.
Jurkha	= A tunnel shaped fish trap.
Kaglaymwng	- Divorce.
Kahanmati	- An evil spirit.
Kakraymar	= Game with dolls.
Kakswngmwng	- Final discussion in the settlement of marriage ceremony.
Kali	- A female deity.
Kami	- Village.
Kangwray	- Catarrh.
Kangwray hulak	Hooping cough
Kangwrayku -chukmagni	- Hawking cough.
Kanchwlwy barak	- Traditional jacket worn at the time of agricultural work.
Kaiya	- Rolled *yangkhung* used for storing paddy.
Kasay bwlay	= Bean leaf
Kenthabura	= Worn out cuff.
Ker	= The deity.
Kerang	= Tortoise
Kenya	= The system in which the owner of a bullock hires out it to another in exchange of paddy.
Khang	- Bamboo strips bent into arcs.
Khar	= Rheumatism.
Kharak samanni	= Headache.
Khakulu	= White gourd.
Khana	= Handing over of land to another in exchange of paddy.
Khandal	- Assistants of the *chakdai*
Khakwlasamanni	- Chest pain.
Kherlang	= Hereditary worshipper of *Garia*
Kheruwa	= An evil spirit.
Khikwba	- Cholera.
Khibwman	- A kind of insect that lives on human faeces.
Khukley	- A bamboo made barrel to store paddy, rice etc.
Khukbuk	= A step of the *sukuy* game played by the females.
Khul	- Cotton.
Khulang	= Small sized bamboo made basket required in the *Burasa puja*
Khulwngma	- The deity of cotton and weaving.

Khwlwng	- Sanctified thread used to act as charm against pox, cholera etc.
Kisi	- Hand fan.
Kubutwy	- Pus.
Kulanga Jamatia	- A section of the Tripuri tribe who once belonged to the Jamatia community and later on expelled from it.
Kulun samanni	- Fainting due to high fever.
Kuchukmanni	- Cough.
Kuki	- A tribe.
Kuway fatwy	- Betel leaf and betel nut.
Kuway chanayma	= The name of a deity.
Kwchar	= Middle or the Second eldest
Kwchak kulun	= Miscarriage.
Kwrriwy	= Elder sister's husband.
Kwpal	- Forehead.
Kwra	- Matured, Ancient.
Kwra Kaktwma	- Ancient history.
Kwsa	- Cuts.
Langkhete	- An evil spirit.
Langi	- Earthen jar to contain wine or small water pot, mild rice beer.
Langa	- Basket to carry clothes, paddy, vegetables etc.
Langal	- Plough
Lanpra	- Name of a puja.
Leyngak	= A kind of creeper used as swing.
Lukj	- A village level traditional organisation of social administration of the Jamatias
Magini	- An evil spirit.
Magadchari	- An evil spirit.
Magda	- Kaon.
Maharaja	= King.
Mahadeb	= Name of a deity
Mahanta	= The leader of the *bagias*
Mahabisnu	= Vernal equinox.
Mahakali	- A female deity who rules over contagious diseases.
Mala	- Garland.
Mami	= Maternal ant.
Manfa	= Melon.
Mama	- Maternal uncle.

Manasa - The goddess of serpent.
Mang - Evil spirits which appears in physical form.
Mangtay - Diarrhoeah.
Mantra - Spell.
Marang - A step in the *sukuy* game played by the males
Masadeyng - A kind of roasted food stuff.
Matra - Ornamental and floral designs made by scrapping bamboo stripes.
Mayal - Regional level organisation of social administration of the Jamatias.
Mayal Panchay - Head of the *mayal*.
Maychwla - paddy.
Maychu - Packet of rice.
May - Paddy, paddy plant, boiled rice.
Maydum - Ceremonial rice basket.
Maykwtal chamwng - Tasting of the first harvest.
Mayhwngma - The goddess of corn.
Mayrum - Rice.
Mayrum macha - A traditional co-operative Society, literally meaning a handful of rice.
Maysiynga - Sugar cane.
Matha - A kind of game.
Mayung - The elephant.
Mayung kufur - The white elephant.
Medini - An evil spirit.
Mesta Naliya - A variety jute.
Mudra - A step in a puja.
Mushal - A step of the *Sukuy* game played by the females.
Mwluk - Lizard.
Mukti - Salvation.
Mukundray - One of the deities of the *Lanpra*.
Muisu - A kind of eye disease.
Muwa - Gum infection.
Mwkhwra - Monkey.
Mwksa - Eye disease.
Mwtay katar - The supreme God.
Mwtaybalnay - Bearer of the image of *Garia*.
Mwylak - Gourd.
Mwytanmwng - Worship of water.
Mwyturu - Curry generally served in a community feast.

Nagtang	= Head of the family
Nagsu	= The name of a deity.
Narasiyng	= Early name of *Garia*
Nakhay	= Big sized *langa*
Nakhete	= An evil spirit.
Nakri	= A kind of worship.
Naliya mwkhwy	= A variety of jute.
Nany	= Grand mother.
Nante	= An evil spirit.
Narayan	= Rank of the Generals of Tripura in the past.
Nerasi	= A purely vegetarian curry preparation.
Nota	= Fruit used to prepare black dye.
Ochai	= Priest, medicineman.
Paus Sankranti	= The last day of the Bengali month of Pousna (December - January).
Pabandev	= The god of air.
Padanni Ocha	= The priest who officiates the marriage ceremony.
Paita	= Sacred thread used by the Hindus.
Parwyalut	= Chicken pox.
Panjika	= Almanac.
Pay	= A kind of indoor game
Parse ekadesi	= The sacred day of fasting on an Ekadasi (eleventh day of lunar fortnight) day connected with the legend of Krishna.
Patal kanya	= An evil spirit.
Pathkarang	= The system of reading fortune.
Patra mitra	= Elder members of the villages who act as jury.
Paykang	= Bamboo made small basket used as container of seeds while sowing in the Jhum.
Peyngmanni	= A kind of curry.
Pi	= Father's sister.
Piakda	= Messenger
Pira	= Wooden seat.
Piyabatha	= Bee hive.
Piyachwkmanni	= Bee sting.
Piyay	= Husband of father's sister.
Prahari	= An evil spirit.
Premchari	= An evil spirit.
Pukhuri	= Pond.

Pusimannibwsa	- Adopted son.
Pusini	= Those who invite the villagers on behalf of the owner of the house where the marriage ceremony is held
Raban	- Swelling
Rahamwng	- Sending
Rambala!	= Banana.
Ramran	- Wooden shell.
Randa	- Widower.
Randi	- Widow.
Randak	- The earthen pots of maylyngma and knulwngma.
Rangbwtang	- Chain studded with coins used by woman.
Rangkwchak	- Gold.
Rangla	- A kind of skin disease.
Rangchakthapa	- Crown (made of gold).
Raylwy	One of the thirteen steps of the *sukuy* game played by the females
Ren	= A kind of mortgage.
Rimachwla	= Adopted son.
Rinaybark	- A piece of cloth used by the woman for covering the lower part of the body waist downwards.
Risumanadin	- The day to wash clothes by the bride and the groom after marriage ceremony.
Rituk.k	= A piece of a cloth used by woman.
Riang	- A tribe of Tripura.
Rubiya	- Bean.
Rupini	- A sub-tribe of the Halam tribe.
Rusan	- Wooden mortar.
Ruwa	= Axe.
Rwban	= A kind of basket made of bamboo strips to store paddy.
Rwkfay	- Silver
Sabay	- Long bean (Winter).
Sacheyng	= A round shaped box made of bamboo sticks to trap fish.
Sakta	= The worship of the female energy of divinity.
Saklakvlay	- A kind of boil
Sakmochermanni	- Urinary disease.
Sal	= A step of the *Sukuy* game played by the females.

Samwng rainanni	: Performing the required puja as a result of sema samanni.
Sangatrain	: Name of a deity.
Sanggrang	- One of the deities of the *Lampra*
Sanggeyng	= Hair clip.
Santay	: Persons of paternal lineage who are authorised to perform *sraddha* ceremony.
Sani	: A deity.
Saon ekadashi	- A sacred day.
Saon puja	: A kind of *Ker puja*
Saraswati	- The goddess of learning.
Sardar	- Community leader.
Sariy lampra	- The *lampra puja* held in the afternoon.
Sarung kanya	= An evil spirit.
Sati	- Self immolation of Hindu widows on their husband's pyre.
Satwng kangray	- The summer cold.
Satwy	- Turmeric.
Semaswngmanni	- Asking the result of a *Puja*
Semasaymani	= The stage where the *Ochai* says what should be done to cure a patient.
Semasamanni	= Telling the result of the Puja.
Sena	- Sena is the concluding ceremony of the *Gana Puja*. It is performed on seventh day of the Bengali month of Baishaikh (April-May)
Sepcyng	= Sesame.
Seyngkwrah	= The person with a stiff waist, Naraseyng.
Sikam	= The Kukis, a kind of game.
Sikambuk	- Snail.
Sikwla	- Young.
Sikwlabwtwk	- Wine drinking ceremony of the bachelor.
Simanlwng paymwng	- Purchasing of the cremation place.
Siriyng	= A step of the *sukuy* game played by the females.
Siva	- One of the lord of Hindu Trinity.
Sreddha	- Funeral ceremony.
Sriakatha	- One of the fourteen gods connected with marriage ceremony
Sribikatha	= -do-
Srichandi	- do-
Sridangduga	- d-
Sriduduga	- do-

Srikalkutu	- One of the fourteen gods connected with marriage ceremony.
Srikulukmatu	= -do-
Srikrischnakra banmaliraja	- -do-
Srilaktray	= -do-
Srimahadey	= -do-
Srimadey	= -do-
Suchubwchwiwy	= The sprinkling of the mixture of sunned rice green turmeric and mustered seeds at the end of the *Ker puja*
Sudan	= A kind of bamboo made fishing net
Sugmwng	- Husking.
Sukuy	- Seed of mimosa scanders, a kind of game played with the seed of mimosa scandens.
Sukundray	- One of the deities of the *Tanyra*
Suravi	- *Ochs*/term for the pig.
Sunamati	= An evil spirit.
Suy	= A step of the *sukuy* game played by the females.
Swkal	= Witch, evil spirit.
Takchakfa mwtay	- It is also known as *biyakwmy Garia*
Takchamaycha laymwng	- The arrangement of a marriage feast.
Take	= Gecko.
Takmakal	= Corn.
Takpipi	- Tailor bird.
Takthu	- Dove.
Talay	= Mother's younger sister
Takhuk	= Brother
Talsakaa	= Miscarriage after three months of pregnancy.
Tawanad	= Don't worry.
Thaman	= Arjun.
Thanangchi	= It is believed that at one time it was known as the land of the Kukis. The image of *Biyagimang Garia* was brought from there.
Thape	= Woven.
Tharuma	= A bamboo piece used as an element of a puja.
Thaysuku	= Melon.
Thaysuwa	= A kind of wild fruit.
Thentharay	= Tamarind.

Thikana naymwng	= Finding out the identity of the deity.
Thuri	= Shuttle.
Thuruk	= The Muslim.
Thuyan swtwymanni	= Bed wetting.
Thwykhimanni	= Dysentry.
Twykhaklay	= The point of a hill where water enters in one side and comes out on another side.
Twykhulunmwng	= The worship of water
Twytak	= Scooped out forest gourd used as water container.
Twysa	= Stream.
Twyswkal	= Evil spirit of water.
Twytun	= The custom of using forced labourers for carrying goods of the travelling officials.
Tisiyng	= Basket used for carrying firewood, agricultural products etc.
Trinath	= A deity
Triratri	= Three consecutive nights connected with funeral ceremony.
Tripura Sundari	= The goddess Kali of Udaipur.
Tulsi	= Holy basil (Ocimun sanctum).
Urupakhiraja	= The *Ochai*term for pigeon.
Ura	= Basket.
Upadesta	= Advisory.
Uwang	= A kind of fish owl.
Vaishnav	= The worshipper of Vishnu.
Vaishnavi	= Vaishnava woman.
Vamra	= Wasp.
Vèkdari vaishnav	= Vaishnav wearing the garb of a religious mendicant.
Vimekadasi	= A day of fasting on an ekadashi (eleventh day of a lunar fortnight in which the Hindus observe fast) connected with Vim, one of the Pandava of the Mahabharat fame.
Wahkak	= A contraption to carry earthen jar containing liquor during the marriage ceremony.
Wak	= Swine.
Wakhak chakmwng	= Showing the plot selected for Jhuming by means of a bamboo pole driven to the ground.
Wasung	= Bamboo tube used as container.

Wasuk	- Young bamboo.
Wathap	- Altar prepared with six bamboo sticks.
Wathwy tang raja	- The deity of water.
Waying	= Cradle.
Yang chwla	- Father's father's father, Father's elder brother, Father's elder sister's husband. Mother's elder brother, Mother's elder sister's husband.
Yangkhe tey as yngi -Chwkmonns	- Scorpion and *shwng*fish sting.
Yagul	- Exchange of labour.
Yagul swmwng	- The system in which the party that renders its service in return in the *Yagul*
Yagul khilmwng	- The system in which the party that works first in the *Yagul*
Yakpay	= Exchange of liquor, in connection with marriage ceremony.
Yakrap	- A step of the *sukuy*game played by the females.
yakhang	- A step of the *sukuy* game played by the females.
Yanfwra	- A bamboo made platform used in the *nagsu puja*.
Yasita	- Ring.

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Fig. 1: The old and torn flag ***Hanuman Dhaja*** *- believed to be of 17th century A.D.*



Fig. 2 : Some woman and children of a ***Jamatia family.***



Fig.3 : A ***Jamatia*** *woman at the loom.*

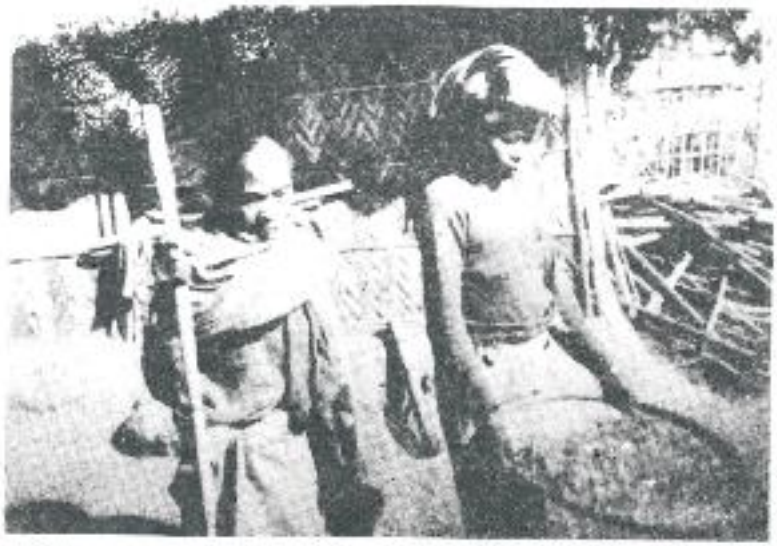


Fig. 4 : A ***Jamatia*** *Woman winnowing paddy with a bamboo the winnowing fan.*



Fig. 5 : The bathing of the bridegroom as a part of the wedding ceremony



Fig. 6 : A marriage ceremony is progress



*Fig. 7: A marriage Panoel- **Jamatia** style.*



Fig. 8 : The image of ***Biyagwnang Garia****. The man in the decorated jacket is a* ***Bagia.***

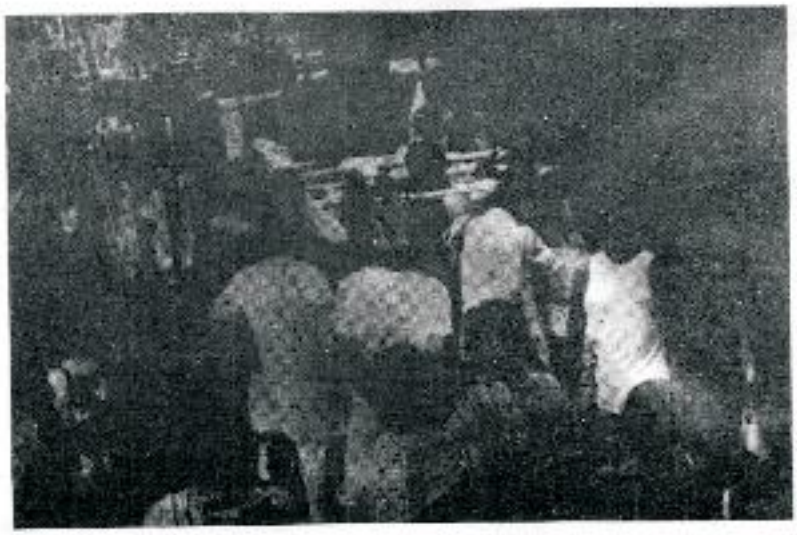


Fig. 9 : A scene of the construction of the image of ***Biyagwnang Garia*** *in progress.*



Fig. 10: The image of the ***Biyakwrwy Garia*** *with devotees in front.*



Fig. 11: The devotees returning home with ***Prasad*** *of the Lord* ***Garia.***

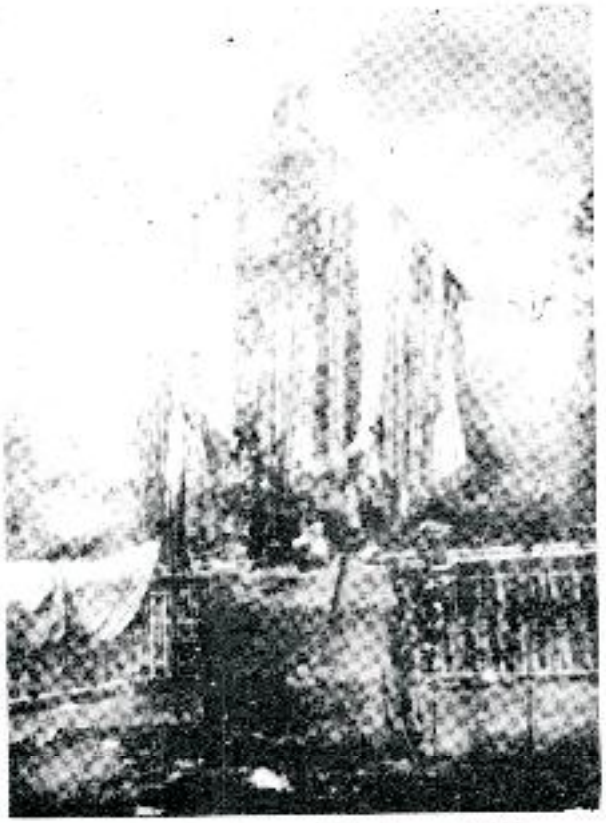


Fig. 12: The image of ***Biyakwrwy Garia.***



Fig. 13: A Jamatia Priest



Fig. 14 : The image of the Lord ***Biyagwnang Garia*** *is being taken to the Puja Pandal with a procession*



Fig. 15 : Devotees proceeding towards the ***Garia Puja*** *pandal carrying the clothes to be used for the construction of the image of Gana.*



Fig. 16: A scene of the mela (fair) on the occasion of the ***Garia Puja.***



Fig. 17 : Members of the ***Lampra Garia Badal*** *in front of the image of Garia.*



Fig. 18 : A senior member of the Jamatia Community



Fig. 19: Group Dance A scene of the Jatra (Folk Opera).



Fig. 20: Members of a Jatra Troup