THE KACHARIS

Rev. Sidney Endle

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THE KACHÁRIS ***

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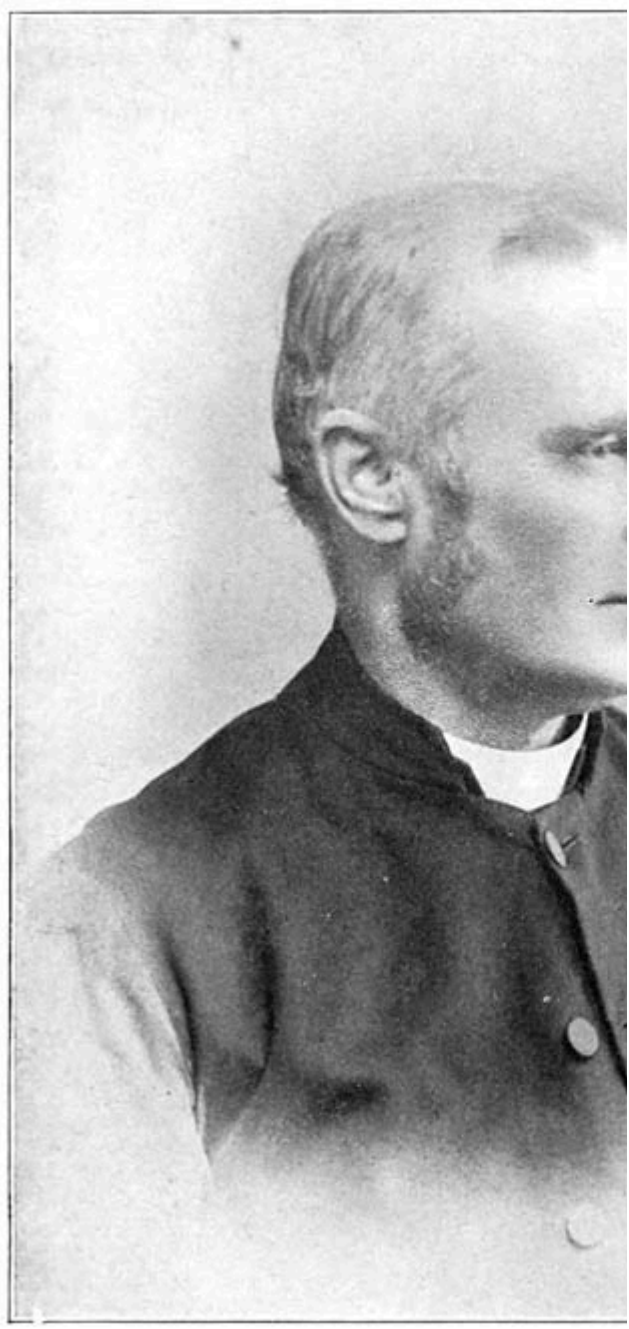
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TORONTO





S. Endle.

From a Photograph by Messrs. Bourne &

THE KACHÁ

BY THE LATE

REV. SIDNEY ENDLE

For many years Chaplain of Tezpur and in charge of the Kachárí Mission of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at that place.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

J. D. ANDERSON, I.C.S. (RETIRED)

Published under the orders of the Government of Bengal and Assam

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIM
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INTRODUCTION

It is with some diffidence that I comply with Colonel Gurdon's request that I should add a few words of preface and explanation to the last literary work of an old friend and pastor, whose loss will long be lamented in the Assam Valley, where he laboured as a missionary and planter's chaplain for upwards of forty years. Mr. Endle's interest in his Kachári flock was that of an evangelist rather than that of a linguist or ethnologist, and this preoccupation has coloured his style and affected the matter of his book in a way that, however pleasant and natural it may seem to those who had the privilege of his acquaintance, may perhaps require a few words of explanation for the benefit of those who look for anthropology only, or linguistics, in his pages.

My first duty, then, is to say a few words about the author's life and character. Sidney Endle was born about 1840 at Totnes in Devon, of sturdy yeoman parentage. His

grandfather was, it seems, proud of being an armiger, and it is a family tradition that many Endles figured in the ranks of the Catholic clergy of the West country. Mr. Endle was educated at Totnes Grammar School, under the Rev. James Powney, and early conceived a wish to enter the ministry of the Church of England, and serve abroad as a missionary. With this view he entered St. Augustine's College at Canterbury. Unfortunately the College seems to have kept no written record of the dates at which one of the most distinguished and devoted of its pupils entered and left its roof. It was in February, 1864, however, that he was sent by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to Tezpur, in Assam, to be the assistant of Mr. Hesselmyer, then in charge of the Kachári mission at that place. In 1865 he was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Calcutta, and in the following year he was admitted to priest's orders. Soon after he was transferred to the independent charge of the S.P.G. mission among the tea-garden coolies at Dibrugarh in Upper Assam. In 1869, on Mr. Hesselmyer's death, Mr. Endle was made chaplain of the important tea-planting district of Darrang, with the charge of the Kachári mission in that district, having his head-quarters at Tezpur. His pastoral duties were thus two-fold. On the one hand, he became the pastor of an European community scattered over an area some 100 miles in length by 30 or 40 in breadth. It was his duty to gather his flock round him at some convenient tea-garden, or at the pretty little rustic church at Tezpur itself, where his congregation included the small band of officials. He was everywhere welcome, and it was not long before he was as popular as he was respected. One of the most unworldly and simple of men, almost an ascetic in his personal tastes and habits, he could sympathise with and understand men whose training and ideas were different from his. He had a native shrewdness and quiet sense of humour which stood him in good stead in his dealings with men probably as varied in their origins

and temperament as are to be found in any collection of Englishmen beyond the seas. His sermons—and he could preach with equal ease and eloquence in English, Assamese, and Kachári—were ever those of a man who to shrewd observation of the various life about him, native and European, added an unwavering devotion to the responsibilities of his calling. Authoritative, and even stern, he could be when he thought it needful to assert his responsibility as a priest. But, somehow, the occasion rarely occurred, since his was not the disposition that demands impossible perfection of ordinary human nature. There was no touch of intolerance in his gentle and (there is no other word to describe him) saintly nature. I think he would have liked to have it said of him that, like Chaucer's Parson,

He was a shepherd and no mercenerie,
And though he holy were and vertuous,
He was to simple men not dispitous,
Ne of his speech dangerous ne digne,
But in his teaching discrete and benigne.

Innumerable were the marriages and christenings he celebrated in all parts of Assam, and it was characteristic of the man that he regarded it as a duty to keep himself informed of the welfare, spiritual and physical, of the children he held at the font. During his rare visits to England he endeavoured when he was not busy preaching for his mission, to visit those whom in their infancy he had admitted to his Church. Few chaplains in India can have been so universally popular and respected as he was, and this without in any way relaxing from the dignity which, in his case, belonged rather to his sacred office than to any consideration for his own person.

But he made no secret of the fact that his heart was chiefly

in his missionary work among his beloved Kacháris. The Bodos of the Kachári *dwars* (the *dwars* or "doors" of the Kachári plains are the passes that lead into the rough mountains of independent Bhutan) are, like most of the aboriginal races of Assam, cheery, good-natured, semi-savage folk; candid, simple, trustful, but incorrigibly disrespectful according to Indian notions of good manners. To a casual observer, they may well have seemed incapable of comprehending the gentle reserve and unaffected unselfishness of their pastor's nature. Among them, however, it was his delight to unbend, and give way to the almost boyish simplicity and sense of fun which to the last were among his most engaging traits. When Mr. Endle approached a Kachári village during one of the prolonged preaching tours which were to him at once a duty and the keenest of pleasures, he was always greeted with a joyous and often noisy welcome. He travelled on foot, and the villagers would turn out to see the *gāmi-nī-brai*, the "old man of the village," as they affectionately called him. He was often cordially invited to share in the village festivities, and it was an interesting sight to watch him seated in the midst of rough semi-savage folk, listening to the tale of their simple joys and sorrows, enjoying their primitive jokes, and, when occasion served, talking to them, as probably no one else will ever be able to talk to them again, of the matters nearest to the missionary's heart.

In all parts of the Kachári country, Mr. Endle established many village schools, served by trusty converts. But his chief pride was in the church he built at Bengbari, which, to his great joy, was consecrated by Bishop Milman in person. Under its thatched roof has now been placed a tablet to the memory of its founder.

No account of Mr. Endle's life, however brief, would be complete without a mention of the fact that in 1875 he

married Miss Sarah Ewbank Chambers, who for twenty years shared his pastoral anxieties. Mrs. Endle was much respected by the European community throughout Assam, and her sudden death in Calcutta in 1895 was universally regretted. How sorely her husband felt her loss, not even those who knew him best were allowed to guess, but it was plain that, from this time onwards, much of his old elasticity of mind and body deserted him, and though he continued his work with unabated industry the effects of age began for the first time to be apparent to his friends. In 1884 Mr. Endle compiled his well-known manual of the Kachári language, published by the Assam Secretariat Press. From time to time he contributed papers on the subject of the Bodo people to the *Transactions* of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. In 1891 he was elected an Honorary Fellow of St. Augustine's College, in recognition of his linguistic studies and of his eminence as a worker in the mission field. In 1906 he was offered a canonry by the Bishop of Calcutta, but characteristically refused a dignity which might have involved absences from his missionary duties.

Such, briefly told, are the few outstanding events in a life wholly devoted to pastoral work, of which little was known outside his native flock. It was Mr. Endle's repeatedly expressed wish that he might end his life and be laid to rest among his Kacháris. This wish was not fulfilled. Towards the end of 1905 it was evident that his persistent disregard of his personal comfort in an enervating climate had taxed a naturally robust constitution. He was induced with some difficulty to pay a brief visit to England for rest and change. He spent this holiday chiefly in preaching for his mission and visiting old friends. He was soon, perhaps too soon, back at his work. It could no longer be hidden from himself or others that he had overtaxed his strength. This, however, caused

him no disquietude. He had done his day's work, and was cheerfully ready to take his departure. In July 1907, he could struggle no longer against growing weakness, and was placed on one of the little mail steamers that ply up and down the Brahmaputra, in the hope that river breezes, rest, and change of scene might bring about some restoration to health. He himself, however, knew that his end was near, and he passed away, painlessly and peacefully, on the river bank at Dibrugarh, close to the scene of his first independent missionary charge, entrusted to him more than forty years before.

So much by way of biographical introduction seemed necessary, not only as an inadequate and too brief memorial of a singularly unselfish and blameless career, but also as an explanation of some features in Mr. Endle's book not usually found in anthropological manuals. Of the subject of the book itself I may now be allowed to say a few words, if only to show that it has an interest and importance, from an ethnological point of view, which are perhaps disguised by the author's characteristically modest estimate of his task and of his power of dealing with it. The book is, primarily, a monograph treating of that branch of the Kachári race which lives in scattered hamlets along the foot-hills of the Himalayas in Northern Bengal and Assam, intermixed now with Hindu people who have intruded into what was once their undisputed home. In Assam proper the Hindus call them Kacháris; in Bengal they are known as Meches.[1] Their own name for their race is Boṛo or Boḍo (the o has the sound of the English o in "hot"). Among this northern branch of the race is embedded the tribe of the Koch, whose name is pronounced locally as if it were Koss, (to rhyme with our English "boss"). (Kachári, I may mention in passing, is also pronounced as Koss-āri.) The Koch have gradually become a semi-Hindu caste, most of whose members now

talk the Indian Bengali or Assamese. It also contains the surviving remnants of the royal family of the great and powerful Koch empire, which, roughly, covered the same area as the present province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. It can be proved that the aboriginal members of the Koch caste within quite recent times spoke the Boṛo language. In the East of the Assam Valley was another powerful kingdom, that of the Chutiyas, whose language was another branch of the speech described in this book. The river names of the whole Brahmaputra Valley are Boḍo names, and it is demonstrable that the Boḍos were the aborigines of the Valley. In the great mass of hills, an outlying spur of the mountains of Upper Burma, which divide the Brahmaputra Valley from that of the river Surma which runs parallel to it from east to west are two more Boḍo groups. The most eastern of these comprises the Di-mā-sā, Great-River-Folk (di- means "river" or "water,") people who were driven out of the valley of the great river Brahmaputra in historical times, and finally became rulers of what is now the great tea-planting district of Cachar or Kāchār. They either gave its name to or perhaps derived their Hindu soubriquet of Kachāri from this district. Of this branch of the race an interesting description will be found in the supplement to this book. At the western extremity of the range of hills is another group, the Garos, of whom an excellent account has lately been published by Major A. Playfair, I.A. (London, David Nutt, 1909). The Garos are of peculiar interest as members of the Boḍo family, because they were head-hunters within the memory of men still living.

Finally in the range of hills in the south of the Surma Valley, there are the Tipperahs whose language is obviously a branch of the ancient Boḍo speech; quiet inoffensive people, ruled over by a semi-independent Raja who is also a great land-owner in the British districts of

Tipperah and Sylhet.

Now, the anthropologists rightly caution us against rashly concluding that a common speech, where races are in contact, implies a common origin, since everywhere, and especially among people who use an unwritten language, nothing is more common than the borrowing of a neighbouring tongue. But where, as here, we have five absolutely separate communities of semi-savage people, who nowadays are not so much as aware of one another's existence, and yet speak what is to all purposes the same language, it is plain that they must have been united at no very distant date by some common social bond. The date cannot have been very distant, because in the unwritten speech of semi-savage people phonetic decay acts very rapidly, and a very few years may serve to disguise the relationships of adjacent and cognate tongues. No one who has heard members of the five branches of the Boḍo race speak their respective languages can fail to recognise that they belong to the same linguistic group. Moreover, this common Boḍo speech was, till within a few years ago, the language of the Koches, the dominant and ruling tribe in the great Koch kingdom, which survived, with something of its ancient prestige and power, long enough to be visited by an Englishman, Ralph Fitch, in Queen Elizabeth's time. It would seem, then, that the language spoken in the ancient Koch kingdom, which extended from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal, was the Koch or Boḍo language, and the mass of the people must have been of Boḍo origin. In the Brahmaputra valley these Boḍos have survived in the midst of Hindu and Shan invaders and settlers, of whom those who are interested in the subject may read in Mr. E. A. Gait's admirable *History of Assam*, (Calcutta, Thacker, Spink and Co., 1906). Here the anthropologist may come to the rescue of the historian. The Boḍo type of face and physical construction is, as Mr.

Endle says, of an Indo-Chinese kind, easily distinguishable from the Arya-Dravidian type common in adjacent Bengal, and careful measurements in the Brahmaputra and Surma Valleys ought to show how far the old Koch element still persists, how far it has been obliterated by inter-marriage with Indian immigrants.

It may, however, be assumed that the population of the Koch kingdom, and therefore of its predecessor, the famous classical empire of Kāma-rūpa, of which Sanskrit scholars may read in the Mahābhārata (perhaps in a late interpolation in the epic) was chiefly Boḍo, of the same type as the humble folk who are the subject of Mr. Endle's book. Kāma-rūpa was visited in the first half of the seventh century of our era by the famous Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsiang, whose interesting account of the land and people may be found at page 22 of Mr. Gait's *History*. "They adore and sacrifice," says the Chinese explorer, "to the Devas and have no faith in Buddha."

It was apparently in the kingdom of Kāma-rūpa that there came into being that form of Hinduism whose scriptures are the later Purāṇas and the Tantras, the worship of Śiva and his Sakti, that form of the Hindu cult which, to this day and even in the temple of Kāli-ghāṭ in Calcutta itself, is distinguished by sacrifice by decapitation. In the earlier times of British rule, as readers of Mr. Gait's book may find for themselves, the Hindus of Assam were much addicted to human sacrifice by beheading, and, to this day, the appropriate method of propitiating the terrible goddess Kāli, the "dark one" (who is also Dur-gā, "hard of approach"), is by bloody sacrifices. The Śaiva or Śāktā form of Hinduism would therefore seem to be due to an engrafting of Koch superstitions on the purer and humaner religious ideas imported into India by the Aryan settlers to whom we owe the Vedas and the religious literature based on those early pastoral hymns. From this point of view, it

is important to bear in mind that the Garos were till lately headhunters, and that the Chutiyas were conspicuous, even in North-Eastern India, for their addiction to human sacrifices.

How does it happen then, it may be asked, that the Boḍos described in this book are among the most innocent and kindly of semi-savage people? The answer seems to be that the bulk of the inhabitants of North-Eastern India were always simple inoffensive folk, and that it was only the ruling tribes and families that were addicted to war, rapine, torture, cruelty, and the religious developments that go with these. If Assam is undoubtedly still the home of the Tantrik beliefs which have their centre at the famous shrine of Kāmākṣā at the old capital of the Koch monarchs (now known as Guā-hāṭi or Gauhati), Assam is also the home of the Viṣṇu-ite reform, an attractive and learned account of which will be found in a paper by Sir Charles N. E. Eliot, published in the "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society" for October, 1910. The common people in Assam, the rustic Hindus of the Brahmaputra Valley, are in temperament and habits very like the cheerful and smiling Boḍo folk among whom Mr. Endle laboured, and of whom he writes with such frank regard and appreciation. The climate of the valley is enervating and soft, and any traveller in Assam can see for himself how the once fierce and warlike Ahom invaders, who gave its name to the country of Assam, have become as soft and kindly in disposition as the Kacháris themselves. No more remarkable instance of the effect of environment on national temperament could be found anywhere, and the anthropological theories of Dr. Ridgeway could hardly have a more remarkable support than he might find by contrasting the semi-savage inhabitants of the Brahmaputra Valley with the bloodthirsty and warlike tribes in the surrounding mountains, their neighbours and relatives.

I have only to say, finally, that I have added, as an Appendix to my old friend's book, a literal interlinear translation of three stories from my little Collection of Kachári Folk-tales. In adding these I have followed the example set by Sir Charles Lyall in his monograph on the Mikirs. By means of this interlinear and word-for-word translation, the comparative linguist may see for himself how far Kachári is still a monosyllabic agglutinative language, and how far it has borrowed the inflectional mechanism of Assamese and Bengali. There has, of course, been mutual borrowing, and I, for one, do not doubt that the syntactical peculiarities of Assamese are largely due to the fact that it is a speech with an Aryan vocabulary spoken by a people who are largely non-Aryan. Any careful reader of the stories in this book can see for himself that the Boḍo spoken in the Kachári *dwars* is the language of a biglot people. Their picturesque agglutinative verb is plainly a survival of days when the language was as monosyllabic as Chinese. But the general structure of the language is now governed by inflections obviously borrowed from Bengali and Assamese.

J. D. Anderson.

Cambridge,
December, 1910.

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Mech, sc. Mleccha, barbarian, one who is ignorant of civilised speech. ↑

THE KACHÁRIS

SECTION I

Characteristics, Physical and Moral; Origin, Distribution and Historic Summary, etc.

Characteristics. I. 1. The people generally known to us as "Kacháris" differ in some material ways from their Hindu and Musulmán neighbours alike in things material and moral. They are certainly not a tall or handsome race, and in general appearance bear some resemblance to the Nepáli, being as a rule shorter and stouter than the people of North-west India, though well fitted to bear up against physical fatigue and hardship. PhysicalIn face and figure they show a distinct approximation to what is known as the Mongolian type, *i.e.*, they have square set faces, projecting cheek-bones, with almond-shaped eyes, and scanty beard and moustache, the last-mentioned being often wanting altogether. In this way they are well fitted for all forms of outdoor (field and factory) labour that require strength rather than skill, and may very reasonably be regarded as the "navvies" of Assam.

Mental. 2. In mental and intellectual power they are undoubtedly far below their Hindu neighbours; for they possess neither the quickness of apprehension, nor the astonishing power of memory, &c., characteristic of the higher castes among the Hindus. On the other hand, what

they do succeed in mastering, often with much toil and painful effort, they digest and retain with much tenacity. Among other social and mental features of character there are two which are seldom wanting to the "Kachári": (1) he is an intensely clannish being. A fine imposed on one member of a village community is sometimes paid by the whole body of villagers together. When employed in any considerable numbers on a tea factory, the Kachári labourers so employed, resenting some real or fancied wrong done to *one* of their number, will often leave the garden in a body, even though there may be a month's pay due to every one of them. Again they have (2) no small share of that quality so powerful for good or evil, according as it is guided into right or wrong channels, *i.e.*, a certain strength of will, "what their friends might call firmness, and their enemies might term obstinacy." If they once make up their minds, and they are abundantly capable of doing this, to act in a certain way, it is mere waste of time to attempt to reason them out of their resolution, for nothing short of absolute and overpowering physical force is of any avail to turn them from the course they have once for all resolved to adopt and act upon.

Moral. 3. As regards the moral character of the Kachári race, those who know them best will be the first to speak favourably of them. Like many of the Sub-Himalayan hill tribes, they undoubtedly have a certain weakness for what may be looked upon as their national beverage (*Madh*, *zu*), a form of rice-beer. Of this, in itself a comparatively harmless liquor when taken in moderation, they at times consume very large quantities, especially at weddings, funerals, and at the January and April *Bihu* festivals; and more particularly at what is known as the "first eating of the new rice" (*Nowán bhát khoa*; *Mikham gădàn zánai*), which usually takes place about the middle of December or a little earlier. At this last-mentioned gathering the writer

has sometimes seen well-nigh the entire population of a Kachári village *hors de combat* from the effect of over-indulgence in the national beverage. But they are certainly not habitual drunkards, and in this matter Kacháris as a rule would compare not unfavourably with the working man in more civilised lands; *e.g.*, in England. But apart from this particular failing, one almost universal among hill tribes on this frontier, it is pleasing to be able to say that among them are to be found many simple virtues of great price, *i.e.*, honesty, truthfulness, straightforwardness and a general trustworthiness deserving of all honour. In illustration of their simple truthfulness, even when involving serious consequences to themselves, the writer recalls a story told him some years ago by an officer in charge of the subdivision of Mangaldai, the late A. J. Primrose, I.C.S. A Kachári of Sekhár Mauza was brought before this magistrate on a charge (manslaughter) involving a very heavy penalty, when he without hesitation admitted his guilt, though the evidence against him was of the slightest, or at least utterly insufficient to secure a conviction. The relations of the sexes too are on the whole of a very sound and wholesome character, far more so probably than in many countries boasting of a higher civilisation. Infant marriage is as yet unknown among them, and so far as the present writer has been able to ascertain during the past forty years, the young people are as a rule chaste before marriage and true to their marriage vows in after-life. But it must be clearly understood that all this holds good of the Kachári in his simple, patriarchal, village life, and there only. His innocence is the innocence of ignorance, not the innocence of experience: and he is as a rule free from certain forms of evil because in his village life he has never come under any temptation to indulge in them. When contaminated by civilization, *e.g.*, when brought into contact with our civil and criminal courts, much of this innocence must inevitably disappear; and of

this sad deterioration of character any man who has been long in the country, and learnt to know the people well, must have experienced many melancholy and painful illustrations.

Origin, &c. II. The origin of the Kachári race is still very largely a matter of conjecture and inference, in the absence of anything entitled to be regarded as authentic history. As remarked above, in feature and general appearance they approximate very closely to the Mongolian type; and this would seem to point to Tibet and China as the original home of the race. The Garos, a race obviously near of kin to the Kacháris, have a tradition that in the dim and distant past their forefathers, *i.e.*, nine headmen, the offspring of a Hindu *fakir* and a Tibetan woman, came down from the northern mountains, and, after a halt at Koch-Behar, made their way to Jogighopa, and thence across the Brahmaputra to Dalgoma, and so finally into the Garo Hills. It is not easy to say what degree of value is to be attached to this tradition, but it does at least suggest a line of inquiry that might well be followed up with advantage.[1]

It is possible that there were at least two great immigrations from the north and north-east into the rich valley of the Brahmaputra, *i.e.*, one entering North-east Bengal and Western Assam through the valley of the Tista, Dharla, Sankosh, &c., and founding there what was formerly the powerful kingdom of Kāmārūpa; and the other making its way through the Subansiri, Dibong and Dihong valleys into Eastern Assam, where a branch of the widespread Kachári race, known as Chutiyás, undoubtedly held sway for a lengthened period. The capital quarters of this last-mentioned people (the Chutiyás) was at or near the modern Sadiya, not far from which certain ruins of much interest, including a copper-roofed temple (*Támár ghar*), are still to be seen. It is indeed not at all unlikely that the people known to us as Kacháris and to themselves

as Baḍa (Bara), were in earlier days the dominant race in Assam; and as such they would seem to have left traces of this domination in the nomenclature of some of the physical features of the country, *e.g.*, the Kachári word for water (*di*; *dŏi*) apparently forms the first syllable of the names of many of the chief rivers of the province, such as Diputá, Dihong, Dibong, Dibru, Dihing, Dimu, Desáng, Diku (*cf.* khu Tista), &c., and to these may be added Dikrang, Diphu, Digáru, &c., all near Sadiya, the earliest known centre of Chutiyá (Kachári) power and civilisation.



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Distribution. III. But however this may be, there would seem to be good reason for believing that the Kachári (Baḍa) race is a much more widely distributed one than it was at

one time supposed to be. They are undoubtedly found well outside the limits of modern (political) Assam, *i.e.*, in North-east Bengal Koch-Behar, &c., and also in Hill Tippera, where the language of the people gives decisive evidence that they are of the Baḍa stock. But apart from these outlying members of the race, there are within the limits of Assam itself at least 1,000,000 souls, probably many more, who belong to the Kachári race; though many of the number have of late years become more or less Hinduised, and have lost the use of their mother tongue. These may perhaps be conveniently divided into a (1) Northern and (2) a Southern group, the Brahmaputra being taken roughly as the dividing line, thus:—

Name.	**Approximate numbers.**	**Chief habitat.**
	I. Northern Group.	
1. Bårå (Kachári)	272,500	Western Darrang, Kachári Duars, and in North Kamrup.
2. Rábhá (Totalá)	31,370	Golpara.
3. Mech (Mes)	93,900	Do.
4. Dhimal	(See Bryan Hodgson)	North-east Bengal.
5. Koch	10,300	On Northern Frontier from Jalpaiguri to North-west Darrang.
6. Solanimiyas	15–18 families only	Only in Mangaldai Subdivision.
7. Mahaliyas Phulgariyas }		Western Darrang. All slightly

Saraniyas

II. Southern Group.

1. Di-má-sá "big-water-folk"	15,931	North Cachar Hills.
2. Hojáis	2,750	Do. and Nowgong.
3. Lálungs	40,160	South-west Nowgong and adjoining districts.
4. Garos	150,000	On Garo Hills and at foot of same.
5. Haijongs	8,766	On plains adjoining southern slope of the Garo Hills.
6. Hill Tippera (Tripura) people	105,850	Hill Tippera, &c.

To these may be added one or two smaller communities, *e.g.*, the Moráns and the Chutiyás in Upper Assam, whose language, not altogether extinct as yet though apparently dying out rapidly, would seem to prove them to be closely akin to the Kachári (Baḍa) race.

Historic Sketch. IV. The only branch of this widely spread race that may be said to have anything like an authentic history is that settled in what is known as the once powerful kingdom of Kāmārūpa (Koch), the reigning family of which is now represented by the Rajas of Koch-Behar, Bijni, Darrang (Mangaldai) and Beltola. But on the history of this (the Western) section of the Kachári race there is no need to dwell, as it was very effectively dealt with some few years ago.[2] But the earliest historical

notices of the Eastern branch of the race show that under the name of Chutiyás they had established a powerful kingdom in the Eastern corner of the Province, the seat of Government being at or near the modern Sadiya. How long this kingdom existed it is now impossible to say; but what is known with some degree of certainty is, that they were engaged in a prolonged struggle with the Ahoms, a section of the great Shan (Tai) race, who crossed the Pátkoi Hills from the South and East about A.D. 1228, and at once subdued the Moráns, Boráhis, and other Kachári tribes living near the Northern slope of these hills. With the Chutiyás the strife would seem to have been a long and bitter one, lasting for some 150 or 200 years. But in the end the victory remained with the Ahoms, who drove their opponents to take refuge in or about Dimápur on the Dhansiri at the foot of the Naga Hills. There for a time the fugitives were in comparative security and they appear to have attained to a certain measure of material civilisation, a state of things to which some interesting remains of buildings (never as yet properly explored) seem to bear direct and lasting witness. Eventually, however, their ancient foes followed them up to their new capital, and about the middle of the sixteenth century the Ahoms succeeded in capturing and sacking Dimápur itself. The Kachári Raja thereupon removed his court to Máibong ("much paddy"), where the dynasty would seem to have maintained itself for some two centuries. Finally, however, under pressure of an attack by the Jaintia Raja the Kachári sovereign withdrew from Máibong to Kháspur in Kachar (*circa* 1750 A.D.). There they seem to have come more and more under Hindu influence, until about 1790 the Raja of that period, Krishna Chandra, and his brother Govinda Chandra made a public profession of Brahminism. They were both placed for a time inside the body of a large copper image of a cow, and on emerging thence were declared by the Brahmins to be Hindus of the Kshatriya

caste, Bhīma of Mahābhārat fame being assigned to them as a mythological ancestor. Hence to this day the Darrang Kacháris sometimes speak of themselves as "Bhīm-nī-fsā," *i.e.* children of Bhīm, though as a rule they seem to attach little or no value to this highly imaginative ancestry.

The reign of the last Kachári king, Govind Chandra, was little better than one continuous flight from place to place through the constant attacks of the Burmese, who finally compelled the unhappy monarch to take refuge in the adjoining British district of Sylhet. He was, indeed, reinstated in power by the aid of the East India Company's troops in 1826, but was murdered some four years later, when his kingdom became part of the British dominions. His commander-in-chief, one Tulá Rám, was allowed to remain in possession of a portion of the subdivision now known as North Cachar, a region shown in old maps of Assam as "Tula Ram Senapati's country." But on the death of this chieftain in 1854, this remaining portion of the old Kachári Raj was formally annexed to the district of Nowgong.

As regards this last-mentioned migration, *i.e.*, from Maibong to Kháspur about A.D. 1750, and the conversion to Hinduism which soon followed it, it would seem that the movement was only a very limited and restricted one, confined indeed very largely to the Raja and the members of his court. The great majority of his people remained in the hill country, where to this day they retain their language, religion, customs, &c., to a great extent intact. It is not improbable, indeed, that this statement may hold good of the earlier migrations also, *i.e.*, those that resulted from the prolonged struggle between the Ahoms and the Chutiyás. When as a result of that struggle the defeated race withdrew first to Dimápur and afterwards to Máibong, it is not unlikely that the great body of the Chutiyás (Kacháris) which remained in the rich valley of Assam

came to terms with their conquerors (the Ahoms) and gradually became amalgamated with them, much as Saxons, Danes, Normans, &c., slowly but surely became fused into one nationality in the centuries following the battle of Hastings. In this way it may well be that the Kachári race were the original autochthones of Assam, and that even now, though largely Hinduised, they still form a large, perhaps the main, constituent element in the permanent population of the Province. To this day one often comes across villages bearing the name of "Kachárigaon," the inhabitants of which are completely Hinduised, though for some considerable time they would seem to have retained their Kachári customs, &c., unimpaired. It may be that, whilst the great body of the Chutiyá (Kachári) race submitted to their Ahom conquerors, the stronger and more patriotic spirits among them, influenced perhaps by that intense clannishness which is so marked a feature in the Kachári character, withdrew to less favoured parts of the Province, where their conquerors did not care at once to follow them up; *i.e.*, the Southern section of the race may have made its way into the districts known as the Garo Hills and North Cachar; whilst the Northern section perhaps took up its abode in a broad belt of country at the foot of the Bhutan Hills, still known as the "Kachári Duars," a region which, being virtually "Terai" land, had in earlier days a very unenviable reputation on the score of its recognised unhealthiness. And if this view of the matter be at all a sound one, what is known to have happened in our own island may perhaps furnish a somewhat interesting "historic parallel." When about the middle of the fifth century the Romans finally withdrew from Britain, we know that successive swarms of invaders, Jutes, Danes, Saxons, Angles, &c., from the countries adjoining the North and Baltic seas, gradually overran and occupied the richer lowland of what is now England, driving all who

remained alive of the aboriginal Britons to take refuge in the less favoured parts of the country, *i.e.*, the mountains of Wales and the highlands of Scotland, where many of the people of this day retain their ancient mother speech: very much as the Kacháris of Assam still cling to their national customs, speech, religion, &c., in those outlying parts of the Province known in modern times as the Garo Hills, North Cachar and the Kachári Duars of North-west Assam.

Final Separation of Northern and Southern Sections of the race. V. It may perhaps be asked how a people so clannish and united as the Kacháris are well known to be, should ever become so widely separated as the Western (Bara) and Southern (Dimásá) sections now undoubtedly are. The separation would seem to be almost final and complete. The writer, *e.g.*, has often tried to ascertain if the Kacháris of the Northern Duars retained any tradition of ever having been subject to the Raja of Dimápur; but up to the present time no trace of any such tradition has come to light. Intermarriage between the two sections of the race is apparently quite unknown; indeed, the barrier of language would of itself probably go far to prevent such intermarriage: for although the two languages have much in common, yet in their modern form they differ from each other nearly as much as Italian does from Spanish; and members of the two sections of the race meeting each other for the first time would almost certainly fail to understand each other's speech. Perhaps the following tradition,[3] which apparently describes one of the closing scenes in the prolonged struggle between the Chutiyá Kacháris and the Ahoms, may go some way to account for the wide separation between the Northern and Southern sections of the race. The story is as follows:—Long, long ago the Dimásá fought against a very powerful tribe (the Ahoms), and being beaten in a great pitched battle, the king with all his forces retreated. But presently further retreat was

barred by a wide and deep river, which could in no way be crossed. The Raja, being thus stopped by a river in front and an enemy behind, resolved to fight once more the next day, unless the problem of crossing the river could be solved. With this determination he went to sleep and had a dream in which a god appeared to him and promised to help him. The god said that early next morning the king with all his people must boldly enter the river at a spot where he would see a heron standing in the water, and walk straight across the river, but no one must look back. Next morning a heron was found, sure enough, standing in the water near the bank; and the king, remembering his dream, led his people to the spot and went into the water, which they found had shoaled enough to form a ford and allow them to wade across. In this way he crossed with a great part of his people. But still all had not crossed. There were some on the other bank and some in the middle of the river, when a man among the latter wondering whether his son was following him, looked back, with the result that the water at once got deep and every one had to save himself as best he could; while the men on the other bank, having no chance of crossing, dispersed. They who were caught in the middle of the river had to swim for their lives, and were washed down to different places. Some saved themselves by catching hold of *Khágris* (rushes) growing on the bank, and are to this day called *Khágrábária*. Others caught hold of *nals* (or reeds) and are thus called Nalbárias. The Dimásá are the people who crossed in safety.

It is fairly obvious that the Oriental love for the grotesquely marvellous has had no small share in the development of this tradition; but whilst making all due allowance for this, the writer ventures to think that the tradition itself is not altogether without a certain historic value. It probably represents the closing scenes in the

protracted struggle for supremacy between the Ahoms and the Chutiyás (Kacháris) when the latter, finally beaten, endeavoured to escape their foes by crossing the Brahmaputra to the South bank, using for that purpose whatever material was at hand, *e.g.*, rude dug-out boats (*khel náu*), extemporised rafts (*bhel*), &c. The student of Assam history will remember that a like mishap befell Mir Jumla's expedition for the conquest of Assam; Rangpur, Ghergaon, &c., when a violent storm or sudden rise in the river carried away or sunk the boats containing his ammunition and other stores, and he was compelled to come to terms with the Ahom rulers. A sudden storm or rapid rise in the river may have prevented many of the fugitives from crossing, and these would perforce have fallen into the hands of the Ahoms. The latter, acting on the principle "Divide et impera," may have forced their captives to take up their abode in the unhealthy (Terai) country now known as the "Kachári Duárs," and further may have prohibited any communication between the two severed fragments of the conquered race, which would thenceforth naturally drift further asunder, until the separation became as complete as it remains to this day.





KACHARI MAN

[1] Some interesting remarks on this subject will be found in the Garo monograph.—[Ed.] ↑

[2] See "Koch Kings of Kamrup," by E. A. Gait, Esq., I.C.S., Assam Secretariat Press P.O., 1895. ↑

[3] Extracted from a most interesting and valuable letter from Mr. Dundas, kindly forwarded for perusal to the writer by B. C. Allen, Esq., I.C.S. ↑

SECTION II

Social and Domestic Life

Dwellings, houses, &c. In their domestic life, the Kacháris of this district (Darrang) do not differ very materially from their Hindu neighbours, to the subordinate castes of whom they are no doubt very closely allied. The houses are of the usual type, one-storied only, the walls being of *ekrá* reed or of split bamboo, and the roof of thatch fastened by cane. Each hut commonly contains two rooms, one for eating, &c., and the other for sleeping. There is no trace here of

the practice which prevails among some tribes of the Province who are undoubtedly very nearly related to the Kacháris, *i.e.*, the provision of bachelor-barracks (*Dekáchángs*), where all the young unmarried men of the village have to sleep apart from the dwellings of settled householders. It is probable, indeed, that this custom formerly obtained here, but all trace of it seems to have passed away long since.

Villages. A Kachári village is as a rule much more compact than a Hindu one, the houses being built more closely together. Usually, too, there is comparatively little foliage in the way of trees, &c.; and occasionally even something like a street separates the two or more lines of houses which compose a village. One prominent feature in the typical Kachári village cannot fail to strike the attention of any casual visitor at first sight. Each house, with its granary and other outbuildings, is surrounded by a ditch and fence, the latter usually made of *ekrá* reeds, jungle grass or split bamboo, &c. The ditch, some three or four feet in depth, surrounds the whole homestead, the earth taken from it being thrown up on the inner side, *i.e.*, that nearest to the dwelling-house; and on the earthworks, some two or three feet in height, so thrown up are firmly inserted the reeds or split-bamboo work forming the fence itself, this latter often inclining outwards at a very obtuse angle; so that the ditch and fence are not easily surmounted from the outside by would-be intruders. A Kachári village usually abounds in domestic live-stock of various kinds, *e.g.*, ducks, fowls, goats, pigs, cattle, &c.; and it can hardly be doubted that the fence and ditch above spoken of are largely intended to prevent the cattle, pigs, &c., from getting into the rice-fields at night, and so doing serious damage to the paddy and other crops. With the abundance of live-stock, especially hogs, reared and kept by the Kacháris, it need hardly be said that the villages can

scarcely be described as being cleanly; though as a rule they do not differ so much as might be supposed in this respect from their Hindu neighbours, separate buildings being provided for the pigs, goats, &c., at an appreciable distance from the family dwelling-house.

Furniture, Implements and Utensils

Little need be said under this head, as the equipment of the Kachári householder for dealing with domestic or field work is almost identical with that of his Hindu neighbours. But it may be stated that in a Kachári house there will usually be found an exceptionally large number of earthenware vessels (pottery, &c.) which are used freely and frequently in the preparation and distribution of the much-prized rice-beer (*Zu*).

Occupation, crops, &c. Agriculture is still the great industry of the Kacháris of this district, both the hot weather (*áus*) and the cold season (*sáli*) varieties of rice being largely cultivated, especially the latter. In carrying out this work the people show both application and skill, so much so, that, failing some very overwhelming convulsion of Nature, it would seem to be hardly possible that a famine could take place in the Kachári Duars. This part of the district is abundantly supplied with water by the numerous streams issuing from the lower spurs of the Bhutan Hills, streams which for the most part flow in very shallow beds, and therefore admit of being easily used for irrigation purposes, whenever the seasonal rainfall may be at all scanty. Moreover, the people are especially skilful in the construction of irrigation canals and earthwork

embankments for diverting water from river-beds into their rice-fields: and their efforts in this direction are very largely aided by their closely clannish organisation. Whenever the rainfall threatens to be below the average, the village headman with his associated elders fixes on the spot whence water is to brought from the nearest river to the rice-fields. At this spot very rude and primitive shelters of jungle grass, &c., are put up: and here all the manhood strength of the village, each man armed with hoe, dao, &c., are compelled to take up their abode until the necessary work has been fully carried out. In this way it will be obvious that the Kacháris have a highly efficient and very inexpensive "Public Works Department" of their own; and vigorous efforts of self-help of this character would seem to be worthy of high commendation and hearty support.

But it is not only in constructing embankments and irrigation canals, &c., that the people work together in this way. Very much the same plan is adopted in carrying out other enterprises in the success of which all are alike interested, *e.g.*, in harvesting the great cold weather rice-crop in December and January each year. When this important work is in full swing, it is but rarely that the owner of a rice-field is found cutting his paddy alone and single-handed. He summons his neighbours to come and help him in this work—a summons which usually meets with a ready and cheerful response. It is quite common to see in December and January organised bodies of labourers, varying in number from ten to fifty or more, all in line and busy with the sickle in one man's field at the same time. Every man as a rule works for the time being at high pressure, his toil being lightened by much merry talk and laughter, and many jests and jokes—these last, it must be admitted, not always of a highly refined character. There is a pleasing absence of the mercenary element in the whole transaction; for as a rule no money payments

whatever are made to the workers. On the other hand, the wife of the proprietor of the rice-field is almost always present in person, and busies herself in keeping ever ready an abundant supply of wholesome and highly appetising cooked food, to be eaten on the spot, the nearest grove of plantain trees providing ready-made plates and dishes. Her post is no sinecure, as the hungry reapers make very frequent raids on the good things she provides; and she has above all to be careful to see that the much prized rice-beer (*Zu*) shall be at all times forthcoming in unstinted quantity. Her lord and master is usually content to wield a sickle with the reapers, like Boaz of old; and, of course, he holds himself ready to lend a hand in the same unpaid fashion in carrying out his neighbours' harvesting operations, whenever his services in this direction may be called for. This whole system of mutual help in time of pressure is a marked feature of Kachári social and domestic life, and tends in no small degree to develop and strengthen that clannish temperament of which it may be considered to be in some sense the natural outcome.

Crops, &c. Rice, roughly classified as the larger and the smaller grains (*maimá* and *maisá*), is here, as elsewhere, the chief object of the peasant's skill and labour; but other crops are not wanting, *e.g.*, pulse, gathered in December, cotton, sugar-cane in limited quantities, tobacco, &c. Of this last-mentioned article there are two distinct varieties commonly grown, *i.e.*, country tobacco and Burmese[1] (*Mán*) tobacco, the latter commanding the higher price in the market. All surplus produce finds a ready sale among the ever-growing numbers of imported labourers on tea estates, many of whom are consumers of Kachári rice-beer or less harmless liquors, and who in consequence fraternise readily with their Kachári neighbours. In this way the average Bodo peasant is a very well-to-do person in worldly things, the more so because the Kachári labourer is

in great demand as a factory worker. Where there are three or four brothers in a family in Western Assam, it is quite usual for one, perhaps two, of the number to remain at home to cultivate the paternal acres, whilst the other brothers make their way to tea estates in Upper Assam for the manufacturing season, often doing double tasks day after day, and returning to the family fold in the autumn with a large and liberal supply of lightly earned rupees at each man's disposal.

Food, &c. As regards his food, the Kachári is as a rule by no means limited and restricted, like his Hindu and Musulmán neighbours. On the contrary, he enjoys and practises a freedom in this respect which no doubt goes far to account for his often magnificent physique. With the exception of beef he denies himself almost nothing. His great delicacy is pork; and a Kachári village usually swarms with pigs in almost every possible stage of growth. These animals are often exposed for sale at fairs and markets in the Kachári country. There is, however, one common article of food, which no orthodox old-fashioned Kachári will ever touch, *i.e.*, milk. When questioned as to the ground of his objection to milk as an article of food, he usually says that he is unwilling to deprive the calf of its natural support, though the real reason is probably of another character.[2] This prejudice against the use of milk would now, however, seem to be passing away; and some of the Kachári lads attending the writer's Training Class at Tezpur now partake freely of this natural and sustaining food.

Among other delicacies of the Kachári is what is known as dried fish (*nā grān*),[3] *i.e.*, the very small fish left on the surface of inundated land after the water has subsided. This is collected in large quantities near the banks of the Brahmaputra, and carried northwards to the Kachári Duars, where it is exchanged for rice and silk (*eri*), &c. This small

fish is not cured or prepared in any way, but simply dried in the sun; and is very far from being attractive to the eye or the nose, especially to the latter. Nevertheless, it is greatly prized by the Kachári peasant as a welcome and savoury addition to his somewhat monotonous daily fare; nor does the free use of this hardly inviting article of food seem to be attended by any very injurious results to the physical well-being of those who largely and liberally use it.

Hunting, fishing. The Kachári often varies his diet by adding to it the proceeds of the chase and by fishing in the numerous shallow hill-streams in which his country abounds. Deer and wild pigs are frequently caught, sometimes by the use of large nets, enclosing a considerable extent of grass land in which some keen eye has detected the presence of the much-prized game. The net is gradually contracted until the prey comes within the reach of some stout Kachári arm, when blows from club or *dao* speedily bring its career to a close. In this, as in almost all else, the Kachári is clannish and gregarious in what he does; and regular hunting parties are duly organised to carry out the work in hand. Much the same system is observed in conducting fishing operations, though here the leading part is commonly taken by the women. On certain prearranged dates, the women of a village, sometimes of a group of villages, will fish a certain stream, or a number of streams, for a distance extending over several miles. The fishing implements used are of a very simple character, and are commonly prepared from materials found in almost every village. Nets are but rarely employed, as the water in these hill-streams is in the cold weather, *i.e.*, the fishing season, usually very shallow, rarely exceeding two or three feet in depth. The implements commonly used are mainly two, *i.e.*, (1) the *zakhái*[4] and (2) the *pālhā*, the former being employed chiefly, but not exclusively, by women;

and the latter by men. Both implements are made of split bamboo work fastened together with cane. The *zakhái* is a triangular basket, open at one end, the three triangular sides closing to a point at the other. The whole is attached to a bamboo handle some three or four feet in length. Grasping this handle firmly, the holder enters the river, usually only two or three feet deep, and lowers the basket to the bottom, keeping the open end in front of her person; and then making a splashing with her feet, she endeavours to drive her prey into the open mouth of the basket, which is then quickly lifted and its contents rapidly transferred to the fish-basket. The system seems to be a very simple and even a clumsy one, but is far from being wholly ineffective. Armed with this *zakhái*, a number of women, sufficient to extend across the entire width of the stream, enter the river together, whilst another party commence operations fifty or a hundred yards away. The two parties work steadily towards each other, so that such fish as are not caught *en route* are gradually driven into an ever-narrowing stretch of water: and as a rule not many fish would seem to escape. The whole scene is a very merry one, accompanied with much laughter and pleasing excitement; and more particularly, as the two parties of fish-catchers approach each other, and the fish make frantic efforts to escape their doom, the fun becomes fast and furious. A fish-catching expedition of this kind is invariably looked upon as a village holiday, the entire population not infrequently taking an active part in it.





KACHARI GIRL FISHI

A second popular method of catching fish is the use of the *pālhā*, which is not very unlike an ordinary circular hen-coop. It is made of split bamboo fastened together by cane-work, and is about 4 or 4–1/2 feet in height and about 3 feet in diameter at the base. The upper portion is drawn somewhat closely together, leaving an open space at the top sufficient to allow the admission of a man's hand, the whole structure being quite light and easily manipulated by one hand. Armed with this, the fisherman quietly enters the shallow water at any likely spot, and whenever his quick eye detects the presence of prey, the *pālhā* is at once placed over it, the lower surface of the basket-work closely clutching the ground, and the fish so enclosed are then withdrawn by the hand through the opening in the upper part of the instrument. This too, like the *zakhái*, seems a very primitive, unsuitable contrivance, but in the hands of men trained to its use from earliest childhood it is quite capable of being made to bring about very useful results.

A third instrument used by Kacháris in fish-catching is a small, pointed, metallic spearhead attached to a light bamboo. This is thrust rapidly and firmly into soft mud or other like places where eels, &c., are supposed to be concealed; and the fisherman occasionally succeeds in transfixing and drawing out one or more of these, which form a welcome addition to his daily diet.

Rice-beer (*Zu*), its preparation, &c. In common with many other non-Aryan tribes on this frontier, *e.g.*, the Nágás, &c., the Kacháris of Darrang habitually consume large quantities of

what is usually known as rice-beer (*Zu*, *Záu*). It can hardly be said to be a beverage in daily use, for it is only prepared when specially wanted for immediate consumption. An essential ingredient in the preparation of this most popular form of refreshment is the condiment known as *emáo*[5] which is usually composed of at least three, and sometimes four, distinct elements. To a definite proportion of husked rice is added (1) the jack-tree leaf and (2) that of the jungle plant known as *bhetai*, and in some cases the poison-fern, though this last-mentioned does not seem to be really necessary. All these ingredients are vigorously pounded together into a powder, which is then passed through a very fine sieve, at least once and sometimes twice. The powder so prepared is then mixed with water so as to make a more or less tenacious paste, and this again is divided into portions sufficient to form solid discs, about three inches in diameter, and one inch thick in the centre, with thin edges. These discs are sprinkled freely with powder from similar discs of some weeks standing, and are for a short time kept covered up in rice-straw. They are then placed on a bamboo platform inside the house for some four days, and are afterwards exposed freely to the hot sun for another four or five days, so as to become thoroughly dry. Finally they find their way into an earthenware water-vessel, which is kept suspended at a distance of several feet over the fireplace though they would seem to need no direct exposure to the action of fire-heat; and here they remain until required for use.

As mentioned above, rice-beer is not used as a daily beverage, but is prepared as required, especially for use at marriages, funerals, harvest homes and other occasions that break the monotony of village life. A common method of preparation is as follows:—A quantity of selected rice, about 3 or 4 seers, is carefully boiled in an iron or brass cooking vessel, the contents of which are then spread out

on a bamboo mat and allowed to become cold. Two cakes of the *emáo* described above are then broken up into powder, which is carefully mixed with the boiled rice; and the whole is then stored in a thoroughly dry earthenware vessel (*kalas*). This vessel with its contents is then placed upon a platform some five feet high over a slow fire, in which position it is allowed to remain for some three or four days, the mouth of the vessel remaining open for the first day or two, though it is afterwards covered. It only then remains to add water *ad libitum*, and to pour out the beer, after well shaking the vessel, through a rude straining apparatus composed of rice-straw. It is said that the direct action of fire is not really needed in the preparation of this beer and that exposure to the sun is sufficient for the purpose, though the application of fire undoubtedly quickens the process. Rice prepared in this way may be kept in the earthenware vessel for six or twelve months, a fresh supply of boiled rice and condiment (*emáo*) being added to the old from time to time; but the beer is rarely kept in this way for any very prolonged period, though its quality is said to be improved by such keeping.

It may perhaps be added that the beverage so prepared would seem to be a thoroughly wholesome or at least a comparatively harmless one. Very large quantities are, to the writer's knowledge, sometimes consumed at a sitting, the consumer's brain apparently remaining wholly unaffected thereby. There is, however, a far less innocent beverage, commonly known as *phatiká*, prepared from this rice-beer by a process of distillation. This is a raw fiery spirit, somewhat resembling in taste the crudest possible whisky; and its use might very fittingly be put under severe restrictions by taxation[6] or otherwise, with results most beneficial to the physical, mental and moral well-being of this very interesting race.

Eri silk culture. One of the chief industries, a very profitable

one among the Kacháris, is that of the culture of the silk-worm known as *eri*, and the manufacture of the *eri* cloth. The *eri* cocoons, which are about 2½ or 3 inches in length, may often be seen suspended, a few feet from the ground, in long festoons, a thin cord being passed through the base of the cocoons for this purpose. In this condition the cocoons remain for some fifteen days, at the end of which period the insects make their appearance in the butterfly stage. Before they are able to fly away, they are collected with care and placed in a suitable receptacle; and at the end of three or four days eggs resembling sago-grains make their appearance in great numbers. It is said that one insect can on an average produce from eighty to one hundred such eggs, or even more. In a further period of fifteen days the eggs are duly hatched, the new-born insect being at first almost black, from which colour it passes to brown, and finally to white, at intervals of three or four days; and at each change of colour the worm is said to cast its skin in snake-like fashion. Some four days after the last stage is reached, *i.e.*, about fifteen days after being hatched, the insect may be expected to set about the formation of its cocoon. To assist it in this work, small bundles of plantain or mango leaves are loosely tied together and placed within broad baskets or on bamboo platforms, and the insects are then carefully placed within these bundles; and under favourable conditions the cocoon should be fully formed in about twenty-four hours. The actual formation of the cocoon is preceded by certain signs, very significant to the Kachári, *i.e.*, the insect itself refuses food for a short time beforehand and becomes of a light, brilliant colour; and on handling it gently, a soft, rustling sound, proceeding from the insect itself, can be distinctly heard. After being carefully cleaned in water and dried in the sun, the cocoons are stowed away, usually in an earthenware vessel, until a fitting time, generally in the dry, cold season, appears for reeling them off, a work carried out by

women and girls. It is said that a Kachári, working steadily at this occupation, can on an average reel off some 150 or 200 cocoons in a day. During the fifteen days preceding the formation of the cocoon, the insects' quarters must be kept scrupulously clean, and food carefully and regularly provided. Its favourite viand is the *eri* (castor oil) plant,[7] which gives its name alike to the insect itself as well as to the silk prepared from its cocoons. But it also feeds freely on the leaves of certain trees known in Assamese as *Kurungá*, *Gámári* and *Sangla*, especially the first named of the three.

The loom employed for weaving the *eri* silk is of very simple construction, and most, if not all, the material needed for the purpose can be provided by the villagers themselves from local resources.





Kachári Woman Weaving (Kamrup).



The market value of a loom of this character is said to be about five rupees. It is usually set up on a shady side of the

dwelling-house, or, where this is impracticable, a rude structure of thatch and bamboo work is provided to shield the weaver from the sun. The actual work is always carried out either by the lady of the house, or by one of her grown-up daughters; and it is in every way suitable to women workers, as it requires very little exertion of physical strength, but only a certain quickness and readiness of eye and hand. The conditions under which the industry is carried on are in all respects pleasing and satisfactory. Indeed, a Kachári woman working placidly and contentedly at the *eri* loom, singing quietly to herself in sheer happiness of heart, offers perhaps one of the most complete illustrations of the benevolent influence of the Pax Britannica to be found in the wide realm of India, especially when it is borne in mind that less than seventy years ago these Kachári Duars were subject to the Bhutan Rajas, who seem to have harried and plundered the people in the most cruel and lawless way. Soon after the master of the house, with one or more grown-up sons, has betaken himself to the rice-fields, and this he does almost at sunrise, his goodwife seats herself at the loom, and works away steadily until about 8 or 9 a.m., when she may be seen carrying a well-cooked and appetising meal, carefully shielded from rain and sun by plantain leaves, to her goodman, who from an early hour has been toiling in the fields for the good of the family. This duty discharged, she resumes her position at the loom for the greater part of what may remain of daylight. Immediately in front of the loom there are probably two or three small children (the Kachári race is a wholesomely prolific one) gambolling and tumbling over each other in high delight. To these the mother now and then devotes a word or two of remonstrance, whenever their gambols seem to threaten an infantile breach of the peace; and she may occasionally rise from her seat to administer some little corporal chastisement, though always “more in sorrow than in

anger"; but otherwise she devotes herself steadily and assiduously to the work in hand. It is said that a Kachári woman, if not greatly or frequently interrupted in her work, can weave about half a yard each day; and, as this *eri* cloth, woven in long strips about two yards wide, can always command a ready sale at about Rs. 2/- per yard, it will be at once evident that a good worker can in this way, without neglecting other urgent domestic duties, easily make a substantial addition to the family income.

The fabric itself (*eri* cloth), so produced, is one of great value, especially for use in the cold season, being at once soft and warm as well as remarkably strong and durable. Of its very great merit in this last-mentioned respect (durability) the writer has good reason to hold a very high opinion. Some twelve or fifteen years ago he was presented with a piece of *eri* cloth by one Leah Khángkhuáh, a good Kachári churchwoman, living not far from St. Paul's Mission Church, at Bengbari, whose payment of her "Church dues" (tithe) took this very pleasing and highly practical form. The quantity of cloth given (the donor declined all money payment) was sufficient to make two ample bed-sheets, and in this character they have been in use now for at least a dozen years past. During that period they have of course been subjected to many and frequent barbarous washings; but even the rough treatment they have so often received at the hands of the Assamese *dhobi* has as yet failed to make any impression for injury on the warp and woof of this sound material; so substantial and conscientious is the work done by this good Kachári churchwoman and gentlewoman.

Position, social and domestic, of women. Among the Kacháris women do not perhaps occupy quite the same influential position as seems to be enjoyed by their sisters in the Khasi Hills, where something like a matriarchate apparently holds the field of social and domestic life. Still,

with this interesting race the position of the wife and mother is far from being a degraded one. The Kachári husband and householder has neither sympathy with, nor tolerance for, that degrading and demoralising creed "which says that woman is but dust, a soul-less toy for tyrant's lust." On the contrary, he usually treats his wife with distinct respect, and regards her as an equal and a companion to an extent which can hardly be said to be the rule among many of the Indian peoples. Kachári women, both in early life and as matrons, enjoy a large measure of freedom, a freedom which is very rarely abused for evil purposes. On being spoken to on the wayside, the Kachári woman will generally reply at once with absolute frankness, looking the questioner straight in the face and yet with the most perfect modesty. It has often happened to the writer during the last forty years to enter a Kachári village for preaching purposes, or with a view to opening a school. On asking for the village headman, that personage is usually not slow in making his appearance; and after a few friendly words he will, quite as a matter of course, introduce his wife, and that with no small pride and pleasure. In discharging this social duty, he will very commonly use much the same language as may be heard among the working classes in England. The phrase most common is "Be áng-ni burui," literally "This (is) my old woman." The words are not used jeeringly at all, but with much real respect and affection; and are obviously so regarded by the speaker's life-partner, whose face and features, somewhat homely in themselves, may often be seen to light up at once with a very pleased and pleasing smile on hearing herself thus referred to by the sharer of her life's joys and sorrows. There is, too, another consideration, not perhaps altogether unknown in other parts of the world, which has great weight with the Kachári paterfamilias, viz., that his goodwife for the most part does not a little to provide for the family needs in the matter of

food and raiment. Her prowess at the loom has been mentioned before; and besides this, the actual planting out of the young rice-seedlings is for the most part carried through by the women. And all this is habitually done without in any way neglecting or slurring over the usual duties more strictly appropriate to the goodwife and mother.



Fron

On the whole it may perhaps be safely said that the social and domestic life of the Kachári is not without its pleasing and satisfactory features. It is probably for the most part

far sounder and more wholesome than the life of great cities, whether in Asia or Europe; and it is with no little dismay and sorrow that the writer would see any hasty ill-considered attempts made to supplant or override this simple, primitive, patriarchal life through the introduction of a one-sided, materialistic civilisation.

1

The Assamese habitually speak of the Burmese people as *Mán*. ↑

2

This prejudice is shared by the Garos and by many other members of the Mongolian race.—[Ed.] ↑

3

Cf. the Burmese *ngā-pi*. Query, is the name a corruption of *nā-ghrān*, in allusion to the powerful odour of fish thus dried?—[Ed.] ↑

4

Assamese, *jakái*.—[Ed.] ↑

5

This is what Bengali distillers call *bākhar*. It is usually purchased by them from hill-men.—[Ed.] ↑

6

Possession, manufacture, and sale of *phatiká* is prohibited by law.—[Ed.] ↑

7

Eranda; Ricinus communis.—[Ed.] ↑

SECTION III

Laws and Customs

Internal Organisation. From such information as is available at the present day it a seems fairly clear that the internal and tribal organisation of the Kachári (Bara) race rested in early days, very largely at least, on a totemistic basis, although it is only here and there that any real regard for the totems can still be said to survive. In primitive days these subdivisions, all at one time strictly endogamous,[1] were probably very numerous. But in the case of many of these sub-tribes all trace of their distinct existence would seem to have passed away; and no restrictions on the intermarriage of members of such sub-tribes as still survive are any longer recognised. Among septs or sub-tribes whose names still to some extent hold the field may be placed the following:—

1. *Swarga-ároi* (*Swarga* = heaven). The heaven-folk. This sub-tribe is said to be the highest of all; none of its members ever worked as cultivators, for as a rule all *deoris*, *ojhas*, and others who took a leading part in religious ceremonials, were chosen from this subdivision; and the offerings made by worshippers were held to be sufficient for their maintenance.

2. *Basumati-ároi* (*Basumati* = earth). The earth-folk. This clan has a certain privilege not possessed by any other, *i.e.*, its members can bury their dead without in any way purchasing ground for the grave or for the erection of the funeral pyre.

3. *Mosá-ároi* (*Mosá* = tiger), otherwise known in Darrang as *Bāgh-l-aroi* (*Bāgh-l-aroi*, the *l* is probably inserted for reasons of euphony). The tiger-folk. The members of this sub-tribe claim kindred with the tiger, and all the inhabitants of a village peopled by them go into mourning on hearing that a tiger has died in the neighbourhood.

4. *Khángkhlo-ároi*. The *Khangkhlo*-folk. *Khangkhlo* is

apparently the name of a certain jungle grass, used freely both at religious ceremonials and at festive gatherings and merry-makings, of which the Kacháris are very fond.

5. *Sibing-ároi* (*Sibing*, sesamum, the Assamese *til*). The sesamum-folk. This sub-tribe is said to be the only one which in olden time was allowed to cultivate sesamum plant, and its members still hold this plant in special honour.

6. *Gándret-ároi* (*Gándret*, a leech or slug, Assamese *Kumzeluka*). The leech-folk. This sub-tribe holds the leech in high regard and cannot under ordinary circumstances kill it; though on occasions of certain religious ceremonials, *e.g.*, purification after a death in the family, its members were required to chew a leech with vegetables for a certain limited period, though apparently only once in a life-time.

7. *Nárze-ároi* (*nárze* = jute). The jute-folk. This sub-tribe held jute in special honour, and on occasions of great religious ceremonials its members were bound to chew a certain quantity of jute (see No. 6).

8. *Doimá-roi* (*Doimá* = a large river) (*cf.* Dimásá [*doimá-sá*], the usual designation of the people of the North Cachar Hills). The river-folk. These in olden time were the fisherman class, though its surviving members are now merged among the mass of ordinary cultivators.

9. *Bibiziyá-ároi* (*Bibína* = to beg). The begging-folk. Professional mendicants having no fixed home or regular occupation, much like the modern Fakirs, Vairagis, &c.

10. *Bing-bing-ároi* (*Bing-bing*, probably an onomatopoetic word indicating a sound more or less musical). Itinerant musicians, subsisting on the voluntary offerings of those to

whom they ministered. The writer has occasionally seen one or two members of this class in Kachári villages.

11. *Ding-ároi* (*dingá* = a bamboo water-vessel [Assamese *Chungá*]).[2] The *dinga*-folk. The members of this sub-tribe are said to have formerly earned their livelihood by making, these bamboo water-vessels.

12. *Goi-bári-ároi* (*goi* = the areca-palm[3]). The areca-folk; formerly devoted to the cultivation of the areca, of which they perhaps held the monopoly.

In addition to the above sub-tribes, all at one time strictly endogamous, though now no longer so, the following may be mentioned. It may be noted that these are recognised, in Kamrup at least, mostly to the north of the great earthwork embankment known as the "Gossain Kamla Ali," though the writer has been unable to find any trace of their separate existence in this (Darrang) district.

13. *Rámshároi. Rámshá* folk. *Rámshá* is said to be the name of a Mauza in Kamrup.[4] It may be noted further that Rám-sá (?Ram's people) is the name by which the Kacháris living in the plains are known to their brethren in the North Cachar Hills.

14. *Brahm-ároi.* Brahma folk. Said to be a quasi-priestly class, found chiefly in Upper Assam. This name, like the preceding, is obviously of Hindu origin.

15. *Bánhbárá-roi.*[5] Bamboo-grove-folk. (*Bānhbāri* = Assamese) is the sacred bamboo grove, found near many Kachári villages, where the worship of the gods is carried on at certain seasons.

16. *Dhekiábári-ároi.* (Dhekiá fern), the fern-folk. The totem of this sub-tribe was probably the fern, still

sometimes used in the preparation of the *fatiká* spirit.

17. *Máómará-roi.* The Máó-fish folk, perhaps originally the dwellers near the Moamári bil.[6]

18. *Kherkhathá-roi* (*Kerketuá*,[7] squirrel). The squirrel-folk. Said to be a low caste and more or less criminal. One of their functions is to cut the horns of cattle.

19. *Fadam-ároi.* The *fadam* folk. The *fadam* is said to be identical with the tree known as *sáchi* in Assamese.

20. *Mohilá-roi.* Mohilá folk. Mohilá is a word of uncertain origin and meaning. It is said to be the equivalent of Maháldár, and to be applied to fishery lessees, and petty traders in areca-nut and betel-leaves and dried fish (*nā-grān*).

It may perhaps be added that among the Meches in Gowálpárá some sixteen of these subdivisions are recognised, all formerly exogamous.[8] In designating these subdivisions the same suffix (*ároi* or *roi*) is used as that characteristic of the Kamrup and Darrang Kacháris: indeed, the names correspond closely in every respect, *e.g.* —

Swarg-ároi,
Masá-roi,
Doimá-roi,
Goibári-roi,

which seems to be practically identical with class-names Nos. 1, 3, 8 and 12, given above.

But it is among the Dimásá of the North Cachar Hills and the Hojais of the Nowgong district that this minute subdivision of the clans would seem to attain its highest

development. In this portion of the Bara race some eighty clans are recognised, of whom forty are known as men's clans (*sengfáng*) and forty as women's (*zŭlu*). All the members of these different clans eat and drink together freely, and are, or were, all strictly exogamous.[9] The only exception to this strict rule of exogamy is that of the so-called royal clan, known as Há-chum-sá,[10] *i.e.*, "black earth folk," all the members of which were compelled to marry *within* their own sub-tribe, marriage with a member of a subject clan being of old absolutely forbidden. (*Cf.* the analogous restrictions enforced by various "Royal Marriage" Acts in other communities.)

In partial explanation of the terms used (their number might probably be largely added to on further inquiry), it will be observed that the first two are obviously of Hindu origin, the Kachári affix *ároi* (people, folk) being attached to the Sanskrit words *Swarga* and *Vasumati* respectively. Most of the designations applied to the other sub-tribes merely indicate the occupation, probably hereditary, by which the members of these sub-tribes obtained their livelihood. But in almost every case, in these modern days, any special reverence for the totem has very largely become a thing of the past. There is, perhaps, one exception to this rule, that of the tiger-folk (*Mosároi* or *Bāghlároi*). (The *l* in this latter word is probably merely euphonic, so that the two words have exactly the same meaning). Kacháris of the old-fashioned conservative school still think it a duty to show respect to their totem (the tiger) by formally going into mourning whenever they learn that one of these animals has died in the immediate vicinity of their village. The period of mourning is indeed but a short one, seldom exceeding twenty-four hours; but during this brief period the sorrowing would seem to be very real, and not a little material loss is sometimes involved. No solid food whatever must be taken, in itself

no slight privation to the Kachári, who is as a rule provided with an ample appetite. At the end of the mourning the floor and walls of each house must be carefully smeared with a freshly prepared compost of mud and cow-dung, a work usually carried out by the women. All articles of clothing, as well as all household utensils made of brass, must be thoroughly cleansed in running water, whilst all earthenware vessels except those which are quite new and have never yet been used for cooking purposes, must be broken up and thrown away. Then one of the elder members of the community, acting as Deori (minister), solemnly distributes the "water of peace" (*Śánti-Jal*)[11] to be drunk by all in turn; and the buildings themselves and all articles of clothing, &c., are freely sprinkled with this preparation. The service is finally consummated by the sacrifice of a fowl or pig, to be partaken of by all in common; after which relations of ordinary social intercourse with the neighbours may be quietly resumed.

Marriage, Endogamy, Exogamy

It is said that each of the sub-tribes mentioned above was in early times strictly endogamous; for though members of all these subdivisions might freely eat and drink together, intermarriage between them was absolutely forbidden. But all such restrictions on marriage seem to have passed away long since, so that the whole subject has nowadays little more than an antiquarian interest.

No formal hypergamy is recognised, though Kacháris occasionally take wives from the cognate tribes known as Rábhas (Totlás), Koches (Madáhis), and Saraniyas, &c.

But such alliances are as a rule not looked upon with favour, and the bridegroom in such cases has generally to make his peace with his fellow-villagers by providing them with a feast in which rice-beer (*Zu*) and pork are certain to take a prominent place. Children born of such mixed marriages become in all cases members of the father's subdivision of the Bodo race.

There is little or nothing specially distinctive in the laws of consanguinity or affinity in their bearing on the marriage relationship. A widower may marry his deceased wife's younger sister, but not the elder, whom he is taught to regard conventionally in the light of a mother. Much the same principle holds good in the case of the re-marriage of widows, which is freely permitted, the one limitation being that a widow may marry her deceased husband's younger brother, but not the elder.

Polygamy

As a rule the Kacháris are a strictly monogamous race, though cases of men having two wives have occasionally come under the writer's notice. These cases are, however, almost invariably limited to men of a somewhat high social position or great wealth, such as Mauzadárs, Mandals, &c. Where, too, a first wife proves childless, Kachári custom sanctions the taking of a second, mainly with a view to handing down the father's name to posterity. On the other hand, polyandry would seem to be absolutely prohibited, though it is known to prevail in the adjoining regions of Bhutan, Tibet, &c.

Adoption

Children, more especially orphans, are occasionally adopted, usually by near relatives, but sometimes by absolute strangers. In such cases the children so adopted are treated as full members of the family, and the foster-parents are considered by the community to have done a highly meritorious act. Several pleasing instances of adoption of this character have come under the writer's notice, and in all such cases the adopted children seem to have found a very happy home.

Female Chastity

As stated above, the standard of chastity among the Kacháris, both men and women, is by no means a low one. As a rule the young people, in the villages at least, lead pure lives before marriage, and are faithful to their marriage vows in after-life. In cases where there are several unmarried girls in a family, and one of them is suspected of having broken the law of chastity, the following plan for detecting the offender is sometimes adopted. The whole family gathers in the evening around the sacred *siju* tree (*Euphorbia splendens*), which is often to be seen growing in the court-yard, surrounded by a fence of split bamboo. At the foot of this revered tree a quantity of rice (uncooked) is solemnly buried and allowed to remain there over night. Early next morning this rice is carefully disinterred, and a certain quantity given to each grown-up girl (*sikhlá*) to be masticated. The offender, under the pressure of the fear of imminent detection, is unable to masticate her portion of rice, the faculty of

secreting saliva failing her in her terror of discovery and disgrace.





Kachâri Girls Playing Jew's H

From a Photograph by Mrs. H.

She is then made to disclose the name of her paramour, whom Kachâri public opinion compels to marry his victim forthwith, the bride-price (*pan*: see below) being in this case considerably enhanced as some slight compensation to the girl's parents for the injury done to the honour of the family. A similar procedure is sometimes resorted to in cases of suspected theft or other like misdemeanours in the family circle.

In some cases where the parents are unwilling to part with their daughter to a prospective son-in-law of somewhat objectionable character, the matter is referred for decision to the village elders, who impose a fine of Rs. 20/- to Rs. 25/- on the offender. But whenever pregnancy follows offences against the law of chastity, marriage becomes absolutely compulsory, and the seducer is made to feel that he has brought disgrace upon the village, and is distinctly under a cloud. In this way a wholesome respect for chastity is maintained, and Kachâri domestic life is kept comparatively pure.

Divorce

Divorce sometimes takes place by mutual consent, but cannot be effected without a certain formality. Man and wife appear before the village elders and state their case, concluding by tearing a pan-leaf into two pieces, *fáthoi*

fesínai, (*K.*) *pán chirá* (Assamese), a symbolic act indicating that, as the sundered leaf can never reunite, so their own married life is severed for ever. Should the husband divorce his wife for causes which seem to the village elders inadequate or capricious, he forfeits all claim to reimbursement of his marriage expenses, and even when the divorce is approved of, he must pay a certain small sum (Rs. 5/- to 10/-) for his freedom, the amount being divided between the village *pancháyat* and the divorced woman. On the other hand, if the woman is divorced for just and sufficient reasons, *e.g.*, for unfaithfulness to her marriage obligations, the injured husband is entitled to recover whatever he may have expended at his marriage, a sum amounting sometimes to Rs. 140/- or upwards to Rs. 200/-. The man who may afterwards marry the divorced woman is held to be responsible for the payment of this money; and so long as this latter condition is duly fulfilled, the divorcée is fully at liberty to live with a second husband.

Inheritance of Property

Among the Kacháris the laws and customs relating to the inheritance of property seem to be very vague, and it is not at all easy to obtain any definite information on the subject. Generally speaking, on the decease of the head of the household the eldest son takes charge of all property, making a home for the time for his widowed mother and his brothers and sisters. In this way the family may be kept together for some years; but eventually it breaks up as the children grow up and marry, in which case the father's property is broken up into equal shares, the eldest son taking one share and a half, while what remains is divided

fairly among the other brothers. The daughters, especially if married, can claim nothing. When a man dies without sons, the property usually passes to his eldest surviving brother, who generally makes some provision for the deceased man's widow and daughters.

Disputes, whether matrimonial or otherwise (*e.g.*, inheritance of property, &c.), are almost invariably referred to the council of village elders, whose members are not necessarily limited to five or other definite number; and the decision of this rural council is very rarely questioned or opposed in any way. It might be well to develop and enlarge this simple and very effective way of settling disputes, so that the villagers may be to a great extent saved from the necessity of coming under the contaminating, demoralising influence of our civil and criminal courts. As all the Kacháris of this district (Darrang) are ordinary cultivators, holding land directly under Government like their Hindu and Musulman neighbours, no remarks are needed under the head of "tenure of land, and laws regarding land." So too with the sections dealing with "war, and head-hunting," it is only necessary to say that the latter practice (head-hunting) is quite unknown here, though it would seem to have been very common in earlier days among the closely cognate race known to us as Garos.

1

On this point Col. Gurdon, Hon. Director of Ethnography, Assam, writes as follows:—"I entertain grave doubts as to the correctness of the author's remark that the Kachári totemistic clans were originally endogamous. If it had not been for the most unfortunate death of the author before this work went to press, we might have hoped to have had some light on this obscure point. Amongst the Mech, who are the first cousins of the Kacháris, and who live alongside of them, marriage is exogamous, vide page 124 of the Monograph, so also amongst the Garos, who may be described as second cousins of the Kacháris. Mr. Friel, Sub-Divisional Officer of Mangaldai, which division of the Darrang district contains a

large number of Kacháris, met an old Kachári who stated quite positively that ‘before the Dewangari war, Kacháris were not allowed to marry within their own sub-tribe.’ It is true that Mr. Friel’s informant afterwards contradicted himself, but I think it is quite possible his first statement was the correct one. On the other hand, it should be stated in favour of Mr. Endle’s theory that three men were found in Sekhar mauza of Mangaldai who stated that in former days ‘a penance had to be performed if one married outside one’s own *kur*.’ My own view, however, is that stated above, and I do not think the statement that the Kachári totemistic clans were endogamous should be accepted without further investigation.” ↑

2

In the Dhubri subdivision there is a place called “Ding-dinga.” Perhaps this takes its name from the sept.—[Ed.] ↑

3

Cf. Assamese, *guā*, betel, to which Guā-hāti, the capital of Assam, is said to owe its name. ↑

4

Rāmshā is one of the old Mauzas of Kamrup. It is situated close to Gauhati.—[Ed.] ↑

5

Sanskrit, *vamsa*, bamboo; *vāms-vāri* is the Assamese word for a bamboo grove.—[Ed.] ↑

6

The Moámári or Máomári bil is said to have given its name to the Moamaria faction which gave so much trouble in the time of the Assamese king Gaurinath Singha.—[Ed.] ↑

7

In adopting a word from the language of their Hindu neighbours (Assamese), the Kacháris often use an aspirated letter where none exists in the original.—S. E. ↑

8

It is certainly strange that amongst the Meches, who are kinsmen of the Kacháris, the sub-tribes are exogamous, whereas the Kachári sub-tribes are said by the author to have been originally endogamous.—[Ed.] ↑

9

Cf. the case of the Mech sub-tribes. ↑

10

Há, earth; chum (-gă-chúm), black (*cf.* Dimá gá-chum, black-water); sá, folk, people. ↑

11

"Śánti-Jal," water of peace (reconciliation), usually prepared by immersing in water leaves of the Tulsi plant, Dub grass, cow-dung, rice, &c. Money is sometimes added in the form of small silver coins (four-anna bits) or even rupees; and rings, or other personal ornaments, are sometimes thrown into this "Śánti-Jal." ↑

SECTION IV

Religion

General character of popular beliefs. The religion of the Kachári race is distinctly of the type commonly known as "animistic," and its underlying principle is characteristically one of *fear* or *dread*. The statement "*Timor fecit deos*" certainly holds good of this people in its widest and strictest sense; and their religion thus stands in very marked, not to say violent, contrast[1] with the teaching of the Faith in Christ. In the typical Kachári village as a rule neither idol nor place of worship is to be found; but to the Kachári mind and imagination earth, air, and sky are alike peopled with a vast number of invisible spiritual beings, known usually as "Modai," all possessing powers and faculties far greater than those of man, and almost invariably inclined to use these powers for malignant and malevolent, rather than benevolent, purposes. In a certain stage of moral and spiritual development men are undoubtedly influenced far more by what they *fear* than by what they *love*; and this truth certainly applies to the Kachári race in the most unqualified way. The Kachári

Duars of this district (Darrang) were in earlier days looked upon as being especially unhealthy, and to some extent they retain that character still. It has repeatedly fallen to the lot of the writer, when entering a Kachári village to find one or more of its inhabitants prostrate with malarial fever of a virulent type; and on asking what was wrong the reply has very commonly been "*modai hāmdang*," *i.e.*, an (evil) spirit has got hold (of me). And this reply may be looked upon as typical and characteristic, and as accurately expressing the very spirit and true inwardness of Kachári religion. Of sin, *i.e.*, the conscious violation of the moral Law of a righteous God, the Kachári has of course no idea whatever. But he does believe in the existence and active interference in the affairs of men of certain invisible spiritual beings who are the authors of sickness, famine, earthquakes, &c.; who are for the most part influenced by malevolent motives, and whose ill-will towards mankind must be propitiated and bought off by frequent offerings of rice, plantains, pigs, goats, poultry, &c., in ways regarding which some little information is given below.

Worship of ancestors. 1. Ancestor-worship would not seem to be in vogue to any extent among the Kacháris of this district, though perhaps it is not altogether unknown; *e.g.*, when the head of a family or other man of note passes away, it is not unusual at certain festivals to place on a platform a small quantity of the viands of which the deceased was known to be fond during his lifetime on earth, presumably for his use and behoof. No adult members of the village community will ever presume to touch these viands, though the village children are apparently at liberty to consume them at their pleasure.

Worship of natural forces. 2. The worship of natural forces also would seem to be not at all common, though some traces of it may perhaps be noted here and there. For instance, (A) in connection with the popular festival known as the

April (Vaisákh) *Bihu*, there takes place what is called the "*Parwa*" show or *bhotheli*, a festival apparently common to Hindu and Kachári alike. The *parwa* is a tall bamboo pole draped with rags, flags, &c., taken from the village on the last day of the *Bihu*, and put up in a field alongside a tree, where the people amuse themselves by dancing, wrestling, and tom-toming, &c., around it. It is possible that this may be a relic or survival of phallic worship, the *parwa* taking the place of the lingam or phallus. (B) Again, water would seem to have about it something of a sacred character in the mind of the average Kachári. The dead are often buried or cremated on or near the banks of running streams, which are also favourite localities for the celebration of the greater *pujas*. This reverence for water is perhaps specially marked among the Kacháris of North-east Bengal (Jalpaiguri, &c), in which part of the Province, Mr. Bryan Hodgson informs us, all the smaller streams are regarded as a kind of lesser deities (*dii inferiores*), whilst the Brahmaputra is looked upon as the *mother* of them all (*mater magna*). It may be noted also in this connection that one of the principal branches of the widely spread Bara race, *i.e.*, the people of the North Cachar Hills, still speak of themselves as *Di-má-sá*, *i.e.*, "sons of the big river," or "children of the great water," even though none of them would seem now to dwell anywhere near a large river or lake, &c. It may therefore perhaps be safely inferred that the element of water, though now apparently not often actually worshipped, has ever been held in special regard by the Kachári race.

Worship of deities. The Kachári Pantheon is a very extensive one, though it seems probable that only a comparatively small number are strictly of tribal or national origin, many having obviously been borrowed from their Hindu neighbours. The popular Kachári deities fall naturally into two classes, *i.e.*, (1) household gods (*nă-ni madái*); (2)

village gods (*gámi-ni madái*).[3] The former are worshipped *inside* the house, or at least in the homestead (compound); the latter by the whole village collectively, *outside* the house, and usually near the sacred grove of trees or bamboos, often to be seen some fifteen or twenty yards from the village, and known as the *thānsāli*. A long list of these gods is given in an interesting paper by Maulvi Mahibuddin Ahmed, some nineteen names of household gods being therein enumerated, whilst the village gods number no fewer than sixty-five. Only a small proportion of these deities would, however, seem to obtain recognition in this district (Darrang), and it hardly seems necessary to mention by name more than a few of them.

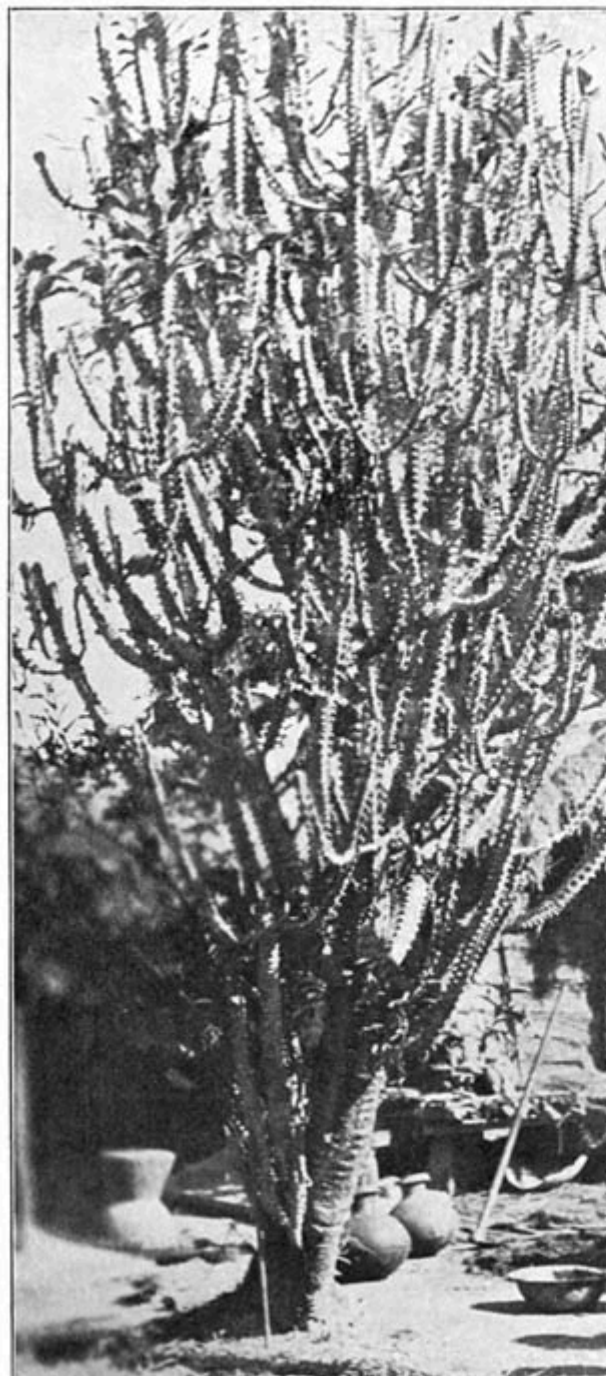
A. *Household Deities.*

Among the household deities may be placed the following: —

1. Bátháu brai, old Bátháu.
2. Mainão, otherwise known as Bhulli Buri, and looked upon as Bátháu's wife.
3. Áśu Mainão.
4. Śáli Mainão.
5. Song Rájá.
6. Song Brái.
7. Burá Bágh Rájá, &c., &c., &c.

1. Bátháu (*Siju*, i.e., *Euphorbia splendens*).

Of these household gods by far the most important is the first-mentioned, *i.e.*, Bátháu, who is pre-eminently the guardian of the family interests and family honour. He is never represented in idol form, but is well in evidence through his living symbol, the *siju* (*hiju*) tree (*Euphorbia splendens*), which is often to be seen in the Kachári homestead surrounded by a circular fence of split bamboo. Among the Meches of Goalpara, almost every home, it is said, has its *Bátháu* (*siju*), though in Darrang it is less frequently met with. Bátháu is said not to be worshipped separately, but always in conjunction with Ai-Deo. Inside the house a slightly raised altar, called *dhám*, is often erected in honour of Song Rájá, and at this women especially pay their devotions and make offerings, particularly at the monthly periods (menses). All offerings, however, made to Song Rájá are finally brought outside the house, and laid at the foot of Bátháu; and the writer has often seen such offerings in the form of heads of goats, pigs, fowls, &c., as well as plantains, *támul*-nuts, *pán*-leaves, *gazi* (*i.e.*, a mixture of rice and pulse), &c., humbly laid down for Bátháu's acceptance. In this way it is held that disease, famine, and misfortunes of all kinds may be kept at bay, through the influence of this powerful guardian of the family interest and well-being.





Siju Tree (*Euphorbia spl*

From a photograph by Mrs. H.

It may be added that it is apparently only among the northern section of the Kachári race that the *siju* tree is regarded with special reverence. The Garos are said to know this tree and to use certain parts of it for medical purposes *e.g.*, the preparation of poultices, &c.; but to them it is never an object of worship. The Dimásá of the North Cachar Hills, on the other hand, seem to have no special regard for the *siju* or any other tree.

2. Mainão (Ceres).

Only second to Bátháu is his good consort, Mainão, though, unlike her husband, she has no special emblem visible to the human eye. Her special function is that of "Guardian of the rice-fields";[4] and among a purely agricultural community like that of the Kacháris, she of course is held in very high regard. She is, in short, to the Kachári peasant very much what Ceres was to the old heathen Roman cultivator. Eggs are the offering that finds most favour in her eyes, and these are presented to her in unstinted quantity. She is apparently especially worshipped at the period of harvesting the *áśu* and *śáli* crops; hence the twofold designation given above (Nos. 3 and 4, household gods), Ásu Mainão, and Śáli Mainão.

Of the other domestic deities above mentioned, it is not

necessary to say much. Nos. 5 and 6 (Song Rájá and Song Brái) seem to be the especial objects of devotion to women, worshipped for the most part inside the house, whilst No. 7 (Burá Bágh Rájá) is apparently merely the name of the tiger, often spoken of with bated breath as the "monarch of the woods" (*banar-rájá*), especially by men travelling at night, when danger from the tiger may well be apprehended.

B. *Village Deities.*

There would seem to be little need to dwell much on the village deities; for no small proportion of them have evidently been adopted from the Hindu Pantheon, as will be obvious from the names given below. Some sixty-five such names are given in the valuable paper above mentioned of village deities recognised in Kamrup, though the writer only knows of some three or four of these gods as reverenced in this district (Darrang). Among these may perhaps be mentioned the following:—

1. Mero rájá.
2. Burá Mahádeo.
3. Burá gosain.
4. Jal Kubér.
5. Thal Kubér.
6. Ih Kubér.
7. Bih Kubér.
8. Kuber brai (masculine).
9. Kuber brui (feminine).
10. Sila Rai, &c., &c., &c., &c.

It is needless to continue the list, for almost all the names are obviously borrowed from popular Hinduism; *e.g.*, Kuber is almost certainly the Hindu god of wealth and of the lower regions (Pluto). Others are in all likelihood merely names of deified mortals of some pre-eminence above their fellow men; *cf.* Ram, Krishna, &c. A notable illustration of this principle of deification is probably that given as No. 10 in the above list, *i.e.*, Sila Rai.[5] This is almost certainly the name of the well-known Commander-in-Chief of the most famous of the Koch Kings, Nar Narayan, in whose time the Koch kingdom reached the zenith of its power. As a soldier and commander this man (Sila Rai) seems to have been the foremost captain of his time in North-east India; and his striking personality would seem so to have impressed the minds and imaginations of his contemporaries as to lead to his apotheosis after death.

As might be expected among a purely agricultural community, the great annual *pujas*, which are three in number, are directly connected with the ingathering of the three chief rice crops of the year, *i.e.*, the Áhu, Pharma, and Śáli crops. The dates for these annual *pujas* do not seem to be at all rigidly fixed, but are apparently settled by the village elders to meet the public convenience. There is no prescribed form of religious worship; indeed, the whole gathering is rather of the nature of a village merry-making than a religious service; and there is invariably a very large consumption of the national beverage (rice-beer) at all these gatherings.

There is said to be another *puja* known as *morong-puja*, of which the special object is to propitiate the cholera demon, to whom are made offerings of he-goats, pigeons, fowls and betel-nuts, &c. In addition to these, flowers, eggs, pounded rice-flour, &c., are sometimes placed on rafts and set afloat on a river; and occasionally animals (goats, &c.) are exposed in this way on rafts as an oblation to the river

god (*dŏi-ni madai*).[6] It may be taken for granted that, whenever these rafts are found on streams in the Kachári country, cholera or other malignant disease is or has been doing its deadly work among the people. In addition to the *pujas* above mentioned, which are more or less of a general character, offerings of goats, chickens, and a mixture of pulse and rice known as *gazi*, are often placed at the foot of certain trees, usually old trees, and finally left there. As a rule, only the *heads* of the goats, chicken, &c., so offered will be found at the foot of such trees, the bodies of the slaughtered animals being consumed by the offerers. These oblations are made, not by the village community as a whole, but by the heads of individual families, some one member of which is in severe trouble from sickness or other like cause. The money value of such offerings is sometimes not inconsiderable.

Priesthood

There is no authorised priestly caste among the Kacháris, nor are Brahmins ever employed in their religious ceremonies, these latter indeed being generally of a social, and even festive, rather than a religious character. In Kamrup, however, one of the recognised sub-tribes is, or was, known as "Brāhmarŏi," a name which seems to point to Brahmins as having a certain standing in the Bådå community. All religious offices are now discharged by *Deoris* or *Deodáis*, who are usually men of a certain age and recognised social position in the village community; village elders in fact. The office is not hereditary, and any one versed in the usual forms of exorcism, &c., can discharge it. Another class of persons employed in

religious ceremonies is known as the *Ojhá* or *Ojhá-Burá*, who is generally armed with shells, cowries, &c., by the manipulation of which he professes to be able to foretell prosperity or the reverse to those who consult him. These officials are supposed to be competent to deal with the ordinary ailments of village life by indicating the approximate method of propitiating the offended deity (*modai*), whose anger is held to be the cause of all the ills that flesh is heir to.

But in times of special emergency, *e.g.*, plague, pestilence, famine, &c., the services of the "possessed" woman,[7] the *Deodáni*, are called into action for a special *puja* organised on a somewhat large scale. These gatherings are not very common, but when they do occur the order of the proceedings is something as follows, as occasionally witnessed by the writer. A piece of ground about fifteen or twenty yards square, usually on the bank of a running stream, is selected for the purpose. The surface of the soil is carefully removed, and a rude screen of cotton cloth some six or eight feet high erected on bamboos at the western side of the cleared ground. At the eastern side a slight earthwork embankment, some three or four inches high and about a foot broad is thrown up; and on this a number of figures, usually seven or nine, but always an *odd* number, bearing a rude resemblance to the outlines of the human form, are placed in an upright position. These figures are roughly made of jungle grass twisted together, and are about one foot in height. Before each figure is placed a layer of the plantain tree with its concave side upwards, and in this are deposited the heads of slaughtered goats, pigeons, chickens, with salt, sugar-cane, plantains, *gazi* (a mixture of rice and pulse), &c., the whole being freely sprinkled with blood and pounded rice flour (*pitháguri*). The *Deodáni*, a somewhat weird-looking figure, with dishevelled hair, and vermilion-stained

forehead, wearing a long petticoat, dances up and down to and fro before these figures, keeping time roughly with the music of cymbals and tom-toms played by four or five men, who act as her assistants. The ceremony is a prolonged one, often extending over many hours: and the *Deodáni*, whose faculties are apparently quite absorbed in what she is doing and who seems for the time to be lifted above the world of time and sense, gradually works herself up to a state of excitement bordering on frenzy. At this stage, which is only slowly attained, a goat is brought forward and taken up before one of the figures above mentioned, when the *Deodáni*, with one stroke of the long sacrificial sword, known as the *imfi* and reserved exclusively for such purposes, severs the victim's head from the body. Most of the blood is held to be offered in sacrifice to the *madái*, before whose emblem the animal has been slaughtered; but some part is said to be sprinkled on the persons of the assembled worshippers. It is at this climax of the *puja*, *i.e.*, at the sacrificial slaughtering of the goat, that the *Deodáni* is supposed to become possessed of the knowledge she is in search of, *i.e.*, the name of the offended deity who has brought about the plague, &c., and also the best method of propitiating his anger; which usually involves an offering of pigs, goats, &c., to the angered god, and the giving of a feast to the whole village community, the expense being defrayed by a general contribution.

1. *Ceremonies Attending Birth.*

In a Kachári village community there would seem to be no formally recognised midwives (*dháis*), any respectable and

competent matron being at liberty to give attendance and assistance to the patient in such cases. In severing the umbilical cord no scissors, knife, or other implement of steel is ever used, nor is the severance effected at one stroke, but in a succession of slight cuts, *seven* such cuts being made in the case of a girl, and only *five* in that of a boy. The cutting instruments consist of thin hard strips of bamboo,[8] shaped roughly into the form of a knife; and a separate bamboo knife must be used in making each slight cut, seven such knives being thus made use of for a female child and five for a male. It is not unusual for one of the bystanders to give a name to the newly-born child at the severing of the umbilical cord. The good matron who officiates as midwife receives no money payment for her services, but on the mother becoming convalescent a feast is given at the parent's expense, in which pork and other flesh meat is always present in abundance; and at this feast the officiating midwife is accorded the place of honour, as some recognition of the value of her kindly ministrations in her neighbour's hour of trial and need.

For about a month or six weeks, (the period seems to vary within these limits) after giving birth to a child, the mother is held to be technically "unclean," and is subjected to certain social and religious limitations; *e.g.*, she may not approach the *dhám* or domestic altar commonly found inside a Kachári's dwelling-house, and on which she is ordinarily in the habit of making offerings of eggs, chickens, &c., in times of trouble. This period of *ceremonial* uncleanness is usually terminated by the use of the water of peace (*śánti-jal*). The *deori* freely sprinkles the mother as well as the house and its contents with this holy water, after which she is fully at liberty to resume social intercourse with her neighbours.[9]

Naming.

There does not seem to be any special principle underlying the giving of names to children, nor do such names as a rule resemble those of their fathers. Like some of the lower castes among their Hindu neighbours, children often take the name of the day or the month in which they were born.[10] Hence we often find such names as Deobar, Mangal, Budhu, as also Mághuá, Pháguná (names of months), &c., in use among the Kacháris. Other names are obviously adopted from the Hindus, *e.g.*, Gangá Rám, Sáti Rám, &c. Others, again, were probably given by the mother in infancy expressive of some peculiarity in the new-born child's mental or physical temperament. Of this type, probably, is a very common name, "Khángkhoá," *i.e.*, the "voracious one," the "great eater."[11] Another illustration is the name Gáb-grá, *i.e.*, the weeper, the crier, &c., &c. In short, any unusually prominent physical peculiarity is often seized upon to become the name by which the child is known throughout his whole after-life.

3. *Marriage.*

A. The marriage contract. From certain scattered scraps of information on the subject that have incidentally come to the writer's knowledge during the past forty years, it would seem that *marriage by capture* was largely, if not universally, in vogue among the Kacháris in earlier days. Some traces of this practice would seem to survive in the ordinary marriage ceremonial which still to a large extent holds the field. A case somewhat of this character came to the writer's knowledge some twenty-five or thirty years

ago. A young Kachári, employed as a village pandit some thirty miles from Tezpur, carried off a girl from the house of her parents some ten miles away. No actual violence apparently occurred in the matter, and very likely there had existed for some time previously a private understanding between the two young people concerned. But what was done clearly had not the approval of the girl's parents; for these latter laid a complaint on the subject before the writer, and claimed redress for the wrong done to them. When the offending pandit was called to account for his conduct, he simply pleaded in defence that what he had done was quite in accordance with the time-honoured custom of his forefathers: and on payment of the usual bride-price, at a somewhat enhanced rate, the parents raised no further objection to their daughter's union with the pandit.

But in modern times "marriage by capture" is rapidly passing out of vogue, if indeed it be not already absolutely a thing of the past; and the marriage contract is usually entered into in one of the four following ways:—

(*a*) The young people occasionally take the matter into their own hands, as in the case above mentioned, ignoring the wishes of their parents on either side. This procedure is looked upon by the community as blameworthy and irregular, but not invalid. The bride's parents claim an immediate payment of Rs. 5/- from the bridegroom, and also exact the bride-price at a higher rate than usual. But if these conditions are duly complied with, no further objections are as a rule made to the union.

(*b*) The more usual practice is as follows. When the son of the house attains a marriageable age, *i.e.*, from fifteen to twenty years, his parents at once set to work to find a suitable bride for him. Having made their choice, they pay a visit to the prospective bride's parents, taking with them

certain presents in the form of rice, liquor, betel-nuts, &c., and formally ask the daughter's hand for their son. If the presents are accepted by the girl's parents, it is assumed that the proposal is favourably received, and the respective parents at once proceed to settle the amount of the bride-price (*gádhan*),[12] which is always paid by the bridegroom's family to the parents of the bride. In Darrang the amount so paid rarely exceeds Rs. 40/- to Rs. 60/-, though in Kamrup and Goalpara it is said to be often double these sums; and even larger still among the Rábhás, Saraniyás, &c. In paying this formal visit to the prospective bride's parents, those of the bridegroom are always accompanied by some of the elders or leading men of their own village, these latter acting as witnesses of the marriage contract, and so constituting in their own persons a very effective, if irregular, system of marriage registration. The stipulated "bride-price" need not be paid at once, nor does the actual union take place for some months after the marriage-contract has been entered into. And in no case does the bride leave her parents' home until puberty has been attained; so that the manifold and obvious evils inseparable from the system of infant betrothals, and the prohibition of the marriage of child-widows among the higher castes of Hindus, happily find no place whatever in the more wholesome domestic life of the Kacháris.

(*c*) In cases where the bridegroom or his parents are unable to pay the bride-price demanded by the girl's parents, it is usual for the young man to give the equivalent in personal service in the house of the bride's parents, much as Jacob[13] served in Laban's house seven years for Rachel. The period of service is a matter of arrangement between the parents of the parties concerned, and seems to vary greatly, *i.e.*, from three or four to upwards of twelve or fifteen years. Cohabitation, however, is allowed after about twelve

or eighteen months' service, and at the conclusion of the full period, the young people are free to depart whithersoever they will, though they usually return to the house of the bridegroom's parents. This form of service is known commonly as "*Olaó ghar-jiyá*."

(*d*) A modification of the above form of service is that which is known as "*mál ghar-jiya*" (Darrang) or "*Khasrot-tháka ghar-jiya*" (Kamrup). In this case the prospective bridegroom severs all connection with his own family, and identifies himself completely with that of his bride, in whose house he serves until the death of her parents, when with his wife he is entitled to the whole or the usual share of their property. On that of his own parents or relatives he retains no claim whatever.

The actual ceremony of marriage among the Kacháris can perhaps hardly be looked upon as of a religious character, but must be regarded as more of the nature of a social and festive gathering. The order of proceedings is somewhat as follows:—On a fixed day a party of the bridegroom's friends, numbering some four or five women and thirty or forty men, set out for the house of the bride's parents or guardians. The bridegroom may himself accompany the party but more frequently does not. The immediate object of the journey is to bring the bride to the bridegroom's house. The party take with them nine loads of viands, *i.e.*, two men carry a pig, other two a large jar containing rice-liquor, four men carry loads of *támal-pan*, whilst the last man carries a quantity of eatables meant for the men and cowherds, who, it is supposed, might otherwise attempt to prevent the marriage party from reaching the bride's house. Two women called *bairati* are in charge of these materials for the wedding feast.[14] On reaching the bride's house her people pour freely on the whole party an irritating liquid known as *kachu páni* (water mixed with the juice of the *kachu* plant) and to this somewhat rough

welcome the bridegroom's party are bound to submit without complaining, although the liquid causes much irritation to, and even blisters, the skin. Finally the good things brought by the bridegroom's party are taken charge of by the bride's people, and the wedding feast is forthwith duly prepared. The village elders sit in front of the assembly, often a large one, and the younger people behind, each guest having in front of him either a brass plate or (more usually) a plantain leaf. On each of these plates the bride places a quantity of rice and curry, serving the elders first; and when all are duly provided for she makes obeisance to the assembled company, and sometimes kneels in their midst for their sanction and approval on entering upon the duties of married life, her husband when present kneeling with her. Then one of the village elders, acting as Deori, makes a short address on the obligations of the married state, ending by wishing every blessing, &c., to the newly wedded pair, the whole assembly joining in at the end with one voice "*erŏina záthang*," *i.e.*, "so may it be," (Amen). The rest of the day is spent in feasting and merry-making, but towards evening the bride is formally taken to the bridegroom's house. If on the journey she has to cross a river, road, or embankment (*áli*), &c., she is given at each such crossing nine areca nuts and nine pan-leaves as presents to overcome her assumed reluctance to proceed further. (Perhaps another relic of the "marriage by capture" practice.) Before the bride enters the bridegroom's house, those who bring her are entitled to receive a jar of molasses as well as one of rice-liquor, and are hospitably entertained for the night. It is said that Kachári custom sanctions a certain interval of time, sometimes amounting to five days, between the bride's entering her husband's house and the consummation of the marriage. All expenses attending the marriage festival, which may extend to Rs. 200/- and upwards, are borne by the family of the bridegroom, the

bride's people as a rule contributing nothing.

4. *Death.*

Immediately after death occurs, the corpse is carefully washed by the nearest relatives, the arms and legs straightened out, the head anointed with oil, and the hair reverently combed. A fowl or a pigeon is killed, and from its flesh a curry is prepared with vegetables and condiments. A portion of this food is then placed close by the deceased's head, and the act of feeding him with a little of it is carried out up to a certain point, though no food is as a matter of fact actually placed within his lips. This act is repeated some ten or twelve times, and what remains of the curry, &c., is then thrown away, no one being allowed to consume it. The dead man's body is then clothed with the best garments he owned in his lifetime, and the whole covered with a perfectly new cloth; and in this condition it is taken outside the homestead for final disposal.

Disposal of the dead. There are two recognised way of disposing of the dead, *i.e.*, (1) Burial and (2) Cremation. The latter is looked upon as the more correct and respectable, though from motives of economy the former is by far the more common. 1. BurialWhen burial is decided upon the corpse is carried to its last resting place, which is often but not always on the banks of a running stream, by the nearest surviving relatives, no women being permitted to attend. Should it be necessary for the burial party to cross a river or irrigation canal, a cord is usually stretched from bank to bank at the crossing place, either above or below the water, to serve a kind of bridge for the spirit

(*jiwa*), should he be at any time disposed to revisit the scenes amid which his earthly life has been passed.[15] Arrived at a suitable place (there are no recognised cemeteries for the interment), some pice are thrown on the spot, to purchase the ground from the deity (*madái*) to whom it is supposed to belong. The body is laid on the ground and the grave duly dug, but before placing the corpse therein, the friends and relatives make a solemn procession around it, five times in the case of a man and seven in that of a woman. The body is then placed in the grave, a somewhat shallow one, and the nearest relatives proceed to fill it with earth. In carrying out this process a certain precaution is taken, *i.e.*, a hollow reed or a stalk of jungle grass (*kher*) is placed perpendicularly in the grave extending from the nose of the deceased to a point somewhat above the natural level of the ground; and in filling the grave with earth, great care is taken not to injure or displace this reed, so that the deceased's spirit may be able to breathe should he so desire. After filling the grave four posts are erected over it, one at each corner; and threads passed around them, in order to prevent the spirits of other men from interfering with the repose of the deceased. In the case of well-to-do people a certain number of rupees are usually buried with the corpse, and even the poorer classes make offerings of pice, &c., for this pious purpose; whilst brass and other utensils needed in every-day life are almost always left on the grave, it being supposed that the deceased may require the use of these things in the new state of existence on which he has recently entered. Finally, a rough shed of thatch is put up close by the grave to shelter the deceased's spirit from rain and sun.

2. Cremation. Very much the same procedure is in vogue in the case of cremation, which is looked upon as the more respectable method of disposing of the dead among the

wealthier members of the community. Cremation usually takes place on or near the banks of running streams, and is prefaced by the formal buying of the land from the deity (*madái*) of the locality. Here too a certain difference is made in disposing of the corpse of a man and of a woman respectively; for in the case of a woman *seven* layers of wood are placed under the body and seven above it, whilst in dealing with a man's corpse *five* such layers under and five above the body are held to be sufficient. After placing the body on the funeral pile, the deceased's friends and relatives pass round it in procession, *five* times in the case of a man and *seven* in that of a woman (see above). The funeral pile is then set on fire on all four sides at once, and the fire carefully fed until every vestige of the deceased's body is consumed. The ashes are not carried away, but four posts are usually placed in the ground enclosing the oblong space on which the cremation has been carried out; and on the tops of these a cloth is spread, which is held to shelter the spirit of the deceased from sun and rain.

Indications of belief in life after death. From what has been written above, it would certainly seem that the Kachári has some idea, however vague and unsatisfactory, of a life prolonged after the great change we commonly call "death," though his notion of the future life is merely that of the "first (earthly) life renewed." It has obviously little or nothing in common with the hope of life eternal in Christ, *i.e.*, life *in* God, life *with* God, life *like* God, given us in the New Testament (see 1 Cor. xv.; Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 John iii. 2).

Festivities.

1. Domestic. From such information as the writer has been able to ascertain, there would seem to be few well-marked domestic festivities among the Kacháris, though the race is a very sociable and hospitable one, and the people entertain each other freely and frequently.

The two following may perhaps be mentioned:—

A. "*Mikham gadán zánái*," *i.e.*, the "eating of the new rice." This is a feast held about December 10th (there is apparently no fixed date), in celebration of the commencement of the cutting of the great rice crop of the year (*sáli dhán*). It is on this occasion that the proceeds of the newly harvested rice are first partaken of as an actual article of food. There is perhaps nothing of a religious character about it, its main feature being a very free consumption of rice-beer, often resulting in much drunkenness.

B. "*Mahu hanai*" (or *thàmfoi hasa-nai K*), *i.e.*, "the driving away of mosquitoes." This is a form of merry-making got up mainly by the young people of a village about the latter part of November or early in December, to celebrate the departure of the mosquito plague for the cold season. Some twenty-five years ago the writer was passing the night in a school-shed, and was aroused from sleep by much shouting, dancing, &c., just outside the door. On looking out into the moonlight he saw a group of fantastic figures, some of them clothed in dry plantain leaves, and wearing a head-dress made of thatch of preposterous proportions resembling an enormous conical-shaped "dunce cap." On inquiring the reason of the gathering, he was told that the performers were "driving away the mosquitoes." No doubt this is an amusement got up by the younger members of the community, who are sometimes rewarded for their efforts by small gifts of money, food, &c., from their elders (*cf.* "Guy Fawkes," at home).

2. Tribal. There would seem to be no distinctively tribal festivals characteristic of the Kacháris of this district (Darrang), unless the January and April *Bihus* can be regarded as such. The origin of these two festivals is still somewhat obscure and uncertain, and further light on the

subject is greatly to be desired. Certainly they are not *exclusively* Kachári festivals, for they are observed by the Hindus in this neighbourhood as well as by the Kacháris.[16] Among the latter the January Bihu is usually celebrated about the 12th of that month. For weeks previously the young people have been busy building "Bihu huts" of jungle thatch; also in erecting tall bamboos, sometimes surmounted by ragged flags, &c., while straw, thatch and other combustibles are piled up around these bamboos to the height of many feet. On the appointed Bihu night these sheds, &c., are all set fire to amid much rejoicing, dancing, singing, &c., and of course there is, as on all like occasions, a liberal consumption of the national rice-beer. For a month or two previously to this festival, the village boys and young people have had to guard the growing and ripening rice crops night and day; and in all likelihood this merry-making, which is very much of the nature of a "Harvest home," is largely an expression of their joy and gladness at being relieved from this hard and irksome duty.

The April Bihu, the origin of which it is not so easy to account for, seem to be a "Saturnalia" of much more objectionable character. The people abandon themselves freely both to drunkenness and other forms of licentiousness, and cases of serious assault and riot have been known to accompany and follow these gatherings. Among the Darrang Kacháris, this festival lasts for seven days, during which little or no work is done, the whole period being given up to merry-making, dancing, feasting, &c. As is the practice among their Hindu neighbours, on the opening day all cattle are taken to the nearest river or tank, and there formally bathed, and afterwards sprinkled with a preparation compounded of rice-beer (*zu*), tomatoes, and turmeric. The horns are smeared with oil, and occasionally oil, ashes, and pounded rice-flour are applied in patches to the bodies of the cattle. This duty discharged,

the people abandon themselves to sheer merriment, the younger folks especially giving themselves up to dancing and singing, &c. The verses sung at these festivals seem for the most part to be little better than mere meaningless jingle-jangle rhymes, made up on the spur of the moment, though occasionally some of them give an insight into the peculiar humour of the Kachári character and temperament. One or two samples of what is sung at these gatherings are given below:—

1. Agŏi, Boisági, faidá nang.
Dána bathar jánai-khai rang zágan zang.

2. Adá Puá Rám, laga laga thángdang;
Gámsá hádang, fáli hádang, mána brábdang?

3. Ádá Ráguna, fáriyá, ai fáriyá,
Námoisă, gunoisă, fáriyá, ádá fáriyá;

Áma máseyakhosa zuriyá, ádá zuriyá;
Dáosá máseyá-khosa zuriyá ádá zuriyá,
&c. &c. &c.

The above represents an exchange of playful banter between two members (brother and sister) of a Kachári family who are about to take part in a Bihu festival or some similar merry-making. The brother, Puá Rám, with all a young man's impatience and eagerness to enjoy the fun, calls to his sister, Boisagi, to come out from the house and join him at once, while she from within (couplet two) pleads womanlike for a few minutes longer grace to complete her personal adornment. Both brother and sister then join in calling on a near relative, a *mauzadár*, not to shirk his social responsibilities, but at once to provide the ways and means for a plentiful Bihu feast. The general sense of the three couplets, somewhat freely translated, is

given below:—

1. Sister Boisagi, come out and play;
This is our Bihu holiday;
Don't move inside the house all day.

2. Dear brother mine, I'll come anon
I'm putting my best *sari* on;
Five minutes' grace; don't harshly press;
We ladies *must* have time to dress.

3. Uncle's a wealthy *mauzadár*;
Long has he served the great Sirkar;
He'll gladly give a bounteous feast,
A round half-dozen pigs at least.
&c. &c. &c.

II

The following couplet, which is not connected with the foregoing, calls perhaps for some explanation. The words, of which a free translation is appended, are supposed to be uttered by a Kachári damsel, the village belle, to a fickle lover, who, after paying court to her for a time, deserts her and marries another. The faithless swain is a man of some little importance in the village community as a *dāng dāliyā*, or drum-major, one of his functions being to beat the big drum (*madal*) at all festivals, marriage processions, &c. He has the misfortune to lose his wife after a month or two of wedded life, and then would fain return to the "old love."

Armed therefore with his big drum of office and apparelled in his gayest attire, he presents himself before the Kachári belle and renews his suit for her hand. Now the average Kachári maiden has a wholesome sense of her own value (in married life she is not unfrequently the "better man" of the two), and no more relishes being "jilted" than her sisters in other and more civilised parts of the world. She at once, therefore, repels his advances in the most positive and unqualified way; and not only so, but in the presence of a large bevy of scornful village maidens, all highly resentful of the faithless lover's fickleness, she proceeds to pour contempt on his suit in the following severely sarcastic couplet ("facit indignatio versus"):—

Dáng-dáliyá, dángdáliyá.
Mozáng mozáng gán-blá-ba
Náng-kho náng-li-yá; nang-li-yá

Handsome raiment though you wear,
I'm not for you, I do declare.

(The original Kachári verse is singularly emphatic.)

Or

"You come to me in bright array:
I'm not for you; be off, I say.
This dandy swain my mate would be?
No 'second-hand lover,' girls, for me."

The above couplets may perhaps be fairly looked upon as typical illustrations of the Kachári temperament and character, and it may be inferred from them that human nature among this interesting race does not greatly differ from human nature in other and more civilised countries of the world.

It may perhaps be added that whilst the Garos living in the plains observe both the January and the April Bihus, their brethren in the Hills ignore both, though they would seem to have certain special harvest festivals of their own. The people of the North Cachar Hills, on the other hand, seem to observe only one annual Bihu, of the nature of a harvest home, at any time between October and December. These Kachári festivals are almost always attended by an immoderate consumption of the national rice-beer, not to say by actual drunkenness in not a few cases. On the other hand, they have their good side in that they help to keep the people to some extent beyond the influence of the destructive vortex of Hinduism, in which their simple primitive virtues might otherwise be so readily engulfed, and the adoption of which in whole or in part is invariably accompanied by a grave and deep-seated deterioration in conduct and character.

1

See S. Matt. xxii. 37, or (what was written many centuries earlier) Deut. vi. 5, "Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart." ↑

2

Modai (Assamese: *deota*, *devta*), a god, spirit, &c. *Hām-na* (Hindustani *pakar* or Assamese *dharna*): to catch, lay hold of, &c. Hence "*Modai hāmdang*, an (evil) spirit has seized (me)," "got hold (of me)." ↑

3

Nă, house (*ghar*). *Gámi*, village (*gáon*). ↑

4

It is probable that her great function, *i.e.*, guardianship of the paddy field, is indicated by her name; for *mai* = paddy (Assamese *dhán*); and *na* (*náo*) = to watch over, keep (Assamese *rakha*); hence *mai-náo* = "the protector of the rice-fields." ↑

5

See "The Koch Kings of Kamrup," by E. A. Gait, Esq., I.C.S. ↑

6

I have seen such a *puja* on the Manas river. The principal offering to the river god was a duck. ↑

7

Cf. St. Luke's account of the "Pythonissa," Acts xvi. 16–18. ↑

8

Cf. Khasi birth custom, p. 124, "The Khasis."—[Ed.] ↑

9

Cf. the Jewish ceremonial described in Leviticus, xii. ↑

10

Cf. the well-known instance of "man Friday" in *Robinson Crusoe*. ↑

11

It will be remembered that the Kacháris are sometimes spoken of as "Children of Bhim" (Mahabharat), who is said on one occasion to have eaten up *unaided* the meal provided for himself and his four brothers. ↑

12

Assamese, *gā-dhan*, body-price.—[Ed.] ↑

13

See Genesis, xxix. 20. Very eloquent in their simplicity and straightforwardness are the words in which the sacred writer describes this "tale of true love" in the days when the world was young. "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel and *they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her*." "The labour we delight in physics pain." ↑

14

This may be a survival of the old practice "marriage by capture." ↑

15

Another instance of the prevalence of a belief that spirits cannot cross running water without assistance. (Cf. *The Khasis*, pp. 135, 141.—Ed.) ↑

16

The interesting thing is that a Visu festival is also in use in Eastern Bengal. The matter is one which might be investigated, say, by the Vangiya Sāhitya Parisat.—[Ed.] ↑

SECTION V

Folk-Lore, Traditions and Superstitions

On this section of the subject there is no need to dwell at any length; indeed, materials for the purpose are to a great extent wanting. Of traditions, properly so called, whether historical or otherwise, the Kacháris of this district would seem to be almost absolutely destitute. Nor can they be regarded as a superstitious race, for it is only when suffering from a serious outbreak of cholera, *Kálá-azár*, or other like public calamity, that they make frequent, and sometimes costly, offerings to their deities as shown in some detail in the preceding section. As a rule the people are of a bright, cheerful disposition; and as a planter friend once remarked to the writer, of all the various races employed on his extensive tea estates the Kacháris were the only people who might be frequently heard whistling merrily as they went to and from their daily toil. Moreover, the subject of Kachári folk-lore has already been effectively dealt with by a writer fully competent to do it ample justice; and perhaps the objects aimed at in this section will be best attained by re-issuing three or four of the more characteristic and typical of the interesting series of Kachári folk-tales collected by this writer, some fifteen years since, from an intelligent member of the Kachári race still (1906) resident in this district (Darrang).[1]



Ka

Fron

I

In Section IV some reasons have been given for the view that the Kachâri race has a special respect, if not reverence, for the element of *water*, especially perhaps for flowing water, rivers, &c. And the latter part of the following folk-tale furnishes some sort of explanation of this presumed respect and reverence.

Dùimá dùisá ni khonángá *How the rivers came made.*

Sánì brai buru mantime Phá unadu bisun gothan brai- buru zálangbá, buruwí zingasán brainwi khithán “Brai, zangfuthá zi old, danathe fisáfolk dangy, bísùn said má to zánánai thángsham?” Erui “How bungshá brai these mai our hu children khàngnu lági food Khuwenáu thángnánai, mai are

Once upon a there lived a -and -an woman. Asánánai when háy wise, were futhá old, the folk woman said to nánai sham?” id, “How shá all these our children nu food wenáu nánai, are

sobagione?”
bisoSo
áru the
lai- old
megoman,
láfá travelled
megofar,
bifùto
mánthe
ni great
bígod
zuluKuvera,[4]
bínáthai
nå- god
i- of
au riches,
lábonáidai
sànstaking
sànzfrom
lámáihim
hor seedlings
thánóifai,
nå paddy,
manpulse,
fai- mustard,
nánaand
burugourds,
khithjánnisyed
“Ángfor
gásenight
bigodays
zuluand
lábonai.”
Phánreached
nå- his
i- home.

au And
sànnæ-after
su staying
thánánai,
khetcouple
khàmnu
lági days
sorahe
fithásset
gúnforth
lánánai
há cultivate,
naintaking
lági dry
thángood
naiswith
Phárhim.
gahàAnd
há first
datshe
nai- marked
ui out
frábai
fátbrpiece
thingof
bu rich
zuráland
khárbýnai
dinnpháuing
nå boundaries
fainain.
Unaall
sànsfour
ni- sides
khálof
khodál,

sekhándi
bifursó
mánicame
lánáhome.
thángmáAmáhai
hágrágain
eonámeai
áru set
bi out
hágrámorkho
saundayi
hákhwith
mazángong
khámandise.
Biniáxe,
sànzándi
sànàcut
áru and
sà burned
khláthe
fàtbjungle
khulandnánai
khomeaned
bruithing
phongsil,
phongkhe
záunafter.

worshipping
on
each
side
of
his
field
—
on

the
east
and
on
the
west,
on
the
north
and
on
the
south
—
he
struck
one
blow
with
his
hoe
on
each
side.

Biau	And
há	when
gáse	all
man	was
Phán	ready,
baidi	the
baido	old
mai	man
áru	planted
fifáng	his
megse	seedlings
thaigo	of
boikha	barbous
funás	sorts,
hunai	and.
Phán	finally
hábá	went
zapbá	home
braia	and
nåi-	rested.
au	And
thán	son,
ziraia	as
nánai	time
thán	went
Obás	by,
ázibt	the
dang	old
khali	woman
dang	desired
sàns	vehemently
burut	tiá
mai	see
nain	how
lági	the

brai-kho-ps
lugu-were
hom-gati-ng
Khi-nto.
brai-But
bung-thai-se
“Lam-khá-lau
dui man
guiá-said,
Nang-“There
dui is
gáng-khá
áng water
mau-on-frai
hun-thí-ë
The-obad,
bi and
brai-if
ni you
khom-ang-w
khná-sthing-slábá
emb-yáb-rá
brai-khid
hom-gati-khai
láng-náng-
nais-relief.”
Phán-But
thán-ghui
thán-persisted
mai-in-d
há prevailed,
man-and
si made
man-her
si husband
zábá-take

buruli- her
há along.
dui And
gángsánai they
brainá and
bungmaise,
“Ángnow
nangquite
duhuclose
nu to
khithédangman,
nonggaband’s
Theofield,
ángnihehold,
khontheg
khnáold
i- woman
álábábegan
fainaiai
ángkhéo
dukhvery
hùiùithirsty.
EreùAnd
bungthá,
buruiold
bungmaise,
“Dinheing
áng enraged,
dùi cried
manáWgabá
thoi- did
si- I
gan.tell
Nangyou?

áng-There
nu is
dui no
hunu-water
nánggo.”
Phára-et
unau-you
braiá-would
mungo-me.”
upai-But
mansi-he,
zánábrai-ng
dùi a
namu-woman,
nángsaid-se.
Nam-“If
namyou-u
fukudi-manse
nubánot
bi give
buru-me
megto-kho
hí drink
zang-I
khánshall
be die.
fuku-Si-
hálá-water
lángyou-se.
Aru must
braiá-procure
bungu-aise
“Nangst
be you
fukuri-an.”
kho So

naiá-bá
dùi old
láng-nan,
Khinse-ing
dùi no
láng-bar
rù way,
máb-ávent
máb-tó
dùi seek
ni for
dau water.
áru And
háng-sin-rá
birlai-ong
bá, search,
bikhse-ing
khnán-ánai,
bikhtank,
nainhe
lubu-bonámd
nai- the
naise-old
Beawoman's
daufe-yes
gelén-with
áru a
rong-cloth
zlain-aid
nunáthrai-gged
bihábar
brai to
zangthe
rongwater's
zlain-edge
monand

zánasiaid
Obásu
braiher,
khàm“Drink
buruiá
ágáryou
Pháwill,
braibut
buruink
khománg
lánupon
gnánthe
zánasek.”
ObáNow
bisuthé
áji- ducks
bu- and
thaiother
khálwater-
bu- fowl
thaiwere
gáthplaying
gáthini
zánatise.
Zábáwater,
bisuakdo
fisínwere
háekmaking
braiá
bisukery
buruinise,
khoráagking
zangand
Hemquacking.
ni And,
házthe

au	old
lángwámai	woman
beaubai	being
fukuri	curious,
manlik	like
khamánai	all
baidi	her
baidsi	sex,
ná	peeped
khàmánai	at
dùiat	them.
hogàmáthai	At
dinbsreinse	seeing

them at their play, she too desired to be happy in her husband’s society, and, though he was very loth, prevailed with him.

And
so
in
due
course
there
were
born
to
them
many
sons
and
daughters.
And
then,
in
order
to
provide
for
their
food,
he
journeyed
to
the
Himálayas
and
digged
a
great
tank,
stocked
with
many

kinds
of
fishes.

Phárá unau Sri braiá suimó fudrí, máse lánágoi mùi sessá áru khusung námthai námwiay dùi gángsis dangphrai. Ereadong, Sri a- braiá be for fukudear thángand fnángbares naisand Beatòrtoises. dùi And nunámphen lángbo nameaibáé, náfrá bikhto raidamagisa, “Áfá, nangbe

Now, one day the god Sri, the good luck, sung that way with his white long, hunting for dear and bares and tortoises. And when he came to the river, “Áfá, you

benitank,
dùi behold
langbá, a
zangfuk kho
gahàre ry
khanthiásiggan.”
Beau But
bi when
sumhe
lánástopped
dùikto
lángbá, nk,
náfrá he
bungfish s,
“Dá said
nangto
zangfunkhu
Loitha gerly
hálágthat
lánghè
Beauust
Sri grant
braiá hem
gaigainu
lauthboon
zangin
dru-return
dru for
bu- their
bu- water.
bá To
khithwhich
khithhe
dùi assented;
bù- and
hùi when

bùnahe,
aru had
náfrásatisfied
bu his
fainathirst,
Bibathdinu
dùisafishes
zánasaid,
Obásu“Take
unauus
náfrato
Sri the
brai-great
nu river,
láo the
thaisBrahmaputra
áru (or
khumLohit).”
thaisSo
hotnthise.
Phárgod
bikhSriu
lábotniadai
sásethem
khumtomá-
ni his
nå- staff,
i- and
au drew
háphthibá
binuafter
zo him,
mikhmàking
áru runnels
omáof
másewater.

buthánai hùnathai. Phárisokhá naibá Sri braiá be made. khumárá kho bini khumánu hunaisa. Hubá bi khumárákho dànkhumbá thákáand gazá, mangónai. áru And, báti-taking se these khàmwith záhùnhim lági to omáa buthámy house, Áru house, omáhis bikhanu2 man-regaled se him dinnwith. Zákhúng-ùi- beer

frábu and
fainu pig's
námthisi; flesh;
omáand
bikhinukho
Sri the
brainu morning
hùnaise.
Hùbú gave
áru his
braiá friend
laukhi the
khumpumpkin.
hùnaBut
Bi when
lau- his
au friend
darbi cut
gazàopen
dangthe an.
Khimpumpkin,
be it
khoràngkhaed
braiá nothing
mithibáut
Áru pure
bini silver.
khumSo
bu he
bi- bade
nu the
khithgód
i- Sri
a- stay
khùisanother
Unaday,

braiá- and
nåi- brewed
au fresh
faináser. liser
Áru and
biháki killed
nå- another
i- pig,
au and
bini when
fisázhe
kho was
zábrgoing
zánawa
thángave
nunáser.
Bi a
láo flitch
aru of
khumbaco-
kho to
khumtaké
kho with
hùláhim.
naikSo
bibaithe
zabrgod
zánaSri
áru gave
bini him
khumahsiá-
bu the
be gourd.
lao But
áru when
khumbrá-

kho cut
lákhopen-
aikhthe
zabrágourd,
gabrìp
zánáontained
thánáisthing
Obásut
bini pure
unaugold.
náfrÁ And
ozá so
zá- the
thí- god
nánaSri
bisujourneyed
ni to
nå- his
i- home.
au And
thángyhém
gadáne
nai- got
hùi- there,
nánahe
khithónaise
“Nangat
sur his
zusálittle
mairdaughter
áru was
goe very
zoráisk.
áru And
dau that
màswas

lánábecause
duishe
i- had
au given
hùnáway
khulumbá,
nangpresents
sur- which
há the
zabrfishes
zágahad
Besumade
bibahim.
nu But
khámenái
zabrfishes
zanatook
Binijhi
dá on
Bårâfim,
duisánd
duimáme
furkho
khulumu.
Zapbai.
the
guise
of
physicians,
and
told
him
that
if
he
would

worship
and
do
sacrifice
on
the
banks
of
rivers,
then
his
daughter
would
be
healed;
which
he
did.
And
that
is
why
we
Kacháris
worship
rivers.
And
that
is
all.

II

The moral of the following story is a thoroughly sound one. It is obviously a kind of sermon on such familiar texts as “Procrastination is the thief of time,” “Never put off to to-morrow what you should do to-day,” &c. Its teaching is clearly the same as that which finds expression in the well-known words:

“There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune:
Omitted, all the voyage of their lives
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.”


A.C.T.



KACHÁRI WOMAN.

Sásě olsia gåthå ni khoungy

The Story of the Lazy Boy.

Sásè olsiá gåthå dangman.
There was once a lazy boy.
Bi málai háli oinái mai gai zap-bá, obás bi mánmisár dublipaddy, háli oi-hùi-dangsetting Phárfor Buthor braiá olsiá gåthå kho háli oinaof nunái bi season, thángsaing haekhai, bungsaise, “Hei The gåthåseason

nangthai
dá gone;
má what
háli are
oidayou
ùi, ploughing
buthúm
mobáu-?
nu The
thángbad
Dá is
mai all
gaibá
má out,
zá- and
bau-it
nu?” is
Theobtu.”
bi But
bikhi
nai- boy
finá, would
mosoni
buá listen
dhuni
dhuni
dhàm
dhàm
bunáimai,
natzeni
nat- beating
flet his
háli cattle
oibai
tháiùm
Unahe

braiávent.
khomAnd
khomwhen
sungthai khai
gåthåd
bràp-man
nánaigain
nai-and
gedaugain
nánaiquestioned
bung-him,
naisbe,
“Nangiad
máuñ“What
brai sort
lùi? of
Ángold
kho man
háli is
oinathis?
be Can
baidhe
sungthai
tháius?see
Ángthat
má I
zádang,
áng busy?
su I
mithknow.”
Beauvery
braiávell
bungwhite
“Nonggá,
lui am
áfá, about.”

áng But
nangkho
gahàn ond
khománg-
sù said
khithámly,
námáNay.”
Beamy
gåthåsán:
bunghuise
“Máit
khománg
dangòr
Mámyour
kithágood
Ángthat
háli I
oinuwould
sàn speak
zolángbai.”
Obáyou.”
braiáAnd
bunghuise
“Dáboy
háli said
oinámáSpeak
má quickly
zánuthen,
Buthand
thánghai,”
hanhòne
gåthåvath
bungnáise
“Bi And
bobething
thángkhu?

Mauman thangkidu, nang "My ángnson, kithánai hu. season Ángis mai gone; gainwhat manábái, ls ma it zánáthai tháng-lough gan? How?" Obás-And braiáthen bungthe-ise "Nanboy aglánried máláiWhere zangthas luguise háli gone? oinánAnd mai when gaibáthas hàmitauman, dálaigone? buthArkho sùr why nunúthas hágoit, áru gone? mábAnd bikhhow laifish-all

nu?” I
Beaufind
gåthata?”
bungBrai se
“Nang e
khithokhánai
hunuman
hábáof
áng the
bikhseason
zerusibáb,u
lábon“You
hágansh”ould
Hanhave
bikhploughed
braiáwhen
buluothers
haekdhal.
khithThe aise
“Nangeason
bethhas
thángone,
thábánd
khåmåo
phute-man
thru-can
thru bring
brai it
sáseback.”
thokBut
thunthe ai
dublboy
gezesaid,
gezen“I
thángmust
nugabring

Obáirtiá
nangback;
bikhonse,
homhow
Áru shall
bi I
zereeat,
khíthaand
i- how
u, shall
nangI
bebaidam
khàmDui”
hantéhai,
buthome
braiáwhere
thánignaisei.
Obáissu
gåthagone.”
háli And
hogàrsnánai
nåiahe
fainámaiuld
bimanot
burukho
mánthe
khàngod
songgo,
hùnáfinally,
zaùilosing
lángpatience,
bimàhe
kithánaidse
“Ai,“You
nanggo
gábuover

fungthárie,
khàrand
songmáuai
hù, will
áru find
maiang
khothákse
bunmánai
hù. with
Anga
buthsnow-
braikwhite
husuhead
lángploughing
nù in
nánggo.
Manfield.
thu You
dini get
áng hold
háli of
oinahim
brai and
sásedo
fainársai
mai he
gainthis
Buthyoná.”
thángSo
bai saying,
hanmánai
kithánáide,
áru his
bikhescape.
hùsùThen
lángthe

manlagah,
áru hastened
bi home
zereto
khámhinu
thinu mother
bebaandil-
nu bade
khàmher
hannámaki
kithalángmai."
Obásquickly,
buriánd
okhátie
naibáim
khàmup
songsámai
gåthákho
zá- to
hù- take
ùi with
làngkim
hù- on
ui the
mainmorrow,
khotárse
bunmemai
hunámais
gåthågoing
kho to
hogámmaise.
Gåthåack
thántui
thángdeparted
zaikhamon
lugùfor

manù, ploughing.
bikhonù sungù, "For," said
bisur bungù, he,
"Buthái thángbai hannánai mithígo. "when I was ploughing to-
Bi máb ráu áru bobething thángkhu, bikhò zangfúr khithánu haiá! day, an old man told me that the
Beanná gåthåå gadaar srau zánánai bobething thán gan hannánai zerenù manù erenù dubù gezer gezer thábar baibà gazánàu season was gone, and that if I went after him and pursued him I would find him, and

brai that
sáseI
nu- must
hotnadise.
Nuhanabá
binuhe
buthwould
zánùtell
nánggo.”
nungSúnai,
bikhshe
bungonaise
“Áfávery
ràthàràearly
dasein
ràthàthe
Ángmorning,
nangand,
ni- giving
au him
mantse
khoràng
sungand
námdinkg.”
Thesbut
braiàhim
khnáisonglábá
thánghisi
thàiùway.
Gàthàànà-
bu as
khithe
khithwent,
thánghei
thángskied
khithàlangu.

Gabha hazang
braiá métet
nai “Can
fafimá mainai
bungá galise
“Máme
hekhá where
hekhá thing
sùr old
gåthålùi
mau of
lùi the
nangsá sa?”ön
hanmá másai
sungá háne?”
gåthá Bá ut
bungá thay se
“Áfá said,
brai,“Everyone
dá knows
brapha that
áng the
manse ason
dukhá isau
gaglá gáne,
nai, but
nangá where
khátha thiau
faidá ang,”
hanbá gáone,
braiá or
“Máwá wáy
khitha tá;
mámá isár
khitbá gáne,
áng who

thángan
nángay?"
ángha
nåá last,
gazàw,
hor-he
tho-was
hùi-nearly
gan;in
hanndis-
Obáhe
gåthsáw
khithámaise,
"Áfáld
áng man
nangkbughing
buthafar
brai off,
baidand
nuïùshouted
Binikhai
nangim
ángkhstay
dá a
buthàtoment,
Málfáther,
boibstay;
mai I
gaithwånt
bai; to
áng ask
un you
zánámai
dasequestion."
bù But
gainthe

há- old
e- man
khui was
Binikhai,
nang and
dase went
thánghis
fáiway.
bá Then
ángthe
mai lad
zágapursued
bungmikhai,
brai and
binu never
khithá- ceased
naise, calling
“Áng after
dá him
faibai, till
thángat
fá- last
finnthe
hálió, old
nang man
benifor
mánpatience,
thángturned
nánaupon
zesehim,
háiuand
gathásaid,
gabrá“What
háli pertinacious
oinánoisy
mai lad

gaihìsithán g.”
Obásbis,
gåthåwho
fainámain’t
zerehave
manme
erenalone?”
khotBut-
khinthe
kho lad
gaibsaid,
nánáTi Be
dinnnaste.
Zaplangry,
my
father;
I
am
fallen
into
great
trouble,
and
it
behoves
you
to
help
me.”
“Speak
quickly,
then,”
said
the
old
man.

And
the
boy
said,
“I
take
you
to
be
the
old
man
of
the
season,
and
I
pray
you
not
to
slay
me.
All
the
others
have
planted
out
their
paddy,
and
I
have
fallen
behind,

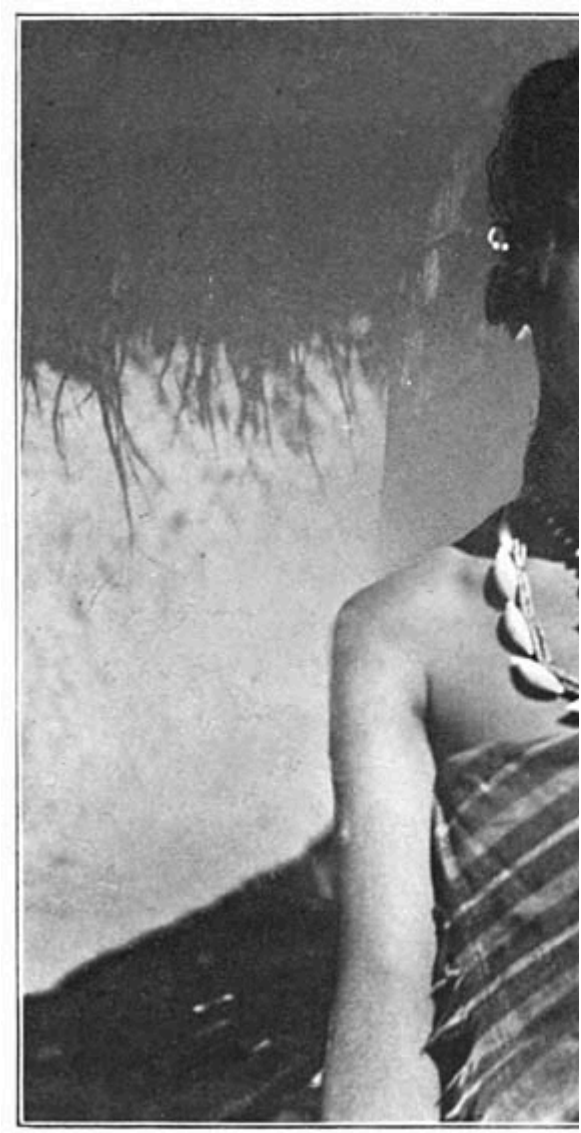
and
have
planted
nothing.
Therefore,
unless
you
turn
back,
I
cannot
hope
to
get
any
harvest."
But
the
old
man
said,
"It
is
too
late
for
me
to
return.
Go
you
back,
and
plant
your
paddy

as
best
you
can."
And
so
the
lad
hastened
back
and
planted
out
his
seedlings
in
such
heedless
haste
as
became
him.
And
that's
all.

III

By his Hindu neighbours the Kachári is often looked upon as a Bœotian, a simpleton from whom little in the way of intelligent action is to be expected. And undoubtedly in the matter of mere book-learning he is never likely to take a

very high place, nor will he shine brightly in the examination-room as an ordinary competitor. On the other hand, he is often endowed with certain practical qualities which are of great value to him in the battle of life. He usually has no small share of what is well called "the *saving* sense of *humour*," which prevents him from taking himself too seriously, and does not a little to lighten for him the cares and toils of life. Of his possession of this invaluable endowment many illustrations will be found in the collection of Kachári Folk-tales, &c., referred to above, a volume which the curious in such matters will do well to consult. And in addition to his sense of humour, he has often a goodly supply of sound homely *mother wit*, which stands him in good stead when brought into relations with other men, who from a merely intellectual point of view are undoubtedly his superiors. These, and other like endowments of great price, often enable him to seize with unerring instinct on the weak points of an opponent's position and to avail himself of them with no little dexterity and success. In the following amusing story, for instance, the simple (?) Kachári servant completely outwits his astute Bráhmin master, turning the tables on the latter to his no small dismay and discomfiture.



Kachâri Gi

From a Photograp

Bámáru *The*
Bráhmin
bini *and*
sákoni *his*
Servant.
Khoráng.

Sáse There
Bámwas
dangman,
áru a
bihá Bráhmin
sákowho
sásehad
dangman.
Sànservant.
sáneAnd
zangone
Bámday
ni when
bi- they
hau-were
bikhgoing
ni to
nåiathe
thanghouse
nù- of
lági the
thálibráhmin's
gur mother-
gákhin-
soralaw,
lánáthai
sákhrBráhmin
kho gave
bán his
hùnáservant
nai, a
bikhbunch
khithof
"Napaise
be and

thálí other
furkha things
dá to
zá. carry,
Zábá, and
ángha said
khitha to
fàtse him,
bù “Now,
megon mind
dangyòu
Eru don’t
hanmá ái
thángthuise
thánplantains,
Phárfor
unaI
boi can
sákhomá
mikhjàm
ukhuibá,
thálí well
kho behind
lánánai,
thaisi
thaisan
binuin
un- front.”
phatAnd,
si so
khithainyángi,
bebahidinu
boibò- marched
kho- ahead.
bù And
zà- presently

thro- the
láng- servant,
Phár- getting
una- hungry
bisu- plucked
dàp- and
zirai- of
hùiba- the
Bámu- plantains
bibà- from
nuea- the
sákhu- bunch,
ni and,
sigá- holding
au it
sung- out
“Bi- to
má his
zákhu- master’s
O- back,
sákha- to
bung- in
“áng- And
duk- this
hui- he
nù did
náng- again
khitha- Kinai
bi again
thálit- till
furkha- the
zába- the
Áru- plantains
dá were
nang- gone.
máni- And

sung- when
dang- ?" he
Bebá- Bábu min
Bámu- presently
bolo- asked
háekha- what
sri had
sri become
thán- of se.
Phárá- the
besu- road,
beau- the
khàm- servant
song- said,
zá- "You
nu- told
lági me
zothon you
khàm- would se,
áru see
beau- behind
ná as
khaw- will
má- as
ne- in
sù front.
man- Song-
man I
Bi- showed
sákhon- you
máse- each
buá plantain
hun- before,
gáse- hu
Bámu- ná
lánai- se.

Phára zebláy khàm mansaid naisan, sàne- bù zánu lági zodangman. Ereamu sákhora sungnaise “Bámun gohàm, ná khawaaiá máse buá daugaid, ná dulù dulù daugaid?” Beamu Bámuna bungnaise “Dulu dulu daugaid! Obà bi bini ná máseknó bini

And you never said anything.” So the Bráhmin went his way speechless. Presently they stopped to cook their midday meal, and they had got with them a few *khawai* fish. But the Bráhmin gave only

khàm one
au to
khubi his-
hot- servant,
det and,
“Mak kept
thu the
be rest
hàtsing himself.
daug And
háia, when
nang he
ni was
zang about
dulùk to
záthang.”
Bea the
gaigar- servant
ni asked
khoring in-
zang- “Oh!
nu Bráhmin,
zenma do
bikho *khawai*
mung fish
bá swim
bung- about
nu singly
haiáo or
khuise. Una shoals?”
khàm Tho
sákhor which
hàtsing the
man- Bráhmin
said,

“Why,
in
shoals,
of
course.”
So
the
servant
said,
“Then
my
fish
had
better
go
with
yours.”
And,
so
saying,
he
threw
his
fish
on
the
Bráhmin’s
mess,
which
was
defiled.
So
the
Bráhmin
got
no

dinner,
and
the
servant
ate
the
whole.

Phára binithánthánsimlbifángdulùsenunámBámonkho sungoha,be nunabongfrámábongBámkhithá“sirSákbungha:“Sirnung?”Bikhhirmhanu Phára obásaphorbá phorbá

A little later they came across a number of servants sitting together, and asked them, “Are you the servants of your master, then?” “Yes,” they replied. “Is he at home?” “Yes, sir, he is at home.” Then they said: “Sir, is your master a Brahmin (being an educated man) or a Sudra? These

sonu-are
lági sirmolu.”
khorang Bang
khálthe the
naisi servant
Phársaid,
gurkhi “Ní not
dulùse,
lugùnot
mansánai,
bisuithese
sung-are
bá, himulu,”
“himaulu”
hannáfiried
bisuto
bungraise.
Obáfive
sungá-lows
hoá-that
lábáit
Bámwaskho
phongbá,
sonaand,
And
meeting
some
cowherd
boys,
he
asked
them
what
the
trees
were.
And

when
they
said
“himulu,”
he
gave
the
Bráhmin
five
blows
without
further
question.

Áru bebá thángui burmá dulùsi nunáo sákhi “Á Bámkho sungmai “Bámse goháni, boi gángse zába tháni zanthar fur má, bungbe” Bámbrá khithái, “Bifur ság.” Sákhar bungmáise” “Nungá, bifur ságoni.” Beachi bibái “Nou Bámsoná phongbá so- zá-

Next thángui thángui burmá dulùsi nunáo sákhi “And Bámkho sungmai “Bámse gohání, boi gángse zába tháni zanthar fur grazing?” má, And bungbe?” Bámbrá khithái, “These ság.” Sákhar bungmáise” “Nungá, bifur ságoni.” Beachi bibái “Not Bámsoná phongbá so- zá-

Next day thángui thángui burmá dulùsi nunáo sákhi “And Bámkho sungmai “Bámse gohání, boi Bráhmin, gángse zába animals tháni that zanthar re- fur grazing?” má, And bungbe?” Bámbrá Bráhmin khithái, “These ság.” Sákhar bungmáise” “Nungá, bifur the ságoni.” servant Beachi bibái “Not Bámsoná phongbá so- so.

Next day thángui thángui burmá dulùsi nunáo sákhi “And Bámkho sungmai “Bámse gohání, boi Bráhmin, gángse zába animals tháni that zanthar re- fur grazing?” má, And bungbe?” Bámbrá Bráhmin khithái, “These ság.” Sákhar bungmáise” “Nungá, bifur the ságoni.” servant Beachi bibái “Not Bámsoná phongbá so- so.

naisa are
Áru chágali.”
binifa And
thángna ná nai
dáu-result,
ba as
dulùn efore,
nunáma nai
sungna nai se.
“Bámna nan
gohabra, Bráhmin
befun was
má worsted
dáu?” ind
Bámgona á
bungna nai se
“Nanbo lows.
bifuna khan
mithia? xt
Bifuthakhe
bog came
hanuna ross
Bi a
bungnauke
“Máa of
bog paddy-
hanubi lds,
Nungsáa ách
Bikhna he
bogu Bráhmin
hanuna alled
Beaúna og,”
bebabidinu
Bámna á
phonsgbáa ant
sozá “Boguli.”

naise And
Unau again
bi he
manw was
slokworsted
hanmade:
got
his
five
blows.
On
which
he
consoled
himself
by
reciting
an
Assamese
saying,
to
the
effect
that
it
is
ill
arguing
with
a
fool:

“Ság sirm bog ba- kára Tini pánc panra kil sudá akára

“Ság silu bog ba- kára Tini pánch panra kil sudá akára.”

Phá And
bini from
thán their
bihaw wife
ni now
nå come
khátha hear
manthé, this,
sákhá Brahmin's
thin- mother-
hot- in-
gru- law's
nánai house,
khitha and
“Nang the
thán Brahmin
mánwá was
khàm become
song very
thin; hungry,
manáthu
ángkha sent
mikhán him
ukhu servant
su- on
dangá ahead
Phátha to
bibán the
nù them
bi to
thángá eat
Bámsu supper
ni ready.
bikhán So
hángkha he

buthàrnái sorrowful
sobai went
khárên on
zangahead and
mikhàn bade
songbáthai the
dinnu Brâhmin's
khithàisei, mother-
áru in-law
bungnaise, "Nang
“Nangwi come
nángzóok and
madàiá dung
megôngkau cow-
gabàn dung
nunggubá and
zaiáiñ”. burn
Obásots of
bi plantain
songphántain leaves,
dinnaise. which
Phárê the
unau Kachâris
bizákhàis use
so- for
fai- salt,
bánù, well
manwéthi knowing
khàrkhuthántai its
hunaise. acrid
Bizámaskhêrá taste.
ukhuli-
su-
naï-
khait

khàm So
megthe
mungbock
básiá was
lábácooked
zánu with
gnámplenty
zánaife.
alkali.

And
when
the
Bráhmin
arrived,
his
meal
was
set
before
him,
and
he
was
so
hungry
that
he
had
to
eat
it
whether
he
liked
its

savour
or
no.

Abá- And
unau- so
bebai- in
baidi- various
baidi- ways
lázi the
manBrá- hmin
zánai- khs
Bámpu- tá
bidá- tu lágí
sitti shame
gangbe
lit- his
nánai- servant.
sákhSo ni
ákha- he
au wrote
hunái- nai
nå- long
i- letter
au to
hotnai- se.
Lámá- rother,
sáseand
thángbá- ting
beau- in u
litnui- n
grángis
sáseservant's
mànhand,
lugùbade
manhim
nànadeliver
binuit.
sitti But

khithinaise.
“Beawent
má a
litdahigle
ángnway,
khithátil
Obáse,
mànsuiá
sitti-a
kho man
nainárhai,
“Nangkho
dànmead
lágeand
Bámwrite,
ni and
bidáhe
kho bade
thindhang”
erui tell
bunghbá,
bi what
sitti-was
kho written
phisinánai
bunghaise
“Áfaletter.
nangAnd
ángnthe
gubuman
sitti read
gánghsem
litnáthei
hù.”letter,
Áru which
be was

sittia to
erehthe
lit, effect
“ádá, that
nangthe
fisáhingthezang
be was
sákhorá
mankill
hui- the
bá- servant.
nù On
hábáthis,
khàmthenai
hù. servant
Ángtore
benifupai
thángthenai
bisuletter
ni and
hábábade
nunuthis
nánggié’nd
Bebawdite
be another
sittikhe,
langsáyinig:
BánfDear
ni brother,
bidáonu
hùnaisceipt
Khinofu
bi this
sittikhetter
nunámairy
monmy

dukkhu- servant
mantu- to
su- my
naise- niece
Theo- without
bigùn- delay.
ni I
khorang- shall
gárno not
háekha- be
fisázà- able
zangto to
mánca- come
hábá to
khàm- the
hunáng- wedding.”

Taking this letter, the servant went to his master’s brother, who was much vexed, but dared not disobey. Accordingly,

though
reluctantly,
he
married
the
servant
to
his
daughter.

Phára And,
sànse when
thánthai the
bi master
fainaini came
bidáto
kho see
sungibá, it
gásehis
khorsáry ant
khnáad,
bi been
sákhdisposed
kho of,
dánnàdi
sri heard
sri what
upaihad
khàmhappened.
Be he
upaisàto
sákhabout
hingzauá
mithkinái,
bekhim.
onnabai
binuhis
khithámaise.
Khitgabá,
hingzau
zangknow
horaof
uduthau
mosnísáer
másand

khá-told
khrop-er
nánai husband,
futhwhán-ai
dinn-gone.
Phára
Bámun-calf,
fisázan-d,
zang-binding
udubi-ai
thádhang-d
mon-and
khàrfor-ám-ai,
sri put
sri it
thang-gy-nánai
mosbér-sákho
dànri-ai-se.
Sàn-her
so- bed.
ba And
mosáfi-sákho
dánfthán-g-
nai night
nunáthe-ai
mánBrá-min
bizámáder-i,
sákhaord
kho thinking
gárhthe-ù
lági calf
thinnwai-se.
Khimhis
bizámáder-i-á
bisuhusband
barisleeping

lángbynai,
lànzhier
dihosinái,
fopnkáilaid
dinnatise.
UnanAnd
Bámwhén
moshe
buthfonai-
ni out
nungge
sri mistake
sri in
uddhthe
zánumorning,
lági and
gámlearned
mànthafurkho
lingmánai
phozwas
hudanighyan.
Phárof
mánsoivur
zánukilling,
zobá,he
sákhbard
bárianis
thángnecais
moshusband
lànzgi-
kho and
bunamany
bungheise
“Bámcalfá
mosonbù
buthálá-

khùi- haste.
phoza- And
bù the
huá servant
khùi, dragged
hùi- the
sù.” calf
Bebai- into
bungba- the
thábá, garden
phoza- and
mànbui- ed
khnánai, phoza- with
zaiákhù- se.
Bebai- nù
bisùs- sticking
ud out
dhár- of
mantha- house.
Zapha- ground.

Meanwhile, the Bráhmin set to work to get himself purged of the offence of cow-

killing,
and
summoned
the
villagers
to
a
feast
without
telling
them
why.
And
when
they
were
all
seated,the
servant
ran
out
into
the
garden
and
hauling
at
the
calf’s
tail,
called
out,
“The
Bráhmin
didn’t
kill

a
cow,
Oh,
no.
And
that
isn’t
why
he
gives
a
feast,
Oh,
no.”
So
the
feast
broke
up,
and
the
Bráhmin
was
not
absolved.
And
that’s
all.

IV

Kachári Theory of Thunder and Lightning[8]

Aglá sásе rázáonce dangman, áru king biháwho hoásáad sáse, one hingzhausá sáse, and dangman. Hoásdaughter. nau The Ráonsán’s hingzhausáni náu was Ráon Ráoná dangman. Lásе the láse daughter’s bisu Ráoni. gadeAs záabthey Ráongradually gagagrew binánpukhonu hábátogether, khàm Ráoná nam wished Sànsе Ráonmáry runùhis thábsister. Amp Ráea bini day

bifaikhá Ráoná
ikhamo remained
zánu alone
naminibá
manákhuise,
mánothi house
bi unknown
runutau
thánákho
bifaifá ther;
mithiákhauman.
Amphá en
bini the
sáselatter
bandiá shed
runuhisu
nunásoni
rázátoi
sigángamu e
khithánaisui;
abándinner,
razaihe
thangoúngi
sanghmaisui,
balucould
“Áfá, not
nangheu
má found.
nánggoHowever,
Háthai
nángsobáni,
háthisaw
hùgathe,
goraiyouth
nángigobá,
goraithe

hùgan, house
theo and
nang old
man the
dukhkhing,
dá who
khàngoing
hannato
khithánaisui.
Ababoy
Ráonaká
hannaisui,
“Ángwha
mungbo
nángthe
nangmatter.
sumá if,”
lábasaid
áng the
khithángan.”
Ámphyáu
bifaiwant
mungbo
uphaelephant,
manIkhai
sumawill
lánágive
khithyánaisui,
“Nangnu
zikhelephant;
nańgigo,
bikhyanu
hùgan’nt
Hanbá
Raohaisé,
bungnaisùi,

“Ángril Ráogikho hábáyou khàmanánoi hù; horse; abásbut áng do mikhàm dùi abandon lángyourself Abáto bifaisorrow bibaidi khonthis khnáváyoi manáAnd zabrathen sin Ráoná dukhreplied, manná“Aisui. Ampaná bifaiá gunimánoi sumasipecial lánaiwant khaiof hábaanything, khlàbut ánoi hùnúf zathayou khlàgiveisui; khimme be a khonárgáksha Ráonini sigángathu,

khithánu Then
bádá will
hùnaitell
binikhai you
raubo what
khithai- is the
a- matter.”
khuisa
Amphá Thereupon,
Raothá the
mainkhang king,
sunùi seeing
thángbá that
dùigathere
thánwas
sáseno help
buruhá from
Ráonian
sangjaisùi, took
balùi, up,
“Nangsurhá
má oath
záadangjá”, saying
Abá“Whatever
Ráoyiáu
khithámai, sui,
“Zanlgfrá
ádáhá will
hábágive
záagatan.”
Áru to
buruyáu.”
hannaindi, And
“Mathaithu
hingRáonsá
zangsaid,

hábá “Give
záam me”
Ráo permission
bung to
naisùi, “Áng marry
khithi Ráoni,
haiáá and
Abá then
buru lá
hannwisùi, balùi, at
“Ai, my
nang food.”
zangò In
hábá hearing
záam this.”
Áru the
Ráo king
hannwisùi, “Ai, sorely
be troubled
khoráng
thik his
ná?” mind;
hanbár oi
sang remembering
buru lá
sum the
lánaisùi. arms
Abá his
Ráo math,
akhrá ngsau
birlá ng-k
naisùi, eps
áru to
Ráu bir ng

birlangnai about
nunáthoi the
Ráonaiáthiage,
guzarti nánoi
hasuthe
lángsanse i.
Bikhimu
mànsubiáding
ákhá anyone
khrutoniákhonu
“Ráonántion
guzarthidang”
hanmánatter
bungò;
áru Ráoni,
Ráonwho,
khàthengáfore,
thapheard
naifinothing
bini about
makthángá
at proposed
baidimarriage
nuiùwith
bikhonself.
akhá But
mabóthai
hanùday
Bårå Ráoni
eroi went
bháthiù.

the
village
stream
to
clean

the
rice
for
the
daily
meals,
when
an
old
woman
met
her
and
inquired,
“What
is
going
on
in
the
palace
to-
day?”
And
Ráoni
replied,
“The
son
of
the
house
is
to
be
married
to-

day.”
And
when
the
old
lady
asked
further
“But
to
whom
is
he
to
be
married?”
Ráoni
replied,
“Mother,
I
cannot
say.”
And
then
said
the
old
dame,
“Ráoni,
it
is
you
that
he
is
going

to
marry."
And
when
Ráoni
inquired,
"Mother,
can
this
be
true?"
the
old
woman
took
an
oath
to
confirm
what
she
had
said.
And
then
Ráoni
at
once
flew
right
away
up
into
the
sky,
and

when
Ráoná
saw
Ráoni
thus
flying
away,
he
shouted
after
her,
doing
his
utmost
to
catch
her.
It
is
these
loud
shouts
and
threats
of
Ráoná
that
men
call
“thunder”;
and
when
Ráoni
occasionally
looks
back

to
see
if
her
pursuer
is
gaining
upon
her,
she
in
so
doing
reveals
for
an
instant
the
brightness
and
beauty
of
her
face,
glowing
like
fire;
and
it
is
this
bright,
dazzling
beauty
of
her

countenance
that
men
call
"lightning."

Hence during a thunder storm may sometimes be heard the words "Ráonikho Ráonaiá hasùdang," *i.e.* "Ráoná is chasing Ráoni."

It is not impossible that the foregoing story may be a Kachári version, greatly altered, of a well-known episode told at length in the Rámáyana, *i.e.* the abduction of Sitá by Rávana the demon-king of Ceylon. The name Rávana in a slightly altered form (Ráoná) is not unknown among the Kacháris of this district (Darrang). About four or five miles south-west of the Událguri Tháná there are still existing the remains of a very fine earthwork road, known to this day as "Rowana's embankment" (Rávanagarh), which gives its name to the Mauzá in which it is situated. The construction of this earthwork must have involved a large outlay of labour, but the tradition about it is that it was thrown up in a single night by Rávana and his followers, the Rákhshases, Asurs, &c.

N.B.—Among the Kacháris of the North Kachár Hills, the mode of accounting for thunder and lightning is very different from that given above, though towards the end of the account given by the late Mr. Soppitt[9] certain statements are made which would serve to show that the two theories have something in common.

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[1] See *A Collection of Kachári Folk-tales, &c.*, by J. D. Anderson, Esq., I.C.S. (retired). Assam Secretariat Press, Shillong, 1895. ↑

[2]
= a “side” of pork. ↑

[3]
Gadán nai-hùi-nai means “observing omens.” ↑

[4]
The hideous Kuvera, god of wealth. He was a white man with three legs and eight teeth. Apparently, the same as the Hindu Pluto; and lord of the shades as well as of wealth. ↑

[5]
I.e., the season personified. ↑

[6]
Assamese. ↑

[7]
Assamese. ↑

[8]
From the writer’s *Outline Grammar of the Kachári (Bårå) Language*, pages 80–82. Shillong, 1884. ↑

[9]
See Soppitt’s *Historical and Descriptive Account of Kachári Tribes in the North Kachar Hills*, pages 52 (foot) to 55. ↑

SECTION VI.

Outline Grammar, Etc.

The mother tongue of the Bårå race at least as spoken in this (Darrang) district undoubtedly belongs to the “Agglutinative” as distinct from the Inflexional family of languages. Here and there, perhaps, certain slight traces of

inflexion may be found, but even these are doubtful and in any case very rare, indeed where they exist at all it may perhaps be assumed that they have been adopted with some obvious modifications from the speech of their Assamese and Bengali neighbours.

In the following pages only a very slight outline sketch of Kachári Grammar is attempted, as the writer has already dealt with the subject at some length over twenty years ago,[1] and most of the conclusions then arrived at still hold good, so far as the Kacháris of Darrang are concerned. But it is hoped that what little is given here may be of service to those who may have occasion to learn and make use of this language in after years. No attempt is made to draw any clear or well defined line between Accidence and Syntax, for these two closely allied branches of the subject may be best studied together by the use of certain illustrative sentences which to the attentive reader will give an insight into the structure of the language, whilst at the same time doing something to supply him with a useful vocabulary of words and phrases.

I. *Nouns.*

1. Gender.

A. Nouns denoting inanimate objects have no formal distinction of gender as *Oá*, a bamboo, *mai* rice (paddy).

B. In the case of animate objects, the gender of the noun is

indicated by a separate qualifying word, placed usually after the noun, *e.g.*

(*a*) Hóa, man (male); Hingzhau, woman (female) used only of human beings.

(*b*) "Zălá," zŏ' used of birds, *e.g.* Dau zalá, a cock; dau zŏ, a hen.

2. Number.

Plurality (there is no dual) is indicated by adding fŭr, frá, or far, to the singular as

masá, a tiger.
masá-fŭr (-frá or -far), tigers.

3. Case.

The case endings, which hold good of nouns, pronouns, and adjective are given below:—

Singular.			**Plural.**
Nom.	masá	a	masá-far, tigers, &c.
Obj.	khó	a	
Instru.	zang	by a	
Dat.	nŏ	to a	
Abl.	ni-frai	from a	

Poss.	ni	of a
,,	há	,, ,,
Loc.	au (iau)	in a

Voc. Heloi mosá O

(*a*) The possessive case has two signs, the former (ni) being by far the more commonly used.

(*b*) The ablative case ending is a compound one, as its proper sign (frai) is preceded by that of the genitive, ni. The same remark holds good sometimes with the locative case.

II. *Adjectives.*

1. Many adjectives begin with the letter *g*, to which a very short vowel is attached, so short indeed that in rapid speaking the vowel of the first syllable may not be heard at all, whilst in composition this first syllable is sometimes omitted altogether, as

“mánsoia
man
gahàm

good
ná?”
(is he?).
Hám-go.
Good (he) is.

2. In composition the adjective usually, though not invariably, follows the noun it qualifies, as

Dŏima ga-súm.
(The) water black = (kálá páni).

3. Comparison.

This is effected by appending the syllable “sari” or “khri” (= than) to the word with which comparison is made, this word being always in the dative case. The superlative degree is denoted much in the same way, the noun being preceded by some word signifying “all,” thus

(*a*) Bi áng-nŏ-khri gă-zau—he (is) taller than I (comparative).

(*b*) Bi bŏi-nă-sári ga-zaú-sin—he is the tallest of all (superlative).

In making these comparisons the first syllable (ga) of the adjective is often omitted: as

nang
you
áng-nŏ-khri
I than
zaú
tall

(ga-zau)
(are)
i.e. zau = (ga) zau, tall.

4. Numeral Adjectives.

The numerical system in this District is very defective, only seven digits, *i.e.* sè, nè, thàm, brè (brŏi), bâ, rå (då), sni (sĭni), being generally used, though the remaining three, skhó, zàt, zi (zu), are occasionally recognised. There is also a useful collective word za-khai = four, which when followed by two numerals is to be multiplied by the former whilst the latter is to be added to the product so obtained; thus

zakhai-thàm sà thàm,
Four × three + three = fifteen (men).
Burma zakhai-brè má-nè,
Goats four × four + two = 18 goats.

Before the second numeral are always inserted certain monosyllables, which classify the noun referred to, *e.g.* as above, sá (human beings) and má (irrational animals). This classifying syllable always indicates the point at which the multiplication ends and the addition begins.

III. *Pronouns.*

(*a*) The personal pronouns which undergo no change of

form to indicate gender are:—

1.	Áng	I.	Záng-fur	we.
2.	Nang	thou.	Nang-sur	you.
3.	Bi	he, she, it.	Bi-sur (fŭr)	they.

The possessive pronoun is expressed simply by putting the personal pronoun in the possessive case, as—

Bé áng ni nŏ, this (is) my house. This me of house (is).

To nouns expressing close family relationship, pronominal prefixes of possession are commonly added, *e.g.*—

	Father.	**Mother.**
My	Áng-ni á-fá.	Áng-ni á-i.
Your	Nang-ni nam-fá.	Nang-ni nam-má.
His	Bī-ni bī-fá.2	Bī-ni bī-má.

Interrogative pronouns in common use are—

1. Sŭr (sar)—who?
2. Má—what? Plural má-fŭr.
3. Bå-bê—which (of two or more)?

The demonstrative pronouns are:—

1. Bé—this (near).
2. Bŏi—that (far).
3. Bí—that (of remote distance).

Properly speaking, there are no relative pronouns, though a form zi, borrowed from Assamese, is sometimes heard. The place of the relative pronoun is usually supplied by a participle, *e.g.*—

Mi-á nu-nai masá thoi-bai.
yesterday seen tiger died has.

IV. *Verbs.*

1. The verb substantive is dang-a, is, dang-man, was, zá-gan, will be; this last being apparently formed from the root, zá-nŏ, to become. The negative forms are

(1) gŏi-á (emphatic gŏi-li-á) and (2) núng-á, it is not.

A very useful word is náng-go (Assamese lá-ge), to express necessity, the negative form is náng-á, needless, in emphasis, náng-li-á, altogether needless. This root náng is often appended to nouns to form adjectives, as

Be budhi-gnáng (or náng).
He is possessed of sense.

2. Conjugation.

In Kachári the verb undergoes no change to express number or person, which are indicated by the subject alone. But a slight trace of inflexion (euphonic) is perhaps found in the fact that when a verbal root ends in a vowel and the termination begins with one, a disagreeable hiatus is avoided by inserting the letter *i* between the two, thus:—

Tháng-ă—I go.
Nu-i-ŏ—I see.

Taking the verb, Bu-nŏ, to beat, as an illustration, the various tenses, moods, &c., of the Kachári verb may be thus indicated:—

Present indefinite, Ángbú-i-u—I beat.
Present definite, bú-dang—I am beating.
Imperfect, Áng bú-dang-man—I was beating.
Past, bú-bai—I beat (did).
Pluperfect, { bú-dang-man / bú-nai-se } —I had beaten (some time ago).
Future, bú-gan—I shall beat.
Future (early paulo post), { bú-si-gan / bú-nu-sŏi } —I shall beat (very soon).
Subjunctive mood { Ang bú-bá — beat / bú-blá — If I had beaten.

Potential, Áng bú-nŏ há-gô—I may (or can) beat.
Imperative, 1. Bú—beat thou. 2. Bú-tháng—let him beat.
Participial forms:—

- Bú-ni—beating.
- Bú-na-nŏi—having beaten.
- Bú-nai—beaten.
- Bú-ŏi—while (on) beating.
- Agent:—
- Bu-grá.

○ Bu-nai-á—a beat-er.

3. The Passive voice is not very frequently used. Its tenses, &c., are expressed by conjugating the verb zá-nŏ, to be, with the past participle of the verb, *e.g.*—

Ang bú-nai zá-gan—I beaten be-shall.

4. The *causal* verb is formed in two ways. The more idiomatic method is to prefix the letter *f* (with any euphonic vowel) to the principal verb, *e.g.*—

Ang { rang-dang — understand, / fă-rang-dang — *cause* to understand, I teach. } —I

Ang { sī-gan — become wet, / fi sī-gan — shall make wet, soak, immerse. } —I

In the above it will be observed that the causal force lies in the letter *f*, its vowel (always a very *short* one) being drawn by attraction (euphonic) from that of the principal verb.

A second way of expressing causation is to combine the verb hŏ-nŏ, to give, with the infinitive mood of the principal verb, *e.g.*—

rang-ă I learn,

rang-nŏ hŏ-i-ŏ I cause to learn,
teach.

5. The distinctive vowel of the negative verb is *á*, which in some cases gives place to *i* or *e*, probably for reasons of euphony. Its chief forms of tense and mood, &c., may be shown thus:—

Present, Bú-á—(I) am not beating.
Imperfect, Bú-á-khŏi-man.
Past { Bú-á-man / Bú-á-khŏi-nŏ / Bú-á-khŏi-se.
Future, Bú-á.
Imperative. —2 Dá bú—beat thou not.
3 Dá-bú-thang—let him not beat.
Subjunctive { Bú-á-bá / Bú-a-blá
Potential, Bú-nŏ hai-á
Participial forms:—
Present, Bú-i—not beating
Past, Bú-á-lábá—not having beaten, without beating
,,
Bú-e—not beaten.

V. *Indeclinable words (avyāya).*

Very little need be said on this part of the subject, because the work of qualifying words (adverbs, &c.,) is very commonly done by means of infixes following the verbal stem which is in many cases, though not in all, monosyllabic. Thus the root hàm (be) will, becomes (1) an adjective by prefixing g^a, g^a hàm, good; and (2) an adverb, by affixing ŏi; g^ahàm-ŏi in a good manner. So, hàm-á—bad; hàm-á-ŏi—bad-ly. Further the adjective thus formed may be duly conjugated as a verb by combining it with the different tenses, &c., of the substantive verb, thus:—

Bi	hàm-dang	he is	good
	hàm-á-dang (good-not-is)		bad
	hàm-gan	he will be	good
	hàmá-gán		bad
	&c.	&c.	

In the same way the passive participle in nai can be (1) declined as a noun, or (2) used as an adjective, or (3) take the place of a relative pronoun; *e.g.*—

1. Zang thoi-nai-kho fóp-bai—we (the) dead (man) buried-have.
2. Miá nu-nai gathai-á thoi-bai—(the) yesterday-seen-girl, died-has.
3. Tezpur-ná, tháng-nai-au áng bi-kho nu-bai—Tezpur to going-in I him see-did.

&c. &c.

VI. *Syntax.*

The great and characteristic feature of the Syntax of the language is the remarkable way in which verbal roots, mostly monosyllabic, are combined together to form a very

large and useful class of compound verbs. In this way the use of conjunctions &c. is very largely avoided, and the language becomes possessed of a vivid force and picturesqueness often wanting in more cultivated tongues. These compound verbs may perhaps be roughly classified under two groups, *e.g.*—

I.—Those in which each verbal root has a distinct meaning and may be used separately;—

II.—Those in which one or more of the verbal roots is never used separately but in combination only. As illustrations of class I. the following may be mentioned:—

1. Lai-nŏ—to bring.
   Tháng-nŏ—to go.
   Åt lai-tháng
   Fire bring-go } (in combination)

2. Há-nŏ—to cut (paddy, &c.)
   Zap-nŏ—finish.
   Zang mai há-zap-bai
   We paddy cut-finished-have } (in combination).

3. Tham-
nŏ—
catch;
lábo-nŏ
—bring;
gorai-
kho
tham-
labó—
those
horses
catch
bring.
&c. &c.

The compound verbs of Class II. are very numerous and in frequent use. A few illustrations only can be given here, which may serve to show that the second and subsequent members of the agglutinative verb, while they have no independent existence, yet serve to enrich and expand the meaning of the primitive root in a very remarkable way.

1. Bai, denotes continuous action.

Bí = to beg; bi-bai-nŏ		begging
Bráp = to be angry; bráp-bai-nŏ	= to continue	being angry
Namai = to seek; namai-bai-nŏ		seeking

2. Láng implies completion.

Bát (jump)	jump across
Udu (sleep)	sleep heavily
Thoi (die)	die outright

Bir (fly)	fly away
Zá (eat)	eat up

3. Su
   Thrå
   } are intensitives greatly strengthening the meaning of the first verbal root.

On (love)		love much
Ukhui (hunger)	su	hunger greatly
Mini (laugh)		laugh heartily
Gai (plant)		plant completely
Ga-glai (fall)	thrå	fall heavily
Thoi (die)		die outright

In not a few cases several, sometimes as many as five or six, of these infixes are combined with the original verbal stem, each one materially contributing to enlarge and enrich its meaning. A few illustrations are here supplied.

1. Dáo-frá
   bír-láng-
   thrå-bai.

The birds
flown
completely
away-
have.

2. Áng bi-
kho bai-
nái-thá-
bai.
I him
continue-
watching-
did.
3. Nu-zá-nai-
sŏi-lá-
tháng.
See-
become-
watch-
much-
take-go,
i.e. go and
see and
take and
observe
carefully.
&c. &c.

From what little has been here stated it would seem to be fairly obvious that the language in its original form is strictly an agglutinative one. But a gradual process of deglutinisation has for some time been going on, no doubt originating through intercourse with neighbours speaking languages of quite another type, *e.g.* Assamese, Bengali, &c. Most Kacháris (Bårå) in this district are quite familiar

with Assamese; indeed, it is very rarely that the writer has met with men who did not know this form of Aryan speech. Now a Kachári in the habit of speaking Assamese will, even when using his own mother tongue, to which he is strongly attached, not infrequently resort to a partially inflected form of expression instead of restricting himself to the use of infixes, &c. This gradual change in the language is especially brought out in the usage of the participial forms of the verb. It has been shown above, *e.g.* that the past participle (passive) can be declined like a noun. Again, in expressing a simple sentence like the following:—

I ran and caught and brought the horse

an Assamese speaking Kachári would probably make use of the active participle in ná-nŏi; whilst his more primitive brother, who might be less familiar with Assamese, would confine himself to the more idiomatic use of infixes. Thus the sentence given above might be expressed in two ways:

Áng gorai-kho { Khàt-nanŏi ham-nánŏi / Khàt-ham } lóbo-bai.

I the horse { running catching / run-catch } bring-did.

It would seem to be not improbable that the language may gradually lose its agglutinative character, and approximate to the inflected type, though the process most likely will be

but a slow one, owing to the very *clannish* temperament of the people which makes them cling strongly to anything they regard as their very own, *e.g.* their language (*cf.*, a somewhat similar state of things in Wales and the Scottish Highlands). But in its present stage the language is one of no small interest to the student of comparative philology, because it is an apt illustration of a form of speech which, once strictly agglutinative, is now in process of learning inflexion through the pressure of contact with the speakers of Aryan tongues.[3]

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[1]

He may perhaps venture to refer the curious in these matters to his *Outline Grammar of the Kachári (Bårå) Language*. Shillong, 1884. An admirable summary of the leading features of this form of Non-Aryan speech is given in the *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. III, Part II, by Dr. Grierson, Calcutta, 1903, pages 1–17 and ff. ↑

[2]

A very similar construction in Assamese may be compared with this, viz:

	Father.	
My	mór bópai	মোৰ বোপাই
Your	tór baper	তোৰ বপেৰ
His	tár bāpek	তাৰ বাপেক

—[Ed.] ↑

[3]

The writer would again refer the student to Dr. Grierson's work, part 7–15, where the whole subject of the agglutinative verb with its stem and infixes, &c., is dealt with with admirable force, clearness and knowledge of the subject.—[S.E.] ↑

APPENDIX I

I.—Tribes closely allied to Kacháris.

In a former section, something has been said in favour of the idea that the Kachári race is a much more widely distributed one than was supposed to be the case some years ago; and members of this race under different names still occupy large areas in north-eastern India. It may be useful to add a few brief notes on some of the principal of these closely cognate tribes, confining our notice mainly to those points and details wherein they differ more or less from the Kacháris of Darrang, whose language, habits, religion, etc., as described above, may perhaps be provisionally taken as a standard.

1. *Garos.*—One of the most important of these allied races is undoubtedly that known to us as the Garos, dwelling in what is called the Garo Hills District. This tribe, like the people of the North Cachar Hills, has until recent years been largely confined to the part of Assam which bears it name, and has not come into contact with Hinduism to any great extent, and hence it has in all likelihood preserved its aboriginal manners and customs almost intact. But it is not

necessary here to do more than merely mention the name of this interesting people, as their whole manner of life has been sufficiently dealt with elsewhere by a highly competent hand.[1]

2. *Mech (Mes).* 70,000.—Nor is it necessary to do much more for the people known as Mech (*Mes*) who are undoubtedly merely a branch (the western one) of the Bårås of Darrang. The name is almost certainly a corruption of the Sanskrit word mleccha, *i.e.*, an outcast from the Brahmin point of view, a non-observer of caste regulations; such persons being in the light of modern Hinduism very much what the barbarian was to the Greek, or the "Gentile" to the Jew, some twenty centuries ago. This term *mlech* (*mech*) is not in use here (Darrang) or in Kamrup.

Subdivision. The uncomplimentary epithet "*mlech padre*" has sometimes been hurled at the writer when preaching to Brahmins or other high caste Hindus, though it would seem to be the recognised name for the Bårå race from the Manás river westwards to the neighbourhood of Jalpaiguri. They would seem to be especially numerous in Goalpara district, where one of the principal landholders is known as the "Mech-párá zamindár." Some sixteen exogamous septs are recognised among the Meches, of which the most important would seem to be the following:—

1. Meshá-árŏi—the tiger folk
2. Bánsbár-árŏi—bamboo folk
3. Dŏim-árŏi—water folk
4. Goibár-árŏi—betelnut folk
5. Swarg-árŏi—heaven folk.

Of these the last-mentioned, which is obviously of Hindu origin, is looked upon as the highest, whilst the names of

the remaining four are apparently of totemistic origin. The first on the list, *Mashá-arŏi* (tiger folk; *Mashá*, tiger), still retains a certain hold on the regard of the members of its sept, all of whom go into a kind of mourning (see above) when a tiger is found lying dead near one of their villages.

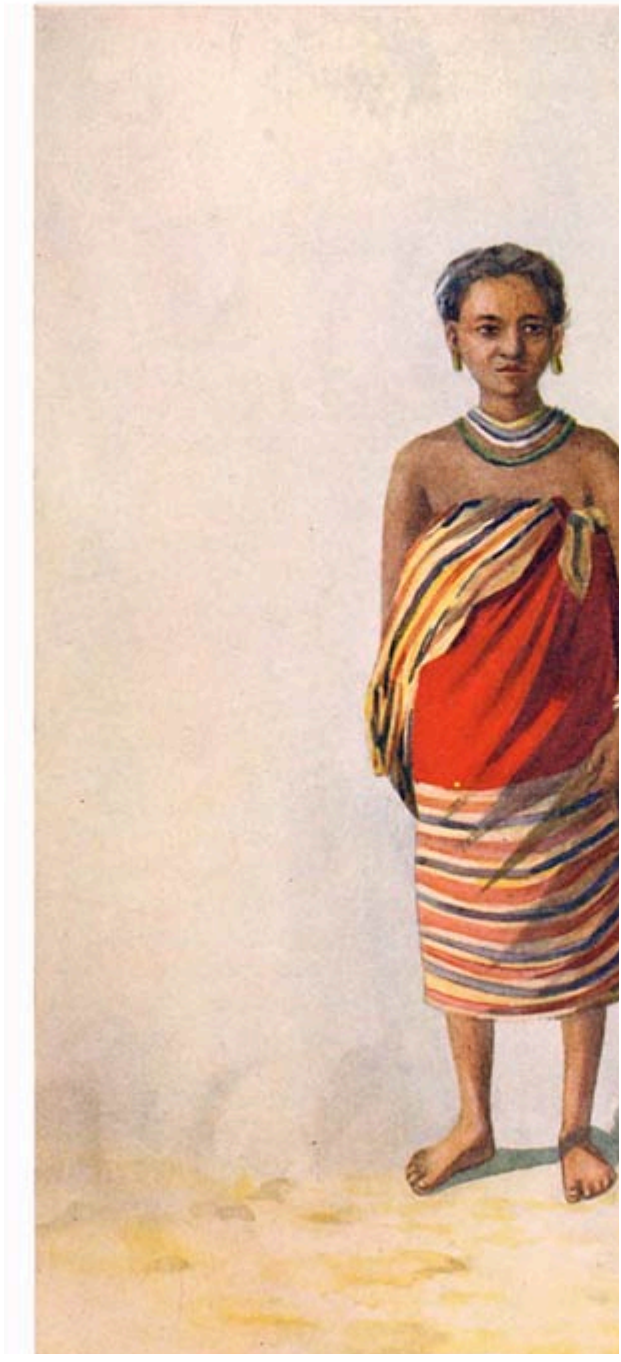
Origin. Nothing definite is known as to the origin of the Meches; by some they are said to be descended from Bhim and Hidamba, whilst others maintain that they are the descendants of Turbasu, son of Raja Jajáti, who fell under his father's curse, his children thus becoming outcasts (*Mlecchas*).

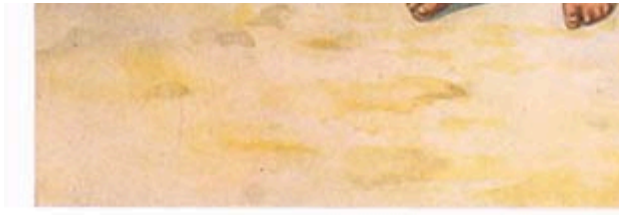
Religion. Their religion is distinctly of the Animistic type with a tendency towards Hinduism, Batháu being replaced by Śiva in some cases. The *siju* tree is regarded with much reverence, and is to be seen in the courtyard of most Mech houses, much more frequently than among the Kacháris of this district. This sacred tree is sometimes used as a means of divination or detecting crime or other misdoings in domestic life.

Marriage and funeral ceremonies.

In all ceremonies relating to marriage and funerals, what has been already said of the Kacháris holds good almost word for word of the Meches. But speaking generally it may be said that the marriage rites among the Meches are more simple than among the Kacháris, the essential features being the exchange of betel-leaves and areca-nuts between bride and bridegroom followed by the offering of a cock and hen in sacrifice to Batháu or Śiva. The funeral ceremonies, on the other hand, among the Meches are perhaps somewhat more elaborate than is the case with the Kacháris (Bårå), as an informal Shrádh has to be performed by them, by the son or daughter of the deceased Mech, seven or nine or eleven days after death, and

sometimes on the day of the funeral itself, an indication that Hindu customs are creeping in among this portion of the Bårå race.





MECH GIRL

3. Rábhás (70,000). The name of this tribe (Rábhás) is of uncertain derivation and in this district (Darrang) the people themselves are sometimes called Totlás, which may perhaps be a nickname. Another term used in designating them is *Dătiyál Kachári*, *i.e.* Borderer Kacháris (*dáti*—border, edge, boundary); and it is held by some that their original home and Habitat.habitat was the region *bordering* on the northern slopes of the Garo Hills. This supposition is partly confirmed by the fact that the only words in their language to express (1) north and (2) south, respectively, are (1) *Bhotá hi-chu*, Bhotan Hills,[2] and (2) *Tura*; their physical horizon being apparently absolutely limited by the two localities thus designated; moreover, Rábhás in somewhat large numbers are still to be found at the base of the northern slope of the Garo Hills. Some 30,000 have their home in Goalpara district, whilst others are located in Kamrup, north-west Darrang, and among the Garos in their hills. Origin (traditional).Their origin is but imperfectly known, but they are said to be descended from a Hindu father who lost caste by marrying a Kachári woman. Their Language.language, which would seem to be rapidly dying out, forms a very interesting link between Garo and Kachári, having much in common with both, but with some special features peculiar to itself. Like the tongue of other branches of the Bårå race, the Rábhá language, at one time undoubtedly agglutinative, seems to be in process of becoming inflexional, through contact and intercourse with the speakers of more or less broken-down Sanskritic languages, *e.g.*, Bengali, Assamese, etc. Some Subdivisions.seven sub-tribes are said to be still recognised

among the Rábhás, *i.e.*, Rangdaniya, Maitariyá, Páti-Koch, Bitliyá, Dáhuriyá, and Sanghá. The members of the three sub-tribes first in this list occupy a position of some eminence above the others, and are at liberty to intermarry among themselves. They are, however, so far "hypergamous" that if any one of their members should marry into any of the last four sub-tribes, the person so marrying would have to pay a fine of Rs. 100, or upwards, to the members of the lower sub-tribe concerned. As regards Social (caste) status.caste-position and status, the Rábhás hold themselves to be slightly higher than the pure Kacháris, *e.g.*, the Rábhá will not eat rice cooked by a Kachári, though the latter freely partakes of food prepared by a Rábhá. On the other hand, the Rábhá eats and drinks quite as freely as does the Kachári, and intermarriage between the two branches of the race is not very uncommon, a young Kachári bridegroom selecting a Rábhá bride having to make his peace with her people by giving them a feast and paying a bride-price (*gá-dhan*) on a somewhat enhanced scale. The children born of such a "mixed marriage" belong to the father's tribe. Kacháris sometimes formally enter the Rábhá community, though it is not necessary for them to do so, on their way to Hinduism. A Kachári wishing to be received into the Rábhá sub-tribe has to pass through a somewhat elaborate initiation, which may be briefly summarised as follows:—

Admission of a Kachári convert into the Rábhá community. "A *deori* (Priest) divides a pig into seven pieces in front of the convert's door, and disposes of them by throwing away one such piece towards each of the four cardinal points; while of the remaining three pieces one is thrown skywards, a second earthwards, and the last Patálwards.[3] At the same place he then proceeds to cook a fowl and prepares therefrom a curry, which he divides into seven equal parts; and arranging these portions on the ground he

leaves them there, after sprinkling them with pad-jal.[4] This part of the ceremonial is known as *chíládhar*, or *báodhar katá*, *i.e.*, forms of making *práyaś-chitta* (reconciliation). The *deori* then lays down a plantain-leaf on the courtyard and places on it a lighted lamp, a handful of rice, a betel-leaf, and an areca-nut, together with some *tulasi* leaves and a few copper coins. The convert is then made to drink *pad-jal* in public, and after this he must pay at least one rupee to the assembled people, and treat them to two vessels full of rice-beer (*mådh*). He is further required to entertain liberally the members of his newly-acquired brotherhood for three successive evenings, pork and *mådh* forming the principal materials of the feast."

Religion. Very little need be said under the head of religion; for in this respect they are but little separated from the closely-cognated Kachári (Bårå) race. The general type of the Rábhá religion is distinctly animistic; but one or two of the higher subdivisions, especially the Pátis, are said to show a leaning towards Hinduism of the Śákta form, the deity chiefly worshipped being known as Bhalli (? Bhareli), to whom *puja* is done in Kārtik, Māgh and Baisākh. There are no temples or fixed places of worship, nor are Brahmins employed; the *deori* (*deosi*) doing all that is deemed necessary in public religious ceremonies.

Relations of the sexes. Marriage is almost invariably adult, and is usually entered into by payment to the bride's parents, or by servitude as among the Kacháris. Cases of ante-nuptial unchastity would seem to be rare; but when an unmarried girl does become pregnant, she is compelled to disclose the name of her lover, often through the *siju*-ordeal process (see above), and public opinion forces the seducer to marry his victim, paying a somewhat higher bride-price (*gá-dhan*) than he would otherwise have done. Monogamy is the rule in marriage, but public opinion permits the taking of a second wife when the first proves childless. Divorce is

permitted for adultery, but would seem to be comparatively rare: widows are at liberty to marry whomsoever they will, except the deceased husband's elder brother, a second bride-price being sometimes paid to the bride's parents. The marriage ceremony itself is very simple, the essential features being (1) the exchange of betel-leaves and areca-nuts by bride and bridegroom, and (2) the formal sacrifice of a cock and hen, the latter being made into a curry of which bride and bridegroom partake together. The dead are disposed of generally by cremation, though in cases of destructive epidemics, *e.g.*, cholera, kálá-azár, etc., known as "*sirkári rog*," the bodies of deceased people are either hastily buried, or simply thrown into the neighbouring jungle.[5]

4. Hajongs—Haijongs. (8,000). About the small tribe (8,000 souls) known as Hajongs or Haijongs only very little definite information can at present be obtained; but it seems probable on the whole that they are a branch of the widely spread Bårå race. The tribal name is of uncertain derivation, but it is not unlikely that it is connected with the Kachári word for mountain or hill (*ha-jo*); and this supposition receives, perhaps, some little confirmation from their present known habitat, *i.e.*, the southern slope of the Garo Hills, and the sub-montane tract immediately adjoining it. It is possible that these people may be the modern representatives of the inhabitants of the old kingdom of Koch Hajo, which corresponds roughly with the present district of Goalpara. It is known that during the period 1600–1700 this part of the country was overrun by Musalmán invaders, when many of the inhabitants probably took refuge in the Garo Hills, returning therefrom, and settling in the adjoining plains at the foot of these hills, when the *pax Britannica* gave them a certain amount of security for life and property. In appearance and dress the people are said to have a close resemblance to the

well-known Kachári type, but this resemblance hardly holds good of their language as now spoken, for this is little more than a medley of Assamese and Bengali.

Religion. There are said to be two recognised subdivisions among them, *i.e.*, (1) Byabcháris and (2) Paramárthis. The latter are largely Hinduized (Vaishnabs) and abstain from pork and liquor, etc.; whilst the former, who are Śáktas to a large extent, follow the practice of their Garo neighbours in matters of diet, etc. In spite, however, of this distinction of meats, it is said that members of the two sections of the tribe freely intermarry with each other. No Brahmins seem to be employed among them, any leading member (*adhikári*) of the village *panchávat* doing what is customary at all marriages, etc. It may be added that the siju tree (*euphorbia splendens*) which occupies so important a place in the social and religious life of the Bårå, Meches, etc., on the north of the Brahmaputra does not seem to enjoy any special regard or respect among the cognate tribes (Haijangs, Dimásá, etc.) who have their homes on the south and east of that great river.

Relations of the sexes, marriage, &c. As among other members of the Bårå race, the relations of the sexes are on the whole sound and wholesome; ante-nuptial unchastity is but of rare occurrence, but when it does take place and pregnancy follows, the seducer is compelled to marry the girl, and to pay a certain fine of no great amount to the village elders. This form of union is known as a *dái-márá* marriage. But generally, as among the Kacháris of Darrang, the parents of bride and bridegroom arrange for the marriage of the young people, which always includes the payment of a bride-price (*pån*) of from 20 to 100 rupees to the bride's parents, or the equivalent in personal service. It is said that among the "Paramárthi" subdivision, who are largely Hinduized, the betrothal of children is coming into vogue, but as a rule marriage is still adult, and for the most part

monogamous. A second wife is allowed when the first proves to be childless, but polyandry is quite unknown. Divorce is permitted for adultery but is very rare, and under no circumstances can a woman be divorced when in a state of pregnancy. The divorce itself is effected in the usual way by the husband and wife tearing a betel-leaf in the presence of the village elders, and formally addressing each other as father and mother, showing that the relation of husband and wife has ceased. Widows can marry again, and do so freely, the one restriction being that no widow can marry her deceased husband's brother, whether older or younger than her first partner. Here again, too, it would seem that Hindu influence is making itself felt, for it is said that the remarriage of widows is looked upon with growing disfavour. Property, both movable and immovable, is usually divided equally among the sons of a family (*cf.* the old Saxon law of "gavelkind"), anything like primogeniture being unknown. In a formal marriage among well-to-do people a certain ceremonial is observed. A square enclosure is formed by planting a plantain-tree at each corner, and within this enclosure are placed sixteen lighted lamps, and sixteen earthenware pots full of water, the bridegroom taking his stand in their midst. The bride then formally walks around him seven times, and then finally takes a seat at his left side, her face being turned towards the east. No *mantras*, etc., are recited, nor is any Brahmin present; but some village elder (*adhikári*) sprinkles water over the couple from one of the water pots, and the ceremony is held to be complete.

Disposal of dead. The bodies of the dead are occasionally buried or committed to the jungle, but this is done but rarely, probably only under the pressure of panic during an epidemic of cholera, etc. Cremation is almost universal, the head of the deceased being placed towards the north, the face looking upwards in the case of a man, and

downwards in that of a woman. A Sráddha usually follows either on the tenth, or the thirtieth, day after the cremation.

5. Moráns (5,800); Animistic, 100; Hinduized, 5,700. Not much is definitely known about this small tribe, whose numbers do not exceed 6,000 in all; but although they are said to repudiate all connection with the Bårå race, it may be safely inferred that they do in reality belong to it; for on this point the evidence of language is fairly conclusive.[6] They are sometimes known as Names.(1) Morán Kacháris and (2) Kapáhiyás (*kapáh*—cotton), the latter name being due to the fact that in early days one of their chief duties was to grow cotton for the use of Áhom princesses, at Kákatal, Moriáni, Jhánzi, Hologápár, etc. Their present Habitat.habitat may be roughly described as the country lying between the Buri Dihing and the Brahmaputra in the north-eastern part of the Province at least one-half of their number being located in the district of Lakhimpur, and the remainder in the adjoining portions of the Sibsagar district. Their chief centre is said to be a place known as Kákatal, the residence of the Tiphuk Gosain, the head of the Matak clan, with the members of which the Moráns are said to fraternize and even to intermarry freely.

Origin (traditional). The original home of the Moráns is said to have been at Mongkong (Maingkhwang) in the Hukong Valley at the upper reaches of the Chindwin river, where some centuries ago resided three brothers Moylang, Morán, and Moyrán. Of these, Moylang, the eldest, remained in the Hukong Valley, whilst the youngest, Moyrán, migrated into Nipál, and was there lost sight of; and Morán, the second brother, passed the Patkoi range into Assam and, settling on the Tiphuk river, became the ancestor of or at least gave its present name to the Morán tribe. But however this may be, it is fairly certain that, when the Áhoms passed into Assam about the middle of the thirteenth century, they at once came into conflict with

the Moráns, whom they seem to have subdued with but little difficulty. By their Áhom conquerors the Moráns were employed in various menial capacities, as hewers of wood and drawers of water, and were sometimes known as Hábungiyás,[7] earth-folk, or true autochthones, "sons of the soil," though they seem to have intermarried freely with their Áhom rulers. But in spite of their subordinate position in political life the Moráns, like other branches of the Bårå race, have sturdily maintained some of their national characteristics to this day, *e.g.*, their language, though apparently doomed to early extinction, is still to some extent retained by members of the clan.

Religion. In the census of 1891 only 100 Moráns are returned as animistic, the great bulk of them being described as Hindus of the Vaishnab.Vaishnab type. Their Hinduism, however, would seem to be of a somewhat lax character; for though they do not eat beef, pork, or monkeys, or drink madh and photiká, yet they freely partake of all kinds of poultry and fish, with the tortoise, grasshopper, etc. No social stigma, too, attaches to the catching and selling of fish to others. No idols are to be seen in their villages, nor are Brahmins ever employed in religious ceremonials, certain officials known as Medhis and Bhakats doing all that is deemed necessary on these occasions. On certain great social gatherings known as Sabhá (Samáj), which are apparently not held at any fixed periods, there is much singing, beating of drums (Mridang) and cymbals (tál) in honour of Krishna, to whom offerings of rice, salt, plantains, betel-nuts, are freely made. In earlier times it is said that there were three chief centres (satras) of the religious life of the Moráns; each presided over by an elder known as the burá or dángariyá. These were the (1) Dinja (Kachári burá), (2) Garpará (Áhom burá), and (3) Puranimáti (Khátwál burá). These dángariyás are said still to retain a position of some

spiritual influence among the Moráns, all religious teaching being in their hands. Each family may freely choose its own dángariyás, but followers of one dángariyá will not eat food cooked by those of another, even when the worshippers are closely connected with each other by family ties, as father, son, brother, etc.

Marriages, etc. Infant betrothals would seem to be absolutely unknown, all marriages being restricted to adults, as a rule monogamous, though a second wife may be taken when the first proves childless. Occasionally the bridegroom carries off his bride by force, especially during the April Bihu, the union formed in this way being afterwards recognised by the girl's parents. Sometimes the bride goes to her lover's house of her own free will, without payment of the usual bride-price (pån). But as a rule as among other portions of the Bårå race, matrimonial engagements are entered into after negotiations between the parents of the persons concerned. The essential elements of a marriage in this case are (1) the payment of a bride-price (pån) of some Rs 20–100 to the girl's parents, and (2) the giving of a feast at the bridegroom's expense to the parents, relatives, and friends of the bride. The marriage ceremony is always non-Shástric, nor are Brahmins present, a Bhakat or dángariyá doing all that is deemed necessary. The ceremony itself may perhaps be described as "semi-chacklang," some, though not all, of the rites practised among the Áhoms at what is called a *chaklang* marriage being frequently carried out.

Divorce. Divorce is permitted occasionally, but only when the wife is guilty of adultery with a man of lower caste-standing than her own. In these cases the husband brings back the erring wife to her father's house with some betel-nuts and one rupee in an earthenware *sarái*; the father receives her and gives back a portion of the betel-nuts to the husband, and the woman is at once free to marry again.

Widows are at liberty to remarry, but not with the deceased husband's brother; but little or no ceremonial is observed at such a remarriage, a widow taking a substantially lower position than a virgin bride.

Disposal of dead. The dead are usually disposed of by burial, but the bodies of old Bhakats are sometimes cremated, the ashes being afterwards buried under a high earth mound known as a "moidám." On the third day after death takes place the ceremony known as *telani*, when the near relatives are anointed with mustard seed oil (tel). This is followed ten days later by the *dahá*,[8] when offerings of rice, salt, betel-nuts, etc., are offered by the relatives, and finally, after an interval of twenty days, the *dahá káj* is celebrated, when a general feast takes place both day and night. These observances have perhaps more in common with funeral wakes than with what is known among Hindus as a shráddha; no Brahmins are present.

6. Chutiyas (87,691).
Deori Chutiyas, 4,000.

Habitat. This once very powerful race, which still numbers almost 90,000 souls, has its chief home and habitat in the districts of Lakhimpur and Sibsagar, though a not inconsiderable number are found in the Darrang district (Mangaldai subdivision). Their general appearance and physical and mental characteristics prove clearly that they belong to the widely spread Bårå race, and this view is borne out by the language still spoken to some extent by one of the subdivisions of the race (the Deoris), which has very much in common with the Kachári of Darrang, and still more with the speech of the people (Dimásá) of the north Kachar Hills.

Traditional origin and history. Their origin is far from being clearly known. According to one tradition—probably the outcome of Hindu imaginativeness—they claim to be

descendants of Khetrias who fled into Assam for refuge from the destroying arm of Paraśu-Ram (battle-axe Ram). But according to a tradition embodied in an old Assamese chronicle of uncertain date, the founder of the Chutiya kingdom, for some 200 years a very powerful one, was one Bihar (? Virapála), who is said to have had his home on "Golden Hill" (Suvarṇa-giri) in the mountains to the north of the modern Sadiya, which place was for a lengthened period the centre of Chutiya power, before the advent of the Áhoms in the 15th century. It is said that Kuvera (the Hindu Pluto) appeared to this Bihar, who was simply an ordinary peasant, and urged him to be reconciled to his wife (Rupavati), with whom he had quarrelled, as she was about to present him with a son who should make a name in history. Moreover, he was directed to make search under a certain tree where he would find a shield, a sword, and a spear; and underneath the shield a golden cat, which latter he was to preserve with the utmost care, as it was to be the talisman of his family's fortunes. Kuvera's instructions were duly carried out by Bihar, to whom a son was born, named Ratnadhwaj, who through force of character established his influence in the mountains; and then descending to the plains established a powerful kingdom at Sadiya which maintained itself there for over two centuries, when it fell before the rapidly growing influence of the warlike Áhoms. In order finally to break up the power of the Chutiyas their Áhom conquerors are said to have distributed the subjugated race over Assam and north-east Bengal. One not inconsiderable portion of the Mangaldai subdivision is still known as Chutiya deś; otherwise Kaupáti. To this Machiavellian policy of the Áhom rulers is perhaps due the present widely scattered condition of the once powerful Kachári race.

Subdivisions (modern).

There are four subdivisions of the Chutiya race still

recognised, viz.:

1. Hindu Chutiya.
2. Áhom Chutiya.
3. Deori Chutiya—the Levite or priestly clan.
4. Baráhi Chutiya—the pig-eating clan.

Each of these subdivisions is said to have been in early days endogamous, though this is hardly so now, for members of the two upper clans can intermarry, and the same statement holds good of the two lower (Deori and Baráhi); but outside these limits marriage is said to be prohibited. The Hindu and Áhom Chutiyas have very largely adopted Hinduism of the Vaishnava type; but it is said that occasionally they indulge in secluded midnight revels known as "ráti soá khoá," at which almost all kinds of food (beef alone excepted) are very freely consumed. The Deoris and Baráhis, however, still follow largely certain animistic rites; so far as they have adopted Hinduism at all, it would seem to be of a depraved type, Tantric rather than Vedic.

The Deoris. By far the most interesting, because the most primitive, characteristic of the four subdivisions of the Chutiya race mentioned above, is that which holds the third place in the list; *i.e.*, the Deoris. It has been stated before more than once that this term Deoris is thus used to designate the recognised ministers of religion throughout the Bårå race; and this points to the fact that they are essentially what indeed their tribal name implies, a Levite or priestly body, and one in earlier days possessed of large influence which even yet has not been wholly lost. In point of mere numbers they are certainly not a powerful body, somewhat less than 4,000 all told. Their chief habitat is on and near the Dikrang river some thirty miles west of the subdivisional station of North Lakhimpur, while other

villages may be found in the Májuli, the "Holy Land" of the modern (Hindu) Assamese, where they would seem to lead a very simple primitive life. A Deori Chutiya village has been well described as follows:

"It consists of some thirty houses built on bamboo platforms raised about five feet from the ground. A single house will often contain a family of forty persons, living in one great room without any compartments, though with separate fireplaces, with a verandah in front where visitors are entertained. The villagers are a tall, large, well-nourished folk, with features bearing a strong resemblance to that of the Kacháris. They drink strong liquor (home-made) and eat all kinds of flesh except beef."

Language. There are two things which give a certain interest and importance to the Deoris in spite of the paucity of their numbers, *i.e.*, (1) their language and (2) their religion. Like other members of the widely spread Bårå race, the Deoris are bilingual, speaking both Assamese and their own tongue, but giving a distinct preference to the latter, of which they are said to be not a little proud.[9] The language itself is obviously very closely allied to that of the Kacháris of Darrang and still more so to the speech of the people of the North Kachár Hills (Dimásá), who, being more isolated from the plains than are the Kacháris, have no doubt preserved their mother tongue very largely in its primitive form. In all likelihood the language of the Deori Chutiyás gives us the purest and most archaic form of the Bårå speech, and there can be little doubt that in earlier times it was the dominant language of Eastern Assam.

The religion of the Deori Chutiyás is still largely animistic. There are a number of domestic gods, who hold a prominent place in family worship, and puja is often performed under big trees and by the side of rivers, as among the Darrang Kacháris. The Brahmaputra is held in

special reverence and is spoken of as the mother of water (ji chimá, or chimá jimá) much as the Darrang Kacháris regard this huge volume of water as "Mater magna" (Hodgson).

Unlike the western Kacháris, however, the Deori Chutiyás pay no special regard to the 'siju' tree (*Euphorbia splendens*), a peculiarity which they share with the Dimásá, Lálungs, Gáros,[10] and other members of the Bårå family who have their home mostly on the south of the great river. They have four great annual festivals, two of which correspond in some respects to the Assamese Mágh and Baisák Bihu, though not held exactly on the same dates. They have a great reputation as wizards, etc., and are supposed to have the power of causing their enemies to die mysteriously of slow occult wasting diseases, and in this way they are often consulted by their neighbours in cases of loss of cattle or undetected robberies. There would seem to be three principal gods:—

(1) Girasi-girá (Burá-buri), *i.e.*, "the old ones," always spoken of as a wedded pair (*cf.* the "Bathau and the Mainau" of the Darrang Kacháris and the "Warang-Berang," 'the old one' of Hodgson's Dhimals); they are specially worshipped by the Dibongiá khel, and their original temple was on the Kundil river, a little east of Sadiya.

(2) Pisha-dema (Bohza-hemata), "the elder son" worshipped by the Tengá pániya khel. His temple stood on Tengápáni river.

(3) Pisha-si, "the daughter," known as (1) Támeshwari mái, the "mother of the copper temple," and (2) Kechá-kháti, the "raw-flesh eater," to whom human sacrifices were offered. She was worshipped by the Bargaya (Borgoniya) khel and her temple stood somewhere near

"Chunpura" ('lime-kiln') on the Brahmaputra a few miles east of Sadiya.

In addition to these a fourth khel, Pátorgiya, is said to have once existed, but its status was inferior to those of the other three, and it has consequently become extinct. To each of these khels and temples four priests (pujáris) were attached, *i.e.*, (1) a Bor Deori (Deori Dima) and (2) a Saru Deori (Deori Sarba); and (3) a Bor Bharáli, and (4) a Saru Bharáli.[11] It is the former two (the Deoris), who alone perform the sacrifice, enter the temple and sing hymns, etc., which are hardly now understood by the laity. The office of the Bharális was an inferior one; it was their duty to collect all temple-offerings and to provide animals for sacrifice. They are also privileged to hold the head of the victim, which is nowadays usually a goat. As a rule no images, etc., are to be seen in the temples, though such images would seem to be provided from time to time as needed for purposes of public worship.

Human sacrifices (Narabali). Of the Deori temples mentioned above the oldest and most noteworthy is undoubtedly that known as the "Támar ghar" or copper temple, at Chunpura, the ruins of which are, it is said, still to be seen some miles east of Sadiya. It is described as a small stone building nearly square, built without cement, the stones joined by iron pins, not clamped. The roof, now fallen in, was of copper; hence the temple's name. The interior is eight feet square; and the whole is enclosed by a brick wall 130 feet by 200. Near the grand entrance in the western wall is a small stone tripod. Here from a period unknown down to a comparatively recent date human sacrifices were offered year by year. It is said that latterly the Áhom kings gave up for this purpose malefactors who had been sentenced to capital punishment; but as suitable victims of this type were not always forthcoming, a certain special tribe (khel) of the king's subjects were held bound to provide one and

in return the members of this tribe were entitled to certain privileges, *e.g.*, exemption from payment of ferry dues and market tolls, etc. It was necessary in all cases that the victims should be of high caste and "without blemish,"[12] the slightest mutilation, even the boring of an ear, rendering them unfit to be offered.

All Brahmins and members of the royal family were exempted as a privilege; whilst Domes, Haris, Musalmáns and women were excluded as unfit. For some time preceding the sacrifice the victim to be immolated was detained at the temple and sumptuously fed there, until he attained a sufficiently plump condition to suit the assumed taste of the flesh-eating goddess. On the appointed day he was led forth, magnificently attired and decorated with gold and silver ornaments, to be shown to the crowds assembled for the occasion. He was then led away and taken, by a private path trodden only by the officiating priests and their victims, to the brink of a deep pit, where he was divested of his gay attire and decapitated so that the body fell into the pit. The head was added to a heap of ghastly skulls that were piled up before the shrine. The exact date when these fearful sacrifices ceased does not seem to be definitely known. Lieutenant (afterwards Colonel) Dalton, from whose highly interesting paper most of the above details are taken, states that they were in vogue down to the time when the Áhom Government was superseded by that of the Burmese, when the Deoris finally withdrew from the neighbourhood of the "copper temple." Mr. Brown, on the other hand, tells us that these human sacrifices were abolished at a somewhat earlier date by Raja Gaurinath, who, also being unable to protect the Deoris from the Mishmis and other tribes, removed them to the Majuli,[13] where some of their villages are still to be found.

Marriage, etc. As among other branches of the Bårå race,

infant betrothal is unknown, no marriage being permitted until puberty is attained. Monogamy is the rule among Deoris and Baráhis; but a second wife is allowed where the first proves childless. Polygamy is common among Hindu and Áhom Chutiyas, but polyandry is quite unknown. Marriages are generally planned and arranged by the parents of the young people concerned, a bride-price varying from Rs. 10 to Rs. 100 being paid to the bride's parents by those of the bridegroom, or an equivalent given in service in the bride's household (*cf.* Genesis, xxix. 15–20: Jacob serving Laban seven years for Rachel).

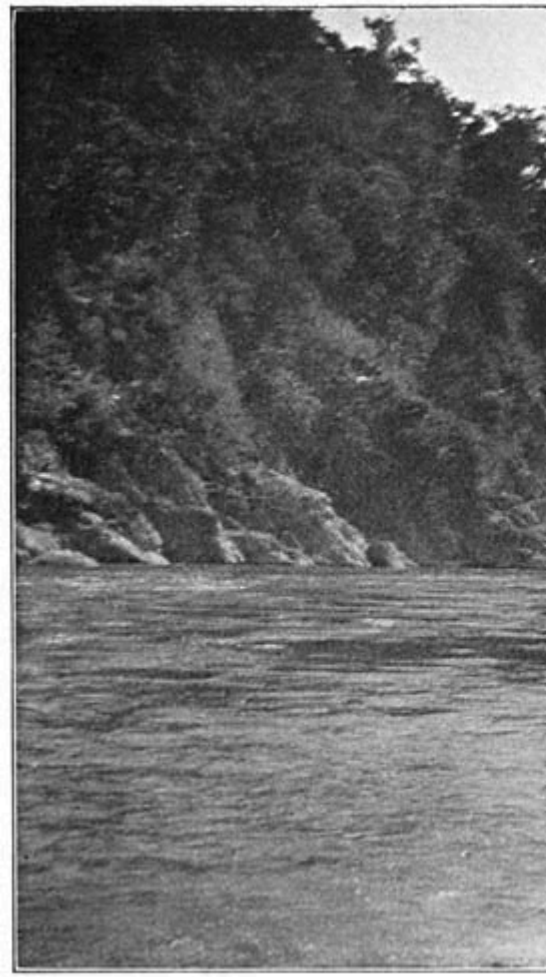
The actual marriage ceremony seems to vary considerably in the four different clans (khels) which compose the Chutiya community. With the two lower sections, *i.e.*, the Deoris and Baráhis, it consists in a feast given by the bridegroom's people to the friends and fellow-villagers of the bride, accompanied by much singing of songs, etc., in honour of the clan gods and goddesses, whilst with not a few even this simple ceremonial is dispensed with, and the young man claims his bride by merely placing bracelets on her wrists and a string of beads, etc., on her neck (Kháru and mani pindhoá).[14] But among the Áhom and Deori Chutiyas, who claim a somewhat higher position than the other two sections, a more elaborate ceremonial is observed. The Áhom Chutiyas to some extent still observe the form of marriage characteristic of their race, *i.e.*, that known as the Chaklang. There is an exchange of *temi* and *katári* between bride and bridegroom, who are made formally to inhale the smell of turmeric together, and this is followed by the tying of the nuptial knot (lagun gáthi), and the distribution of simple refreshments (jal-pán) among the assembled friends and relatives; and finally the bridegroom is said to carry off his bride through a hole cut in the corner of the house, this last proceeding being perhaps a survival of the time when marriage by capture or

stealth was not unknown. With the Hindu Chutiyas there is a still more elaborate ceremonial in vogue, one which approximates somewhat closely to the orthodox Hindu ideal. The *chaklang* form is superseded by that of the 'hom,' *i.e.*, libations of clarified butter (ghi) are formally poured in sacrifice on the sacred fire, and certain special mantras are recited by the officiating priest in the presence of the bride and bridegroom, who are formally seated by his side, and formally united by the tying of the nuptial knot (lagun-gáthi). It is said, further, that matrimonial etiquette requires postponement of consummation of the marriage for a week or so after the completion of the wedding ceremonial.

Divorce, widow, remarriage, etc. Divorce, which would seem to be not very common, may and usually does follow adultery on the part of the wife, the adulterer paying a fine of Rs. 500 to the injured husband, and further being compelled to provide a home for the erring woman, whom no respectable man of the tribe would consent to marry. The form used in cases of divorce is the usual one of tearing a betel-leaf (pán-chirá) together by the husband and the wife. The remarriage of widows is permitted with few, if any, restrictions; but as a rule the full marriage ceremonial, whether 'hom' or 'chaklang,' is not observed in such widow remarriages.

Disposal of the dead. The bodies of the dead are usually disposed of by burning, except in cases of epidemics, when, through panic or like cause, they are thrown into the jungle, or left to perish where they fall. The cremation is generally followed by a funeral feast, lasting for a period of from five to nine days, either at the deceased's house or at the river-side where the body was burnt. A shrádh with feasting of the dead man's relatives takes place usually at the end of a month after the cremation. This shrádh marks the closing of the period of mourning, which in the case of

an adult extends over about thirty days, during which period no flesh or fish may be eaten, though rice, ghi and potatoes are allowed. In the case of those who die in childhood no shrádh is observed, though the bereaved family usually go into mourning for some three days.



Fron

[1]

See *The Garos*, by Major A. Playfair, David Nutt. 1909.—Ed. ↑

[2]

Hi-chu, *i.e.*, *hi* earth, *chi* high: *cf.* Kachári *há-jo*, *i.e.*, *há* earth, *gajo*, high. ↑

[3]

"Patál," one of the seven regions which Hindus believe to exist under the earth. ↑

[4]

Pad-jal, *i.e.*, *pad* a foot, and *jal* water, "foot-water"; water in which a Gosain has dipped his foot, or (at least) his great toe, and which is therefore looked upon as sacred. It is otherwise known as *charanámrita*, *i.e.*, *charan* foot, and *ámrita*, *umtal* ambrosia. ↑

[5]

For other information about Garos, see *Garo Monograph*, pp. 17, 19, 21. —Ed. ↑

[6]

See paper by Major P. R. T. Gurdon, in *Journal of A. S. B.*, Vol. LXXIII., Part I, No. 1, 1904. ↑

[7]

Hábung-iyá, perhaps from *há* earth, *bung* for *su-bung* men; hence *hábung-iya*, autochthones, *adscripti glebæ*, something like the serfs of the old feudal system in Europe. ↑

[8]

I.e., *daśā*, the tenth.—Ed. ↑

[9]

See *Outline Grammar of the Deori Chutiya Language*, by W. B. Brown, B.A., I.C.S., Shillong, Assam Secretariat Press, a scholarly work to which the writer gladly takes this opportunity of acknowledging his manifold obligations. ↑

[10]

But the Gáros plant either a mandal tree or a Euphorbia cactus near their *Kosi* or sacrificial stones, hence recognising the sacred character of the *siju* tree (see *Gáro Monograph*, p. 97).—Ed. ↑

[11]

Bar = big, *saru* = small.—Ed. ↑

12

Cf. the old Jewish law regarding animals for sacrifice being "without blemish," Exodus, xii. 5; Leviticus, xxii. 19–21. ↑

13

A long island in the Brahmaputra.—Ed. ↑

14

I.e., the putting on of *kháru* (bracelets) and *mani* (necklace).—Ed. ↑

APPENDIX II[1]

To the stories taken by Mr. Endle from my little collection of Kachári folk-tales, I have ventured to add the following three tales, with an interlinear literal translation and some brief linguistic notes. This I have done in order to follow the example set in Sir C. J. Lyall's edition of Mr. Edward Stack's work on the Mikirs. A transcription followed by a loose translation is not of much use to linguistic students unless they have already some knowledge of the language. I ought to explain that I have not followed Mr. Endle's system of transliteration. In a language which has no written character, it is best to trust to one's own ear. In such languages dialect springs up quickly and local differences of pronunciation abound. I have merely tried, therefore, to record what I have myself heard. With the aid of the literal versions I now give, and by carefully reading Mr. Endle's Grammar, anyone who wishes to compare Kachári with other Bodo languages, such as Garo and Tippera, ought to be able to make out the remainder of the stories in my little collection without much difficulty.

The vowels are recorded as follows:—

a	is pronounced like	u	in English	*hut*
ā	,, ,, ,,	a	,, ,,	*father*
e	,, ,, ,,	a	,, ,,	*mason*

i	,,		i	,,	*fit*
		,,			,,
	,,				
ī	,,		ee	,,	*green*
		,,			,,
	,,				
o	,,		o	,,	*hot*
		,,			,,
	,,				
ō	,,		o	,,	*lo!*
		,,			,, *alone*
	,,				
u	,,		u	,,	*pull*
		,,			,,
	,,				
ū	,,		oo	,,	*school*
		,,			,,
	,,				
ai	,,		i	,,	*bite*
		,,			,,
	,,				
au	,,		ow	,,	*how*.
		,,			,,
	,,				

The sound represented by ŭ is rather difficult to describe to Europeans. To my ear, it seems rather guttural, something like the u in "ugh!" or the vulgar pronunciation of girl as "gurl." Or, again, it may be said to be like the French *eu* in *peu*, as pronounced by English people. Or perhaps a still nearer approximation is the Englishman's "er" when he pauses in making an after-dinner speech. The sound is of some importance, as -ŭi is the suffix by which the adverb in modern Kachári is formed from the adjective. Thus gahām, good; gahām-ŭi, well. Also the continuative

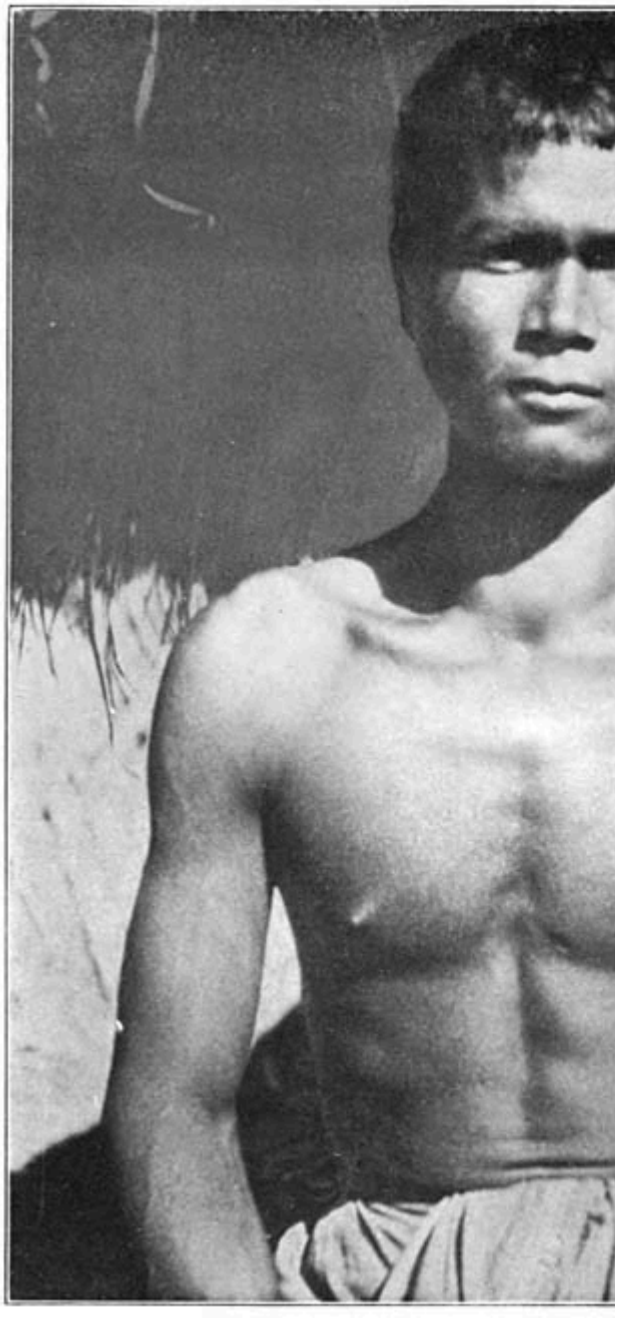
participle, as, thāng-ŭi, thāng-ŭi; going, going—as he went.

When ā is added to a noun, it is, as in Assamese, the sign of the nominative. If the word ends in a vowel, and especially in the vowel ā, an euphonic i is inserted between the two vowels. Thus hingzau-sā, is "woman." Hingzau-sā-i-ā is "the woman," in a narrative. Similarly -au is the inflexion marking the locative case. If the word ends in ā, this letter is divided from au by an euphonic i.

Words borrowed from Assamese or other Indian languages are printed in Roman letters. Some such may have escaped me. If so, they have probably been so transmuted by Bodo habits of pronunciation as to have become completely naturalised.

Ā inserted or "infixed" in the middle of a verb (between stem and inflexion) is the sign of the negative. Sometimes the euphonic i precedes it. Sometimes, especially before a guttural sound, it is converted into e.

No other supplementary explanations beyond those given in Mr. Endle's note on grammar seem required here.





Kachári Man (Kamrup Distri

From a photograph by Mrs. H. A. C

(I) Ābrā-nī khorāng.

Simpleton-of Story.

Sā-se
One
brai
old man
burui *dangman*.
old woman were.
Bi-sŭr-hā
Them-to
sā-se
one
gothō
boy
dangman.
was
Bī
He
sān?-se
day-one
brai-burui-*nī-au*
old-man old-woman-to
mosō
bullock
bai-nŭ
buy-to

lāgi
for
thākā
money
bī-
naise.
beg-ged.
Khintu
But
brai
old man
burui
old woman
gothō-khō
boy-to
āzla
silly
nu-nānŭi
see-ing
thākā
money
hŭ-ā-man.
give-not-did.
Gothŏ-
ā
Boy
em-brā-brā
again and again
bī-nai-khai
begging-because-of
thākā
money
zakhai-brŭi[3]
four-fours
hŭ-naise.
give-did.
Phāre

Then
gothō-ā
boy
mosō
bullock
bai-nŭ
buy-to
lāgi
for
thāng-ŭi
go-ing
thāng-ŭi
go-ing
man-thām
three
āli-*nī*
roads-
of
khāthi-*au*
near-at
ga-hām
good
mosō
bullock
mā-se
one
nu-nānŭi,
see-ing,
be
that
āli-*au*
road-on
thākā
money
din-nānŭi,
plac-ing,
mosō-khō

bullock-to
khā-nanŭi
bind-ing
lābo-naise.
take-did.
Thāng-ŭi
Going
thāng-ŭi
going
bī-hā
he
khī-nŭ
to ease himself
on-khāt-nānŭi
depart-ing
mosō-khō
bullock
hā-grā[4]
forest
dai-se-au
branch-one-to
khā-nānŭi
bind-ing
din-nānŭi
plac-ing
khī-hŭi-bā[5]
to ease himself go-ing
mosō-ā
bullock
be-thing
that-way
khāt-lāng-naise.
run-away-did.
Phāre
Then
be

he
khī-nai-nī-frai
easing-from
fai-nānŭi,
com-ing
mosō-khō
bullock
nu-e-khai
see not-because
hā-grā
forest
hā-grā
forest
namai-bai-naise.[6]
seek-wander-did.
Arŭ
And
bī
he
mŭi
deer
zonthrā
male
nu-nānŭi,
see-ing,
bī-khō-nŭ
it-indeed
bī-nī
him-of
mosō
bullock
han-nānŭi,
say-ing,
hŭsŭ-baie
hunt-ing
hŭsŭ-baie
hunt-ing

un-au
after
hā-grā
forest
zethāp-au
thicket-in
gongā
horns
*nāng-nānŭi*7
stick-ing
thāp-thā-nānŭi
caught-stay-ing
thā-naise·
stay-ed.
Obāsŭ
Then
bī
he
mŭi-khō
deer-to
godo-i-au
neck-on
dīdung-zang
cord-with
khā-nānŭi
bind-ing
no-hā-lāgī
house-up-to
dīdung
string
zorai
ty-ing
zorai
ty-ing
no
house

man-fai-naise.
reach-come-did.
Beau-nŭ
Then
bīmā
mother
bīfā-i-ā
father
sŭng-naise,
ask-ed,
"*nang*
you
mosō
bullock
bai-nŭ
buy-to
thāng-nai-ā,
go-did-not,
hŭrŭ?"[8]
eh?
Obāsŭ
Then
bī
he
būng-naise,
say-did,
"*be*
this
dīdung-khō
string-to
bŭ-bā-nŭ,
tug-see,
zang-fŭr
you
mosō
bullock

man-gan."
get-will.
Erŭi
Thus
han-nānŭi,
say-ing,
sā-thām
they-three
zang
together
dīdung-au
string-on
hom-nānŭi
seiz-ing
bŭ-bā-naise.
haul-ed.
Bŭ-ī
Hauling
bŭ-ī
hauling
mŭi-ā
deer
no
house
man-fai-bā;
reach-come-did;
boibŭ
they
gī-khrong-naise.
all fear-much-did.
Phāre
Then
bīmā bīfā-i-ā
mother-father
mŭi-khō
deer-to

bū-thāt-nānŭi
beat-slay-ing
s'lai-nŭ
exchange-to
lāgi
for
gāmī-*nī*
village-of
mānsŭi-*nŭ*
men-to
bāngan
loads
hŭ-naise·
send-did.

Be-au-nŭ
Then
gothō ābrā-i-ā
boy-foolish
"ai
mother
āfā-i-ā
father
mosō
bullock
bu-thāt-nānŭi
beat-killed-did
zābai"
ate
han-nānŭi
say-ing
mālai-nī
strangers-of
gāme
village

gāme
village
khithā-bai-naise.
say-continue-did.
Khintu
But
bī-khō
him
ābrā
foolish
nu-nānŭi
see-ing
mansŭi-*frā*
men
bī-nī
his
khorāng-khō
word
fathi-ā-khŭise.[10]
believe-not-did.
Bī-nī
There-of
unau,
after,
āji-*bŭ*
to-day
thā-i-ŭ
staying
kāli-*bŭ*
to-morrow
thā-i-ŭ,
staying,
ābrā-i-ā
fool
bāngai
somewhat
det-bŭ-nānŭi[11]

big-grow-ing
gāgai-nī
himself-of
hingzau
wife
namai-nŭ
seek-to
lāgi
for
ārŭ,
more
brai-burui-nī-au
old-man old-woman
thākā
from money
bī-
naise.
ask-did.
Be-au-bŭ
Thereupon
hŭ-ā
give-not
gār-ā,
escape-not,
thākā
money
zokhai-brŭi
four-fours
brai-*nī-frai*
old-man-from
lā-nānŭi
tak-ing
hingzau
wife
nāmai-nānŭi
seek-ing
thāng-naise.

go-did.
Thāng-ŭi
Going
thāng-ŭi
going
gāmī
village
mānsŭi-*ni*
men's
dŭi
water
gathān-au
ghaut-at
zombai
hiding
thā-naise.
stay-ed.
Phāre
Then
unau
after
sāse
one
mazāng
pretty
hingzausā
girl
dŭi
water
lāng-nŭ
draw-to
fai-nai
com-ing
nu-nānŭi,
see-ing,
dŭi
water

gathān-au
ghaut-at
bī
he
dŭi-lāng-nai
water-draw-ing
hingzausā-khō
girl-to
hom-nānŭi
seiz-ing
lābō-naise.
take-did.
Phāre
Then
fai-ŭi
coming
fai-ŭi
coming
nāmā-i-au
road-on
meng-nānŭi
tired-being
bong-fāng-fāng-se-nī[12]
tree-one-of
sing-au
under
zīrai-*naise*,
rest-ed,
ārŭ
and
mosō-halwā
bullock plough(er)
mā-se
one
lā-nānŭi,
taking,
mānsŭi

man
sāse
one
bŭ
also
be-au-nŭ
there
zirai-dangman·
resting-was.
Bī-baidi
This-way
bī-sŭr
they
zirai-bā thā-bā,
resting-staying,
hom-nai
seiz-ed
lāng-zā-nai[13]
abducted
hingzau-i-ā
girl
zingāsī-nānŭi
lamenting
gāb-ŭi
cry-ing
gāb-ŭi
cry-ing
megong-dŭi-i-ā
eye-water
hā-hā-lāgi
earth-to-as far as
[14]
bŭhi-lāng-naise·
flow-down-did.
Bī-khō
This

nu-nānŭi
see-ing
mosō
bullock
lā-nai
leading
mansŭi-*ā*
man
ābrā-nŭ
fool-to
khithā-naise,
say-did,
“*nang*
you
be
that
hingzausā-khō
girl-to
mau
where
15
man-nai?
get-did?
Arŭ
And
nang
you
bī-khō
her
nai-nanŭi
observ-ing
lābo-dang,
take-did,
na
or
nai-i-ā-lā-bā
see-not-doing

lābo-dang?”
took?
Obā
Then
ābrā-i-ā
fool
būng-naise
say-did
“*āng*
I
bī-khō
her
mazāng
pretty
nu-nānŭi
see-ing
bī-sŭr-nī
them-of
dŭi-gathān-nī-frai
water-ghaut-from
thākā
rupees
zokhai-brŭi
four-fours
din-nānŭi
plac-ing
lābo-dang.”
take-did.
Obā-nŭ
Then
bī
that
buddi-*grāng-ā*[16]
wisdom-possessing-one
bung-naise،
say-did,
“*nang*

you
khānā
blind
dang.
were.
Be
That
hingzausā
girl
mazāng-bā-bŭ[17],
pretty-being-though,
bī-nī
her-
of
megong
eyes
thai-ne-ā
two
bet-nai.
burst-are.
Nang
You
nu-ā-khŭi-nŭ?
see-not-did?
Ho,
Nay,
nŭi,
see,
dŭi-ā
water
sō-sō
rushing
bŭhi-lāng-dang.
flow-down-is.
Bī-baidī
This-kind
hingzausā-khō,

woman-to
nang
you
mā
what
khām-nŭ?"[18]
do-will?

Be
That
khorāng
word
khnā-nānŭi
hear-ing
ābrā-i-ā
fool
bī-nī
his
mosō
bullock
zang
with
s'lai-nŭ
change-to
namai-naise.
wish-ed.
Khintu
But
bī
that
mānsŭi-*ā*
man
misai-*nŭ*
false-ly
hŭ-nŭ
give-
to

namai-i-ā·
wish-ed-not.
Theo-
bŭ
Yet
embrā-brā
again and again
bī-nai-khai,
begging-because of,
"*lā, le, lā*,"
"take, then, take,"
han-nānŭi,
saying,
mosō-zang
bullock-with
mānsŭi-*zang*
mortal-with
s'lai-nānŭi,
exchang-ing,
gāgai
own
gāgai
own
mon-*au*
mind-in
ga-hām[19]
well
man-nānŭi,
find-ing,
azang[20]
one-person
sā-se
one
azang
one person
sā-se
one

māmār
quickly
thāng-lai-naise.
went-away.
Be-baidi-nŭ
This-manner-in
thāng-ŭi
going
thāng-ŭi[21]
going
ābrā-i-ā
fool
bong-fāng
tree
fāng-se
one
sing-au
under
burmā
goat
lā-nai
lead-ing
mānsŭi
man
sā-se
one
zo-bai
sitting
thā-nai[22]
stay-ing
nu-nānŭi,
seeing,
bī-bŭ
he-
too
be-au-nŭ

there-indeed
zo-naise.
sit-did.
Be-baidi
This-way
zo-bai
sit-ting
thā-bā,
stay-ing,
moso-ā
bullock
hā-su-dangman.
defecated.
Phāre
Then
bĭ
that
burmā
goat
lānai
leading
mānsŭi-a
man
bung-naise,
said
“*be*
that
mosō-nī
bullock’s
udu-i-ā
belly
gob-long-bai,
is burst,
arŭ
more
sān
day

sā-
se[23]
one
thābā
staying
be
it
thoi-sī-gan."
die-perish-will.
Be-au-bŭ
Then
bi
that
ābrā-i-ā
fool
gomā
true
nung-nā=nŭi,
thinking,
moso-khō
bullock
bī-nī
his
burmā-zang
goat-with
s'lai-naise.
exchanged.
Be-baidi
This-way
thāng-ŭi,
going,
ārŭ
also
sā-se
one
thālit
banana

lā-nai
bearing
mānsŭi
man
lŭgŭ
meeting
man-nanŭi,
getting,
ābrā-i-ā
fool
bŭ
also
zo-dangman·
sit-did.
Khintu
But
burmā-i-ā
goat
gāngsŭ[24]
grass
ukhui-nānŭi
hungering
ba-brāp
restless
bai-nai-au[25]
wandering-on
bī
he
zo-nŭ
sit-to
sukhu
pleasure
man-e-khai,
get-not-because of,
burmā-khō
goat
bubā,

beat-ing,
burmā
goat
bā bā
ba-baa
han-naise.
say-did.
Obānŭ,
Then
"*ese*
thus
mengnāi-i-au
tired-being
āng
I
nang-khō
you
mā-brŭi
what-way
bā-gan?"
carry-shall?
han-nānŭi,
saying,
brāp-nānŭi,
angered-being
gār-nŭ[26]
to get rid
lubui-bā,
wishing,
be
that
thālit
banana
lā-nai
carry-ing
mānsŭi-ā,
man

thālit-khō
bananas
ābrā-nŭ
fool-to
hŭ-nānŭi,
giv-ing,
bī
he
burmā-khō
goat
lāng-naise.
take-did.
Bī-baidi-nŭ
This-way-indeed
bī-sŭr
they
bi-ni-frai
there-from
thāng-lai-naise.[27]
go-away-did.
Ere-au-nŭ
There-upon
sā-se
one
mānsŭi
man
bī-nī
his
sigāng-thing
front-direction
āsī
finger
khrep-khrep
snap-snap
dām-nānŭi
sound-ing

fai-dang.
come-did.
Obā-sŭ
Then
khāthi-*au*
near
lŭgŭ
meeting
man-bā,
getting
ābrā-i-ā
fool
bung-naise,
said
"*āng*
I
burmā
goat
mā-se
one
mānī
up-to
hŭ-nānŭi,
giv-ing,
be
those
thālit-khō
bananas
lābōdang.
carried-away.
Theo-bŭ
Yet
āng-nī-au
from-me
thālit
banana (you)

bī-ŭ!”
beg!
Erŭi
So
han-nānŭi,
say-ing,
“*nang*
you
thālit
banana
zā-nŭ
eat-
to
lubui-dang-bā,[28]
wish-do-if
nang-nī
your
bidyā-*khō*
skill
āng-nŭ
me-to
hŭ,”
give,
han-nānŭi,
say-ing,
bī
he
bī-au-nŭ
there
hurā-se
hour-one
māni
till
sŭlŭng-nānŭi,
teaching,
zenthen-*ŭi*
as best

hā-nānŭi,
able-being
thālit-khō
bananas
bī-nŭ
him-
to
hŭ-nānŭi,
giving
āsī
finger
khrep-khrep
snap-snap
dām-nānŭi
sound-ing
thāng-naise.
depart-ed.
Thāng-ŭi
Going
thāng-ŭi,
going
mai
rice
gezer
tall
dāp-se-au
field-one-in
khī-nŭ
defecate-to
onkhāt-nānŭi
going-out
khī-nai-au
(in the process)
bī-nī
his
bidyā-*khō*
leaving

bau-gār-
naise.
forgot.
Arŭ
And
be
that
mai-gezer-au-
nŭ
rice-tall-in
gamā-bai[29]
lost-is
han-nānŭi,
saying,
mai-khō
rice
themā
lice
nai-nai-baidi[30]
seeking-like
nai-naise.
searched.
Be-au-nŭ
Then
mai-nī
rice-of
girimā-*i-a*[31]
owner
mai
rice
hā-bai-tha-dangman[32]
was broken down
nu-nānŭi,
seeing
bī-khō
him
sŭng-naise,

asked
“*nang-hā*
you
be-au
there
mā
what
gamā-dang?
have lost?
Āng-nī
My
mai-fŭr-hā
rice plants
hām-
ā
ruined
zo-thro-bai.”[33]
flattened-utterly-are.
Ābrā
Fool
*bung-nais*e,
say-did,
“*āng-hā*
I
thākā
rupees
zokhai-brŭi-ni
sixteen of
bidyā
skill
man-se
one
be-au-nŭ
there
gamā-bai.
lost.
Nang-bŭ

You-too
āng-zang
me-with
namai-phā-bā,
seek-come-ing
āng
I
nang-khō
you-to
ga-hām
well
man-gan,"[34]
meet-will,
han-nai-khai,
saying-because-of
bī-bŭ
he-
too
namai-ŭi
seeking
namai-ŭi
seeking
man-e-khai[35]
get-not-because of
brāp-nānŭi,
angry-being
"*nang-nī*
your
khorāng-ā
tale
misā,"
false,
han-nānŭi,
saying,
āsī
fingers
dām-bā,

sounding,
"*āfā*,
father,
dā
now
āng
I
man-bai!"
get-have!
han-nānŭi
saying
ābrā-i-ā
fool
khāt-lāng-naise.
ran-away.
Arŭ
And
be-baidi-nŭ
that-way-exactly
thāng-ŭi
going
thāng-ŭi
going
fukuri
pond
man-se
one
man-hŭi-bā[36]
meet-ing
be-au-bŭ
there-too
bī
he
khī-nānŭi,
defecating,
bī-nī

his
bidyā-*khō*
art
baugār-naise.
forgot.
Phāre
Then
bi
he
nāmai-e[37]
seeking
nāmai-e
seeking
man-ā-khŭi.
get-not-did.
Ere-au-nŭ
There-on
sā-se
one
mansŭi
man
lŭgŭ
meeting
man-nānŭi
getting
sŭng-naise,
ask-ed
"*nang-hā*
you
be-au
there
ma
what
gamā-dang?"
lost-have,
hanbā,
saying,

"*āfā*,
father,
āng-hā
I
be-au
there
ga-hām
good
basthu
thing
man-se
one
gamā-bai;
lost;
nang-bŭ
you too
namai-bā,
seeking,
āng
I
gahām
well
man-gō,"
meet-will,
bung-nai-au[38]
saying
bī-bŭ
he-too
bī-zang
him-with
nāmai-fai-naise,
search-come-did,
ārŭ
and

un-au
then
nāmai-ŭi
seeking
nāmai-ŭi
seeking
hā-bru
earth-mud
zang
with
musunlā-musunlī
hugger-mugger
zā-nānŭi,
becoming
theo-bŭ
yet
man-e-khai,
get-not-because of
bī
that
mānsŭi-ā
man
brāp-nānŭi
angry-being
āsi
fingers
dām-naise.
sounded.
Obā
Then
bī,
he,
"*O āfā*,
O father,
dā-sŭ,
now-inded
āng

I
be-
khō
it
man-bai,"
got-have,
han-nānŭi,
saying,
rong
happy
zā-nānŭi,
becoming,
no-hā-lāgi
house-up-to
khrep-khrep
snap-snap
dām-nānŭi,
sounding
no
house
man-hŭi-naise.
went and reached.
Bī-khō
Him
nu-nānŭi
seeing
brai
old man
burui-*ā*
old woman
mini-sŭ-naise.
laugh-much-did.
Aglā
First
bī-khō
him
sinai[39]

recognition
man-ā-khŭi-man,
get-not-did
unau
after
sŭng-nānŭi
ask-ing
mithī-naise.
knew.
Ārŭ
And
thākā-*fŭr*
rupees
mā
what
khām-khŭ?"
did?
"*han-bā*,
saying
bung-naise,
(he) said,
"*āng*
I
hingzau
girl
sā-se
one
lābō-dangman.
take-did.
Be-hā
Her
megon
eyes
thai-ne
two
bŭ

also
bet-nai·
were burst.
Bī-nī-khai
Therefore
ārŭ
also
mosō
bullock
s'lai-naise·
exchanged.
Bī-bŭ
It-too
āng-khō
me
bā-nŭ
to carry
thin-nai-khai
ordering
brāp-nānŭi,
being angry
thālit
bananas
s'lai-naise.
exchanged.
Thālit-khō
Bananas
nu-nānŭi,
seeing
sā-se
one
mānsui-*ā*
man
bī-nai-khai,
begging-because
be
of that

mansŭi-nī-frai
man from
be
this
bidyā-*khō*
skill
sŭlŭng-nānŭi
learning
thālit
bananas
hŭ-nānŭi
giving
lābo-dāng·
took.
Ārŭ
And
āng
I
mā
what
khām-
nŭ
to do
nāng-go?"
was obliged?"
Zap-bai!
Ended!

FREE TRANSLATION.

The story of the simpleton.

There was once an old man and an old woman, and they had an only son. One day he begged rupees of the old people to buy a bullock, but they, seeing the lad was an innocent, refused his request. However, on his importuning them, they gave him sixteen rupees. On which he marched off to purchase his bullock, and finding a fine one where three roads met, he put down his money on the road and led the beast away, but as he was going, he tied his new acquisition to a branch, and, as he was looking another way, it escaped. On which he started in search of it, and seeing a stag, hunted that, until by chance its horns stuck in a thicket. Thereon he tied a cord round its neck, and joining other cords to the first, finally reached his home. On which his father and mother asked, “Did not you set out to buy a bullock?” “To be sure I did,” he replied, “and if you help me to pull this cord, you will see the bullock I have bought.” So they all three tugged, and presently the stag appeared, kicking and struggling, to the great fear of the old people. They killed it, nevertheless, and sent its flesh round to the adjacent villages for sale. After which the boy went about saying that the villagers had eaten cow’s flesh. But seeing him to be a fool, no one paid much attention to what he said.

Another day, some time after, when the silly boy was rather bigger, he asked for money again to buy a wife with. And again, overcome by his obstinacy, they gave him sixteen rupees, taking which he set out in search of a maiden, and, after going some distance, took up his station at a place where the villagers draw water from the river. Presently a pretty girl came tripping down to get water, on which, as before, he put down his money and seized and carried off the girl. And since she was plump, he soon grew tired and rested under a tree. Presently a man leading a plough ox came that way, and he too joined the party and sat down. But the girl sat weeping and lamenting and crying her eyes out. Seeing which, the man said to the simpleton, "Where did you get that girl? And did you have a good look at her before you took her?" "Yes, I did," said the lad, "I saw that she was a pretty girl, so I put down sixteen rupees at the village watering place and carried her off." On which the cunning fellow said, "You must be blind, my friend; she may be a pretty girl, but both her eyes are burst. Did you not see that? Why, look at them now. The water is running from them in streams. What are you going to do with a girl like that?"

On hearing that, the lad wanted to exchange the girl for the plough ox, and the man cunningly pretended to be unwilling, but was finally persuaded by the simpleton's importunacy, and said, "There, take it, and begone." So the exchange was effected, and each quickly went his own way, mightily pleased with his bargain.

After going some way, the boy met a man with a goat. This man too sat down. After a while the ox eased itself, and the man with the goat said, "That beast's belly is burst, and in a day or two it will die." The simpleton, believing every word he said, exchanged his ox for the goat, and went his way. Presently he met a man carrying a bunch of bananas, and sat down beside him. But the goat was hungry for

grass and kept wandering about and crying “Ba! ba!” so that his master got no peace. Now the word “bā” in Kachári means “Carry me on your back.” So the boy was vexed, and crying “How shall I carry you on my back when I am so tired?” exchanged the goat for the bunch of bananas. And again each went his way.

By chance there came a man that way snapping his fingers. And he asked for the bananas. But the simpleton said, “I got those bananas in exchange for a goat, and you ask me for them! However, if you really want to eat the fruit, teach me the art of snapping the fingers, and you shall have them.” After an hour’s teaching, he had learned the difficult art, more or less, and, giving up the bananas, departed snapping his fingers.

Presently he came to a fine field of rice, and there forgot his new art. Fancying he had lost it in the rice, he began searching for it in the crop as women search for lice in one another’s hair, and the rice-field was all trodden down. And then the owner of the field came up and asked, “What are you looking for there?” The simpleton said, “I have lost something for which I gave sixteen rupees. If you will join me in my search, I shall be greatly obliged.” So the man searched too, and the crop suffered greatly. But finding nothing, the man, in pure vexation, snapped his fingers. On which the lad, crying, “*That* is just what I lost!” danced away gaily.

Soon after he paused on the bank of a pond, and again forgot his art, and began wading about in the mud looking for it. And a man asked him, as before, what he had lost. So he replied, “Something for which I gave sixteen rupees.” And the man joined him in the search, and both became covered with mud from head to foot. And, since they found nothing, the man grew angry, and snapped his fingers. On which the boy cried in joy, “Good sir, *that* is

what I lost!" and danced away to his home. And when his old parents saw him covered with mud, they burst out laughing, and, until they heard his voice, did not know who he was. And when they asked what he had done with his money, he explained that he had bought a girl, whom he had exchanged for an ox, which he gave in exchange for a goat, which angered him by ordering him to carry it on his back, so that he exchanged it for a bunch of bananas, which he gave in exchange for the art of snapping his fingers. "And what else did you expect me to do?" said the simpleton! And that's all!

II. Mŭkhrā ārŭ sessā-nī khorāng.

The tale of the monkey and the hare.

Mā-se
One
sessā
hare
ārŭ
and
mŭkhrā
monkey
zang
together
fisikhī[40]
friendship
man.
was.
Bī-sŭr
They
sā-nŭi
two
zang
together
ozai-*nŭ*[41]
ever
lŭgŭ *se*
together

thā-i-
ŭ,
stayed,
lŭgŭ *se*
together
zā-i-ŭ,
ate,
ārŭ
and
lŭgŭ *se*[42]
together
thā-baā-bai-i-ŭ.
wandered
about.
Obāsu
Then
sān-se
day-one
sā-se
one
Darrang-ārŭi
Darrang-ite
mānsŭi
man
goe
betel
thālit
banana
lā-nānŭi,
bringing,
ālāsī
feast
zā-nū
to eat
thāng-nai
going
nām-au

on road
lŭgŭ
meeting
man-nānŭi,
obtaining,
bī-sŭr
they
rai-lai-naise,[43]
speaking-exchanged,
"*be*
this
mānsŭi-nī
man's
goe
betel
thālit-fŭr-khō
bananas
zā-nŭ
to eat
lāgi
for
zang-fŭr
we
buddi
scheme
man-se
one
khām-*nŭ*
to make
nāng-go,"
must,
han-nānŭi,
saying,
sessā-khō
hare
nāmau
on road

thā-nŭ
to stay
thin-nānŭi,
sending,
mŭkhrā-i-ā
monkey
hā-grā-i-au
forest in
hākhmānai
hidden
thā-naise.
stay-ed.
Phāre
Then
mansŭi-*a*
man
man-fai-bā,
reaching,
sessā-khō
hare-to
nu-nānŭi,
seeing,
bī-bān
load
din-nānŭi,
placing,
hŭ-sŭ-naise.
hunted.
Hŭ-sŭ-bā,
Hunting,
mŭkhrā-i-ā
monkey
hāgrā-nī-frai
forest-from
māmār
quickly
on-khāt-nānŭi,

emerging,
thālit-fŭr-khō
bananas
lā-nānŭi,
taking,
bong-fāng-au
in tree
gā-khŭ-hŭi-naise.[44]
clambered.
Ārŭ
And
"*sessā*
"hare
fai-gan"
will come"
han-nānŭi,
saying,
thālit
bananas
goe-*fŭr-khō*
betel-nuts
māmār
quickly
zā-grŭ-naise.
eat-gobbled.
Arŭ
And
thālit
banana
bigur
skins
bŭā
only
sessā-nŭ
for hare
din-naise.
placed.

Emphāre
Then
unau
after
sessā-khō
hare-to
mānsŭi-ā
the man
hom-nŭ
to seize
hā-i-ā-khŭise
was-not-able
ārŭ
and
un-au
after
no-i-au[45]
to house
thāng-phā-phin-naise.[46]
go-away-back-did.
Obāsŭ
Then
sessā-i-ā
hare
gābzri-ŭi
shouting
gabzri-ŭi
shouting
thāng-nānŭi,
going,
fisikhī-khō
friend
lŭgŭ
meeting
man-hŭi-nānŭi,
obtaining,
gur

molasses
thālit
bananas
bī-bā,
on begging,
thālit
banana
bigur
skins
bŭā
only
hŭ-naise.
gave.
Bī-nī-khai
Therefore
sessā-i-ā
hare
brāp-nānŭi,
being angry,
"*be-khō*
to him
bāngai
some
dukhu
trouble
hŭgan,"
will give
mon-*au*
in mind
nung-nānŭi,
thinking,
thāso-bāre[47]
Kachhu plants
sing-au
under
thā-hŭi-naise.

went and
stayed.
Un-
au
After
mŭkhrā-i-ā
monkey
bong-fāng-nī-frai
from tree
on-khāt-nānŭi,
descending,
"*sikhī-lŭi*,
oh, friend,
sikhī-lŭi!"
oh friend,
han-ŭi
saying
han-ŭi,
saying,
gābzrī
shouting
gābzrī
shouting
thāng-bā,
going,
sessā-i-ā
hare
brāp-nā-nŭi
being angry
bung-naise,
said,
"*mā-thŭ*[48]
what's this
sikhī
"friend
sikhī
friend,"

lŭi?[45]
eh?
Āng
I
be-au-nŭ
here
rāzā-
nī
king's
khuser[49]
sugar-cane
ne-fai-dang.
am come to watch.
Nang-nŭ
You
āng-khō
of me
mā-nŭ
what
nāng-go?"
want?
Obā-sŭ
Then
mŭkhrā-i-ā
monkey
nu-zā-hŭi-
going and
nānŭi[50]
looking
bung-naise,
said,
"*he*
oh,
sikhī,
friend,
khuser-khō
sugar-cane

āng-nŭ
to me
tho-se
one
bit
hŭ,
give,
hera!
do!
Bese
How
gathāu
sweet
āng
I
zā-nai
eating
nī,"
see,
han-
bā,
saying,
sessā
hare
bung-naise,
said,
"*Āng*
I
nang-
nŭ
to you
hŭ-nŭ
to
give
hā-i-ā.
am not able.
Rāzā
King

khnā-bā
on hearing
āng-khō
me
bu-gan.”
will beat.
Theo-bŭ,
However
bī
he
embrā-brā
again and again
bi-nai-khai,
because of begging,
“*zā*,
eat,
lŭi,
there,
zā,[51]
eat,
āng
I
nang-zang
with you
hā-liā,”
am not able,
han-nānŭi,
saying,
zā-nŭ
to eat
hŭ-naise.
gave.
Phāre
Then
bī
he
zā-nānŭi,

eating,
sālā-i-au
on tongue
man-bā,
catching,
"*sikhī*,
friend,
āng
I
thoi-naise,"
am killed,
han-nānŭi,
saying,
babrāp-bai-bā,
wandering distractedly,
sessā
hare
bung-naise,
said,
"*nang*
you
gagai-nŭ
your own
dukhu
trouble
man-dang.
procured.
Āng
I
dā
now
nang-khō
to you
mā
what
khām-gan?"
shall do?

han-nānŭi,
saying,
bere-jothā-nī
hornets of
bāhā
nest
sing-au
under
thā-hŭi-naise.
went and
stayed.
Mŭkhrā-bŭ
Monkey-too
un
behind
un
behind
gabzrī-nānŭi
shouting
thāng-nānŭi,
going,
ārŭ
also
nu-zā-hŭi-nai-sŭi-lā-i-ŭ.[52]
went and watched him with care.
"*Sikhī*,
Friend,
nang
you
mā
what
khām-dang?"
are doing?
bung-bā,
on saying,
sessā
hare

khithā-naise,
said,
"*āng*
I
rāzā-nī
king's
zothā
drum
ne-dang,"
am guarding,
han-
bā,
saying,
"*Sikhī*,
friend,
āng-nŭ
to me
bāngai
a little
dām-nŭ
to play
hŭ,
give,
herā!"
do!
Sessā-i-ā
Hare
bung-naise,
said,
"*ŭh!*
oh!
āng
I
hā-i-ā,
cannot,
herā;
truly,

rāzā
king
khnā-bā
on hearing
āng-khō
me
bu-thāt-gan,"
beating will kill,
bung-bā bŭ,
saying even,
embrā-brā
again and again
"*āng*
I
lāsui-*sŭ*
very lightly
dām-gan,
will play,
herā,"
really,
han-nānŭi,
saying,
bere
hornets'
bāhā-khō
nest
ākhai-phāt-ne
hand-palms-two
zang
with
bu-zāp-naise.
beat and
broke.
Obānŭ
Then
bere-frā
hornets

mukhang,[53]
face,
megon,
eyes,
modom,[53]
body,
gāsenŭ
all
ot-phop-bā
stinging-hurting
mŭkhrā-i-ā
monkey
gāp-khrau
howling
gāp-si
yelling
ba-brāp-bai-naise.[54]
wandered about.
Obānia
Then
sessā-i-ā
monkey
bung-naise,
said,
"*āng*
I
dŭ-hŭi-nŭ
repeatedly
nang-nŭ
to you
khithā-dangman,
said,
theobŭ
yet
nang
you

khorāng
word
lā-i-ā.
accepted-not
Āng
I
mā
what
khām-gan?”
shall do?
han-nānŭi,
say-ing,
ārŭ
and
dāp-se-au
field-one-in
zibo-gowāl-*nī*
a kind of
snake
khathi-*au*
near
thā-hŭi-naise.
went and
stayed.
Āzang-hā
Accordingly
mŭkhrā
monkey
bŭ
too
khī-thu
behind
khī-thu
behind
thāng-nānŭi
going
bung-naise,

said,
"*ārŭ*
and
be-au
there
lai
eh?
nang
you
mā
what
khām-dang,
are doing,
hera?"
say?
Sessā
Hare
bung-naise,
said,
"*āng*
I
rāzā-lŭng-hā-nī[55]
king-people-of
sāmā-lauthi
sceptre
ne-dang,
am watching,
herā!"
sir!
bung-bā,
saying,
"*Sikhī*,
friend,
āng-nŭ-bŭ
to me to
hŭ,
give,

herā!
do!
āng
I
bāngai
a little
dāng-nai-ni."
wield and see.
Bī
He
"*hŭ-ā*"
"not give"
han-bā-bŭ
saying-even
embrā-brā
again and again
dāng-nai-nānŭi
wielding
be-au-bŭ
then-also
bī
he
zībo-zang
snake-by
ot-zā-naise.[56]
bitten be-came.
Bī-nī-frai
There-from
sessā
hare
thāng-nānŭi
go-ing
photo-bāre-au
marsh-in
thā-hŭi-naise.
went and stayed.

Mŭkhrā
Monkey
bŭ
also
gābzrī
shouting
gābzrī
shouting
thāng-nānŭi,
go-ing
ārŭ
and
lŭgŭ
meeting
lā-hŭi-nānŭi
going and getting
sessā-khō
hare-to
sŭng-bā,
asking,
bī
he
bung-naise,
said,
"*be-khō-nŭ*
This
rāzā-nī
king's
dolā
palanquin
han-nānŭi
saying
bung-ŭ."
call.
Mŭkhrā
Monkey
bung-naise,

said,
"*Sikhī*,
friend,
āng
I
bāngai
a little
uthī-*nai*
ascending
nī,
see,
herā!"
please!
bung-bā,
saying,
"*ŭh*!
oh!
āng
I
hŭ-nŭ
to
give
hā-i-ā.
am not able.
Rāzā
King
khnā-bā
hearing
āng-khō
to me
mā
what
bung-gan?
will say?
Nang
You
mā-bā

what sort
ābrā
fool
mānsŭi,
man,
hera!
eh!
Khorāng
Word
khithā-bā-bŭ
saying-even
khnā-song-ā,"
not heed,
bung-bā-bŭ,
saying-even,
mŭkhrā-i-ā,
momkey,
"*nong-ā*,
no, no,
herā
oh
sikhī,
friend,
do-se
one
bit
bŭā
only
uthī-*gan*,"
will ascend,
han-nānŭi,
saying,
photo-bāre-au
on marsh
bāt-drum-bā,
jumping,

godo-hā-lāgi
neck-up too
thrup
flop
thāng-naise.
stuck.
Obāsŭ
Then
sessā
hare
khithā-naise,
said,
“*duhui*
“now
thālit
bananas
zā-nānŭi
eating
bigur
skin
hŭ-nai-ā,
giving-(person),
be-nŭ,
here,
herā
oh
sikhī,
friend,
nang
you,
be-au-nŭ
there-even
thā-dŭ!
stop!
Āng
I
nang-khō

you
khulum-bai!
pay you my reverence!
Āng
I
thāng-naise,"
am going,
han-nānŭi,
saying,
bī
he
mŭkhrā-khō
the monkey
be-au-nŭ
there
gār-lai-naise.
left behind.

Obasā
Then
unau
after
bī-thing
that-direction
gāndā
rhinoceros
mā-se
one
fai-nai
coming
nu-bā,
seeing,
bī-khō
to
him
mukhrā-i-ā
monkey

dikhāng-nŭ
to extricate
thing-dangman.
was ordering.
Gāndā-i-ā
Rhinoceros
bung-naise,
said,
"*āng-hā*
I
ukhui-sŭi-dang
hungry-very-am
ārŭ
and
dŭi-gāng-sŭi-dang;
water-thirsty-very-am;
āng
I
nang-khō
you
dikhāng-nŭ
to extricate
hā-i-ā,"
am not able,
han-nānŭi,
saying,
bī
he
thāng-naise.
went away.

Bī-nī
There
un-au
after
ārŭ
also

moesŭ
buffalo
mā-se
one
fai-nai-au,
on coming,
bī-khō-bŭ
to him also
khithā-dangman.
said.
Bī-bŭ
He also
khnā-song-ā-lā-bā
not attending
blot
pop!
thāng-naise.
went away.
Boi-nŭ-khri
Than him
khī-zap-au[57]
tail-end-at
mosā
tiger
mā-se
one
ukhui-sŭ-nānŭi
hungry-very-being
bī-thing
that-direction
thāng-dangman.
was going.
Mŭkhrā
Monkey
nu-nānŭi
seeing
bung-naise,

said,
“*he*
Oh
āfā,
father,
nang
you
āng-khō
to me
be
this
dukhu-*nī-frai*
trouble-from
dikhāng-ā-bā
if (you) extricate
arŭ
other
raubo
anyone
dikhāng-lia,”
extricate will not,
“*han-nānŭi*,
saying,
gahām-ŭi
well
khulum-nŭ
to worship
hom-naise.
began.
Theo-
bŭ
Still
bī,
he,
“*āng*
I
nang-khō

you
dikhāng-nānŭi
extricating
mā
what
man-gan?"
shall get?
han-nānŭi,
saying,
khozo-ne-sŭ
paces-two-about
thāng-bā,
going
mŭkhrā-i-ā
monkey
bung-naise,
said,
"*āfā*,
father,
nang
you
āng-khō
me
be
this
photo-bāre-nī-frai
marsh-from
dikhāng-nānŭi
extricating
hā-bru-fŭr-khō
muddiness (lit. "muds")
su-srā-nānŭi,
cleansing
āng-khō
me

nang
you
zā,"
eat,
han-bā, *bī*,
saying he
ukhui-sŭ-nai-khai
hungriness-because-of
be
that
khorāng-au
word
khnā-song-nānŭi,
hearkening
bī-khō
to
him
bung-naise,
said
"*āng*
I
nang-khō
you
zā-nŭ
to eat
mon
mind
gŭi-ā,
have not,
manāthŭ,
however,
be-baidi
that sort
dukhu-*au*
trouble-in
gaglai-nai-khō
fallen (person) to

dikhāng-ā-bā,
extricate-not-if,
āng-hā
I
gahām
good
zā-gan.
will-be.
Theo-bŭ
However
gaigai-nŭ
yourself
zāsī-*nānŭi*
beseeching
hŭnai-i-au,
on giving
āng
I
zā-nŭ
to eat
hāgo,"
am able,
han-nānŭi,
saying,
bī-nī
his
lānzai-*khō*
tail-
phol-au
in marsh
hot-bā,[58]
sending,
mŭkhrā-i-ā
momkey
bī-nī
his
lānzai-au

hom-ba,
seizing
dikhāng-bŭ-naise.
dragged him out.
Mŭkhrā
Monkey
khithā-naise,
said
"*āfā*,
Father,
nang
you
āng-khō
me
dā-niā
now
modom-fŭr-khō
body (plural)
gahām-ŭi
well
su-
srā,
dry,
emphare
after
rān-bā
drying
zā,"
eat,
han-nānŭi
saying
sān-dung-au
sun-shine-in
do-se
one
zo-bai
bit sitting

thā-dangman.
remained.
Ere-au-nŭ
Then
mosā-i-ā
tiger
phāt-se-thing
one other direction
nai-ne-au,
on looking
bī
he
bong-fāng-au
in tree
fāt-drāp
helter-skelter
gā-khŭ-naise.
clambered.
Mosā
Tiger
be-
khō
him
nu-nānŭi,
seeing,
brāp-nānŭi,
angry-being,
bongfāng
tree
guri-*au-nŭ*
root at
sān-ne
days-two
sān-thām
days-three
ne-bai
watch-ing

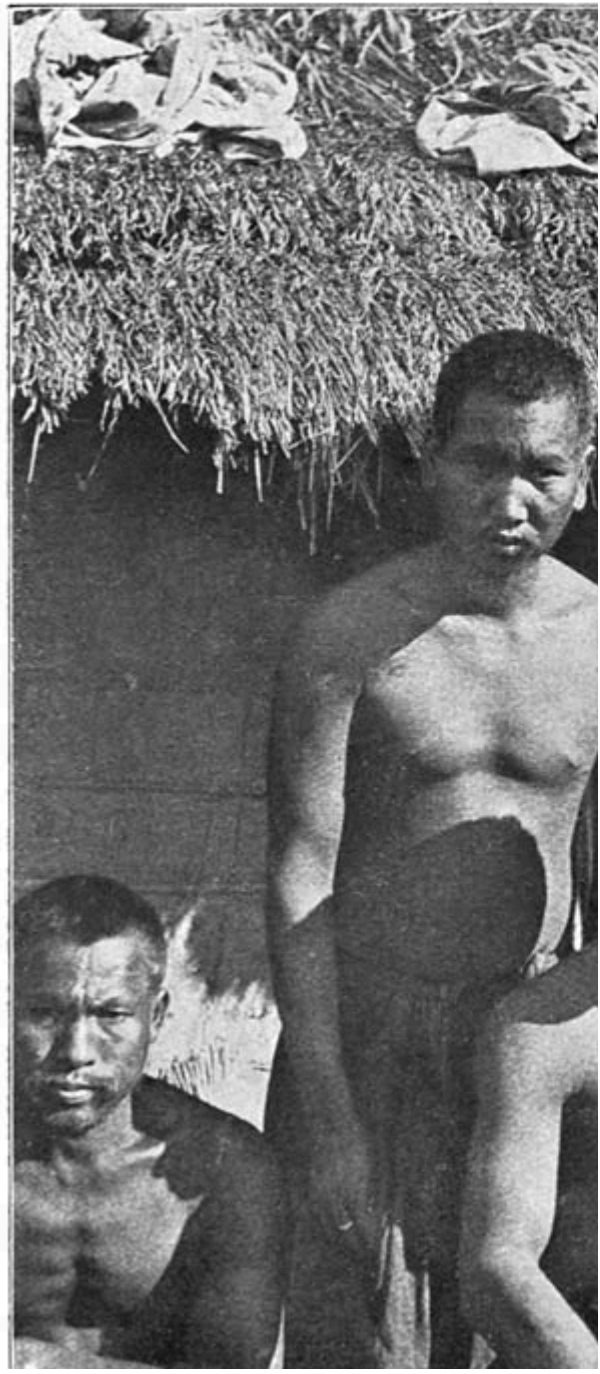
thā-naise.
stay-ed.
Be-baidi
This-way
thā-nānŭi,
stay-ing,
khugā
jaws
sī-nānŭi,
gap-ing
hāthai
teeth
hāzīzī
display
khām-*nānŭi*,
making
thoi-thī-nānŭi
dead-pretend-ing
thā-*naise*,
stay-ed,
ārŭ
and
thāmfai-frā
flies
khugā-i-au
mouth in
brŭng-brŭng
buzz buzz
han-lai-nŭ
to continue to stay
hom-naise.
began.
Be-au-nŭ
Thereon
mŭkhrā-i-ā
monkey
ose

by
ose
degrees
thoi-māt-bai
dead-verily-is
nung-nānŭi,
thinking,
bongfāng
tree
bīzō-nī-frai
top-from
lāse
slowly
lāse
slowly
onkhāt-bŭ-
nānŭi,
descending,
āglā
first
lāse-*i-hai*
carefully
lānzai
tail
khugau
in jaw
su-nai-grŭ-bā-bŭ
insert-examine-feel-ing-e ven
mosā
tiger
mung-bo
anything
khām-ā-khŭise.
did not do.
Ārŭ
And
un-au

after
ātheng
leg
thāng-se
one
sŭ-nānŭi
inserting
hŭ-nai.
gave.
Be-au-bŭ
Thereon
mungbō
anything
khām-ā-khŭise.
did not do.
Obāsŭ
Then
mŭkhrā
monkey
bung-naise,
said,
“*nang*
you
āng-nī
my
ātheng-fŭr-khō
legs—
khrem-khrem
crunch-crunch
ot-nānŭi
biting
zā-gauman,
would have eaten,
lānzai-*khō*
tail

khrem-khrem
crunch-crunch
ot-nānŭi
biting
zā-gauman,"
would have eaten,
han-nānŭi,
saying,
rong
happy
zā-nānŭi,
becomimg,
"*dā-niā*
Now
āng-nī
my
khoro-khō-nŭ zā,"
head-also eat,
han-nānŭi,
saying
khug-au
in mouth
sŭ-nānŭi
inserting
hŭ-bā,
giving,
obānŭ
then
mosā-i-ā
tiger
khrem
scrunch
ot-khrep-naise.
bite-crunch-did.
Thoi-bai.
Died!
Zap-bai!

Finished!





Group of Kachári Men (Kar

From a Photograph by Mrs. F

FREE TRANSLATION.

The Monkey and the Hare.

A monkey and a hare were great friends. They ever lived together, ate together, and went about together. One day meeting a man from Darrang going to a feast with a load of bananas and other delicacies, they said to one another, "We must get what that man is carrying by some trick or other." Whereupon the monkey bade the hare stay on the road, while he himself hid in the forest. Presently the man, seeing the hare, put down his load and ran after it. On which the monkey, coming out from the jungle, carried off the bananas and other things. And for fear the hare should come and ask his share, the monkey hastily gobbled up the bananas and betel-nuts and kept the skins only for his friend.

The man, not being able to catch the hare, went home, and then the hare, shouting aloud, searched for the monkey, and, when he found him, demanded his share of the spoil, and only got the skins. So, being vexed, he determined to have his revenge. And first he went and hid under some acrid *kachu* plants. And when the monkey came and asked what he was doing, he replied, "My friend, I have the honour to be in charge of the king's sugar-canes." So the monkey said, "Ah, give me just a bit, do." But the hare

replied, “And what do you suppose the king will say?” But the monkey was importunate. So the hare gave him a stalk of *kachu* to chew, and when the acrid juice stung his tongue, the monkey began dancing about howling. But the hare coolly said, “It’s all your own fault! You *would* have a stick of the king’s sugar-cane, and what could I do?”

Then the hare went and took up his post under a hornet’s nest, and the monkey came along, shouting for his friend, and, finding him asked, “What may you be doing *there*?” And the hare replied, “I am guarding the king’s drum, so there!” “Ah,” said the monkey, “do let me beat the king’s drum!” “Oh, but I cannot,” said the hare, “the king will be angry.” But the monkey insisted, and said, “I will play on the drum *very* gently; you see!” So the hare consenting, the monkey clapped his two palms on the hornet’s nest and broke it, so that the hornets emerged, and stung him sore, so that he screamed with pain. But the hare only said, “You would have your way, and what was I to do?”

Next the hare went and sat down near a *gowal* snake. And the monkey came shouting, and asked, “What are you about now, my friend?” The hare replied, “I am now in charge of the king’s sceptre!” On which the monkey said, “Ah, let me just wield the king’s sceptre for a moment!” But the hare answered, “I cannot do that, for the king will be angry.” But the monkey being importunate, he consented. Whereupon, of course, the snake bit him, and he howled with pain.

Then the hare went and sat in a marshy place, and the monkey came shouting in search of him, and asked what he was doing. And the hare told him he was sitting on the king’s litter. “Ah,” prayed the monkey, “let *me* too sit on the king’s litter.” But the hare said angrily, “And what do you suppose the king will say? It strikes me you are a fool, my friend, and listen to no warning!” But the monkey,

insisting, leaped into the marsh, sank up to his neck, and stuck there miserably. On which the hare leaped out and cried, “Now, my kind friend, you who eat bananas and give me the skins, you can just stay where you are! My compliments! I am off!” So saying, he left him to his fate.

Presently a rhinoceros came that way, and the monkey begged him to extricate him. But the rhinoceros remarked that he was hungry and thirsty and on his way home to dinner, and went his way. And a buffalo also passed by and refused to help. Finally a tiger came, extremely ravenous. And the monkey entreated him respectfully to pull him out; but the tiger said he did not see how it would profit him to come to his rescue. But when he had gone some two paces, the monkey called after him, “Look here, if you will drag me out of the marsh, you can clean me of the mud, and eat me!” And since the tiger was extremely hungry, he consented and said, “It is not that I have any particular desire to eat you, but if I do a good deed, I shall get virtue. However, as you are good enough to insist, I am willing to make a meal of you.” So saying, he put his tail into the marsh, and the monkey, catching hold of it, was slowly dragged forth. On which the monkey said, “Now let me dry myself in the sun, and when the mud is dry you can scrape it off and eat me.” So he sat in the sun, and the tiger waited hungrily. But the monkey seized the opportunity when the tiger chanced to look another way, and clambered up a tree. At that the tiger was very angry, and waited two or three days at the foot of the tree. Finally he pretended to die of starvation and lay there with his mouth open and his great teeth showing. So the monkey climbed down, slowly and cautiously. And the tiger lay quite still, so that the flies came and buzzed in his mouth. And first the monkey carefully put his tail in the tiger’s mouth. But he never stirred. Then the monkey thrust his leg in the tiger’s mouth, and still he did not move. “Ah,” said the

monkey, in great glee, “you would have gobbled up my tail, and scrunched up my limbs, would you?” And so saying, the silly creature thrust his head in the tiger’s mouth. And the jaws closed with a scrunch, and the monkey died, and that’s all!

III.—Sā-se phālāngī gotho-nī khorāng.

The story of the merchant lad.

Sā-se
One
udu-i-au-nŭ
womb-in-even
bīfā
father
thoi-zā-nai
dead-becomimg
gotho
boy
dangman.
was.
Phāre
Then
āzī
to-day
āzī
to-day
khāli
to-morrow
khāli
to-morrow
bī
he

ge-det
big
zā-bā
becomimg
sān-se
day-one
bīmā-nī-au
mother's to
sŭng-naise,
ask-ed,
"ai,
mother,
āglā
before
zang-fŭr-hā
us peoples-'s
āfā-i-ā,
father,
lai,
now,
mā
what
mau-nānŭi
labouring
zā-dangman?"
eat-did
han-bā,
saying
bīmā-i-ā
mother
hāmā
breath
su-nānŭi
sighing
khithā-naise,
said,
"*nam-fā-i-ā*

your father
desŭ
country
desŭ
country
fālāngī
hawking
khām-nānŭi
doing
zā-dangman·
used to eat.
Bī
He
thā-blā,
remained-if
dā
now
zang-frā
we
ese-bŭ
thus
dukhu
trouble
zā-i-ā-man,"
should not eat
han-
bā,
saying
bi
he
bung-naise,
said,
"*ŭh*,
Eh,
obā
then
āng

I
bi
that
hābā-khō
work for
hā-i-ā
able-am-not
nā?
eh?
bese
as many
thākā
rupees
dang,
are.
āng-nŭ
to me
dihon-nānŭi
producing
hŭ,"
give,
han-bā,
saying,
bīmā-i-ā
mother
bung-naise,
said,
"*āfā*,[59]
father
nang
you
bī-baidi
this-way
khām-nŭ
to do

nāng-ā,
must-not,
āng
I
bī-ŭi
beg-ging
gāp-ŭi
weeping
nang-nū
you
zā-hŭ-gan.
to eat-give-will.
Nang
You
malai-nī
foreign
dekhu-*au*
land-in
thāng-nānŭi
going
mā-brŭi-bā
what way-ever
thoi-bā
dying
bet-bā
perishing
āng
I
mā-brŭi
what way
thā-gan?"
stay-will?
Theobŭ
Still
gotho-ā
boy
khnā-song-ā-lābā,

not hearing
embrā-brā
again and again
bīmā-nī-au
mother-from
thākā
rupees
bī-nānŭi
begging
lā-nānŭi
taking
bastu
merchandise
bai-naise,
bought
ārŭ
and
nau
boat
gong-se
one
namai-nānŭi,
seeking
lā-naise,
took
ārŭ
and
gāsenŭ
all
zo
fit
zā-bā,
becomimg,
mānsŭi
men

sā-nŭi-sŭ
about two
hom-nānŭi
seizing
bīmā
mother
burui-*khō*
old woman-to
khulum-nānŭi
worshipping
mālai-nī
foreign
dekhu-*au*
country
nau
boat
zang
with
thang-naise·
went.
Be-baidi-nŭ
This-manner-in
thāng-ŭī
going
thāng-ŭi
going
gāmī
village
dot-se
one
dŭi-gathān-au
water-ghaut-at
nau-*khō*
boat
khā-nānŭi,
binding,
gāmī

village
gāmī
village
basthu
merchandise
phān-hŭ-naise,
hawking-send-did
Bi
He
gāgai
himself
nau
boat
ne-ŭ.
watched.
Be-baidī-nŭ
This-way-in
thā-ŭi
stay-ing
thā-ŭi
stay-ing
be-au-nŭ
there
sŭr-bā
certain
brai
old man
burui
old woman
sā-nŭi-hā
two-people-of
hangsŭ
swan
gafut
white
mā-se
one

dangman.
was.
Bī-nŭ
it
bī-sŭr-nŭ
they
dŭi lā-ŭi
water-giving
mikhām
rice
song-ŭi
cooking
hŭ-grā-man.
gave and cherished.
Bī-khō-nŭ
It-itself
sān-se
one day
bī
that
gotho-ā
boy
dŭi-gathān-au
water-ghaut-at
gagai-nī
its own
hangsu-*bigur-khō*
swan-skin
khŭ-nānŭi
shedding
din-nānŭi
placing
ārŭ
and
mazāng
lovely
sikhlā-sā

girl
zā-nānŭi
becoming
dugui-nai
bathing
nu-naise·
saw.
Bī-nī-frai-nŭ
From-that (time) even
boi
that
hāngsŭ-*nī*
swan's
girimā
owners
brai-burui-*khō*
old man old woman
on-su-nānŭi
loving
thau
oil
ārŭ
and
bī-ni
his
nau-*au*
ship-in
zī
what
zī
what
basthu
merchandise
dang,
was,
ozai-*nŭ*
always

bāngai
some
bāngai
some
hŭ-nŭ
to
give
hom-naise.
began.
Bī-baidī-nŭ
This-way-in
basthu-*fŭr-khō*
merchandises
fān-ŭi
vending
fān-ŭi
vending
fān-zap-bā
sale-finished-being
nŏ-i-au
to house
fai-nai
come
so-nai-khai
concluding-because of
bī
that
brai
old man
burui-nī
old woman's
nŏ-i-au
house-to
thāng-nānŭi,
going

thākā
money
zābrā
much
hŭnānŭi,
giving
hāngsŭ-*khō*
swan
bī-bā,
begging
brai
old man
burui
old woman,
"*ere-*
nŭ
"as it is
lāng,"
take"
han-nānŭi
saying,
bung-dangman,
said
khintu
but
bī
he
fāfu-*nāng*
sin-smitten
zā-nŭ
to become
gī-nānŭi,
fearing
brai-*nī*
old man's
gnāng
belonging

basthu-*khai*
property because of
embrā-brā
importunately
thaka
rupees
hŭ-nānŭi,
giving
hāngsŭ-*khō*
swan
lābō-naise.
took away.

Bī-nī-frai
There after
nau
boat
lā-nānŭi,
taking,
fai-ŭi
coming
fai-ŭi,
coming,
no
house
man-fai-nānŭi
reach-comeing
āzī-*bŭ*
to-day-too
thā-i-ŭ
staying
khāli-*bŭ*
to-morrow-too
thā-i-ŭ
staying
bī
he

hāngsŭ
swan
mānsŭi
man
zā-i-e
becomes-not
nu-nānŭi,
seeing,
sān-frim-bŭ
day-each-on
hām-lāng-naise·
sick became.
Bī-khō-nŭ
To him
nu-nānŭi
seeing
bīmā
mother
burui-*ā*
old woman
malai-nī-au
strangers-from
sŭng-bā
on asking
bai-bā
frequenting
rau-bŭ
anyone
mung-bŭ
anything
khithā-nŭ
to say
hā-i-ā·
was unable.
Khintu
But

bi-au-nŭ
there
burui
old woman
sā-se
one
dangman.
was.
Bī-nī-au
Her
sŭng-bā,
on asking,
bī
she
bung-naise,
said,
"*āgŭi*,
sister,
nang
you
bī-khō-nŭ
that
mithi-ā-khŭi
understood-not
nā?
eh?
Bī
That
fālāngī
hawking
khām-*nai*
doing
thāng-nai-au
going-in
mā-bā
something
man-se

one thing
zā-dang·
happened.
Nang
You
bī-khō
to
him
buddi
trick
khām-*ba*,
doing,
mithi-nŭ
to understand
hā-gan,"
will be able,
han-
bā,
saying,
bīmā
mother
burui-*ā*
old woman
bung-naise,
said,
"*khitha-hor*[60]*-hai*,
speak-out-do,
ai
mother
burui,
old woman,
dhorom
virtue
man-gan,"
get will,
han-bā
saying,

bī
she
khithā-naise,
said,
"*nang*
you
sān-se
one day
sā-se
one
sikhlā-sā
girl
labo-nānŭi
taking
nang-nī
your
gotho-nī
boy's
thema
lice
nai-nŭ
to search
thin.
order.
Ārŭ
And
thema
lice
naibai
searching
thā-nai-au-nŭ
in staying
gāp-thī-nānai
weep-pretend-ing
sŭng-thāng,
let her ask,
"*nang*

you
mā-nŭ
why
sān-frim-bŭ
day by day
hām-lāng-dang?”
waste away?
Obānŭ
Then
bī
he
bī-khō
to her
on-khāng-nānŭi
feeling affection
bī-nī
his
mon-*au*
mind-in
zi
what
khorāng
word
dang,
is,
bī
he
khithā-gan,”
say-will,
han-
bā,
saying,
bīmā
mother
bī-baidi-nŭ
that-way-in
khām-naise.

did.
Hingzausā-i-ā
Girl
themā
lice
nai-nai-au-nŭ
while searching
gāp-thī-nānŭi
weep-pretend-ing
gongrai
snottle
surukhŭ
snuffle
surukhŭ
snuffle
sŭng-naise,
ask-ed,
"*ādā-lŭi*,
brother-mine,
nang-hā-lai
to you
mā
what
zādang?
has happened?
Nang
You
be-
khō
that
khithā-i-ā-bā,
if do not say
āng
I
bŭ
too
khām

rice
dŭi
water
zā-i-ā,"
will not eat,
han-nai-khai
because of saying
gotho-
ā,
boy,
hāmā
breath
su-nānŭi,
sighing,
bī-nŭ
to her
lāse
slowly
lāse
slowly
khithā-naise,
said,
"*āng*
I
fālāngī
trading
khām-*nŭ*
to do
thāng-nai-i-au
on going
dā
indeed
āng-nī
my
nau-*i-au*
boat in
zī

which
hāngsŭ
swan
gafut
white
mā-se
one
dang,
is,
bīkhō
it
mānsŭi
man
zā-nai
becoming
nu-dangman.
saw.
Khintu
But
bī
it
dā
now
baidi-sŭi-ŭi-nŭ
manner-same-in
thā-bai.
stays.
Bī-nī-khai
Because of that
[āng]
I
ere-baidi
this manner
zā-dang."
am become
Themā

Lice
nai-khāng-bā
seeking-finished-being
be
those
gāsenŭ
all
khorāng
words
hingzausā-i-ā
girl
bī-nī
his
bīmā-nŭ
mother-to
khithā-naise.
said.
Be-khō
To her
bīmā-i-ā
mother
khnā-nānŭi
listening
boi
that
burui-*nŭ*
woman-to
khithā-hŭi-naise
sent and said
lā-i-ŭ.
exactly.
Burui-*ā*
Old woman
bī-khō
to her
khnā-nānŭi

listening
buddi
wisdom
hŭ-naise
gave
lā-ī-ŭ,
verily,
"*nang*
you
dinī
to-day
boi
that
hingzausā-khō
girl
lābo-nānŭi
bringing
khithā-nānŭi
saying
hŭ,
give
bī
he
dinī
to-day
hor-au
night-in
udu-lāng-thī-nānŭi
sleep-deep-pretend -ing
thā-thāng.
remain-let.
Hor
Night
gezer-bā
much-being
hangsŭ-*ā*
swan

mānsŭi
man
zā-nānŭi
becoming
gagai-nī
own
modai-fŭr-khō
gods
khulum-bai-thā-i-ŭ·
is wont to worship.
Be-au-nŭ
Thereon
bī
that
hangsŭ
swan
bigur-khō
skin
zuzai-mŭ-au
hearth-on
sŭ-nānŭi
thrusting
hŭ-bā,
placing,
obāniā
thereon
mansŭi-*nŭ*
man-indeed
thā-si-gan."
stay-altogether-will.
Be
That
buddi
wisdom
hŭ-nai-baidi-nŭ
giving-like-even

bīmā-i-ā
mother
hingzausā-nŭ
girl-to
khithā-naise,
said
ārŭ
and
hingzausā-i-ā
girl
bŭ
also
gotho-nŭ
boy-to
khithā-nānŭi
saying
hŭ-nai-khai,
because of giving,
sān-se
one day
gotho-ā
boy
khurui
vessel
gong-se-au
one in
khāre-zang
ashes-with
thau-zang
oil-with
golai-nānŭi
mixing
din-nai,
placed
āru
and

songor
yak's tail
man-se
one
din-naise.
placed.
Hor
Night
zā-bā
becoming
bī
he
udui-thī-lāng-nānŭi
sleep-pretend-slu mber-ing
thā-*bā*,
staying,
hāngsŭ-*ā*
swan
si-khāng-nānŭi
emerging
ākhā-i-au
on hand,
ātheng-au
on leg
modom-au-bŭ
on body also
khepthu-bai-dang.
felt (with beak).
Theobŭ
Still
li
he
khet-khut
stirring
khāmā-khŭise.
made not.
Bī-nī-khai

Therefore
bī
he
udu-lāng-māt-bai
asleep-deep-truly-is
nung-nānŭi,
thinking,
gagai-nī
her own
hāngsŭ
swan
bigur-khō
skin
lāse-
hai
slowly
khu-nānŭi
unfastening
din-nānŭi
placing
gagai-nī
her own
modai-fŭr-khō
gods-to
mon
mind
hŭ-nānŭi,
giving,
khulum-bai-thā-dangman.
worshipping-staying-was.
Ere-au-nŭ
So
srī-srī
still-
still
lāse-
hai

slowly
si-khāng-nā-nŭi
emerging
boi
that
hāngsŭ
swan
bigur-khō
skin
thāpne-hai
suddenly
zuzai-mu-au
in hearth
e-fop-nānŭi
thrusting
din-naise.
placed.
Unau
Then
bigur-
ā
skin
khām-nānŭi,
scorching,
manām-khāng-bā,
smell-emerging,
bī-khō
that
manām-nānŭi
smelling
man-nānŭi,
obtaining,
“*āng-khō*
To me
mā
what
khām-*khŭ*,

have done,
mā
what
khām-*khŭ*?”
have done?
han-nānŭi,
saying,
fāt-drāp-dō
hither-thither
gaglai-nānŭi,
falling about,
khāng-grāng-nānŭi,
rolling about,
thoi-hāp-nānŭi
half dead becoming
thā-naise.
stayed.
Obāsŭ
Then
gotho-ā
boy
māmār
quickly
fai-nānŭi
coming
khurui-nī
vessel-of
thau-khō
oil
khoro-modom-ātheng-ăkhai-au
head-body-leg-arm-on
hŭ-nānŭi,
giving,
songor
yak’s tail
zang
with

sip-bai-thā-naise,
continued to fan,
ārŭ,
and
bī-baidī-nŭ
that-way-in
sip-ŭi
fanning
sip-ŭi
fanning
thā-blā,
on staying,
gabau-zang
with delay
hāmā
breath
sukhāng-naise,
sighed-forth
ārŭ
and
thāng-khāng-naise.
alive-became.
Bī-baidi-nŭ
That-way-in
mānsŭi
man
zā-nānŭi,
becoming,
sā-nŭi-zang
they-two-together
hābā
marriage
khām-*lai-nānŭi*
do-exchang-ing
zābrā
many
din-*hā-lāgi*

days-up-to
fi-sā
boys
fisŭ
girls
zang
with
rozo-rŭ-man-zā-lai-bai-thā-naise!
"lived happily ever after."
Zapbai!
Finished!

FREE TRANSLATION.

The story of the merchant lad.

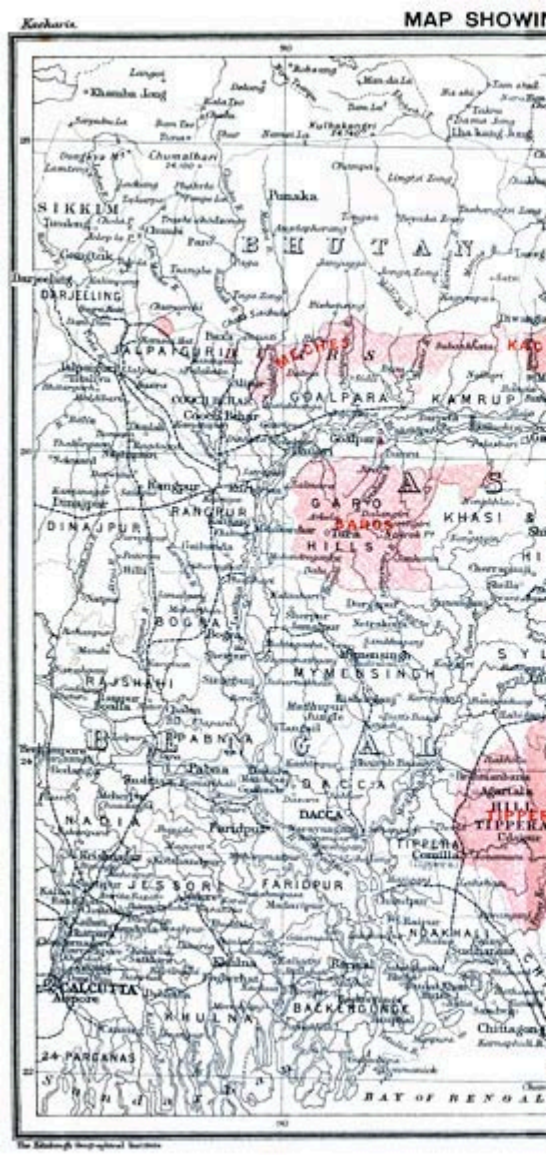
There was a certain lad whose father died before he was born. And, one day, when he had grown a big boy, he asked his mother, “What did my father do for his living?” And his mother, drawing a long breath, said, “Your father used to travel about selling things. Ah, if he were alive we should have no trouble to endure!” But the boy replied, “Do not you think that I too could earn money in that way? Bring out what money there is, and let me see what I can do.” But his mother said, “Ah, my son, you must not talk like that! If you go away into foreign lands and die there, what will become of me?” But her son would not listen to her, and by importunity induced her to give him money, with which he bought goods, and procured a boat, and hiring two or three men, took leave of his mother, and went into a far country to trade. Finally he came to a certain place where he moored his boat, at the place where men draw water, and sent his men to hawk his wares from village to village while he himself stayed in the boat. It happened that there lived hard by an old couple who possessed a white swan, which they fed and tended as though it were their own child. One day, the lad saw this swan strip itself of its swan plumage and become a beautiful maiden, and bathe. From that time forth he paid

great attention to the owners of the swan, and gave them presents of the oil and other things he had in his boat. And when the merchandise had been sold and the time was come to go home, he went to the old people's house and offering much money begged them to sell him their swan. But they were for giving him their swan for nothing. He, however, feared to commit a sin if he took it as a gift, and, because it was the old man's property, compelled him to take much money in exchange for it, and went away.

But when he came home with his boat, behold, the swan remained a swan, and, for disappointment, the lad pined and wasted away. Seeing which, his old mother consulted various people, but got no help. Finally, she went to a certain wise woman, who said, "Sister, do not you understand? Something has happened to him while he was away trading. You must use a device to find out what it is." To which the mother replied, "Tell me plainly what it is, and you will do a good deed." So the wise woman gave this advice. "Some day do you direct a maiden to search for lice in his hair. And while she is doing this, let her pretend to be mightily grieved, and let her ask him what is the matter. And he will feel flattered and will open out his heart to her." And the mother did as the wise woman directed her. The girl she sent wept and snuffled as she tended the lad and said, "Tell me why you pine and grow thin; else I too will give up food and drink." And so he, heaving a sigh, explained thus: "While I was away trading, I saw the white swan which is in my boat turn into a maiden. But now she remains a swan, and for her love I am pining."

When her task was done, she told the lad's mother, who sent word to the wise woman. The wise woman said, "Let the girl tell him that the swan maiden worships her own gods in the dead of night. Let him pretend to lie asleep, and when she divests herself of her swan plumage, let him

seize it and thrust it into the hearth, and then she will always remain a girl." The old mother directed the girl accordingly, and the girl told the lad. One day he mixed ashes and oil in a vessel, and procured a yak's tail, and, when night was come, he lay down and pretended to be fast asleep. Presently the swan crept out, and feeling his hands, feet, and body with her beak, was satisfied that he slept. Then slowly taking off her swan skin, she became absorbed in the worship of her country's gods. And the lad seeing his opportunity, grasped the swan plumage and thrust it into the hearth, so that it was singed, and the smell of the feathers filled the place. And the maiden, smelling the burning feathers, cried, "What have you done to me? What have you done to me?" So saying, she fell down in a faint and seemed as one dead. But the lad, taking his vessel of oil, anointed her with it, and fanned her gently with the yak's tail, till she came to. And so they married, and begat many sons and daughters, and lived happily ever after. And that's all!


Kacharis.
MAP SHOWI
SIKKIM
BHUTAN
DARJELLING
JALPAIGURI
COOCH BEHAR
GOALPARA
KAMRUP
GARO
HILLS
KHASI
RANGPUR
DINAJPUR
BOGRA
RAJSHAHI
MYMENSINGH
PABNA
DACCA
NADIA
JESSOR
FARIDPUR
CALCUTTA
KHULNA
BACKERGUNGE
24 PARGANAS
TIPPERA
NOAKHALI
BAY OF BENGAL

MAP SHOW

[1]

This Appendix is written by Mr. J. D. Anderson, the compiler of the little work on Kachári folk-tales mentioned on p. 54.—Ed. ↑

[2]

Sān = literally, the sun. ↑

[3]

Zakhai = a group of four, like the Hindi ganda. ↑

[4]

Hā-grā; hā = earth, *cf.* hā-zō, high earth, mountain; hā-brū, dirty earth, mud. So also dŭi-brū, dirty water, whence we get *Dibrugarh*. ↑

[5]

The infix *hŭi* conveys a sense of "at" or "from a distance." *v.* Mr. Anderson's account of the 'agglutinative' verb; vol. III, part II, pp. 7–15 of the *Linguistic Survey of India.*—Ed. ↑

[6]

The infix bai signifies continuance. ↑

[7]

Nāng, gnāng are very like the Assamese lag and the Bengali *lāg* in the double sense of "sticking" and necessity. ↑

[8]

Hŭrŭ. Kacháris, like Assamese, are very fond of such expletives, which though they have little, if any, meaning, add to the liveliness of narration. Many others will be found later on. ↑

[9]

S'lai, or z'lai, implies mutual action, exchange. ↑

[10]

A good instance of the characteristic double negative of Kachári, or, rather, of the fact that the inflexion khŭise is only used with the negative verb. ↑

[11]

Det, which by a common idiom can be made adjectival by adding the usual prefix, thus, ge-det = big. ↑

12

Bongfāng = tree, fāng-se = one, nī = sign of the genitive. As to fāng-se, see many other instances of the Kachári generic way of counting; *e.g.*, mānsŭi sā-se, one man; mosā mā-se, one tiger, etc. There are several instances in these stories. ↑

13

Lāng-zā-nai, the curious "passive" or "middle" participle. Perhaps the most characteristic instance of its use I have come across is in another story not given here, where a giant insults the Kachári Jack-the-giant-killer by calling him a "godo-i-au set-bā gākhir *on-khāt-nai gothō*," literally a "on-throat-squeezing-milk-exuding-boy," *i.e.*, a babe in whose mouth is still his mother's milk. ↑

14

Hā-hā-lāgi. The first *hā* is the word for "earth," the second is the same word used as a dativel affix = "up to," while lāgi is the common Assamese word repeating the idea of the second hā. ↑

15

Mau of course = *mā-au*, the locative of *mā* = what. ↑

16

Grāng = an affix commonly used to indicate the possessor of a quality. *ā* = sign of nominative. ↑

17

Bā is the sign of the conditional tense, and the adjective mazáng is turned into a verb by its use. ↑

18

Mā khām-nŭ (in the infinitive) is curiously like the French use of "que faire?" ↑

19

Ga-hām = good; *hām-ā* = not good, bad; *hām-dang* = is good; *hām-ā-bai* = was not good, etc. ↑

20

Azang is simply the Assamese e jan, used distributively by repetition and heightened by the indigenous *sā-se*, which means the same as Assamese e. ↑

21

Thāng-ŭi is the adverbial participle, something like "going-ly." Gahām-ŭi = well. ↑

22

Zo-bai-thā-nai = sit-continue-stay-ing. ↑

23

Sān sā-se = lit. “sun one.” Sā is usually the distributive word used in counting humans. I imagine its use here is not to indicate personification, but for euphony, as a jingle to sān. *Man-se* would be the normal construction. ↑

24

I have not marked *gāngsŭ* as an Assamese word, but it is probably a Kachári version of *ghās*. ↑

25

Ba-brāp-bai-nai-au; this is the locative case of the “passive” participle in *nai* of the “agglutinative” verb, *ba-brāp-bai*. The infix *brāp* signifies anger, restlessness, and *bai* means wandering about. ↑

26

Gār = to lose. ↑

27

Thāng = go; lai = severally, the same root as occurs in *s’lai* = exchange. ↑

28

Lubui-dang-bā, a rather rare case of a double inflection. *Lubui-bā* would have sufficed. Much the same difference as between “if you wish” and “if you are wishing.” ↑

29

Ga-mā, adjectival form conjugated with the verbal inflexion *-bai*. *Cf.* *Lakh-mā* = hide. ↑

30

Nai-nai, root repeated to signify continuous action. ↑

31

Girimā is plainly from Sanskrit grihastā. ↑

32

Hā-bai-thā-dangman = fall-continue-stay-was. ↑

33

Thro = a common infix commonly used to express completeness of action. *E.g.*, *Thoi-thro-bai* = was utterly slain. ↑

34

Ga-hām man-gan = will get advantage, good. ↑

35

Man = get; *e* (euphonic for *ā*) = not; *khai* = by reason of. ↑

36

Hŭi is an interesting infix, and implies “went and did,” or “did from a

distance." *Man-hŭi-bā* = although he went and got; *man* = get. ↑

37

Namai-e = euphonic for *namai-ŭi*. ↑

38

Bung-nai-au, an interesting idiom; *bungnānŭi*, the present participle, apparently imitated from the Assamese, when the agglutinative verb began to decay, would have done as well; *bung-nai-au* is the locative of the "middle" participle; *bung-nai* = "on saying." ↑

39

Sinai is evidently chini (Assamese). ↑

40

Fi-sikhī; *sikhī* = friend; *fi* is the causal prefix which also occurs in the word *fi-sā*, a son; *i.e.* a made person, "the being you cause to exist." ↑

41

Ozai = the Assamese *hadāi*, with the intensive *nŭ* added. ↑

42

Lugu*se* = evidently, the Assamese *lagat*. ↑

43

Rai = converse; *lai* = mutually; *naise* is the inflection. ↑

44

Gākhŭ = climb; *gākhŭ-hŭi* = went and climbed. ↑

45

No = house; *au* = dativa l inflection; the *i* is inserted for euphony. ↑

46

Phā-phin; an infix implying "returning." ↑

47

Thāso may perhaps be a corruption of Assamese *kasū*. ↑

48

Thŭ and *lŭi* are examples of idiomatic expletives which are practically untranslatable. So also *herā*. ↑

49

Khuser is of course Assamese *khusiyār*. ↑

50

Nu = see; *zā* = be, become; *hŭi* = going. ↑

51

Zā = eat (the imperative is always the bare root, as in so many other languages). The word reminds me of a little story which shows the

perplexities of bilingual people. A Kachári went to see his Assamese mother-in-law, who provided food and hospitably said (in Assamese) "*Khā, khā*." On which her son-in-law, obeying her injunction in Kachári, bound her hand and foot. Seeing his mistake, she laughed and said, in Kachári, "*Zā, zā*." On which he, much puzzled, went away! ↑

52

A good example of the agglutinative verb, for which in Hinduised Kachári would be substituted a long succession of participles, such as *nu-*nānŭi, *zā-nānŭi*, *thāng-nānŭi*, etc. It is impossible, of course, to translate all the infixes severally. ↑

53

Perhaps *mukhang* is Assamese, as well as *ātheng* which occurs elsewhere, and *modom* may be *badan*. ↑

54

Ba-brāp-bai-naise = wandered distractedly about. The infix *bai* signifies wandering, and *babrāp* being in pain or wrath. ↑

55

Rāzā-*lŭng-hā-nī* = a literal translation of Assamese rājā-hătar. ↑

56

An instance of the rare passive, a manifest imitation of the Assamese idiom ot-zā-nŭ, "bit-become-to," to be bitten. ↑

57

An expressive phrase for "last of all." ↑

58

Lit. "throwing." ↑

59

"Father" used affectionately for "child." ↑

60

Hor = *hot* = "throw." ↑

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Colophon

Corrections

The following corrections have been applied to the text:

Page	Source	Correction
6	Dimapur	Dimápur
6	Maibong	Máibong
20, 20, 40, 59, 77, 78, 78, 92, 96, 118, 126	[*Not in source*]	.
25, 127	.	[*Deleted*]
44	one	once
53, 55, 86	[*Not in source*]	,
54, 89	Kachari	Kachári
59	KACHARI	KACHÁRI
59	,	.
66	Brahmin’s	Bráhmin’s

68	Aba	Abá
76	immense	immerse
78	ham-labó	tham-labó
80	[*Not in source*]	with
88	habung-iya	hábung-iya
89	on	no
91	.	:
94	,	[*Deleted*]
100	;	,
102	loose	lose
103	Sanscrit	Sanskrit
105	[*Not in source*]	”
110	idiom-ot-zā-nŭ	idiom ot-zā-nŭ
111	hāve	have
117	hâ-gan	hā-gan
119	.	,
125, 125, 125	Chutiyas	Chutiyás
125	Básumati-aroi	Básumati-ároi
126	Rábhas	Rábhás
127	Mosá-aroi	Mosá-ároi

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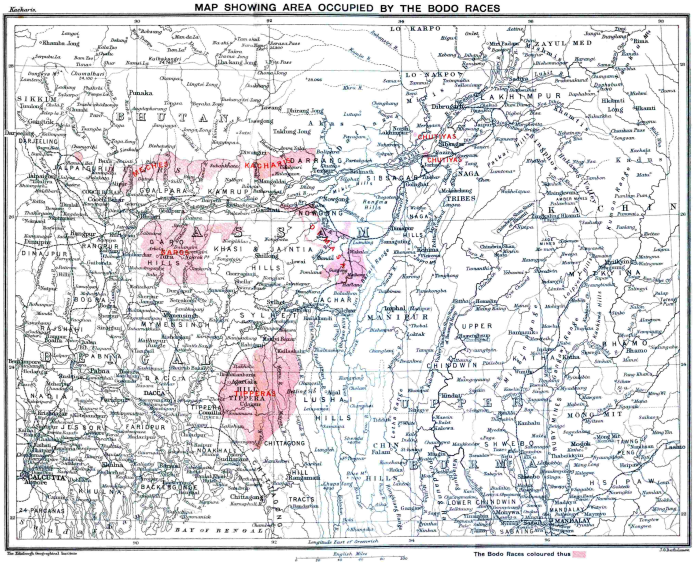
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