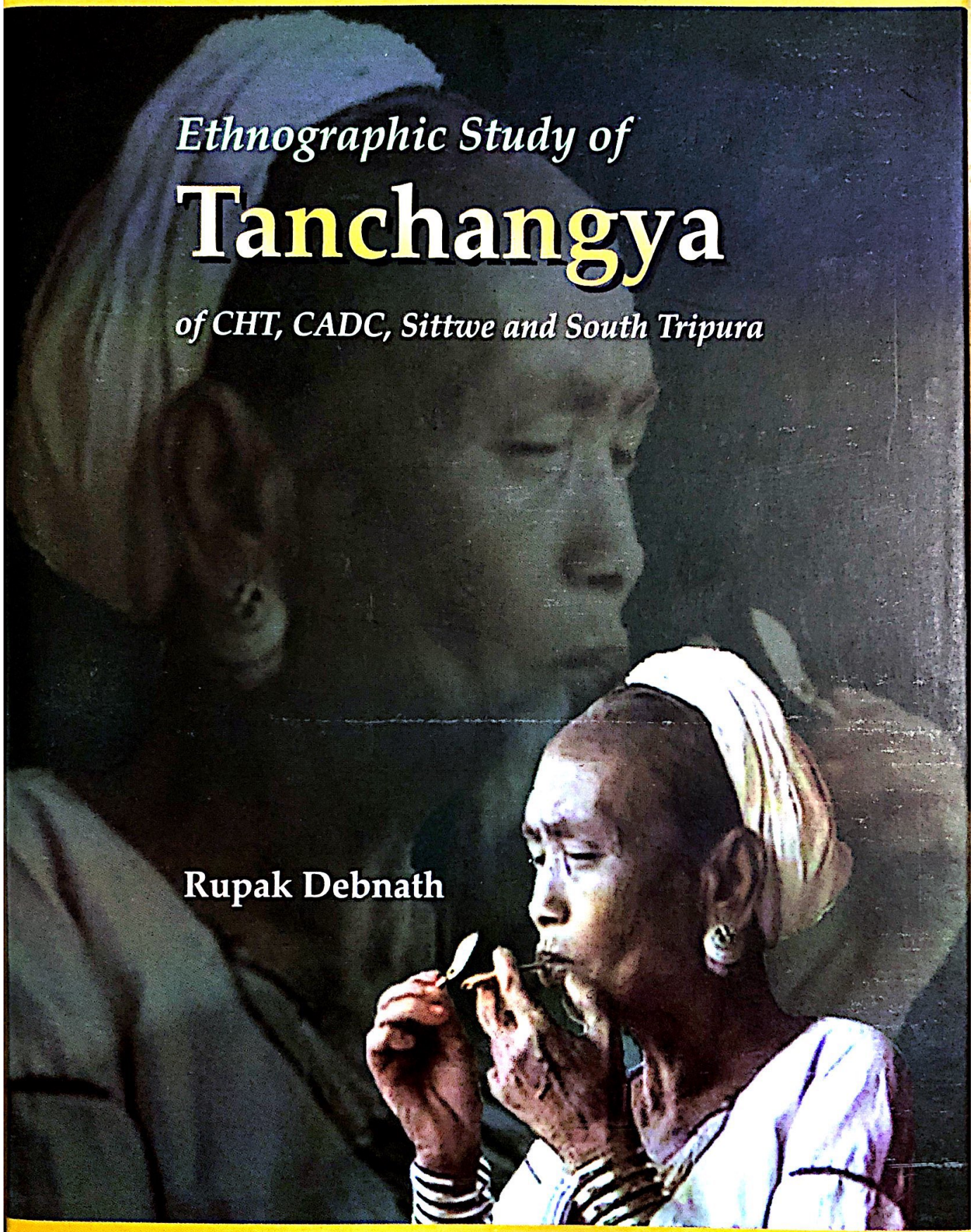

Ethnographic Study of
Tanchangya
of CHT, CADC, Sittwe and South Tripura

Rupak Debnath

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An Ethnographic Study of the Tanchangya is a pioneering work of its kind, summing up the findings of extensive fieldwork done in CADC (Mizoram), South Tripura, Chittagong Hill Tracts and North Arakan.

The first chapter gives an overview of the ecological and ethnic situation of the region in which Tanchangyas now live, and there are also enquiries into the ethnicity of other groups and subgroups living as their neighbours. The final chapter is about social change affecting the ethnic group studied, while the middle chapters focus on ethnicity and history, migration and geographical distribution, material culture and subsistence strategies, family and kinship organisation, and their religious life.

The present work will not only help understand the Tanchangya better but also

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kreativmind

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Ethnographic Study of Tanchangya of CHT, CADC, Sittwe and South Tripura
by Rupak Debnath

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Prefatory Remarks

For various reasons, the ethnic group called Tanchangya has been excluded from ethnographic studies. Anthropologists and linguists have made only passing remarks on them, that too in connection with Chakma. The present work attempts to take the reader, for the first time, too, into the Tanchangya's world. Their ethnicity and culture are examined against a broader cultural and ethno-linguistic perspective that involves other Tibeto-Burman groups dwelling in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, in parts of Northeast India bordering the Hill Tracts and in the northern parts of Arakan. Outside the area, the ethno-history of Chakpa and some socio-cultural aspects of their life have also been studied.

The findings in this work follow extensive participant fieldwork over a period of thirty-six months, living with the community and observing their ways, interacting with community elders and with resource persons from the group, as also from neighbouring communities. Initially, gaining access to information was difficult but once the purpose of my visit was explained, the community responded favourably and extended every possible help. The research setting is spread across Chakma Autonomous District Council (Mizoram), South Tripura, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Imphal Valley (Manipur), Chin Hills and Sittwe (Akyab). To know a people who are different from what the researcher is, it is important to get inside their culture, and the extent to which a researcher

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can do that depends on his mindset. In this, I had the fortune to live with the Tanchangya people for more than two years in several phases, learning to understand their language and becoming acceptable to the community. At the same time, comparisons have been made, wherever necessary, with other cultures, systematically accounting for the similarities and the differences that exist.

Accordingly, the first chapter gives an overview of the ecological and ethnic situation of the region in which Tanchangyas now live, and there are also enquiries into the ethnicity of other groups and subgroups living as their neighbours. The final chapter is about social change affecting the ethnic group studied, while the middle chapters focus on ethnicity and history, migration and geographical distribution, material culture and subsistence strategies, family and kinship organisation, and their religious life.

The present work will not only help understand the Tanchangya better but also take cognisance of their present socio-economic conditions and work concertedly for their social uplift. Many problems they face today will continue to trouble them in the future, unless the world around them decides to change for the better.

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Credits for photography

All maps and sketches are made by the author, who also took the photographs facing page 1, as well as those on pages 4, 28, 48, 49, 54, 67, 121, 136, 142-43, 144, 145, 148-49, 156, 165, 166, 167, 189, 208-209. The script in page 218 and the *āngs* in page 220 are reprographic productions. Beacon Bhattacharya has helped the author take the photographs on pages 139 and 140. Dinanath Tanchangya has taken the photographs in pages 23, 124, 132, 152-53, 154 and in flyleaves 3, 4 and 6. The photographs in pages 174, 196 and flyleaf 5 were taken by Pritiranjan Tanchangya. Several pictures were provided by Niranjan Chakma (pages 12 and 64), Kaingwai Mru (page 13), Thoysafrue Khyang (page 22), Rebati Tripura (page 16), Ajit Debbarma (page 17), Hla Gyou Chu Chak (pages 55 and 56), Raju Chakma (pages 67, 131 and 230) and Hemanta Chakma (page 213).

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Abbreviations in general

Abl.	Ablative
AG	*Angyā Gosā* (Tanchangya kinship group)
ARHT	Administrative Report of Hill Tipperah
As.	Assamese
BBG	British Burma Gazetteer
Beng.	Bengali (language)
Bpr.	Bishnupriya
CADC	Chakma Autonomous District Council
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
DA	*Dhagnawadi Areḥdopũ*
Dat.	Dative
DG	*Daingnyā Gosā* (Tanchangya kinship group)
Gen.	Genitive
IA	Indo-Aryan
Instr.	Instrumental
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
KG	*Kārwā Gosā* (Tanchangya kinship group)
LADC	Lai Autonomous District Council
LB	*Lāngbāsā* (Tanchangya kinship group)
Loc.	Locative
LSB	Linguistic Survey of Burma
MB	Middle Bengali
MeG	*Melong Gosā* (Tanchangya kinship group)

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MIA	Middle Indo-Aryan
MoG	*Monglā Gosā* (Tanchangya kinship group)
MuG	*Muo Gosā* (Tanchangya kinship group)
NIA	New Indo-Aryan
Nom.	Nominative
OB	Old Bengali
PCJSS	*Pārbatya Chattagrām Jana Samhati Samiti*
Pl.	Plural
RP	Received Pronunciation
SCB	Standard Colloquial Bengali
SEB	Southeastern Bengali
Sgl.	Singular
Skt.	Sanskrit
TTAADC	Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council
VCP	Village Council President

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Abbreviations in kinship

B	=	Brother
D	=	Daughter
F	=	Father
GC	=	Grandchild(ren)
GF	=	Grandfather
GM	=	Grandmother
GP	=	Grandparent
H	=	Husband
LA	=	In-law
M	=	Mother
P	=	Parent
S	=	Son
SI	=	Sibling
SP	=	Spouse
W	=	Wife
Z	=	Sister

e = elder y = younger

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Pasan (story telling) time. Recounting a tale of yesteryears. Even today, stories continue to appeal to old and young alike.

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1. *Background*

Initially, one has to keep in mind that the names, Daingnak and Tanchangya, apply to a single hill-dwelling group; irrefutably, too, they are of the Tibeto-Burman stock, though their spoken idiom is now Indo-Aryan. Their population is dispersed between 20.10° and 24° North latitudes and 91.50° and 93° East longitudes, along the hilly borders of three counties – India, Bangladesh and Myanmar. In Northeast India, Tanchangya settlements are found in South Tripura and in the Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC). They are mostly concentrated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT); a smaller number lives in Sittwe (Akyab). A few Daingnak hamlets extend to the east of Mahamuni, on the spurs running southwestward along an expanding Lemro. The northern limit of distribution is the Tropic of Cancer, beyond which only five Tanchangya (*Kārwā-gosā*) families live at Amchhari, a large Chakma village on the Sajek in northwest Mizoram bordering the Jampui Hills. In the south, their settlements extend to the mouth of the Koladan.

The region selected for this ethnographic study is a green arm of the eastern Himalayas, rich in tropical rainforests, into which ecosystem the hill people are naturally integrated.

1.1 *Land and its physical aspects*

Viewed from the coastal plains of Bengal and Sittwe, the land is amassed into eastward undulations until chains of the tropical Himalayas are reached. These chains, which run

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mostly north to south, break into ravines and patches of lowland along riverbanks; they are all covered with tropical rainforests and, throughout the lower parts of the hills, there is an abundance of bamboo and creeper jungles. Precariously steep slopes are encountered at several places in the Saingdin and the Ponnakyun ranges; otherwise, in most places, the hills are generally low running with an average declivity favouring swidden cultivation. In the northern and the eastern parts of the Hill Tracts and to the extreme north of Sittwe (whence the Chin Hills branches out into the Arakan Yomas), mountain summits rise to considerable heights. Betling Sib in the Jampui range (at the tri-junction of CHT, Tripura and Mizoram) is 3100 feet while to reach the summit of the Keokradaung (on the CHT-Myanmar border) one has to scale a height of 4054 feet. The Blue Mountain rises to almost eight thousand feet above the sea level.

The principal river in South Tripura is the Gomati, which flows past Udaipur and Comilla towns into the Meghna, while the Muhuri, after initially moving west, turns south through the centre of the Belonia subdivision to feed the Feni (which forms the boundary of Tripura and Bangladesh). In the Hill Tracts, the Karnaphuli is the major river; it is fed by the Rainkhyoung (Rain Chaung) from the south, and the Chengri and the Kassalong rivers from the north; the Maini merges with the Kassalong at Langadu while at Barkal, the Subalong joins the Karnaphuli. From the Jampui Hills, the Sajek (Tuipui) runs southward past Tlabung (Demagiri), then turns a little west at Barkal into the Karnaphuli; from the opposite direction flow the Thega and the Tuichang (which also mark the flanks of CADC). In the southern part of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, small streams like the Bomu, the Lama Chaung and the Tein Chaung (Tain Chhari) form principal tributaries of the Matamuri (Marit Chaung), which is also fed by the Harbung in the Chittagong district. The Sangu (Ragri Chaung) flows due north up to Ruma, then turns northwestward to

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reach Bandarban, after which it goes west through Chittagong district into the Bay of Bengal. About 80-90 kilometres above Sittwe (Akyab), the Koladan (Yamphang), the Mayu and the Lemro begin to abandon their hilly character; crisscrossed by tidal streams, they form extensive creeks before merging with the sea at Hunter's Bay. Of considerable importance to the dwellers of North Arakan Hill Tracts are the Saingdin Chaung, the Mi and the Pi Chaungs– all tributaries of the Koladan. The Naaf (Anoukngay), an inward extension of the sea, separates Chittagong from Sittwe.

The warm humid tropical monsoon climate of the region is conducive to both *jum* and wet-rice cultivation. In summer, the temperature soars to 35°C, while it is around 18°C on average during December and February, occasionally sinking to a low 4 to 5°C on the coldest day of the season. In higher altitudes, the temperature is two or three degrees lower than the average. Between October and February, dense fogs are seen at sunrise and sunset. The prevailing wind is southwesterly but in winter, a strong northerly wind blows, sometimes bringing showers and cyclones. In early March, the morning fog begins to turn thin, and it becomes thinner by mid-April; if during this time, the nights are clear and starlit, one is sure to find dew deposits on the morning grass. But this is also the time of the terrible Northwester (*Kāl Vaisākhi* in Bengali); every year, its devastative fury leaves many trees uprooted, scores of houses destroyed and their roofs blown. Around the last week of April, the heat turns dry; with the showers now becoming very intermittent, the average temperature and the human discomfort rise steadily until the monsoons bring some relief in early June. The average precipitation during the monsoons is 250 cm.

Famine is almost unknown in the hills but food shortages occur when the rains play truant. Besides, during bamboo flowering, which invariably occurs once in several years, rats arrive in hundreds and thousands, and cause much damage

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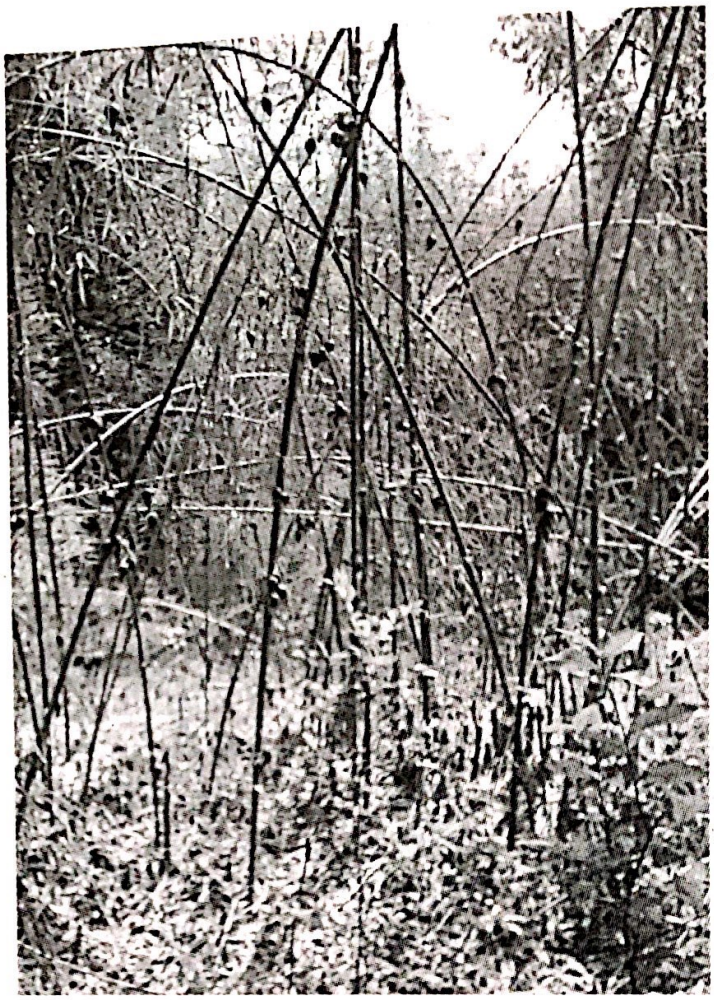

Bamboo flowering.

Swidden vs. wet-rice cultivation.

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to the crops. Diseases attributable to the climate include common fever and malaria, rheumatism and dysentery. Malaria is particularly acute in CADC. Hill folks, men, women and children, are all inveterate smokers, which habit makes them vulnerable to such respiratory diseases as tuberculosis and whooping cough. Skin diseases are fairly widespread, in addition to which people suffer from intestinal worms and from ulcers of the stomach, the latter caused by excessive drinking. A tendency to partial amnesia is found among ageing swidden farmers of CADC and Saingdin.

1.2 *Ecosystem and socio-political bases*

Racially and linguistically, the people inhabiting the region belong to opposed stocks, Tibeto-Burman speaking Mongoloids on the hills and Indo-Aryan speaking Bengalis on the western plains. For several centuries, Bengalis have cultivated with the plough, their mode of economy favouring extensive agricultural operations in the plains, permanent settlement and trade, and steady revenue to sustain a centralised polity. On the contrary, the hill groups subsisted on swidden cultivation, in which mode of economy, returns are constrained by the carrying capacity of the rainforest eco-system. A plot of land once *jumed* had to be abandoned for a fallow period of eight to ten years so that the soil could recuperate its lost fertility. That induced nomadic habits among hill groups, and in search of new *jums*, entire villages shifted from one place to another at regular intervals. Compared to the lowlander's notion of possession and transmission of landed property, the bulk of the highlander's inheritance as late as in the 19th century consisted only of domestic animals and few household valuables that could be easily moved. Politically, all swidden-practicing groups were organised into village-based communities, each under the domain of its own independent chieftain. Under each ethnic group, a number of clan chiefs or heads of kinship groups existed

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but there was no centralised authority to command allegiance of the whole group; often, clans clashed against each other. How, then, did a particular group maintain ethnic solidarity? Within an ethnic group, clans regulated all alliances. Marrying outside one's own ethnic group was disallowed.

Increase in the density of hill population and shrinkage of virgin plots for *juming* forced the highlander to resort to other measures. Further north, in the Chin Hills, a system of crop rotation emerged, while their northern neighbours, especially Angami Nagas and a section of Kachins, cultivated on irrigated terraces (Davis 1891: 237-38; Leech 1954: 21). In the region we are concerned with, Shendus (Tlangtlang tribe of Lai) were 'acquainted with the method of terrace cultivation' (Lewin 1869: 113); a few groups also employed Bengali clients (many of whom were acquired in course of raids on plains villages) to cultivate little patches of flatland within the hills (*Ibid.*: 13). Among other expedient means, stronger or fiercer tribes sought to control extensive ridges, dispersing weaker groups from the neighbourhood. When Aphya Khumis were driven out of the Yoma Mountains by Shendus, they settled on the upper Koladan, where they took their turn to expel the Mru. Inter-ethnic feuds were quite common. Phayre (1841: 705) wrote, 'Different clans of *Kumis* attack each other; there is a feeling of jealousy between the clans of the same tribe...' Lushai clans fought among themselves in unpredictable alliances, until their Sailo chiefs emerged as undisputed masters of North Lushai Hills. Sometimes vanquished groups were absorbed within the tribe to secure economic surplus for their subjugator. As a rule, the commoner clans ('*machi*') of Lakher (Mara) rendered economic service to the aristocratic clans ('*phangsang*'). High and low-ranking clans were also characteristic of the Bawm who emerged in the 18th century, when 'parts of other tribes' were absorbed under 'the leadership of a "Shendu" aristocracy' (Brauns & Löffler 1990: 33).

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Between the extreme opposition of the Tibeto-Burman hill dweller and the plains living Bengali, one finds the valley-dwelling groups (Chakma, Marma and Tippera), racially of the Tibeto-Burman stock but culturally and religiously closer to plains people. This geographical distinction between hill-dweller and valley-dweller follows Lewin's (1869: 28) classification (albeit using Marma terms) of hill tribes of the Chittagong Hill Tracts as *Khyoungtha* (*i.e. Chaungsa* or 'Children of the River') and *Toungtha* ('Children of the Hills'). The valley-dwellers (some of whom were wet-rice cultivators in Arakan) adopted a compromising mean between the extremes of periodically shifting villages and permanent settlement. Instead of frequently changing villages, they stuck enduringly to old hamlets, preferring to go one or more days' journey from their houses to find *jums*; consequently, their children inherited more material goods than children of the average highlander did, To the former, the little plot of land on which the house stood was inheritable property.

Proximity to the plains also allowed the valley-dweller to enter into politically beneficial relations with the rulers of the plains. In course of time, they restructured their traditional tribal organisation after the centralised institutions of the plains. In 1713, Jalal Khan, a Chakma Chief, acquired of the Mughal governor of Bengal trade monopoly between the hills and the plains against payment of an annual tribute in cotton bales (Hutchinson 1909: 24). The Bohmong Chief followed suit; sometime between 1774 and 1788, Kaung-hla-pru obtained settlement for the Marma in the southern part of the Hill Tracts against revenue payable in cotton. Earlier, in 1760, with the Mughal power waning, Chittagong was ceded to the East India Company but it was not quite until 1860 that the British interfered with the internal matters of the two hill Chiefs, Chakma and Bohmong. In 1874, the Chakma Circle was divided, and Nefrusain, head of Palaingsa Marmas, was made Chief of the Mong Circle with his head-

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quarters at Manikchhari. Under the British, the three Circle Chiefs were invested with authority to collect annual revenue from all villages within their jurisdiction. The arrangements destroyed the traditional structure of the hills, reducing all erstwhile independent chieftains of hill communities to mere functionaries of the Government. Interestingly, though Chakmas evolved a centralised political authority with a single chief over the entire group, their system remained essentially of the tribal-type, based on community management with powerful *Dewāns* controlling their own kinship groups ('*gozā*'). To manage villages under the *gozā*, each *Dewān* appointed several *Khisās*. On the contrary, the Marma's administrative system resembled the plains' type. In Arakan, townships were administered by the *Myouk* or *Myosa*; the circle officers, *Kywonok* ('head of island') and *Khyoungok* ('head of stream'), worked under the *Myosa*. A circle was subdivided into villages, each under a *Rwasa* (headman). The British government preferred the Marma type to that of the Chakma; in doing so, they made the fundamental error of confusing 'between the village or *para*, and the *mouza*, and the adoption of the village head as the *mouza* headman regardless of the fact that the latter unit would ordinarily include several of the former' (Ascoli 1918: 92).

Tippera kings worked out a different scheme: the sovereign of the Hill State derived his bulk of revenue not from the hills but from his *zamindāri* in Chakla-Roshnabad (now comprising parts of Comilla and Noakhali districts), his right to land tenancy being sustainable as long as he paid a yearly tribute to the Government of Bengal. The economic surplus derived from the *zamindāri* allowed him to adopt for the hill farmer such welfare measures as reduced *ghar-chukti kar* ('household tax'), even grant exemption from tax when crops failed. Yet, the benefit was not extended to all groups but to those fulfilling the one essential condition of submission to the Tippera's authority. The less complying Bru and Nowatiya

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had to pay higher taxes than Tippera (ARHT 1874; Debbarma 1931: 67) while Jamatiyas were punitively treated in 1864 for showing dissention. With Kukis, the arrangements were different, the Tippera king receiving ivory and military service but no revenue from them. However, in a roundabout way, a fourth part of the cotton sold by each Kuki family was collected from traders who purchased the produce.

By the close of the 19th century, traditionally self-governing socio-economic organisations of the hill people had dwindled. Most erstwhile chiefs, whose precise kinship ties with their people made them legitimate heads of swidden-based village communities, came to be replaced by individuals loyal to the territorial administrators. When the British annexed the Hill Tracts, they first tried to abolish swidden cultivation, stating it off as ecologically very detrimental, and to induce hill families to go over to plough cultivation because that mode of economy would make them permanent settlers and, consequently, regular tax-payers.

1.3 *Ethnic groups in the region*

Ethnic groups that live as the Tanchangya's neighbours are all of the Tibeto-Burman stock, speaking mutually unintelligible languages classifiable into Sak, Arakanese, Baric and Kuki-Chin. Mru language agrees with Burmese, Baric, Naga and Kuki-Chin on a number of points, while Chakma and Tanchangya speak the easternmost variety of Indo-Aryan. Historically, Saks (Chaks) are among the oldest groups to have migrated to Burma in the early part of the first millennium AD. (*See* § 2.3). In later periods, the Kuki-Chins and the Burma groups entered the watershed of the Chindwin and the Ayeyarwaddy rivers, from where some groups took a southwesterly course to reach Arakan and the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Bara groups probably entered the Brahmaputra valley via eastern Tibet, spreading westwards as far as North Bengal and southwards through the Cachar Hills into

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Tripura and CHT. In course of these migrations, new ethnic identities emerged as older groups split and sections of their people amalgamated either with other groups or into different races.

Besides the ethnic groups mentioned in the table, some Garos and Chaimals (Kuki subgroup) also live in South Tripura, wherein their number in 2001 was 4,826 and 50 souls respectively. During my tour of CHT, natives told me that in the 1960s, not less than five hundred Haijongs, Gurkhas and Manipuris (Kirtaniyas?) lived around Maini and Kassalong;

Major Ethnic groups of CHT, CADC and South Tripura (1991)

	CHT	South Tripura	CADC	*Group Total*
Bawm	6,431	00	342	6,773
Bru	*not returned* *	53,839	335 *	54,174
Chak (Sak)	1,681	00	00	1,681
Chakma	239,417	61,763 *	26,387	327,567
Halam	00	15,191	00	15,191
Jamatiya	*not returned* *	50,806	00	50,806
Khyang	1,980	00	00	1,980
Khumi	1,241	00	00	1,241
Kuki	n/a	2,081	00	2,081
Lushai	662	161	00	823
Marma	142,342	27,261	00	169,603
Mru	22,167	00	00	22,167
Nowatiya	*not returned* *	2,211	00	2,211
Pangkhua	3,227	00	448	3,675
Tanchangya	19,217	1,632 *	5,352	26,201
Tippera	61,174 *	105,828	00	167,002
Uchai	*not returned* *	1,566	00	1,566
Total	499,539	322,339	32,864	854,742

* *Uchai, Bru, Nowatiya and Jamatiya are grouped as 'Tippera' in CHT. In South Tripura, Tanchangya is returned as 'Chakma,' their figure is obtained by method described in pp. 108-11. Bru in CADC is mixed up with Uchai.*

Sources: Census of Bangladesh 1991 (Revised by Rangmati District Council); Census of Tripura 1991; Local Administrative Office (Census), CADC, Mizoram.

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today, none of these ethnic groups is found in that area. As for Chaw (Kyaw) and Anu of Koladan, and M'hang of Kyauktaw, they seem to have either migrated to the Chin Hills or assimilated into other groups. From British records, it is learnt that Anu dressed like Khumi but spoke a dialect containing 'many words and expressions intelligible to the Manipuri' (BBG-I 1880: 186). Very little is known about Chaw while M'hang was entered as an unclassified subgroup of Chin in the proposed Linguistic Census of Burma (LSB 1917: xii). Another group, Ledu, lived in the Than Chaung and the Wet Chaung village tracts under Minbya Township; there was also Twiship Chin in the same area (Ogh 1931: 264); neither is traceable. Some Chaungthas live in the eastern parts of Buthidaung Township but they are today no different from Rakhines; 'the real Chaungthas,' they say, 'now live on the other side of the Tawpya hill-range.'

No two groups have identical material cultures; nor do they endorse the same customs; yet, common characteristics do emerge. They all live in platform dwellings of bamboo and thatch grass (sometimes using timber for posts), practice swidden cultivation, and domesticate fowl and poultry; they have no taboos on pre-marital sex, women's smoking or drinking; and when someone dies naturally, the corpse is preserved for at least a couple of days before disposing it (the manner of which, of course, differs). Except for the Chin groups, who say that their ancestors emerged from *Chinlung*, a rock-covered cave, the other groups recall no tradition that looks back to a megalithic past.

1.3.1 *Marma* (*Mag*)

Marma is a variant of မြန်မာ *Mrānmā*, 'a national of Myanmar,' and the people who so designate themselves are of the same race as Burmans. In Arakan, they are called မရမာကြိ *Maramākri* (> *Maramāgri*). Their language differs only slightly from Burmese; it retains some archaisms, particularly the

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distinction between *r* and *y*, which is rendered to a common *y* in Burmese. The term ရိုင် *Rakhaiṅ* takes the geographical sense of 'a native of Rakhine State (Arakan)' while မဂ *Mag*, which is applied by the Bengalis to the same people, may have originated from Arakanese မင် *mang* (a title used by Marma chiefs and officials of high rank) but the meaning suffered degeneration in the 16th-17th century, when it became synonymous with those native depredators of Arakan who joined with the Portuguese pirates to pillage the costal towns of Sandip and Chittagong. In Tripura, *Mag* continues to be the regular affixture to personal names; it is also used in the ethnic sense. In CHT, it has been replaced by the national name, *Marma*.

Burmans are believed to have migrated from Kansu, their original home between northeast Tibet and the Gobi Desert. In the 9th century AD, they were in Kyauksè; but it was not quite until the early 11th century AD that a wave of the same people crossed the Yoma Mountains to reach Arakan. (This

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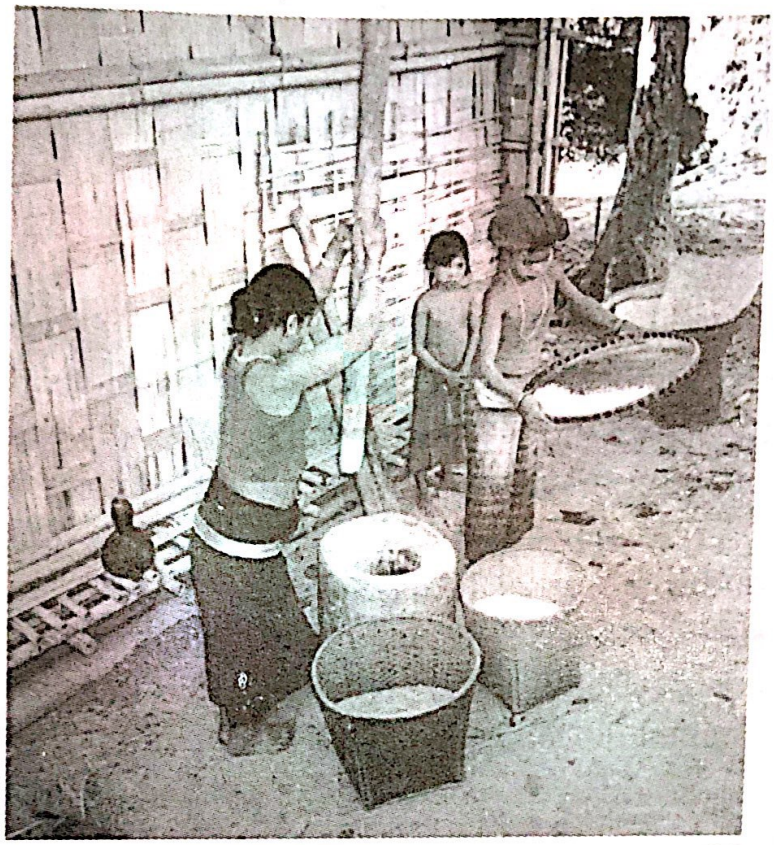

Marma maiden.

Mru girls at work.

will be noted in some detail in the next chapter.) With varying fortunes, an independent kingdom of Arakan flourished for several centuries until 1784, when Bodawphaya, the king of Amarapura, occupied the country and convulsed it into a province of Burma. A period of anarchy followed, and thousands of Arakan refugees entered the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The majority of Marmas now living in CHT are descendents of refugees who came at that time. Prior to that, in 1614, one *Rigresa* chief was governor of Chittagong (Hutchinson 1909: 28). By the mid-18th century, many of them had returned to Arakan, after Bohmong Kaung-hla-pru was driven out of Chittagong by the Mughals. But owing to oppression in the Arakan court, Kaung-hla-pru returned with his followers to Chittagong in 1774 to establish himself 'at Ramu, Edghar, and on the Matamuri river, finally settling at Maxikhal on the Sangu river in 1804' (*Ibid.*: 28). Less than a decade after that, in 1782, Mrachai, a chief of the *Palaingsa* Marmas, emigrated from the 'Phalangkhyoung [Palaing Chaung], a stream

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flowing into the Koladan river in Arakan, and settled in the Matamuri valley' (*Ibid*: 17).

A Marma migration to Hill Tripura did not occur until the final quarter of the 19th century. In an estimated population for 1876-77, the total of 373 Mags is shown in the state. Abundance of land for swidden and plough cultivation, as also exemption from tax to encourage settlement, induced several groups to emigrate from CHT. Between 1876 and 1881, Marmas (mostly the Palaingsa clan) came to South Tripura every winter only to return to the Mong Circle after a few of months; but in 1882, they settled permanently in Belonia subdivision. Since then, their population has grown. The Census of Tripura 2001 shows 24,706 Mags in South Tripura against 30,385 individuals for the ethnic group in the state.

1.3.2 *Mru*

Mrus call themselves *Mru-cha* [mrúʧə]. *Mru* is the native's term for 'man' and *cha* means 'child' or 'offspring.' Within the group, there exist a number of exogamous clans ('*chen*'), and there are distinct wife-giving clans ('*tutma*'), which rank socially higher than wife-taking clans ('*pen*') do. No *tutma* can take as wife a girl from *pen*. 'In principal... wife-takers, the *pen* must show respect to the *tutma*, who are wife-givers' (Brauns & Löffler 1990: 170). Within an elaborate network of kinship ties, a clan reckoned as *pen* by another clan becomes *tutma* in its relation to a third clan. Two clans recalling no alliances between in the past can form a *tainou* ('ceremonial friendship') at a certain point, after which members of these clans will never intermarry among themselves. A boy of *Tāng* clan cannot marry a *Gripcha* girl because the two clans now share *tainou* relation between them.

The ethnicity of the Mru has always vexed researchers. Hodgson (1853: 17) noted that *Mru* is 'used by the Arakanese as generic term for all the hill tribes of their country.' When Buchanan toured the Chittagong Hills in 1798, he found that

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in 'their features and accent they [Mru] entirely resemble the Rakain. They are quite naked, except a small bit of cloth used for the sake of decency.... They inhabit the banks of the upper part of the Edgong river, and are subjects of Kaung-la-pru: but have a Ru[a]-sa of their own tribe' (van Schendel 1992: 63-64). Culturally, Mrus share close affinities with the Awa Khumi, with whom they appear to be largely intermixed. Linguistically, Mru has many things in common with Burmese, as also with Bodo, Naga, and the Kuki-Chin languages (Grierson 1904: 380). Shafer (1955: 103) classified the language under a distinct *Mruish* section of the Burma branch. Mru did not have any written characters until 1985, when a native, Menlay Mru evolved a writing system with thirty-one graphemes.

About the Mrus' origin almost nothing is known, but it is possible that they branched off from 'the Tibeto-Burman family at an early date, before the modern groups such as Bodo, Naga, Kuki-Chin, etc. had been developed' (Grierson *Ibid*: 381). One Arakan chronicle associates a Mru named Marayu with the mythical founding of Dhagnyawaddy (Phayre 1844: 33-4); again, in the 10th century AD, a Mru chieftain named Amatyo and his nephew Pyobo are said to have briefly ruled over parts of Arakan (*Ibid.*: 37-8). But this information occurs in contradiction to the Mru's own socio-political organisation that does not indicate to the existence, even in former times, of a centralised authority over the whole group. Nevertheless, it may be said with some certainty that Mrus (spelt *Mro* in Marma) were already in upper Koladan when the first wave of Burman arrived in Arakan in the 11th century. Much later, when they were driven out their habitat by the Aphya Khumis coming down from Saphodaung in the Yoma Mountains, a section crossed over into the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In the 18th century, some Mrus were living in the Matamuri valley; the rest of the tribe lived across the border in the hilly parts of Saingdin and the Ponnakyun Township.

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Tippera female

Bru maidens

1.3.3 *Tippera*

The Tippera's name for himself is *Barak* or *Barak-sā*, and the language he speaks is *Kakbarak*. A different group of people, the Bru (*Riāng*), now speak *Kaubru*, a dialectical variant of *Kakbarak*. (I shall refer to them in a subsequent section.) Asked about his descent, the Tippera who professes Hinduism will recount a mythic tale of descent from the *Pāndava* kings of the *Mahābhārata* times. This genealogy was constructed only in the 15th century AD, when a Tippera king, Dharma Manikya commissioned two Bengali Brahmins to compose the state chronicle, the *Rājmālā*. Linguistically, they belong to the *Bara* group of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family of Sino-Tibetan languages; they are related to Mech, Rabha, Garo, Lalung, Karbi (Kachari), and Deori-Chutiya. In 1228 AD, Sukhapa led the Tai-Ahoms to Assam ('*Mungdun-chun-khām*'). Centuries before that, the Bara groups lived in the extensive tract along the Brahmaputra valley. The *Rājmālā* repeatedly points to the Tippera's family connections with

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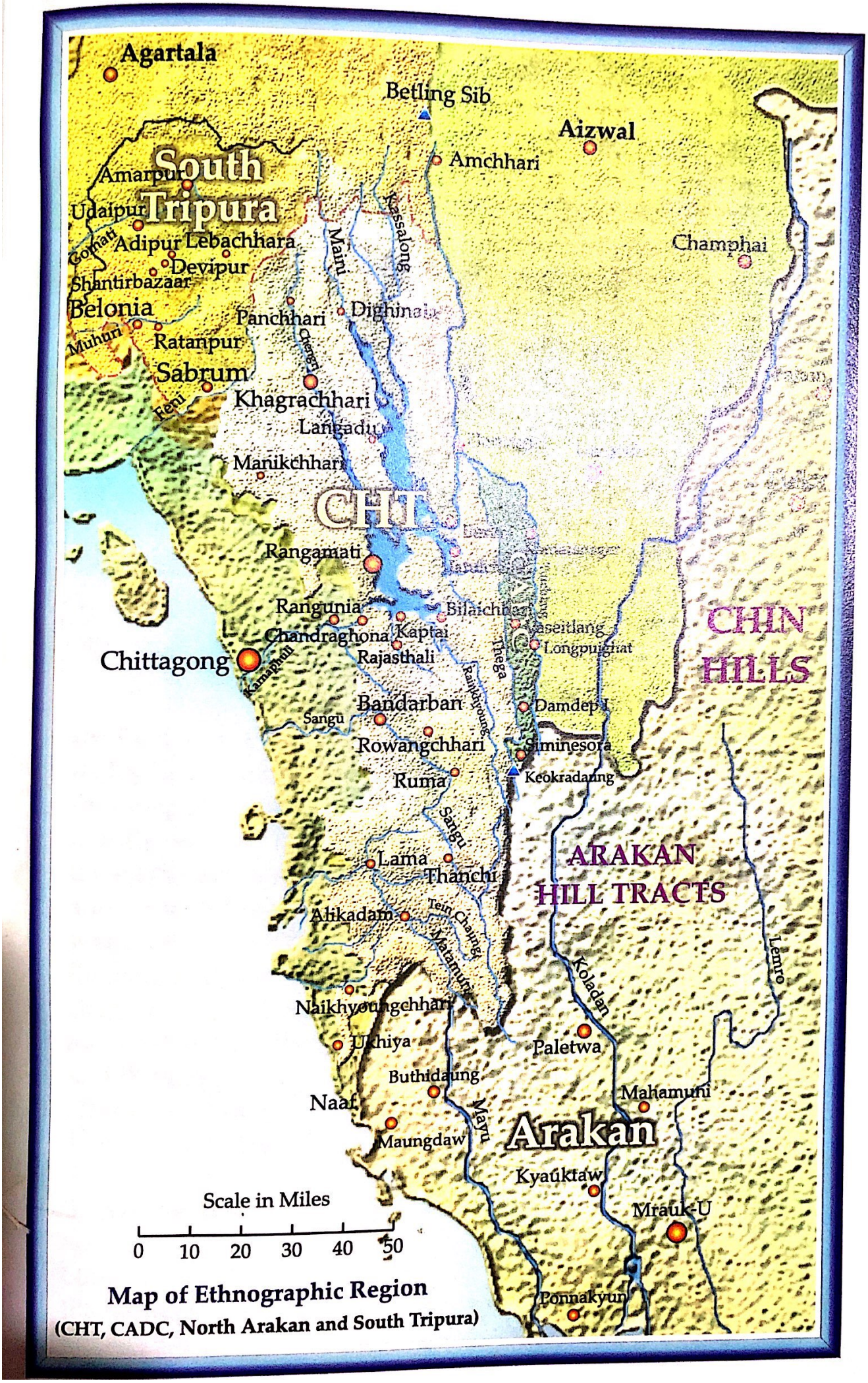

Map of Ethnographic Region
(CHT, CADC, North Arakan and South Tripura)

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the Kachari royalty, and it seems that a southward migration of Tippera came in the wake of the Ahom occupation of the Brahmaputra valley. 'In the thirteenth century, it would seem that the Kachari kingdom extended along the south bank of the Brahmaputra, from the Dikhu to the Kallang, or beyond and included also the valley of the Dhansiri and the tract which now forms the North Cachar sub-division.... Towards the end of this century, it is narrated that the outlying Kachari settlements east of Dikhu river withdrew before the advance of the Ahoms' (Gait 1963: 300-301). In 'Dakshin' and 'Khalangma' episodes of the *Rājmālā*, it is narrated that after a war with the Kachari king (name not mentioned), the Tippera king, Dakshin, withdrew to the upper parts of the Barabakra (Barak) river and settled at Khalangma among 'Langrong' (Ranglong) and other Kuki tribes that eventually accepted him as king. In the early part of the narrative, the boundary of their kingdom is thus demarcated: Tuirong on the north, Roshang (Arakan) in the south, Koch-banga (Koch-

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Bihar?) in the west and Mekhli (Manipur) in the east with capital at Tribeg, 'the junction of three rivers.' These descriptions match perfectly with the Halam tradition of how their people came under Tippera domination, when the former lived in the region of the Tuivai (*see infra* § 1.3.9). For a long time, Tipperas controlled the Barak valley; yet, a centralised polity did not emerge among them until the early 15th century. If the popular 15th century tradition of the Tippera king, Dangur-pha (Ratna-Manikya), subduing his seventeen brothers, each a 'king' of his own small 'kingdom,' to become the undisputed ruler of the hill state was viewed in proper light, it would point to an undermining of older tribal chieftainships and the emergence of a single territorial authority. Sections of Halam also merged with them.

In the 15th-16th century, Tipperas penetrated into the Chittagong Hill Tracts, controlling not only the northern parts but also expanding southwards across the Karnaphuli. They extended domination over the Early Chins (Old Kuki groups) and they were also involved in the ethnogenesis of Chakma. However, the Tippera's fortunes in the plains of Chittagong fluctuated, as they bitterly clashed with Arakan kings on the one hand and the Afghan rulers of Bengal on the other over the possession of the area. In 1584, the Tipperas were badly routed by the Arakan king, Meng Phalaung; at that time, sections of their people and of the Bru (who had allied with the Tipperas) were carried away as captives and settled on the Lemro. Notwithstanding these developments, Tippera presence continued to grow in the Chittagong Hill Tracts where sections underwent intermixture with local groups. Towards the close of the 18th century, Arakan was convulsed following a Burman occupation, which led to migration of Marmas and other groups of Sittwe into the southern parts of the Hill Tracts. Groups that had settled earlier in the region were then pushed northwards. Around that time, a section of Tippera returned to their native state; they were called

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Katal-sā or *Nowātiyā* ('new comers') by those already living in the Hill Tripura. The section of their people now called 'Debbarma,' who dominate the West District of Tripura and also have a sizeable population in South Tripura, are mainly Tipperas of *Gurpāi, Dāspā, Chānpuirā*, etc. clans. The rulers were affiliated to one of these clans but brought their chief queens from other races. During the *Hasam-bhojan*, the yearly feast given by the Tippera king to hill chiefs owing fealty to him, there was a provision for adopting the royalty-favoured surname 'Debbarma.' Members of the royal family appended 'Debbarman' to their own names. Natives say that in the time of the last Tippera king, Bir Bikram Manikya (1923-47), the title 'Debbarma' was acquirable through payment of Rs. 5/-; the fee legitimatised the use of that surname and it allowed families to permanently retain the same, generation after generation.

Around the mid-19th century, the hills bordering on Tripura were inhabited by Nowatiyas, while Uchais had some villages near Feni, Karnaphuli and Sangu rivers (Lewin 1869: 80). Uchai (spelt 'Osuie' by Lewin) is a minority group, ethnically closer to Bru than to Tippera; their tradition, as we shall see, makes Bru and Uchai brothers. Another group, Jamatiya were concentrated mostly in South Tripura, and they appear to have persisted with their traditional way of community management on the lines of democracy until Bir Chandra Manikya subjugated them in 1864.

The numerical strength of Tippera, Jamatiya and Nowatiya in South Tripura for the Census Year 2001 is shown against their total population in the state:

	Tippera	Jamatiya	Nowatiya
South Tripura	105,333 (19.4%)	59,918 (80%)	2,331 (35%)
Tripura	543,848	74,949	6,655

Source: Office of the Registrar General & Directorate of Census Operations, Tripura.

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In CHT, the total population of Tippera subgroups is presently estimated (on the basis of a decadal growth rate of 1.48) to be more than a hundred thousand souls. There, educated Brus and Uchais now use 'Tripura' as official surname.

1.3.4 *Bru (Riāng) and Uchai*

Brus identify a place called *Maini-tlang* as their early habitat. *Tlāng* is Kuki-Chin for 'hill'; the place so named refers to the upper reaches of the Maini river in the Khagrachhari Hills District (CHT). One tradition (Hutchinson 1909: 36) also points to *Riāng* settlements further south on the hills overlooking the Matamuri. In 1798, Buchanan was told that '[t]he Reang, whose language is different from that of the Tippera... live near Oodapour [Udaipur], upon the banks of the Gomooty [Gomati] and the Moory [Muhuri] rivers' (van Schendel 1992: 126). More than a dozen clans are recognised by the Bru, and the appellation *Riāng*, now officially applied to the whole group, is merely one of the clan names. One Tippera tradition mentions that two Riang chieftains, Rai Kacham and Rai Kachak, took the side of a 16th century Tippera king against eastern Kukis and also against Hussein Shah of Bengal.

What then is the Bru's ethnicity? Hutchinson (*Ibid.*) believed that they were of Kuki origin while Debbarma (1931: 73) considered them an admixed group of Kuki and Tippera. Probably they are a section of Early Chins (the so called 'Old Kukis'), with whom they share cultural affinities. In dress and personal decoration, they differ from Tippera. The clan-name *Riang* looks like a variant of *Hriam* or *Riam*, which subgroups of the Halam apply to themselves in the ethnic sense. Another clan *Molsoi* seems to have some connection with Molsom, another section of Halam. The Brus did not come to the Chittagong Hill Tracts through Arakan, as sometimes supposed; they probably entered the Lushai Hills a long time ago through the Champhai route but instead of mov-

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ing northwards into Manipur and Cachar Hills, as Halams did, they took a westerly route, reaching the northern parts of the Hill Tracts. They settled in the upper reaches of the Maini river, spreading subsequently along its eastern side up to the Karnaphuli. In the 15th century, the Bru came under Tippera domination and assimilated into them; they even adopted the latter's language. But the Tippera considers them an inferior people. In the Arakan annals, Tipperas are consistently referred to as မြို့ *Mroung*, which term in the ethnic sense would apply specifically to Bru than to their subjugator. Later, in course of the 16th century, when the Tipperas penetrated into the southern parts of the Hill Tracts, the Bru moved with them, their hamlets spreading from the Matamuri valley southwards to the borders of Arakan. Hutchinson (*Ibid*.) says that two Riang brothers, Kilay and Manglay, 'were Karbaris or managers on behalf of the Tippera Raja Udaigiri [Uday Manikya (1567-73) ?].' At the close of the 16th century, Arakan king Meng Phalaung made captives of Mrungs and settled them on the Lemro in Sittwe "with a view I suppose of cutting off their retreat to their own country; but when *Arakan* became convulsed in consequence of the invasion of the Burmese [in 1784], they gradually commenced leaving the *Lé-myo* [Lemro], and returning through the hills towards their own country. For a time they dwelt on the *Kola-dán*; now none are to be found in any part of Arakan, save on the *Mayú* in its upper course, and only a few stragglers there" (Phayre 1841: 684).

A parallel version of Bru migration might be gleaned in an Uchai tradition, which says that a certain king of Arakan captured their people and settled them in the hills around Maungdaw, where they lived peacefully for a long time under their own kings. Then, one day, some people came from the west; their king sought to befriend the king of Maungdaw and invited him to a dinner. But the latter was served poison with his food, on eating which he dropped dead. In the mean-

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Khyang maiden

Khumi woman

time, a messenger was sent to Maungdaw to ask the people to show their allegiance to the new king, failing which, they were told, a punitive army would be sent against them. When they refused to comply, several hundreds of men, women and children were ruthlessly murdered. Only two brothers, Ringsa and Uchya, managed to escape. But they were apprehensive of a pursuit; so, they divided the survivors in two groups. Ringsa, the elder, reached Tripura earlier than Uchya. The present-day Uchais claim that they are descended from the younger brother, Uchya, while the Riangs originated from the group that went ahead of them.

Ethnically, Uchais are the closest of the Bru, and, like the latter, they too underwent an early Tippera domination. The Chakma tradition of Bijoygiri speaks of Uchai as *Hai-chai Tipperā*, and claims that an army of this people accompanied Bijoygiri in his Rowang (Arakan) expedition. Another commander who accompanied Bijoygiri was a Bru named Kunjadhan Riang.

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In 2001, the Bru population of Tripura was 165,103, out of which 49,698 lived in South Tripura. A bulk of the number consisted of refugees from Mizoram. An estimated 8,000 Brus now live in CHT but they are returned as Tippera. In 2001, Uchais in Tripura numbered 2,015, out of which about 96% lived in South Tripura; their population in CHT is negligible.

1.3.5 *Khyang*

Early British accounts consistently refer to a tendency in the Khyang to imitate the Burman (Trant 1828: 261; BBG-II 1880: 262). Phayre (1841: 684) and Hodgson (1853: 15) were of the opinion the Khyang was of the same lineage as the Burman. One Khyang tradition even makes the Burman the elder brother. The Burman view of their nation being formed of a hundred and one races is echoed in the Khyang myth of *Hli-nu* ('the mythical earth-born mother') who laid 'one hundred eggs... from which sprung one hundred human beings, the progenitors of the different races of men. She then laid

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another egg which was beautifully coloured as if by the hand of some skilful artist' (BBG-II 1880:261). The son born of the last egg was the Khyang.

Culturally and linguistically, Khyangs are most closely related to the Southern Chins. *Khyang*, of course, is the Burman's pronunciation of *Chin*: the term ချင် *Khyaṅ* occurs in old Burmese inscriptions of the 12th-13th century (Luce 1931: 298). But a Khyang calls himself *Sho*, which affix occurs with variations in the appellations *Asho, Zo, Zomi, Mizo, Chwang-zo*, etc., as different Chin groups use in the ethnic sense. Several clans ('*shang*') are recognised within the tribe, and in the past, these clans lived as independent village communities, each under a hereditary chieftain called *mat* [mɔt]. In CHT, eleven Khyang clans are found: *Hokcha, Khepcha, Lāibresha, Lithusha, Mangcha, Manglāmsha, Nüncha, Pecha, Shamcha, Shecha*, and *Yaungcha*.

In the mid-19th century, Khyang settlements in Burma extended 'along the Yoma range (which runs nearly N.N.W. and S.S.E.) from about the nineteenth to the twenty-first degree of North latitude' (Hodgson 1853: 15). Another tradition speaks of their early occupation of the region between Ava and Pegu under a powerful ruler until a horde of 'Tarters' invaded the land, deposed their king and killed most chieftains, compelling the survivors to seek refuge in the mountains (Trant *Ibid.*: 263). Clearly, the allusion here is to the Burman, for the tradition which makes him the elder brother of the Khyang also mentions of continual repression of the Khyang. It is said that though *Hli-nu* loved her youngest son most, she could only give him the Yoma Mountains as inheritance. To this, fowls and domestic animals were added but the Khyang was naïve and the Burman systematically robbed him of every possession.

Khyangs first immigrated into the Chittagong Hills in the late 18th century, in the wake of Burman occupation of Arakan but at that time, they were not numerous enough to be

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distinguished from Marma, the principal target of Burman oppression. While inhabiting Arakan, some of their people (as in the case of the *Lāibresha* clan) had intermarried with Marma. Kaung-hla-pru is a familiar name among them but the tribe sadly recalls that when they came to the Hill Tracts there was much of fighting among the immigrants for land; in the end, the Khyang was left landless. Lewin (1869: 94) was aware of a small number of Khyangs inhabiting 'the spurs of the great hill range separating the Hill Tracts from Arracan.' Forty years later, Hutchinson (1909: 45) figured out their number in CHT to be 500 and living 'in the most inaccessible places.' In the early 1960s, Khyang settlements existed in the Chemni Mouza between the Sangu and the Karnaphuli (Bernot 1964: 162). Thoysafrue Khyang of Chandraghona told me that the upper region of the Harbung in the Cox's Bazaar District was where Khyangs first settled when they came from Arakan. In CHT, their present population is only 3,500, and they live mostly at Chandraghona and Rajasthali. In Arakan, they have villages on the Lemro, on the eastern side of the river; from that point, their settlements extend southwards along the Yoma Mountains into Sandoway, where their number increases considerably.

1.3.6 *Khumi*

As far as Khumis are concerned, there are two major divisions among them; the *Awa Khumi* who, like Mru, is one of the oldest tribes of the upper Koladan, while the *Aphya Khumi* (also called *Ahraing Khumi*) came into that area around the late 17th century, driven by Shendus out of their older habitat at Saphodaung in the Yoma Mountains. The arrival of the last group led to the dispersal in large numbers of the older settlers, Awa Khumi and especially the Mru to the hilly regions of Mrauk-U, Ponnakyun and Maungdaw townships (Ba Thin 1931: 249). A section of Awa Khumis immigrated with the Mru into the Chittagong Hills; they intermarried

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with the Mru and became largely absorbed in the latter, settling in the upper reaches of the Sangu and the Matamuri rivers. Interestingly, the Khyang calls both Mru and Awa Khumi by the same term, *Mra* [mrə]. Those Awa Khumis who stayed back in their original settlement had frequent clashes with Aphya Khumis in course of the 19th century; Mrus too recall bloody feuds with Aphya Khumis.

The Burman's pronunciation of Khumi is *Khye-mi*, meaning 'dog-race,' the term containing an allusion to the latter's way of so wearing the loincloth that a loose end always hangs down at the back in the manner of a tail; to this is added the Khumi's high propensity to eating dog's flesh. But when the native calls himself *Khumi*, the term is used in the ethnic sense. *Mi* is Tibeto-Burman for 'man' while *khu-* is cognate with the Kuki-Chin generic affixes *Sho, Zo, Cho, Kho*, etc. Khumi language is classified under Southern Chin (Grierson 1904: 329; Shafer 1955: 105). The dialect of Awa Khumi differs considerably from that of Aphya Khumi. Conspicuous differences are also observed in the material cultures and the religious practices of the two groups.

Awa Khumis recognise exogamous clans as numerous as that of the Mru while I found Aphya Khumi of CHT to have six clans (*Shiktibe, Uyeshin, Lāngwingcha, Shāmṭhang, Shāngkucha, Khāyshe* and *Shiktibe*). Traditionally, the Awa Khumis managed themselves on the lines of democracy; they do not recall 'a chieftain class or clan from which chiefs are drawn' (Ohn Pe 1931: 257). Among the Aphya Khumis, on the contrary, a distinct chieftain class existed, and each clan had its own hereditary *Ahraing* who derived no revenue from the clan but received from each family a yearly basket of rice and a bottle of rice-beer. On his part, the *Ahraing* gave feasts and organised fortune war parties; in addition to which, he also performed such essential tasks as selecting suitable places for frequently shifting villages, acquiring provisions for his clansmen in times of crises, etc. Their bitter rivalry with the

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Shendu (who had long ago driven them out of Saphodaung) continued as late as the end of the 19th century. Lewin (1870: 306-7) writes of a Khumi *toungmeng*, Young, who once burnt a Shendu village, and, in retaliation had his own village burnt on two occasions by the Shendu. At the close of the 18th century, they had some villages in the southern parts of the Hill Tracts, in the upper Matamuri valley.

1.3.7 *The Central Chins, including Lushai*

Tribes grouped under the linguistic category of Central Chins comprise Tashon (Shuntla), Lai-zo (Shendu or Lakher), Zahau (Yahau), Lente, Khaulsim, etc. Also included is the Lushai or Duhlien. In the late 18th and early 19th century, ethnic feuds saw rival Chin groups vying with each other for control over cultivable ridges. Several diffusion and restructuring occurred within older Chin societies. Sometimes, formidable groups absorbed weak neighbours or vanquished subgroups; at other times, amalgamation of different groups brought out new ethnic systems.

Both Bawm and Pangkhua are linguistically grouped under Central Chin. *Pangkhua* appear to be closely allied to the Old Kukis and it would be interesting to see if they share any ethnic connections with Halams. Probably, they were in the Lushai Hills before coming to the Hill Tracts. By late 18th century, a section of Zahau and Shuntla too had moved into the upper reaches of the Bawinu (Koladan). The ethnic group called *Bawm* uses the affix *-zo* generically, just as *Sho* or *Cho* is added to many Chin appellations. (*See supra* §1.3.5). *Banjogi* in the sense of *ban*, "a forest," and *jogi*, "wanderer" (Hutchinson 1906: 159) is an Aryanised form of *Bawm-zo*, originating in the lowlander's idiom. In 1798, Buchanan was informed of an 'independent tribe, named Bonjoogy' by a 'Mussulman of ... [Company's Hut in Chittagong], who pretended to be well acquainted with the Country to the east' (van Schendel 1992: 27-8). Phayre (1841: 707) was told by a

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Molsom female

Hleng-tchyo (Hlawnceu) *toung-meng* that several generations ago, 'a portion of his clan coming from the N.E. subdued the *Lung-khes* [Lungkhuas] and *Boung-jwes*.' The Bawm imbibed many societal traits of their Lai-zo (Shendu) masters and they evolved for themselves a rigidly stratified social-system with distinct 'high-ranking and low-ranking clans, economic and politically relevant marriage restrictions and wife-giving and wife-taking clans' (Mey 1984: 94). The Lungkhua amalgamated with Southern Chins to emerge, in course of the 18th century, as Panghawi. Until their conversion to Christianity, Shuntlas avoided intermarrying with Panghawis.

These groups are primarily concentrated in the Hill Tracts, the Bawm at Ruma and Thanchi in the Bandarban District and the Pangkhua at Baghaichhari, Bilaichhari and Barkal in the Rangamati District. A small number of Pangkhua also lives at Rowangchhari. Neither of these groups lives in South Tripura. In CADC, the sole Bawm village is Sizaw (West), which had with a population of 477 souls in 2005. About 500 Pangkhuas now live in two CADC villages of Devasora

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(North) and Parva-III. To the northeast of Bawm and Pangkhua, one finds Lushai. In 2001, the population of Mizoram was 888,573 out of which total about 72% comprised Lushai; outside Mizoram, their number is negligible.

Around the close of the 18th century, the Lushai moved out of Tlankna, north of Falam. Their rivalry with Zahau subgroups, particularly with Fanais, as also with Hualngos and Hualhangs ('Howlong') compelled them to migrate northwestwards into the Lushai Hills (Mizoram). As they moved, they dispersed from that region the earlier settlers, particularly Thados, Biates, Hrangkhwals and other subgroups of Old Kuki (Debnath 2008: vii). As already indicated, different clans of Lushai fought against each other in unpredictable alliances until the mid-19th century, when *Sailos* emerged as undisputed masters of the North Lushai Hills. *Lushai* in the sense of 'a head-hunter' originated in the early British period but it might have originally meant 'one with long hair.' In former times, the Lushai male kept long hair, which was groomed into a bun at the back of the head. Today, *Lushai* is abandoned in favour of *Mizo*, which brings under its cover not only all clans that spoke Duhlien but also other Kuki-Chin groups dominated by Lushai (*Ibid.*: xii). Tipperas call them *Shikāmsā*, while Indo-Aryan speaking Chakmas know them as *Kugi*. Halams designate them as *Khosāk*.

1.3.9 *Halam*

Under the ethnic nomenclature *Hālām* are subsumed allied subgroups of Early Chins (Old Kuki) who came under Tippera domination. The term *Hālām* is Baric in origin, *hā* meaning 'earth' and *lām* 'path.' They call themselves *Hriam*, pronounced [riəm], which connotes 'man'; it also means 'land' or 'country' (as Lushai '*ram*'). As already mentioned, Tipperas acknowledge Halams as original dwellers of the hill kingdom. Halams, on their part, claim to have known their subjugator long before they occupied Hill Tripura. A Rang-

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long tradition says that in former times, when Hriams were living in Tuivai, they had a king (*Hriam-reng*, lit. 'king of the Hriam people') who became infatuated with his own daughter. (I was told this tale by Tamborlian Halam, my Ranglong informant of Bagbasa, North Tripura.) Soon people came to know of it, and, in utter humiliation, the king jumped into the river. As he fell, he miraculously changed to a rock. From that day, the place has been called Tamlung (literally 'Jumping Rock'); it lies south of Senbaum. His crown fell into the Tuivai and it was being carried down stream, when a chief of the Tippera (*Vāi-reng-te*, 'the small king of the Vai') picked it up and put it on his head. The Hriams, then having no king of their own, made the Vai (Tippera) their ruler and followed him to *Reng-pui-ram* ('land of the great king'), the Halam name of Tripura. As for the ethnonym 'Tippera,' Halams associate it with the Tuivai. Interestingly, the place name *Tribeg* in the Tippera's tradition (*see supra* § 1.3.3) looks like an Aryanised rendition of *Tuivāi*. Bengalis living in the Cachar district of Assam pronounce *Tuivāi* as *Tipāi*, and the place called Tipaimukh is the junction of three rivers.

The origin and the dispersal of Halams have not to been seriously studied. They claim to have come from *Khur-pui-tā-bum*, which is identified as 'a place in the hills north of Manipur' (Debbarma 1931: 80). Following interactions with Halams, I discovered that *Khur-pui-tā-bum* is literally 'a place with a big hole.' In Ranglong dialect, *khur* means 'hole' and *pui* 'big, great,' whence *Khur-pui* 'the big hole.' It is pronounced *Khul-pui-tā-bum* in Chorei dialect, and refers to the same place which other Chin groups identify as *Chinlung* ('the hole of Chins,' but which would literally be 'a cave among the rocks'). While various places between southwest China and Chindwin have been identified as the location of Chinlung, the Halam tradition of *Khur-pui-tā-bum* indicates to some place in the Kachin State (North Myanmar); it says that the *Bak* drove them out of their habitat. Probably, in-

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creased Kachinic movements in the Upper Chindwin valley towards the close of the first millennium AD caused their dispersal. 'A number of early Chinese works published at various dates between A.D. 350 and A.D. 1000 make references to "the wild and troublesome b'uok tribes" living apparently in the mountains to the west of Yung Ch'ang... This seems to be a population inhabiting the Kachin Hills Area, and though language and culture may have changed, the tribal name has stuck. Modern Maru call Jinghpaw speakers *p'ok*; the Shans of Hkamti Long used to refer to their Kachin serfs as *kha-p'ok* (serf p'ok); Jinghpaw itself might well be written as *ing-p'ok*; modern Chinese refer to the modern Kachins as *p'u man* – the *p'u* being written with the same character as the earlier *b'uok*' (Leech 1954: 208-09). From there, Hriams took a southerly course to reach Tahan where, a long time ago, lived the three Great Chiefs of the Chin people – Marbwangkhup in the North, Lersi in the South and Lapui in the centre. This division as mentioned in the oral tradition of Halams corresponds to the ethnic and linguistic division of Kuki-Chins into Northern, Central and Southern Chin groups. It is learnt from the same tradition that looking west from Tahan, one sees the sun going down at Champhai. Before dispersing from Tahan, Lapui planted a banyan sapling, predicting that one day this will grow so huge that branches from the top will hang down to touch the root; on that day, the living descendents of the three Great Chiefs will unite into a single nation.

In the 13th-14th century, there were Shan inroads into the Chindwin valley. By the time, the city of Kalemyo was built (in 1395) to mark Shan domination in Chindwin, a westward migration of the Chins had occurred. On leaving Tahan, the Hriams entered Northeast India through the Champhai route, to settle in the northern parts of Mizoram along the Cachar border, even penetrate into the southern parts of Manipur ('*Moitāi-ram*'). The first place they settled

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was *Ruong-le-vāi-shua* (Tipaimukh), literally meaning 'junction of the three rivers.' A section of their people tried to move northwards through the Manipur Hills but was prevented by the 'Rongmai' Nagas; they subsequently returned to the Tuivai, where they came under Tippera domination sometime in the late 14th or early 15th century. Early amalgamation led to the emergence of new subgroups like the Rupini. When the Tippera king went to build *Reng-pui-ram*, he settled the Halams as human wall at strategic points on the northern, the eastern and the southern flanks of the kingdom. They were then called *Bāro-Hālām*, 'the Twelve Halams.' During *Hasam-bhojan*, Halams were always assigned a place of honour (Debbarma 1931: 86-87). The privilege extended to the Hriam chiefs attracted, in subsequent times, small groups of Bara and other Kuki-Chins into the ethnic group, increasing the number of Halam subgroups to seventeen.

1.3.10 *Sak (Chak) and Chakma*

The Arakan chronicles state that the Daingnak had early links with the Sak of ancient Burma, at least up to the 14th century AD. As for the Chak of Naikhyoungchhari, they are perhaps the only section of the older group to have retained the original language, while other sections of their people in Burma, such as the Kadus of Katha and Myitkynia and the Tamans of Upper Chindwin now speak Burmese. In Manipur, the Chakpas have abandoned *Chākpālol* in favour of Meithei. Various theories on the Chakma's origin have been proposed in recent years, and one writer (Abedin 1997: 58) even called them a 'rootless tribe.' We shall subsequently see that Chakma of the Chittagong Hill Tracts emerged through a long ethnogenesis that involved ethnic groups as diverse as Sak, Daingnak or Tanchangya, Tippera, Bru and Barua; they are the rightful dwellers of the Hill Tracts.

We shall learn more about these developments when we examine the Tanchangya's ethnicity.

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2. *Ethno-linguistics*

No ethnographic work has been done on Tanchangya prior to this study. Between mid-19th and early 20th century, British writers (Phayre 1841; Lewin 1869 and 1870; Hutchinson 1909; Grierson 1927) made some passing remarks on Tanchangya's descent, idiom and ethnic affiliation. In mid 20th century, a number of German anthropologists (Löffler 1964; Bernot 1964) worked on CHT groups but little interest was shown on Tanchangya. Recently, native writers have published a few books, which though containing interesting notes are inadequate by ethnographic standards; these works do not quite go inside the culture of their own ethnic group.

In the present study, I have tried as best as I can to unfold the things that make the Tanchangya's world, beginning with what now concerns him most – his ethnicity.

2.1 *Labels of identity and contrast*

To understand the Tanchangya's ethnic paradigm, it is most necessary to take cognition of the dichotomy between what precise labels they use for themselves and what the contrast groups and neighbouring peoples apply to them. The Marma or Rakhine appellation for the Tanchangya is ဒိုင်းနက် *Daingnak* or ဒိုင်းနက်သား *Daingnak-sa*. They are known to the Mru as *Dengnak*; Brauns and Löffler (1990: 35) would have us believe that *Daingnak* is 'the Marma pronunciation of the Mru designation.' But it is possible that the Mru corrupted

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the older Arakanese term *Daingnak* into *Dengnak;* the Mrus are neither aware of its meaning nor do they have any tradition that says something about Daingnak. In an Arakan chronicle, Daingnak is first mentioned under the date 1333 AD and, though very little is said about them, there are indications to their old connection with the သက် *Sak* ('Thet') of ancient Burma and to their intermixture with the Marma. Chakmas publicly assert that Tanchangyas belong to their own ethnic group (they have political reasons for doing so); they also say that Tanchangyas are the 'real Chakmas'; in private, however, a Tanchangya is Tanchangya even if he were to write 'Chakma' as surname. Today, both groups speak allied dialects of Indo-Aryan; yet, Tanchangya differs from Chakma (called *Ānokyā* by the former) in dress and customs.

To the Khyang, Chakma and Tanchangya are both *Sak;* on the contrary, the Sak (Chak) proper is known to them as *Chāk* [tɕak]. In their native state, Tipperas do not know the Tanchangya while the Chakma is called *Chaungmā;* but in CHT, they distinguish *Deindāk Sāk* (Tanchangya) from *Ānak Sāk* (Chakma). On considering the fact that Mrungs (Brus) of the upper Mayu lived close to Daingnak in the early 19th century (Phayre 1841: 683), it is possible that they picked up the term *Daingnak* from the Marma, and from them, it passed on to the Tippera, who then modified it after their familiar clan names but retained the affixture *Sak* to distinguish them from their own people, the *Barak. Ānak* [anək] and *Deindāk* [deɪdak] are the ñames of two Tippera clans, while *Ānokyā* is what Chakmas are called by Tanchangya. The Mru name for Chakma is *Achāk* [ətɕak], distinguished from *Sākme* [sakmə, sakmi] or Chak and from *Dengnāk* (Tanchangya). The Central Chins, Bawm and Lushai, who came to the Hill Tracts in early 19th century use identical appellations for Chakma and Tanchangya. The Bawm calls them *Sāk,* which term he picked up from some hill-dweller, while the Lushai calls them *Tākām* and the Shendu *Tākāngpā,* which could have some con-

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nection with their settlements in river valleys. Parry (1976: 574) writes, 'Takanpa. The Chakmas. The first Chakma seen by the Lakhers was standing on the bank of a river breaking water shells, and the name is derived from the noise made by the shells breaking.'

Among themselves, Tanchangyas also use *Sāppe* or *Sāppe-kulyā* in the ethnic sense; the term, as we shall subsequently see, is derived from *Sak*. Besides, Phayre (*Ibid.*) mentions *Kheim-bá-nago*, a term he had learnt from the Daingnaks of the upper Mayu. But the designation တဉ်ဗြေ *Tanchangyā* has passed into general usage. In the 19th century, British writers spelt it as 'Toungjynya' (Lewin 1869; Mackenzie 1884) and 'Tangjangya' (Risley 1892); in recent times, we have 'Tongcengya' (Löffler 1964), Taungchengya (Mey 1980). Within the ethnic group, the educated now calls himself *Tanchangyā* [tɔnsɔŋja, (tɔntɕɔŋja)]; for the swidden farmer, it is *Tuntunyā* [tuntunja] or *Tungtungyā* [tuŋtuŋja]. Between these extreme pronunciations, one hears the Bengalis of Chittagong refer to the tribe as *Tanchoing-gā* [tɔnsoiŋga].

Before going into the details of the Tanchangya's ethnicity, it would be worth reviewing extant ethnological notes on this ethnic group.

2.2 *Ethnological notes from the 19th–20th century*

We have seen that Daingnak and Tanchangya are the same people. An early note on them is given by Phayre (*Ibid.*: 683-84): 'The remaining hill tribes [of Arakan] are the *Doing-núk* and the *Mrúng*. They both inhabit the upper course of the *Mayú* river. The language of the first is a corrupt Bengalee. They call themselves *Kheim-bá-nago*. Of their descent I could learn nothing; probably they may be the offspring of Bengalees carried into the hills as slaves, where their physical appearance has been modified by change of climate. In religion they are Buddhists.' In the same account (*Ibid.*: 712), he furnishes a short vocabulary of the Daingnak. In a subse-

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quently published account, Phayre (1844: 27-8) provides the following note on the Thet (Sak):

'... a king named *Tsek-kya-wad-de* reigned in *Bara-na-ti* [Varanasi, Benaras].... he had four sons, among whom he divided the world. To the eldest *Thur-ri-ya Thau-da* he gave the central portion and the city of *Pa-ta-na-go*; to the second, *Tsan-da-than-da*, the northern portion and the city of *Pin-tsa-pu-ra*; to the third son, *Ma-ni-thu-bha-was*, he gave the southern portion and the city of *Randa-pu-ra*; to the fourth son, *Kan-myeng*, were allowed all the countries inhabited by the Burman, Shan, and Malay races from *Ka-thi* (Munnipur) to the borders of China....

'*Kan-myeng* collecting men from different countries of the west... brought them to *Ram-ma-wa-ti*; they then asking for subsistence and a place to live in, to the first who so applied he gave them the name of "*Thek*," and their language being different from the rest, they lived separate. The king then assigns names to the rest of his followers...'

In the footnote to *Thek*, he adds, 'This is a small tribe living among the hills in Arakan Proper; they are described in an "Account of Arakan" in the Jour. Asiat. Soc. for 1841, p. 683, under the name *Doing-nak*.' (*Ibid*.: 28). The Arakan chronicles, as we shall see later in the chapter, pointedly indicate to the Daingnak having ethnic connections with the Sak (Thet) of ancient Burma

According to Lewin (1869: 62), 'The name of Chukma is given to this tribe in general by the inhabitants of the Chittagong District, and the largest and dominant section of the tribe recognizes this as its rightful appellation. It is also sometimes spelt Tsakma, or Tsak, or as it is called in Burmese, Thek. A smaller section of the same tribe is called Doingnak.... There is a third division, or clan, called Toungjynyas.' Risley (1892: 169) follows Lewin and says, 'The Chakmas are divided into three sub-tribes – Chakma, Doingnak, and Tungjainya or Tanjangya.' But Ghosh (1909: 53) points out that

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Daingnak and Tanchangya are alternative names of the same people, the former being an appellation given by the Mag (Marma). Hutchinson (1909: 21), of course, mentions 'only two sub-tribes, Chakmas and Tanshangyas.'

In the *Census of India* for 1931 (XI. Burma 1:186-7) Daingnak is spelt 'Daingnet' and classified with Sak, Kadu, Taman, Malin and Ganan under the Sak Group. (Details on these groups are given in a subsequent section and then in the next chapter.) Sak and Daingnak populations are recorded in the Akyab district alone; about the latter, it is said, as in Appendix B of the Census of 1921, 'Daingnet is a language much corrupted by the Indo-Aryan Bengali, of the descendents of Sak prisoners of war from the Lower Chindwin, who were captured by King Mindi [Mengdi] of Arakan at the close of the 13th century and made to settle in the Akyab [Sittwe] District.' Interestingly, a similar tradition of a section of their people coming under Arakan subjugation in former times prevails among Chaks of Naikhyoungchhari.

Around the beginning of the 20th century, we find Barua referring to the Tanchangya as 'one of the mountain clans of Arakan' ('আরাকানের পাহাড়ী জাতির অপর এক সম্প্রদায়,' *Ārākaner pāhārī jātir apar ek samprdāy*) who assimilated with Chakmas and adopted the latter's language, but Chakmas never actually considered them as their equals (*op. cit.* Ghosh 1909: 54). Ghosh (*Ibid.*) finds indications to a Sak-Tanchangya connection in Barua's remarks. This view of Tanchangya being a 'mountain clan' is reiterated in Brauns and Löffler (1990: 35): among hill people subsumed 'under groups whose language they share... we have the Tongcengya (also written "Tanchangya," etc.) who are often called Doi(n)gnak in the older sources. ("Tong-cen" is a Marma word for "mountain clans"...). Like their neighbors, the Chakma, the Tongcengya speak a local dialect of Bangla; but there are differences in culture, e.g., in their house form and style of dress.' In another paper, Löffler (1964:110) describes them as 'mountain

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dwellers' ('Bergbevölkerung') and says that in the 15th-16th century, the southern Hill Tracts was under the dominion of the Buddhist Sak who extended their influence over the Daingnak or Tanchangya ('... im 15. und 16, Jh.:... südlische Hill Tracts unter dem Einfluss der buddhistischen Sak, die die einheimische Bergbevölkerung (Dengnak, Tongcengya) sakisieren'). But the problem of the Daingnak is left unsolved by Löffler, albeit with the recognition that further study needs to be carried out.

After the British conquest of Burma, we get some information on Sak. Hodgson (1853) prepared a short, incomplete list of Sak words (*Ibid.*: 8-10); it was followed by Houghton's (1893) paper on Kadus and their vocabulary. In Houghton (*Ibid.*: 130), Saks of Arakan are affiliated to Kadus and placed under 'the Kachin-Naga branch, (sub-section Kudô), of the Tibeto-Burman race' and they are said to have come into Burma 'through the passes North of Bhamo.' Lowis (1949: 25) suggests a wider admixture: 'The Chin element in the Kadu is very faint. They are for the most part, like the Danus, a Burmese-Shan compound, but they have also an appreciable admixture of Kachin besides the trace of Chin. They are the result of a fusion of all four stocks... Their language, which contains a large number of Kachin and a few Chin words as well as Burmese and Shan, is fast dying out and they are now more or less Burmanized.' A similar view is expressed by Scott and Hardiman (1900, I.1: 569): 'The Kadu language is a hybrid of such doubtful ancestry that it is difficult to assign it definitely to any group in the classified scheme of languages. It contains traces of Chin, Kachin, Shan, and Burmese in its composition.' The same authors also said, 'The Kadus are conspicuously tall as compared with the Shans and Burmese and are very much more muscular. Their dress is much of the fashion of the Burmese, the men wearing a short *paso* or *lungyi*, the women blue waist-cloths or coats and the head-gear woven by themselves with the spindle

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common through the country' (1901, II.1: 326). Brown's (1920) findings on the Kadu put an end to all speculations. He dismissed the notion of Kadu being a mere jargon of Burmese and suggested that there was in the Upper Chindwin Valley a period of 'a Kadu domination, just as there was afterwards a Shan and a Burmese domination; and that Kadu was the language of one of the tribes which came to Burma long ago and eventually formed what is now the Burmese people' (1920: 8). In the same paper (*Ibid.*: 4*fn*), he wrote, 'I have since discovered that Sak (or Asak – the prefix *a* is frequently dropped) is the Kadus' own name for themselves. The name Thet looks suspiciously like the modern Burmese form of the same word. A word written *sak* in Burmese is pronounced *thet*.'

2.3 *Sak-Kadu groups in Burma*

In *Siji* 116, Sima Qian wrote that during the 2nd-1st century BC, southwestern China was inhabited by the 西南夷 *Xinan-yi* ('Southwestern barbarians'); they lived in the area comprising today's Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunan and Guangxi. Distinguished from the Man ('Southern barbarian'), the ethnic groups and subgroups of the *Xinan-yi* are known by various names in Chinese records: during the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC), we have Di Qiang, Zhou, Xia, Shu and others; in the Han period (206 BC-220 AD), the prominent groups are Sui, Kunming, Qiongdu, Dian, Zhadu and several others. Some of these ethnic groups such as Sui and Kunming were nomads and pastoralists; others like Dian, Yelang and Qiongdu (the last being the 'the most powerful' among groups living from Dian northwards) were of the settled type, having centralised polities and powerful local chiefs (Burton 1961: 295; Ping 2006: 540-41). During the Spring and Autumn Period corresponding to 770-476 BC, the Di Qiangs, who are acknowledged ancestors of all Tibeto-Burman people, dwelt in the upper waters of the Yellow River (Hwang Ho);

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at a later period, several waves of migration brought the Yelangs to Guizhou, the Dians to eastern Yunan, and the Qiongdu (pronounced *Kondu* or *Kontu* in old Chinese) including small groups to the southwestern parts of Sichuan (Ping *Ibid.*). Han Chinese 琼都 *Qiongdu* became ကန်တူ *Kantu* in 12th century Burmese and 建都 *Chientu* (*Jiandu*) in *Yuanshi* ('Yuan History'); it became ကဒူ *Kadu* in modern Burmese.

Smaller groups of the Di-Qiangs, ethnically related to the Qiongdu (Kadu), appear to have moved west of the Lan-tsang Chiang (Mekong river), spreading to the valley of the upper Salween to occupy areas around Paoshan (Baoshan), Tengchen and Kunlong, where some set up early chiefdoms while others lived in a state of precarious independence. These settlements might even have extended roughly from Mieng-tien in the south to Dali in the north and between Bhamo in the west and Shunning in the east. In course of fieldwork in Manipur, I met Yumlembam Yaima, the Chakpa priest of Sekmai, who told me that the ancestors of Ando and Sekmai came from 'Vanjieng' in the Mekong valley. The place he meant is probably Yuanjiang on the Red River (Mekong); he also told me that they came through Bhamo and settled in Awa (which is also Meithei for Burma), where they had their own kingdom. Years later, when their people dispersed, a section was left behind in Awa while another moved into Manipur. My informant attributed the cause of their dispersal to a forceful conversion of their people to Buddhism. Yaima told me, 'The *Āwāningthou* (*lit.* Burman king, a Meithei term) wanted to make us Buddhists; so we left Awa and came here, at first settling at Andro. We brought with us our own Fire-god.' About the origin of the Tamans of upper Chindwin, Brown (1911: 306-08) wrote: 'Before they lived in the basin of the Indawgyi Lake they came from the Shan states, still further east.... It is stated that they once lived in a place or country in China called Ôkkat... I have not been able to identify Ôkkat but, as pointed out by Mr. E.C.S. George, C.I.E,

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Deputy Commissioner of Mogok, there is a place called Hokat on the Irrawaddy, about fifty miles due east of the Indawgyi Lake. This may be named after a place or district in China, and the name may quite possibly have been given to it by the Tamans on their way to the Lake.'

Having said this, one might try to ascertain the time of migration of the early Di-Qiang groups to Burma. The Pyu were already in Burma in the beginning of the Christian era and had absorbed much of the Indian culture that penetrated early into that country. Numerous artefacts discovered during excavations in the central Ayeyarwaddy basin testify to a flourishing Pyu-culture between the 2nd century BC and the 9th century AD (Moore 2003: 27ff.). The Pyu kingdom began to suffer reverses from the time of Kolofeng (750-779 AD) and it 'came to a sudden end in 832 AD when rebellious Nanchao tribes plundered its capital and deported thousands of captives to Yunnan Fu' (Hall 1960: 10). Interestingly, the later date coincides with the arrival of the Burmans to the land which came to be known after them; the Pyus were subsequently absorbed into them. Besides Pyu, the Burma chronicles consistently mention of Sak (Thet) and Kanyan among the early ethnic groups of that country (Phayre 1883: 5; Maung Tin and Luce 1960: 2). Qiongdus or Kantus did not remain confined to Southwest China; by the 7th-8th century AD, a sizeable section of their people had spread to the northern parts of Burma. When the Burmans first arrived in Burma, they settled around Kyauksè and, in a short time, spread from Shwebo in the north to Prome in the south, controlling through the Pagan period (1044-1287 AD) the hydraulic system of the central Ayeyarwaddy and the lower Chindwin. Further north, Tagaung had been the Kadu capital, and, from the Chinese annal, *Yuanshi*, we learn that Kadu ('Chientu') power in Burma did not quite wane until at the close of the 13th century, when the Yuan Mongols defeated them.

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'Taigong (Tagaung) city of the Jiandu is the rebels' nest and hole. They relied on it to resist our army. We sent Buddhist monks to warn them, but they were murdered. So we advanced both by water and land, and attacked Taigong city and captured it. Twelve walled towns of Jiandu, Jingchi (Gold teeth), etc. have all submitted' (Ping *Ibid*.: 536).

The Burma version of the account in *The Glass Palace Chronicle* reads as – 'Thus in Tagaung called Sangassaratha, thirty-three kings reigned in unbroken succession... In the time of the last of these kings, Bhinnakaraja, the kingdom of Tagaung, called Sangassaratha, perished under the oppression of the Tarops and the Tareks from the Sein country in the kingdom of Gandhala' (Maung Tin and Luce 1960: 2-3).

Luce (1931: 297) says, 'The capture of Tagaung doubtless occurred in Jan. 1294.' Meanwhile, the Shans were contending against the Burmans for political control over the rice-producing valleys of central Burma. Five years after the fall of Tagaung, the Three Shan brothers destroyed Pagan.

Before we proceed to learn of the Sak-Kadus in the post-Pagan period, it would be worth considering in retrospect the ethno-political situation in Burma in the first millennium AD. The *Maharazaweng* (the Royal Chronicle) refers to an early split in the ruling dynasty of Tagaung, the traditional seat of Kadu. When Abhiraja, the founder king of Tagaung, died, his sons, Kanrazagyi and Kanrazagne, quarrelled among themselves over the possession of the throne, the latter usurping power and compelling his elder brother to migrate westward to Kaletaungnyo (Kale), where he made his son Muducitta king of Pyus, Saks and Kanyans. Sometime afterwards, Kanrazagyi migrated further west to settle at Kyoukpangdong (Kyauppadaung), a hill that lies to the east of the Koladan/ Kacchapa river.

'At this period there were, therefore, according to the Maha-ra-za-weng, two kingdoms – that of Ta-goung and that of the Pyoo, Kan-ran and Thek, both ruled by descendents of

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the Ikshwaksu dynasty of Ka-pee-la-vas-tu. The second of these was subsequently destroyed by repeated attacks from Arakan' (BBG-I 1883: 237).

From Burmese inscriptions of the 12th-13th century AD, we learn that during the Pagan period, the Kadus were in 'the neighbourhood of Tagaung and upper Mu' (Luce *Ibid.*). About Sak settlements, Luce writes, 'One of the three villages of slaves dedicated in the Myazedi inscription of *c.* 1113 A.D. is *Sak Munalon*. It is characteristic of the spelling of this inscription to write *lon* for *lawn*; so the village in question may safely be read "Munalwan of the Sak." The name *Munalwan* is not uncommon in the inscriptions, but the place remains unidentified. In one case it seems to be described as "Munalwan down stream," *sc.* below Pagan; but the reading is scarcely legible at present. One of the peaks of Mt. Turaṅ (Tuywindaung) near Pagan was called, in the Pagan period as now, Mt. *Sak-cuiw*, i.e. "ruling the Sak."' Mt. Sak-cuiw is *Sak-cuḥ-tong* in Marma. Chak clans (*Ngārek* and *Kain-kā vāin* in particular) claim that in former times, their people lived at called Sak-kyng-tong on the Ming river, whence they were called *Min Sak*; in former times, a king named Chophru ruled there. There is also 'the mount of Theks' (Maung Tin and Luce *Ibid.*: 165) in the kingdom of Macchagiri.

Up to the 10th century AD, Arakan was ruled by an Indian line kings with capitals at Dhagnyawaddy and Wethli (Vaiśali, which was to the south of Dhagnyawaddy). The *praśasti* on the north face of Anandachandra's pillar at Shitthaung points to the existence of two Chandra dynasties in Arakan (Johnston 1944: 370f.). Perhaps these kings were not pure Nordics but intermixed with local Tibeto-Burmans; at least two of them, Vrayajap and Sevinirin (Mavukaghatin), have non-Indian names. King Anandachandra lived in the 8th century AD, while Simha Ganapati-śura-chandra and Simha Vikrama-śura-chandra ruled as late as in the 10th century. In the Arakan chronicles, Tsolatheng Tsandya (Chura-

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simha Chandra) was the last ruler of the second Tsandya (Chandra) dynasty, and he died under mysterious circumstances in 319 AE (957 AD).

For a brief period after his death, two Mru (?) chiefs ruled Wethli, while Saks consolidated themselves under Nga-Maung-Kadon further north at Sambowet (Pyinsa) on the Lemro. The legend of the Saingdin falls is associated with this king of the Sak. '... this hilly region was once reigned over by one Nga Maung Kadon, a giantlike man, and all streams and their tributaries had high and low tides, being connected with the Kalapanzin river until Nga Maung Kadon built up the barricades of rocks and thus formed the present waterfall [on the Saingdin Chaung]. It is said that Nga Maung Kadon built up the barricades of rocks in order to prevent the escape of a crocodile which had carried away his wife during his absence' (Ba Thin 1931: 248). The author who has recorded this legend also writes, 'No one could tell what had become of Nga Maung Kadon afterwards' (*Ibid.*). But an old Arakan chronicle makes Nga-Maung-Kadon the posthumous son of Tsolatheng Tsandya, brought up 'among the *Thek* [Sak] tribe, in the hills on the upper course of the river Mayu' (Phayre 1844: 38). What then does this indicate? Probably, the Saks had allied with the Chandra kings and they continued to take the latter's side even after their power in Arakan had waned. Briefly, at the close of the 10th century, there was a period of Sak domination in north Arakan. Sambowet was the Sak capital. From Arakan chronicles, it is learnt that in 380 AE (1018 AD), Nga-Maung-Kadon was defeated and slain in trying to resist a westward expansion of Burmans. *The Glass Palace Chronicle* indicates that the event took place a few decades later.

'One day it was told king Htilaingshin that Thekminkaton was coming troubling the border villages. And the king set apart a great number of fighting men and elephants and horses to hunt Thekminkaton until they caught him. Then

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Shin Arahan [Anawrahta's spiritual teacher] preached before the king and told him of what had been of yore, and he said, "O King, sin not against thy friend who prayed with thee in thy former life."... And Thekminkaton strayed from gratitude. The generals Nga Yidaing and Nga Yinaing were sent with a great host of elephants and horses, and they marched and came to Ngasinkaing. Thekminkaton advanced to meet them; and they defeated him and returned presenting many prisoners of war.... When they had caught Thekminkaton, the two generals cut off his head and came and presented it' (Maung Tin and Luce 1960: 107, 118-19).

Putting these developments together, one might say that with Tsolateng Tsandya's death, the Indian line of Chandra kings in Arakan came to an end. For a brief period, the country was under independent chieftains who vied with each other for domination, and there were also invasions from the east. The first invasion (338 AE, 976 AD), which destroyed Wethli, was allegedly carried out by the Shans (Phayre *Ibid.*) who remained in Arakan for eighteen years. But there is nothing in Shan chronicles to warrant the Arakan claim. With the second invasion (in early 11th century), a distinct line of Tibeto-Burman kings established themselves in Arakan. The invaders who killed Nga-Maung-Kadon were an early wave of Burmans reaching Akyab across the Yoma Mountains; they are the ancestors of Marma and Rakhine. Khettain, the first Arakan king of the dynasty at Pyinsa, was a Burman (Mranma) tributary of Pagan, but to give continuity to their native history, the Arakan chroniclers make him a half-brother of Nga-Maung-Kadon.

What became of the Saks of Sambowet after suffering reverses against the Burmans may be gleaned partly from the Arakan chronicles and partly from the oral tradition of Marma. About the last Tsandya king of Arakan (10th century), the chronicle says, 'The king [Tsolatheng Tsandya; *spelt* Tsula-taing Tsandra]... being troubled with headache he con-

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sulted his wise men, who informed him, that in a former birth he existed as a dog in a country bordering on China; that dying, his skull fell into the forked branch of a tree, which when agitated by the wind pressed upon the skull, and so influenced the living head of him, now born as a man. The only certain cure was to have the skull removed from the tree. The king determined therefore to go to China... There he was honorably received by the king [of *Theng-dive* or *Ta-goung*], and soon commenced a search for the tree containing the dog's skull; this being found, he caused it to be burnt, and built a Pagoda near the spot. The king remaining a long time as if forgetful of his home, his attendants roused his attention by singing the song of his own country, and then at their solicitation he prepared to return. On reaching the sea, the greater part of the boats were lost, and the king was drowned... in the year 319 [956 AD]... a few miles south of Cape Negrais. The chief minister carried the mournful intelligence to the queen; she suspected him of having contrived the disaster, and banished him from the kingdom' (Phayre 1844: 36-7).

A popular Marma legend (Hutchinson 1909: 54-55) tells that King Chandra 'suffered much from vertigo. He called in the medicine men who after consultation informed him that in previous existence he was a dog afflicted with hydrophobia that had been killed and the head stuck on a branch of a tree in China, and that when the wind swayed the branch, he suffered the attack of vertigo.' Immediately, he set out for China with his prime minister, Thamegi; on reaching the place, 'he felled the tree and smashing the dog's skull threw the pieces into the water.' But on the return journey, the boats caught fire and King Chandra perished in the flames. Only Thamegi escaped. The queen became very angry when told of what came to pass and she accused the minister of conspiracy. 'This so disturbed the prime minister that he left the country with his followers and came and lived at Rajabili, on

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the river Sylok, a tributary of the Karnaphuli in Tin-para (three villages), whose settlers are still known as Tipperas. The minister had a younger brother named Tsakma, a rude and uncouth man, who treated him with great disrespect. The elder brother once more moved on and settled in the country now called Tippera and became the founder of the royal family. The younger brother gradually grew in importance and was locally called Tsakma Raja and became the founder of the Chakma tribe' (*Ibid.*). Silok was Chakma headquarters in the mid-18th century.

After the Burman takeover of Sambowet, Saks were dispersed from that place; it is not stated where they went. In the Burma annals, when Kanrazagyi's kingdom was destroyed, Pyu, Kanyan and Sak wandered from place to place, until they 'arrived at Prome, where they quarrelled among themselves, the Pyus remaining in possession of that country and the Kanran [Kanyan] and Thek going west to Arakan' (BBG-I 1880: 238). About half a dozen Burmese inscriptions of 12th-13th century AD locate Sak in the neighbourhood of Pagan; there are also indications to their enmity with the Burmans. Luce (*Ibid.*) says that a common ministerial title in old Burmese was *Mahā-sak-thit* ("Terror of the Sak"). In the early 14th century, Saks were living at Macchagiri and they had grown troublesome again. What subsequently happened to those Saks is linked to the origin of Daingnak. There are some indications to this in an Arakan chronicle and in the Sak's native tradition. Before we go into the details of that tradition, it would be worth noting what the other groups related to Sak-Kadu say about themselves.

Chakpas say that after their kingdom in Awa perished, they migrated to Manipur. In 1294 AD, Tagaung perished under the oppression of the Yuan Mongols and in 1333 AD, Macchagiri was destroyed by an Arakan/ Mranma invasion. It is, therefore, possible that Chakpa migration to the Manipur valley occurred sometime around the close of the 13th

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and the early 14th century. A tale of two brothers, Haleng and Hanjok, is very popular among them, and I shall try to the best of my abilities to retell the same in connection with identical tales of migration found among allied groups like Chak and Daingnak. For the present, it would suffice to say that in course of Chakpa migration, a split occurred. One group crossed the Kabow valley to enter Manipur, and they took them their fire-god whom they worship even to this day in the *Sānglen-pok-pā* ('the house of the first born') at Andro; the other group, unable to keep pace, strayed off. When, sometime afterwards, the Andro group became numerous, they dispersed to other places like Sekmai, Phayeng, Koudruk and Kasong in the Imphal valley.

Other groups related to Sak-Kadu appear to have lived in the upper Chindwin when their ethnic relatives were fighting against the Burmans. Tamans claim that they came from Ôkkat via the Shan state and settled around the Indawgyi Lake. '... a local legend, according to which the lake was once

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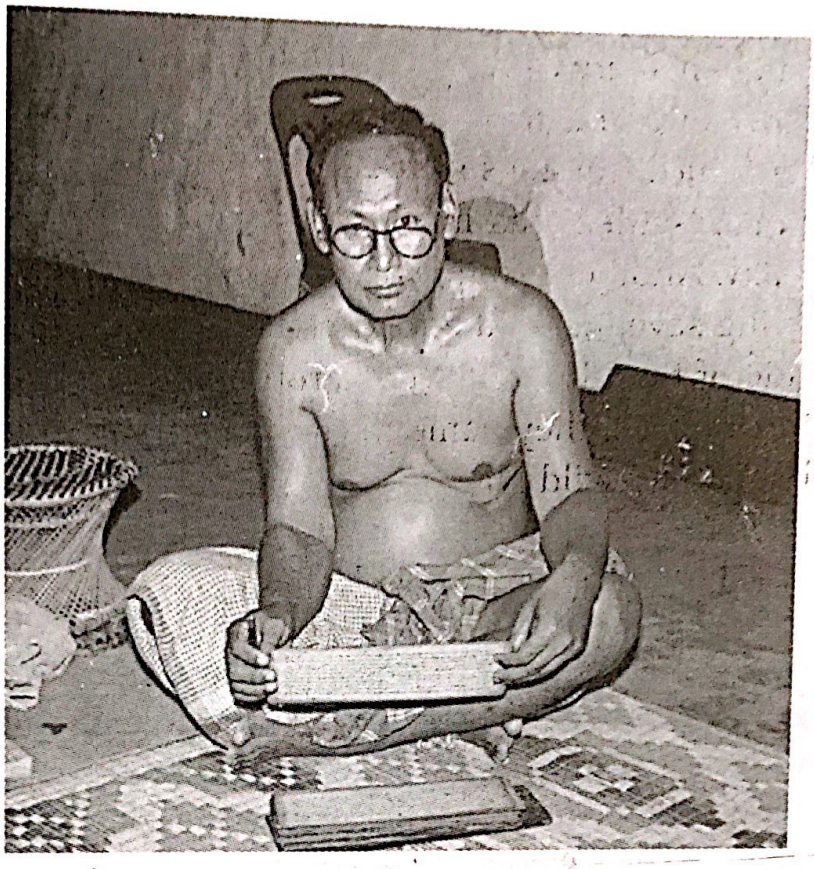

Sānglen-pok-pā, Temple of Fire-god, Andro.

Chakpa priest of Sekmai

inhabited by a people called Tamansai. (Tamansai is the Shan form of Tamanthè or Tamanthi, the alternative name for the Tamans and the name by which their present headquarters is called.) This people incurred the displeasure of the god of the lake, and all but one old woman, who was warned by a dream, were drowned and became fish' (Brown 1911: 308). The disappearance of the original settlers of the Indawgyi Lake is explained by the fact that the Tamans first tried to move westward to the mountains beyond the Nwemauk; if they had had succeeded, they would have been another Sak subgroup, besides Chakpa, to penetrate into Manipur. My Chakpa informants said that people of their own race lived in the east, across the Indo-Burma border but they were unaware of the Taman. It is not known when Tamans tried to migrate westward but there were other Tibeto-Burman groups, Nagas and Kuki-Chins, who repulsed them and compelled them to settle on the west side of the Chindwin river where Tamanthi became the principal village of the tribe.

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Later on, there were 'many Tamans in all villages in Homalin Township and in many others in Panngbyin' (*Ibid.*: 306). Kachinic incursions in course of the 18th century led to new Taman settlements in Mogaung, Kindat, Monya and Mandalay. Another group, very closely allied to Taman is Malin living seventeen miles upstream from Tamanthi on the east side of the Chindwin; this group has 'a tradition that, with the Tamans, they came from the Nantaleik Valley, now inhabited by wild Nagas' (*Ibid.*: 312).

2.4 *Sak and Daingnak in 14th century Burma*

In *The Glass Palace Chronicle*, we read of the fall of Macchagiri. 'Now when Macchagiri heard that Yazathingyan was gone into exile, he rebelled and was in anarchy.' But Yazathingyan is promptly recalled; he then sends 'Tharepyissapate, mayor of the inner palace against Macchagiri with two hundred fighting elephants, two thousand warriors from the forts, colonies, and border villages along the upper country north and south ... but before he reached Macchagiri, so slack were the discipline and strategy, that one night his army was seized with panic and broke; in hot haste they fled, there was none to stop them.' (Maung Thin and Luce 1960: 162-65).

Sometime afterwards, four generals (Yazathingyan, Tharevaddana, Sitturinkabo and Sitturinkathu) set out to attack Macchagiri.

'So they took four thousand elephants, forty thousand horses, and four hundred thousand mighty men; and when they reached Macchagiri they razed to dust the outlying villages and purlieux. The Macchagiri king awaited them on the mount of the Theks; and they compassed him in on every side, and, making their army whole and strong, barred his escape.... At last the ruler of Macchagiri, being sore afraid, came with his son and brother, and an elder who had visited Ceylon, and uttered words of pleading: "I dare not again break my faith. Spare ye my life!"' (*Ibid.*).

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The Saks (Chaks) have a similar tradition. Angmak Phrue of Hta-Htae-Kaung (Kyauktaw, Sittwe) told me that when Mengathi (Mengdi) was king of Arakan, the Saks had their own king at Macchagiri. One day, Macchagiri attacked some villages on the western side of the Yoma Mountains; that greatly angered Mengathi and he would have promptly struck Macchagiri but his general, Razathingyan, cautioned him thus, 'Macchagiri is strong and there are tens and thousands of soldiers in the city. Shouldn't we take him by stealth?' And he proposed sending a messenger to Macchagiri to ask if the king would accept Arakan's sister as wife. So, Macchagiri, not suspecting anything amiss with the offer, came to Arakan where Mengathi's men made him captive. In the meantime, Macchagiri was attacked and taken. King Yangcho had three sons. One of them fled to Burma while the others were made captives but subsequently pardoned and given governorships of Min and Kyan countries. The Macchagiri king was made ruler of Kyauktaw. Ten thousand Sak captives were settled on Aeng and Ro Chaungs and they intermarried with the Rakhines; they were called Daingnak. Angmak Phrue said, 'Before the Burmans came to this country, there were Saks at Sak-kyng-tong. Some of them went to the Chittagong Hills; only a few families now live scattered in Saingdin. Some say that there are Saks beyond the Chin Hills but we know nothing about them.'

A similar version is narrated by Chak (1982: 17-18). 'In the time of Mangthi [Mengdi], son of Arakan king Mang Bhilu [Meng-bhilu], Yengcho was ruler of Saks. His capital was Michagiri [Macchagiri]. Korengri [Mengdi's minister] conferred with the governor of Lamu and together they struck upon a plan to smite Michagiri. Four generals were despatched to Michagiri, each accompanied by a maiden of wondrous beauty. Ahead of them, a messenger was sent to tell Yengcho that King Mangthi wished to give his sister Brahmi to him. Delighted at the offer, Yengcho generously conferred

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riches and an elephant upon the Arakan messenger, Sang Tang, saying that he would accept Brahmi [as wife] on the 12th day of the Tapothay month, 695 AE (February 12, 1333). —By pre-arrangement, an Arakan general, Re-ang, led a guard of ten thousand mercenaries, escorting Brahmi to Michagiri. Yengcho was taken in by Brahmi's physical charm. In the meantime, the Arakan army surrounded the capital. At night, taking opportunity [of the king's distraction], they stormed into the palace, making Yengcho, his three queens, their two sons (Chophru and Chothung) and two daughters captives. The king's eldest son, Chochung, escaped with his followers into Burma and took refuge with the Burman king. Arakan king Mangthi did not punish the captives; he made Yengcho ruler of Kyathkya and the princes Chophru and Chothung governors of Ming and Kang provinces [respectively]; Mangthi married [the elder] Princess Chomekhyain and gave the younger princess to his minister, Korengri. Sometime later, prince Chophru also fled eastwards into Burma.— The Saks were [then] in total disarray and they were moved from their original place and settled on the Aeng and the Ro rivers. It is learnt that they numbered more than a hundred thousand. In this way, the legendary Sak kingdom perished in 1334 AD. At a later time, around 1364 AD, the youngest prince [Chothung] went to the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Other Saks followed him or his general and they reached Yangcha and Gengowa in the Lama subdivision. Many Saks who failed to find their prince returned to Arakan.' (*Translation mine.*)

A Chak tale of migration to the Chittagong Hill Tracts is retold by Chaudhury (1931: 521). 'When the Chaks began to cook their curry with *Chingri* fish [shrimp] they were asked to follow the Chakmas who were ready before hand. But as the *Chingri* fish, which turns red by cooking, could not be made white, they thought that the cooking was not complete as the fish still contained blood, so they cooked the curry on and on but the fish did not turn bloodless, i.e. white.

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The Chakmas seeing their delay left them behind and they settled in these places.'

In the Census of 1931, there were 693 Saks in Burma, and with about 100 families then living in CHT, the group would be a remnant of the old Sak colony at Chakyadong (*Sak-cuḥ-tong*). The tale is also recalled by Chakpa and Daingnak. For the Chakpa version, I am indebted to Heikrujam Angsousana of Andro; he spoke in Meithei, dropping in one or two Chakpa words that he remembered, and without the help of Somakanta Singh, my Meithei friend, I would not have known the tale.

Formerly, Chakpas lived in Awa. But one day, war broke out and they left that country. In those days, there were two strong men among Chakpas, Haleng and Hanjok, who were brothers, and so the people made them leaders. Hanjok was asked to carry fire-god, the guardian deity of Chakpa. After wandering for several days, they arrived at a place where they saw people selling shrimps. Hanjok's men cooked the shrimps they bought and they ate them with *kok* ('boiled rice'). But Haleng's shrimps would not turn white; so, thinking that there was still blood in the shrimps, his men went on cooking. Fretful of the delay, Hanjok said, 'O brother, look only for the headless *usih* (banana plant with the top shoot cut) as you come, that you may know the way we went.' And as they went, they cut the top shoot of every banana plant they found on the way with the *kādāng* ('knife'). But rains came down and new top shoots grew quickly, and so Haleng's men, who could not find the traces, were lost. Some say that they still live in Awa. Hanjok's men in the meantime settled at Andro, from where they later branched off to other villages of Phayeng, Sekmai, Koudruk and Kasong. Their fire-god is still worshipped at Andro.

Chak and Marma traditions point to Sak migration to the Chittagong Hill Tracts between the late 14th and the early 15th century. Löffler (1964: 110) says that during the 15th-

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16th century, the Saks established their domination in the southern Hill Tracts. In one Arakan chronicle, the *Dhagnawadi Areḥdopũ* (1881: 54-55), it is said that a wave of Saks crossed over to Chittagong in the early 15th century. Mangrekyaz, son of Maungswe, the Sak king of Maungzamru became embroiled with the Arakan king but the latter was too powerful for the Sak ruler. In 760 AE (1418 AD), the Saks were routed and compelled to immigrate to the Chittagong district, where the Mohammedan governor allowed them to settle in twelve villages. In Ghosh (1909: 21), the Sak city, Macchagiri, is called 'the Chakma capital,' while Yangzo's name is Aryanised to Arunyuga, pronounced *Arunjug* [orundʒug] in Bengali.

The destruction of a Sak colony in the early 14th century is briefly noted by Spearman (BBG-II 1880: 9-10): '[Mengdi's] dominions again being attacked in various quarters by the Shans, the Burmese, the Talaings [Mons] and the Thek tribe in the north, the king went to the Mahamuni temple, and, depositing his rosary before the idol, vowed to rid the country of its enemies. In pursuance of this vow, he marched

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◄
Chakpa woman

►
Chak woman

in person in the year 674 (1312 AD) to repel the Talaings, who had possessed themselves of the county south of the town of Thandwai (*Sandoway*). His uncle Udzana-na-gyee, was sent with an army to attack Puggan (*Pagan*). Tsaleng-gathu, his brother-in-law, advanced into Pegu, and the general Radza-theng-kyan was sent against the Thek tribe. The city of Puggan (*Pagan*) was taken, the Talaings were overawed, and the expedition against the Thek, after being once repulsed, was eventually crowned with success.'

As for the Daingnaks, we find them first mentioned in 695 AE (1333 AD) in connection with the fall of Macchagiri. The event, as narrated in *Dhagnawadi Areḥdopũ* (1881: 27), is identical with the version retold by Chak (1985: 17f.). To avoid repetition, I shall refer only to the incident, leaving out the romantic strain in the Yangzo-Brahmi episode. It is said that in 695 AE (1333 AD), Mengdi's minister, Tsangrai (Korengri in Chak version) took Yangzo, the Sak king of Macchagiri, and his three sons (Tsauzung, Tsauphru and Tsautu) captives. They were released after Tsangrai had extracted of

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Chak male

the Sak twenty-five elephants, besides plenty of gold and silver. Yangzo was made governor of Kyamutha over the Kaphya tribe while Tsauzung and Tsauphru were sent to rule the Kyaw and the Ming provinces. Ten thousand Saks were rounded up at different places along the Aeng and the Yo Chaungs; their older identity, သက် *Sak*, was dropped and they were called ဒိုင်းနက် Daingnak.

The Aeng (Ann) Chaung is one of the principal rivers of Kyaukpu district; it rises in the Yoma Mountains and runs by the Aeng village into the Bay of Bengal. As for the Ro (Yo) Chaung, it is a tributary of the Dhalet ('Dalak' in Marma), another principal river of Kyaukpu, flowing past Ro (Ro) village in the north of the Aeng Township. Today, the inhabitants are mainly Rakhines and Burmans; a small number of Khyang have their old villages towards the northeast, in the Arakan Yomas. Dalak-Dhalet and Daingnak-Daingnet suggest a possible matching and, given the Daingnak's settlement in the Aeng-Dalak valley, it indicates to the Daingnak being the 14th century Sak settlers of that region. At that time, they were probably the southernmost section of the Sak. One kinship group of Tanchangya is called *Daingnyā gosā*.

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There is no mention of the Daingnak in extant records between 1333 and 1841 but their oral tradition contains two interesting names, the one Miru, which is a place name, and the other Mangsui, a personal name. Joydhar Chakma (Tanchangya, MuG) of Ratanpur told me the first tale while the second is frequently heard but in this case, my informant was, Suratchoga Tanchangya, ex-VCP of Damdep-I.

Once upon a time, a young man who was pale and sickly, dreamt of becoming king, but he was always mocked by his friends. 'You are so weak. How can you think of becoming a king?' But he insisted that some day he would surely be their king. 'Then you've to prove it now.' And they asked him pluck the rainbow from the sky. The god of the forest who overheard their conversation visited him in a dream and instructed him with these words, 'Go you tomorrow to Miru to find there an old woman who weaves clothes by day and night.' So he went to the woman and brought back a very long piece of cloth with the rainbow colours woven in it, and he showed it to his friends. 'Look, I've bound the rainbow with this cloth. From now on, you will see it in the sky only after I unfurl the cloth.' And they believed him, because they had never seen so colourful a piece of cloth before. Later, when he became king, he divided the cloth among the women of his tribe. And that is how Tanchangya women came to possess so beautiful clothes.

The native has no idea of the whereabouts of Miru. When I asked my informant about it, he said, 'Maybe, it's some place in Burma. Long ago, our ancestors lived in that country.' A place named Myedu lies to the southeast of Tagaung.

When Phayre wrote of the Daingnak, he made an interesting remark: 'They call themselves *Kheim-bá-nago*. Of their descent I could learn nothing...' (1841: 683). Löffler wondered if it was a clan-name ("Sippename?"). Like the Chakma, the Tanchangya believes that he came originally from Champanagar, but while the Chakma bluntly assigns his

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origin to Bihar in central India (because he considers himself a Śakya of Kapilavastu descent), the Tanchangya is naïve enough not to know its whereabouts.

If *Kheim-bá-nago* is Champanagar minus the Buddhist associations that Chakmas bring into their origin, and also if one looks into Sak-Kadu settlements in the 12th-13th century, then it could not have been far from the Kadu capital. There is one Tsampaynago between Ava and Tagaung. Captain Hannay, who, in journeying from Ava to Hukong Valley on the Southeast Frontier of Assam, reached the place on December 1, 1835, wrote that not far from the police *chowki* of Tsampaynago was 'situated about seventy miles above Ava...Old Tsampaynago Myo... at the mouth a small river which flows from Mogout and Kyatpen, and falls into the Irrawaddy immediately opposite the modern choki of that name' (Pemberton 2005: 200-02).

The Tanchangya tale of migration is similar to that of the Chak and the Chakpa. One day, Mangsui and Angsui, the two brothers, set out in search of a land where the Axa (Burman) king would not oppress them. After wandering for several days, they reached the edge of a vast forest and rested there for a while. Mangsui's men caught tiny shrimps from a stream ('*chharā*') and ate them with great relish. His brother caught fatter shrimps from the river ('*gāng*'). As these would not turn white, he thought that the shrimps had too much blood in them but was ashamed to throw away the lot. He therefore asked his men to put more firewood and increase the heat. On seeing the delay, the other party prepared to leave, Mangsui telling his younger brother, 'O brother, the path is long and the forest deep. Unless we start now, we may not reach the other end by nightfall. As we go, we'll cut the heads of the banana plant so that you may find the way we went.' By the time they were done with the cooking, it was dark, and so Angsui and his men stayed where they were. It rained continually for the next few days, and new shoots

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grew, and Angsui's men finding not the traces left by the other party were stranded at the other end of the forest.

Mangsui, also called Maisang in Chakma and Tanchangya oral traditions, is Maungswe in *Dhagnawadi Areḥ dopũ*, which, however, makes Mangrekyaz, son of Maungswe, the leader of the group immigrating into the Hill Tracts. Things become complicated at this stage. For several years, Arakan was without a legitimate ruler. 'The Arakanese annals at this time narrate how the country was for many years in great confusion, and that usurpers [Sithabeng, Myinsaingri, etc.], one after another, became the rulers. At length, the native king, Meng Soamwum was driven from his kingdom [in 1406 AD] by an army sent by Pyinsing Mengswâ, called also Meng Khamaung, king of Burma, which took possession of the capital, then Laungkyet. – Meng Soamwum fled to Bengal, an event that led to a close connection between the two countries, and which lasted for more than two centuries.... During that time the king of Bengal was attacked by the king of Dehli, and the exile rendered good service to his protector' (Phayre 1883: 77).

After driving out Mengswamum, the king of Ava nominated his brother-in-law (under the title Anawrahta) as governor of Arakan; in the meantime, Razadarit, the Mon king of Pegu, invaded Arakan and killed the Burman governor but could not retain the territory for long. In 1410, it was again occupied by the Burmans, and Razadarit, who though detained in Martaban by threats of invasions from Ayutthya, Chiangmai and Kampengpet, sent in a large force, which occupied Sandoway and other parts north of it, compelling the Burman governor to abandon Arakan. For more than a decade after that, Arakan continued to be assailed by Mons and Burmans. In 1430, after twenty-five years of exile in Bengal, Mengswamum regained his throne with the help of the Sultan ('Thuratan') of Bengal; he assumed the title of 'Kalima Shah' and issued coins in Arabic. Arakan was re-

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lieved of Mon and Burman interference but from 1430 to 1459, its kings were tributaries to Bengal.

In the early 15th century, a section of the north Arakan Saks allied with the Baruas (Bengali Buddhists) of Chittagong and, taking opportunity of the confusion in Arakan, they tried to establish themselves around the upper Koladan but were vanquished and driven into the Hill Tracts. The Daingnaks probably allied with Saks and Bengalis; their oral tradition mentions of the cruelties they suffered in a war against Axa. They subsequently migrated to the Matamuri valley, while another section of the Sak, the Min Sak (ancestors of Chak), was left behind at Sak-cuḥ-tong. In Tanchangya's oral tradition, the people who entered the Hill Tracts were *Sāppye*. 'In the year 1418, a large section of Sappye or Arakanised Sak arrived at Alikadam, moving through a deep forest. At that time, the governor of Chittagong, Jamal-ud-din, allowed them to settle in twelve villages. Those twelve villages were called *Bāra Tāluk* [twelve *taluks*] and the villages came to be known after the twelve *gosās* [kinship groups] that lived there...' (Tanchangya 2000: 9). (*Translation mine*). The Daingnak term for Burma is Axa, which would mean Ava, and in their native traditions, including *Chadigāng Chhārā Pālā*, the Burman king is called *Axā rājā* (literally, 'king of Ava'). We have already seen that the Chakpa term for the Burman king is *Āwāningthou*, in which *ningthou* is Meithei for 'king.' In the *Dhagnawadi Areḥdopũ*, Maungswe is the Sak king of Maungzamru. Ghosh (1909: 24) writes 'Chakma king.' Kormi (1940: 28), the author of Chakma *Rājnāmā*, calls him *Maisāng* and says that *Māngsui* (Maungswe) is his Marma name. According to the last mentioned source, the emigrants were led to the Hill Tracts not by Maisang but his by sons, Radongsa, Kadamthongza and Tainsureswari.

The appellation *Tanchangyā* is ascribed by the native to Tain Chhari, the first place they settled on their arrival in the Hill Tracts. Löffler (*Ibid.*: 110) says that in the 17th century,

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the Sak migrated to the valley ('den Tälern'), the Dengnak to the mountains to the south of the Marma area ('den Bergen des südlischen Gebietes von Marma') and the Mru in the middle of the Hill Tracts ('die mittleren Hill Tracts') of the Karnaphuli area. He also says that in the 15th and 16th c., ... the southern Hill Tracts was under the dominion of the Buddhist Sak who extended their influence over the native mountain dwellers ('einheimische Bergbevölkerung'), Dengnak or Tongcengya. And according to Brauns and Löffler (1990: 35), '"Tong-cen" is the Marma word for "mountain clans".' But Tain Chhari (a tributary of the Matamuri) is *Tein Chaung* in Marma, and in Marma practice, ethnonyms are traced to streams near the dwelling habitats. There is no mention of Daingnak in Arakan annals after 1333 AD, but from different versions of the fall of Macchagiri, one finds that the terms 'Sak' and 'Daingnak' are interchangeable. On their part, Tanchangyas claim that sometime after their settlement in the Matamuri valley, a section of their people went westward and became Chakma. 'In former times, Tanchangyas and Chakmas were one people. When Dhabaṇa became king, a new people called Chakma were formed...' (Tanchangya 2000: 12; *translation mine*). They also claim that in former times, their people were divided into twelve kinship groups (*gosā; gozā* in Chakma); today, only seven *gosās* are found within the ethnic group. The claim is not unfounded. Kormi (*Ibid.*: 75-76) traces the link of some Chakma clans with Tanchangya: 'The *Kārbbuwā Chege* [head of *Kārwā gosā*] had three sons – Dheya, Nadengña and Angña ... Of his second wife was born Dhungña, whose son Mendar headed the Mendar clan... from the other three sons emerged the three clans *Dheyā gutthi, Nādengña gutthi* and *Angña gutthi*. Of these, the *Dheyā gutthi* is found in old records, the *Angña gutthi* occurs in extant descriptions, while the *Nādengña gutthi* is lost... Dheya's son, Chhalya, born of his second wife... is merged in the *Chhālyā gutthi* of the *Mulimā gozā*.'

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In another case, which I am aware of, a small section of the *Muo gosā* of Tanchangya is merged with Chakma. About fifty-five families of the *Dāllowā* clan now live at Nalkata (in Pecharthal Block under Kanchanpur Subdivision of North Tripura); they affiliate themselves with the *Barbua* (*Barua*?) *gozā* of Chakma and say that about seventy years ago, their fathers came from Dighinala (CHT). When exactly this section had merged with Chakma is difficult to say; old members of the clan, aged 60-65 years, were all born at Nalkata and have known themselves as Chakmas of the *Barbua gozā*.

About the origin of the *Barbua gozā*, it is said that it was formed out of families originally belonging to the Barua group that gave early kings to Chakmas; it is the largest kinship group within Chakma and almost sections of all clans of the other Chakma *gozās* are found within it. A different version of origin is given by Ghosh (1909: 61), who says that in former times, Baruas provided clientele service to Chakma kings. But as that created problems particularly during the time of the Pagla Raja (who was himself a Barua), Chakma *dewāns* and *tālukdārs* created a new *gozā* (to perform the said task) with a hundred and fifty families drawn from the existing *gozās*. My Chakma informants attributed the largeness of the group to a popular tradition. It is said that the even after Pagla Sattwa's ('the mad king') death, Chakma *rājās* held him in awe because of the magical powers he wielded in his lifetime; so, to keep his spirit pacified, they waived taxes from families owing allegiance to his kinship group, the *Baruā gozā*. Another Chakma tradition states that in former times, a certain *Barbua gozā* Dewan was in possession of spiritual powers and he once cured an ailing Chakma *rājā*, who was so pleased with the former that he ordered that henceforth no *Barbua gozā* family would be required to pay house tax. The economic provision attracted other Chakmas and, in subsequent times, many families abandoned their original kinship groups to get inside the *Barbua gozā*.

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The Tanchangya always refers to the Chakma as *Ānokyā*. Literally, *ānokyā* means 'people living in the west,' and though Chakmas today are mostly settled in the northern and the central parts of the Hill Tracts, in the 15th-17th century, they lived on the plains of Chittagong, west of Tanchangya settlements in the Tain-Matamuri valley. The *Rājnāmā* (Kormi 1940: 35) says that four chiefs of four kinship groups – *Dhurjyā* (*Bogā gozā*), *Kurjyā* (*Tanyā gozā*), *Pirābhāngā* (*Dhāmei gozā*) and *Dhābānā* (*Mulimā gozā*) evolved the Chakma polity in the Chittagong Hills. A fifth kinship group, the *Baruā gozā*, which formerly gave *rājās* (the last of whom was the Pagla Raja) to the Saks of Matamuri, was excluded from political power-sharing with the four *gozās* in the 17th century. Today, there are forty-one kinship groups within Chakma; many of them subsequently emerged when sections of diverse ethnic groups amalgamated into them.

2.5 *Chakma solidarity and Daingnak opposition to it*

In the *Rājnāmā*, it is said that prince Bijoygiri ('Bichagri' in Tanchangya), wishing to expand his kingdom, made the king of Tippera and the zamindars of Bengal his allies, and led an expedition against the Mag kingdom (Rowang). The Tippera king gave him Uchai ('*Hai-chai*') troops and the zamindars some Bengali mercenaries (Kormi 1940: 18). In the same account, Bijoygiri's descent is traced to the Buddhist Śakyan line of Champaknagar kings. Radhaman is his childhood friend and commander-in-chief while another commander of the alliance is 'Kunjadhan Riang who had won over the *Riang* and *Murung* nations' (*Ibid.*: 19; *translation mine*). Ethnically, Kunjadhan is Bru (Mrung), and Riang, as already mentioned, is one of the several Bru clans. Historically, Tipperas achieved their domination over the Bru in the 15th-16th century AD.

The expedition against Rowang was carried out successfully, after which Bijoygiri defeated Khyangs, Kukis and Burmans. Literally, 'Bijoygiri' means 'Conqueror of Hills.' At the

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(*Left*) *Chakma couple.* (*Right*) *Chakma female playing the khengrong.*

end of the expedition, Radhaman returned to Champaknagar while Bijoygiri stayed back in the newly annexed lands for some time. The details match with those in the *Chādigāng Chhārā Pālā*. Later, when Bijoygiri decided to return to Champaknagar, news reached him of his father's death. In the ballad, his woes multiplied when he was told that his younger brother, Udaygiri, had usurped the throne. Deeply smitten by the news of usurpation, Bijoygiri and his men decide not to return to Champaknagar. In the ballad, his mood thus depicted:

Champaknagar ār na zei	*(We'll) never go to Champaknagar*
Ami Sāppyekule phiri zei.	*We'll (now) return to Sāppyekul.*

Sāppye or *Sāppre* means 'Sak people' or 'Sak nation' (*pre* or *pye* is a corruption of the Marma term, ပြည် *prañ* (*pyañ*), for 'nation' or 'country'). Tanchangyas use it even today in the ethnic sense; the kinship groups, *Monglā gosā*, *Melong gosā*,

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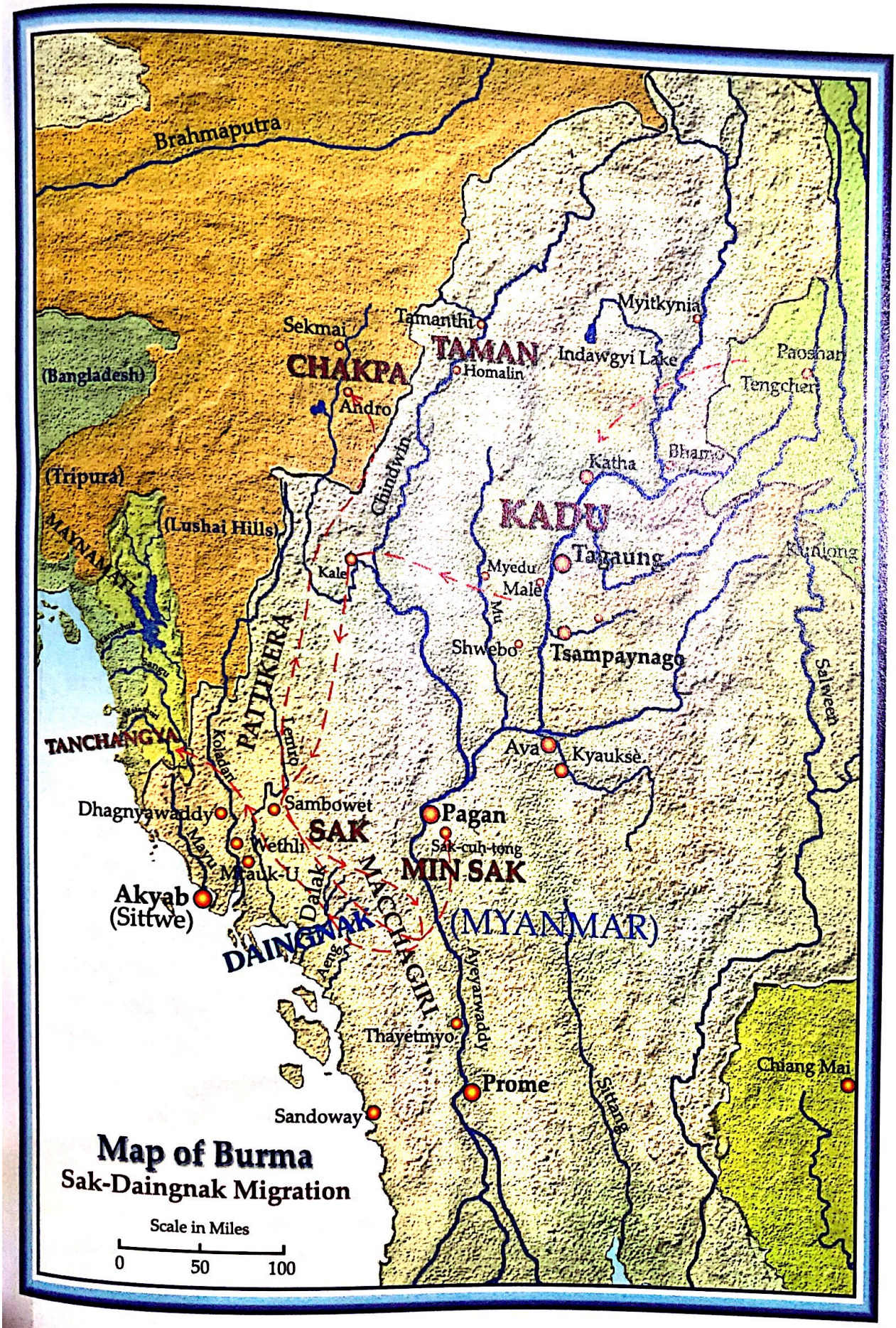

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Daingnyā gosā and *Angya gosā* still refer to themselves as *Sāppye or Sāppye-kulyā*, the latter term meaning 'of the Sak nation'; their songs are known as *Sāppye-git*, 'the song of the Sak people.' Thus, in one form or the other, the name *Sak* or *Asāk* has survived among ethnic groups descended from the Sak (Thet) of ancient Burma.

What subsequently happened to Bijoygiri and his men is worthy of note. His soldiers took wives from the local population while the prince himself married an 'Ari [Marma?] woman of noble birth' (*Ibid.*: 20). The *Rājnāmā* (*Ibid.*: 20-24) remarks, 'Children born of the admixture adopted the customs of both parents and, a new race [Chakma] emerged.... – The Śakyan race [in which Buddha Śakyamuni was born] was called "*Śāk*" or "*Chhāk*" by the Mags [Marma]. The royal line was called *Śakmang, mang* meaning king, whence the *Śākyan* royal family. But the dwellers of Champaknagar were designated *Chāmpā* or finally *Chākmā* by Bengali brahmins... – [On the contrary,] the section of the tribe that stayed back at Champaknagar [a place about 25kms from Agartala, West Tripura] merged with the Tipperas when the latter occupied their capital.' (*Translation and parenthesis mine*).

Mills (1931: 518) believed that Chakmas were '...undoubtedly in the main descendants of Maghi [Marma] women and Mogul soldiers... In appearance they resemble Bengalis and their features show little trace of their partially Mongol origin. The dress of the well-to-do is Bengali...' Earlier, Hutchinson (1909: 21 & 25) wrote, 'The Chakmas are undoubtedly of Arakanese origin. They immigrated into the Chittagong Hills District where they intermarried largely with the Bengalis whose language they speak.... The connection of the Chakma race with the Kshatriyas from Champanagar, the capital of Anga in Bhagalpur, is a myth, and the origin must be traced to unions between the soldiers of Nawab Shaista Khan, the governor of Lower Bengal, under the Emperor Aurungzeb about 1670, and Arakanese immigrants; and subsequently

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with the hill women.' This view of Chakma being an intermixed group of Marma and Mughals is essentially that of the Marma; the same is also fostered by Tanchangya who say that in former times, they avoided marital alliances with *Ānokyā* (their term for Chakma), because the latter degenerated by adopting the ways of the *Moglā rāsā* (Mughal king). Privately, the Chak too maintains this view.

We have already seen that a line of Buddhist kings from Bengal, the Chandras, ruled Arakan up to the 10th century AD and that the Saks had allied with them. One Buddhist source, Lama Taranath (Chimpa & Chattophadhaya 1970: 330) says that Buddhism spread in the Kuki country 'after the invasion of Magadha by the Turuṣkas.' In 1197 AD, Ikhtiyar-ud-din destroyed Nalanda, and hundreds of Buddhist monks then immigrated to Bengal. Around the same time, the Pandit Vihara of Chittagong emerged as a pre-eminent seat of Buddhist (Mantryana and Vajrayana) learning, and it continued to be so for more than a century. The kingdom of Pattikera, which existed to the close of the 13th century AD, had Buddhist rulers who were close allies of Pagan. In the 15th century, Bengal Buddhism declined and there was a resurgence of Hinduism.

Around the same time, Tipperas embraced Hinduism. Arakan kings, on the contrary, continued to be Buddhists, officially Theravadins but favouring the esoteric practices of Vajrayana Buddhism. With ethnic emigrations from Arakan, Buddhism entered the Hill Tracts. In the meantime, a section of Bengali Buddhists of the Chittagong line had amalgamated with Marma to emerge as Barua (called *Bruwā* in Rakhine). According to the *Rājnāmā* (Kormi 1940: 32), a Barua commander of Tainsureswari fought against the Arakan army in the Tain-Matamuri battle of the early 15th century. From that commander originated the *Baruā gozā* of the Chakma, and the line of rulers descended from the head of this kinship group dominated the other kinship groups up to the

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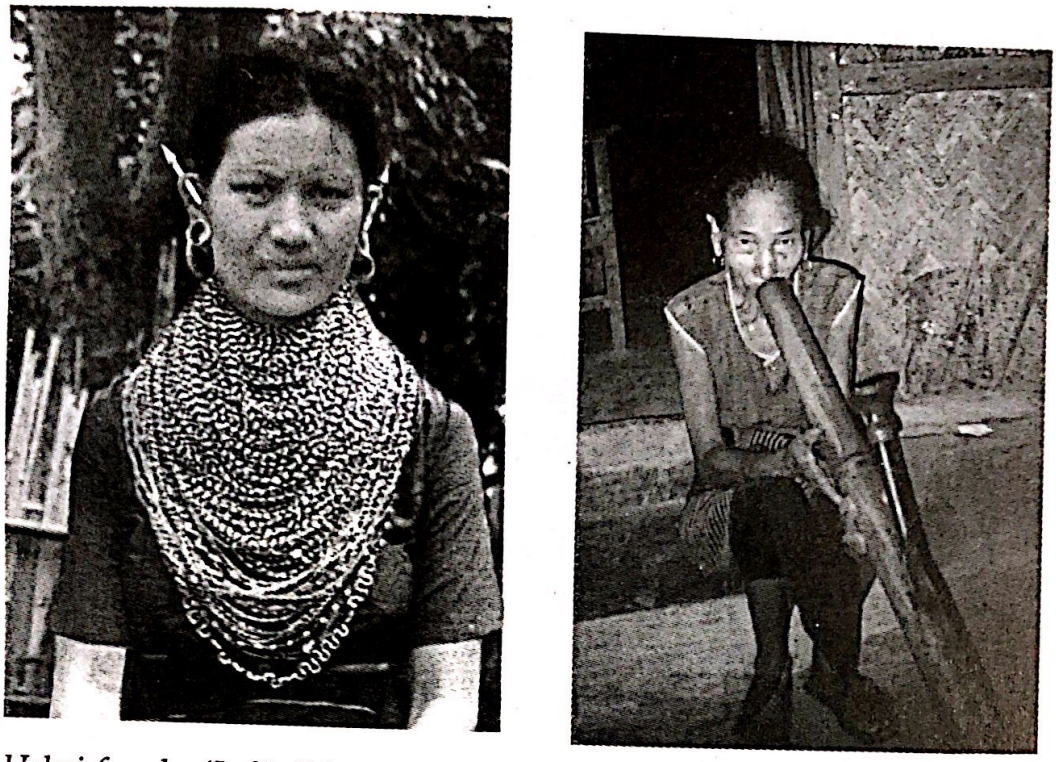

Uchai female. (Left) Colourful beads are used to decorate the neck. The Bru female, in addition to beads also wears silver coins for necklaces. The ear pin is similar to the one worn by Halam women. (Right) Smoking the dābā.

early 17th century, the Pagla Raja being the last of the Barua kings of native fame.

In course of the 16th century, Tipperas fought with Arakan kings over the possession of Chittagong; not infrequently, a third party, the Mohammedan ruler of Bengal, entered the fray. Tippera king Bijoy Manikya (1532-64) is known to have waged successful wars against Jayantiya and Bengal, wresting from them parts of Sylhet, Noakhali and the northern parts of Chittagong. According to an Arakan annal, a 'Sak' (Tippera?) retreat occurred in 1544: 'While Meng Beng was thus engaged [with Mons, Shans and Burmans], an enemy had appeared from the north called in the Arakanese history the Thek or Sâk king, by which term the Râjâ of Tippera appears to be meant. He had penetrated to Ramu, but was now driven back, and Meng Beng again occupied Chittagong' (Phayre 1883: 79-80). Later, in 1584, Amar Manikya led an expedition against Arakan but his army was badly routed;

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Meng Phalaung despatched a punitive Arakan force after the retreating Tipperas; it occupied Ramu and Chittagong, then, marching further north, ransacked Udaipur, the Tippera capital. During the Arakan assault, Amar Manikya had retreated to the Manu valley (in North Tripura) but unable to bear the shame of defeat, he committed suicide. Then 'Meng Phalaung [son of Meng Beng], who was king of Arakan until 1593, held all Chittagong, parts of Noakhali, and of Tippera' (*Ibid.*: 173). Nevertheless, Tipperas continued to dominate in the northern part of the Hill Tracts, from the Feni to the Karnaphuli, until as late as the mid-18th century, when Silok became the Chakma headquarters.

Ethnically then the Chakma's own system is rooted in the Chittagong Hills; it emerged when a group of Saks (and a section of Sappye-Daingnak) amalgamated with Tippera, Bru and Bengali Buddhist (Barua) during the 15th-17th century, overcoming narrow ethnic boundaries constructed on socio-cultural and linguistic bases. Indo-Aryan was the language of this newly emerged group and Buddhism their creed. Chakma *Rājnāmā* (*Ibid.*: 24*fn.*) points to the ethnogenesis: 'As Chakmas have assimilated into other groups, so too have Mags [Marmas], Tipperas, Riangs, etc. amalgamated with the Chakma.' Politically, of course, it took them another century to emerge as territorial masters of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. One Barua chief, Sattuwa Barua (popularly known as *Pāglā Rājā*, 'the mad king') ruled Chakma in the early 17th century, between 1607 and 1614 AD (Chakma 1996: 157). He was the last ruler of Chakma in the Bengali Buddhist line. In *c.* 1608, Taranath wrote, 'His [Bālasundara's] sons Chandravāhana *now* resides in Rā-khaṅ, Atitavāhana rules Ca-ga-ma...' (Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970: 331). [*Italics mine.*] The Pagla Raja's eccentricities made him increasingly unpopular among the hill people and he was killed during an uprising. One Tanchangya writer says, 'On examining the chronicle of Chakma kings [the *Rājnāmā*], it is discerned that from

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King Bijagri to King Sattuwa (Pagla Raja) the rulers were all Rowangya [of the Arakan line] while kings from Dhabana to the present Chakma Raja are all Ānaks or from Agartala [capital of Tripura]. When Dhabana became king, he reformed the Chakma society...' (Tanchangya 1885: 6. *Translation mine*).

About the Pagla Raja, Hutchinson (1909:22) says that he 'was credited with supernatural powers and was supposed to purify himself from sin, by removing his inside, washing and replacing the same. The curiosity of his wife was aroused, and when spying upon him she was discovered by the Chief, who in rage slew her and the whole family. His eccentricities and tyranny grew so great that his people finally assassinated him, and fearing the consequences removed themselves further north and settled in the neighbourhood of Rangonea on the Karnaphuli river.'

This version of wife-slaying is not vouchsafed by Chakma native tradition, according to which, after the death of the mad king, his widow, Kattuwa Rani, fled to Fatikchhari, taking along with her two sons and a daughter. The daughter, Amangali, was married to a minister of the Tippera king; four sons were born of the couple – Dhurjya, Kurjya, Pirabhanga and Dhabana; they became *Dewāns* of four Chakma kinship groups, *Bogā gozā*, *Tanyā gozā*, *Dhāmeï gozā* and *Mulimā gozā* respectively. A fifth kinship group, *Baruā gozā*, as already mentioned, existed at that time but was excluded by the other four *gozās* from political power-sharing. After sometime, the Kattuwa Rani returned to the Hill Tracts, with Tippera enforcements, and proclaimed herself Chakma *rā ni*. After her death, her sons (legitimate heirs of the Barua line) ascended the throne but they were swiftly murdered, one after another, by a conspiring noble. A period of chaos followed during which nobles fought against each other for the "throne"; finally, Amangali's sons took matters into their own hands, and following a consensus among them, Dhabana became Chakma *rājā*. The *Rājnāmā* (Kormi *Ibid.*: 35) says

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that Marmas had helped Dhabana to become *rājā*, after which he endeavoured to foster solidarity among different ethnic groups living in his territory – 'Chakma, Tippera, Kuki, Tanchangya, Riang, Murung [Mru?], Khyang, Mag, etc.' by 'bestowing appropriate titles on their chiefs' (Kormi *Ibid*.: 35).

On Dhabana's death, his sons, Dharmya and Mangalya, reigned in succession; thereafter, we enter a period wherein Chakma chiefs take on the Mohammedan patronymic *Khan*. During the time of the first of these chiefs, Subal Khan, the Mughals pressed on the Chakma from the west. In the reign of Fateh Khan, younger brother of Subal Khan, Chakmas and Mughals battled over the possession of the plains but the latter pushed them into the recesses of the hills. After a brief period, peace came to prevail between them, and in the early 18th century, Chakmas acquired trade monopoly between the hills and the plains against an annual tribute in cotton bales to the Mughal administrator of Bengal. The *Rājnāmā* (*Ibid*.: 37) also says that Fateh Khan was 'favourably disposed towards the Muslim religion.'

These developments had far-reaching consequences for Sappye-Daingnak (who by that time had probably acquired the appellation 'Tanchangya'). In the 18th century, Tanchangyas lived in the Rainkhyoung valley, mostly in the upper parts around the place where the tributary river merged with the Karnaphuli. Among the tribes of CHT, they are closest to Chakma (even considered a subgroup of the latter); both speak allied dialects of Indo-Aryan. The oldest specimen of Daingnak vocabulary, which Phayre (1841: 712) collected from the upper Mayu, clearly shows that in the early 19th century, Tanchangyas were using a Bengali-base as everyday idiom. Yet, a conflictful relation with Chakma is evident in the final quarter of the 18th century, caused by social disjunction, after *Anokyās* ('the westerners,' i.e. Chakmas) became a 'degenerated' people by mixing with the Mughals. One native writer (Tanchangya 2000: 12 and 14-15) observes

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that while Tanchangyas retained the traditional customs of their ancestors, Chakmas went astray by associating themselves with the Mughals, their kings then adopting Muslim customs. At the close of the 18th century, 'the disgruntled' Tanchangya opposed Chakma solidarity. (See p. 94. *Also see infra* pp. 190-91.)

2.6 *Language*

Tanchangyas speak a distinctly eastern variety of Indo-Aryan, which despite falling in line with the Southeastern (Chittagong) dialect of Bengali, retains several features of Tibeto-Burman, viz., dentalisation of palatal and palato-alveolar obstruents, aspiration of word initial [t], substitution of [r] by [j] in the environment of the palatal vowel [i], and occurrence of tone contrasts with changes in laryngeal and supra-laryngeal settings of phonemes. Between Chakma and Tanchangya, they now share a common idiom; yet, Chakmas claim not to understand much of the Tanchangya speech. That primarily is due to the distinct phonological modifications found in Tanchangya, within which exists several kinship-based sub-dialects. The *Kārwā gosā* (KG) sub-dialect is closet to Chakma, and it helps to understand the extreme modifications going into *Muo gosā* (MuG), *Daingnyā gosā* (DG) and *Melong gosā* (MeG) sub-dialects; *Monglā gosā* (MoG) differs slightly from MeG while the *Lāngbāsā* (LB) idiom is now similar to that of MuG. There are indications that once *Angya gosā* (AG) had its own sub-dialect but it now incorporates several KG, DG and MuG features. The 1841 specimen probably came from a *Kārwā gosā* informant.

2.6.1 *Orthography*

The written character is the closest to Burmese, which had in its turn originated from Mon. It quite likely that Mon influence also went into Daingnak script, which was probably adopted in the 14th century, after a section of the Maccha-

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giri Saks was subjugated by Marma. The inherent vowel of Tanchangya is *ā*, as in Chakma, not *a* as in Burmese. By comparison, the Chakma script is more removed from Burmese than Tanchangya is. There is no evidence now to suppose that this script had acquired general usage in the past. It is still unknown what script, if any, was used by Sak-Kadus. Chakpas of Manipur are familiar with the old Meithei script, which evolved not earlier than in the 16th century; the present-day Chaks do not recall knowing a script older than that the Burmese script. And while the Daingnak's original

Tanchangya script

kichimyākā *big* [xa]	*gachimyā khā* *humped* [k^{h}a]	*chandyā gā* *moon-like* [ga]	*tindilyā gā* *3-branched* [ga]	*chālāmyā ngā* *rounded* [ŋa]
jurāli chā *joined* [tsa]	*muchrādā chhā* *twisted* [sa]	*diphadālā jā* *twice-dotted* [dza]	*urāuri jā* *flying* [za]	*tindilyā nā* *3-branched* [na]
diaihtyā tā *two-fisted* [ta]	*phadādeyā thā* *dotted* [t^{h}a]	*ārubhāngā dā* *kneeling* [da]	*lejparā dā* *tailed* [da]	*pettwā nā* *pot-bellied* [na]
gāādāt tā *bell-hooked* [ta]	*japhadāt thā* ... [k^{h}a]	*dulandi dā* *swaying* [da]	*talmuhā dā* *face-down* [da]	*phārbānyā nā* *waist-tied* [na]
pārālyā pā ... [ɸa]	*ubarfadā phā* *dotted-top* [p^{h}a]	*bukchebā bā* *dented-chest* [ba]	*chāidilyā bā* *4-branched* [ba]	*bukphadālā mā* *dotted-chest* [ma]
chimachyā yā *clawed* [ja]	*diaihtyā rā* *two-fisted* [ra]	*talmuhā lā* *face-down* [la]	*chālāmā wā* *round* [wa]	*bhuribukyā sā* *big-bellied* [sa]
	ubarmuhā hā *face-up* [ha]	*petpādālā lhā* *cleft-bellied* [la]	*petsudā ā* *open-bellied* [a]	

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language (a pro-Sak dialect imbibed with Marma loans) changed to Indo-Aryan in the 15th-17th century, their script survived among a closed group as a means to codify magico-religious formulas and the traditional knowledge of healing. Tanchangyas call it *Chālāmyā akkhar*, which means 'rounded script.' The Marma script is *tsālonḥ*, 'round,' while the Chakma script is now named *Azā pāt*, 'the priest's script.'

My curiosity was aroused when Kajjyarai *vaidya* of Devipur showed be his *tālik* ('manual of magic and medicine') in January 2004. Then I was doing fieldwork in South Tripura. Apparently, it looked like Chakma script but on scrutiny, I found some graphemes had slightly altered shapes. Also, there were differences in the manner of singing the alphabet. The first two graphemes of the *kā*-varga, ෆ and ඛ are sung as *kichimyā kā* and *gachimyā khā*, against Chakma *chuchāngyā kā* and *gujāngyā hā*; the nasal of the *chā*-varga, ඤ, is *tindilyā nā* in Tanchangya but *chilochyā nā* in Chakma, while the glyph for the voiced unaspirated stop, ෆ, is called *bukcheyā bā* in Tanchangya and *ubarmuhā bā* in Chakma. During 2004-05, I studied other *tāliks*, Chakma and Tanchangya, including the *genkhuli* ballads, *Lāngyā-Langani*, *Rādhāman-Dhanpudi* and *Chādigāng Chhārā Pālā*. The script probably belongs to an intermediate stage between Marma and present-day Chakma. Even the numerals which Tanchangya *vaidyas* use differ from the Chakma numerals. (*See infra* p. 85.)

In writing, the coda consonant is represented, as in Chakma, with a short bar (¯) over it, e.g. တ̄ [-t]; it is the equivalent of the halant (ˎ) in IA languages. If a consonant has no sign, the inherent vowel is understood as [a]. When other vowels are added, the base glyph is thus altered:

[ဘ]	ဘ်	ဘ̄	ဘိ	ဘု	ဘေ	ဘူ
a	ɔ	ø	i	u	e	o
ဘဲ	ဘ̄	ဘို	ဘေိ	ဘං	ဘး	ဘီ
ai	ɔi	ui	ei	aŋ	aḥ	ã

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ꩻ is perhaps an older tone marker (*see* p. 79). As far as ꩻ꩜ is concerned, it is used in the talik to write the mystic syllable ꩻ꩜ [ɔːŋ] < IA ओँ [õː]. When *yā* and *rā* are part of a consonant conjunct, the forms ⌋ and ⌣ are used, ꩻ *kyā* and ꩻ *krā*. E.g. ꩻ꩜ *kyang*, 'monastery.'

2.6.2 *Phonology*

Tanchangya uses seven steady-state vowels.

i u

e o

ɛ ɔ

a

All back vowels are rounded; the central low unrounded [a], which is the inherent vowel, is articulated with the tongue slightly fronted. Except for the mid-low unrounded [ɛ], other vowels occur in all positions. [ɛ] is found in the beginning of words and also within the non-initial syllable when followed by the velar sounds [k, g, ŋ]. In sequences such as [ɔ]+ [labial stop/ semivowel] or vice-versa, the back mid-low vowel is articulated with the back of the tongue slightly raised and the lips more rounded than it would be in a sequence wherein a non-labial consonant comes before or after [ɔ], e.g. *kawā* [xɔ̨wa], 'crow.' The same lip-rounding and tongue movement occur when [ɔ] is in hiatus with another back vowel, as in *pua* [ɸuɔ̨], 'son.' In the immediate environment of the palatal semi-vowel [j], slightly centralised varieties of [e, u, o, ɔ] occur. Maniruzzaman (1984: 76) mentions of a marginal type schwa [ə] in Chakma. In Tanchangya, it is absent.

Vowel lengthening is not distinctive of Tanchangya but in some open monosyllables, vowels are articulated long. This is particularly characteristic of monosyllabic words having [t^h, f (p^h), k^h] in the onset position and which originally had [-r] as coda. Epenthesis is common in Tanchangya. IA [hɑti],

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'elephant,' becomes [ʔet] in Chakma but [ʔait] in Tanchangya. Similarly, Beng. [rupoʃi] 'beautiful'> MoG [ruboit], [pɑk(h)i] 'bird' > Tan. [ɸaik, ɸait]. But [gait] 'tree' may have come epenthetically from Beng. [gacʃhi], 'tree' (diminutive), or it could be a case of diphthongisation of the long vowel in closed monosyllables, usually when [t] < IA [c, ch, ɟ, ʃ] is the coda consonant – a feature typical of Tanchangya, e.g. Beng. [bɑ:ʃ] 'bamboo' > Tan. [bɑit], [mɑ:cʃ(h)] 'fish' > [mait], etc.

Tanchangya consonants are –

m		n				ŋ		
p	b	t	d		(ʈ)	k	g	ʔ
(p^h)		t^h				k^h		
		ts	dz	(tɕ) (dʑ)				
ɸ	f	s	z	(ʃ)		x		h
			l					
w			r		j			

Bilabial and dental nasals, [m] and [n], occur in all positions; initially, velar [ŋ] is absent. Nasalization is rare but when it occurs, the phenomenon can be traced to the loss of [ŋ]; in some cases, as in [paĩtɕtɕaŋ] 'an order of Buddhist monk,' it is compensatory in nature, making up for the loss of original [ɲ] from the Marma loan.

The voiceless bilabial and velar stops [p, k] occur word finally and as geminates [-pp-, -kk-] within the word – e.g. [gɔp.pwa] 'a gossip,' [rak.kɔit] 'demon'; these phonemes also occur in consonant sequences (both consonant clusters and abutting consonants), e.g. [pjɔŋ] 'to flatten,' [kjɔŋ] 'monastery,' [ak.tɔ] 'time,' etc. Between vowels, they tend to be voiced; initially, an occasional [p-] is heard in Marma loans, such as [poi] 'offering,' else it is spirantised, as [k-] is to [x-].

p-, -p- > ɸ-, -b- ɸuk 'insect' (SCB pokɑ); xɔbal 'forehead' (SCB kopɑl).

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k-, -x- > x-, -g-	xan 'ear' (SCB kɑ:n); sigal 'chain' (SCB cʃhekol).

Sometimes, word final [-k] is pronounced as [-t], as [ɸait] < [ɸaik] < Beng. [pɑk(h)i].

The voiced bilabial stop [b] is unchanged except when intervocalic. In that position, it tends to vary with the labial semivowel [w]. If a nasal occurs across syllable boundary, MoG speakers also interchange [-b-] with [-m-]. Intervocalic [-g-] is elided in some of *gosā* sub-dialects.

-b- > -w-	xɔba 'crow' (Chakma) > xɔ̨wa, xɔba
-b- > -m-	dabana 'thigh' > damana (MoG)
-g- > -ø- (-h- in MeG)	xugu 'dog' (DG, MuG) > xuhu (MeG), sagɔl 'goat' (KG) > saɔl (AG).

As word final, the dental stops [t, d] are unchanged, except for devoicing of [-d]; intervocalic [-t-, -d-] becomes [-d-] in KG, while in most other *gosā* sub-dialects, [-d-] is habitually rhotacised. In DG and AG, [-d-] is sometimes found to vary with [-r-]. Tanchangya [d] retains its phonetic value word initially but its voiceless pair often uses an allophonic [t^{h}] in the same position. Under the influence of Chittagong Bengali, one finds the voiceless palatal stop [ʧ] in educated speech but in the commoner's idiom, it is quite consistently replaced by [t]. In [dzijɔ] 'HyB' < Bengali [dæor], we have a case of affrication.

When speech is conscious, IA [bɦ, dɦ, gɦ] are rendered to weakly breathed allophones of [b, d] in the initial position, but in rapid speech, [b̤at] 'rice' and [d̤up] 'white' are always [bat] and [dup]. IA [ɦ] is absent in Tanchangya; initially, the glottal stop replaces it, as in [ʔait] 'elephant' < Beng. [ɦɑthi], the modification also affecting the tone shape. In most *gosās*, the glottal stop is elided and a low-fall tone occurs in its place. Between vowels, MeG uses [-h-] instead of [-g-]. The voiceless aspirates [t^{h}, k^{h}] are heard word initially, while [p^{h}-, -p^{h}-] usu-

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ally vary with [f-, -ɸ-]; initial [pʰ-] is retained in KG [pʰar], MeG [pʰa:] 'waist.' MuG speakers replace [kʰ-] with [h-].

The dental affricates [ts, dz] occur only initially, preserving minimal contrast with [s-, z-]; in between vowels, these change to the voiceless dental fricative [-s-]. Among the Chakma kinship groups, only *Dhāmei gozā* and *Kurakuttyā gozā* retains a distinction between [ts-, dz-] and [s-, z-]; the other *gozās* use a uniform [s-]. Intervocalic [-s-] is always voiceless in Tanchangya, e.g., Chakma [maza] > Tanchangya [masa] 'platform.' Another affricate similar to RP [tʃ] and SEB [cʃ] occurs as geminate in the word [ʔo̯.loitɕ.tɕja] 'yellow.' Its voiced pair [dʑ] is rare even as geminate; it is found in not more than a couple of words such as [raidʑ.dʑɔ] 'kingdom,' [radʑ.dʑur, raidʑ.dʑu] 'ear decoration.' In word final position, NIA [-cʃ(h), -ɟʒ, -ʃ, -s -z] > Chakma [-tɕ], e.g. SCB [bɑ:ʃ] 'bamboo' > Chakma [batɕ]; Tanchangya avoids all fricatives and affricates in that position; as a rule, these are habitually modified to unreleased [-t], at times also to [-k].

	Chakma	*Tanchangya*	
	-tɕ >	-t	-k
Bamboo	batɕ	bait	–
Fish	matɕ	mait	–
Five	ɸatɕ	ɸait	—
Hair (of body)	xetɕ	xet, xeit	–
Pineapple	anatɕ	anait	anek (MuG)
Thirst	tʰatɕ	–	tʰek, tʰik

IA palatoalveolar [ʃ] is a marginal phoneme varying uncertainly with word initial [s-], as in [ʃap] and [sap] 'snake,' [ʃib] and [sib] 'Shiva, the Hindu deity,' but generating no minimal contrast in the *jummayā's* speech. In CHT and South Tripura, where the medium of instruction in schools is Bengali with English as second language, Tanchangyas have now begun to take some cognisance of minimal pairs with [s-]

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and [ʃ-], as also with [t-] and [ʈ-] in recent loans from Bengali and English. The voiceless labiodental fricative [f] varies initially with [pʰ]; in intervocalic position, it replaces [-ɸ-, -pʰ-]. Dental [l] occurs in all positions but shows a posterior articulation in the environment of [j]; sometimes, it also varies with [r], e.g. AG [sansilak] and KG [sansira] 'butterfly.' The behaviour of non-initial [r] in the Tanchangya sub-dialects brings out another notable phonological difference with Chakma:

	Chakma	*Tanchangya*	*Exceptions in sub-dialects*
Cock	xura	xua	xura (AG, KG)
Client	gabur	gabu, gabur	gabut (AG, MeG)
Hen	xuri	xuji	xuri (AG, KG)
House-wall	bersaga	besega	ber (KG)
Meat	era	eja, ija	era (KG)
Spider	magɔrɔk	magɔlɔk, maɔlɔk	maɔrɔŋ (KG)
Stubborn	ɔmɔxɔdɔ	ɔmɔxɔrɔ	ɔmɔxɔdɔ (KG)
My	mɔr	mɔ	mɔt (DG)
Our	amar	ama	amat (DG)
Your	tʰɔr, tʰɔmar	tʰɔ, tʰɔma	tʰɔt, tʰɔmat (DG)

Unless intervocalic [-r-] is the result of rhotacism (-d- > -r-), it is elided in most *gosā* sub-dialects (except KG and occasionally AG, which tend to retain -d-). DG also makes an interesting modification, [-r] > [-t], in the genitive case; among the other subdialects, especially AG and MeG, [gabur] 'client (male)' is pronounced as [gabut]. In [magarak] > [magɔlɔk, maɔlɔk] 'spider,' we have a case of [-l-] substitution.

Of the two semivowels in Tanchangya, [w] occurs after bilabial and dental sounds. It is also found in some clusters, as in [dʑwʂ] 'cold,' [sam.mwa] 'small bamboo box,' etc. Initially, one finds it in [wa] 'rain-retreat.' Word final [w] is absent in the language. The use of [j] is more widespread than [w]; the palatal semi-vowel also occurs in all positions.

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IA voiceless labial and velar stops are sometimes voiced in intervocalic position' but voicing is not distinctive of Tanchangya as it is of Chakma. 'All voiceless sounds [in Chakma] are realised as voiced if not geminated medially.... In the final situation the tendency is also to keep pace with the non-initial modification towards voicing...' (Maniruzzaman 1984: 81). On the contrary, Tanchangya devoices most non-initial voiced consonants of Chakma, e.g. – [sog] > [tsok] 'eye' (EB tsouk, SCB cʃo:kh), [xaza] > [xasa] 'unripe' (EB xɑsɑ, SCB kɑ̃cʃɑ), [ɸi:d] > [ɸit, ɸi:t] 'back' (SCB pi:ʈh), and so on. As far as laryngeal settings are concerned, IA voiceless phonemes, despite modifications in the supra-laryngeal tract, are more comfortable in Tanchangya than in Chakma.

In Tanchangya, there are several pairs of homophonous words, whose precise meanings are conveyed by the speaker using a two-way tonal contrast. On examining a few words (*see* below), it was found that tone shapes of syllables are affected by changes in voice quality and with elision of consonants. But these findings are only preliminary and require extensive study to arrive at definite conclusions. Tanchangya orthography accommodates a low fall tone within the tone character ᨶ, e.g. ᨸᨶᨿ, *pahr* ('light') About the precise function of ᨶᨿ, I am not too sure; it was probably used to indicate an older mid-level tone, originating from a devoiced [h],

Tanchangya	*Gloss*	*Tone*	*Chakma*	*Bengali*
za	go	low level	za	dʒɑ:
za	jungle	low fall	zar	dʒɦɑ:r
ɸait	bird	low fall	ɸek	pɑkhi
ɸait	five	low level	ɸatɕ	pɑ̃:cʃ
ʔasi	smile	low fall	ʔazi	ɦɑʃi
asi	eighty	low level	azi	ɑʃi
bisi	seed	low level	bizi	bicʃi
bisi	mongoose	low fall	bizi	bedʒi

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but when the spoken idiom changed, the original purpose fell into disuse and it merged with the long vowel in the monosyllabic [pʰi:, fi:] 'the evil eye,' etc. In writing, [pʰi:, fi:] takes the form ঈঃ.

2.6.3 *Morphology*

No records pertaining to the Bengali spoken in Chittagong during the 15th-17th century is available, but present-day Chakma and Tanchangya dialects, despite sharing several similarities with SEB, have interesting points of divergence.

Pronouns

	Chakma	*Tanchangya*	*SEB*
I	mui	mui	ãi
We	ami	ami	ãora
You (*sgl.*)	tui	tui	tui, tũi
You (*pl.*)	tumi	tumi	tõra, tora
He/she	tʰe	tʰe	te, hite
They	tara	tʰaa, tara	tara, hitera

Chatterji (1974: 174) wrote, 'The Chakma dialect of Bengali, spoken by the Buddhist Chakma tribe living in Chittagong Hills District, is Chittagong Bengali, with some features which connect it with West Bengali and Assamese.' Identical pronominal forms in Assamese include mɒj (1*sgl.*, *cf.* WB mui), ami (1*pl.*), tɒj (2*sgl.*, *cf.* WB tũi), tumi (2*pl.*). Kamtapuri (Rajbangshi) and Bishnupriya share some similarities with Chakma and Tanchangya.

	Kamtapuri	*Bishnupruiya*
1	mui (*sgl.*); hami (*pl.*)	mi (*sgl.*); ami (*pl.*)
2	tui (*sgl.*); tumra (*pl.*)	ti (*sgl.*); tumi (*pl.*)
3	se, tã, tãe̯ (*sgl.*); tamra (*pl.*)	ta (*sgl. mas.*), tei (*sgl. fem.*); tanu (*pl.*)

The old singular and plural for the First Personal Pronoun, traceable to late MIA (prior to the 10th century AD), persist-

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ed through the Proto-Bengali period (950-1200 AD) down to the 15th-16th centuries, after which the forms fell into disuse outside Assamese, Kamtapuri, Bishnùpriya, Chakma and Tanchangya dialects. We have already indicated that Bengali Buddhists of the Chittagong line had amalgamated with Marma to emerge as Barua, and they played a core role in the adoption of Indo-Aryan by Sak and Daingnak. Chatterji (1975: 808-17) says that in early MB (c.13th-15th century AD), the Second Person old singular and plural forms were replaced by the newer forms (2*sgl. inf. & fam.* tui, *ord.* tumi; 2*pl. inf. & fam.* torā, *ord.* tomarā) in the Bengali dialects. SEB adopted new forms, but Chakma and Tanchangya retained the older ones. The double forms [te] and [hite] for 3 *nom.-sgl.* occur in SEB. Chakma and Tanchangya [tʰe] originates from the same oblique base in [ta-] as the SEB forms do.

Number and Gender

Plural endings of Chakma and Tanchangya agree with SEB.

Chakma	*Tanchangya*	*SEB*
-(g)un, -(g)ani, -lok	-un, -ani, -lok	-(g)un, -hɔɔl (+ain)

On the contrary, plural in Assamese is formed by [-bor, -hɒt], while Bishnupriya uses [-i, -ei, -mahei] as plural suffixes.

Among multitude terms popular in dialectical Bengali, the adjectival *beun* in Chittagong (*beggāin* in Noakhali, *bekkān* in Mymensingh), originating from the tadbhava *bebāk-gulin*, corresponds to [bjak] in Tangchangya: e.g., [bjak xɔrani] 'each and every word.' In the term [bjak sukkani] 'all happiness,' the plural prefix [-ani] is added to non-concrete *sukh*, 'happiness' while [bjak] connotes 'totality (of happiness).'

Suffixes for the feminine gender of animate nouns are –

Chakma	*Tanchangya*	*Bpr.*	*As.*	*SEB*
-i, -ni, -bi	-i, -ni, -bi	-i, -ani, -ini, -ni	-ɒni, -ni, -ri	-i, -ni -(V+)r

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Feminine [-bi] and masculine [-ba] are both Tibeto-Burman in their origin; these are commonly used as suffixes in personal names, e.g. *Nāithakbi* (Tippera), *Pākhāngbā* (Meithei), *Rāngābā* and *Makkābi* (Tanchangya and Chakma), etc.

Case	*SEB*	*Chakma*	*Tanchangya*	*Examples*
Nom.	-ø, -e	-ø	-ø	t^he, *'he.'*
Gen.	-r	-ar, -ɔr	-a, -ɔ, -t (DG)	t^ha, t^hat, *'his'*; $t^hɔ$, *'your.'*
Dat.	-re	-re	-je	t^haje, *'to him.'* (KG t^hare)
Abl.	-tun	-tun	-tun	mɔnɔttun, 'from mind.'
Loc.	-ɔt	-t, -di	-t, -ti, -tin	rwat, *'in the village.'*
Instr.	-di	-di, -tɔi, -lɔi	-di, -tɔi, -lɔi	ʔaitdi, ʔaittɔi, ʔaitlɔi *'with the hand.'*

In Bengali, the locative in [-te] acquired an ablative force during the MB period. The Tanchangya locative in [-ti] or [-tin] is not interchangeable with [-te]; it corresponds to Chakma [-di], and it has a probable cognate in Pali locative [-dhi]. Consider the following examples for uses of [-ti] and [-tin].

Abl. -tun	Chakma	dɔginettun bɔijar ezer (From the south the breeze blows.)
	KG	dɔinettun bɔijar aiser
	MuG	dɔinɔttun bɔ: aiser
Loc. -di, -ti, -tin	Chakma	ɸugedi bel(an) ude (In the east, the sun rises)
	KG	ɸugettin bel(an) ude
	DG, MuG	ɸugetti bel(loa) ure
	MeG	ɸugetti bel(an) ure

On the other hand, the instrumental in [-lɔi] is traceable to Old Bengali [lɒi]; it occurs as [-lɒ] in Bishnupriya (Sinha 1981: 82f.), which language, like Chakma and Tanchangya, has the locative in [-t], the genitive in [-r, -ɒr], the dative in [-re, -are], and the nominative in [-ø].

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Verbal Conjugations

Conjugations of the verb in Tanchangya are given against corresponding forms in SEB and Chakma. By adding these to a root verb, say √*khā* ('to eat'), one may easily notice the similarities and the differences.

Tense		*Chakma*	*Tanchangya*	*SEB*
Present Indefinite				
1st Person	*sgl.*	-ɔŋ	-ɔŋ	-ir
	pl.	-i	-i	
2nd Person	*sgl.*	-tɕ	-t, -ɔt	-ɔr
	pl.	-ɔ	-ɔ, -ɔr	
3rd Person	*sgl.*	-e, -j	-e, -er	-r
	pl.	-ɔn	-ɔn	
Past Indefinite				
1st Person	*sgl.*	-jɔŋ	-jɔŋ	-lɑm
	pl.	-jei	-je	
2nd Person	*sgl.*	-jɔtɕ	-jɔit	-(i)la, -(i)li
	pl.	-jɔ	-jɔ	
3rd Person	*sgl.*	-je	-je	-il
	pl.	-jɔn	-jɔn	
Future Indefinite				
1st Person	*sgl.*	-im, -in	-im, -in	-iɔm
	pl.	-(i)bɔŋ	-(i)bɔŋ	
2nd Person	*sgl.*	-(i)be	-(i)be	-bɑ
	pl.	-(i)ba	-(i)ba	
3rd Person	*sgl.*	-(i)bɔ	-(i)bɔ	-bɔ
	pl.	-(i)bak	-(i)bak	

Chakma and Tanchangya differ from SEB and other Bengali dialects, as from Assamese, by retaining singular and plural forms in all persons. Chatterji (1975: 930) gives the following inflections for the radical tense in late MIA:

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Person	*sgl.*	*pl.*
1.	-ɒw̃i, -w̃i > -i	-ɒw̃ɒ, -ɒmɒ > -õ
2.	-ɒsi, -is(i) > -is, -s	-ɒhɒ > -ɒ, -ɔ, -o
3.	-ɒi > -e, -j	-ɒntɒ > -enɒ, -nɒ > -en, -n

In Bengali and Assamese, that distinction no longer exists. The use of the older plural form is now confined only to the honorific. Bishnupriya, on the contrary, retains the older distinction between singular and plural in all persons (Sinha 1981: 97). Chakma and Tanchangya dialects show an interesting development; in *1Past* and *1Present*, the old plural [-ɒw̃ɒ] becomes singular [-ɔŋ] while the old singular [-i] < [-ɒw̃i, -w̃i] is changed to a plural inflexion. This interchange of positions occurred during the 15th-16th century, when the old sense of number was beginning to die out of eastern NIA (excluding, of course, Oriya) and singular and plural forms were used arbitrarily.

Chakma and Tanchangya agree with the eastern dialects of NIA in using the Future base in [-ɬb-] > [-b-], traceable to OIA [-tɒvvyɒ-] or [-tɒvyɒ-] through MIA [-(i)ɒvvɒ-, -(i)ɒbbɒ-, -e̥bbɒ-]. The [-m] in *1Future Singular* [-im] or [-in] is a phonetic variant of [-b]. Chatterji (*Ibid.*: 676 and 965-7) analysed the developments in some detail in connection with Bengali. For corresponding developments in Assamese and Bishnupriya, the interested reader may refer to Sinha (1981: 98-9) and Kakati (1995: 356-7).

Chakma and Tanchangya differ from the eastern dialects of Bengali, as also from Assamese and Bishnupriya, by using the past base in [-(i)j-] more regularly than the one in [-l-]. Side by side though, the [-l-] form occurs in [dilɔ] 'gave,' [xɔla] 'said,' [ʔɔilɔ] 'became.' The co-occurrence is historically meaningful; it belongs to a stage of linguistic development in eastern IA, at least up to the 16th century, when, as noted by Chatterji (*Ibid.*: 949f.), the past base in [-i-] existed side by side with the one in [-l-].

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2.6.4 *The Numerals*

For writing numerals, Chakmas use figures that closely resemble Bengali while the figures used by the Tanchangya have affinities with Burmese.

	*Chakma**		*Bengali*		*Tanchangya*		*Burmese*
1	১	ɛk	১	æːk	๑	ɛk	၁
2	২	di	২	dui	๒	dui	၂
3	৩	tin	৩	tiːn	๓	tin	၃
4	৪	sɛr	৪	cʃɑːr	๔	sai(r)	၄
5	৫	ɸatɕ	৫	pãːcʃ	๕	ɸait	၅
6	৬	sɔ	৬	cʃhoe̯	๖	sɔj̃	၆
7	৭	sat	৭	ʃɑːt	๗	sat	၇
8	৮	astɔ	৮	ɑːt	๘	aittjɔ	၈
9	৯	nɔ	৯	noe̯	๙	nɔ	၉
10	১০	dɔtɕ	১০	dɔːʃ	๑๐	dɔit	၁၀

**As followed by District School Education Board, CADC. In CHT, the Tribal Cultural Institute has adopted Bengali numerals. In Tripura, the Chakma Socio-cultural Development Society had proposed Chakma numerals similar to that of CADC.*

The Tanchangya's way of counting numbers from one to ten is similar to Chakma and Bengali; in writing, the figures for three to five and eight to nine are derived from Burmese. Seven looks like Burmese nine facing the other way; in the case of three and four, the lines under the Burmese figures are dropped. Six looks like Burmese nine turned 90° clockwise. Though ten is *dait*, in reading it is half-chimed as *ek dait*, 'one ten;' eleven is *ek dait ek* ('one ten one,') not *egāra* as in Chakma, twenty *dui dait* ('two tens'), etc. From eleven to ninety-nine, most numbers are sung; then we have *ek sat* (< Beng. *ek śata*), a rather flat type 'one hundred,' not the singing 'ten tens.'

If the Saks of Macchagiri used a script, it would have been something like Mon or Burmese, as in the case of Daingnak, but about that we know nothing as yet. Chakpas of Andro

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possess some handwritten manuals in the old Meithei script (which uses thirty-six characters instead of twenty-seven in modern Meithei); they acquired these after settling in Manipur, where they came under a Meithei domination. One thing about the Sak is certain, that they had their native counting system. During fieldwork in CHT and Manipur, I collected Chak and Chakpa numerals, while my sources for Kadu and Taman are Brown (1911: 313; 1920: 22-23) and Houghton (1893: 134). Kadu numerals taken from Houghton are given with curved brackets; these are not rendered into IPA.

	Chak	*Chakpa (Andro)*	*Kadu*	*Taman*
One	à	həttà	nu, wa, a, (*ta*)	tɔ
Two	niŋ	kĭŋ	kaləŋ, (*krin*)	nek
Three	sùŋ	sòm	sum	sùm
Four	prí	pí	s'i, (*pi*)	pəli
Five	ŋá	ŋá	(*ngâ:*)	məŋɔ
Six	krùk	kòk	kok	kwa
Seven	sníŋ	sinĭ	(*set*)	sənè
Eight	əcaik	cəhà	(*p'et*)	pəsè
Nine	təhù	tuhù	(*kan*)	təxɐ
Ten	sí	hətta sətsí	ʃim, (*shim*)	ʃi

The Chakpa's own counting system is now known only to a few individuals who remember little of *Chākpālol* ('Chakpa language'); it has thoroughly been replaced by Meithei. As for Kadu, Brown (1920: 22) says, 'For the numbers two to ten the Shan numerals are used in counting. The native words have fallen into disuse, just as the native Japanese numerals have been supplanted by the Chinese in the towns of Japan, and will probably soon be obsolete altogether.' The Daingnak or Tanchangya's native figures survived among *vaidyas* but the words for counting the numbers were replaced by Bengali terms in the 15th-17th century.

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2.7 *The Hypothesis*

Daingnak or Tanchangya are of the Tibeto-Burman stock, who originated when a section of the Macchagiri Saks, one of the earliest ethnic groups to arrive in Burma, absorbed Marma elements and evolved into a distinct Daingnak paradigm in the 14th century AD. Prior to their settlement in Arakan, they lived at Tsampaynago (*'Kheim-bá-nago'*), in the neighbourhood of Tagaung, the Kadu capital. Though they now mostly use the designation Tanchangya, they also refer to themselves as *Sappye*. The Kadu's name for himself is *Asak;* and like the ethnonyms, *Chak* (Sak) and *Chakpa*, the appellation *Sappye* is indisputably a variant of *Sak* or *Asak*.

In old Burma chronicles, Sak is one of the early peoples of Burma, besides Pyu and Kanyan; they were in the upper valleys of the Ayeyarwaddy and the Chindwin rivers in the middle of first millennium AD. A Chinese annal of the Han period speaks of a people called *Xinan-yi* ('the Southwestern barbarians') who in the beginning of the Christian era lived in Southwestern China in the area now comprising parts of Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunan and Guangxi; they composed a numerous horde of early Tibeto-Burmans, some nomadic and pastoralists and the others more organised with centralised polities and powerful chieftains. Among the early settlers of Burma, the Qiongdu, subsequently Kantu or Kadu, were the most powerful; they are believed to have arrived through the Bhamo route. In the 9th-14th century, they tried to resist subjugation by the Burmans on the one hand and the Siamese-Chinese Shans on the other. In subsequent times, Kadu suffered both Shan and Burman domination; the language they speak today is Burmese with an admixture of Shan; culturally, they are like the Burmans, just as their relatives in Manipur, the Chakpas, are now linguistically and culturally very little apart from the Meitheis. Tamans and Malins of the upper Chindwin are Burman in custom and language. Only a small population of Chak now living in CHT

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and Sittwe speak the older language, though not without signs of Marma gradually replacing many older forms.

It is difficult to say when the Sak first migrated to Arakan; the old Burma chronicles associate their early rulers with Tagaung, the seat of Kadu power until the end of the 13th century. In Burmese inscriptions of the 12th-13th century AD, Saks had villages in the neighbourhood of Pagan. From what the chronicles say, we may infer that they were in Arakan by the 10th-11th century and had allied with the Chandra kings (who ruled Wethli and Dhagnyawaddy) in trying to resist a westward expansion of the Burmans. The Chandras were Buddhist rulers of the Bengal line. For a brief period in the early 11th century AD, the Saks lived around Sambowet (Pyinsa) but they were defeated by the Burmans and their king, Nga-Maung-Kadon (Thekminkaton) slain. The chronicles do not tell us what subsequently became of them but in the early 14th century, there were Saks in Macchagiri. In 1294 AD, Kadu power came to an end when the Yuan Mongols destroyed their capital, Tagaung, and they pressed southwestwards. Around the same time, Shan inroads into the central Ayeyarwaddy led to the destruction of Pagan. After the fall of Macchagiri in 1333 AD, the Saks dispersed severally; a section moved to the northern parts of Arakan while another escaped across the Yoma mountains into Burma. Sometime in the late 13th or the early 14th century, there was also a movement through the Kabow valley, leading to the settlement of Chakpas in Manipur, where they subsequently came under Meithei domination. A section of the Macchagiri Saks was captured by Arakan king, Mengdi, and settled in the Ann (Aeng)-Dalak region of the Kyaukpu district. There they intermixed with the local population and came to be called Daingnak. During the 14th century, the last mentioned group absorbed several Marma elements into them, even acquired something of the latter's language and adopted Marma script and numerals.

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During the Mon-Burman conflicts of the late 14th and early 15th century (which left Arakan ravaged), Daingnaks were pushed northwards into the Saingdin area. Arakan was at that time in a state of great confusion. (After several usurpers had ruled the country, a legitimate king ascended the throne but he was driven out of his own country by the king of Ava.) Around this time, a section of Saks allied with Baruas (Bengali Buddhists) of Chittagong and tried to assert their domination in the northern parts of Arakan. The ethno-history of the Chakmas points to an early line of Bengali chieftains (*sardārs*) and Barua *rājās*. Daingnaks appear to have allied with Saks and Bengalis, and following a defeat in a war fought in the Koladan region in the early 15th century, they migrated to the Hill Tracts, settling on the Tein Chaung (Tain Chhari, a tributary of the Matamuri), whence they came to be called Tanchangya. And while these groups were migrating, another section of Sak (the Min Sak) was left behind at Sak-cuḥ-tong and they became the ancestors of the present-day Chaks.

In the 15th-17th century, the Saks of Matamuri valley consolidated themselves; they amalgamated with Barua and, more generally, with Tippera (who controlled the northern Hill Tracts up to the Karnaphuli, even penetrated southwards into Ramu) and Bru to create a radically new ethnic system, the Chakma of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, with Indo-Aryan as language and Buddhism as their creed. Daingnaks were the closest neighbour of the Chakma and they suffered the latter's domination; they also adopted Indo-Aryan as their everyday language. During Chakma ethnogenesis, a section of Daingnak had amalgamated into Chakma. Another section opposed the latter's ethno-cultural solidarity, maintaining social distance and insisting on having a distinct cultural paradigm of their own. In the 16th-17th century, Chakmas lived on the west side of the Hill Tracts between the Matamuri and the Karnaphuli. In the 18th century, other groups (Mru, Sak and Marma) arrived in the southern parts of the

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Hill Tracts, which eventually became the Bohmong's territory. The Chakmas in the meantime, moved northwards, consolidating themselves in the central parts of the Hill Tracts around the Karnaphuli. Their closeness to the plains had brought them into conflictful as well as beneficial relations with the Mohammedan rulers of Bengal. Tanchangya lived to the east of Chakma, mainly in the Rainkhyoung valley, from where their settlements extended northwards to the point where the tributary river merged with the Karnaphuli. The intrinsic divide between the two groups became the more prominent in the early 18th century, when Chakmas entered into politically advantageous relations with the Mughals and acquired trade monopoly between the hills and the plains, a position that made them masters of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

At the close of the 18th century, Chakmas made a move to absorb the entire Tanchangya group into them but the latter opposed it and left the Hill Tracts for Arakan. In the early 19th century, they returned to the Hill Tracts and one Tanchangya leader sought recognition as chief of the tribe, but the Chakma Chief (in whose territory they wished to settle) would not recognise him as a Tanchangya chief. Consequently, many of them returned to Arakan. Some stayed back in the Hill Tracts, settling among the Marma. Around the mid-19th century, small groups moved northwards into the Chakma Circle, and many of them gradually waived their differences with Chakmas. Today, a section of Tanchangya identifies itself with Chakma (even uses Chakma as surname); the majority insists that they differ from Chakmas.

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3. *Migration and Distribution*

As already seen in the previous chapter, Daingnak emerged as a distinct ethnic group when a section of the Macchagiri Saks amalgamated with the Rakhines in course of the 14th century. The Arakan view is that in 695 AE (1333 AD), King Mengdi routed the Saks of Macchagiri who had become troublesome and captives numbering 10,000 souls were settled in the northern parts of the Kyaukpu district, along the Aeng and Ro Chaungs. Throughout history, hyperbolic figures of human destruction and captivity have been associated with war victories, and the Arakan estimate of 10,000 Sak captives is an exaggeration. The actual figure might have been several times less. That the event took place is one thing that cannot be denied, especially with parallel versions authenticating it. In the early 15th century, Daingnaks migrated to the Hill Tracts, from where they subsequently dispersed to other places. Today, they are principally distributed in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and in northern Sittwe (Akyab) with small sections in South Tripura and in the southern parts of the Chakma Autonomous District Council, Mizoram.

3.1. *Migration*

Despite ethnic admixture and the emergence of an altered cultural paradigm, the Daingnak or Tanchangya continues to look back nostalgically to Tsampaynago (*'Kheim-bá-nago'*), which they say was the place where their people originally

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lived. The place, as already mentioned, is in upper Burma, south of Tagaung; today, the people living in that area are mostly Burman and Shan. There is also a relatively smaller number of Burmanised Kadus, the Daingnak's oldest ethnic relative. Between Kyaukpu and Prome, the population is diverse, comprising Rakhines, Burmans, Karens, Khyangs and Mon-Tailangs; and if there are Saks or Daingnaks around Thayetmyo today, they would be indistinguishable from Burman or Rakhine in custom and language. In the late 18th century, the Daingnaks migrated from CHT to Arakan but at that time, they are not known to have dispersed anywhere beyond the northern hilly parts of Sittwe. Within a couple of decades, many of them returned to CHT. Between 1925 and 1945, small fragmented groups of Daingnak-Tanchangya left the Hill Tracts for CADC and South Tripura.

3.1.1 *Settlement in CHT*

Since the time of Anawrahta (1044-77), Mons and Burmans had been colliding with each other for control over the irrigation system of Ayeyarwaddy. Enmity between the two kingdoms escalated during the reign of Razadarit (1385-1423), the Mon king of Pegu; alienating the Burmans from the Shans and befriending the Rakhines were two principal strategies that the Mons followed. They also made frequent incursions into southern Arakan on the pretext of expelling Burman governors or bringing Burman asylum seekers to justice. Probably, increased Mon activities and their conflictful relation with the Burmans in the early 15th century had pushed the Daingnaks out of Kyaukpu into the hilly recesses of Saingdin. 'Arakan suffered in the contest between the two stronger countries' (Phayre 1883: 77). Several usurpers succeeded one after another, their oppression so annoyed the people that they sought the intervention of Ava. In 1404 AD, Mengswamum succeeded to the throne as legitimate ruler but in 1406, the Burman king, Minhkhaung, occupied Ara-

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kan, compelling Mengswamum to flee to Bengal and there take refuge with the Sultan (*Thuratan*). A Burman governor was put in charge of Arakan but he was shortly taken prisoner by Razadarit, which led to a Burman invasion of Pegu. Taking advantage of the confusion, a group of Saks (Sambowet Saks?) allied with Baruas (Bengali Buddhists) of Chittagong and tried to consolidate themselves in the northern parts of Arakan, around the upper Koladan. Daingnaks appear to have allied with Saks and Bengalis, and following a Sak routing by the Burman army in 1418 AD, they migrated with the Sak to the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Daingnaks identify the place of their first settlement in the Hill Tracts on the Tein Chaung (Tain Chhari), a tributary of the Matamuri. In course of the 15th-17th century, the Saks consolidated themselves on the western side of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, northwards from the Matamuri valley; they amalgamated with Barua and, more generally, with Tippera (who then controlled not only the northern parts of the Hill Tracts but had even penetrated southwards into Ramu at the close of the 16th century) and Bru to emerge as Chakma of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. We have already seen how a section of Daingnak-Tanchangya had also amalgamated with them and how the entire group came under Chakma domination, which transformed their language into Indo-Aryan. When, in course of the 18th century, other groups (mainly Mru, Sak and Marma) began to arrive from Arakan into the Hill Tracts, Chakma and Tanchangya were pushed northwards; the former had their headquarters around Rangunia while the latter lived to the east of Chakma, in the Rainkhyoung valley and spreading northwards up to the Karnaphuli. 'The Daignets say that they originally lived near the Kantha chaung [Karnaphuli] in the Chittagong district. There they had their own Rajahs of whom the names of the last three are given as Chweman [Chaman Khan], Zampasa [Jan-Baksh Khan], and Darampasa [Dharam-Baksh Khan]' (Webb 1911: 271). In the

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same account, it is written, 'In the Akyab District Gazetteer dated 1905... [i]t is also recorded that they [Daingnak] do not intermarry with other races' (Ibid.: 270). But during the time of Jan-Baksh Khan, they were asked to intermarry with Chakmas, which caused discontent among the Daingnaks and, in 1782, they left the Hill Tracts for Arakan (Lewin 1869: 64-65). Arguably, Buchanan did meet this group when he toured the Chittagong Hills in 1798. At that time, Chakmas lived in the central part of the Hill Tracts while Chaks (Sak or Sakmi) lived in the south. Buchanan wrote, 'The [S]ak live... partly on this side of Mein-daung, and partly on the Mroo-seit river. North from the Sak live also another people called Kulak Sak who speak a dialect nearly resembling the Burma' (van Schendel 1992: 65).

At the end of the year 1784, Bodawphaya, king of Burma, invaded Arakan and by February 1785, Arakan was nothing more than a province of Burma. The king of Arakan, Maha Thamada, tried to escape across the Naaf with his family but was captured by the Burman army and deported to Amarapura. Soon after the occupation of Arakan, the Burmans terrorised the people of that country; evidently, they 'had bitten off more than they could chew. Revolt after revolt broke out, and as their rule became more and more repressive, with the hateful practice of deportation as its chief remedy against disorder, thousands of Arakanese fled over the border into the Chittagong jungles, which belonged to the East India Company's Presidency of Bengal' (Hall 1960: 32). Many of those emigrants took to harassing their oppressors by raiding villages across of the British border. In 1794, a Burman army of five thousand men led by Nanda Kyawzo violated the border to bringing the marauders to justice. The British despatched a force under General Erskine. No encounter between the two forces took place though, and Erskine, who believed that the refuges were guilty, as the Burman general claimed, ordered a section to be pushed back into

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Sittwe. Two-thirds of the people who returned to Sittwe were killed by the Burmans. Around 1811, tensions mounted again along the British-Burma border after a refugee leader, Kyin-byan (King-Berring), overran Mrauk-U. The Burman army had no trouble in driving him out, but Kyin-byan continued to plague them until his death in 1815. On having failed to capture him and bring him to justice, the Burmans took their rage out on the peaceful dwellers of north Arakan hills, compelling thousands of them to enter the Chittagong Hill Tracts. A year later, in 1816, Bodawphaya also died.

In 1819, Tanchangyas numbering 4000 souls returned to the Hill Tracts led by Phahpru (Lewin 1869: 65). A Tanchangya version of this event (Tanchangya 2000: 14) states that Phahpru collected donations from his people to purchase a gift for Dharam-Baksh Khan; 'but,' as Lewin (*Ibid.*: 66) pointed out, 'Dhurmbux Khan [the Chakma Chief] would not recognise him as head of the Toungjynya clan, and consequently the major part of them returned to Arakan.' On the way back to Arakan, quarrel erupted among the *gosās*, causing a split within the ethnic group. A section settled in the southern parts of the Hill Tracts, around Qutbdiya, spreading subsequently to Ukhiya and Teknaaf; the other section crossed over to Arakan to put up villages on the upper reaches of the Mayu. Around the mid-19th century, a section of the Mayu-dwelling Tanchangya (Daingnak) had also left Arakan to settle in the Bohmong Circle. By the close of the century, more immigrants came into the Hill Tracts. Lewin (*Ibid.* 64) wrote, 'The Doingnaks... are now straggling back, village by village, on their return to the tribe. Several of their villages are found in the Cox Bazar Hills, and they preserve to this day the remembrance of the places inhabited formerly by their ancestors on the Kurnafoolie River, although from long residence in Arracan their vernacular language is the dialect of that country, and they are, comparatively speaking, ignorant of Bengallee, a bastard dialect of which is spoken by the tribe

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at large.' Lewin takes cognisance of the prevailing Chakma view of Daingnak being a sub-tribe of Chakma but also treats of Daingnak and Tanchangya as different subgroups. 'At present the Toungjynyas in this district are said to number 2500 souls. The elders among them are still acquainted with the Arracanese vernacular, but the present generation are fast amalgamating with the rest of the tribe, and use with them a corrupt species of Bengallee.'

3.1.2 *Migrations to CADC and South Tripura*

Until the 20th century, Tanchangya migrations occurred between CHT and Arakan. But in the mid-1920s, the direction changed. Erstwhile kinships organisations had disintegrated by the close of the 19th century, and small groups composed of few families now immigrated to South Tripura and the South Lushai Hills, the availability of land for both swidden and plough cultivation being the chief attraction.

In 1926, fourteen Tanchangya families from Gilamun (CHT) led by Devicharan reached Bara Kabakhali, south of Demagiri in the Lushai Hills. For some time, the emigrants moved from place to place until the British government allowed them to settle permanently at Lokkisury in the South Lushai Hills. Devicharan's 81-year old son, Suratchoga Tanchangya, ex-VCP, Damdep (New Jogonasury I) Village Council, told me during an interview at his residence at Dursora (August 27, 2005) that it was not until several years had passed that the government legitimatised his father's settlement in the Lushai Hills. Devicharan was a *Muo gosā* Tanchangya; he was accompanied by eight families of his own kinship group and six *Daingnyā gosā* families. My informant identified the latter as kinsmen of one Gulachandra. Besides, there was also a Tippera (probably Uchai) family of one Khamsarai among the early settlers of Lokkisury.

A government order (No. 4 of 1933-4/ CI-TAIS-Receipt, dated – Lungleh, May 16, 1933) demarcates the area of the

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first Tanchangya settlement in South Lushai Hills (Mizoram) in the following terms:

> 'Devicharan is allowed to settle with his 15 houses [which should include the sole Tippera/ Uchai family of Khamsarai] in the Land of Lukisuri. The provisionary boundary of which will be as follows –
>
> 'West – Thega lui. North – Up the Lukisuri lui from its junction with the Thega to its source in the Uiphumtlang. East – Along the Uiphumtlang to the source of Silsuri lui. South – Down the Silsuri lui from its source in the Uiphumtlang to its junction with the Thega.
>
> 'In the event of Devicharan committing any misdemeanour he is liable to be turned out on being given a month's notice.'

By the close of the decade, more Tanchangya families set up small hamlets between the Thega and the Tuichang. A missionary report by F.J. Raper on the South Lushai Hills for 1938 contains a few lines on the people residing in the area between present-day Tlabung (Demagiri) and Siminesora. '...there are many people living in small groups of houses particularly along the river banks. They are not Lushai but people who have settled in the South Lushai District from the Chittagong Hill Tracts. They have got permission from Government and have their homes among the Lushai people. There are about 500 homes of Chakmas alone besides a number of people of the other tribes. These people do not speak Lushai and are for the most part, Buddhists. Their homes are very difficult to get at as there are no roads and they move their homes so frequently. Very often there are only two or three houses in a group.' Chakma and Tanchangya are the only two Buddhist groups of CADC. In the 1960s, especially during the period of the Mizo unrest, most hamlets (sub-villages) were grouped.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, the Tippera kings encouraged settlement in the hill kingdom. By the close of

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the 19th century, several hundred Marmas (Mags in official records) and Chakmas had settled permanently in South Tripura. Tanchangyas arrived here much later; in 1932, one Bhagyamuni came from Rainkhyoung with a following of eight *Muo gosā* and two *Langbāsā* families to Daluchhara (Gaburchhara Mauza, Belonia subdivision). But Bhagyamuni was not the first Tanchangya settler in Tripura; his 70-year son, Joydhar, who was born at Ratanpur, however, told me that a *Monglā gosā* (*Nalābā gutthi*) headman, Angyari from Rainkhyoung, came a couple of years before his father's arrival but initially for some years he lived at Lebacharra (now in Karbuk Development Block), before settling permanently at Ratanpur (then Gaburchhara). Settlement records could not be acquired for verification but a receipt (Sl. No. 72705, dated 04.04.1345 TE) of 1 *anna* paid as revenue to the Tippera coffer by Bhagyamuni 'jotdar' showed the year as 1935. Angyari's descendents, except for an aged daughter, are all dead; but elderly Tanchangyas of Ratanpur told me that his following comprised twenty-five households – fifteen *Monglā gosā*, eight *Melong-gosā* and two *Daingnyā gosā* families. The KG families now settled at Devipur (Tuichungma), Adipur and Marani (Tainani) say that their ancestors immigrated to Tripura about seventy years ago, settling temporarily at Silachari, Chalagang, and at other places in the Amarpur subdivision before moving to their present hamlets. Their ethnic neighbour here is the Bru but Tanchangyas avoid intermarrying with them. The old Tanchangya name for Marani (< Bru *Marandi*) is *Chhay-gharyā* ('Six Houses'). In 1945, six *Karwā gosā* families had settled here.

Around 1940-45, there were emigrants from Thanchi, Barkal, Kaptai and Rainkhyoung; they came as individual families or in small groups, the main compulsions were either dispute with local authorities in CHT or fear of recruitment as coolies during the World War II. Between 1941 and 1960, several Tanchangya families left Tripura for Mizoram;

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a few of families straying further north of Tlabung (Demagiri) were settled at Amchhari when it was made a grouped village in 1966-67. In 1960, the Kaptai Hydroelectric project led to the creation of an artificial lake affecting a large area of settlement along the Karnaphuli and its tributaries, mainly Rainkhyoung, Kassalong, Subalong, Maini and Chengri. More than 100,000 inhabitants of 18,000 families living within a catchment area of 50,000 acres of cultivable land were displaced. About 40,000 Chakma refugees were pushed into India. Under the subsequent rehabilitation scheme, some Chakma families and a large number of Bengali settlers were accommodated within a part of the reserved forest that the East Pakistan government had allocated for the purpose. Very few Tanchangya families were rehabilitated at that time; of those living in the Rainkhyoung valley, some moved to settle on their own at Rajasthali, Rowangchhari and Alikadam; another section (100 families according to native estimate) migrated to Buthidaung Chin Hills while not less than 25-30 families crossed the Thega into the southern parts of CADC; then moving east across the Tuichang, they settled at Chamdurtlang, Vaseikai and other villages in Mizoram. There were no Tanchangya immigrants to South Tripura in the 1960s.

3.2. *Demographic structure*

In examining the Tanchangya's geographical distribution, it is not quite possible to get accurate population estimates for all places. The reasons for this are various, the most conspicuous one is that demographic surveys have not always been properly carried out. For the population of Sittwe, no reliable estimates are available after the British-conducted Census of 1931. In 1983, the *Tatmadaw*-controlled Home and Religious Affairs Ministry, Government of Myanmar, published a population estimate but it remains highly opinionated. Though the Government of India regularly publishes decennial Census Reports, the work of enumeration in the

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Northeast is often very sloppily executed; in many places, people complain that enumerators never go to their houses to get the actual figures but acquire the information from a panchayat member, who is asked to come over to the nearest block headquarters to help them 'work out' the village figures. This prompted me ambitiously consider the prospect of making a fresh survey of the Tanchangya population living in India. In South Tripura, the work was carried out in all nine villages where Tanchangyas were settled; I remain indebted to Raju Chakma (Tanchangya, *Melong gosā*) and Hemanta Chakma (Tanchangya, *Kārwā gosā*); without their earnest involvement, the work would not have been possible. While in CADC, I was allowed to see village registers and meet some village headmen who were helpful; the Local Administration Office (Census), Kamalanagar, assured and extended all cooperation I needed; in obtaining the kinship-wise village data, I was helped by Rajendra Bikash Tanchangya, Romesh Kanti Tanchangya and, most particularly, Adikanta Tanchangya, Ex-CEM and Ex-Chairman, CADC; two young men, Pankaj Tanchangya and Rabiranjan Tanchangya deserve special thanks.

A similar survey could not be carried out in CHT and Sittwe, owing to restrictions on foreigner's movements; a severe lack of funds was another obstacle I faced in course of the work. Nevertheless, the findings in South Tripura and CADC are satisfactory; for the first time, Tanchangyas living in India has been counted separately from Chakma. The data has helped make generalisations on the compositional aspects of their population. Before going into the details, we shall take a look at the demographic polarities existing in the region.

3.2.1 *Percentile variation in Tibeto-Burman population*

For several centuries, the hills lying to the east of Bengal have been the natural retreat of diverse Tibeto-Burman groups, whom Bengalis broadly classify as *Jumiyā* and *Kuki*,

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the former approachable but the latter an object of fear and derision. Until the end of the 19th century, so great had been the fear of the head-hunting Kukis that few Bengalis dared to go into hills. But from early 20th century, the demographic structure of the hills began to change; by 1950, thousands of Bengalis, the 'outsiders,' became permanent settlers, occupying most fringeland in the area. Today, the region most sorely afflicted by Bengali presence is the Hill Tracts. Under the British, it enjoyed a 'Totally Excluded Area' status, a semblance of which was kept up by the East Pakistan Government for sometime after 1947 as 'tribal area.' Officially, between 1947 and 1963, there were some restrictions on the settlement of plains' people in the hills but at several places agricultural land was leased out to Bengalis, allowing them 'near-monopolies in both wholesale and retail trade, in credit and in transportation' (Mey 1984: 23). In 1964 (by the 1st Amendment Act of 1963 of the Constitution of Pakistan), the 'tribal area' status of CHT was repealed and all pretences to safeguarding tribal rights abandoned. The Bangladesh Constitution of 1972 upheld the repeal of the 'tribal area' status and allowed Bengalis to settle in the hills in increased numbers, ostensibly to take out population pressure of the teeming plains and avowedly to bring the Hill Tracts within the ambit of a unilingual and unicultural nation. Increased Bengal presence led eviction of indigenous groups. In 1871, Bengalis comprised less than 2% of the population of CHT; today, they are almost 50% of its total, a situation that makes bleak the future of the ethnic peoples of the Hill Tracts.

The case of Sittwe has always been different from that of CHT. Historically, Arakan had received small waves of Bengali Brahmins by the end of the 16th century AD. But the sum of Hindu emigrants from Bengal is insignificant compared to the large number of Bengali Muslims brought in as captives by Arakan kings, especially Meng Razagyi (1593-1612) when he occupied Sandip and Chittagong. Legally set-

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Tibeto-Burman (TB) vs. Total Population of CHT, CADC, South Tripura & Sittwe (1871-2001)

		1871-2	1901	1931	1961	1981	1991	2001
CHT	TB	61,957 (98.3%)	116,000 (93%)	... ...	... ...	441,776 (59.2%)	501,144 (51.4%)	n/a
	Total	63,054	124,762	212,922	385,079	746,649	974,445	n/a
CADC	TB	... ...	... ...	... ...	... ...	... ...	32,864 (100%)	36,309 (100%)
	Total	...	...	...	...	...	32,864	36,309
South Tripura	TB	... ...	48,875 (73.4%)	73,853 (57.5%)	116,426 (33%)	189,942 (34.9%)	326,353 (42%)	285,769 (37.2%)
	Total	...	66,572	128,416	352,632	543,602	766,014	767,440
Sittwe	TB	214,821 (77.6%)	325,344 (67.5%)	389,561 (61.1%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	276,671	481,666	637,580	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Sources: BBG II, 1880; *Census of Tripura* 1931; *Census of India* 1931, 1961, 1981, 1991 and 2001; *Census of Pakistan* 1961; Local Administration Office (Census), Kamalanagar; Office of the Registrar General & Directorate of Census Operations, Tripura.

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tled in lower Koladan, they intermixed with local Rakhines to become the progenitors of the Rohingyas. *Kulā* is the Rakhine term for Bengali and *dān* (or '*thān*') the native's corruption of Pali *thāna* (< IA स्थान *sthāna*, 'place'). In 1872, there were 2,655 Hindus in Sittwe (then Akyab) while the Muslim population of that district was 58,255, the figure comprising mainly coolies and agricultural labourers from Chittagong. Higher wages in Arakan compared to the little the labourer earned in Bengal was the chief attraction; initially, the majority of labourers would return to Chittagong at the close of the agricultural season but in the late 19th and early 20th century, thousands of them settled permanently in Buthidaung, Maungdaw and Mrauk-U Townships. The population structure of Sittwe changed; the Tibeto-Burman population plummeted from 77.6% in 1872 to 67.5% in 1901. In 1931, there were 242,081 Muslims in that district alone; during the Nagamin identity-card operations of 1978, more than a million Rohingyas entered Chittagong to escape persecution by Burmans. Even today, the *Tatmadaw* ('military junta') continues to evict Rohingyas from that district; their land and houses are confiscated and then turned to model villages in which (Buddhist) Rakhine nationals are relocated.

In the native state of Hill Tripura, the first census was carried out in 1872; the report (ARHT 1873: §8) shows 34,000 inhabitants, out of which 20,000 were hill tribes, while Tibeto-Burman Manipuris (their number unspecified) were roped in with Bengalis (chiefly Muslims) among the 14,000 inhabitants of the plains along the western strip. No district-wise break up of population is shown in that estimate. In 1901, Tibeto-Burmans composed 73.4% of the total population of South Tripura (then comprising Belonia and Sonamura Subdivisions); the percentage fell sharply to 57.3% in 1931. From 1910, Bengali Muslims from East Bengal began emigrating in large numbers, lured into the fertile stretches of cultivable lowland along the river valleys; the Census of 1931 (Deb-

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barma 1934: 29) describes them as more efficient and sedulous than Bengali Hindus. In the table below, variation in Muslim population of South Tripura is shown against the total of non-Tibeto-Burmans (NTB) in the 20th century:

Non-Tibeto-Burman vs. Muslim Population, South Tripura

Census Year	1901	1931	1961	1991	2001
Muslims	15,576 (80%)	45,196 (82.8%)	122,485 (51.8%)	32,390 (7.4%)	38,999 (8%)
NTB-total	17,697	54,563	236,206	439,661	481,671

Sources: Census of Tripura 1931; *Census of India* 1961, 1981 & 1991. Office of the Registrar General, Tripura, & Directorate of Census Operations, Tripura, for population by religious communities 2001.

Between 1901 and 1931, the Tibeto-Burman population of South Tripura declined by 16% following emigration of a large number of Bengali Muslims, from the Eastern Bengal districts of Comilla ('Tipperah' in British records) and Noakhali. In 1947, British India was partitioned; the creation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan saw a transfer of population between the divided nations. The migration of Muslims to East Pakistan which then began continued for some time after the Bangladesh War in 1971 but that did not conspicuously alter the percentile figure of the non-Tibeto-Burman population of Tripura, because the emptied slot resulting from Muslim migration was soon filled by Hindus crossing over into the state. In the following decades, Hindu population increased by manifold times, the clamour against 'outsiders' in the state eventually leading to the ethnic riots (the Mandai massacre) of 1980. In 1991, the Tibeto-Burman population of South Tripura increased to 42% from 35% in 1981, owing primarily to the influx of Chakma refugees from the Hill Tracts. 'By the beginning of the 1980s the situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts had become characterised by army atrocities, popular insurgence, and continued government-

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supported immigration of poor Bengali peasants' (Mey *Ibid.*: 29). On the plea of "neutralising" the Shanti Bahini, a policy of punitive repression was launched against the ethnic peoples of CHT. After the genocides at Bhusanchhara and Chota Harina (under Barkal PS) in June 1984, about 5,000 Chakma refugees tried to enter Mizoram, but the Government of Mizoram refused to let them in (Chakma 2002: 68). Two years later, in 1986, about 65,000 tribal refugees, mostly Chakmas, entered Tripura (*Ibid.*: 68); this time, they were allowed to stay at various refugee camps in South Tripura. After the elections of June 1996, a democratically elected Awami League came to power in Bangladesh, and on December 2 the following year, a peace treaty was signed with the Shanti Bahini (PCJSS). The return of 45,000 Chakma refugees to CHT is the main reason behind the plunge in Tibeto-Burman population of South Tripura from 42% in 1991 to 37.2% in 2001.

The total area of CADC is merely 1445 sq. miles. In 1953, the Pawi-Lakher Autonomous Regional Council (PLARC) was created under the Mizo District Council. But when Mizoram got its Union Territory status in 1972, the PLARC was restructured into three separate autonomous bodies – Lai, Pawi and Chakma Autonomous District Councils. In 1901, only 198 Chakmas were known to have lived at Demagiri (now Tlabung). The number multiplied over the decades and in 1941, there were 5,088 Chakmas in the South Lushai Hills. That figure included the Tanchangya families then legally settled at Lokkisury. Besides Chakmas and Tanchangyas, there were some Tippera (probably Uchai) emigrants from CHT. By 1945, restrictions on settlement of Chakmas and Tipperas were in force in the South Lushai Hills.

The following extract is from the Copy to Superintendent, Lushai Hills vide No. 173D/C/III-19 of 23.3.44, signed E.S. Hyde, Superintendent, South Lushai Hills, dated Lungleh, March 21, 1944; it pertains to the settlement of Chakmas in the South Lushai Hills.

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'The following principles will be observed in dealing with Chakma (and Tippera) settlement and bastis in the South Lushai Hills:–

'(i) Owing to the large number of Chakmas now settled in the South Lushai Hills, most of whom have considerable families, no further applications for settlement will be considered but for the most exceptional reasons.

'(ii) No passes for new separate houses will be considered except where the applicant is

(a) the grown-up married son of a Chakma who has been settled for at least ten years in the Lushai Hills,

(b) the grown-up married grandson of such a settler.

'In both these cases the applicant must also be a permanent resident of the Lushai Hills. Passes for daughters will not be considered. If those marry outside Chakmas, they must go to their husbands' villages. If they marry Lushai Chakmas the husband will be covered by the rules above....'

The population of CADC is indicated in the records of the Local Administration Office, Kamalanagar, as 100% Tibeto-Burman. There are some Bengali traders and government employees in the autonomous district council. A few of them have intermarried with Chakmas and Tanchangyas, and they now live there permanently.

3.2.2 *Tanchangya population in the region*

In 1819, Tanchangyas numbered 4000 (Lewin 1869: 65). The 1871 Census of CHT does not give a separate Tanchangya population but Lewin (1869: 65f.) estimated the presence of 2500 individuals in the district alone; their number in Arakan for the same census year is not available. In the 1911 Census of Burma, 954 Daingnaks (spelt 'Daingnet') are returned under 'Race' and 919 individuals under 'Language.' There was probably some inaccuracy in that enumeration.

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In the preliminary stage of the Linguistic Census of Burma, 1917, we have 242 languages and dialects returned, out of which number about 177 were not included in the Census of 1911. Daingnet (assigned Serial No. 13) is put together with Chin (12) and M'hang (14) under Subgroup 'Unclassed' of the Kuki-Chin Group while Thet or Sak (10) is placed with Yindu (4), Chinbôk (5), Chinbôn (6), Baungshe (7), Khami (8), Anu (9) and Taungtha (Chaungtha 11) under Subgroup 'Southern Chin' of the same language group (LSB 1917: xii). In 1917, a total of 4,463 Daingnaks were living across the northern parts of the Akyab district (*Ibid.*: 13). Their number increased in 1921, 'probably due to more accurate enumeration' (*Census of India* 1931, XI-I: 187), and Daingnet, like Sak and Kadu, is placed in the 'Sak Group.' Given below is the population of the Sak group in Burma during the Census years 1921-1931 (*Ibid.* 186-7):

Sak Groups in Burma	1921		1931	
	Race	*Language*	*Race*	*Language*
Kadu	37,710 (74.6%)	18,594 (73.7%)	36,400 (70.2%)	20,305 (57.6%)
Ganan	6,474 (12.8%)	1,022 (4%)	7,182 (13.9%)	7,144 (20.3%)
Taman	815 (1.6%)	92 (0.4%)	1,190 (2.3%)	938 (2.7%)
Sak	614 (1.2%)	614 (2.4%)	693 (1.3%)	691 (1.9%)
Daingnet	4,928 (9.8%)	4,915 (19.5%)	6,355 (12.3%)	6,159 (17.5%)
Total	50,541	25,237	51,820	35,237

Sak and Daingnak are shown only in the Akyab district of Burma, living around the northern parts of Maungdaw township. The population of Daingnak or Tanchangya in CHT in

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the Census of 1931 was not enumerated separately but put together with Chakma. In 1955-57, Löffler conducted field studies in the Hill Tracts; his estimate of the ethnic population for 1956 is as follows:

Ethnic population of CHT in 1956
(Brauns & Löffler 1990: 37)

Chakma	140,000
Tanchangya (spelt 'Tongcengya')	15,000
Marma	80,000
Sak	2,000
Khyang	1,000
Tippera	30,000
Mrung/ Riang	7,000
Mru	17,000
Khumi	2,500
Bawm	3,500
Pangkhua	1,500
Lushai	500
Total	300,000

Tanchangya is not among the Scheduled Tribes recognised by the Constitution of India. That makes enumerators avoid the ethnonym in their reports. In South Tripura, their ethnic identification is also complicated by their use of Chakma as surname, while the Bengalis of Belonia, Muhuripur, Baikhora and Shantirbazaar identify them as Mags (Marma), the dominant Buddhist population of the district. The Census of Tripura for 1931 returns no Chakma in Belonia and Udaipur subdivisions which is confirmed by statements of Tanchangya arrival and settlement in those parts.

In 1961, a total of 428 Chakmas were returned from Gaburchhara, Mahendra Chakma Para and Doluchhara under Muhuripur Tehsil, and from Kaliprasad Para (now within Devipur), Joyhind Chakma Para (declared extinct in 1971), Durgaroy Pathar (East Manu), Chapiya Chakma Para (now

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Singhachhara), Malachand Baidya Para (Rajapur or Takkuma), etc. under Belonia Tehsil; they were all Tanchangyas. Out of 199 Tanchangyas from Udaipur (all returned as Chakma) in 1961, the majority were then settled at Marani; later, the hamlet was merged with other hamlets to form the Adipur village council. The names of these villages were acquired from *District Census Handbook* for South Tripura and *Special Tables for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes* for the Census years 1961 and 1971, and the sum of population checked against the total for ethnic group and their religious affiliation within the different subdivisions of that district. Where villages of 1961 were described as extinct in 1971, I personally undertook to inquire after the places where the populations had shifted. Most importantly, it was necessary to ascertain if those villages then contained purely Tanchangya population or had sections of Chakmas living with them. In this regard, I had to fall back on Tanchangya elders who easily recalled the names of older settlers and also specified precise lines of descent and the names of their living relatives. Asked if there were Chakmas living among them, they told me, 'Now there are one or two Anokya [Chakma] girls whom our boys have brought from Shilachhari and Natunbazaar. What can we do? Our fathers would not have allowed such things to happen. There was one Thuwang, grandfather of Nirmal Babu [a resident of Devipur, one of my informants], who went with some families to live at Shilachhari but when an Anokya wanted to marry his daughter, he left that place and came back to Tuichungma [Devipur]. That happened sometime before Taslampha [Rajprasad Riang Choudhury] became minister.' Shilachhari is in the Amarpur Subdivision (South Tripura); it is an old Chakma settlement dating back to 1873, when the first group of 400 Chakmas emigrated from CHT. But no Chakma family has ever lived in any of the nine villages wherein Tanchangyas are now settled. This was confirmed by their Bru and Marma neighbours. The

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figures for 1991-2001 too were worked out in analogous manner. Despite the method, I would allow about 2% deviation in reconstructing the estimate for the year 1991 when there were Chakma refugees all over South Tripura.

Today, Tanchangyas are mainly concentrated in CHT, where the majority (47%) lives; only 3.3% lives in Tripura and a slightly higher 9.7% in Mizoram.

Tanchangya Population in India, Bangladesh and Myanmar 1931-2001

	1931	1961	1991	2001	2005
CHT	n/a	n/a	19,217	28441*	35267 *
South Tripura	150	627	1,632	2,257	2,467
CADC	100	n/a	5,352	6,465	6,387
Outside CADC (in Mizoram)	00	n/a	n/a	n/a	925
Sittwe	6,355	n/a	n/a	n/a	30,000 *
Total	-	-	-	-	75,046

Sources: Census of India (1931, 1961, 1991); Census of Bangladesh 1991 (revised figures, Hill District Council, Rangamati); office of Registrar General, Tripura, & Directorate of Census Operations, Tripura; and 2005 Survey by the author.
*The figures for CHT 2001 and 2005 are calculated in terms of growth rate 1.48 as proposed by PEDP, while Tanchangya population of Sittwe is the mean of the native's own estimate (40,000) and that of the non-native (20,000).

Like all ethnic peoples of CHT, Tanchangyas do not consider government census figures to be entirely accurate; their own estimates are several times higher than the official figures.

For the CADC figure against the year 1931, an average of seven members per family is multiplied by the fourteen families that had settled with Devicharan in the South Lushai Hills; the figure is then rounded to 100 individuals. No relevant demographic data could be collected for reconstructing the Tanchangya population in Lushai Hills for 1961. The estimate for 2001 was provided by the Local Administration Office, Kamalanagar. In 2005, the total Tanchangya popula-

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tion of CADC was 6387; their distribution is shown in the table in p.113. Outside CADC, Tanchangyas also live in eight villages, mostly in LADC, while Amchhari (Tuipuibari), a grouped village with 2675 Chakma inhabitants, lies further north on the Sajek.

Compared to the figures of 2001, about 1.2 % decline is seen the Tanchangya population of CADC in 2005, the principal reason behind which has been the movement of many families out of CADC to LADC. There has also been some movement within CADC especially between Damdep I and Chotoguisury II. A small number of families migrated to CHT. These movements occurred mainly between 2001 and 2004, affecting the demographic structure of mainly six villages.

Name of Village	2001	2002	2003	2004
Damdep I	864	864	792	685
		(±0)	(–72)	(–107)
Chotoguisury I	254	254	322	350
		(±0)	(+68)	(+28)
Chotoguisury II	267	274	253	415
		(+7)	(–21)	(+162)
Silosora	368	162	148	157
		(–206)	(–14)	(+9)
Bilosora	347	352	323	317
		(+5)	(–29)	(–6)
Bandukbhanga	376	384	300	277
		(+8)	(–84)	(–23)

Source : Local Administration Office (Census), Kamalanagar.

Unlike Tanchangyas in South Tripura, those living in CADC use the surname 'Tonchangya,' not 'Chakma,' and also insist that they differ culturally from Chakma.

In South Tripura, a house-to-house survey was carried out with pre-formatted sheets in which each householder was required to return the number and composition of the fami-

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Tanchangya hamlets of Mizoram and South Tripura, their population, 2005

Village	Tanchangya			In Tanchangya Family through Alliance (excluded from Total)					
	M	F	T	Chakma	Tippera	Bru	Marma	Bengali	Mizo
Adipur	140	133	273	03F	00	01F	00	00	00
Aloychhara	81	76	157	00	2F	02F	00	00	00
Barbari (East Manu)	18	16	34	00	00	00	00	00	00
Devipur	331	311	642	06 F	00	01F	01M	01M	00
Dulyachhara	197	182	379	00	00	00	00	00	00
Kathalia	23	17	40	00	00	00	00	00	00
Ratanpur	289	273	562	04F, 03M	00	02F	02F, 01M	00	00
Tainani	138	139	277	00	00	00	00	00	00
Takkuma (Rajapur)	52	51	103	00	00	00	00	00	00
Total	1269	1198	2467	13F, 03M	02F	06F	02M, 02F	01M	00

Tanchangya villages in Mizoram (outside CADC) and their population, 2005

Amchhari	11	12	23	04F	00	00	00	00	00
Chamdurtlang II	64	52	116	00	00	00	00	00	00
Chikurlui	53	56	109	00	00	00	00	00	00
Kawnpui (Langthlai)	68	64	132	04M	00	00	00	00	00
Ngalemlui	63	55	118	00	00	00	00	00	00
Saibaw	74	72	146	03F, 02M	00	00	00	00	00
Saikhawthlir	33	31	64	00	00	00	00	00	00
Vaseikai	116	101	217	05F	00	00	00	00	00
Total	482	443	925	12F, 06M	00	00	00	00	00

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Villages in CADC	*Tanchangya*			*In Tanchangya Family through Alliance (excluded from Total)*					
	M	F	T	Chakma	Tippera	Bru	Marma	Bengali	Mizo
Bandukbhanga	219	235	454	12F, 9M	00	00	00	00	00
Bilosora	191	185	376	05F, 3M	00	00	00	00	00
Boraguisury	261	261	522	23F, 7M	00	00	00	00	00
Borakabakhali	238	243	481	08F	00	00	00	00	00
Boroituli	13	10	23	02F, 01M	00	00	00	00	00
Chotoguisury I	195	163	358	00	00	00	00	00	00
Chotoguisury II	134	131	265	01M	00	00	00	00	00
Dursora	134	144	278	00	00	00	00	00	00
Fulsora	121	117	238	03F, 01M	00	00	00	00	00
Fultuli	161	167	328	00	00	00	00	00	00
Gerasury	84	81	165	00	00	00	00	00	00
Gobasury	116	111	227	00	00	00	00	00	00
Kukurdulya	129	116	245	05F	00	00	00	00	00
Longpuighat	183	169	352	03F	00	00	00	02M	00
Mainabapsora I	231	197	428	00	00	00	00	00	00
Mainabapsora II	07	04	11	00	00	00	00	00	00
Damdep I	417	391	808	13F, 02M	00	00	00	00	00
Rengkhasya	08	07	15	01F	00	00	00	00	00
Silosora	101	96	197	00	00	00	00	00	00
Siminesora	166	138	304	00	00	00	00	00	00
Vaseithlang	164	148	312	03F, 01M	00	00	00	00	00
Total	3273	3114	6387	78F, 25M	00	00	00	02M	00

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Distribution of Tanchangya gosās in villages of Mizoram and South Tripura, 2005

In South Tripura

	DG			KG			LB			MeG			MoG			MuG		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
Adipur	00	00	00	273	140	133	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Aloychhara	00	00	00	144	79	65	01	00	01	07	02	05	04	00	04	01	00	01
Barbari	00	00	00	34	18	16	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Devipur	00	00	00	637	331	306	00	00	00	03	00	03	00	00	00	02	00	02
Dulyachhara	00	00	00	379	197	182	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Kathalia	00	00	00	40	23	17	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Ratanpur	08	05	03	36	12	24	07	03	04	175	92	83	253	132	121	83	45	38
Tainani	00	00	00	277	138	139	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Takkuma	00	00	00	99	52	47	00	00	00	02	00	02	02	00	02	00	00	00
Total (2467)	08	05	03	1919	990	929	08	03	05	187	94	93	259	132	127	86	45	41
Outside CADC																		
Amchhari	00	00	00	23	11	12	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Chamdurtlang II	00	00	00	11	08	03	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	105	56	49
Chikurlui	00	00	00	00	00	00	05	02	03	00	00	00	16	06	10	88	45	43
Kawnpui	00	00	00	27	14	13	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	105	54	51
Ngalemlui	32	17	15	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	03	03	00	83	43	40
Saibaw	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	48	21	27	00	00	00	98	53	45
Saikhawthlir	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	64	33	31
Vaseikai	102	53	49	00	00	00	06	04	02	00	00	00	00	00	00	109	59	50
Total	134	70	64	61	33	28	11	06	05	48	21	27	19	09	10	652	343	309

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In CADC

	DG			KG			LB			MeG			MoG			MuG		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
Bandukbhanga	86	42	44	132	65	67	12	07	05	24	10	14	79	39	40	121	56	65
Bilosora	68	32	36	143	71	72	00	00	00	00	00	00	70	37	33	95	51	44
Boraguisury	69	36	33	28	14	14	23	11	12	25	12	13	43	20	23	334	168	166
Borakabakhali	47	22	25	58	30	28	09	03	06	26	15	11	39	21	18	302	147	155
Boroituli (23)	17	12	05	03	00	03	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	03	01	02
Chotoguisury I	35	19	16	23	13	10	20	11	09	22	13	09	17	12	05	241	127	114
Chotoguisury II	43	23	20	00	00	00	03	00	03	16	07	09	00	00	00	203	104	99
Dursora	33	18	15	08	03	05	05	00	05	00	00	00	15	06	09	217	107	110
Fulsora	17	08	09	36	19	17	02	02	00	00	00	00	03	00	03	180	92	88
Fultuli	63	26	37	186	93	93	08	05	03	00	00	00	39	18	21	32	19	13
Gerasury	43	21	22	26	10	16	00	00	00	03	00	03	17	12	05	76	41	35
Gobasury	46	25	21	92	45	47	00	00	00	31	16	15	00	00	00	58	30	28
Kukurdulya	32	19	13	00	00	00	00	00	00	21	10	11	19	11	08	173	89	84
Longpuighat	141	77	64	31	16	15	11	05	06	06	03	03	11	05	06	152	77	75
Mainabapsora I	37	21	16	24	17	07	08	05	03	21	14	07	19	14	05	319	160	159
Mainabapsora II	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	11	07	04
Damdep I	73	38	35	67	37	30	09	06	03	35	19	16	102	60	42	522	257	265
Rengkhasya	09	05	04	06	03	03	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
Silosora	132	67	65	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	13	07	06	52	27	25
Siminesora	75	41	34	101	55	46	07	04	03	06	05	01	24	14	10	91	47	44
Vaseithlang	107	58	49	23	14	09	10	06	04	00	00	00	09	04	05	163	82	81
Total	1173	610	563	987	505	482	127	65	62	236	124	112	519	280	239	3345	1689	1656
Gosā Total	1315	685	630	2967	1528	1439	146	74	72	471	239	232	797	421	376	4083	2077	2006

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ly (in terms of male-female ratio, kinship affiliation, and occurrences, if any, of intermarriages in the family), literacy and educational status (including information on whether or not attended schools), and occupation mentioning principal source of family income. A similar study could not be undertaken in CHT and Sittwe owing to constraints already mentioned.

In numerical strength, the Tanchangya stands fifth among the ethnic groups of CHT. According to the 1991 Census of Bangladesh, their total population in the country was 21,639, out of which 19211 individuals live in CHT. A revised estimate from Rangamati District Council shows their population as 19,217 in two districts of Rangamati and Bandarban. There are no Tanchangyas in the Khagrachhari District.

Tanchangya Population of Bangladesh in 1991

District	*Bangladesh Census*	*Revised Figures for CHT*
Rangamati	13,718	13, 718
Bandarban	5,493	5,499
Chittagong	1846	...
Chaudanga	582	
Total in CHT	19,211	19,217
Total in Bangladesh	21,639	...

There seems to be some mistake with Chaudanga; probably, the figure given against it is the one for the Tanchangya population living in the Cox Bazaar District, wherein at least seven villages (Amtali, Chingchhari, Chingkhali, Ghargontuli, Hoaikhyoung, Hlaturi Khalla and Madarbuniya) with Tanchangya families (number unascertained) affiliated to *Daingnyā gosā* have been located under Teknaaf and Ukhiya PS. Many of them use 'Chakma' as surname. In the Chittagong District, the ethnic group (predominantly *Kārwā gosā*) is found mostly at Rashyabil and Jangalbaghabil under Ran-

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gunia PS; here most of them use 'Tanchangya' as surname. In the Rangamati District, they are mostly concentrated in villages under Bilaichhari/ Rainkhyoung, Kaptai and Rajasthali PS; a smaller number lives at different places under Juraichhari, Kowakhali and Rangamati Sadar. In Bandarban district, most Tanchangya villages are under Bandarban Sadar and Rowanchhari PS, while a small section lives in about seven villages (Boroitali, Pagala Para, Pagala Headman Para, Patrajiri, Tombru Headman Para, Tombru-nich Para and Rejve Para) under Naikhyoungchhari PS.

3.2.3 *Kinship-based concentration of Tanchangya population*

At the close of the nineteenth century, the Tanchangya's traditional kinship-based organisation, the *gosā*, disintegrated (*see infra* § 5.5); nevertheless, even in their present settlement pattern there are indications to the significant roles that kinship groups played in former times. The data collected from South Tripura shows that the typical Tanchangya hamlet is composed of families usually affiliated to one kinship group. In CADC, much intermixture went into their settlements in the 1960s when sub-villages were grouped into larger village councils. Easy crossing-over from CHT to CADC and vice-versa has also affected the demographic composition of older hamlets; nevertheless, one does not fail to discover higher incidence of *gosā* domination in villages such as Kawnpui, Chamdurtlang II, Chotoguisury I and II, Dursora, Fulsora, Saikhawthlir, etc.

Unless a similar survey of the Tanchangya population in CHT and Sittwe is carried out, it will never be possible to know the total numerical strength of each *gosā* and the exact pattern of their distribution.

In Tanchangya villages of South Tripura, except Ratanpur, marital alliances are confined to the kinship group; an early KG-MeG marriage occurred about thirty years ago, the KG woman now lives at Ratanpur with her husband and

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two sons. During the last ten years, KG Devipur has brought in a few brides from the other *gosās* of Ratanpur while some of their own maidens have been given away in marriage to MeG and MoG grooms. MuG is now not averse to intermarrying with other *gosās* but the tendency is to rotate alliances among the 14 families that originally settled in Gaburchhara in the 1930s. The kinship groups, MeG and MoG, which arrived together at Ratanpur in 1930 now make a composite village-community, freely intermarrying with each other.

Instances of intermarriages with other ethnic groups, including Chakmas, continue to be low. The Tanchangya's dominant ethnic neighbour in this district is the Bru; there are some Tipperas and Uchais and a considerable number of Marmas. With the Tippera, Bru or Uchai, intermarrying is avoided as far as practicable; yet, if anything of that kind were to occur, the prevailing rule is to bring in wives, not give away their own maidens. Should a Tanchangya maiden marry a Bru or Tippera in ways other than *ghar-jāmāi-tulānā* (wherein the groom comes to live with the girl in the house of her father), it is most certain that she will not find favour with her own people again.

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4. *Material Culture*

Adjustment to the rainforest habitat and exploitation of the ecological niches available within that habitat are among the few things that can be most certainly said about the Tanchangya. In the pursuit of mimetic strategies for subsistence, they are like the other hill groups living in the region – Mru, Chakma, Marma, Khyang, etc. Their houses too are made of bamboo, thatch grass and logs, and the material for their homespun is the cotton that grows in the hills; yet, so typical is the layout of the Tanchangya's dwelling house that one has no difficulty in identifying it. The same thing may be said of the manner in which their womenfolk wear the homespun. Other material artefacts, including those related to personal decoration, will be examined in course of this chapter.

4.1 *The dwelling house*

As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, Tanchangyas live in houses made chiefly of bamboo and thatch grass. But since they do not change village sites as frequently as Khumis do, their houses are built strongly, and bamboo along with wooden posts are used for uprights. The entire work is done by males; a completed house bears indelible signs of aesthetics being superseded by concern for utility and regard for time-honoured conventions. Windows are not kept; instead, small openings are cut on the outer walls to let in sufficient

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air, which makes the interiors comfortable during summer. On extremely windy days and through the cold season, these openings are kept closed.

4.1.1 *Selection of site*

The foremost requirement for a new house is a suitable plot of ground. Too high elevations are not preferred; a low ridge close to a water source would be the ideal choice. No Tanchangya will ever build his house at the point where a stream starts; he will also avoid places around the gorge. Fear of spirits keeps him away from the vicinity of graveyard and ruined *kyang* ('a Buddhist temple'). Should he sight pits and caves, holes and anthills about a place, verily he avoids it and seeks out a different plot elsewhere. In the Tanchangya's world, spirits are acknowledged owners of land, and should a site be discovered as haunted after one has built his house on it, the village *vaidya* ('priest') is called in to perform such propitiatory rites as would allow the house-builder to get the plot leased from its spirit-owner.

4.1.2 *Auspicious days and ceremonies*

When a plot of ground has been selected for a new house, the Tanchangya may start construction once he has cleared it of the jungle and adjusted the uneven ground around the approach by moving the upper soil. The best time for building new houses is before the monsoons set in; patch-up work is usually done after the rains. Tuesdays and Wednesdays are inauspicious to start the work of construction. As a rule, a hole is first dug up for the ceremonial post, the *muh-khām*, which is then decked on the top with things to ward off the evil eye – a bow and arrow, a few mango leaves and a tender shoot of plantain. This decking is never interfered with, and long after the shoot and the leaves have decayed and fallen, the bow and arrow are seen securely perched in their assigned position, on the upper part of the post.

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Ceremonial post decked with bow and arrow

If the householder is a man of some means, he invites the village *vaidya* to perform a site-blessing ceremony, which takes less than an hour. The *vaidya* sprinkles sanctified water, *ghilā-kasai pāni*, in the hole for the ceremonial post. Scrapings of gold and silver, occasionally even old silver coins are put into the hole. In the KG-custom, additional holes are dug around the main hole and small bamboo cylinders (filled with water) put into them. Always after the sprinkling of *ghilā-kasai pāni*, a tiny scroll or a small pebble with an *āng* ('a cryptic sign as charm') drawn on it is placed inside the hole for the *muh-khām*; the belief is that if there are malevolent spirits living on the plot or nearby, the benevolent *āng* deity will drive it away. A *mantra* is muttered to invoke the inert spirit of the *āng*. Before closing the ceremony, the *vaidya* also puts four *āngs* at approximate points where the corner posts will be set up. Later the same day, a munificent host invites relatives and friends to a small feast of pork and rice-beer. A poor swidden-farmer will acquire the same charms from the *vaidya* by paying him a few rupees.

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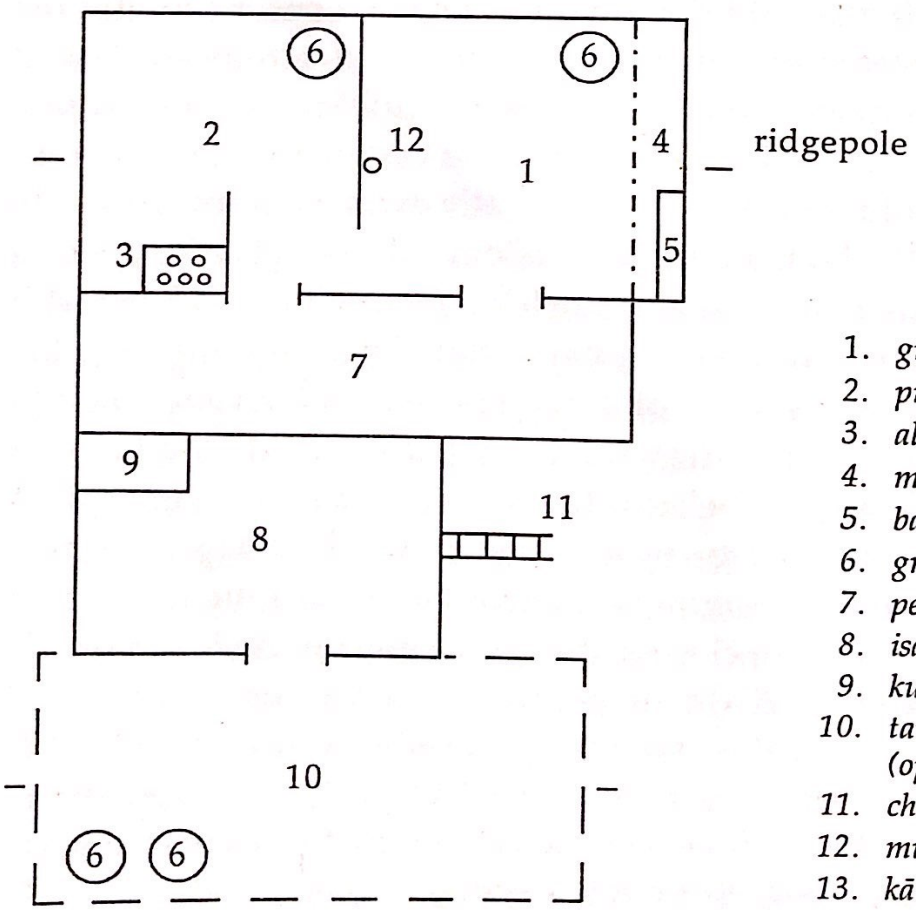
Once the ceremonial post is planted, construction begins from the next day. In former times, villagers assisted one other in building houses but that convention has been replaced by paid labour. If a son goes to build a new house for himself in the same plot where his father's house stands, the rule says that his house cannot look directly at the face of his father's house. The same rule applies when the older house belongs to father's brother or an older male sibling.

4.1.3 *Structure of the māchā-ghar*

The Tanchangya ယာယတ် *māchā-ghar* ('platform house') is wider than it is long, its bamboo floor raised five to seven feet above the ground by means of uprights, *thuni*. Addi-

KG Tanchangya house with inside kitchen.



1. *gudi*
2. *pinā*
3. *alainsāl*
4. *mangāin*
5. *bamboo seat*
6. *granary*
7. *pesāng*
8. *isar*
9. *kumghar*
10. *tang-ghar (optional)*
11. *chāngu*
12. *muh-khām*
13. *kānechāl*

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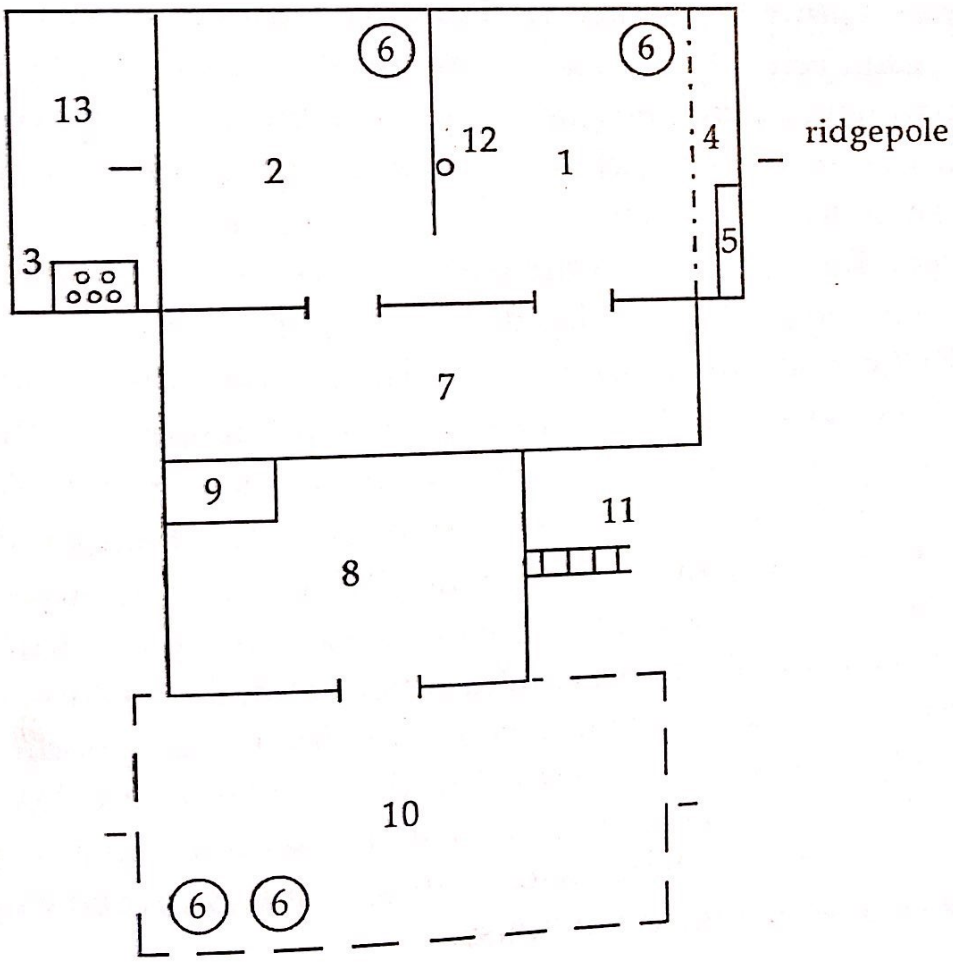
tional flooring for the portico (*pesāng*) is laid out in the front, as in a split-level house, about six to eight inches lower than the inner floor. This invariably extends on one side to make the hypaethral *isa* ('*isar*' in KG) which has high fencing around it to prevent accidental falling over. The *isar* is used mainly for washing and bathing but a part of it serves as *kum-ghar* ('place for storing water'). All kitchen trash is thrown under the *isar* for the livestock. A piece of roughly hewn timber for ladder, *chāngu*, gives the only access to the house.

Bamboo splits are plaited together to make house walls, called *ber* in KG (as also in Chakma) and *besegā* in the other *gosā* dialects of Tanchangya. Each wall is given a different name, after the function it performs or the position it occu-

Tanchangya house with kitchen on the outerside of pinā.



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The leaning wall of Mang-gāin.

pies within the structure. Literally, *māsi-ber* or *māsi-besegā* means 'central partition'; it divides the house into two compartments, *pinā* and *gudi*, approachable through two front doors. In the *pinā*, children or unmarried members of the family live, while the householder and his wife lodge in the *gudi*. But the same compartments are used for other purposes too (*see* § 4.1.4). Inside the *gudi*, one sees the *muh-khām* on the inner side of the *māsi-ber*. The central partition is joined to the back wall, the *sidāna-ber* or *sirāna-besegā*, but there is always on the inner side of the front wall a decent passage to move freely between the compartments. Tanchangyas do not cut any doors in the back wall. A DG or MuG house has separate cooking room, called *kānechāl*, on the outer flank of the pina. In a KG house, on the other hand, the cooking place, *alainsāl*, is inside the *pinā*, as in a Chakma house, partitioned off in one corner with a short wall called *lāsura-ber*. Literally, *lāsur* means 'ill at ease,' and the wall is so named because it is there to save the housewife from uneasiness caused by presence of strangers in the house.

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The roofs are strongly built on a framework of bamboo rafters that slope either ways from the ridgepole. This is then reinforced by bamboo battens placed over and under the rafters and tied at all points of bisection with bark rope or stout cane. After the whole structure has been made, thatching starts from the lowest point of the roof, the builder climbing steadily up the slope towards the ridgepole as he lays bundles of thatch one over the other in successive layers. This makes the roof waterproof for at least three to four years.

The most difficult part to construct is the *mang-gāin* wall, which leans outwards from the *gudī* side. This wall is typical of the Tanchangya house and great skill is needed to make it. In former times, when a newly married groom first went to visit his father-in-law, a couple of days after the wedlock, it was customary of him to make a new *mang-gāin* for the latter's house or repair the existing one. It was a veritable test of the young man's skill in house building, and success earned him esteem among his in-laws. From the level of the platform floor, the incline increases until the wall leans outward maximally to about a height of four feet. At that point, it is joined by a thatched shed, which triangularly slopes down from the wedge of the roof.

My Tanchangya informants could not recall any tradition referring to the leaning wall of the *mang-gāin* but a bamboo seat on the inside could probably be the place of a household deity whose adoration has fallen into disuse. It is now used to keep clothes, boxes and other articles; in some houses though, there were cheap clay-images of Buddha. Despite everything, Tanchangyas acknowledge two deities, one male and another female, as guardian spirits of household prosperity. Inside the house, the seat of the female deity is around the base of the ceremonial post, and outsiders are never permitted to sit near it. But wherein does the male deity of the household reside? Frankly, the Tanchangya today has no idea about it.

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These is no inside toilet in a Tanchangya house and every family uses its own lavatory, which is several yards away, at the back of the house on the edge of a slope to allow natural water run-off. Where descent slopes are not available, large toilet holes are dug. Bamboo and roughly hewn timber are used for toilet floorboard. Jungles growing along the path are regularly cleared to avoid accidental stepping over snakes. At night, of course, grown-ups make good use of spaces on the edges of the house-compound to spend a penny but for little ones, the *isar* is all right. A woman at an advanced stage of pregnancy may use the back of the *isar* at night. With the livestock around, one easily avoids the stench of human excreta and decaying kitchen garbage.

4.1.4 *Accommodation in the māchā-ghar*

The whole family sleeps on the bamboo-plaited floor, placing mats and blankets underneath. Blanket to wrap the body is availed of in winter and, occasionally, during the monsoons, when continual rain and strong breeze make the night cold. Children, usually breast-feeding babies and toddlers, sleep with their parents in the *gudi*, but once they are grown up, they sleep the *pinā*; then girls and boys must sleep separately. The married son will lodge with his wife in the *pinā* until it is time for him to shoulder the responsibilities of the house; his preference for a particular corner is given priority over unmarried siblings. In former times, if a householder had several married sons, only one of them stayed with him; the others went out with their spouses to live in separate houses. With the growth of a well-defined land rights system in the hills, and a redefining of the laws of inheritance, the older system of one son staying with the parents has fast changed. Where concrete and semi-concrete buildings have replaced the traditional *māchā-ghar*, houses are now so planned that a maximum number of male members of a growing family can be accommodated under a single roof.

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Traditionally, Chakmas divided their houses ('*māzā-ghar*') into several compartments, and large families dwelt in them. In a Tanchangya house, a partition wall may be set up inside to create extra living space but it not quite usual to subdivide the already existing compartments. The preference is always for spacious living rooms. When parents grow old or when the married son living them becomes a responsible householder, alternative arrangements are made. Should one go to a Tanchangya village, he is sure to find houses having *tang-ghar*, which is slightly smaller than the principal dwelling quarter but without any portico; it occupies the opposite end of an extended *isar*. In these large houses, the married son and his wife live in the *gudi*, their children occupy the *pinā* and householder's aged parents the *tang-ghar*.

Anyone accessing the house from outside must wash the hands and the feet on the *isar*, where bowls and tumblers are kept filled with water. Footwear is never taken inside the living rooms. Guests, *garbā*, are always welcome. Generally, elderly guests and relatives are accommodated in the householder's room, but friends of children will lodge in the *pinā*. When friends or neighbours call on for a chat, they sit on the *pesāng;* occasionally, the *gudi* is used.

Inside every house, against the back wall, one finds large baskets (*dingrā*) containing rice. Chakmas mark out the area of the inside granary, the *azaleng*, by putting up a partition wall about waist high. The Tanchangya *asalāin* (*āslāin*) dispenses with the partition wall. In larger households, a part of the *tang-ghar* is used as family granary. Tanchangya villages are not known to keep common village granaries.

4.2 *Food and drink*

At home, the first meal is taken in the morning, before the swidden farmer goes out to work, and he takes another meal in the evening, after returning home. A part of the food cooked in the morning is wrapped inside banana leaf and

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taken to the jum, where he eats it at noon. During the three-and-half months of ꯇꯥꯏꯅꯤ *rāinyā*, ('the fallow period'), the noon-time meal is taken at home.

Rice is eaten with vegetables, fish, eggs or meat. It is common for the family to dine together, squatting on the bamboo floor in a circular row with the food placed in the centre. But a daughter-in-law will conscientiously avoid taking her meal in the presence of the father-in-law or husband's elder brother should the latter call on the family on certain days. Vegetables, rice, curry and condiments are spooned up from separate utensils in a self-serve way. With guests around, the housewife, sometimes even the host himself does some serving. Everything is eaten with the hands. Many Tibeto-Burman groups favour eating from a common platter; their guests are also expected to do the same. But in this, the Tanchangya's sense of hygiene is commendable. No two individuals will eat from the same plate. With toddlers and children below five years, it is not minded though.

Homemade rice-beer is liberally consumed by grown-ups but it is almost never taken during the regular meals, when the whole family sits to dine together. A peg or two before dinner is believed to do much good to the stomach.

4.2.1 *The diet*

Rice is the staple food and it is eaten boiled. Fish, eggs, meat and vegetables are cooked in different ways. A condiment of hot chilli and onion, usually mixed with paste of dry-fish or shrimps is a good appetiser. Between mid-June and early January, several varieties of vegetables are produced in the *jum*, and with food supplements from local markets, the choice of seasonal edibles so varies that the Tanchangya's diet never becomes monotonous. The rainforests provide additional varieties of roots and tubers that the swidden cultivator does not grow in the *jum*. Particularly delectable is the tender shoot of the bamboo, which grows in abundance in the region and is

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Tanchangya (*Daingnyā gosā*) maidens in their village. The houses in the background show the *mang-gāin*.

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a favoured food item. Also eaten are all available varieties of freshwater fish. The domestic poultry supplies eggs and meat for the most part of the year. Pork features regularly in community feasts. Besides, Tanchangyas will eat almost anything that abounds in flesh. Existing game laws prohibit hunting within reserved forests but in remote hamlets, the hill dweller takes the opportunity of the absence of law enforcement groups to go after the straying deer or the wild hog. There is no taboo against taking beef, but where the Hindu population dominates, as in South Tripura, it is avoided out of deference of the latter's creed.

Jungles, marshes and streams provide several varieties of crabs, *tsarā kāngārā, bālik kāngārā*, etc. Of diverse species of tortoise found, the most favoured is the *phārwā duhr*, which thrives in jungles, among bamboo clumps. *Sidal* or *ngāpi* ('dry fish') is easily procured from local markets. Milk and milk-products are not particularly favoured. When work in the *jum* comes to a standstill, men may occasionally prepare food. Otherwise, it is the housewife who does the cooking for the family; the only respite she has from the monotonous chores of the kitchen is when there is a marriage feast or any social occasion in the neighbourhood.

4.2.2 *Food taboos*

The craving for meat is strong but among birds, *mynāh* (*Gracula religiosa*) and *bhimrāj* (*Dicrurus paradiseus*) are not eaten. Their ability to imitate human speech makes the Tanchangya hold them in deference. It could not be ascertained if these birds enjoyed a totemistic past but one native tradition relates their role in giving speech to man. It is said that a long time ago man used only gestures to communicate with others of his kind; he did not know how to speak. Then, one day, *Gosen* chose the *mynāh* to carry out his will. And as the *mynāh* flew down to earth, he saw that the land was vast, stretching from the point of the sunrise to that of the sunset,

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and there were so many people living on earth. At that moment, there came the *bhimrāj* and the *mynāh* now told him of how things had come to pass. When the *bhimrāj* offered to help, the *mynāh* gladly accepted it. But the *bhimrāj* was a poor learner; he learnt the words most imperfectly and made many mistakes too. And so, man got two languages, one that Tanchangyas use among themselves and another that their people do not understand.

Crows and vultures are avoided because of their carrion eating propensities. There is no taboo against eating reptiles but the *sankini* (*Bungarus fasciatus*) is avoided, and those who eat it are considered as wild and inferior people. Perhaps, the highly venomous and deceptive nature of this snake has compelled its exclusion from the Tanchangya's list of edibles. The meat of the tiger may be eaten but not that of the common cat about the house.

4.2.3 *The cooking place*

Cooking is done in the *alainsāl* (also *āhainsāl*) on a mud hearth made of five earthen blocks that are thickly plastered. Under it is an oblong plinth of clay, the *lip*; it is made thick to prevent fire from affecting the bamboo floor underneath. The largest earthen block, the *buremā* occupies the centre of the hearth; it is made of clay scooped out from the base of the ceremonial post. This is done to protect the hearth from the evil eye. For making the other blocks, identified by the umbrella term *pādalā*, the housewife uses clods of earth or pieces of bricks or flint, whichever is available.

On the walls around the hearth are bamboo-shelves for keeping light utensils, aluminium plates, pans, ladles, stirrers, pointed bamboo-sticks or slender iron-rods (for roasting or grilling), spoons and cups. Large earthen pots and wash-bowls are kept on the bamboo floor. Other things of everyday use include the *chumā* ('bamboo cylinder'), broom, iron chopper and small bundles of firewood.

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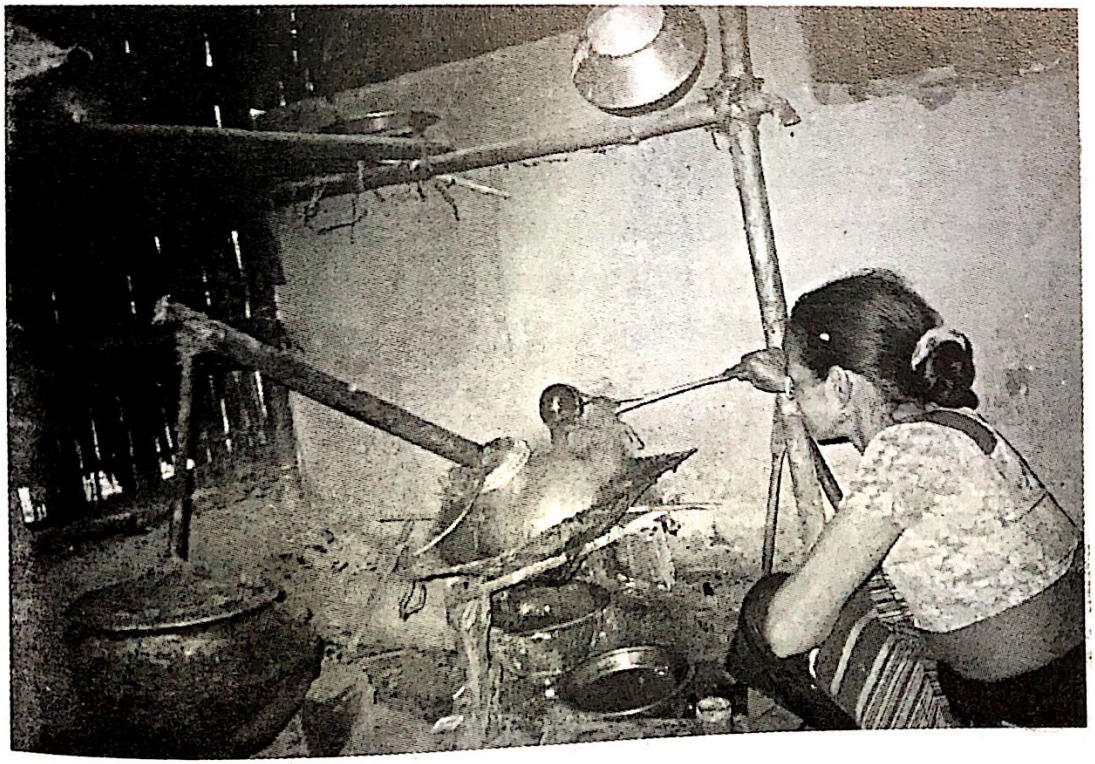
4.2.4 *Rice-beer*

Homemade rice-beer is a welcome stimulant and preferred to the brands available in local bazaars. It is an essential ingredient in all socio-religious rituals, including life-cycle ceremonies, when gods, spirits and shamans can be entertained alongside human beings. During a feast, the host is expected to arrange large quantities of liquor for his guests. Drinking is proscribed on the first two days of *Bisu* and also when there is mourning in the family.

The manufacturing consumes much time and needs great attention to the work at hand. Always, it is the woman who cuts a singular figure in the home-brewery. So much of importance is given to beer making that no mother will have her daughter lack in this essential chore after she gets married. At first, she makes her daughter do some easy work, such as spreading cooked *binni* rice for cooling it down, pouring cold water on the steam receptacle pot, etc., before finally assigning to her the task of distilling the liquor. The

Liquor distillation



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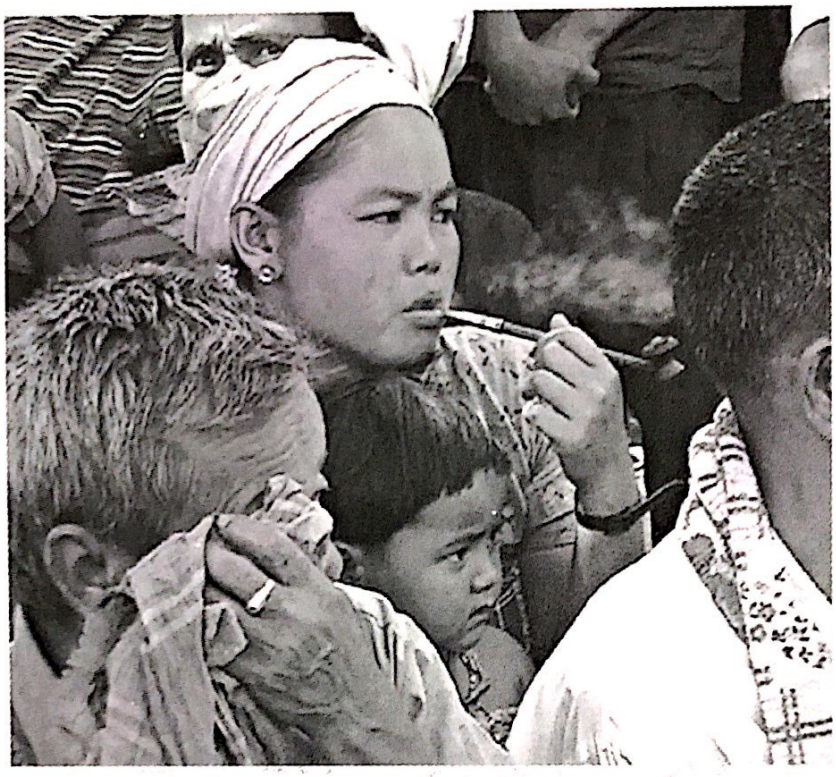

Women are free to smoke.

commonest variety of rice-beer, called *mad*, is a clear liquid obtained after several hours of patient distillation over a slow fire. A principal requirement is the *muli* or beer-cake made by pounding a mixture of paddy-seeds, red chilli (*Capsicum annuum*) or black pepper (*Piper nigrum*), banana peels, pine-apple stalks (alternately pieces of sugarcane), *mān-kasu* (*Alocacia indica*), garlic and a varied assortment of wild herbs identified by their local names – *bah-pārā-gāit, tsigan pāimā, danda-uppan*, etc. After pounding, the mixture is turned to dough by hand, then made into small cakes and dried in the sun. Exclusion of one or few of these ingredients from the *muli* will adversely affect the strength of the beer. Good beer cakes are made at home but they may also be purchased from local markets. A Tanchangya housewife of Ratanpur, who has reputation in liquor making, candidly confessed that no hill women made better beer-cakes than the Bru female did.

In its alcoholic content, *zagarā* is stronger than *mad*; the distillation apparatus is not required for making it. The housewife first makes a layer of paddyseeds inside the beer pot,

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then puts a mixture of cooled *binni* rice, beer-cake and water, and seals the mouth of the pot with banana leaf. It is then allowed to ferment for several weeks; the longer the period of fermentation, the stronger is the beer. When that is over, the banana leaf is removed and *zagarā* is ready to be sipped through a reed-pipe. Every time, the level sinks, it is raised by pouring extra water into the pot, but that also weakens the drink. The layer of paddy seeds inside the pot prevents clogging of the pipe. There is always a great difference between a pure first drink and its subsequently diluted variety. Unless a guest is someone special, no Tanchangya host will ever offer him *zagarā*. It is stronger than Vodka but has an infamous reputation of inducing outsiders into drunken brawls with the host.

Another variety, *daiyā-pusi*, is also made by fermenting rice but for a shorter period. In quality, it is much inferior to *mad* and *zagarā*. Even the *muli* used in making this rice-beer is of cheap quality. *Daiyā-pusi* is poured in glasses and taken in long sips. Water can be poured into the beer pot to obtain additional quantities of the drink.

4.3 *Smoking and pān chewing*

Awareness of the injurious effects of tobacco in recent years has markedly reduced the smoking number among the educated younger generation. But most old timers are still inveterate smokers. Men pick up the habit quite early in life but women acquire it at a later stage, after children are born to them. In CHT and Sittwe, a smoking pipe with a detachable wooden bowl is preferred to cigarettes; in South Tripura and CADC, the pipe is not available, and so cheap cigarettes and locally made *bidis* are welcome alternatives. Tippera and Chakma, as also the Karbi tribe of the North Cachar Hills, prefer the *dābā* (a smoking device made after the principal of the hookah) to the pipe. (See picture in p.67.) Some Tanchangya males of South Tripura also use it.

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Pān is taken by both sexes, young and old, though among married women, the percentage of abstainers is low. After dinner, it is readily offered to guests. In former times, it played some role in the amorous dealings of the juvenile section. Lewin (1869: 48) refers to Mauma maidens using the pan to invite or repulse their aspiring lovers: "a leaf of pawn [*pān*] with betel and sweet spices inside, accompanied by a certain flower, means, "I love you." If much spice is put inside the leaf, and one corner turned in a peculiar way, it signifies, "Come." The lead being touched with turmeric means, "I cannot come." A small piece of charcoal inside the leaf is, "Go, I have done with you."' A Tanchangya ballad, *Lāngyā-Lāngani*, has an episode in which the lady love, *Lāngani*, sends a *pān* soaked in "the sweat of her heaving bosom" to *Lāngyā*, her lover, urging him to come and take her away. In another episode, she gives him a *pān* dipped in honey made by the *muabā-puk* ('the wild bee'). Generally, the *pān* leaf is smeared with unslacked lime and rolled into a cone with crumbs of betel nut inside. Should a piece of tobacco leaf be added to it, the pan becomes a good stimulant.

4.4 *Dress, ornaments and coiffuture*

When it comes to noting the dresses of hill tribes in the region, undoubtedly the Tanchangya female wears the most exquisite homespun. We have referred to a Tanchangya tradition which says how their women got so colourful clothes. (*See* p. 57.) Usually, no offence is taken at replication of the traditional dress but should ethnic or political rivalry exist with some group, the same is employed as label of identity and contrast. A CADC calendar for 2006 used the caption 'Chakma girl' under the photograph of a traditionally dressed Tanchangya female. That flared up controversy; on January 5, a Tanchangya deputation met the CEM (Chief Executive Member) and tendered a written protest against what they described as 'cultural attack' on their community, demand-

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ing 'immediate correction' of the error and 'apology from the officer of the concerned department.'

4.4.1 *Male attire*

The male attire is simple. Colourful *lungyis* are sometimes worn but mostly a piece of white cloth is used for the lower part of the body, covering the thighs down to the knee; it is knotted in front with the long end passed between the legs and tucked in at the back. During *jum* work, a towel of cheaper material, the *gāmchā*, is also worn. For the upper part, the swidden cultivator uses the white *chālum*, a full-sleeved, collarless shirt, open in front. Also called *jummā-chālum* ('shirt worn by the swidden-cultivator'), it is plain, without the motifs found in the variety worn by the women. With transition from swidden cultivation to alternative resource systems, the *jummā-chālum* is now fast disappearing. With compulsions to find other means of livelihood away from the native village, and an increased mobility of the male population that has come with it, young men have largely adopted the dresses of other races. The *khabang* ('*gabā*' in MuG) or white turban which their fathers wore in former times is now no longer used by the young generation of males.

Tattooing is not practised and no significance attached to tattoo marks on the body. A couple of Daingnaks I met at Hta-Htae-Kaung (Kyauktaw, Sittwe) had birds and animals pricked on their forearms. They said that those were done at about eleven or twelve years of age, a practice popular among the Rakhines of Sittwe.

4.4.2 *Female garments*

For covering the lower part of the body from the waist to a couple of inches above the heel, Tanchangya female uses the *penuin* or *peruin*. It is tightly wound round the waist, the loose end so drawn over the other end of the cloth with the corner tucked in at the hip that no part of the leg is exposed

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Turban is worn hill-fashion, crown bare

in walking. A typical *penuin* (168 cm long and 114 cm wide) has horizontal black border (25 to 30 cm wide) on top and bottom; in between, the colour though predominantly red is never woven in emphatic monochrome. Always, threads of different colours are used for motifs and horizontal stripes. The Chakma *pinon* is a less colourful piece, without the Tanchangya's black borders, but having its own distinctively vertical stripe, the *chābugi*, which is displayed in the line of the left leg when the cloth is worn.

A girdle cloth, *pāduri* or *pādui*, with laces at both ends, is wound round the waist to secure the *penuin*. Some prefer a predominantly white *pāduri*, others the more colourful ones with pinstripes or zigzag lines balancing the motifs along the fringes of the cloth.

To cover the upper part of the body, *chālum* and *khāri* (*khādi* in KG) are used. Generally, two types of *chālum* are worn. The *kaboi-chālum* is, like the *jummā-chālum*, a white, full-sleeved, collarless shirt, but having motifs on the shoulder and the waistline. Another type, the *kālā-chālum*, is actually a black coloured blouse than a *chālum* proper, with the sleeve long or short according to preference. Green is also a preferred colour for this upper garment. As far as the *khādi* is concerned, it will cover the breasts when the *chālum* is not

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worn; the piece is broad enough (about 35 cm) to be used as shawl in winter. Casually, one also throws it across the shoulder, salwar-fashion. Young and unmarried females use a predominantly red coloured breast cover, *rānga-khādi*. As a rule, a girl wears her first *khādi* as soon as she begins to menstruate. After marriage, she puts on the *chibitānā-khādi*, which mixes black or some other colour with red.

Finally, a white *khabang* is wound round her head in the hill fashion, with the crown exposed. Chak females wear a black turban and Chakpas a white one. A Chakma woman does not use any headwear but the Marma puts on a white scarf while attending social ceremonies.

4.4.3 *Gosā-based variation in female dress*

The female attire varies with her *gosā*; those outside KG rarely wear all five pieces of traditional homespun. In most villages, much intermixing of dress is now evident; at some places, young Tanchangya females have also adopted the garments of other races. Nevertheless, a section of elderly women continues to wear dresses specific to their own *gosās*. (Differences in pronunciation of garment terms are indicated in transliteration).

1. *Kārwā gosā.* — *Khādi, penuin*, white *kaboi chālum* with motifs on shoulder (worn by young and old alike), *pāduri* and white *khabang*.
2. *Muo gosā.* — *Khāri, peruin* and *chālum*; young girls will wear white *phul-chālum* with designs on the shoulder but older women prefer the black, long-sleeved *kālā-chālum*. During wedlock, bride wears white *gabā*. *Pādui* is rarely worn.
3. *Daingnyā gosā.* — *Khāri*, white *khabang* and black *chālum* but green as alternative colour is also preferred; *pādoi* is almost never used. *Pinoin*

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	with black borders is worn but there also exists a singularly DG variety without black borders and having horizontal pin-stripes woven along the motifs.
4. *Monglā gosā.*	*Khāri, peruin* and the *kālā-chālum*. The white *khabang* is worn during marriage and other social ceremonies.
5. *Melong gosā.*	Almost similar to MoG.
6. *Langbāsā.*	They claim that in former times, their women wore distinct dresses. Presently DG or MuG garments are used.
7. *Angya gosā.*	Same as *Kārwā gosā* but without *pādui* (*pāduri*). Black preferred for *chālum* but housewives admit that they are fond of wearing the *kaboi chālum*.

4.4.4 *Making the homespun*

Tanchangya females are excellent weavers; they make their own clothes on small homemade looms (*bāin*) with cotton grown in the *jum*. At the end of every harvest, cottonseeds are extracted from the yarn with the ginning machine. When sufficient cotton has been ginned, the pile is dried in the sun and made ready for carding with a bow, while the seeds are stored in small bamboo baskets for the next sowing season. The carded cotton is then spun into thread and neatly wound round spindles.

There are no special compartments for weaving home-spun; the work is done on the *pesāng* or portico. One end of the warp is fitted to a bamboo beam in the front wall; the other is adjusted by a leather strap worn by the weaver round the back of her waist. To operate the loom, she presses the treadle with her feet. Then, as the heddles start moving, she skilfully passes spindles through the warp, simultaneously flattening all intersecting threads with a smooth but heavy

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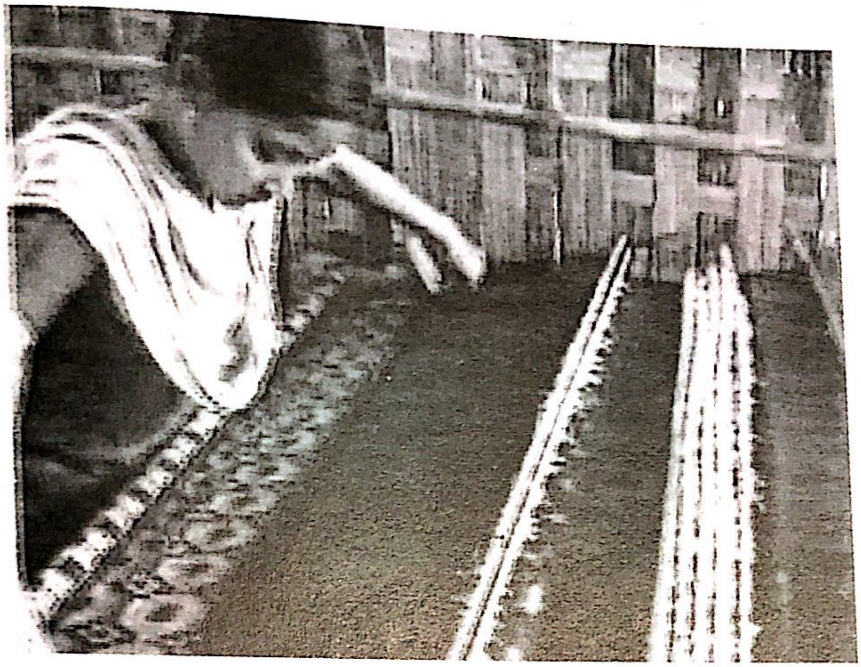

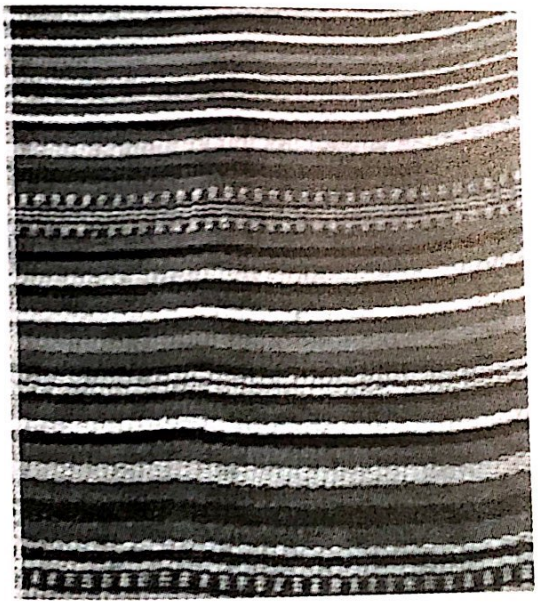

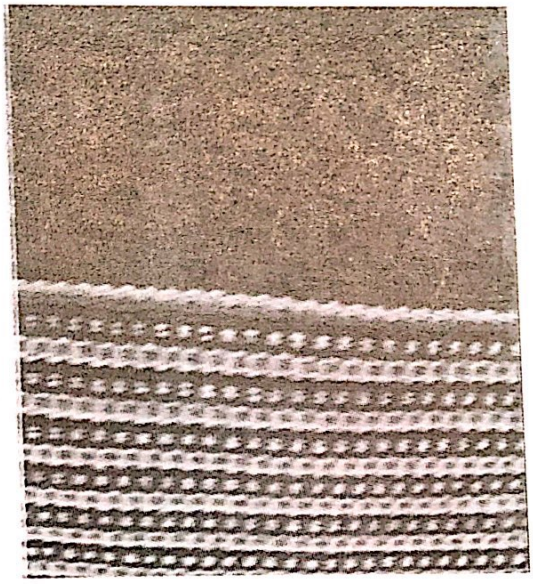

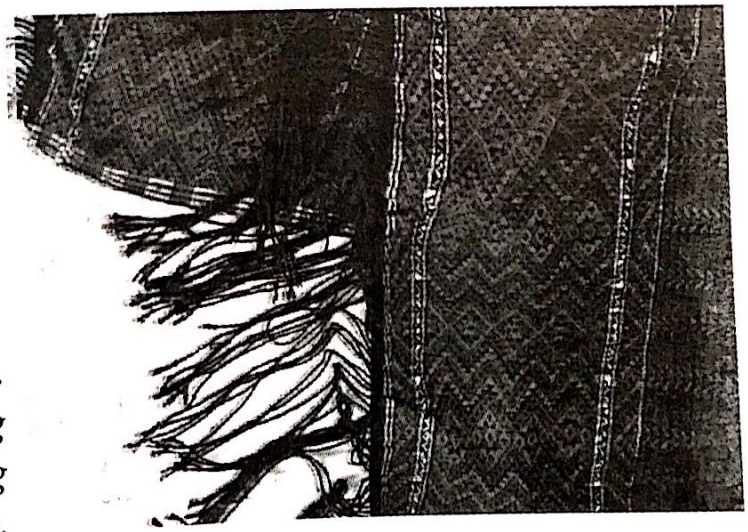

Making the homespun. Uncomplaining work go into weaving exquisite designs.

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blade of chiselled bamboo. It is a long process, and several weeks of uncomplaining labour go into making a decent piece of cloth.

Some motifs are specific to particular pieces of homespun while others have acquired general usage. For instance, the *kurā-chok phul* ('imitation of the fowl's eye') is meant exclusively for the *khādi*; it cannot be used in other garments. The representations are always from the familiar world: *bāgh-chok* ('the leopard's eye'), *bilāi-kuch* ('the cat's paw'), *māchyā-kān* ('gills of the fish'), *kāngārā-dāt* ('the crab's claw'), *kumrā-puk* ('the rostrum-headed weevil'), *tarain-puk* ('the little green

Ālām: the catalogue of designs. The threads are made out of cotton that grows in the hills.

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maggot'), *beguin-bichi* ('seeds of the eggplant'), *chumuri-dādi* ('stalk of the pumpkin'), *kāttal-barā* ('seed of the jackfruit'), *ām-phul* ('mango blossom'), *tārā-phul* ('the stars'), etc.

Every housewife keeps an ဘလမ်ခဏီ *ālām-khāni*, a catalogue of the designs that go into the weaving. Starting at a tender age, girls master this essential craft by the time they become marriageable.

4.4.5 *Coiffuture*

Today, one seldom comes across highland males with long hairs but a century ago, that used to be the fashion. Among Tanchangyas, both sexes kept long hair, which was combed backward into a knot, visible at the back of the head after the turban was wound. Women, of course, have long hairs and they decorate the knot with a thin silver chain that has a long hairpin attached to it.

4.4.6 *Ornaments*

Some males have perforated ears into which earrings or small plugs would easily fit in; today, no ear ornaments are worn by them. In contrast, the women, mostly the elderly type, have distended lobes into which a heavy but detachable, cone-shaped screwier (*rājjur*) is used. The whole thing, made of silver, is crafted artistically, the cone top shaped into what the Tanchangya calls *ichā-chok*, 'the shrimp's eye.'

Is the *rājjur* then responsible for the distension of the lobe? The ear-boring ceremony, the ကန်ဗေတ ပျေဘီ *kān-berā poi*, is no longer performed by the Tanchangya but in former times, it was customary of the householder to select an auspicious day on which an elderly woman would bore the ears of his daughter. As a rule, it was done before a girl attained puberty. Immediately after the boring, a small bamboo peg was inserted into the lobe. Rich men invited friends and relatives to a feast. Once ear-boring was over, elders bestowed gifts on the girl. In subsequent days, the peg was screwed regularly,

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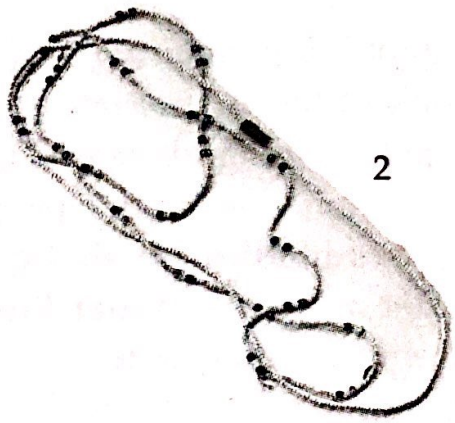

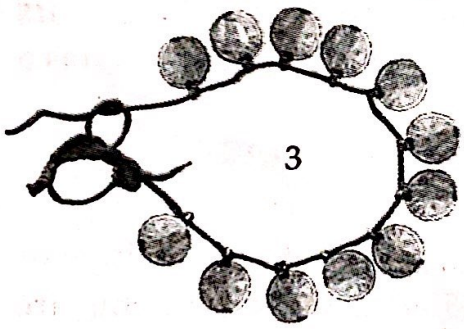

1. *Chāndyā āhlchowā or moon necklace*
2. *Bisi mālā or bead necklace*
3. *Tengā-chowā or coin necklace*
4. *Rājjur or ear decoration responsible for distension of the lobe*
5. *Kusi khāru or armlets*
6. *Anklets with hollow inside*
7. *Nāitong or Ponderous earrings*

and each time the hole became larger, the old peg was discarded and a new one inserted into the lobe and screwed again. This continued until the aperture grew large enough to receive the *rājjur*. But as that ornament was not worn before marriage, a large silver ring (*nāitong*) or a thick piece of bamboo was continually used. Chak women too have remarkably distended lobes and their ear ornament (*nātong*) is quite heavy.

Tanchangya females adorn their neck with two types of ornaments. Unmarried girls are fond of the *bichi mālā*, made by passing a thread through colourful beads. After marriage, it must not be worn. Young girls who have reached puberty may wear the *tengā-charā*, a simple necklace of silver coins. But the more elegant *chāndyā āhlchowā* is meant only for the

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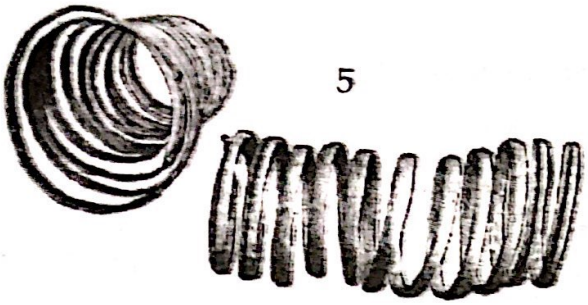

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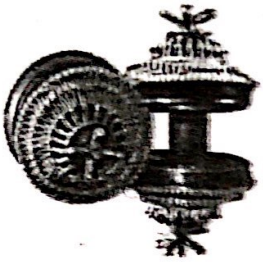

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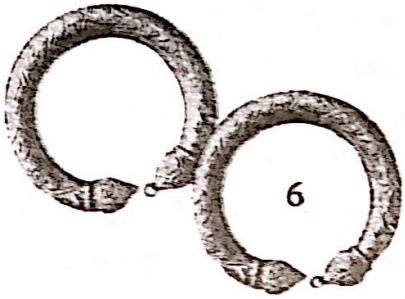

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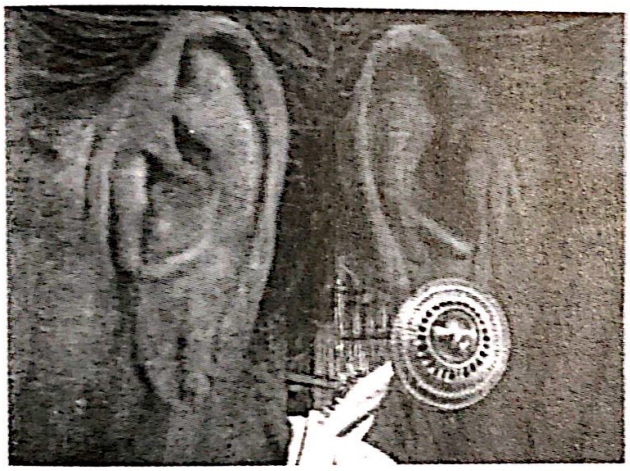

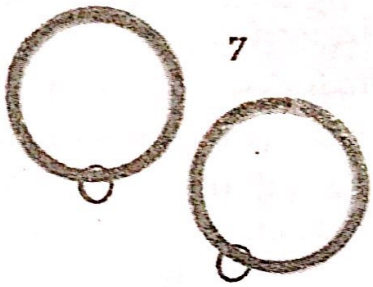

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married woman. To make this piece of decoration, two coin necklaces are fitted to the ends of a crescent-shaped silver piece. Should economic crisis ever compel a housewife to sell her personal belongings, she will try to save this piece for her own daughter. It is one of her most prized possessions. If there are no daughters in the family, her ornaments go to the daughter-in-law living under the same roof.

Some ornaments are always worn on the arms, the *tār* or silver armlet above the elbow and a spiralled ring, the *kusi khāru*, made of the same metal, between the wrist and the elbow. Specifically for the wrist is the *bāghor*, a thick bangle. A silver anklet, the *thenga-khāu* (with hollow inside), is also worn. Nose studs are used by Chakmas; Tanchangyas say that Chakmas acquired the habit from the Mughals.

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4.5 *Swidden-cultivation*

In the tropical rainforest ecosystem of the Eastern Himalayas, swidden cultivation has been traditionally practised by Tibeto-Burman groups, including Tanchangya. Compared to intensive agricultural operation, which radically alters the ecological setting, swidden is essentially a mimetic resource system. If pursued within the carrying capacity of the environment, it helps conserve the natural rainforests. No doubt, some truth prevails in the view that this hill-type of resource strategy is not adapted to sustain increased population but it does to mean that there is something amiss in the method. At places where wet-rice cultivation uses only man and animals, the yield is much lower than in areas where high-yielding technology is used. Similarly, with upgraded techniques, swidden cultivation could be practised as a feasible strategy in the region. But before we go into these arguments, it would be worth taking note of the typical slash and burn cultivation that a section of the Tanchangya still pursues.

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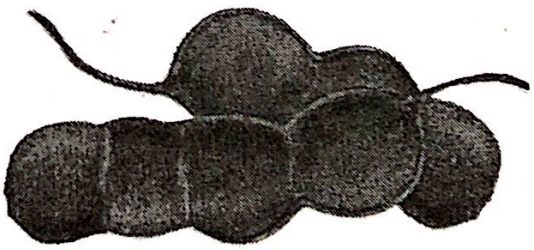
4.5.1 *Selecting the plot*

To begin with, the swidden farmer selects a suitable ridge, usually one that has a thick undergrowth of bush and bamboo. The boundary of the plot is then marked (*'jum beyānā'*) to avoid confusion and encroachment; it is done by planting *māchyā* ('bamboo uprights') along the contours. Before returning home, the cultivator finds a handful of earth turned loose by the earthworm, wraps it inside a leaf, and leaves it in some undisturbed corner of the plot with a prayer to the deity of prosperity, *'Mui āsyā e jumān pāng gulung. E jumān jadi kuna ekkhān gahm basang, tui āsyā rāyot mar sabaney degebe,'* 'Today, I found this *jum*. If it's auspicious, then come tonight in my dream and show the signs thereof.'

Before going to bed, the same prayer is repeated. Should a man dream of a basket filled with rice or of a garden full of flowers, it is interpreted as a sign of good harvest; accordingly, he prepares to clear the undergrowth within a day or two. But if he dreams of a fat boar, then he must sacrifice a black cock to prevent a possible destruction of his crops.

Selection of *jum* plots is usually done around the third or the fourth week of January. In the *Rādhāman-Dhanpudi Pālā*, Chala Bap (an old gossip invested with the Tanchangya's ancient wisdom) says that the first Thursday of *Māgh* (*Māgh* = mid-January to mid-February) is most auspicious for seeking out new *jums*. The best plot, he then adds, will be found by one who goes out of his house early, before the rooster crows. Tanchangyas are suspicious about the north face of a ridge, even if it looks good for cultivation.

◀ *Jum field*



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For Tanchangya, the ghilā is very sacred.

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4.5.2 *Slashing, burning and sowing*

About early February, a workforce comprising only male members of the family starts felling the dense bush and bamboo jungle that grows in the *jum* plot. The work is toilsome and there is the additional risk of snakebite. Low trees are cut on the upper side, leaving the stumps standing, while the larger growths are allowed to remain after the lower branches have been felled. Cutting is always done with the iron-chopper, the *sebak*; it starts from the bottom of the ridge; the cutters steadily ascend the slope, working in a horizontal line.

Then for almost two months, the fallen jungle is left to dry in the sun. Towards the end of *Chaitra* (early April), the dried jungle is fired. Soon everything is reduced to ashes; the fire also burns the soil a couple of inches below the surface. Most of the nutrients are stored in the vegetation; on burning, these nutrients return to the soil, providing nourishment to the crops subsequently sown. Several days after the fire has died out, pieces of half-burnt wood are collected in piles to be used later at home as firewood. But a *jum* fire can cause much havoc unless precautions are taken to keep it under control. Generally, the area around the plot is kept clear and everything dry or ignitable removed to prevent the conflagration from spreading outside. Besides, as long as the fire is alive, men continually move along the contours, beating down every straying flicker with branches of trees. Once a *jum* is on fire, women and children are never allowed to venture near it.

The annual spring festival, the *Bisu*, is celebrated in mid-April, and once the celebrations are over, Tanchangyas can start sowing. Usually, there are some rain showers at this time of the year; it makes the ground soft for digging holes. Then whole families, men, women and children, get to work, sowing seeds in vertical lines. Each cultivator has a small bamboo basket (*kurum*) strapped to the back; it contains a mixture of paddy, melon, pumpkin and cucumber seeds, Indian

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corn, beans, sesame, chilli, oilseeds, etc. Tanchangyas produce several varieties of paddy in the *jum*, and, on average, 50% of the mixture contains paddyseeds. With the hand that holds the *sebak*, the cultivator makes holes in the ground while with the other hand a pinch of the mixture is picked out of the *kurum* and dibbled into the holes, which are then covered with the loose upper soil. Cottonseeds are not used directly but first mixed with clay, then rolled into tiny balls and dried in the sun. Only dried cotton balls can be added to the general mixture of seeds.

If aided by short showers, germination starts in about a week after the sowing.

4.5.3 *Weeding and protecting the crops*

From June to October, painstaking labour goes to keep *jums* clear of weeds that sprout plentifully. Weeding is done by hand, and it is mostly women and growing children who toil for hours in the field, bending down in rain and sunshine to pull out whole weeds by their stalks. As *jum* plots 'are generally situated in propinquity... mutual help and assistance in weeding the crop is given; each one takes his turn to help in his neighbour's joom' (Lewin 1869: 21). During weeding, insect bites are common, occasional snakebites also occur, while in CADC, there is always the risk of catching malaria after mosquito bites. Between August and October, tiny caterpillars make work in the *jum* quite difficult. Once an exposed limb comes in contact with these insects, an itching pain is induced and it lasts for several hours. Rubber or plastic footwear purchased from local markets is now used, but at Devipur (South Tripura), I was given a pair of bamboo sandals by Sukhram, one of my Tanchangya informants. I asked him if it had a special name other than the one for the regular footwear, *jatā*. It never occurred to me that I was asking a foolish question but he replied in good earnest, 'You're writing about us. Why don't you suggest a name?' I

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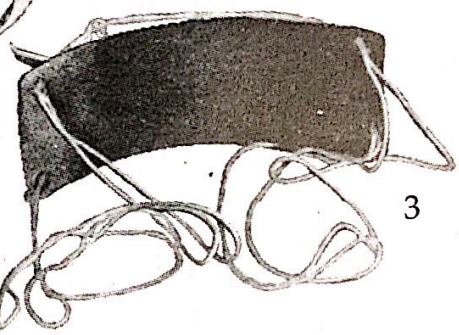

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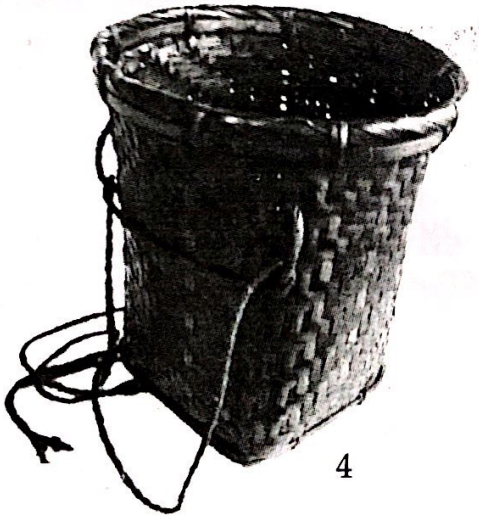

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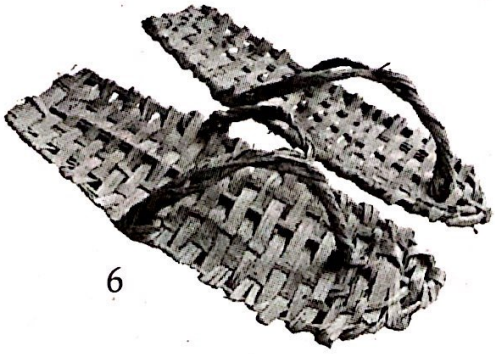

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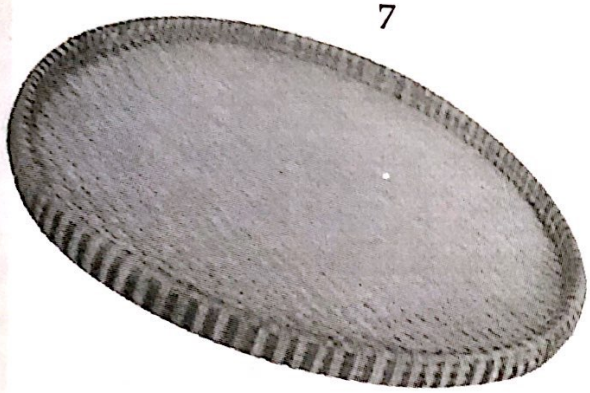

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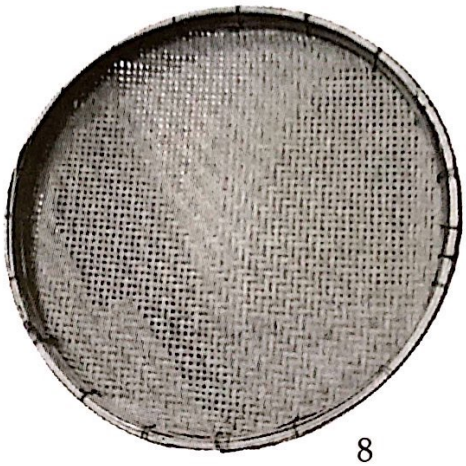

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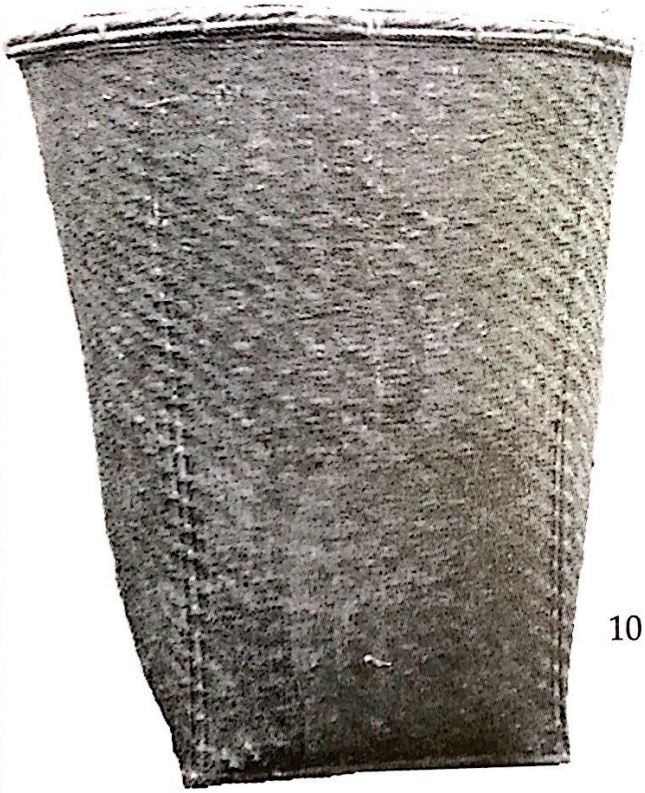

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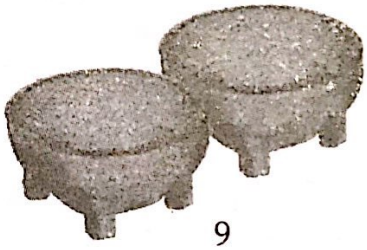

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1. *Phu kālyong* (*kālāng*). During marriage, it is used to carry clothes.
2. *Sāmmuā*, small box for keeping jewellery.
3. Strap for carrying baskets.
4. *Kurum*, small basket used during sowing.
5. *Pasā kālyong*, large basket with lid, used to keep clothes, etc.
6. Sandals made of bamboo.
7. *Kulā* or winnowing tray.
8. *Chāluin* or sieve.
9. *Pāittang* with short legs to keep pan, betel nuts, match box, etc.
10. *Dingyā*, large basket for storing grains.

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appreciated the compliment and said, 'What about calling it *Rādhāmanar jatā* ('the slippers of Rādhāman')?' Both of us then laughed heartily. What could be better than to associate a pair of indigenously manufactured sandals with an admired hero from their own ethno-history?

Wild animals, especially deer, wild boars and monkeys can cause extensive damage to the standing crops. In late August, the paddy crop begins to turn yellow, and flocks of birds are attracted to the feast. To keep watch on crops and protect them against these 'nuisances,' small cabin-shelters are built on bamboo uprights. As precaution, several *tāgs* or sounding devices made of tin are set up at different points in the *jum* and all connected by a long rope to the cabin-shelter, where some member of the *juming* family will always reside in his turn during the cultivating season. These tin devices are beaten vigorously to scare away birds and beasts from the field.

4.5.4 *The harvest*

Early cucurbits are harvested in June but additional stocks of vegetable seeds, legumes and more cucurbits are sown supplementarily, the process repeated with each successive harvest, to ensure the family a steady supply of vegetables in course of the cultivating season. Generally, crops produced in the *jum* are sufficient to sustain a family but increased demand for *jum* vegetables in the plains market now makes the *jummayā* produce quantities in surplus. Swidden cultivation is essentially multi-crop, and in course of a particular cultivating season, several varieties of crops are harvested, some as early as in *Āśāḍ-Śrāvan* (mid-June to mid-August), but the cotton crop is not plucked before *Āśvin* (mid-September to mid-October), followed by oilseeds in *Agrahāyan* (mid-November to mid-December).

Harvested paddy is tied into sheaves and thrashed on bamboo beams. The straw is discarded in the *jum* and the

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Crops harvested in course of the cultivating season

Time of harvest	Crops
Āṣāḍ mid-June–mid-July	*Māmrā* (cucumber, *Cucumis savitas*), *makkā* (maize, *Zea mays*), and varieties of spinach known by their native names such as *ochain-sāk, pasi-sāk, māyā-sāk, subreng*, etc.
Śrāvan mid-July–mid-Aug	*Chumurigulā* (pumpkin, *Cucurbita maxima*), *juma-kumrā* (a variety of gourd), *cinrā* (musk melon, *Cucumis melo*), *zingā* (ridge gourd, *Luffa actuangala Roxb.*), *dherat* (okra, *Abelmoschus esulentus*), besides the crops of June-July. Sour leaves of *āmilā* (a variety of sorrel) are eaten.
Bhādra mid-Aug–mid-Sept	*Jum begun* (a small variety of aubergine), chilli and early varieties of hill paddy (*dhān*) known by the names of *kain, gelang, mehli, kabak*, etc. *Māmrā, chumurigulā, juma-kumrā* and *cinrā* continue to be harvested. Tender shoots of the *āmilā* replace the leaves.
Āśvin mid-Sept–mid-Oct	*Jum-begun* and chilli. *Binni, nāinchhāberi, rāchā, sori* and other varieties of paddy, including *kain*. First harvest of cowpea (*Vigna sinensis*), which the Tanchangya calls *sutā-tulā-samāi*, cotton, sesame, and jute. Red peel of the *āmilā* fruit is now eaten.
Kārtik mid-Oct–mid-Nov	*Jum-begun*, chilli, certain varieties of paddy, cowpea, cotton, sesame and jute. One variety of pigeon pea, the *juma-samāi* (*Cajanus cajan*), is also harvested. Seeds of the *āmilā* are favoured.
Agrahāyan mid-Nov–mid-Dec	*Jum*-potato, chilli and *arahar*. Harvest is almost over.
Pous mid-Dec–mid-Jan	Last pickings of *jum*-potato and chilli.

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Preparing to collect harvest from the jum

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Winnowing

grain stored in the cabin-shelter (*rānyā-ghar*). Later, it is carried in small baskets to the village home. Small mallets made of hardwood are also used for thrashing. Winnowing is then done by fanning on grain spread out on mats. Today, in many villages, considerable labour going into the work is saved by the power-generated rice-mill.

Cotton obtained from the *jum* is generally used to make the homespun, unless economic exigency obliges families to sell their produce.

4.5.6 *Objections to swidden cultivation*

Early suggestions to induce plough cultivation among the inhabitants of the Chittagong Hills came up in 1784, when the East India Company sought the opinion of Mr. Irwin, Chief of Chittagong, in that regard (Lewin 1869: 22). The matter was raised again, in 1829, but the Commissioner of Chittagong told the Company that it had no right to interfere with the internal matters of hill chiefs. The picture changed

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in 1860, when the British officially took over the administration of CHT. Between 1860 and 1880, initiatives were taken to induce hill farmers to adopt a mode of cultivation that differed from the one they traditionally subsisted on. It did not produce the desired results, prompting the British Political Agent of Hill Tripura to dissuade the government from pursuing the same policy in the hill kingdom (ARHT 1979: § 51). Nevertheless, progress was made in the following decades, after the British actively involved the CHT Chiefs. Hutchinson (1909: 69) mentions that in 1900, about 11,000 acres of land were brought under plough cultivation, which fetched the government Rs. 14,000 in revenue.

Policy makers in the region have always insisted that *jumed* plots take many years to recoup fertility; they have also argued that replenishment of burnt forests is not possible under reduced *jum* cycles. *Juming* has also been viewed as not conducive to rootedness to living places but favouring nomadic habits among hill men. Interestingly enough, in the region we are concerned with, ethnic groups like Chakma, Tippera, Marma and Tanchangya have been more or less prone to ecophilia, and it made them aware of the importance of forest fallows and conservation of bio-diversity for purposes of food, medicine, etc. The British administration and, later on, other post-British regimes failed to understand the interdependency of forest and cropping; bluntly, they condemned swiddening as destroying vast areas of rainforests, arresting soil fertility and increasing soil run-off. A conspicuous lack of appreciation of the symbiotic connectedness between the hill-dweller and his environment became evident when vast areas of their habitat were brought under reserved forests and swiddening banned within the reserves. Ironically, the same governments have exploited reserved forest to procure timber for construction work, to supply tons of bamboo to paper mills and to allot several hectares of cultivable ridges for rubber plantation.

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4.5.7 *The pragmatics of swidden cultivation*

Notwithstanding the condemnation of swidden cultivation, ethnic groups in the region have known their traditional agro-economy as best suited to the ecological environment in which they have been living for several centuries. Even today, without the intrusion of the 'outsider' Bengali into the hills, the ethnic population would have remained within the carrying capacity of its traditional resource system. One great advantage that the swidden cultivator enjoys over the plough farmer is that he does not require any hired labour to do his work and the production cost is minimal. Most striking is the large variety of crops harvested from *jum* during a single season against the mono-crop pattern of the lowlands. 'In an ordinary year he [the swidden cultivator] will secure an ample supply of rice for his own requirements and a surplus for sale, in addition to yams, pumpkins, melons, chillies and Indian corn to vary his diet and for barter' (Hutchinson *Ibid.*: 67). To be precise, the variety of swidden produce ensures not only quality diet but also generates resources to meet family needs pertaining to dwelling, clothing and ornamentation, as well as ritual and ceremony.

The topographical character of the hills and the problem of communication that comes with it must be pragmatically considered. Efforts to introduce wet-rice cultivation in the CADC are yet to pay off. Stretches of cultivable lowland lie unexploited along the eastern bank of the Tuichang, and it is likely to remain so for at least another decade or until official atavism favouring wet-rice cultivation comes to prevail among the dwellers. The area remains without a network of roads. One fair weather track that connects Damdep-I (New Joganasury-I) to Kamalanagar (Chwangte-C), the CADC's headquarters, is useless for the most part of the year, rendering unfeasible any transportation of technology for alternative modes of production. In CADC, *juming* is pursued to meet the basic needs of living.

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Taking a short respite during weeding.

This said, the adoption of prophylactic and preventive measures could make *juming* itself an economically viable and ecologically non-detrimental strategy. Most crucially, it would save from extinction the traditional economy of not only the Tanchangya but also of other Tibeto-Burman groups living in the region. In plots having declivity above 45%, soil run-off can be minimised by providing catch-water drains higher up the slope. Fire-terracing of *jum* plots before the dried jungle is burnt, piling of unburnt debris along the contours, and the sowing seeds in horizontal instead of vertical rows (OPHRA 1966: 55) are some measures that could be adopted. To minimise the hazards of forest fires and the loss of nutrients through extensive burning, swidden cultivators could be advised to go for controlled burning and keeping *jum* fires small and low. 'In Bhutan and parts of India (Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya), the slashed material is covered with soil before burning' (Kerkhoff and Sharma 2006: 50). A form of composite swiddening, after the practice of

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minority farmers in North Vietnam (Van Dung *et. al.* 2006: 58), could be taken up in CHT; in this mode, single households would continue to cultivate wet-rice on fringeland and, at the same time, go for small, rotating swidden plots on ridge faces. This could also be tried in South Tripura and in the North Arakan Hills.

4.6 *Hunting, fishing and foraging*

With government ban on hunting, an old ecological niche is now abandoned, and the use of most hunting tools of yesteryears, especially the *kyāp* and the *kabuk* (used to trap boar, deer and tiger) forgotten. Occasionally though, animals straying into the jum are caught with noose traps or killed with sticks and choppers, the meat partly eaten and partly sold. Bows and arrows too have become rare. As for licensed guns, a spate of insurgency in the region has compelled governments to take back old muzzle-loaders that hill men had in their possession until the mid-1970s. Smaller traps like *iri* and *zāp* are sparingly used to catch birds, especially the wild fowl. Reptiles are beaten to death with sticks.

Hunting is not recalled by Tanchangya to have attracted any social prestige, as it did among Nagas and Kuki-Chins, who until their conversion to Christianity decorated the approaches as well as the interiors of the dwelling house with bills, horns and skulls of hunted creatures.

Fishing is done with traditional tools (fishing-nets, basket traps and the fishing rod). Village-side rivers and streams abound in freshwater fish, mollusca and crustacea. Besides, certain types of crabs and tortoises are always found in jungles and marshes. Shortage of fish is met by purchase from the local market.

As far as foraging is concerned, the rainforest habitat still produces sufficient varieties of yams, potato, roots, tubers, and also the tender shoot of bamboo. Mushrooms are greatly relished, so too are most species of wild banana. The sole

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tool for supplementary food-gathering is the *sebak* but when rain-showers make the ground soft, pointed sticks or bamboo can become very handy.

4.7 *Husbandry*

Domesticated animals provide families with a steady protein diet round the year. Under the bamboo platform, every house has its pigsty with strong fencing around it. This gives ventilation, natural drainage and overhead shade; besides, the water falling from the *isar* creates 15 to 25 cm deep wallows, a prerequisite for livestock during the warm summers. Under the *gudi*, the place is kept dry; in winter, straw or dry grass are thrown to keep the livestock warm. Separate logsheds along slopes are seen in places where concrete or semi-concrete houses with low floors have replaced the *māchā-ghar*. The common village pig (black with erect patches of hair on the shoulder) is greatly preferred for meat; in its absence, other favoured varieties are black *Hampshire* (with white belt on shoulder), *Saddleback* (with drooping ears) and *Large Black* (with erect ears). But the performances of neither of these breeds have been satisfactory in the prevailing weather conditions of the region. District farms therefore encourage the exotic *Large White Yorkshire* (with erect ears) or *Landrace* (white with drooping ears). A boar upgraded with of one these breeds weighs between 275 and 300 kilograms while the sow achieves a litter-size of fifteen.

In breeding poultry, the free-ranging system is practised. During the day, fowls are allowed to roam freely but are confined at night in fowl-cages or enclosed pens. The commonly domesticated breed is the *Chittagong fowl* with long neck, single short comb, red earlobes and wattles, and long, thick legs. Chicks have scanty fluff but are without any plumage. Under poultry up-gradation programmes, district poultry farms now supply the *Rhode Island Red* known for its high resistance to disease or the *White Leghorn* which has a great

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laying capacity (about 250 to 300 eggs between short clutch-periods). Ducks are not preferred. Plough cultivators now domesticate cattle; some families keep sheep and goats.

4.8 *Other subsistence strategies*

Around the early 20th century, a section of Tanchangya went over to wet-rice cultivation. Those in South Tripura are mostly engaged in plough cultivation. Some families add to household income whatever little is earned from small business and horticulture. Here, education among Tanchangyas is below satisfactory, making the number of government employees negligible. (*See* p.231.) In CHT, things changed with the abolition of its Excluded Area status under the East Pakistan government. Continual influx of Bengalis into the hills in subsequent times evicted thousands of tribal farmers from the agricultural land sublet to them during the British period. When the Kaptai Dam was built in 1960, it displaced about 200 Tanchangya families. Some moved toward the Thega; a small section even went across it to settle in Mizoram. Others went to Wagga, Rampahar and the hills of Manikchhari, and still others to Bandarban. Not everyone benefited from the rehabilitation programme. Very few families were actually allotted fringeland, while the larger section was left to make precarious living for sometime, until their children found permanent and contractual jobs in government offices, NGOs and private concerns. Today, in CHT, young Tanchangyas are more prone to availing the opportunities of formal education than their relatives in Sittwe and South Tripura.

In CADC, the primary occupation of the Tanchangya is *juming* but well-off swidden farmers also carry on small trade to supplement their income from agro-economy. Very few individuals are employed in the government sector but that number will increase in the future, owing primarily to a growing awareness of the need for education.

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Karwā gosā school girls.

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5. *Family and Kinship Group*

The smallest unit of kinship reckoning is the family, which is linked, among the Tanchangya, through the male line, to the ဒေဟ် *del* ('lineage') and to the ဂုတ်ထိ *gutthi* ('clan'). These ultimately regulate alliance, inheritance and ceremony. At the highest level of societal integration is the ဂျေသ *gosā* ('kinship group'), which evolved when several clans pooled the common consent of influential families or the clan representatives in matters pertaining to socio-political discourses and economic decisions. By tradition, this ethnic group is known to recognise a number of *gosās*, each under the domain of its own hereditary *Āmu* who functioned independently.

5.1 *The Tanchangya family*

A typical Tanchangya family living under one roof consists of Ego, his spouse, their unmarried children, and not more than one married son. Together, they carry on the family's subsistence activities. In some households, aged parents live as dependents. Usually, male siblings, after they get married, do not stay under the same roof. When Ego has several married sons, only one of them lives with him and inherits property in due course, while the other sons move out to live in separate houses. This custom probably derives from the structural constraint of the traditional dwelling house, which had not enough space to accommodate very large families inside it. If, however, a son living separately desires to be

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part of a combined workforce, then Ego may give to him space in his own plot of land to build a new dwelling house. By thus linking smaller workforces or nuclear families, the Tanchangya extended family is formed. Grandchildren born of the son living with Ego are considered family members of the second descending generation.

An unmarried daughter helps her mother in supplementing the male workgroup during certain stages of cultivation, *jum* or wet-rice, whichever strategy is pursued by the family; at other times, she is a useful hand in the domestic sphere. But after her marriage, she becomes a member of her husband's domestic group. By the same criterion of alliance, a daughter-in-law is accommodated in Ego's family.

If a daughter's husband dies prematurely, and she has no children to take care of, she may return to her father's house and live with him until she remarries. An estranged wife may take a similar course of action. But if she has children born of the broken marriage, she will only be allowed to bring with her the female child. A baby boy can stay with the mother so long as she breastfeeds him but at the end of that period, he must be returned to his own biological father. Traditionally, descent is agnatic, with only the male child inheriting his parental property. Today, several concessions are made and daughters are accommodated as preferential inheritors within a changing system.

Should Ego be without a natural heir, he can compensate the deficiency through adoption. Theoretically, there is no restriction on adopting a child whose natural parents are non-Tanchangya but in almost all cases of adoption, it is found that the adopted child was born of Tanchangya parents or at least had a Tanchangya father. In a wealthy family, a boy or a girl can be adopted even if the householder has children born naturally of him. One prime criterion is that an adopted child must not share any blood-ties with adoptive parents; at the same time, it is most binding of the genitor or genetrix not

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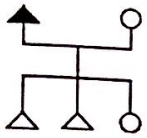
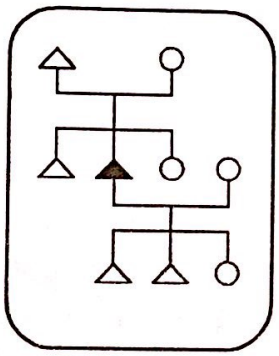
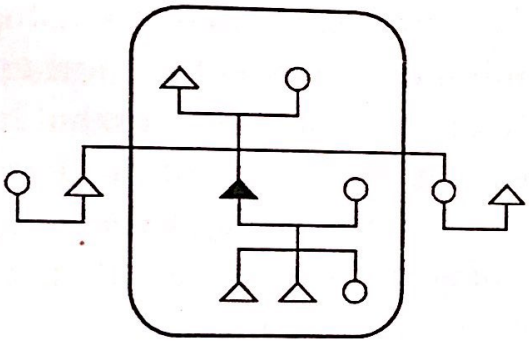


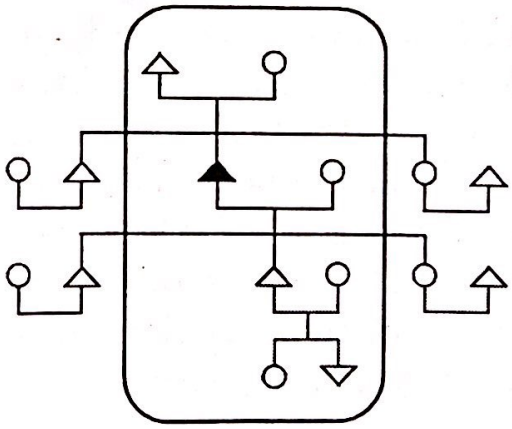
1 *Ego, spouse and unmarried children*



2 *Ego, spouse, unmarried children and dependents (aged parents, unmarried siblings)*



3 *Married siblings are not family members*



4 *Only one married son lives with Ego.*

Residence types

to receive any payment from the family that adopts his or her child. Usually, children are taken at a tender age of three or four months; in ten out of ten cases, the adopted child is a boy. After adoption, it is deemed improper to refer to the child's natural origin in his presence.

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5.1.1 *Clientele system*

What Lewin (1869: 33f.) described as 'hill slavery' is at best a clientele system wherein the domestic work-group of influential householders was strengthened by engaging the services of clients from weaker sections of the society. For their masters, these clients were 'a major means of securing economic surplus' (Mey 1984: 94).

The Tanchangya term for client is *gābur*, and he is a useful hand in the family, treated at par with other members and living with them under the same roof. Formerly, clients were also received in repayment of debt. An adopted son cannot be subsumed under the same category, since fictive kinship is a means resorted to by a family-head to meet the shortage of a natural male-workforce; he differs from *gābur* in that he is a full-fledged family member, eligible to inherit property. In the customary practice of *gha(r)-zāmāi tulānā* (see § 6.2.4), one discovers a similar pattern of acquiring additional males from outside to strengthen the domestic workgroup.

Among Tanchangya, the clientele system is not wholly extinct, and in villages, affluent families continue to employ *gāburs* in their subsistence strategies, *jum* or horticulture or wet-rice cultivation. Besides, in many houses, one also finds the *melā-gābur* ('housemaid') assisting the housewife in cooking, cleaning and childcare. Services rendered by clients are compensated in cash or kind. Adoption from the client category is strictly forbidden. Anisogamous alliance with client leads to social ostracism.

5.1.2 *Coordination within the family*

Within the family, a male head regulates social, economic and reproductive roles of its members. In the following paragraphs, we shall call him as Ego (only for convenience's sake).

i. The Tanchangya family is patriarchal and Ego's decision pertaining to subsistence strategies are always bind-

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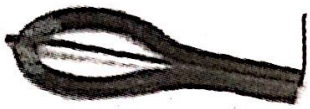
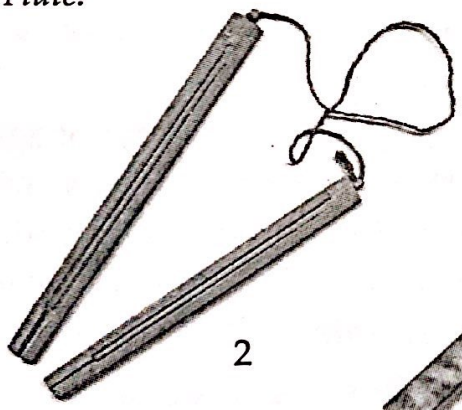
Playing the khengrong.



1

1.*Khengrong (iron).*
2.*Khengrong (bamboo).*
3. *Flute.*



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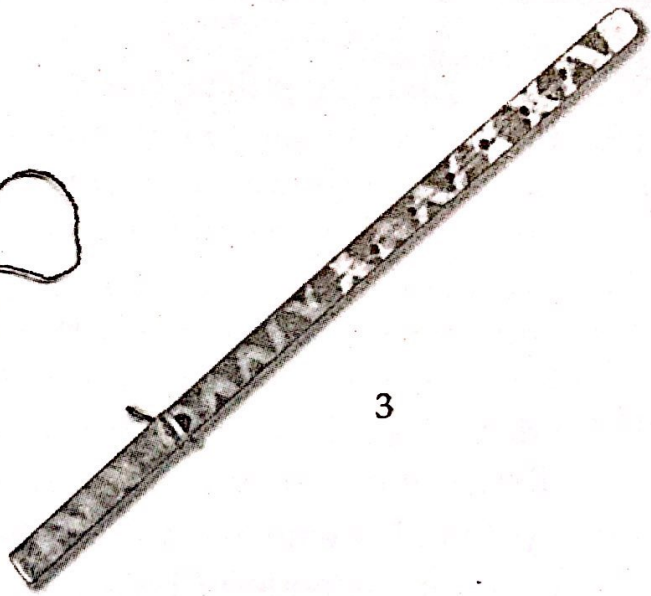

3

ing. As family head, he attends social discourses and performs essential rituals and ceremonies.

ii. Descent is agnatic, and an adult son living in the same house with Ego may represent him in social gatherings and perform rituals for family welfare. If Ego is temporarily indisposed or away from the family, the son can also take urgent economic decisions.

iii. The son who inherits property is liable to repay all debts incurred by Ego during his lifetime. If the property is divided between two sons, then both are responsible

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Older children take care of the little ones when parents are away at work.

The housewife is always hardworking.

for repaying the debt, the amount repaid by each being proportionate to inheritance. A son who has lived in a separate house during the lifetime of his father cannot be held responsible for any repayment.

iv. Except for breast-feeding babies, children tender of age, and decrepit parents, every family member must work. Idleness of every form is disdained, and one popular adage says, *Baiyā baiyā khānāttun thāgu(r) ahnā gahm*, 'Better to be a monk than to sit idle.'

v. Ego and his wife are wedded to mutual reciprocity in everyday activities: *Mukkwā gahm naahle, nekkar dukh; nekkwā gahm naahle, mukkar dukh* ('Bad wives afflict their husbands with worries; bad husbands their make wives miserable'). The Tanchangya housewife is hard very working. She does most of the child-caring, washing and cleaning; she also assists her husband in the *jum*, especially during sowing, weeding and harvesting.

vi. In economic activities, a neat division of labour is maintained between sexes. A woman's help is never sought in selecting a new *jum* plot or in firing a fallen jungle. Hunting is a male activity as foraging is a female one but both sexes are free to go fishing. Old males can do

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some foraging. In the secondary strategies too, gender roles are maintained. No male weaves clothes but he can build a house and make baskets; with the woman, it is vice-versa.

vii. Ego regulates all marriages within the family. Under certain conditions, he may take a second wife during the lifetime of the original spouse. As far as children are concerned, they must have his consent before getting married.

viii. Ego enjoys absolute authority in matters pertaining to adoption and transmission of family property.

5.1.3 *Tanchangya customary laws on inheritance*

Swidden farmers never asserted any right to ownership of plots they *jumed*. The hills were common land and a ridge abandoned after a *juming* operation became common land again. This mode of economy was not conducive to accumu-

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lation and transmission of landed property. So the bulk of the *jummayā's* inheritance comprised domestic animals, household commodities and women's personal decorations, besides social roles and titles, magico-religious paraphernalia and the indigenous art of healing.

Like every other hill man, the Tanchangya did not exert any right to ownership of the plot he *jumed*. But he was of the settled type, as the Chakma or the Marma was, not frequently changing the village site. He was rooted to the plot on which his ancestral house stood for several generations. Only in the early 20th century, after a section of the ethnic group went over to wet-rice cultivation, did they learn to assert ownership rights.

The traditional system of inheritance that prevailed among Tanchangya may be gleaned from their customary laws.

i. Property is transmitted in the male line, from father to son. Traditionally, wives, daughters and female siblings received nothing but they were allowed to retain in their possession all articles of personal decoration.

   Adopted sons enjoy as much right to inheritance as 'real' or biological sons do.

ii. After father's death, the entire property goes to the son who has lived with him under the same roof and supported him economically. All minor siblings are to remain under his care as long as they are not capable of managing things on their own.

   A son living in a separate house is not entitled to any inheritance, unless the deceased makes a testimonial to that effect.

iii. The deceased's wife must be cared for by the person who inherits property, and if she does not remarry, he must provide for her as long as she lives. Should an adopted son inherit property, he must look after the living mater. If at the time of father's death, there is an unmarried

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daughter in the house, the inheriting son will take care of her until she too is married off.

iv. Theoretically, additional privilege is not given to a biological son born after a family has adopted an heir. But blood-ties among Tanchangya are strong, and in such cases, the property is divided. The deceased's ancestral assets goes to his biological son; his lifetime acquirements are given to the adopted son, provided that the latter has lived in the house of the pater.

v. No blood relative can contest the rights of an adopted son, and if, after marriage, the latter continues to live with the family that adopted him, the pattern of inheritance follows *clauses i* and *ii*. Only estrangement from the pater can formally scrap the adopted son's right to inheritance.

vi. If the son who has lived with his father dies before the latter does, the son's son (grandson) inherits property. However, if the deceased son is the only heir of a householder (and if neither has a heir, biological or adopted), then the property passes on to the male closest to householder in consanguinity. In the Tanchangya's system of kinship reckoning, a consanguineous inheritor is invariably a member of the same *del*.

vii. A man may gift his property to the *kyang* or to anyone he likes but before he does that, he will have to make a public testimonial (in the presence of village elders) to that effect, so that his blood-relatives may not assert any claim to property after his death.

viii. An estranged son is not entitled to any inheritance; he does not derive any privilege by referral to agnatic descent. But in practice, it is found that if the deceased has no legal inheritor, the estranged son takes recourse to the provision of consanguinity (*see clause vi above*) in customary law to assert his claim on father's property.

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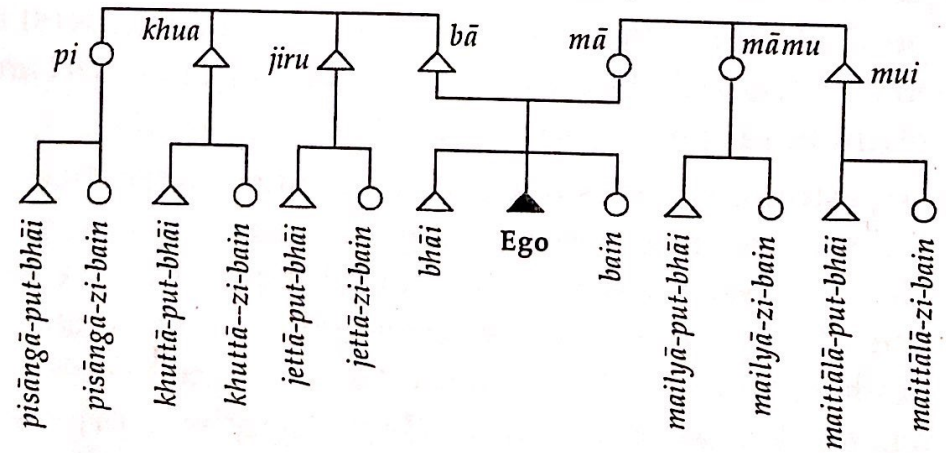
ix. But if the deceased has an adopted son besides the estranged son, the entire property, as a rule, goes to the former. In this case, the estranged son cannot assert his right to even ancestral assets. However, if the adopted son dies without leaving behind a male issue, and if the estranged son is alive at that time, then the latter can stake claim to his father's property.

x. A mentally retarded child or a son incapable of taking care of himself cannot inherit his father's property. But so long as he is alive, a consanguineous male will act as custodian and look after him. This custodian inherits property after the son dies.

Today, several of these customary practices are not strictly followed. If a man has more than one son, it is now usual to divide the property equally among them. Against space or accommodation constraints of the traditional dwelling house, modern concrete buildings can accommodate any number of siblings and their families within a single plot. In towns like Bandarban and Rangamati, there is an increasing trend among well-off family heads to opt for the tower-block lay-

▼ *Tanchangya kinship (bifurcate collateral).*



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out which tends to cut across the older distinction between nuclear and extended families. Most importantly, educated males now make it a point to bestow part of their property on wives and daughters.

5.2 *Relationships*

The family is the smallest cohesive unit, which links up with the greater society through an elaborate network of affinial and consanguineal ties. No doubt, marital alliances are important in determining kin status but since the Tanchangya family is essentially patrifocal, every alliance tends to be conceived in terms of precise ties with family heads and consanguineal males. The rationale behind this is obvious. For Tanchangyas, descent ties compose the vertebrae of their social order, and, in their view of that order, each collateral group is linked through the male line (*del*) to the clan (*'gutthi'*).

5.2.1 *Relationship terms*

The Tanchangya's kinship system is essentially bifurcate collateral (the Sudanese type), wherein separate kin terms are assigned to F, FB, MB, M, MZ and FZ. All cousin prefixes are potentially descriptive. The following list uses the domain of the individual to define specific ties with different kin categories, affinial and consanguineal, in three ascending and three descending generations. In the extreme right column, '*x*' (whenever it occurs) is to be read as 'name of son.'

		Relation	*Form of address*
F	:	*bāp, bābā*	*bā, bābā; bo* (AG, DG, MoG)
GF	:	*āittyā*	*āsu; buā-dā* (DG)
GM	:	*buāngā, barāngā*	*nu, nānu, bebei, bei; buā-bei* (DG)
FeB	:	*jettā*	*jiru; jidu* (KG)
FeBW	:	*jerengā; jedengā* (KG)	*jerāi; jedāi* (KG)
FeBS	:	*jettā-put-bhāi*	*dā* or *dādā* if older, else by name
FeBD	:	*jettā-zi-bāin*	*bei* if older, else by name

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FyB	:	*khuttā*	*khua* (DG), *khuku* (MuG), *khukko* (AG), *kākkā* (KG)
FyBW	:	*khuāngā; khurāngā* (KG)	*khui, kākki*
FyBS	:	*khuttā-put-bhāi*	*dā* or *dādā* if older, else by name
FyBD	:	*khuttā-zi-bāin*	*bei* if older, else by name
FZ	:	*pisāngā*	*pi; pepe* (DG); *pipi* (KG)
FZH	:	*pisāngā*	*pisā*
FZS	:	*pisāngā-put-bhāi*	*dā* or *dādā* if older, else by name
FZD	:	*pisāngā-zi-bāin*	*bei* if older, else by name
FLA	:	*so(r), sesāu* (MoG)	same as F
MLA	:	*su(r)i*	same as M
M	:	*mā*	*mā , iyoh* (DG and MoG)
MB	:	*mailyā, mailāngā*	*māmu*
MBW	:	*mailāngā*	*māmi*
MBS	:	*mailyā-put-bhāi* *mailāngā-put-bhāi*	*dā* or *dādā* if older, else by name
MBD	:	*mailyā-zi-bāin* *mailāngā- zi-bāin*	*bei* if older, else by name
MZ	:	*maittālā, maisāngā*	*mui*
MZH	:	same as MZ	*maisā, muisā*
MZS	:	*maisāngā-put-bhāi* *maittālā-put-bhāi*	*dā* or *dādā* if older, else by name
MZD	:	*maisāngā-zi-bāin* *maittālā-zi-bāin*	*bei* if older, else by name
B	:	*bhāi*	see eB & yB
BW	:	see eBW & yBW	see eBW & eBW
SIFLA	:	*tālai*	*jiru; jidu* (KG)
SIMLA	:	*tālani*	*jerāi; jedāi* (KG)
BWB	:	*beyāi*	*beyāi; dā* or *dādā* if older
BWZ	:	*beyāni, biyāni*	*beyāni, biyāni; bei* if older
BS	:	*bhāi-put, bhāi-pua*	by name or nickname
BSW	:	*bhāi-puda-bo, bhāi-pura-bo*	by name *or* as 'mother of *x*'
BD	:	*bhāi-zi*	by name or nickname
BDH	:	*bhāi-zi-jāmāi; bhāi-zi-zāmei*	by name *or* as 'father of *x*'

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eB	:	*dānga(r)-bhāi, zed-bhāi*	*dā, dādā*
eBW	:	*baisāngā, zed-bhāi-bo*	*busi*
yB	:	*chiyan-bhāi; chigon-bhāi* (KG)	by name or nickname
yBW	:	*bhāi-bo, chiyan-bhāi-bo*	conversation is tabooed
Z	:	*bain*	see eZ & eZ
ZH	:	see eZH & yZH	see eZH & yZH
ZHB	:	*tālta-bhāi*	*dā* or *dādā* if older, else as *tālta*
ZHZ	:	*tālta-bāin*	*bei* if older, else as *tālta*
ZS	:	*bhāgyanā; bhāynā* (AG); *bhāganā* (DG)	by name or nickname
ZSW	:	*-bo* suffixed to ZS	conversation is tabooed
ZD	:	*bhāgini* (*bhāyini* in AG)	by name or nickname
ZDH	:	*bhāgini-jāmāi, bhāgini-jāmei*	by name or as 'father of *x*'
eZ	:	*jed-bain, ba-bain*	*bei, bebei*
eZH	:	*bonai*	*bonai*, also *dā* or *dādā* if older
yZ	:	*bain, chiyan-bain; chigan-bain* (KG)	by name or nickname
yZH	:	*bain-jāmāi, bain-jāmei*	by name or as 'father of *x*'
H	:	*nek*	*ai* or as 'father of *x*'
SPGF	:	*āittyā*	*āchu; buā-dā* (DG)
SPGM	:	*buāngā, barāngā*	*nu, nānu, bebei, bei; buā-bei* (DG)
HeB	:	*bhāi-so(r)*	conversation is tabooed
HeBW	:	*jāl*	*bei*
HeBS	:	*bhāi-so(r)-puā*	by name or nickname
HeBD	:	*bhāi-so(r)-zi*	by name or nickname
HyB	:	*dior, jio(r); jegad* (AG)	by name or any calling
HyBW	:	*dior-bo, jio(r)-bo*	by name or as *bain*
HyBS	:	*dior-pua, jio(r)-puā*	by name or nickname
HyBD	:	*dior-zi, zio(r)-zi*	by name or nickname
HeZ	:	*nansot, nansoit*	*bei*
HeZH	:	*nanso(i)t-jāmei* or *jāmāi, nansoisa-jāmei*	*dā, dādā*; also *banoi*

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HeZS	:	*nanso(i)t-pua, nansoisa-puā*	by name or nickname
HeZD	:	*nanso(i)t-zi, nansoisa-zi*	by name or nickname
HyZ	:	*nanan*	by name, nickname; also *bain*
HyZH	:	*nanan-jāmei (-jāmāi)*	*bhāi, banoi*, or as 'father of *x*'
HyZS	:	*nanan-pua, nanan-puā*	by name or nickname
HyZD	:	*nanan-zi, nanan-zi*	by name or nickname
W	:	*mok; muk* (MuG)	*ai* or as 'mother of *x*'
WeB	:	*sumandi* (corrupt. *sugandi*)	*dādā, banoi*
WeBW	:	*sumandi-bo*	*bei*
WeBS	:	*sumandi-pua, sugandi-puā*	by name or nickname
WeBD	:	*sumandi-zi, sugandi-zi*	by name or nickname
WyB	:	*sālā*	*bhāi* or by name, nickname
WyBW	:	*sālā-bo*	*bain* or by name

A mother protecting her child from the scorching sun.

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WyBS	*sālā-pua, sālā-puā*	by name or nickname
WyBD	*sālā-zi*	by name or nickname
WeZ	*jeyat, jegat*	*bei*
WZH	*sajan, sadan*	*bhāi*; also as *sajan* or *sadan*
WZS	*sajan-pua, sadan-puā*	by name or nickname
WZD	*sajan-zi, sadan-zi*	by name or nickname
WyZ	*sāli, shāli*	by name or nickname
S	*pua, puā, put*	by name or nickname
SLA	*jāmāi* (*zāmei* in MuG)	*jāmāi*, also by name
SLAF	*beyāi*	*beyāi* or *dādā*
SLAM	*beyāni, biyāni*	*beyāni, biyāni*
SLAB	*putarā,*	*putarā*, also by name
SLAeZ	*zi-nansoit, zia-nansoit*	by name or as 'mother of *x*'
SLAyZ	*zi-nanan, zia-nanan*	by name or as 'mother of *x*'
D	*zi*	by name *or* nickname
DLA	*pura-bou, puda-bou*	by name or 'mother of *x*'
DLAF	same as SLAF	see SLAF
DLAM	same as SLAM	see SLAM
DLAB	same as SLAB	see SLAB
DLAeZ	same as SLAeZ	see SLAeZ
DLAyZ	same as SLAyZ	see SLAyZ
GPF	*dānga(r)-jettā*	*jiru; jidu* (KG)
GPM	*dānga(r)-jerengā; dānga(r)-jedengā* (KG)	*jerāi; jedāi* (KG)
GCS	*pudin, puring*	by name *or* nickname
GCD	same as GCS	see GCS (not gender-specific)

Semantically, most terms are Indo-Aryan, and several of these occur, with some phonological modifications, in Chakma and also in Eastern and Southeastern Bengali. But *āchu* [asu] for 'grandfather' (*āzu* in Chakma) is identical with Tippera *āchu* [asu]. DG and MoG Tanchangyas call mother as *iyoh*. In Chak, mother is called *aneh* [ənè] and in Taman, *nëm*.

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Ego calls his great-grandparents by the same terms he uses to address FeB and FeBW. In the hills, the average lifespan is short and few Tanchangyas have actually seen or personally spoken to their own great-grandparents.

Terms to connote M, BWB, BWZ, ZHB, ZHZ, eZH, SLA, SLAF, SLAM, DLAF, DLAM, SLAB and DLAB do not differ from those used to address them. In referring to cousins and siblings, separate prefixes, each indicating precise ties, are used; in addressing them, some distinction is made in terms of their age.

Father's younger brother is called *khua* (DG), *khuku* (MuG) or *khukko*, but if he takes a deceased elder brother's wife to assume the role of *sārāngā-bāp*, 'stepfather,' only the woman's daughter may address him as *bā* or *bābā*. Her son will continue to call him *khua*, etc., or use no address at all. If a widower marries the younger sister of his deceased wife, his children can call her *mā* or *musi*. A *sārāngā-mā*, 'stepmother' coming from a different family is generally addressed *mā* by children born of her husband's original wife.

5.2.2 *Teknonyms, endearment terms and nicknames*

A householder is never addressed or referred to by his personal name but as father of one of his children, such as *Paidāng-bāppa*, where *Paidāng* is the name of a son. The same convention is followed in the case of the housewife. Husband and wife call each other as father and mother of their children but they also use the indefinite *ai*; they never utter each other's personal names. Teknonymy is also prevalent among Chakmas, and the real name of a householder is not uttered in desolate places for the fear of attracting the notice of evil spirits. A superstitious swidden cultivator will tell you not to call him by his personal name in the jungle; he believes that if that is done, a malevolent spirit will know his name and, imitating your voice, call upon him at night to inflict him with woes. With the spread of education, the belief

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in spirits is gradually disappearing, and the widespread use of teknonyms with it.

Parents use endearments to call children. A son may be called *bongu* or *bābu* ('father') by a patronising father. Correspondingly, a girl is addressed as *mā*. Boys may also be called *Dhana* ('the wealthy one'), *Rājenpur* ('prince'), etc. Names with allusion to personal traits are also used by parents to children tender of age. A peevish boy may be called *Kāchā-marit* ('green chilli') and a girl with downcast eyes *Udāsi* ('melancholic'). *Kālāpunā* is a very waggish way of nicknaming a child whose back is darker than the rest of the body while a child called *Pettuwā* will greedily gulp down every morsel of food given to him. But these names are not used after the children grow up.

Any nickname originating outside the family usually clings to a person lifelong or until the time he acquires a newer affixture. These are never uttered in the presence of the person who is actually referred to. Bargalya Tanchangya, present VCP of Chamdurtlang (LADC), had an accident that left him permanently lame-footed. The bus he was travelling in got badly damaged but he survived the accident to be known as *Gāri-bhāngyā*, 'the bus breaker.' At Baraguisuri (CADC) lives one Shanti Bikash Tanchangya who is called *Phoren-gappwā*, because he always brags of having travelled to foreign countries; his own people say that he never went out of Mizoram. My host at Dursora (CADC), Suratchoga Tanchangya, is nicknamed *Gāndeyā*. So wide is the currency of these nicknames that very quickly, real names are replaced from general memory. It is Tanchangya's way of knowing and remembering people. Pankaj, the youngest son of Suratchoga Tanchangya, and his friend, Rabiranjan, a schoolteacher at Fulsora, told me, 'By the time you leave us, you'll have acquired a nickname.' I still do not know what name they gave me. Pankaj and Rabiranjan were my trusted companions in the August-September 2005 tour of Tanchangya villages of CADC.

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5.2.3 *Tabooed relations*

The mother-in-law avoidance is consistently maintained, and a man is never intimate with his *suri* (WM). They do not speak to each other in public; inside the house too, they usually avoid direct conversation. If the man has something to tell his mother-in-law, he communicates it through his wife or one of her younger siblings. In like manner, a housewife avoids intimacy with her father-in-law.

A woman's relationship with her *bhāisor* (HeB) is always marked out by avoidance behaviour. They must not speak to each other in public or in private; they should even avoid looking into each other's eyes. Amusingly, a Tanchangya will tell you that should a housewife who has gone to the river to fetch water suddenly discover that her *bhāisor* has fallen into the water and needs to be pulled out, she will quietly ignore him and walk away. She may, of course, serve him meal and wash the utensil he used but never clean his clothes. Conversely, she is intimate with her *jeor* (HyB), but not to the extent of allowing their intimacy become an embarrassment for the family. Under Tanchangya customary law, leviratic alliance is allowed in the sense that a man can marry the wife of a deceased elder brother.

A man avoids contact with his wife's elder sister but their relation is not as restrained as the one between a woman and her *bhāisor*. Though a man may not touch his wife's elder sister or marry her under any condition, he is allowed to talk to her. She is like an older sister to him, and he calls her *bei*, the same address for eZ. With the wife's younger sister, he is very familiar; he can marry her after the wife's death.

5.3 *Structure of kinship organisation*

Within the Tanchangya tribe, there are seven *gosās* or kinship groups, each having under it several clans or *gutthis*. The *gutthi* is further divided into *dels* or lineages, which, in the past, regulated intra-clan marriages but those functions

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became redundant when the clans themselves began to disseminate positive marriage rules by distinguishing precise marriageable categories from non-marriageable ones. We shall examine the prevailing marriage rules in the next chapter. In the following paragraphs, the focus will be on the Tanchangya's social structure.

5.3.1 *Gutthi*

ဂုတ်ထိ *gutthi* is best conceived of as clan; perhaps, one may even describe it as a patriclan, as each *gutthi* traces descent in unilineal male lines (*del*) from an apical ancestor. Derived from Pali *gotthi* (< Skt. गोष्ठी *gōṣthī*), its function is much confused with the Hindu *gotra*. In the Tanchangya society, the *gutthi* now plays a pivotal role in regulating marriage, inheritance and ceremony. An individual, a family or clan can shift allegiance from one *gosā* to another but changing of *gutthi* is strictly prohibited. Only an adopted child is assigned the clan of his pater.

Several *gutthi* appellations originate in personal attributes of their apical ancestors, the pattern conforming to the penchant for remembering persons not by their personal names but by nicknames or monikers. Thus, the progenitor of the *Arwā* clan (KG) was much too skinny, because he ate very little food. In the appellations, *Bāngāl gutthi*, *Pālāngsā gutthi*, etc., one may discover early admixture with other ethnic groups or racial stocks. Clan names such as *Ālu* ('potato') and *Balā* ('wasp'), etc. allude to non-human objects sans the ritual for multiplication or preservation of their totem species. One LB clan is called *Ābāngyā*; the term perhaps refers to a certain plant species (*Achyranthes aspera Linn*?). Another clan calls itself *Karu*, a term that appears to be cognate with *krú*, Sak for 'bamboo,' but my Tanchangya informants could not tell me what it meant. In some cases, even physiological or psychological semblance is sought between apical ancestor and natural object. *Balā gutthi*, for instance, is conceived

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Name of *gutthi*	Meaning (2006-7)	Risley's Notes (1891)
1. *Ārwā* (KG)	He was too skinny.	[*Aruyāi*], the man as thin as skeleton.
2. *Bāngāl* (KG)	Born of a Bengali father.	descendent from a Bengali father.
3. *Bunga* (KG)	He had high ribs.	[*Bhumar*], he of high ribs.
4. *Phrāngsā* (KG)	He whose father died of leprosy.	[*Faringsa*], he who excelled in wickedness.
5. *Gochālyā* (KG)	The strong, big man.	the strong man.
6. *Pālāngsā* (MoG)	His father was a Palaingsa Marma	...
7. *Nābānā* (MoG)	Often he behaved childishly.	...
8. *Kālā melā* (DG)	Born of a dark women.	...
9. *Pandit* (DG)	He was very knowledgeable.	...
10. *Rāngā* (DG)	He of fair complexion.	...
11. *Kālāthangsā* (DG)	His father was a minister.	...
12. *Pakta* (MeG)	He was flabby.	
13. *Debā* (MeG)	Whose parents gave him away.	...
14. *Rāndānga* (MeG)	He with a large waist.	...
15. *Temele* (MeG)	He who played pranks on others.	...
16. *Gunyā* (MuG)	He who was very skilled.	...
17. *Kabālyā* (MuG)	Always luck favoured him.	...
18. *Lāmbowā* (LB)	He was very tall.	...

N.B. Risley mentions a couple of gutthis, such as *Bādāl* ('a chisel'), *Ichā* ('he was too fond of shrimps'), *Kachui* ('they who build their house in a row') and *Lulang* ('a devil'), which could not be traced. As for the clan-name *Kachui*, it could possibly be the *Posoi gutthi* of *Daingnyā gosā*, but I am ignorant of its meaning.

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of as a clan descended from an ancestor who buzzed like a wasp when he got angry; alternatively, the same clan ancestor is also believed to have inflicted severe injuries on (*lit.* 'stung') his enemies. But these interpretations do not always seem to be very static. Risley (1891: Appendix I) glossed *Balā* as 'he whose family was as numerous as wasps.' Incidentally, his list does not distinguish *gutthi* from *gosā*; these are clearly confused. Lewin (1869: 67) does not give any *gutthi* names but his list of Tanchangya *gosās* is accurate.

5.3.2 *Del*

ᨴᩮᩬ *Del* (also *dāl* in KG and MeG; *dāil* in DG) denotes a lineage group under a clan ('*gutthi*'); it traces unilineal descent, as already mentioned, in the male line from the *gutthi* ancestor. The original ancestor of the lineage is not remembered; in this case, it is more important to remember one who lived a few generations ago. Within the kinship group ('*gosā*'), clans ('*gutthi*') may intermarry with each other. But the Tanchangya *gutthi* is not strictly exogamous; in former times, all intra-clan marriages were regulated by the *del*. This inference has been worked out from remnants of older practices among extant lineages. Even today, some lineages such as the *Legāngā dāil* of the *Piso* clan (DG) and the *Bāgaosā del* of the *Gunyā* clan (MuG) prefer to keep out of the circle of permitted marriages such persons as belonging to the same lineage. Yet, should a boy of any of these *dels* bring about a successful elopement with a girl from his own lineage, their parents will make enquiries after their male ancestors. If no consanguineal ties between the concerned families are traced backwards to the fifth ascending generation from the lovers' point, then the match is approved; else, they are separated.

Dels were not permanent affixtures, as *gutthis* were, but periodically updated points of relationship reckoning. A set of names were valid only so long as marital restrictions applied. When restrictions relaxed, old *dels* became redundant

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and new *dels* emerged to redefine patterns of marriage within the *gutthi*. Several generations later, those names were again abandoned and a fresh set created with altered points of kinship reckoning. This process continued up to the late 19th century, after which the system itself died out. I collected a few *del* names, which do not seem to be older than that time.

Today, *dels* are no longer reckoned by Tanchangya as socially important units. Nevertheless, in making alliances within the *gutthi*, consanguinity is always given priority. Should two

Traceable Tanchangya lineages ('del').

Gutthi	*Del*	*Gloss*
Ārwā	*Pāttwādang*	He wandered carelessly.
(KG)	*Sāhāinsā*	...
Dāllowā	*Bongā*	He buzzed like a bee.
(MuG)	*Chog-pāgeiyā*	When angry, his eyes glared.
	Lāmbuk-beichchyā	He used only a strong forearm to strike his enemies.
Gunyā	*Mesā*	He had a lump on his back.
(MuG)	*Bāgaosā*	Priest who worshipped a tiger.
	Chāgal-lāsiyā	He blushed when he saw a goat.
	Mugāiyā	He hit his enemy with a cudgel.
Tasi	*Sālegā*	He prattled like a sterling.
(MuG)	*Sugar-chet-kheiyā*	He ate the penis of a boar.
	Dur-pun-kheiyā	He ate the anus of a tortoise.
Piso	*Tibā*	He was a Mrung-Tippera.
(DG)	*Pesoi*	He kept his hair untidy.
	Legāngā	He was cleanly of manners.
Paso	*Lāngā*	He was hard working.
(DG)	*Tarakyā*	He was smart and intelligent.
Āmilā	*Kowā*	He was attacked by wild beast (and
(MeG)		made a great hue and cry about it).
	Bowā	But he showed no perturbation.

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males be related to each other by parent or sibling ties, their children are expected to avoid marital alliances among them, at least up to the fifth generation. Sometimes, this prohibition is relaxed after the third descending generation.

5.3.3 *Gosā*

The *gosā* ('kinship group') is formed of several clans ('*gutthi*') which show some sort of socio-political, cultural, occupational and linguistic homogeneity among them. Twelve such kinship groups are said to have been originally created when the group first settled in the Tain Chhari region. Then each group had its own hereditary *Āmu*. Politically, the *gosā* was a self-governing unit, each functioning independently of the others. A single chief over all *gosās* did not quite emerge until the early 19th century. We shall note further on this in a subsequent paragraph. Kinsmen bound to a particular *gosā* owed their allegiance to none other than their own *Āmu*. Occupationally, all families living under a *gosā* cooperated with each other in traditional agro-economy. In functioning, the consensus of different clan heads on matters pertaining to social and cultural exercises were accumulated over time and set up as paradigm for *gosā*-oriented living.

A 2005 survey of Tanchangya settlements (*see supra* § 3.2.3) shows that families bound by *gosā* ties tend to form clusters. Was then the *gosā* an endogamous unit? Theoretically, alliances outside the kinship group does not invoke any social sanction but the incidence of inter-*gosā* marriages continues to be low in Tanchangya villages of South Tripura and CADC. Casually, an individual from one kinship group will speak of oddities in the spoken idiom of a man from another kinship group; he will also point to differences in their customary practices. With reference to the female's outfit, one notes the ease with which Tanchangyas point to *gosā*-based differences in colours and textures of the homespun. Yet, among different *gosās* within the ethnic group, no avoidance relationship

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exists. Perhaps, an older way of affirming oneness to the kinship group was by keeping marital alliances as far as possible among different clans of the same kinship group.

Usually, different clans composing a *gosā* stayed together but internal disputes sometimes led to fission, with a whole clan or a section of it leaving the original *gosā* and going over to a different one. This would explain why some identical clans

Tanchangya kinship groups and clans

Gosā	*Gutthi*
Kārwā gosā	(1) *Ārwā*; (2) *Gosālyā*; (3) *Balā*; (4) *Bāngāl*; (5) *Phrāngsā*; (6) *Lāmbāsā*; (7) *Baksārā*. (8) *Bunga*; (9) *Lāposyā*; (10) *Bou*.
Muo gosā	(1) *Tāsi*; (2) *Dāllowā*; (3) *Āgā*; (4) *Gunyā*; (5) *Kuruga*; (6) *Āhgārā*; (7) *Khusswā*; (8) *Kabālyā*.
Angya gosā	... ...
Lāngbāsā	(1) *Sakyā*; (2) *Balā*; (3) *Lāmbowā*; (4) *Karu*; (5) *Bedaba*; (6) *Ābāngyā*; (7) *Pārā* (*Pāyā*).
Daingnyā gosā	(1) *Piso*; (2) *Posoi* (3) *Bāngālyā*; (4) *Balā*; (5) *Bāndhyabo*; (6) *Rāngā*; (7) *Kālā-melā*; (8) *Kālāthangsā*; (9) *Rāngākāngā*; (10) *Bou*; (11) *Kālāngsā*; (12) *Pandit*; (13) *Kāttalyā*; (14) *Dānnowā*; (15) *Tāinyobo*; (16) *Āmilā*; (17) *Bogā*.
Monglā gosā	(1) *Pālāngsā*; (2) *Dābunyā*; (3) *Kaleyā*; (4) *Debā*; (5) *Nālābā*; (6) *Nābānā* (*Nābālā*).
Melong gosā	(1) *Āmilā*; (2) *Temele*; (3) *Ālu*; (4) *Pakta*; (5) *Rāndānga*.

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occur under different kinship groups. As a rule, *gutthi* is not interchangeable but one may leave his original *gosā* to join a different *gosā*. This system of entering or leaving a kinship group also allowed absorption of non-Tanchangya families by the ethnic group. The Tanchangya clans are all ancestor-focused, and appellations such as *Bāngālyā gutthi, Pālāngsā gutthi*, etc. generate at least one descental information that the apical ancestors of these clans were men from ethnically or racially different stocks who assimilated into Tanchangya. In the case of a section of the *Piso gutthi*, the *Tibā dāil*, the origin can be traced to the early 19th century, when a section of Tanchangyas were living as neighbours of Mrung in the upper reaches of the Mayu. It is said that a man of the *Piso* clan of DG adopted a Murang-Tippera [Mrung] orphan and the latter's lineage came to be called *Tibā dāil*.

My MeG informants of Ratanpur categorically stated that the *Monglā gosā* was created when a section of Tanchangya was absorbed into Marma. A tale of the origin of the two *gosās* says that in the Tain Chhari-Matamuri battle (c. 15th century AD), the *Sāppye* suffered major reverses against the *Rowāng rāsā* (Arakan king), after which a section of their people left the place and became *Ānokyās* ('westerners' i.e. the Chakma). Of those who remained, a section took to plundering Mag (Marma) villages, stealing grains, livestock and everything useful they could find, and those people formed the *Melong gosā*. Then, one day, the Rowang king sent a huge army; the *Melong gosā* escaped into the mountains but the others could not escape. Many of them were carried away to *Rowāng*, where they intermarried with the Mags. Later, when their children came back to join the tribe, they were called *Monglā gosā* by the others.

As for the term *gosā* ('*gozā*' in Chakma) itself, there is some debate on its origin. For Ghosh (1909: 54fn) it is a corruption of Bengali গোছা *gochhā* (< Skt. গুচ্ছ *guchchha*, 'bunch'). Semantically, this is less tenable than Dewan's (1996: 46) view

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of *gosā* being a compound of Marma *gong* ('head') and *sā* ('offspring, people'). But when two Marmas meet, it is usual to inquire after their ခုသား *jā sāḥ* (also ခု ခုတ် သား *jāt sāḥ*), asking, ကို ပင် ခုသား လေး *ko bang (kai pang) jā sāḥ leḥ*? or ကို ပင် ခု ခုတ် သား လေး *ko bang jā jāt sāḥ leḥ*? ('Of what kinship group are you?'), to which the reply is *Palaingsa, Rigresa,* etc., according to the kinship group to which one belongs. Another likely cognate of *gosā* is Kachin *gumsa* or *kumsa,* an organised socio-political unit under a chief called *Duwa.*

Today, only seven *gosās* are traceable, out of which again, the *Angya-gosā* and the *Lāngbāsā* are almost extinct. Interestingly, within the KG section living in South Tripura, there is a *gutthi* that calls itself *Lāmbāsā,* which could perhaps be a separated section of *Lāngbāsā* joining ranks with *Kārwā gosā.* Another section of the same kinship group is being assimilated into MuG. In CADC, I came across a few LB women who wore MuG dress and spoke the latter's dialect. Two AG individuals I met at Kyauk Chaung (Maungdaw) spoke Tanchangya but were dressed like Rakhine. Strangely, too, the *Angya gosā* recalls no clan names.

5.4 *Gosā-based village community*

When kinship groups were small, each *gosā* had its own village and functioned directly under its *Āmu.* Tanchangyas remember their *Āmus* as powerful men who brought 'prestige' to the *gosā.* Lewin (1869: 67) spelt *Āmu* as *Ahoon,* and by Lewin's time, a number of Tanchangya kinship heads had been reduced to mere tax-collecting officials of the Chakma Chief, a function performed by parallel Chakma *Dewāns.* 'He collects the poll-tax (the sole hill revenue) and retaining a certain fixed proportion thereof, pays the remainder to the Chief of the tribe, together with a yearly offering of first-fruits. He has the privilege of deciding cases and for doing so receives certain fees, the amount of which is prescribed by custom' (*Ibid.*).

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In former times, the *Āmu* enjoyed a far more prestigious position. He occupied his office throughout life; on his death, it passed on to the son living with him. No *gosā* could have more than a single chief at one time. Asked about the meaning of the term, I was told that it meant 'the big head(man).' Interestingly, the Sak term for head is *āhú*, and the Tanchangya *Āmu* was literally the 'big head' of the *gosā*. His 'big' responsibility was to ensure harmony among the clans owing allegiance to him. That he did by seeking the common consent of the different clans and endorsing to a set uniform of rules within the *gosā*.

At the village-level, influential family elders or representatives of clans were important functionaries, and they adjudicated cases of infringement of customary laws. But when clans or lineages within a *gosā* came to dispute, the *Āmu's* intervention was sought. In matters pertaining to migration, settlement, or political alliances with other groups, his decision was final. Yet, the *Āmu* could not afford to be despotic, in which case, his own kinsmen would have abandoned him and joined a different *gosā*. Within the system, the *Āmu* derived no revenue from his relatives but he was assisted by them in private work, such as in building his house and helping his family cultivate the *jum*. A returning party of hunters always presented him with a hind leg of the animal they killed. When the *Āmu's* son or daughter got married, villagers contributed in kind, giving rice, fowls, bottles of homemade beer, etc. A full-grown boar was the most valued gift.

Notable increase in village population prompted the *Āmu* to divide his people into sub-villages, each under a *Rwāsā*, but by then, the administrative structure of the hills too had changed: all erstwhile kinship organisations disintegrated and their independent heads were reduced to mere headmen of *mouzās* under Chakma and Bohmong Chiefs.

There also existed in the Tanchangya village a residential-type of age-set system, wherein adolescent boys were segre-

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gated at night from their families and made to live at a dormitory for male bachelors under the care of an elderly lad. While the other *gosās* abandoned that practice long ago, the *Daingnyā gosā* persisted with it until the close of the 19th century.

'Among the Toungjynya and Doingnak sections of the tribe, the unmarried lads are all assembled at night in one house under the charge of an elder lad, in the same way as in the Khyoungtha [Marma] villages. This, however, was not the custom with the Chukmas proper' (Lewin 1869: 73).

On making inquiries after that system, I learnt that "the elder lad" was called *Gābura-dewān* (also *Gābuchyā-dewān*). One meaning of *gābur*, as we have seen, is 'client'; the other meaning is 'an unmarried lad' to which *dewān* ('a village official') was affixed. An alternative term for the juvenile leader's office is not recalled by the other *gosās;* neither could my informants tell me what type of lodging the young community used.

Marma young males are known to have repaired to the *kyang* (Buddhist temple) for the night (*Ibid.*: 46). Chaks (Saks) could vaguely recall a similar residential-type of age-set system but remembered no names or details; their kinsmen in Manipur, the Chakpas, used the *Koso*, a rudimentary structure on a raised platform, using thatch grass and bamboo for material. This, they occasionally also designated as *pākhāng-phalleisā koso*, to distinguish it from the *āhālup-koso* used by the elderly age-set. Formerly, Lushai villages too had their *zawlbûks* ('bachelor's dormitory').

The *Gābura-dewān* supervised the activities of the youth community, and he was always the most influential bachelor in the village, in most cases either a son or a close relative of the *Āmu*. He enjoyed his tenure in office as long as he stayed unmarried, and he also chose a *Muhri*, another unmarried young male, to assist him in his work. The *Muhri* could not become *Gābura-dewān* by promotion, unless he

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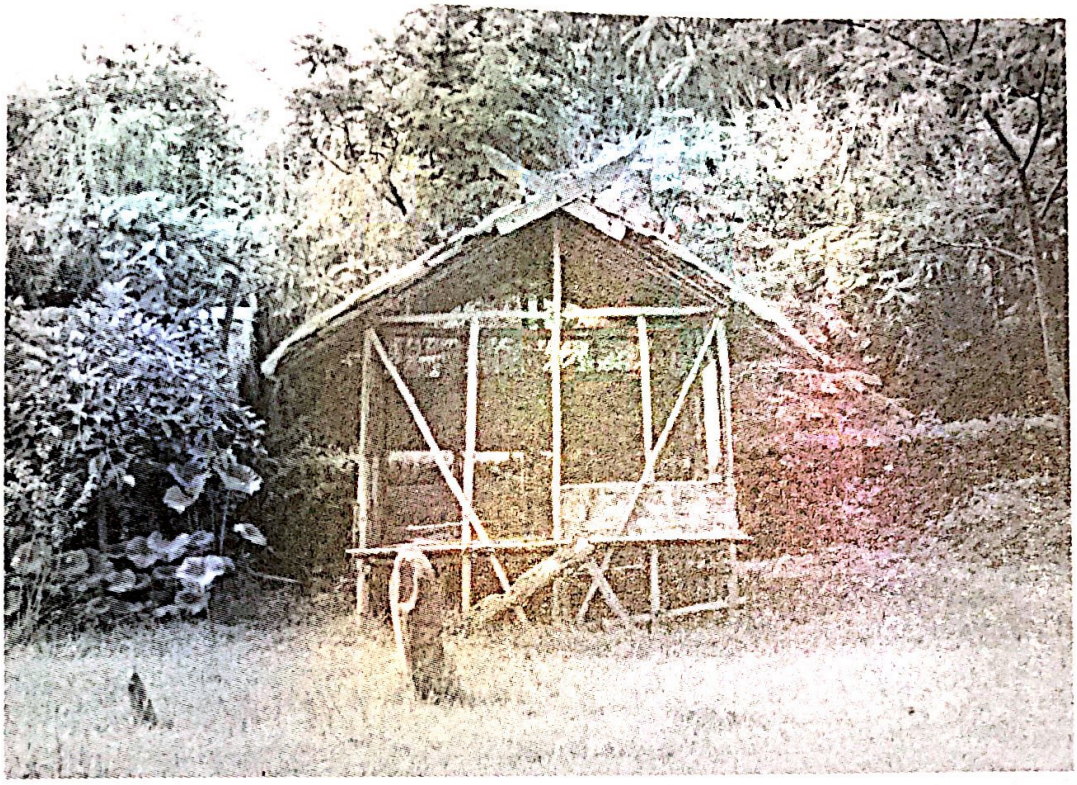

Koso, Chakpa dormitory at Muthua Bahadur Museum, Andro.

too came from an influential family or possessed exceptional leadership qualities. After a *Gābura-dewān* got married, another elderly lad succeeded him; the new juvenile head could choose a different *Muhri*. In the village, the juvenile age-set performed a most important function of transmitting the socio-cultural paradigms of the *gosā* to a new generation of males. Besides, it rendered voluntary service to families in building houses and in cultivating the *jum*. All cases of juvenile delinquency were looked into by the *Gābura-dewān*, and punishments ranged from flogging the delinquents to confining them without food for a day or two. At leisure, the young group always had some means to recreate. Lewin (*Ibid.*: 73). says, 'The lads play at konyon...the game is known to them as geela kara [*ghilā khālā*]. They also play a game resembling our English "touch." Peg-top [*nāring* or *nāding khālā*] is a common amusement among them.'

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5.5 *Disintegration of the kinship organisation*

In 1782, the Chakma Chief, Jan-Baksh Khan, passed a unilateral order that Tanchangyas should intermarry with Chakmas but as that was contrary to Tanchangya custom, it led to discontent among them, and they migrated to Arakan (Lewin 1869: 65). We have already noted that the Tanchangya *gosās* functioned as independent socio-political village units, each under the domain of its own *Āmu*. Yet, some sort of unity prevailed among the independently functioning *gosās*, and the exodus of 1782 seems to have come in the wake of some consensus among the *Āmus*.

When we next hear of the Tanchangyas in 1819, we find them led from Arakan into CHT by one Phahpru.

'The Toungjynya section of the tribe to the number of 4000 souls is said to have come into the Chittagong Hills as late as 1819 in the time of the Chief Dhurmbux Khan. They acknowledge as their head one Phahproo but Dhurmbux Khan would not recognize him as head of the Toungjynya clan, and consequently the major part of them returned to Arracan' (Lewin 1869: 66).

Not much detail is available on Phahpru but he seems to have been the Tanchangya's consensus man chosen above narrow *gosā* politics. Shortly after arriving in the Hill Tracts, Phahpru collected subscriptions from Tanchangya families to purchase an expensive gift ('the *Lāl Kutir*') for the Chakma Chief, Dharam-Baksh Khan, and to get in return permission to settle within his territory (Tanchangya 2000: 14). Lewin (*Ibid.*) says that Phahpru sought recognition as "head of the Toungjynya clan," which the Chakma Chief refused to grant him. Frustrated at his failure, he promptly decided to lead the entire group back to Arakan, just as he had led them into the Chittagong Hills. But factional politics among the *Āmus* resurfaced; some of them followed Phahpru and went over to Arakan, where they settled in the upper reaches of the Mayu; the others stayed back in CHT to eventually

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waive their differences with Chakmas. One Sridhan Amu found favour with Dharam-Baksh Khan, and he was allowed to settle with his kinsmen in the Rainkhyoung valley (Tanchangya *Ibid.*). Around the mid-19th century, many Tanchangya families migrated from Arakan to the southern parts of the Hill Tracts, settling around the Cox Bazaar Hills.

When the British took over the administration of the Chittagong Hills, all erstwhile independent hill groups saw significant structural changes going into their traditional socio-political organisations. Prior to that, in the early 18th century, the Chakmas had entered into mutually beneficial relations with the Mughals, restructured their society, and also adopted Mughal designations like *dewāns* and *kārbāris* for village-level officials through whom the territorial Chief collected revenue. Yet, for at least a hundred years after that, Chakma *dewāns* remained powerful, running their own parallel administration at the village level of the traditional kinship groups they represented. At the close of the 18th century, the Chakma Chief's principal sources of revenue consisted of custom duties levied on ferry, rent from *Chhan-kholā* ('thatch fields') and house tax from hill families (Buchanan 1792, *op. cit.* van Schendel 1992: 103 and 120f). Other ethnic groups living within the Chakma Chief's jurisdiction paid a nominal capitation fee; they were allowed to persist with their traditional modes of living. In the Tanchangya's case, the Chakma Chief interfered directly and though early efforts to bring the group within Chakma solidarity did not quite succeed, it pushed them into such inexpediency as eventually jeopardised their *gosā*-based socio-political communities.

The Bohmong's administrative system was different from that of the Chakma Chief; it was closely modelled on the plains type of revenue administration. (*See supra* § 1.2.) Independent clan chiefs or heads of kinship groups, including those of the Tanchangya settling in his territory in 1819, offi-

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cially enjoyed no higher status or greater claim to authority than that of the appointed village headmen (*Rwāsā*). In 1860, the British annexed the Hill Tracts; initially, not too many changes were made. But in 1884, CHT was restructured; it was divided into five Circles, two Khas Mahals in Sadar and Sangu subdivisions, and, the three Circles of Chakma, Mong and Bohmong Chiefs.

In restructuring the administrative set up of the hills, the Bohmong model was given priority over the Chakma model. Under new arrangements, the three Circle Chiefs were invested with authority not only to collect revenue from families residing within their respective Circles but, mostly importantly, to regulate the actions all village headmen. On the one hand, this allowed the Chiefs 'to dismiss the traditionally elected village heads and install loyal followers of their own in all villages' (Mey 1984: 92); on the other hand, by the same law, a highland chieftain who originally collected revenue only from his own kinsmen could now assert legal right within the village to collect house tax from all families, irrespective of their ethnic affiliations. This was contrary to the system the hill men had traditionally known.

By the close of the 19th century, all kinship groups of the Tanchangya had disintegrated; their *Āmus* were reduced to headmen of *mouzās* within the Chakma and the Bohmong Circles.

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He will float on until he is rescued by some 'finder.'

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6. *Customs, Rituals, and Beliefs*

Habitual behaviour is expected of a Tanchangya throughout life. As long as he goes by rule, he earns social acclaim as a righteous man. Any conflict with custom attracts social sanction ranging, according to the degree of violation, from mild reproach to ostracism. Whenever there is a ceremony in the family, a point is made to invite to a feast the village community or at least few neighbours should the expenses of entertaining a whole village be not within the means of the householder. In many areas, Tanchangya hamlets continue to be primarily *gosā*-based. And where families are bound to each other as kins or affines, community feasts play a core role in reinforcing the individual's kinship obligations. No doubt, following external contacts with other ethnic peoples, changes have crept into the Tanchangya's cultural paradigm; but the *jummayā* continues to observe many time-honoured customs.

6.1 *Birth rites*

During the final weeks of pregnancy, the mother-would-be stays close to the house or mostly inside it. But she continues to do the kitchen chores until a day or two before the delivery. If she is carrying her first child, she avoids, unless absolutely necessary, climbing up and down the log ladder, which gives the only access to the house. Sometimes, especially if childbirth is expected when it is weeding time in the *jum*, her husband can ask her mother to come over and stay

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with her through the final stages of pregnancy and childbirth. Mostly, in such cases, the mother-in-law stays with her daughter until the newborn undergoes the purification ceremony. Pregnant women who have already mothered children look more relaxed than the first-time mothers; they continue to perform regular household chores until moments before going into labour.

As soon as labour pain begins, the *asā melā* or village midwife, who is already informed of the probable date of delivery, is hastily fetched. In course of delivery, she is helped by other females of the house or women of the neighbourhood. Men are expected to stay outside the house. At such times, the father-would-be stands as a helpless spectator, eager to hear the birth cry of the child and to be told of its sex. A male child is always welcome, because he will grow up to be a useful hand in the father's domestic workgroup. Soon after the birth, the umbilical cord is cut with a *daluk*, a small sliver of bamboo sharpened at the edges. The womb is removed, stuffed inside a small earthen pot and buried in a less frequented corner of the house compound. Tanchangyas believe that if the womb is disposed far from the house, the child will eventually grow up to live a vagabond life, not emotionally attached to his own family.

Immediately after the delivery, the newborn is cleaned with lukewarm water and wrapped in new clothes to keep it dry and warm. Additional bedding consisting of several pieces of dry homespun is given to the child and its mother. So long as the remnant of the umbilical cord does not fall off, both child and mother are treated as impure; they stay segregated from the family. The woman is not allowed touch any utensils or articles that family members use; she must not do any kitchen work but may take the food cooked by the family. Only after the child has been purified with *ghilā-kasai-pāni* does its formal initiation into the family take place. To mark the end of segregation, the mother goes out of the house,

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accompanied by the midwife, to a nearby stream for a bath in the running water. When she returns, the *asā-melā* sprinkles purified water (*'ghilā-kasai-pāni'*) on her and she makes her obeisance to the earth-goddess. Once that is done, she can resume her normal duties as housewife.

The midwife gets a *rātā kura*, 'cock,' and a bottle or two of rice beer. Formerly, a one-rupee silver coin was given as token payment; now-a-days, silver coins are very rare to get and service-fee is paid in currency notes. This is called *nāyi kābā tāngā* (*nāri kābā tāngā* in KG), literally, 'money for cutting the umbilical cord.' On the occasion, an offering to household deities followed by a feast is twice blessed; it earns social credits for the father and bestows divine grace on the newborn. No specific naming ceremony is now recalled by the Tanchangya; generally, it is the biological father or a family elder who gives a name to the child.

Among Tanchangya, there is a peculiar custom, unknown to Chakma or other ethnic groups living in the region. If a woman gives birth to her first child during the first week of *Bhādra* (corresponding with the third week of September), the child must be forsaken by its natural parents, because the time is importunate and the newborn is believed to bring 𑄥𑄨 *phi*, 'bad luck,' with it, probably the curse of the water deity. Customarily, the child is put on a bamboo raft and 'floated,' *bhāsye-denā*, downstream. If the mother objects to the coarse handling of her child, she too is put on the raft. The first person to find the child and tow the raft to safety acquires the right to possession of the child; he may adopt it or give it away to one willing to be its social father; should the mother be on the raft with her newborn, she is fated to remain with the finder or be given away with the child. Her legal husband can take her back only after he has compensated the finder for the services rendered. By performing the *bhāsye-denā poi* ('child discarding ceremony'), the bad luck associated with a newborn is removed.

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Child discarding ceremony.

This custom is now almost lost; occasionally, when it is performed, parents wait for the child to grow up a little. Last year, one such *poi* was performed at Bandarban: after putting a baby boy on a bamboo raft, the midwife swam about fifty meters downstream. She was playing the role of the finder. Few villagers who had assembled near the stream, cheered on as she towed the raft wading through the shallow water to the bank and put the child into the safe hands of a tearful mother. The boy's father then gave money to the 'finder' and thanked her; the *phi* that came with the child was removed.

6.2 *Marriage*

There are no constraints on free intermixing of boys and girls. *Gengkhuli* sessions begin with nightfall, and whenever there is one in the village, the youthful company will always hang around the place until the end; sometimes, a session is so long that a whole night is covered in retelling an episode from the popular love tale of *Radhāman and Dhanpudi*. Boys and girls huddle round an inebriated ballad singer, cheering him on with the *reing*, the hill cry of ecstasy. For young lov-

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ers, it is but natural on these *gengkhuli* nights to steal themselves away from the boisterous gathering to the privacy of solitude. Extramarital sex is inadmissible but premarital sex allowed. If an unmarried girl becomes pregnant, it is taken for granted that her lover will marry her soon. Should he decline to do so, or express doubts about the legitimacy of the foetus despite definite proof of his involvement in the conception, he is punished, if necessary ostracised. No Tanchangya parents are unaware of the adolescent ways of children, having trodden the paths of love when they were young. 'Children have grown up. What can we do?' Adolescent love and youthful affection play a core part in the choice of life partners, and parents will rarely oppose a match so long as the prevailing norms of allowable alliances are not jeopardised. In the past, it was the duty of the *Gābura Dewān* to see to it that no mismating transpired in the juvenile community. Alliances with other ethnic groups are very restricted. Wives can be brought from other communities but daughters and sisters are not given away. Until about half a century ago, marital alliances with Chakma were avoided.

There are no restrictions on cross cousin marriages. When Tanchangyas say that they do not marry 'closely,' it means that in their society, alliance with patrilateral parallel cousin (father's brother's son or daughter) is disallowed. Of course, one can marry a matrilateral parallel cousin (mother's sister's son/daughter). There is no satisfactory evidence to show the existence of any social hierarchy distinguishing the clans ('*gutthi*') into wife-givers and wife-takers; but restricted exchange is permitted. 'Closeness' in Tanchangya's case must be interpreted in terms of *del* or lineage exogamy. Father's brother belongs to the same *del* as father does; hence, they are 'closely' related. But the mother comes from a different *del*, which is another way of saying that one can marry one's matrilineal parallel cousin. Father's sister belongs to the same *del* as father but her son or daughter takes on her husband's

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del; hence, in the Tanchangya's reckoning, all patrilineal cross-cousins are marriageable.

When *del* exogamy was abandoned, endogamous practices within the *gutthi* came to be interpreted in terms of positive marriage rules. The native term *Sāngyā kurum* or *Khelyā kurum* (*kudum* in KG) refers to alliance categories (cross cousins and matrilateral parallel cousins) while *Asāngyā kurum* (also *Garbā kurum*) includes non-marriageable relatives (siblings, patrilateral parallel cousins, stepbrothers or stepsisters, and putative kins). Leviratic and sororatic alliances are restricted to marrying WyZ and HyB, only after the death of the spouse. Under no circumstances is one permitted to marry spouse's elder sibling (WeZ or HeB).

Several types of marriages are known to the Tanchangya, of which the most prevalent ones are either arranged by parents or brought about through elopement. Child marriage is non-existent, while remarriage of widows ('*rāni-melā-sāngā*') is allowed. Formerly, *Āmus* kept polygenous families but they were not known to any assert filial widow inheritance (as erstwhile Lushai Chiefs did). Co-wife is allowed to the commoner if the original wife is found barren or insane. With the living wife's consent, a man can marry a second time but the increased expenditure of maintaining large families talks the *jummayā* out of plural marriages. Tanchangya women are not known to render sexual services to more than one male at a time but after a husband's death, she is permitted to marry his younger brother.

6.2.1 *Sāngā* ('*Negotiated marriage*')

When a boy becomes marriageable, his parents begin to inquire after a prospective bride. If the boy is already committed to some girl, he informs his parents about it; else, they take initiatives to open negotiations with the parents of some girl they have in mind. Initially, the proposal is sent through an intermediary called *ganakyā*. A girl's father who wishes to

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circumvent a match will cite some family problem and say that his daughter cannot be married in a year or two. However, should he see no objection to the match, a suitable day is fixed for the boy's parents to visit his house. Custom and courtesy make the boy's father carry *poi*, 'gifts,' as he goes out to negotiate his son's marriage; it includes a bottle or two of rice beer and a strangled fowl that has been nicely dressed and boiled. Since these visits are made only after a definite go-ahead gesture from the girl's side, the *poi* is accepted; thereafter, the boy's father can initiate *teimmāng*, 'the formal topic of marriage.' As a rule, the girl's side fixes the amount of money to be paid as *dudli tāngā* 'milk-price.' Compulsory gifts such as a new set of homespun, which invariably is the one worn by the women of the groom's *gosā*, and a few personal decorations for the bride need not be demanded; these will always come with the groom's party on the day of the wedlock. *Sājani* ('cosmetics') are a recent addition to the list. If the girl's grandmother is alive, she can drop a word or two once negotiations have ended fruitfully, 'Tell your son to bring a *bāghor* for me.' Though this is never demanded in earnest, the groom will bring at least a silver coin for her.

The marriage ceremony is performed during the daytime, shortly after the groom's party has arrived. A young, unmarried girl carries a bamboo basket, *phu kālyong*, which contains clothes and decorations for the bride. Always, an uneven number of individuals will accompany the groom, and there is also a friend or brother-in-law to act as the groom's best man, *chābālā*. The party cannot enter the girl's house straightaway; they must wait outside until the *jāmāi tulānā* ('welcoming the groom') is performed. It takes only a couple of minutes for an elderly relative of the bride to circle an egg several times round the groom's head and throw it, in a gesture to exonerating misfortune. During the marriage, the bride's house is overcrowded; if the groom is from the same village as the bride is, folks come to see how their boy looks

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A long piece of white homespun is tied round the waists of the couple during wedlock.

in the new role; if he is from a different village, the curiosity multiplies. Marriages are always occasions for community celebrations and the bride's father invites as many people as he can. In the past, a whole *gosā* lived as a single village community; individual families were linked to each other by blood or alliance, and marriage provided the opportunity to display one's kinship ties with the community.

During the wedlock, the bride sits to the left of the groom; their waists are bound together with a piece of white homespun. In front of them is put a flat basket or plate with paddy-seeds and cotton on it; on one side of the plate is kept a bowl of purified water. In KG and DG practice, a coconut, a few leaves of *pān* and some beetle nuts are also put on the plate. When everything is set, a young relative of the bride performs the *lāttang bānāh* ('tying the wedlock') three times, each time asking the same question, 'O elders, now that I've have bound Kattiyang and Makkabi (i.e. specific names of

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groom and bride) together, do you approve of the wedlock?' Each time, the reply is *Āhe, āhe*! 'Yes, indeed!' Then, elderly relatives of the bride take their turn to pick up pinchful of cotton and paddyseeds from the plate to bless (*sep denā*) the couple, touching their foreheads and sprinkling purified water on them.

But the kismet of a newly wedded is not quite sealed until *Chumlāng* is performed at the groom's house. It is essentially a pre-Buddhist ritual wherein a male and a female deity, both household gods, are offered blood and meat of a pair of fowls; the gods are also given eggs and rice beer. Much significance is invested in this ritual, and Tanchangyas will conscientiously ignore all admonitions of their Buddhist clergy to perform *Chumlāng*. If any woman is compelled by circumstance to tie the wedlock with a man she does not take a liking to, she can abandon him before the *Chumlāng* worship is performed. The native justifies the act with reference to the *Rādhāman-Dhanpudi Pālā*, wherein Dhanpudi is married against her will to an old man. On the morning of *Chumlāng*, she picks up an empty pitcher, pretending to go to river to bring water for the worship; instead of coming back to the house of the groom with whom she performed *lāttang bānāh*, Dhanpudi goes with *Chumlāng* water to the house of her childhood lover, Radhaman. Later, when the groom goes to bring her home, Radhaman's family refuse to return her. 'She has brought *Chumlāng* water to our house. We cannot let her go away.' The matter is then referred to the village council where community elders give their ruling in favour of Radhaman and Dhanpudi; but since transgression has occurred, Radhaman's family is asked to perform *Sugar Chumlāng* with a boar weighing more than seven *maunds* (about 280 kgs.) and to give a feast of pork and wine to the community. The 'price of milk' is returned to the abandoned groom, along with all expenses he incurred during the *lāttang bānāh*. Tanchangyas say that since then, a new bride has not been allowed to go out alone to bring water for

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Chumlāng; she is always accompanied by other females of the groom's family or women of the neighbourhood.

After making sacrificial offerings to household deities, the couple sit together to divine the future of their wedded life. Each takes a leaf and they throw them together. If the leaves fall on different faces, the sign betokens prosperity; else, the act must be repeated but never more than three times. Great significance is attached to a subsequent examination of the tongues of the sacrificed fowls. Should no defect be discerned in the tongue shapes, the sign is good; but if something is found amiss with the tongues, a fresh pair of fowls is sacrificed and the examination repeated.

After the ceremony, the new bride receives a gift, usually a silver decoration, from her mother-in-law. The couple then seek blessings ('*sep-māgānā*') of elderly relatives of the groom's family. *Poiyā-bhāt* or wedding feast is compulsory.

6.2.2 *Customary laws pertaining to Sāngā.*

i. A Tanchangya is never allowed to take as spouse any individual with whom *Garbā kurum* ties are shared. Should a premarital affair be discovered between two such individuals, they are exemplarily punished and separated; but if they marry in spite of everything, they are ostracised. Children born of such marriages are social outcastes, and no Tanchangya will enter into any alliance with them.

ii. When two parties negotiate a marriage between them, neither of them can make contact with a third party until the original parties arrive at some decision. If any party violates this rule, it will pay a fine of Rs. 25/- to Rs. 100/- as *lājbār* to the offended party.

iii. No marriage is solemnised during the months of the *Wā*, (from mid-July to the end of October), when Buddhist monks observe the Rain-Retreat (Pali *vaṣṣā-vāsa* < Skt. *varṣāvāsa*).

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Incidentally, the period of *Wā* corresponds to the time when the swidden farmer is busy. Then whole families, men and women and grown-up children, work together in the *jum*, weeding and tending crops, and collecting the harvests of those months.

iv. Payment of *dudli tāngā* ('milk-price') is compulsory and at least a token sum of at Rs. 7/- must be given to the bride's family before the wedlock.

v. *Poiyā-bhāt* may be deferred indefinitely, say, for six months, six years. Mañana! But it cannot be avoided. Should a married man die without having given this feast, his family suffers the disgrace of seeing his corpse handled with sheer disdain. (*See infra* § 6.3.2).

vi. Customary practices at all stages from the *Temmāng* to the *Chumlāng* must be observed and blessings of elders sought by the wedded couple.

vii. The new bride must not go out alone to the river to bring *Chumlāng* water. Other maidens of the groom's family or from the neighbourhood shall accompany her all the way to the river and back home so that no harm comes to her.

viii. After the *Chumlāng*, the married couple must visit the bride's father for about seven few days, during which time the groom has to prove his skill in house-building by repairing the existing *mang-gāin* of the father-in-law's house or replacing it with a new one.

6.2.3 *Chināli Sāngā ('Marriage through elopement')*

As far as marrying is concerned, boys or girls prefer choosing their own partners. Should everything proceed smoothly and parents give consent to the match, then *Sāngā* takes place. However, if parents disapprove of the affair, the couple brings about a *dhezānā* ('elopement') in the evening and spends the night at some friend's house. The following morning, the girl's

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father is informed of her whereabouts so that he can send someone to bring her back home. A day later, the boy's parents will carry *poi* to the girl's father; if the gifts are accepted, then a date for the wedlock is fixed. This type of marriage is called *Chināli Sāngā* in Tanchangya, the term literally meaning 'marriage that has come through the path of transgression.' As a rule, the couple is fined by the village council; the girl pays a minimum of six to twelve rupees and the boy double the amount.

In case of elopement, rarely do parents decline to approve of their children's choice. Yet, if parental reluctance continues, the couple elopes again after sometime, and, if in this way, they succeed in bringing about three elopements, then they cannot but be married. However, formal inquiries will always be made after the male lines of both families to ensure that the boy and the girl do not share a *garbā kurum* or non-marriageable relation between them.

6.2.4 *Other forms of marriage*

Periodic bride-service is not unknown to Tanchangya and in one non-standard custom, a boy lives with and works for his would-be-father-in-law for one or two years to meet the obligations of marrying the latter's daughter. After marriage, he usually moves out with his wife to live in a separate house of his own. But in some families having only daughter and no male inheritor, one now finds an increasing trend at creating a type of uxorilocal residence. This is not of the kind found in matrifocal societies but one that is under a male who controls property, as well as the socio-economic roles of the family members. The system wherein a daughter brings in her husband to her mother's house or a married son leaves his parent's house to reside with the wife in the house of his mother-in-law is unfamiliar with the Tanchangya. What he knows as *ghar-zāmāi tulānā* is a means to acquiring viable males by families that have seen a falling off in the male work-

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group, owing to biological denial of sons to ageing patriarchs. In this form of marriage, all customary rituals pertaining to negotiated wedlock is performed, but no *ghar-zāmāi* ('resident groom') is required to pay milk-price.

Economically not too well-off *jummayās* prefer *Dhamma sāngā* or marrying in the *kyang*; the ceremony is conducted by a monk and there must be at least two witnesses, one to testify for the bride and another for the groom. It saves the expenses of the traditional community feast, the *poiyā-bhāt*. Instead, they arrange for an affordable *tārā-poi*, a thanksgiving to the officiating monk; the gifts in this case consist of a coconut, five betel-nuts and a bunch of *pān*, sweetmeats, a roll of thread, a needle, some silver coins or currency notes (according to the giver's capacity), paddyseeds and, at least, a piece of traditional homespun. *Chumlāng* is opposed by the monastic community but even the poorest of Tanchangya laity carries it out privately, inviting a few friends or relatives to a homely feast.

6.2.5 *Incest prohibitions*

Married partners are faithful to each other, and this makes adultery rare; yet, if anything of the sort is discovered, the council of elders promptly redresses it by penalising the guilty. Should offenders be related to each other by consanguineal ties, they are flogged in public, and then made to eat food with hogs. Fine in all cases of incest is paid to the council individually by the delinquents in cash and livestock, the rate varying with the level of offence. Finally, offenders are warned not to ever indulge in the same act again, defying which will invariably lead to social ostracism. Children born of incestuous marriages are social outcastes. A child of ghost-marriage suffers a similar fate, if his widow-mother conceals the identity of the lover she took after her husband's death.

Should a man elope with the rightful wife of another man, he pays all expenses incurred by the latter in marrying her.

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As punishment, the offenders' heads are partly shaven and sandals put round the neck; in that fashion, they are paraded through the village. The rightful husband could deny taking back the disgraced woman, in which case her lover, if he is a bachelor, will have to marry her. Her offended husband is absolved of every responsibility towards her.

6.2.6 *The system of divorce*

If married couples find it difficult to stay together, they can go on their separate ways once the village council ratifies their divorce. Reconciliation of divorced partners is always possible; they will then have to tie the formal wedlock again, perform the *Chumlāng* and give *poiyā-bhāt* to the community. Allegations of maltreating wives are never heard of; in fact, it is considered not man-like to assault a woman physically, no matter how guilty she is. However, should a wife feel that she has been improperly treated by the husband or by her in-laws, she can always go back to her father's house. Tanchangya customary law does not block a husband from taking a second wife if the original one stays away from him for more than a year. In a roundabout way, the same law allows the wife to snap all ties with her husband. This measure is of an extreme kind, not quite resorted to by a woman unless she is determined on separating from her husband.

One may separate from the partner who has committed adultery. Should the husband be at fault, he bears all expenses incurred by the estranged wife towards her maintenance so long as she does not remarry. A wronged husband is not entitled to give anything to his disgraced wife; she gets nothing but may take with her the few personal decorations she inherited from her mother. Dispute over custody of children after the divorce of parents is avoided by referring to a customary law that assigns the responsibility of the girl child on the mother and that of the boy on his father. Babies, whatever is the sex, stay with the mother as long as she breast-feeds

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them but after that, a boy returns to his biological father. If a woman is pregnant at the time of divorce, all expenses pertaining to childbirth are borne by her estranged husband. But if she conceals pre-marital pregnancy and takes another man as husband, the latter can divorce her, even refuse to bear expenses towards childbirth. Biological parenthood is very important, and children are always legitimate members of their father's clan. It is only an adopted child who takes on the clan name of his social father.

When a man decides to join the monastic order, he will leave his wife under the care of the son who inherits his property or a blood-relative (if the son is minor). Should his wife decide to remarry, she must formally relinquish all claims to the things that belonged to him.

6.3 *Funeral rites*

Usually, a corpse is cremated after it has been preserved for a day or two to allow all relatives see the deceased for one last time. But when someone dies of infectious diseases or epidemics such as cholera or smallpox, the corpse is hastily dumped into a hole and covered with earth; the decorative coffin too is dispensed with and, instead of it, a box-shaped bamboo basket used. This practice seems to have originated in times when epidemics took great tolls on villages and there were not too many living folks left around to cremate scores of dying men, women and children; at the same time, a genuine fear of catching the disease led to denying preservation of the corpses of people dying of cholera, smallpox, etc.

Burial is also resorted to when breast-feeding babies die. Tanchangyas say that a child dying before dentition has set in must be buried. Preservation of a baby's corpse would multiply the sufferings of parents; hence, it is hastily disposed. Coffins are not allowed to dead children but parents may carry the little corpses in small wicker baskets and bury them in proper graves, several feet under the ground.

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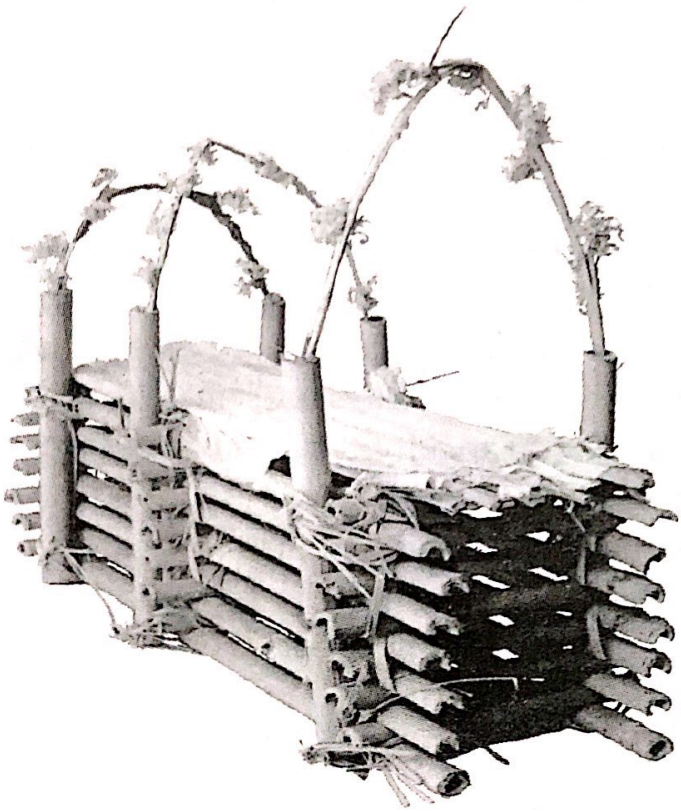
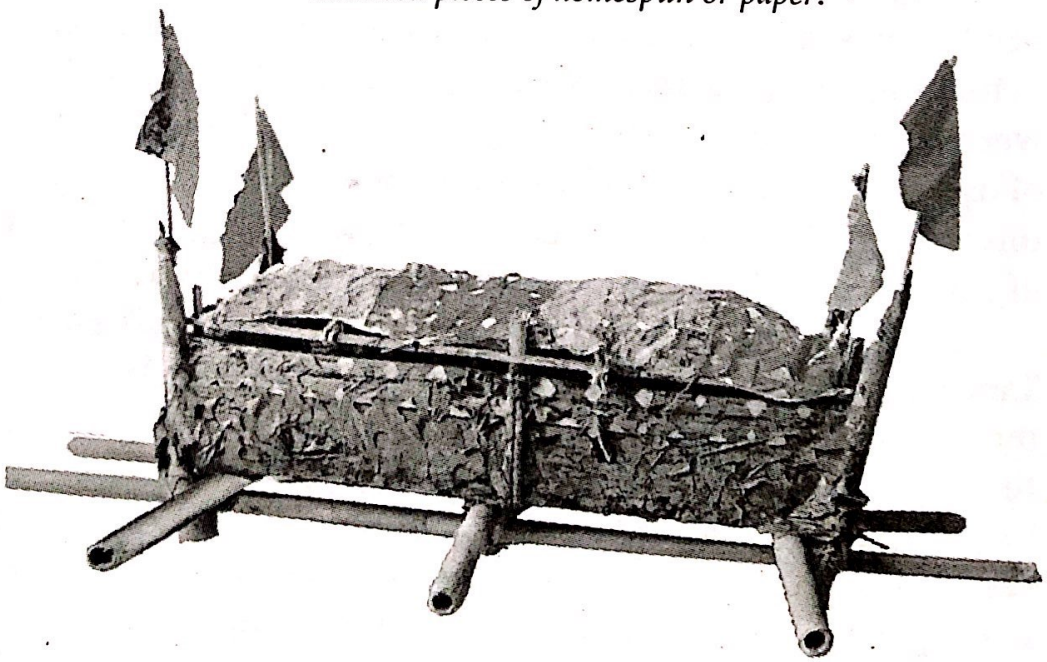


(Top.) *The corpse is washed, dressed and kept on a bamboo bed for at least one day to allow all relatives see the deceased for the last time. The seven layers of bamboo means that it is made for the female corpse.* (Below.) *The coffin. Woodwork, but the lid is made of strips of bamboo fitted with cloth and decorated with coloured pieces of homespun or paper.*



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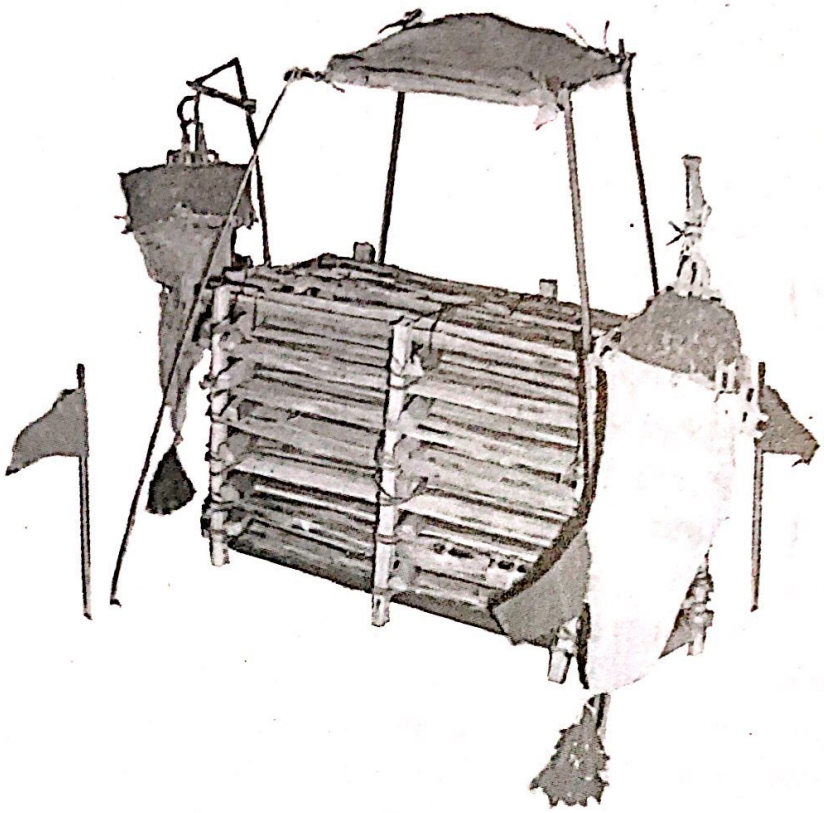

The pyre with seven layers of wood is for a female dead. A male corpse is always given five layers.

As a rule, cremation is avoided on Wednesday and on the day of the new moon. The dead cannot be burnt at night.

6.3.1 *Manner of disposing the dead*

When someone in the family dies, a primary responsibility of those living is to inform relatives, friends and villagers about it. In some societies, a family member or a neighbour is asked to pass on the information to others. Tanchangyas take recourse to an older but convenient means, called *pagā-bāit*, literally meaning 'a blank fire.' Chakmas are not familiar with it. Shortly after death has occurred, a male member of the family proceeds to burn a cracker or fire a gun. Occasionally,

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fireballs or smoke coils are sent up the sky; these certainly predated the gun or the firecracker. In their own natural habitats, Tanchangya dwellings tend to sprawl outwards from a dense hub, which is a clustering together of the most important houses, and by the time one reaches the family dwelling at the furthest extremity of the village, he has walked almost a mile. This mode of communicating through signals is old but, more importantly, it gives aggrieved family members some time to attend to the corpse and prepare it for preservation, before people start gathering. When a villager hears a gunfire or sees fireballs going up the sky, he knows for certain that someone is dead.

In the meantime, the corpse is washed, wrapped from the neck to the toe in white, cotton homespun and, with assistance from neighbours, laid out on the *sammeng-ghar*, a temporary bamboo bed erected on the *isar*. Silver coins are placed on the dead person's chest ('*buga-tāngā*') so that he may give it to the boatman who ferries him across the river of death. This practice of placing coin on the chest is probably acquired from Chakmas who themselves imbibed it from the Hinduised Tipperas. But in the Tanchangya's way, it goes simultaneously with an older practice of placing a *sebak* without the butt by the corpse's side. The *jummayā's* other world is an idealisation of his own familiar habitat: in it, there are extensive ridges with dense rainforests; hence, when time comes for Everyman to leave this world, family members never forget to provide him with the most essential tool for cultivating *the jum* in the transcendental world. Most other articles placed by the dead man's side relate to swidden cultivation; a small bamboo cylinder ('*khuda-bisi-chumā*') is stuffed with paddy and mustard seeds and the open top packed with cotton. The Tanchangya does not recall a specific term for the afterlife but he believes that the harvest there is good, with plentiful to eat. Several toothpicks, five for a male and seven for a female dead, are also put on the platform bed.

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The corpse is kept in the *sammeng-ghar* for at least a day, during which time the family prepares the coffin. It is a rectangular box made by fitting together pieces of bamboo and using wood for the base; the material for the covering lid is cloth fitted to a skeletal framework of bamboo. Some decoration is given to the coffin with slicings of colourful homespun and coloured papers pasted on the outer sides; then red and white streamers are put in the four corners.

When the corpse is moved into the *ālang-ghar* ('coffin'), all worldly things to accompany Everyman to the other world are put inside and the lid pulled down to close. A fowl is tied to one of the bearing poles ('*bāroā-bāit*') of the coffin, only to be released moments before the corpse is taken away. On the sixth day, the fowl is caught, strangled, and the boiled meat is offered to the spirit of the deceased. By pre-arrangement, a Buddhist monk present on the occasion reads out a Pali *sutta*. This done, the coffin bearers seek permission of the family to take the corpse away. *Marā jebā hukum āhe*? 'Is the dead (now) allowed to go?' they ask. And everyone says in one voice, *Āhe, āhe*, 'Yes, he may (go).'

From the moment on, a group of musicians, usually drummers and flute-players, begin to play a dirge, which continues until the cremation site is reached. The music sounds strange and distant to the unaccustomed ear but stranger still is the kinetic rhythm into which the coffin-bearers and the throng accompanying the corpse are induced. It begins in the house compound where the coffin-bearers go round in rhythmic circles, five for male dead and seven for female. Brus, Chakmas and Tipperas find it strange that the Tanchangya should 'dance' when he is most expected to be grave. Burman or Marma mourners also take along musicians, but they do not dance; on the contrary, the Chak (Sak) always performs the funeral dance. Chakpas of Andro will always have drummers ('*sānglen pungjāo*') in their funeral processions and, at least, one male to do the dance of the dead with

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a long spear in his hand. The music and the 'dance' cease as soon as the party reaches the cremation site.

Several layers of firewood are piled up to make the funeral pyre, the *rubā-khur*; if the corpse be of a man, his pyre has five layers while that of a woman seven, the additional layers are in recognition of the services she rendered to the family in her lifetime. Inviolably, this rule of five and seven is followed by Tanchangyas in South Tripura, CHT and Sittwe but the section living in CADC provides six layers to the female.

Is this, then, a recent development? My Tanchangya informants of CADC asserted that it was their custom; some even said that giving seven layers to the female dead was the Chakma practice. When I sought clarification on this matter of community elders in CHT and South Tripura, they said that they never heard of such custom as giving six layers of wood to the Tanchangya female. 'May be that's how they do the things in Mizoram. Hope that one day, they don't stop burning the corpses.'

Before laying out the corpse on the pyre, coffin bearers make one last manoeuvre with the coffin; they go round the pyre anti-clock, five times, if the corpse is of a man, or seven times, if it is of a woman. The head of a male corpse is turned to the west while that of a woman toward the east. It is explained that when the man was alive, his eyes were used to looking at the rising sun, because the earlier he went to the *jum*, the more work he did through the day. On the contrary, a woman must finish her household chores before sunset; hence, when she dies, her corpse is so laid out that the eyes always look to the west. Chaks, Mrus and Chakmas put the head of the corpse in an east-west direction, west for male and east for female; Marmas, on the contrary, position the corpse, irrespective of its sex, with the head pointing to the north. Interestingly, there are regional differences among Tanchangyas. The section of DG Tanchangyas in CHT and Sittwe claims to put the head of the male toward the north;

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Sangha dān

that of the woman is, however, to the regular east; their counterparts in CADC are not acquainted with this custom of north-pointing head. It is difficult to say if the DG practice is unique to the *gosā* or imbibed from Marma; but literatures published by natives of CHT (Tanchangya 1985: 25; Tanchangya 1995: 51) state in unambiguous terms that the prevailing Tanchangya practice is to have the male's crown toward the west and the female's toward the east. In April 2007, a workshop on Tanchangya customary laws was held at Rangamati, where community elders decided that a set of common codes of social behaviour should be endorsed by all Tanchangyas living in CHT, irrespective of their particular *gosā* affiliations; in the case of laying out the corpse on the pyre, it was proposed that the head of the woman would continue to point toward the east but that of the man should be placed toward the north.

When a parent dies, the son who has lived with him under the same roof will light the pyre. But this custom is not strictly

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followed now, primarily due to changes in the Tanchangya's residence-type. Today, the eldest son, or the youngest one (in the absence of the eldest) can light the pyre. When children die, it is the male parent who performs all crematory rites.

Before lighting the pyre, a gesture at feeding the corpse is made by putting a pinch of rice and drops of water into the mouth. If a Buddhist monk is present at the cremation site, he sprinkles purified water on the pyre and performs the *anitya bhāvanā*, reading out a Pali text on the transient nature of all earthly things. Mourners return home after the corpse is reduced to ashes and the lingering flickers of flame put out with water. The next morning, a member of the deceased's family goes back to the cremation site; he collects the calcinated remains in a pot, covers its mouth with a piece of white cloth, carries the pot to a nearby stream and throws it into the water over the back of his head. While most kinship groups follow this manner of disposing the ashes, sections of MeG and MoG now living in South Tripura have a different practice. In their case, ashes are not disposed in streams; instead, after the cremation, the remains, including pieces of unburnt bones are piled up in one place and, on the following day, a male relative visits the same place to look for footprints of birds or animals. They believe that from the day of cremation to the day of *srāddha*, the spirit of the deceased hovers round the place where its mortal body has been cremated, assuming some bird or animal shape. No sooner are footprints discovered than his relatives presume to know what shape his spirit has taken. A similar belief prevails among the Chaks (Saks) of Naikhyoungchhari and Saingdin but in their case, the examination is done at home: uncooked rice or paddy-seeds are left on a winnowing tray for the night, to check for footprints in the morning. Satisfied with his findings, the MeG or MoG mourner places a pitcher of water over the pile of ashes and a bottle of rice-beer on one side. Before returning home, he makes a small fencing

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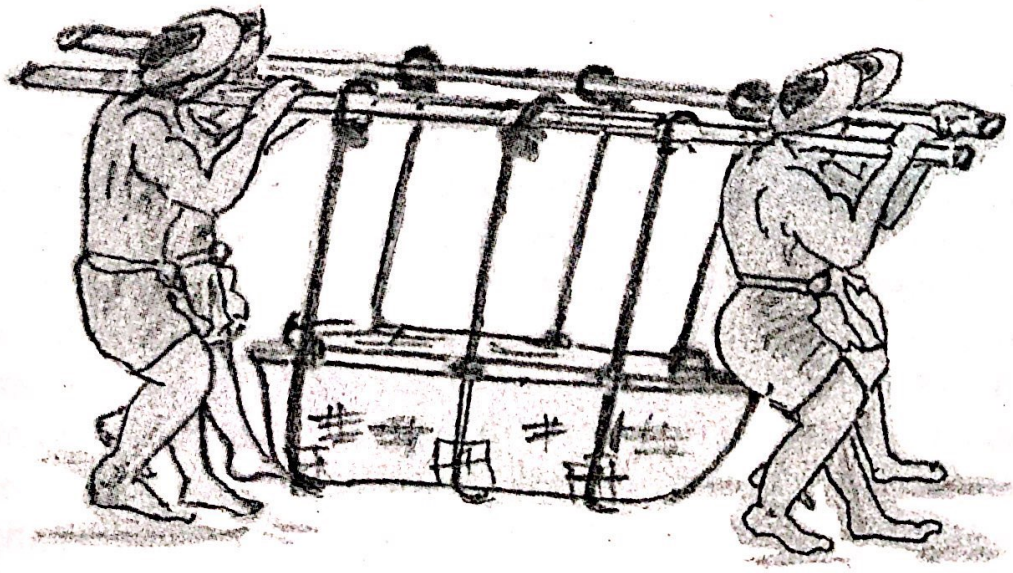
(Top.) *If someone dies a natural death, the corpse is carried in a coffin. The bearers move rhythmically.*

(Below.) *It is a disgrace to die without having the poiya- bha-t. The corpse is carried at the level of the knee.*



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around the spot. Other *gosās* may put up a light fencing or, as mostly seen, a couple of bamboo uprights with a thread tied to them to create a symbolic confinement for the spirit of the dead.

The period of mourning is called *Sāt dinyā*, literally meaning that it is observed for seven days. For six days, the mourning family avoids meat, fish, eggs and liquor; they also make regular offerings of *bhāt-masā* ('rice wrapped in plantain leaf') and water to the spirit of the deceased at the spot where it is confined. On the sixth day, the fowl dedicated to the dead is caught, strangled and its boiled meat offered to the spirit. In the evening, a family member goes to the cremation site, taking rice, water, and a *pān*. This ritual is called *pān parā baichcheyanā*. After the food offering, the thread that was tied to the bamboo poles is severed, symbolically releasing the spirit from earthly bondage; finally, an invitation of the dead is made, 'Tomorrow is the seventh day. I come invite you to the house that was yours to take one last meal with the family.' *Srāddha* ('funeral ceremony') is performed on the seventh day. A generous feast is given to friends and relatives to end the mourning. A few days later, in a make up for his natural lacking in Buddhist ways, a *sangha dān* is performed in which the personal belongings of the deceased, his clothes and decorations are donated to the *kyang*.

6.3.2 *Funeral practices in cases of unnatural deaths*

When a woman dies in course of pregnancy, the womb is cut open, the foetus removed and buried at a secluded place, but the woman's body is cremated. This practice is generally followed by Chakma, Marma and Tippera. Tanchangyas bury the foetus separately so that when the time of rebirth comes, it may not find the old womb to afflict the same woman again. But what happens if a woman dies at an advanced stage of pregnancy? My informants told me that if, on cutting open the womb, the baby inside was found breathing, a

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female kin of the deceased's husband took care of it. 'But then it's of no use. The baby will die in a couple of hours; at best, it may live for a day or two.'

If a man gets killed by a tiger or any wild beast, the entire *gutthi* performs *Bur-pārā*. Offering are made to the spirits of ancestors, so that no member of that clan suffers a similar fate in the future. When death comes of drowning or falling off from a tree, burning or suicide, the funeral is a quiet one, without musicians or decorative coffin, but spirits responsible for death are propitiated with diverse articles along with a bottle of rice beer and a pair of domestic fowls or a boar. The period of mourning is not shortened nor food restrictions waived until the *srāddha* is performed.

Should a man die without having given *poiyā-bhāt* (*see supra* p. 203), villagers will ensure that his corpse is treated contemptuously. The regular coffin is not allowed; instead, the corpse is put in a large basket and suspended by ropes from a long pole, virtually dragging it. Tanchangyas say that the corpse must be carried knee-high. It is very humiliating for a family to have a deceased member carried in this manner. To avoid the shame, a living member of the same family usually pleads on the dead man's behalf, promising to arrange a *poiyā-bhāt* within an avowed time-frame, say in about three or six months.

6.4 *Illness, drugs and spirit propitiation*

In the rainforest habitat, there are numerous herbs, plants and trees whose barks, leaves and oozing have curative properties; bones and tooth of dead animals are potent medicines too. The Tanchangya knows that if these are effectively used, many common diseases will be easily cured. Mineral salts and sugar ointments are widely recognised for their healings effects on contusions and wounds. But when some ailment aggravates and a patient shows no signs of recovery, the cause is attributed to the malicious workings of an evil

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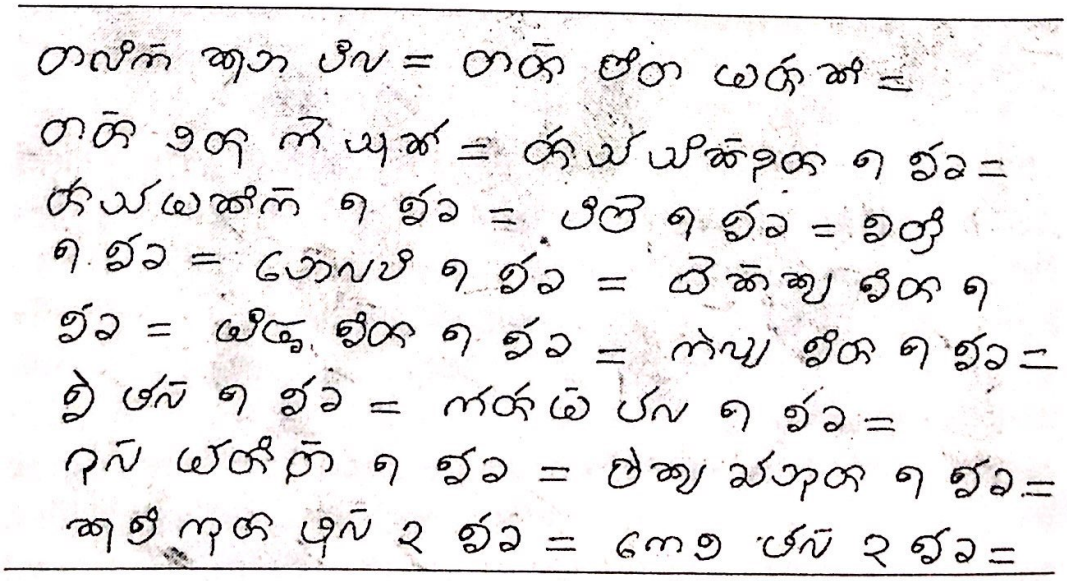
spirit. The average Tanchangya knows not how to extract medicine from his habitat or in what manner to tame surly spirits into the benevolent mood. In his world, all knowledge of drugs, spirit pacification and exorcism is solely enjoyed by the *vaidya*. This man knows how to take the pulse, diagnose ailments from the colour of eyes and tongue but is utterly ignorant of the complex workings of viruses and of the ways in which the immune system of humans gets destroyed. Should an epidemic strike, he is rendered as helpless as the ordinary villager is. In former times, whenever small pox or cholera broke out in the hills, villages were either abandoned or put in quarantine. Tanchangya villages were too sprawled out to be closed in any way, and once a village was abandoned following an outbreak of epidemic, the survivors never returned to the same old site.

All formulas for drug-making and prescription, as well as the ways of taming or pacifying spirits, removing the evil eye (*phi*) are found in the *tālik*, a handwritten manual available with the *vaidya*. After the *vaidya's* death, it is passed on as inheritance to his son. The medicinal contents of the *tālik*,

▼ *Reprography of a page from a vaidya's tālik.*



including the anatomical notes, are sourced from the Indian system of *Ayūrveda*. No human system functions normally without a proper coordination of *vāyu* ('wind'), *pitta* ('bile'), *rakta* ('blood') and *kaph* ('mucus'), each perceived as a *dhāt*. The body is the abode of the soul, and there are in it eight rooms, nine doors, seven locks, five keys, eighty posts, three beds, thirteen plugs, etc. Of nerves, I was told that they number seventy-two thousand. In the *tālik*, under each entry, an ailment is proposed, and then instructions are given on what substances to be mixed and in what manner the drug registered to make it effective. Given below is the transliteration of a page reproduced from a *tālik*.

Ailment	*Tālik nuā pirā, tār bit mārani. Tār dāru kai shuna.* (1)
Substances	*Rasasindur ek jakhā/ Rasamānik ek jakhā/ Pibai ek jakhā/ jātri ek jakhā/ elāchi ek jakhā/ dhainyā jirā ek jakhā/ mithā jirā ek jakhā/ kāilyā jirā ek jakhā/ jāi phal ek jakhā/ karam pālā ek jakhā/ gul marit ek jakhā/ bāinya chhaurā ek jakhā/ nudi kur phul dui jakhā/ kedā phal dui jakhā/ kuduka jhunjhuni dui jakhā/ sonā jhāran dui jakhā/ kasturi dui jakhā/* (2)
Preparation	*Ei dāru ekatra kariyā madhu diyā pisiba. Nuā tulā biji pramān bari bānāiba. Gol bānāiba.* (3)
Dosage	*Khāana anumān:* *Sudu jar ahile garam pāni di khāiba* (4) *Laha sindur, rasamānik di khāiba* (5) *Tadā pirā karile lang, kerangā, gandā shing diyā o khāiba* (6) *Dak phude gāit pāichchiya gāit thenga di khāiba sange bari miliyā khāiba* (7) *Āsar ahile khedā phal di khāiba* (8) *Parān dharphar ahile, pāni khāile, kedā marit telluā kalā-gāch di khāiba* (9) *Nā dharile rasamānik, rasa gandhan di khāiba* (10) *Kāsile chigan tuilyā diyā kati ahluid ai anumāne khāiba* (11)

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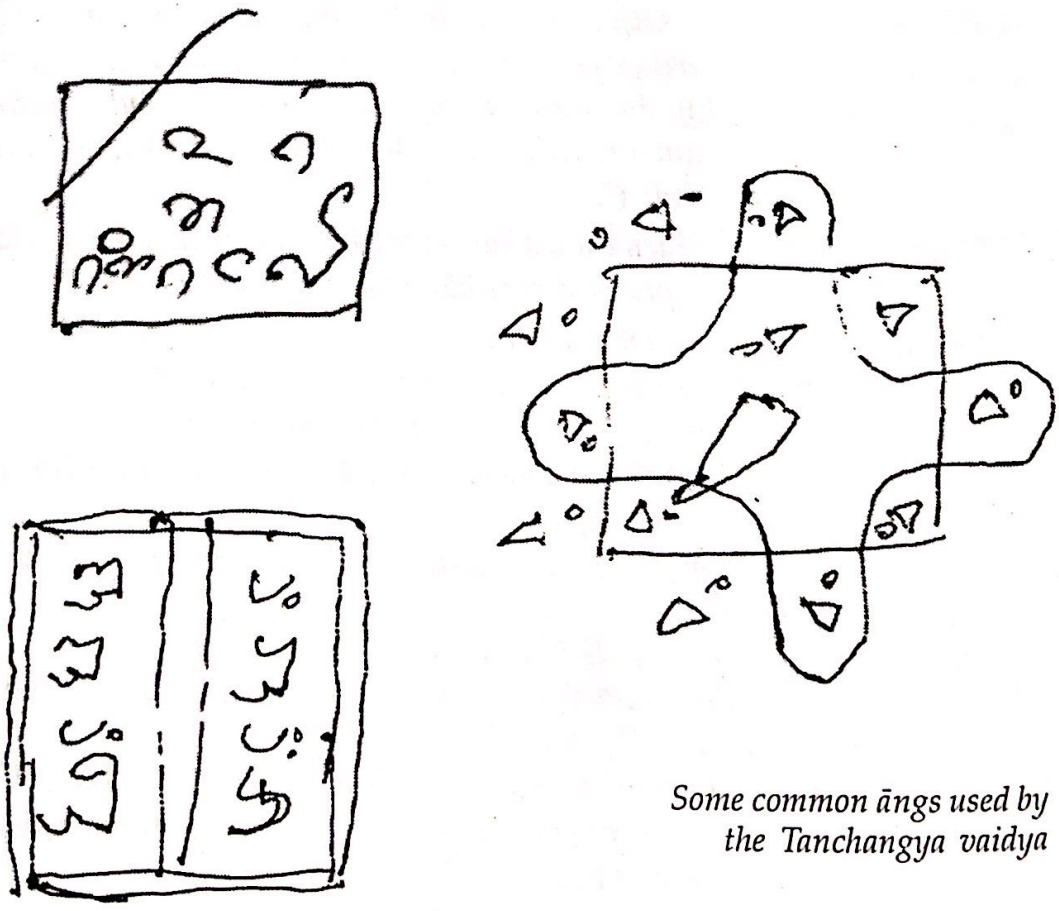
Ei sakal anumān diyā nuā bhāt nuā pirā ei daru diyā bhala ahiyā zāy. (12)

As English equivalents for all plant and mineral names could not be accurately ascertained, a word-to-word translation is avoided.

Ailment	*Tālik*, the ailment of a new wife, its cure. Take note of the drug. (1)
Substances	18 substances are named, the identifiable ones being *rasasindur* ('sulphide of mercury'), *pibai* ('long pepper,' *Piper longum*), *elāchi* ('cardamom,' *Elettaria cardamomum*), *dainyā jirā* ('coriander,' *Coriandrum savitum*), *mithā jirā* ('aniseed,' *Pimpinella anisum*), *jāi phal* ('nutmeg,' *Myristica fragrans*), *bāinya chhaurā* ('borax'), *gul marit* ('black pepper'), *sonā jhāran* ('dust of gold'), *kasturi* ('musk'), etc. (2)



Some common āngs used by the Tanchangya vaidya

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Preparation	Mix the ingredients thoroughly with honey to obtain a paste; then, make pills of the size of new cottonseeds. (Also) make it round. (3)
Dosage	If fever goes up, she must take a pill with lukewarm water; she may also take it with *laha sindur* and *rasamānik* (4–5). If the tonsils are swollen, she must take the pill with clove or powder of the rhino's horn... (6-8), etc. If the patient is treated with this medication, the ailment will quickly cease to afflict her (12).

No doubt, a number of drugs extracted indigenously from the rainforests are highly potent but their application is not always accurate. Simple intestinal disorders often turn into life-threatening ulcers. Tanchangyas are not disinclined to seeking better medical facilities but the absence of doctors in the immediate neighbourhood of the hamlet, the physical distance between home and district hospital, poor communication system, as also financial constraints of family heads make it difficult for them to access doctors and hospitals. Those living in the southern villages of CADC must undertake a two or three-day journey to reach Lungleh, even for vaccinating children against typhoid, malaria, hepatitis and smallpox. One recurring problem in the hills, mostly during the monsoon months, is that of snakebite, and the traditional method of taming venom by using tight ligatures on the affected limb and subsequently applying herbs to the wound are not always effective. The condition in many places today is no better than it was when Hutchinson (1909: 62) wrote, 'The [traditional] remedy is often worse than the disease, for they have got very slight knowledge of the different kinds of snakes, and the same remedy is applied to all bites from both poisonous and non-poisonous snakes.'

When a patient does not respond favourably to naturally extracted drugs, the *vaidya* advises his family to offer a fowl or a boar to the spirit (*'bhut'*) causing the ailment. Sometimes,

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he gives an amulet containing a paper with a protective *āng* sketched on it. Cases of hysteria, phobia and epilepsy are attributed to evil spirits. In the Tanchangya's imaginative world, spirits are too populous; it is the *vaidya* who knows diverse spirit names, their origins and natures. When someone has high fever accompanied by boring occipital pain and shows a tendency to make hysterical cries in sleep, he is diagnosed as possessed by *Chelā*; when identical symptoms appear but the patient also tends to mutter continually when awake, his abnormal condition is traced to the workings of *Chelā's* younger brother, *Rukkwā*. If one incurs the displeasure of the evil-eyed *Sisi-Mansā*, he has delirious nights, with urgings to urinate every half-hourly. These descriptions are vivid and the *vaidya's* persuasion to mollify angry spirits so persistent that the poor *jummayā* believes these airy things as real. When an individual suffers from typhoid or malaria, his family is asked to make propitiatory sacrifices to the shaman goddess, *Gangi-mā*. Accordingly, the *vaidya* fixes the date on which a fowl may be sacrificed in a nearby stream. Charges for propitiatory rituals vary according to the nature of ailment; generally, it will cost more to exorcise malevolent spirits than to appease less ill-disposed spirits with sacrifices of fowls. Cure for spirit-induced ailment is purely coincidental but the village *vaidya* takes credit for the same.

6.4 *Religious beliefs*

The Tanchangya is a Buddhist, a Theravadin like the Chak, the Chakma and the Marma. He venerates Buddha, and, on specific occasions, performs Buddhist ceremonies like *kathin-chibara dān, phānas-bātti dān, hājār-bātti dān, byuha-chakra*, etc. The pagoda worship, which he calls *zāri pujā* ('*zādi pujā*' in KG), has grown in importance over the years, and locally, young men of the village community go from house to house to collect subscriptions to built new pagodas or give face-lift to existing ones. By contributing money and physical labour

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in building of pagodas, Tanchangyas expect to reap spiritual merits for a happy afterlife. The *pungyi* (Buddhist monk) tries to explain this afterlife in the ideal Theravadin way of transcending the painful cycle of rebirth through righteous action. Some understand the *pungyi*, and they are mostly the elite; the commoner, on the contrary, has a penchant for placidly disapproving of the many things he hears in the *kyang*. Evidently, there is not as much material in a metaphysical state of existence to arouse his interest, as there is in the popular notion of an afterlife that naïvely idealises his own familiar habitat. But some day in the future, the commoner too will catch up with the elite and believe as true the things that the Buddhist clergy now painstakingly explicates. Chakma elites have learnt to consider themselves Buddhist puritans; they believe that they are descended from the family of the Buddha Śakyamuni himself.

Tanchangyas are less presumptuous than Chakmas, and until this day, their elite, like the commoner, has no qualms in admitting that theirs is a kind of Buddhism mixed up with pre-Buddhist practices. One fundamental aspect of Buddhism in Southeast Asia has been the absorption of animistic beliefs and shaman deities into an esoteric pantheon. This harmony is yet to be achieved in the form of Buddhism that the Tanchangyas know; their clergy lack in this most essential insight to giving transformed roles to nature spirits and older gods within the Buddhist faith. Often, the village monk berates the commoner for his non-Buddhist practices, but the latter stays nonchalant; as Tanchangya, he is innately committed to performing some 'essential' things. Among the five precepts (*'pañchaśīla'*) of Buddhism, he happily violates the one that forbids animal sacrifice and use of liquor. In one ancestor cult, *Bhātdyā*, three or five generations of unilineal males are remembered and their spirits offered liquor and cooked rice with boiled chicken. These ancestors are seen as an extension of the Tanchangya's social structure, the oldest

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forming the point of reckoning for the *del*, which once regulated alliances and inheritance within the clan. Invariably, it is only the head of the family who can make the offerings; shortly before noon, he goes to an unfrequented corner of the house compound to build a little platform, on which he spreads a banana leaf and puts some food on it. Rice-beer is served in bamboo cup. A set of lamps are also lit, after which ancestors are invited to the feast. From noon to sunset, the family is instructed not to disturb the spirits while they partake the food. Moments before sunset, the family head goes out to check if his offerings have been accepted. Usually, some bird or stray animal forages the food but for the Tanchangya that by itself is indicative of spirit visitation.

Though Tanchangyas are Buddhists, they acknowledge one god, ဂျေသေဆိ *Gosen*, as the Creator of the Universe. In the beginning, when the world was but an endless stillness of water, this god allowed a banyan tree to grow out of that liquid stillness, and then he plucked a leaf from the tree and sat on it meditating for how long no one knows. A crab in the meantime turned out earth from the bottom of that tree, which slowly piled up to create land. When, at the end of his meditation, *Gosen* opened his eyes, he saw before him a wide stretch of land and immediately got to work; he created hills and rivers, plants and trees, birds and animals, and every other object that we now see. He also created the sky and placed in it the sun and the moon so that they may divide between them the day and the night. Finally, he made man with clay, shaping it after his own shadow.

To *Gosen*, they offer no worship, but there are other deities whom they privately adore. Inside the dwelling house, the place around the ceremonial post (*muh-khām*) is considered sacred to the deity (*pharā*) of household prosperity; she is called *Māh Lakkhi*, after *Mahā Lakṣmī* of the Hindus. During *Chumlāng*, a pair of gods, male and female, are worshipped, and though they now appear with Hinduised names, they

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clearly belong to an older stratum of nature spirits. A small bamboo-house resembling a hill, sometimes two contiguous hills are made, with two doors, in front of which two rattan or bamboo cups with rice and eggs are kept. For the native, *Chumlāng* is necessary to formalise wedlock; besides, it is also performed yearly for domestic well-being. During the worship, a pair of eggs (MeG and MoG offer a single egg), two fowls (a cock and a hen), and a bottle of rice-beer are required. While the ordinary *Chumlāng* is performed with fowls, in the *Sugar-Chumlāng* a boar must be sacrificed. As already mentioned, the female deity is *Māh Lakkhi*, occasionally also called *Parameśwari* while the male deity is *Biyetrā* or *Nārān*. *Biyetrā* is the son of Gosen and *Nārān* his Hinduised name. Among Bengali Hindus, all gods live on a purely vegetarian diet but in a Tanchangya house, they take eggs and meat, even homemade rice-beer.

6.6.4 *The little things that the abbot of Uttamsora did.*

Nandita Bikkhu, the young abbot of Uttamsora Buddha Vihara, Damdep-I (New Joganasury-I), CADC, laments that the Tanchangya laity is not yet truly Buddhist. 'They don't come regularly to the *kyang*. They'll do so many things which Buddhists are not supposed to do,' he told me. On the first two days of the three-day spring festival, *Bisu*, Tanchangyas avoid liquor but on the third day, no abstemious pretension is kept and they turn simply deaf ears to the admonitions of the Buddhist clergy. To avoid the expenses of *poiyā-bhat*, some families go to the *kyang* and make *Dhamma sāngā*, but when they return home, they quietly perform a private *Chumlāng*. How then does this young abbot deal with so inconsistent a village laity? Every day, at 4.30 am Indian time, Buddhist songs in Bengali blare from a battery-backed stereo, two big speakers spreading the core message of Theravada from one end of Damdep to the other. I could not but admire this brilliant mode of 'hear and become Buddhist' indoctrination.

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Only time will say to what extent the efforts of the clergy at transforming the Tanchangya into Buddhist become successful. We have seen that the monastic order is not favourably disposed to assimilating older practices; the laity, on the contrary, tries to find a Buddhist construal to the essential things they do. Asked about the practice of disposing ashes and bones of the dead in the river, the elite now says that the current will carry these to Bodh Gaya, where the spirits of his ancestors take eternal repose.

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7. *Postscript*

The Tanchangya's socio-economic configurations changed notably during the 19th and the 20th century. Historically, their ethnic status was jeopardised in 1782; they were asked to merge with Chakma but they defied the order, because the cultural paradigms were different. Yet, from the time of the British take-over of CHT to as late as the final decade of the 20th century, their ethnic status has been viewed as indivisible from that of Chakma. That situation changed in the 1990s, when Tanchangya was officially recognised as a distinct ethnic group of CHT, ending centuries of struggle against Chakma domination. Sections of this group living in Northeast India are still treated as Chakma. No doubt, socio-economic changes occurring in the Hill Tracts have left both groups much altered, but, in some intrinsic ways, they differ conspicuously from each other.

7.1 *Economic changes*

In the past, the Tanchangyas' subsistence strategies centred round the *jum*, an essentially mimetic form of economy, which if practised within the carrying capacity of the environment does not disrupt the rainforest ecosystem. Yet, sometime before the British took up the administration of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, some ethno-development had started. Within the recesses of the hills, fertile patches of low land were used to grow paddy and fruits with the help of Bengali

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clients brought from the plains while hill families themselves worked in swidden plots. When the British initially tried to induce the highland farmers to adopt plough cultivation, the attempts failed; and it was quite not until the close of the 19th century that sections of 'the valley-living groups (Marma, Chakma, Tippera) went over to settled agriculture' (Mey 1984: 76). Several Tanchangya families now living at Kaptai and Rangunia say that their ancestors plough-cultivated tracts of lowland around Udarbania, Bridgeghata, Napitpukuria, and Dudhpukuria, until the East Pakistan government leased out their land to Bengali settlers in 1948/49. A section of their people who had crossed over into South Tripura in the 1930s also cultivated with the plough, while another section that settled in the South Lushai Hills found ridges that were very conducive to *juming*.

Settled agriculture has its advantages; when practised in favourable environments, it raises the economic level, leading to improvements in the general living conditions of cultivating families. But within the recesses of the hills, there is little plain land, and the river valleys do not quite spread out until the fertile plains with a predominantly Bengali population are reached. What the three valley-dwelling groups did was to divide the narrow river valleys among themselves, the Tippera along the western fringes of the hill kingdom and in the northern parts of the Hill Tracts, the Chakmas in the centre around the Karnaphuli and its tributaries, while the Marmas controlled the southern parts now comprising the Bandarban Hills District. Chaks and Tanchangyas managed to squeeze in between Chakma and Marma, but the numerical minorities, Khyang and Khumi, were left to themselves to make a precarious living. With increased Bengali settlement in the second half of the 20th century, older hegemonies in the Hill Tracts, especially those of Chakma and Marma, came to conflict with that of the new settlers who enjoyed the tacit support of the government in everything

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they did. Rehabilitation of people affected by the Kaptai Dam was a major hurdle for the East Pakistan government. Much land was lost, and only a small section of displaced families could be resettled. In 1964, a Canadian team of experts was asked to study how best use of the available land could be made under the rehabilitation programme. The team found swidden cultivation as suited to the ecosystem of CHT but it also indicated that the population had increased beyond its carrying capacity. Accordingly, the East Pakistan Agriculture Development Corporation (EPADC) sought to induce hill farmers to adopt horticulture; six acres of land per family was allotted to grow banana, pineapple, cashew nut, guava, papaya and citrus fruit. It was proposed that by selling the produce in the market, sufficient quantities of rice could be purchased. But the policy failed at its inception; the first produce did not get any market, and without the money to buy rice, starvation followed. In subsequent times, in Bangladesh, *joutha khāmārs* ('agricultural cooperatives') were set up but these were mostly intended to boost the economy of Bengali settlers rather than that of the hill dweller. To make matters worse for CHT, other benefits amassing in post-Kaptai years, including relief measures from the international community, economically polarised the indigenous peoples. Owing to the dominating role Chakmas played in hill politics, they suffered great repression but reaped greater material gains than the other ethnic groups of CHT did.

Taungya ('swidden cultivation') had been the mainstay of living for the hill groups (Mru, Khumi, Chaungtha, Sak and Daingnak) in the northern parts of Sittwe while extensive agriculture was carried on the western plains by Rakhines employing Muslim labourers from Chittagong. Besides Rakhines, Rohingyas also cultivated paddy in lower Koladan. At the close of the 19th century, sections of Sak and Daingnak living in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships became lowland cultivators. Today, a few rich Daingnak and Rakhine

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Wet-rice cultivation

farmers stand in stark contrast to a poverty-stricken majority. Under the British, Arakan economy had prospered, but after the British left, it slumped rapidly. With a military coup in 1962, Myanmar entered into one of the worst eras of repression of ethnic minorities. Since then, several thousand Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh; many Rakhines now live in CHT; other ethnic minorities of Sittwe (Mru, Sak, Khumi and Daingnak) are allowed to live but their villages are subjected to frequent relocations, affecting their livelihood.

In South Tripura, population density began to increase around the middle of the 20th century. With Bengalis (mostly Hindu emigrants from East Pakistan) permanently settled in the valleys along the western parts of the district, there was little scope for indigenous peoples to access plots in those places. Originally, at Tainani, only six Tanchangyas families (*Chhay-ghariya* as it was then called) had settled in the late 1930s among a predominantly Bru population; at that time,

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they cultivated with the plough. Today there are 54 Tanchangya families in that village, many of whom settled in the late 1950s. Out of that number, 39 families have no other option than to subsist by swiddening; there is an acute shortage of lowland in the village. Ratanpur presents a contrasting picture; there, 94 families are wet rice cultivators and only three families practise *jum*. These details were acquired in course of fieldwork in 2005.

In former times, *jum* plots were expansive and usually occurred side by side. With legal restrictions on *juming* (now disallowed inside reserved forests), plots have shrunk in size; besides, one now rarely sees a plot converging on that of his neighbour. Shrinkage of the plot has adversely affected the quantity and variety of the yield, while physical distance between plots has made it impossible for swidden farmers to assist each other on a reciprocal basis. The economic mis-

Overview of Tanchangya's Economic Strategies in SDT, 2005

Village	*Total Families*	*No. of families with main income from*				
		Jum	*Plough*	*Service*	*Trade*	*Misc.*
Adipur	56	38	14	00	02	02
Aloychhara	26	04	14	08	00	00
Barbari	07	00	07	00	00	00
Devipur	132	29	90	05	05	03
Dulyachhara	72	01	68	02	00	01
Kathalia	08	03	04	00	00	01
Ratanpur	117	03	97	17	00	00
Tainani	54	39	15	00	00	00
Takkuma	21	00	21	00	00	00
Total	493	117	330	32	07	07

* Families that carried on trade at the village level also had about an acre of land to cultivate with the plough. Government employees too had cultivable plots, around two acres on average. In contrast, swidden farmers had no alternative sources of income. Seven families were found to live precariously, doing various kinds of work within the village.

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match between swidden farmers and plough-cultivators is starkly conspicuous in their living conditions. The former lives mostly in shabby platform dwellings (traditional houses sans their erstwhile prosperity), lacking in basic amenities, as compared to the luxurious type, concrete or semi-concrete houses of the plough cultivators, who rear cattle in addition to livestock and poultry. Economically well-off plough cultivators make some investments in trade and horticulture; their houses have electricity and electrical appliances, furniture and other things that make living comfortable.

The population of CADC is within the carrying capacity of its tropical rainforest ecosystem, and *juming* continues as the mainstay of income for both Chakma and Tanchangya. Official attempts to get the swidden farmer to adopting wet-rice cultivation on stretches of low land along the Thega and the Tuichang have failed. At least, that is the picture the Agriculture Department of CADC provides. Pragmatically considered, there are valid reasons behind the general lack of willingness to exploit low land for agricultural purposes. It is for about thirty-seven years that the CADC has been functioning autonomously; yet, no motorable roads connect villages with the headquarters, Kamalanagar. How then does one transport technology to the villages? There is no electricity after Longpuighat, which lies mid-way between Kamalanagar and Siminesora, the southernmost village on Mizoram-Myanmar border. The common *jummayā* subsists on the yield from his swidden plot; he has also his domestic poultry and livestock. His economically well-off neighbour carries on trade at the village level. With the educated, of course, there is some chance of finding job in the rather over-staffed CADC offices or in far-flung village schools.

7.2 *Social changes*

Tanchangya social life has witnessed changes in course of the 20th century, but there is some persistence in traditional

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An old *Monglā gosā* woman returning from the jum.

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ways, especially when it comes to observing life-cycle ceremonies. This characteristic prevails among almost all hill-groups in the region, where individual life is bound to the village. Marriage ceremonies and funerals are usually conducted in the traditional way; even the Tanchangya who now lives in the town or the city will make it a point on these occasions to go to his native village, among his own people, to perform the things that the customary laws of his tribe expect of him.

Feasts such as *poiyā-bhāt* reinforce his kinship ties with the village community. Instances of taking wives from prohibited categories are almost never heard of, while intermarrying outside the ethnic group continues to be low. In most cases of intermarriage, Tanchangyas more or less maintain the old rule of bringing wives rather than giving away their sisters and daughters to other communities. If a male from outside wishes to marry a Tanchangya girl, it is expected of him to come inside the community. A case to which I have been witness occurred two years ago at Devipur. A Bengali driver from Shantirbazaar fell in love with a *Kārwā gosā* girl; he has married her and now lives with his wife at Devipur. When I was staying with Amiyo Ranjan Tonchangya, forest ranger, at Longpuighat, I met a Bengali shopkeeper from Cachar. He told me that he has been living at Longpuighat for over ten years; he is married to a Tanchangya. Joydhar Chakma (Tanchangya, *Muo gosā, Gunyā gutthi*) of Ratanpur allowed one of his daughters to marry a Marma, who now lives with his Tanchangya wife in a portion of his father-in-law's plot. On the contrary, a *Muo-gosā* father (name withheld on request of the family) of Saikhawthlir has disowned his daughter for eloping with an Uchai; during my stay with him, I tried to raise the topic but found him much too distressed at the mention of it. His elder brother's son has brought in an Uchai bride, who now lives with the family and also speaks decent Tanchangya.

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Religiously, from non-Tanchangya communities, Hindu or Buddhist girls are preferred to Muslim and Christian as inter-marriageable category. With the Buddhist Chakma, the Tanchangya's older prohibition has waned considerably. In January 2008, one of my informants, Hemanta, married an Anokya (Chakma) girl; the couple now lives at Devipur, with Hemanta's father. About fifty years ago, village elders would not have approved of the same match.

Tanchangyas have no problems in inter-dining with other people from other ethnic groups, whatever be their racial or religious affiliation. There is no class-division, and one is free to enter a Tanchangya house. Guests from all categories of population are happily entertained. Traditionally, no social taboos were attached to smoking or drinking, and the pattern continues in South Tripura and CADC. In CHT, young Tanchangyas have picked up the Bengali's way of showing deference to elders by not smoking or drinking in their presence. On the positive side, of course, there is a general decline in the number of smokers among hill men.

7.3 *State of education; its relation to politics and ethnicity*

In the region we are concerned with, the valley-dwelling Chakmas, Marmas and Tipperas had long contacts with the plains people; they reaped the benefits of formal education earlier than the other tribes did and emerged as elites among hill men. That helped them create political and ethnic polarisations to counter Bengali hegemony, but eventually their own strategies came to be characterised by an exclusion of other tribes, especially the educationally backward, from all socio-political benefits that accrued in course of the 20th century. The TTAADC (Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council) created for the social uplift of scheduled tribes of Tripura is virtually Tippera dominated, and the objective of fostering commonness of cause across ethnic boundaries has perceptibly failed. In CHT, too, representation remains

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disproportionate to actual population ratio, and it is Chakmas who play the leading role in negotiating the interests of the hill people with the government.

The general state of education among Tanchangya is poor, owing principally to economic crisis faced by families. In the past, Buddhist bodies imparted a purely religious education with the sole intent of creating a stable number of Buddhist clergy; in the aftermath of Kaptai, these bodies set up several boarding schools and hostels within CHT for the poor laity. Individual families benefited from these arrangements but the average Tanchangya continues to be educationally deprived even today. In 1991, only 24% Tanchangyas of CHT were returned as literate. Nevertheless, between 1980 and 1990, the small literate section succeeded in creating a generation of leaders who could negotiate the interests of their people with the Bangladesh government and with the PCJSS (which is a predominantly Chakma political organisation with less than 2% representation from other ethnic communities of CHT). Their efforts yielded early fruit in 1983, when the *Tanchangya Samaj Kalyan Sangstha* (Tanchangya Social

State of Literacy among Tanchangyas of South Tripura, 2005

Village	*Population*	*Never attended Schools*			*Attended Schools*		
		T	*Can sign*	*Cannot sign*	T	SF *passed*	*Graduate*
Adipur	273	195	07	188	78	02	00
Aloychhara	157	86	06	80	71	08	00
Barbari	34	22	00	22	12	00	00
Devipur	642	489	11	478	153	26	01
Dulyachhara	379	282	07	275	97	06	00
Kathalia	40	31	02	29	09	01	00
Ratanpur	562	375	13	362	187	39	02
Tainani	277	216	06	210	61	01	00
Takkuma	103	60	03	57	43	03	00
Total	2467	1756	55	1701	711	86	03

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Welfare Society) was formed; its core objective was to attain a distinct ethnic status for the Tanchangya. On April 8, 1995, during a convention at Bandarban, it was renamed *Bangladesh Tanchangya Kalyan Sangstha* (Bangladesh Tanchangya Welfare Society); it was attended by about five thousand Tanchangyas coming from all parts of CHT. The PCJSS took exception to these developments; its armed wing, the Shanti Bahini even torched Tanchangya houses at Barkal, Jurchari, Bilaichari, physically assaulting some of the organisers and issuing threats to their families to abandon the area (Tanchangya 2000: 32-33).

On January 25, 1997, when the PCJSS leadership and the Bangladesh Government met to find an amicable solution to the CHT problem, Tanchangya leaders submitted a memorandum to both parties, seeking – (1) Constitutional recognition of Tanchangya as a distinct tribe of CHT, and (2) Proportionate reservation of seats in the Hills District Councils. Incidentally, the PCJSS memorandum submitted to the Bangladesh Government had in Clause 2(a) identified only ten ethnic groups within CHT – Chakma, Marma, Tippera, Mru, Bawm, Pangkhua, Lushai, Khumi, Khyang and Chak. The move was well-timed. In CHT, eleven ethnic groups are now officially recognised, and out of sixty-one seats in the two Hills District Councils of Rangamati (31) and Bandarban (30), Tanchangyas have representatives in three seats.

In South Tripura, eighty-six (86) individuals are matriculates; they make a trivial 3.5% of the total Tanchangya population in that district. There are only three graduates (0.1%) in nine villages. The population not attending schools is very high, the bulk of which comprises families of swidden farmers who are now economically unadvanced and require all members of their families to work in the *jum*. Free mid-day meals as provided by the education department to lure children of poor families to school are shunned. 'The quality is so poor that even our pigs won't eat the stuff,' said one dis-

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illusioned *jummayā* who had sent one of his sons to school for a couple of days. Plough cultivating families, on the contrary, have no objection to sending their children to schools, but most primary schools are either teacherless or single-teacher schools, and apart from mid-day meals, there are no other means to motivate students' enrolment. Lack of education among Tanchangyas of South Tripura has failed to create a much needed generation of leaders to represent the cause of the ethnic group in the TTAADC. Even subgroups of Tippera are allowed to have representatives in the District Council; the Tanchangya being a distinct ethnic group has a stronger case to contend for itself.

In CADC, the state of education and awareness among Tanchangyas is better than it is in South Tripura. The Local Administrative Office estimates their present literacy rate to be around 38% against a much higher 49.4% for the entire District Council. That percentage includes individuals attending schools plus those who never attended schools but have learnt to sign their names. According to the same criterion, the literacy rate of Tanchangya in South Tripura would be only 31%. Since the formation of CADC, Tanchangyas have played a significant part, holding important portfolios, as high as that of CEM (Chief Executive Member). As yet, no attempt has been made therein to ethnically dissociate Tanchangya from Chakma, but there were talks about formally applying for amending the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India to incorporate Tanchangya as a distinct Scheduled Tribe of Mizoram. This I heard when I last visited Mizoram in September 2006; nothing happened after that. But in CADC, everything other than elections to the local body is fated to be very slow.

7.4 *Concluding remarks*

Under Chakma hegemony, the Tanchangya suffered socio-political exclusion; in course of the last quarter of the 20th

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century, they had also seen their own interests superseded by what Chakmas felt most necessary for them. And while Chakmas emerged as elite, socially and politically, the latter was fated to remain underprivileged. Cleavages between the two groups had existed for long; it was only a matter of time for the latter to be officially granted a distinct ethnic status – a thing they had been consistently claiming for since the 18th century. Recognition of Tanchangya as a distinct ethnic group in CHT now allows them to represent their cause at national and international levels and to work concertedly for the socio-economic uplift of their people. The Myanmar government officially places Daingnak among ethnic minorities of the Rakhine State (Arakan). Leaving aside the crisis that the ethnic groups of CHT face today owing to overwhelming Bengali presence in the hills, the average Tanchangya in the Hill Tracts is better off than his counterpart is in India, especially the section living in South Tripura, where they do not have leaders to negotiate their interests even at the District Council level without reference to the Chakma.

Things are never static, and social change occurring over a period of time led to the assimilation of Sak into other races. Today, Kadu and Chakpa are no longer the people they used to be; the former is Burmanised, the latter merged with the Meithei. No Malin remembers the language of his ancestors; he speaks Burman and wears Burman dress. No doubt, the Tanchangya has changed considerably in course of the 19th and 20th century; they share many things in common with Chakmas; yet, they still maintain noticeable differences. It is imperative that in places such as South Tripura and CADC, measures are officially taken to spread education among Tanchangyas, secure their socio-economic uplift and promote their indigenous culture.

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Vocabulary

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A note on the variant forms of phonemes in different environments is given in pp. 74-80. In the following list, no attempt is made at allophonic transcription; however, hiatus is sometimes indicated to avoid mispronunciation. Generally, final stops are unreleased while voiced stops in the final position of words tend to be partially devoiced.

Eng.	DG	KG	MeG	MoG
Air (breeze)	bɔ:	buijar	bɔ:	bɔ:
Alligator	xumuk	xumur	kumbuk	...
Aluminium	dɔttja	dɔttja	dɔttja	dɔttja
Ant	ɸiba	fifira, ɸiira	ɸiba	ɸiba, ɔifuk
Arrow	...	sel	ban	ban
Back (of body)	ɸit	ɸit	ɸi:t	ɸit
Bamboo	bait	bait	bait	bait
Banana	xɔla	xɔla	xɔla	xɔla
Bed	bisan	bisani	bisani	bisani
Bee	mufuk	mubafuk	mubafuk	muɔfuk
Belly	ɸet	ɸet, ɸed	ɸet	ɸet
Bird	ɸait	ɸaik	ɸait	ɸeit, ɸait
Blood	lo	lo	lo	lo
Boat	nɔ	nɔ	nɔ	nɔ
Body	gija	geja, geija	gja	gja, xainta
Bone	ʔa	ʔar	ʔa	ʔaa
Bottle	pilaŋ	pillaŋ	pilljaŋ	pilaŋ
Bow	ḍɔnu	ḍɔnu, badol	ḍɔnu	ḍɔnu
Bowl (small)	ka:	kja:, kja:	ka:	ka:
Bowl (large)	...	dɔŋ	dɔŋlain	dɔŋlain
Bronze	kait	kait	kait	kait
Buffalo	moit	moit	moit	moit
Butterfly	...	tsansira	tsansilak	tsansilak
Cat	bilai	bilai	bilai	belei
Catapault	...	badol	barol	barol

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In Chakma, some *gozā*-based differences are evident. For instance, *Mulimā gozā* [marma], 'cucumber,' is [mambra] in *Dhāmei gozā* subdialect. Similarly, *Mulimā* and *Dhāmei* [sundori] and [tsundori] respectively for 'funnel' is [billi] in *Burbua gozā*. In the list below, the common words occurring in Chakma *gozās* are used.

MuG	LB	AG	Phayre	Chakma
bɔ:	buŋ	bɔ:	bó	bɔijar, buijar
xumuk	...	kumok	...	xumor
dɔttja	...	...	...	...
ɸiba, ɔifuk	ɔinfuk	ɸiira	...	ɸigire
ban	lak	...	le	sel
ɸit	ɸit	ɸi:d	...	ɸi:d
bait	bait	bait	...	batç
xɔla	xɔla	xɔla	ko-lá	xɔla
...	...	...	...	sizi, ʃizi
mubafuk	mubafuk	mubafuk	...	mufuk
ɸet	ɸet	ɸet, ɸed	...	ɸet, ɸed
ɸait	ɸait	ɸait	...	ɸek
lo	lo	lo	...	lo
nɔ	nɔ	nɔ	nó	nɔ
gja	gija	geja	...	xeja, xeija
ʔa	ʔa	ʔa	ar	ʔar
pilaŋ	pilan	pilaŋ, pillaŋ	...	bɔdɔl
ḍunu	ḍunu	ḍunu	...	ḍunu
ka:	ka:	ka:	...	ka:
...	dɔŋlain	...	...	gabala
kait	kait	kait	...	ɸidol
moit	moit	moit	mó-it	motç
tsansija	...	tsansilak	...	ɸɔttafɔtti
bele	belei	bilai	bí-lá-í	bilei
barul	...	...	...	badol

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Eng.	DG	KG	MeG	MoG
Cheek	gal, galsaba	gal, galsaba	gal	galsaba
Chest	buk	buk	buk	buk
Chin	tʰugɔi	tʰumɔri	tʰugui	tʰubi
Clay	...	madi	mari	mari
Copper	tama	tama	tama	tama
Cow	guru	guru	guru	gru, guru
Crab	...	xaŋara	xaŋa	xãa
Crow	xɔwa	xɔba	xɔwa	xɔba
Day	din	din	din	din
Deer	ʔujin	ʔɔriŋ	ʔɔjin	ʔunɔn, ʔujiŋ
Dog	xugu	xugur	xuhu	xuu, xugu
Door	dua	duar	dɔjat	...
Dove	xɔ	xɔ	xɔ	xɔ
Ear	xan	xan	xan	xan
Earth	...	pittimi	pitimi	pittimi
Earthworm	xetɕtɕuwa	xetɕtɕowa	xetɕtɕwa	xetɕtɕwa
Egg	bɔda	bɔda	bɔra	bɔra
Elbow	xiloni	xiloni	kiŋuli	kirɔni
Elephant	ʔait	ʔait	ʔait	ʔait
Eye	tsug	tsok	tsok	tsug
Father	bo	baba	ba, bo	bo
Father-in-law	so:	so:r	soso: .	sesau
Finger	aŋul	ãul, aŋul	ãul, aŋul	aŋul
Fire	...	aguin	ahain	a.oin
Fish	mait	mait	mait	mait
Flower	fu:l	fu:l	fu:l	fu:l
Flute	basi	basi	basi	basi
Food	xabat	habar	kʰana, xana	kʰana, xana
Foot	tʰɛŋ	tʰɛŋ	tʰɛŋ	tʰɛŋ
Forehead	xɔbal	xɔbal	xɔbal	xɔbal

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MuG	LB	AG	Phayre	Chakma
galsaba	galsaba	galsaba	...	gal
buk	buk	buk	...	bug
t^hubi	t^hubi	t^hɔhɔi	...	t^huguri
mari	...	...	...	madi
tama	tama	tama	...	tama
guru	guru	guru	gó-ru	goru
xaŋa	xaŋa	...	...	xaŋara
xɔba	xɔba	xɔwa	ko-bá	xɔba
din	din	din	din	din
ʔujiŋ, tsɔŋa	ʔujiŋ	ʔɔriŋ	...	ʔɔriŋ
xugu	xugu	xuur	kú-gúr	xugur
doa, doja	doa	dua	...	doar
xɔ	xɔ	xɔ	...	xɔ
xan	xan	xan	kán	xan
pirittimi	pitimi	...	...	pittimi
xetɕtɕwa	xetɕtɕowa	...	...	xetɕtɕwa
bɔra	bɔra	bɔda	...	bɔda
keloŋi, xirɔni	keloŋi	kiloni	...	xeloŋi
ʔait	ʔaik	ʔait	...	ʔet
tsok	tsuk	tsog	sop	sog
ba, ʔaba	ba	...	bap	bap, baba
so:	so:	so:	...	so:r
aŋul	aŋul	aŋul	...	aŋul
aguin	a.uin	...	a-gú-in	agun
mait	mait	mait	má-it	matɕ
fu:l	fu:l	fu:l	...	fu:l
basi	basi	basi	...	bazi
hana	xana	...	...	hana
t^hɛŋ	t^hɛŋ	t^hɛŋ	teng	t^hɛŋ
xɔbal	xɔbal	xɔbal	...	xɔbal

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Eng.	DG	KG	MeG	MoG
Forest (jungle)	za	zar	za	za
Forest (dense)	zabui	zarbui	zabui	zabui
Forest (dense with large trees)	taun	tarun	taun	taun
Fowl	xua, kua	xura	kua	kua
Fox	sejal	sejal	...	sejal
Frog	bɛŋ	bɛŋ	bɛŋ	bɛŋ
Girl	mela	mela	mela	mela
Glowworm	dzunifuk	dzuni(fuk)	dzunifuk	dzunifuk
Goat	sagɔl	sagɔl	saɔl	saɔl
God	gosen	gosain	gosain	gɔsain
Gold	sɔna	sɔna	sɔna	sɔna
Guava	guijamgula	guinsugula	gujensigula	...
Hair (of body)	ket, keit	ket	ket	gja xet
Hair (of head)	tsul	tsul	tsul	tsul
Hand	ʔat	ʔat	ʔat	ʔat
Happiness	xusi	xusi	xusi	husi
Head	mada	sira	sia	mara
Hill	moin	moin	moin	moin
Hillock	mua	mua	mura	mua
Hog	sugɔ	sugɔr	sugɔ	sugɔ
Horse	goa	gora	goa	goa
House	gɔ	gɔr	gɔ	gɔː
Housefly	masi	masi	masi	masi
House-lizard	gɔ lakki	iŋirɔŋ	imirɔŋ	imirɔŋ
Insect	ɸuk	ɸuk	ɸuk	ɸuk
Iron	loa	loa	loa	loa
Jackfruit	xattɔl	xattɔl	xattɔl	xattɔl
King	rasa	rasa	rasa	rasa
Knee	ʔarugila	ʔadugila	ʔarugula	ʔarugula

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MuG	LB	AG	Phayre	Chakma
za	za	za	...	zar
zabui	zabui	zabui	...	zar
taun	taun	taun	...	tarun
xua, kua	kua	xua, kua	...	xura
sejal	sijal	...	...	sijal
bɛŋ	bɛŋ	bɛŋ	...	bɛŋ
mela	mela	mela	...	mila
dzunifuk	dzunifuk	dzunifuk	...	zunifuk
sagɔl	sagɔl	saɔl	sagol	sagɔl
gɔsain	gosen	...	...	gozen
sɔna	sɔna	sɔna	...	sɔna
guijamgula	...	guijamgula	...	gujam
ket, xeit	ket	ket	...	ketç
tsul	tsul	tsul	sul	sul
ʔat	ʔat	ʔat	hát	ʔat
husi	xusi	xusi	...	huzi
mara	sja	sija	tsir-rá	mada
mua	mua	mua	mú-rá	mura
moin	moin	moin	...	mo:n
sugɔ	sugɔr	sugɔ	sú-gur	sugɔr
goa	goa	goa	gó-ra	gora
gɔ:	gɔ:	gɔ	gúr	gɔr
masi	masi	masi	...	mazi
iŋilɔŋ	inirɔŋ	...	...	tuttubi
ɸuk	ɸuk	ɸuk	...	ɸug
loa	loa	loa	ló-á	luo
xattɔl	xattɔl	xattɔl	...	xattol
rasa	rasa	rasa	...	raza
ʔarugila	ʔarugila	ʔarugila	...	ʔadugila

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Eng.	DG	KG	MeG	MoG
Lamp	batti	tserag	tsejag	tsjak, batti
Leaf	ɸara	ɸada	ɸara	ɸara
Light (dawn)	ɸɔɔ	ɸɔːr	ɸɔː	ɸɔɔ
Man	mɔɔt	mɔrɔt	mɔːt	mɔɔt
Mango	am	am	am	am
Meat	eja	era	ija	aja
Mirror	mejaŋ	meraŋ	mejaŋ	mjaŋ, ana
Monastery	kjɔŋ	kjɔŋ	kjɔŋ	kjɔŋ
Monkey	banɔ	bantɔr	banɔ	banɔ
Moon	tsan	tsan	tsan	tsan
Mother	ijo	ma	ma	ijo
Mouth	mubera	mubeda	muɔbera	mubera
Nail	nɔk	nɔk	nɔk	nɔk
Name	naŋ	naŋ	naŋ	naŋ
Neck	gɔla	gɔla	gɔla	gɔla
Night	rait	rait, rajɔt	rait	rait
Nose	nak	nak	nak	nak
Oil	tel	tel	teːl	teːl
Oven	...	ɔlɔinsal	ahɔinsal	aɔinsal
Owl	ɸesa	ɸesa	ɸesa	ɸesa
Papaya	ɸirasigula	bijasigula, bisougula	fidasilgula	frisigula
Pigeon	xuirɔ	xuidɔr	xuirɔ	...
Pineapple	anait	anait	anigula	anek, anait
Place	dzaga	dzaga	dzaha	dzaa, dzaga
Plant, tree	gait	gait	gait	gait
Plate	tʰala	tʰala	tʰala, lɔŋbain	lɔŋbain
Queen	rani	rani	rani	rani
Rain	zɔ	zɔr	zɔ	zɔ
Rainbow	ransuni	randali	...	...

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MuG	LB	AG	Phayre	Chakma
tsjak, batti	tsjak	tserag	...	serag
ɸara	ɸara	ɸara	...	ɸada
ɸɔɔ	ɸɔɔ	...	...	ɸɔːr
mɔːt	mɔɔt	mɔrɔt	mo-ró-t	mɔrɔd
am	am	am	...	am
eja	eja	...	...	era
mejaŋ	mjaŋ	meraŋ	...	ana
kjɔŋ	kjɔŋ	kjɔŋ	...	kjɔŋ
bandɔ	bandɔ	bandɔ	...	bandɔr
tsan	tsan	tsan	thán	san
ma	ma	ma	má	ma
mu, mubera	mu	mubera	...	mu, mubeda
nɔk	nɔk	nɔk	...	nɔk
naŋ	naŋ	naŋ	...	naŋ
gɔla	gɔla	tɔra	...	gɔla, tɔda
rait	raijɔt	rait	rá-it	reit
nak	nak	nag	...	nak
tel	teːl	teːl	...	tel
aguinsal	...	olonsal	...	olonsal
ɸesa	ɸesa	ɸesa	...	ɸeza
ɸerasigula	...	...	...	ɸogoija
xuijo	...	...	...	xɔdor
anek	anigula	anait	...	anatç
dzaga	dzaga	dzaha	...	zaga
gait	gait	gait	...	gatç
t^hala	t^hala	t^hala	...	t^hal
rani	rani	rani	...	rani
zɔ	zɔ	zɔ	...	zɔr
ransuni	ransuni	...	...	ranzuni

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Eng.	DG	KG	MeG	MoG
Rat	undu	untur	unu	…
Red	raŋa	raŋa	raŋa	raŋa
River (big)	gaŋ	gaŋ	gaŋ	gaŋ
River (small) (perennial)	sua	sɔra	soa	soa
River (small) (seasonal)	zui	suri, zuri	sui	sui
Road (path)	zaŋal	zaŋal	zãal	zaŋal, zãal
Rope	duji	duri	duji	duji
Salt	nun	nun	nun	nun
Servant	gabu	gabur	gabut	gabu
Shadow	saba	saba	saba	saba
Shrimp	isa	isa	isa	isa
Silver	ruba, dɔtta	ruba, dɔttja	ruba	dɔttja
Skull	xulɔsaa	xulɔsara	maraxul	paddara
Sky	agait	agait	ahait	a.ait
Snake	sap, ʃap	sap, ʃap	sap, ʃap	sap
Speech	xɔra	xɔda	xɔra	xɔra
Spear	sel	sel	sel	sel
Spider	magɔlɔk	maɔrɔŋ	mahɔlɔk	maɔlɔk
Spine	xaŋail	xaŋel	xaŋel	xaŋel
Star	t^haa	tara	taa, t^haa	tara
Stone	ʃil	ʃil	ʃil	…
Sun	bel	bel	bel	bel
Swidden (jum)	dukkam	dzum	dzum	dzum
Tail	leit	leit	let	let
Thigh	dabana	dabana	damana	damana
Thirst	t^hek	t^hik	t^hik	t^hek
Tiger	bag	bag	bag	kja, bag
Tooth	dat	dat	dat	dat
Tongue	dzil	dzil	dzil	dzil

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MuG	LB	AG	Phayre	Chakma
undu	...	...	...	undur
raŋa	raŋa	raŋa	...	raŋa
gaŋ	gaŋ	gaŋ	gáng	gaŋ
soa	soa	soa	...	sɔra
sui	sui	sui, zui	...	zuri
zaŋal	zaŋal	zaŋal	...	ɸɔd
duji	duji	...	...	dɔ.ei, xazi
nun	nun	nun	...	nun
gabu	gabu	gabut	...	gabur
saba	saba	saba	...	saba
isa, isja	isja	isa	...	iza
dɔittja	ruba	ruba	...	rubo, sandi
hulɔsaa	xulɔsaa	sjahul	...	xul
agait	agait	ahaid	...	agatç
sap, ʃap	sap	sab	tsáp	sap, ʃap
xɔra	xɔra	xɔra	...	xɔda
sel	...	...	...	zadi
magɔlɔk	...	...	...	magɔrɔk
xaŋail	xaŋal	xaŋal	...	xaŋal
taa, t^haa	tara	tara	tá-rá	tara
ʃil	t^hɔluŋ	...	...	ʃil
bel	bel	bel	...	bel
dzum	dzum	dzum	...	dzum
leit	leit	leit	...	leitç
dabana	dabana	dabana	...	dabana
t^heg	t^hek	t^hik	...	t^hatç
bag	kja, bag	bag	...	bag
dat	dat	dat	...	dat
dzil	dzi:l	dzil	...	zil

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Eng.	DG	KG	MeG	MoG
Tortoise	du	du	lik, du	lik, du
Village	aram, rwa	adam	rɔa	rwa, roja
Water	ɸani	ɸani	ɸani	ɸani
Waterfall	tʰairaŋ	tʰaŋsaŋ	tʰaŋ	tʰaŋ
Watermelon	tʰɔmuit	tʰɔrmut	tumul	...
Wealth	dɔn	dɔn	dɔn	dɔn
Window	ɸuguri xana	xana duruŋ	xana du:	du:
Wit	akkɔl	akkɔl	ḍat	ḍat
Zigzag	bɛŋaxaŋa	bɛŋaxɔŋa	bɛ̃jaxɔ̃a	beŋaxuŋa
Common Adjectives				
Bad	gɔm nɔj	bɔsɔŋ, gɔnnɔi gɔm nɔj		pʰjak, gɔnnɔi
Beautiful	dɔk	dol	dɔk, rubuit	rubɔit, ruɔit
Big, Great	daŋɔ	daŋɔr	daŋɔ	daŋɔ
Bitter	...	tida	tira	tira
Black	xala	xala	xala	xala
Blind	...	xan	xan	xan
Blue	ail	eil	a:l	el, al
Cold	dʑwɔ	dʑurɔ	...	dʑwɔ
Fat	pɔkta	pɔkta	pɔkta	pɔkta
Good, Fine	gɔm	gɔm	gɔm	gɔm
Green	ʔail	eil	jal	ʔail
Heavy	gu:	gur	gut	gut
Hot	gɔrɔm	gɔrɔm	gɔrɔm	gɔrɔm
Little	tsigɔn	tsigɔn	tsiɔn	tsiɔn
New	nowa	nowa	nowa	nowa
Raw, Unripe	xasa	xasa	xasa	xaa, xasa
Red	raŋa	raŋa	raŋa	raŋa
Ripe	...	ɸahana	ɸahana	sinana
Round	gul	gul	gul	gul
Short	...	badik	barik	barik

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MuG	LB	AG	Phayre	Chakma
du	lik, du	du	...	du
aram, rwa	rwɔ	rwa	...	adam
ɸani	ɸani	ɸani	...	ɸani
t^haŋ	t^haŋsan	t^haŋsaŋ	...	t^hamzaŋ
molfɔl	t^hɔmoit	...	...	t^hɔrmotɕ
dɔn	dɔn	dɔn	...	ḍɔn
du:	du:	du:	...	ɸuguri xana
akkɔl	ḍat	akkɔl	...	akkɔl
bɛŋaxaŋa	bɛŋabeŋi	bɛŋabeŋi	...	bɛŋaxɔŋa
gɔm nɔj	gɔm nɔj	gɔm nɔj	...	bɔzɔŋ
laba	dol, laba	...	...	dol
daŋɔ	daŋɔ	daŋɔ	...	daŋɔr
tira	tira	...	...	tida
xala	xala	xala	...	xala
xan	xan	...	...	xan
el	el	a:l	...	el, nil
dʑwɔ	dʑwɔ	...	...	zɔr
pɔkta	pɔkta	pɔkta	...	pɔkta
gɔm	gɔm	gɔm	...	gɔm
ʔail	ʔail	xantɕtɕja a:l	...	el
gut	gut	...	...	go:r
gɔrɔm	gɔrɔm	gɔrɔm	...	gɔrɔm
tsigun	tsigun	...	...	sigon
nowa	nowa	nowa	...	nuo
xasa	xasa	xasa	...	xaza
raŋa	raŋa	raŋa	...	raŋa
sinana	sinana	...	...	ɸagana
gul	gul	gul	...	gul
barik	barik	...	...	badik

Scanned with CamScanner

Eng.	DG	KG	MeG	MoG
Slim	ɸarol	ɸadol	ɸarol	ɸarol
Sour	...	xɔrɔ	ɔrɔ	...
Straight	usu	usu	usu	usu
Sweet	mira	mida	mira	mira
Tall (Height)	ɔsɔl	ɔsɔl	ɔsɔl	ɔsɔl
Ugly	...	dol nɔy	rubuit nɔy	bainnia
Warm	um	um	um	um
White	ḍup, dup	ḍup, dup	ḍup, dup	ḍup, dup
Yellow	ʔɔluitɕtɕja	ʔɔlotɕtɕja	ʔɔlotɕtɕja	ɛl (?)
Interrogative Particles				
How	xirok	xenekkja	xendak	xidak
What	xi	hi	xi	xi
When	...	xɔmɔle	xɔmɔle	xɔmɔtte
Where	xuru	xudi, xudrɔt	xujet	xujet
Who	xɔnna	hɔnna	xɔne	xɔne

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MuG	LB	AG	Phayre	Chakma
ɸarol	…	…	…	ɸadol
…	…	…	…	hourbo
usu	usu	usu	…	uzu
mira, mirja	mirja	…	…	mida
ɔsɔl	ɔsɔl	ɔsɔl	…	ɔzɔl
bainnia	…	…	…	bannei
um	um	um	…	um
ḍup, dup	dup	ḍup, dup	…	ḍup, dup
ʔɔluitɕtɕja	ʔɔluittja	ʔolotɕtɕja	…	ʔɔluitɕtɕja
kikkja	…	…	…	xiŋiri
hi	…	…	…	hi
xɔmɔle	…	…	…	hɔkke
xuri	…	…	…	xudu
xɔnna, xɔne	…	…	…	xɔnna

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take cognisance of their present socio-economic conditions and work concertedly for their social uplift. Many problems they face today will continue to trouble them in the future, unless the world around them decides to change for the better.

Rupak Debnath is an ethnolinguist, a full time researcher on ethnic groups of Northeast India and the Chittagong Hill Tracts. He is presently working on the Chak (Sak) and the Khyang [illegible] Chittagong Hill Tracts, and the Chakpas of Manipur. He has published widely and participated in various seminars and workshops pertaining to Ethnicity, Education and Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policies.

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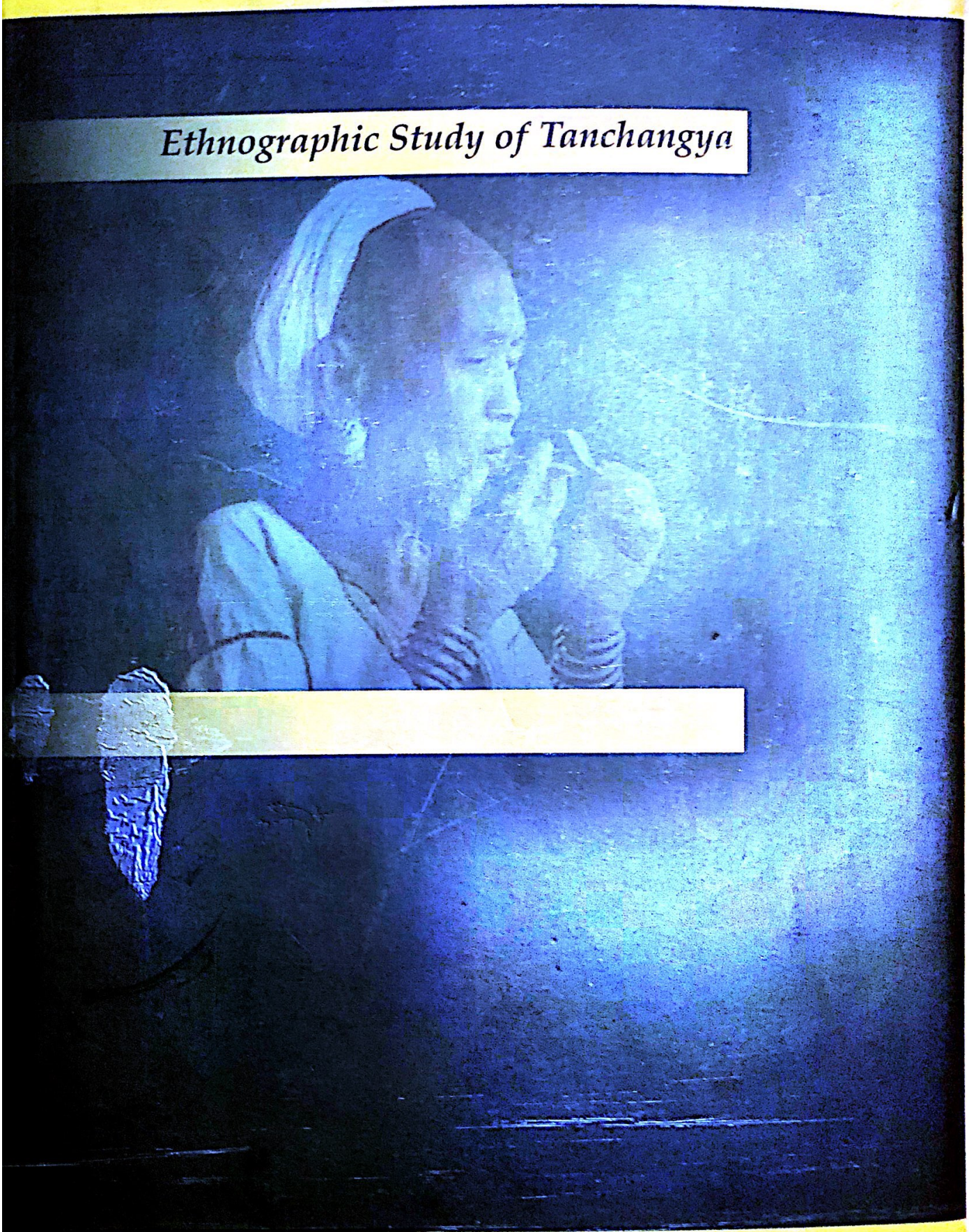

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