

THE PEOPLE OF NEFA

THE GALLONGS

L. R. N. SRIVASTAVA, M.Sc.

Divisional Research Officer, Tirap Frontier Division
North-East Frontier Agency

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT, ADVISER'S SECRETARIAT
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THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER AGENCY (NEFA) is a wild and mountainous tract of about 30,000 sq. miles in the Assam Himalayas bounded by Bhutan, Tibet, Burma and the Valley of the Brahmaputra. It is divided for administrative purposes into five Frontier Divisions—Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap—with their headquarters at Bomdi La, Ziro, Along, Tezu and Khonsa respectively. It is inhabited by a large number of Indo-Mongoloid tribes, speaking some fifty different dialects. This book describes the Gallongs, an important tribe living in the Siang Frontier Division.

P R E F A C E

The most difficult part of an anthropologist's job, it is said, begins when he returns from the field. While in the field I found myself busy collecting materials. I did not have time to look back to them and write up there. But when I settled down to the sifting and the processing of the materials I found myself at sea. I could not make out where to begin and where to end. However, when I began working on them, the difficulties were overcome and the result is here.

This study has been undertaken to give an introductory idea of the Gallongs, their country, material culture, social and economic organizations, rituals and belief and a few other aspects of their life. Space and time did not permit to give a fuller details on the above topics. Theoretical interpretations have been avoided, as then it would have taken much time and space. Facts have been presented before the readers and now it is upto them to evolve theories out of these facts. As there has been no substantial material on the Gallongs, published so far, it may form a basis to future investigations. Keeping this in mind, an attempt has been made to give a brief outline of almost all the aspects of their culture.

In the field of publication of books, it is my maiden venture. Limitations and shortcomings are bound to be there, for which I myself shoulder the entire responsibility.

I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude and thankfulness to Shri K. L. Mehta, and Shri N. K. Rustomji the former and the present Advisers to the Governor of Assam, who have kindly given me the opportunity to carry on research on the tribes of the Siang Frontier Division. They have always extended their helping hands for the cause of anthropological research in the North-East Frontier Agency and have been a source of inspiration to us. The debt I owe to Dr Verrier Elwin, Adviser for Tribal Affairs, is that of a pupil to his pre-

ceptor. He went through the manuscript with great patience and made valuable corrections and suggestions. And as a mark of all this, this book is dedicated to him. I wish to record in particular my gratitude to my Gallong friend Shri Taluk Rano, who was my interpreter and guide. I am greatly indebted and thankful to the officers and the staff of the Research Department, NEFA, Shillong, for their kindly going through the manuscript, making valuable suggestions and corrections, making drawings and for typing out the manuscript. I will be failing in my duty if I do not express my thanks to all others who have helped me in the preparation of this book, individual acknowledgements not being possible here. I look forward to their help again in the preparation of my next book, *The Minyongs*. I am highly appreciative of the co-operation and help given by the people whose life has been depicted here.

Shillong
March 1962

L. R. N. SRIVASTAVA



Making designs on a skirt



Gallong girls put on a number of bangles and chains of beads

CHAPTER ONE

THE LAND AND PEOPLE

I. THE COUNTRY

The Siang Frontier Division in the North-East Frontier of India is the home of the Gallongs. A small population is also scattered on the fringes of the border between the Siang and the Subansiri Frontier Divisions. The area inhabited by the Gallongs starts in the west with the Subansiri river and extends up to the Sido river, a little beyond the Simen river in the south-eastern part of the division. A few Gallong villages are also situated in the lower Siyom valley, on the right bank of the Siyom river. Only two Gallong villages — Kambu and Paya — are on the left bank, which is mainly occupied by the Minyongs. The upper Siyom valley, on the left bank, is inhabited by the Boris. The northern and the southern boundaries of the Gallong region are demarcated by the Siyom and the Brahmaputra rivers. In the west are the Hill Miris; in the north, there are such people as the Minyongs, Boris, Ramos and Pailibos; in the east, are again the Minyongs; and in the south, are the villages of the plains Miris, dispersed in the Brahmaputra valley.

The whole country is an intricate labyrinth of precipitous, rocky and high hills and mountains, towering high on both sides of the rivers or streams. Hills are generally from 1,000 to 10,000 feet high, scattered throughout the country. There is luxuriant, though not very thick, growth of forests on these hills. Constant cutting of trees for the jhum cultivation does not allow the forests to grow very thickly. Soil erosion and land slides are some of the characteristic features of the country leading to floods, blocking of tracks and endangering human and animal lives. The whole area is ecologically homogeneous

with negligible differences. The population is mainly concentrated in the valleys of rivers. Gallongs are more fortunate to have fertile and less sloping lands in the lower Siyom, Sipu and Simen valleys, than the Boris and the Minyongs having rocky and steep lands.

There are numerous rivers and streams in this area. The Siyom, the next biggest river after the Siang in the division, runs for a little distance through the Gallong area. As two of the villages and the cultivation fields of the Gallongs living on the right bank are situated on the left bank of the Siyom, crossing of this river becomes necessary. Apart from suspension bridges, boats and bamboo rafts are also used for the crossing. The Simen, Sipu and Sido are other big rivers in the valleys in which many Gallong villages are situated. Rivers and streams are in such a number that even before one stream is crossed, another comes ahead. Though there are plenty of rivers and streams, especially in the south-eastern region, not a single lake is to be seen. The undulating lands never permit the water to accumulate and take the shape of a lake.

Due to heavy and continuous rains for the greater part of the year, luxuriant evergreen vegetation is the most characteristic of this region. Thick jungles, with tall, stout trees with long creepers around them, are to be found everywhere, and, in the lower areas there are bush jungles and shrubs in abundance. Elephant grasses, where one often loses one's way, abound in the south-eastern area. Bamboo and cane are available in plenty in almost all the jungles. Another cane-like parasitic creeper used for making hats is also found in the lower areas. Though some hills are over 4,000 to 5,000 feet high, pine trees are not available. With increase in altitude, a little variation in the flora is to be seen. At higher altitudes, thin bamboos in thick clusters are noticed. Various wild fruit trees—both sweet and citrous—are also found, varying in kind and taste with altitude. Jackfruit trees are countless, while mango, guava and other fruits representing the vegetation of the plains areas, are few and far between. Oranges are in plenty in the central and the south-eastern areas; lemons are rare. Rhododendrons and

orchids beautify the higher hills. Various other flowers with a variety of colour and fragrance adorn the countryside.

The fauna is typical of the Cis-Himalayan regions. Tigers and panthers are found in the lower jungle of the foothills. The high steep mountains are probably not suitable for their habitation. From the number of bags, pouches, sheathes of daos and knives, made of bear-skin, it appears that, in olden days, bears were in abundance, but have been almost exterminated by the Gallong hunters. Elephants are found only in a few selected areas in the foothills. Right from the western border, that is, from the Subansiri river, up to its eastern boundary across the Simen, there are only a few elephants in the Daring-Gensi jungle. Deer are in plenty and available in almost all the jungles. In spite of the regular hunting of deer, they have not been exterminated like the bears. Monkeys, squirrels and rats are found without number, and are delicious items of the Gallong menu. Barking deer, otters, pheasant, jungle fowl and bats are also not uncommon. Pigeons and hornbills are in plenty. Wild pigs abound in thick jungle, but their hunting requires an organized party of skilled hunters. Snakes are numerous, but cases of snake-bite are rare and those of consequent death are rarer still. Various other reptiles are also to be seen, of which the centipedes are important. Varieties of leeches — plain and striped — are found, and it would not be unrewarding for a zoologist to come here for their study. After a few showers, they come out in millions, and then, as the people say, it is easy to count the number of grass blades but not the leeches. Greenish yellow *tanyak* and blackish *tali* flies swarm horribly in the villages. Rivers and streams are well-stocked with fishes.

II. CLIMATE

The climate of the country can be divided into two seasons: rainy — March to September — and winter — October to February. The country has a heavy and continuous rain ranging from 100 to 200 inches a year. March and April experience a few

showers with an occasional break, and the heavy rains start from May and teasingly persist up to the end of August. September again has less rain with prolonged breaks. The pressure decreases considerably by the second part of October, the first being a little rainy; swollen rivers start receding and the blocked paths are opened. The highest rainfall is recorded in the months of May, June and July, more so in the latter two months, when going outdoor becomes difficult as every small footpath turns into a rivulet, small log-bridges are washed away and leeches abound. Luxuriant growth of grass and shrubs impede passage. The south-eastern areas, bordering foothills, become cut-off and inaccessible during the rainy season. Cold winds start blowing by the end of October, and the following three months are very chilly. February again becomes pleasant. Due to innumerable hills the range of vision is very limited. Heavy thick sheets of fog can be seen on the body and the peaks of the hills, and this causes the mornings to be chilly. Temperature starts rising from a little before noon and goes on rising up to a little after two o'clock. With the approach of evening there is a considerable drop in the temperature, and nights become cold. Though the country, as a whole, is considerably cold, snow is rarely seen.

III. DIFFERENT GROUPS OF THE GALLONGS

The Gallongs occupy a larger area in comparison with the other tribes in the division. They live in sparsely populated villages. The density of population is extremely low in the villages as well as in the Gallong area, as a whole. Generally, the villages, with marked exceptions in the recent past, used to be single-clan villages, and this has limited their population. The population of the Gallong villages ranges from 30, the minimum, to 1,100, the maximum. The honour of being the biggest village goes to Kombong.

The Gallong tribe, as already mentioned, is composed of several groups, inhabiting a compact area, comprising of many villages, all culturally and socially linked together. These groups

are the Karga, Karka, Bogum, Tator-Tani, Paktu, and Lodu, some of which can be further divided into sub-groups. The different areas inhabited by them are culturally uniform, with slight variations, discernible only after close scrutiny, but, the basic common denominator remains the same throughout.

IV. MIGRATION

Long ago, say the Gallongs, they lived in the Tibetan region and on the fringes of the Indo-Tibetan frontier. Streams of migrating families came down from time to time from upper areas and, in absence of adequate geographical knowledge, they followed the easiest track. Gradually, the lower areas gave them shelter and they slowly established permanent settlements. Marauding raiders from beyond the frontier raided their settlements very often, and, as they were, at that time, not very powerful in their military prowess, in comparison with the raiders, they had to emigrate. There are no written records available, and we have, therefore, to depend on the people's own traditions. The Karka Gallongs, for example, had their original settlements at Pa-Pigru, near Tada Dege, just at the Indo-Tibetan frontier. Having migrated from this place they came down via the Bori area, through Peri, Kambang, Karbak, Boje, Bole to Yomsha. Yomsha became their next permanent settlement for decades. But, with increase in population, the village could not accommodate all, and consequently, from here also different migrations took place in different directions. Lombi came to Jirigi and finally settled at Lombi; Tirbin came direct to Tirbin; Gamlin came to Kadai and thence to Gamlin; Esi came by the bank of the Rimi river. Dunbar, while describing the migration of the people, says, 'It is, however, believed that the Gallongs and Subansiri Daflas once lived in the Yamne Valley, and that the Gallongs, at all events, migrated by the gorge at Pasighat along the foot of the hills and up the Siemen valley.' But I failed to find any trace of the Gallongs' habitation in and migration from the Yamne valley. The Padams and the Panggis, the present occupants

of the Yamne valley, also could not give any account of migration to corroborate the above statement.

V. PRESENT DISTRIBUTION

The Gallongs are distributed over a large area in the Siang Frontier Division, occupying most of its south-western and southern territory. Liromoba, Yomsha, Gamlin, Kombong, Bagra, Basar, Daring and Gensi are some of the most important and densely populated villages. Almost all the Gallong villages are homogeneous in population. Jining is a mixed village having both the Gallongs and the Minyongs. In a few other villages too some Minyongs have come to settle there but, in comparison with the population of the Gallongs, their number is negligible. In the foothills beyond the Siang Frontier Division also there are many Gallong villages with considerable population.

VI. LANGUAGE

The Gallongs use a form of speech which conforms to the general characteristics of the Adi language differing from it in a number of slight phonetic peculiarities. For instance, we find H in Gallong where Adi usually has SH. The classical example is Gallong *ehing* for Adi *eshing*. But each and every Adi SH does not change into H in Gallong. There are words where both the dialects retain SH. A detailed phonetic analysis only can reveal the environments in which this change takes place. Another distinctive trait of Gallong lies in its dropping of final NG's in Adi words. Gallong *keba* and *ponu* correspond, for example, to Adi *kebang* and *ponung*.

Existence of tones has been suspected in this dialect. It has been found that the same word pronounced differently, expresses different meanings. Such words are said to be numerous. But it has not been properly ascertained whether the differences in meaning are caused by differences in pitch or in length of the vowels. Even if it were due to tones, it has to be

seen whether such words abound in this dialect in such a degree as to justify its description as a tone language. It may be that these words are the remains of a feature that characterized language in the distant past, but which is now gradually disappearing.

These are, however, very minor differences and constitute natural dialectical variations. Adi, Miri and Dafla have been considered identical in spite of far more numerous and greater differences. So, there is ample justification in considering Gallong as one of the main dialects of a great language, which covers the major part of the North-East Frontier Agency from Eastern Kameng to Western Lohit.

Competent authorities, who have done work on the dialects of the North-East Frontier Agency, class Gallong in the North Assam Group of the Tibeto-Burman Languages.

The people have been speaking the same Gallong dialect which their ancestors used to speak centuries ago. In the olden days of inter-village feuds, when people were not much in contact with the neighbouring tribes, their dialect was not influenced by those of the neighbouring people. But in the recent past, due to closer and unrestricted contacts with the plains and other groups of people in the division, a little change, in the shape of inclusion of some words from other dialects and languages, has been brought about. Though the people invariably speak the dialect of their own, yet in the neighbourhood of the headquarters and outposts and administrative centres, it is influenced by the dialect of that area, more predominantly by the dialect of the Minyongs. Women are more conservative or less susceptible to this influence, and they always speak the unadulterated Gallong dialect.

Gallong itself has a number of sub-dialects, as each group of villages has developed its own phonetic peculiarities which distinguish them from others.

Gallong is only a spoken dialect; it has no script. People in the foothills have picked up Assamese and those, who are employed in the government services, know a little Hindi. The Devanagari script has been introduced in the area.

VII. RELATIONS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

There are a few Gallongs scattered along the eastern fringes of the Subansiri Frontier Division. But this study is mainly concerned with the Gallongs inhabiting Siang. Dalton, Cumming, Hamilton and Waddell have left some accounts of the Abor. But these authors were not very precise in making a distinction between the Abors and the Gallongs. The Abor is a group of such people as the Minyongs, Padams, Panggis, Pasis and several others, while Gallong is another group of people differing from the Abor in dialect, customs—social and religious—and mainly in the hair style. As the term Abor has a derogatory meaning, the word Adi is now coming into use. But, whatever term we may use instead, the Gallongs cannot be placed in the same group with the Abors. Whatever account is available—very scanty though—it is about the Abors. Earlier writers, who invariably entered through the Minyong Abor region, could not penetrate into the Gallong areas, and very little could be known about them. Dunbar, in his *Abors and Gallongs*, is, however, clear about the differences that exist between the Abors and the Gallongs and, wherever possible, he has made the differences more clear. Rarely any anthropologist could get the opportunity of visiting these areas. Dr Furer-Haimendorf was able to visit only a few Minyong villages on the right bank of the Siang between Pasighat and Pangin, and thus left no account of the Gallongs. Other anthropologists also, who subsequently visited the area, concentrated their studies on the Abors, and the Gallongs were again left out.

In the past the people indulged in inter-tribal feuds and their frequent movements from one village to another were fraught with grave dangers. Sudden outbreak of such feuds made life more insecure and thus there was no social intercourse between the people and their neighbours. People from the plain areas also rarely visited these people. The Gallongs, in order to meet their requirements by purchasing a few articles of household utility, had to go down to the plains of Assam ;



A Gallong girl at her loom

but their stay in the towns or settlements of Assam was of a very temporary nature and this could not bring about any permanent influence on their life. Their relation with the plains people, when they visited them, was, however, cordial. Before the disastrous earthquake of 1950, towns like Dibrugarh and Tinsukia in Assam were easily approachable from the lower Gallong area.

VIII. TRADE ROUTES

Trade in the early days was based on the principles of barter, and brass bowls, beads and cattle were used as money.

But these items of money were interchangeable and one was never the exact multiple of the other, as the quality and the size of the brass bowls, size, colour and lustre of beads, and also the size of the cattle, always varied, and hence standard exchange was obviously impossible.

The resources of the tribe were supplemented by trade across the frontier. During the British days, say the Gallongs, they carried on trade with the Tibetans, as also with the Monpas and the Boris, whose area lay in between and who often acted as intermediaries. Salt, beads, brass bowls and coats were the most prized articles which were brought from Tibet, bartered against cattle, spears and chillies. There were several trade routes lying between the Tibetans and the Gallongs, which passed through the country of other people inhabiting the upper areas. These trading expeditions often led to inter-tribal feuds, as the people, who were living between the Gallongs and the Tibetans, did not want the traders to go via their country, as, in that case, their trade would have sustained losses. They acted as a sort of broker between the two. This brought them a little benefit. To avoid such extra burden, the Gallongs used to go to Tibet by rivers and streams, unnoticed by other villagers, but were at times detected and thus trouble ensued. Since 1947, there has been considerable retardation in such barter trades with the Tibetans. All the needs of the people are now being fulfilled at the headquarters and the outposts. Salt, the most valuable item of their trade, is supplied to them in abundance at an extremely cheaper rate — 15 naye paise per seer, while formerly they had to barter a slave for a maund or so of salt. Beads and clothes are also made available to them in considerable quantity.

Formerly there were no shops or markets in this area, but, in recent years, a few shops with some biri, tobacco, soap, tea leaves, sugar and a little cloth can be seen here and there. The headquarters at Along has a market with a long line of shops, almost all owned by the tribesmen themselves. A small class of traders has now emerged, which has grown averse to agriculture.

There has been a great influx of money in the area during the last ten years. The people have earned this money mostly by getting contracts for building houses, cutting tracks and in portage. Besides being used as a medium of exchange, the metal coins were, and still are, being used for ornaments in the form of necklaces. As this money has become very convenient for them now to store and to use as medium of exchange, it has found favour with them, and currency notes of higher denominations are much preferred.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

The country has been under effective administration since last so many years. The British Government inclined on the whole, to leave the tribesmen alone, partly because the task of administration, especially in the wild border areas, was difficult and unrewarding, partly from a desire to quarantine the tribes from possible political infection, and partly because a number of officers sincerely held the view that the people were better and happier as they were. As the areas posed difficult problems with regard to communications, no earnest efforts were made to develop them and make roads. Since 1947, every effort has been made to connect villages with outposts and administrative centres with good bridle paths and porter tracks, though much less has been achieved in the direction of making permanent roads, mainly because of the formidable nature of the country and lack of transportation facilities. The current difficulties in transport and the supply of essential commodities are at present being eased by recourse to airlift until land communications have developed satisfactorily. Rivers, though big, are full of rocks and rapids, and have very strong currents and cross-currents, which render navigation impossible. Small boats and bamboo rafts can and do ply for a little distance in the Siyom, but these are only for crossing from one bank to another. The plying of such boats and bamboo rafts does not help in the way of regular transportation of passengers and goods. It is far from an easy task to make motorable roads in the area due to the

formidable nature of the country and lack of such equipment as may be required to construct such roads. And to import everything by 'plane is a still harder job. Mule tracks are under construction, but these tracks will cover only a limited area — the central portion of the country. Porter tracks, though spread throughout the country, do not yet connect every village with each other and with the outposts and the administrative centres.

X. PHYSICAL FEATURES

The Gallongs, as a whole, are of the Mongoloid stock with well-built features. Their hair is black in colour. They have scanty hair on their face and body. Men are of medium stature; women are short. Prognathous faces are rare. The presence of the epicanthic fold is common. The canthi become more and more covered and the obliquity of the eye more pronounced, as we proceed toward the northern areas. Nose is broad without much depression. Eversion and thickness of lips are uncommon. Stout men or women are not to be met with. Ecological conditions, nature of the country, amount of hard labour, necessity for climbing hills, all amalgamate together to give the people a stout, sturdy and proportionate figure. Physically, both the sexes are strong and hardy. In spite of the fact that there is the serious problem of under-nutrition, their bodies are well-built and fully developed. They can afford to do the hardest of labour which actually is demanded of them in cultivation of their fields. They can and do carry loads from 20 to 30 seers over long and strenuous tracks without much of fatigue. The women are just as strong as the men. They shoulder the responsibilities of doing major work in their agriculture fields, of household affairs and very often of carrying loads from place to place.

CHAPTER TWO

DOMESTIC LIFE

I. THE VILLAGE AND ITS APPROACHES

The sites of the villages are generally selected on the high spurs of hills, for the high spurs are considered healthy and free from unwanted flies, and in the past, were preferred for security reasons, though, of course, a few villages are also situated on the foot of the hills. From the village situated on high spurs, from where the whole valley below is visible, one could have a good view of the movements of any intruder. In case of raids, the location of the village used to be of much strategic importance. Before the raiders could reach the village all of a sudden, the inhabitants could get ready for the defence. Generally, the village has only one approach-road. Other three sides are covered with jungle, land slides, or high hills, all of which give natural fortification to the village. No village boundary or fortifications, however, are constructed for defence purposes.

The general lay-out of the village depends upon the slope of the land available for habitation. Villages may assume the shape of a rectangle or a square. In some places the houses are built in such a way that the rows of houses represent the rungs of ladder. No uniformity, however, is maintained in the construction of houses, due to the undulating land. Gallong villages are generally small, having 20 to 30 houses on an average. Generally, one particular clan with a few migrants from other clans occupies the village and this restricts the expansion of the village. Availability of water in the neighbourhood is one of the dominant factors controlling the selection of a site. But, sometimes, the nearness of the water-point is sacrificed for the sake of a better site, and water is brought to the village

in long aqueducts of bamboo, from a distance of more than a thousand feet.

II. THE HOUSE

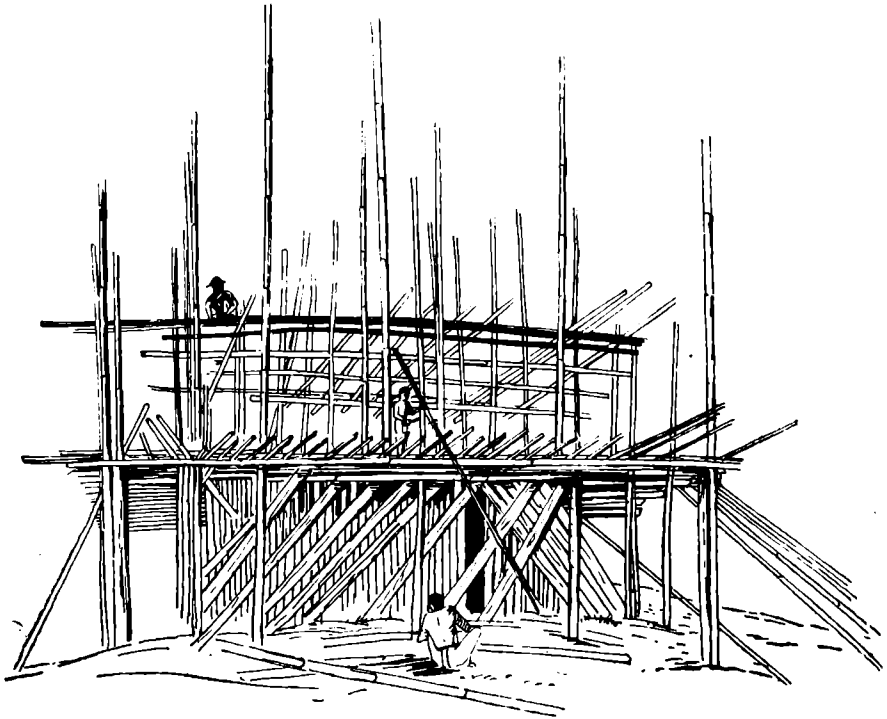
Construction. The houses are raised on struts of bamboo or wood at a height of four to twelve feet from the ground. As the land is uneven and undulating, piles have to be used to get a level floor. Houses here are more sparsely situated in comparison with the houses in the Minyong area where, at times, the roofs of two adjacent houses often touch each other. The floor and the walls are made of split bamboos tied with cane. Planks, where available, are also used. Doors are few and far between. Recently a few houses are provided with doors, made of planks, but rarely bolted. The absence of windows is conspicuous. The roof is thatched with leaves of trees or straw, depending upon the availability in the area. The thatched roof is slanting and droops down considerably and covers almost three fourth of the wall and thus provides a protection to it.

The house consists of a big hall, rectangular in shape. The hall serves the purpose of bed-room, living-room and



Gallong houses

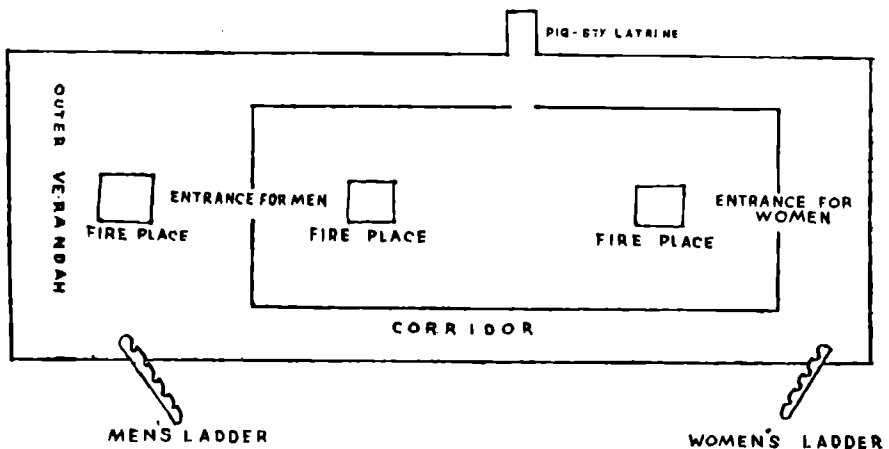
dining-room. Father and mother sleep beside the same fireplace, where the son with his wife sleeps, without any partition. Generally, there are two entrances to the house; one is in front and the other on the right hand side or left hand side, approached by two ladders, made of logs of wood bearing several notches. These ladders restrict the entry of heavy and



A house under construction

wild animals into the house. At night, when the inmates of the house retire, any member of the family, who goes to sleep last, turns the ladder in opposite direction so that the notches cannot be used in climbing to the floor and the ladder thus prevents the entry of the animals at night. The two doors are meant for men and women, who climb up to the floor of the house by the two ladders. Women enter the house by the side ladder and men by the front one. Women are never allowed to go in or come out of the house by the ladder meant for men. If, by mistake, which is rarely committed, a woman uses the men's ladder, she faces a shower of rebukes and scoldings

from the elders of the family. There will be no game, the Gallongs believe, in the hunt, nor fish in the river, if any woman uses the men's ladder. An outsider can recognize the respective entrance by the objects, used by male or female members of the family, kept on either side of the veranda, indicating the ladder to be used. Men, however, can use the women's ladder, except on such occasions as going for a feud, hunting or fishing, without the danger of violating any social canons. On the occasion of marriage, especially among the Karka Gallongs, usually a folding ladder of bamboo, and not of log of wood, as usual, is made for the entry of the bride. This is allowed only when sufficient number of mithuns are killed by the groom's family to give a feast. So the privilege of making a new ladder immediately raises the father of the groom higher up in the social scale. This ladder is to be used only once by the bride, when she first enters her husband's house. After this she uses the old traditional ladder used by women of the family and the newly-made ladder is rolled up and kept in the house never to be used again. The two wings of the house have two corridors, while the back of it has none. In front of the house, there is a big open platform, where the winnowing of the grain, spinning, weaving and other household work, which, due to intense darkness within the house, cannot be performed inside, are carried on.



Inside layout of a Gallong house

The fireplace is approximately in the middle of the house. A square portion of the bamboo floor is cut and covered with thin sticks and earth. A perimeter of wood is made, which prevents the bamboo floor from catching fire. Three stone slabs, eight to ten inches long, are fixed vertically in the earth to make the oven. These stone slabs are nowadays being rapidly replaced by iron tripod stands, purchased from the market. The number and the position of the fireplace depends on the size of the house. The more commodious the house, the larger number of fireplaces would there be. Often, a fireplace is also found in the outer open platform in front of the main entrance, which is generally meant for guests and visitors, coming from other villages.

Over the fireplace, there are three trays suspended one over the other. The lowest tray, made of two or three sticks tied together with cane, is used for smoking fish and meat. The tray next higher to it is a bigger one with a mat on it, where paddy and other grains are dried. The topmost tray is still bigger, and is used for keeping utensils and other things, which are not frequently used. Due to nearness of constant fire, the bottom of these trays get completely pitched, and they are thus prevented from catching fire. There is no provision for an outlet for smoke and the entire house remains filled with it. It takes considerable time for smoke to clear out through the splits of the bamboo wall. The four sides of the fire place are known by different names and different social values are attached to them. The occupation of one or more of them is governed by social rules, and have appropriate sanctions. As we enter the house, we see the fireplace at a little distance from the entrance. The side of the fireplace facing the entrance is *bago*, to be occupied by the guests. The side opposite to it is *nyosi*, where the slaves of the family and the old men and women sleep; on the left hand side, is *nyode*, and on the right hand side, is *udu*. The former is meant for the eldest son and his wife. The second son also may sleep here with his wife, if he has one, while the latter is to be occupied by the unmarried children.

While entering the house, one generally finds the pig-sty attached to one of the two side walls, with a door connecting the pig-sty with the inner hall. The floor of the pig-sty is a little lower than the floor of the house. The walls of the sty are generally of planks and the roof is thatched like that of the house. Over the pig-sty is the latrine, the floor of which is covered with planks, except a small opening in the middle. In the pig-sty, only one or two pigs are kept who do the scavenging of the latrine, which is closely attached to the house.

Attached to the side walls, sometimes, there are small enclosures for keeping cooking utensils, vegetables and edibles for the pigs. Apart from the three trays hung over the fireplace, one often finds few other shelves here and there in the house, where bigger utensils and baskets and cane and bamboo articles are kept.

Occupation of the house. The house provides accommodation to the master, his wife, his sons and their wives and his unmarried sons and daughters. The occupation by each of them is governed by social rules and the fireplace determines the place to be occupied by each member of the family. Slaves, if any, live under the same roof with their masters and, when the family of the slave increases, a separate house may be built by the master, in collaboration with the villagers, on the same terms and conditions as applied to any freeman of the village. The masters have to give a reciprocal feast to them who contribute their labour in the construction of such houses. The institution of polyandry does not necessitate the building of separate houses for the younger brothers, all of whom live together with the eldest married brother.

Decoration of the house. Decoration of the house does not escape the attention of the people, though not much is with them inherited from their ancestors to decorate and beautify the house. Horns and hides of the animals killed constitute the important items of decoration. Skulls and mandibles of animals are often arranged in a line, suspended by cane, to mark the bravery of the owner and the inmates of the house. As wood-carving is unknown to the people, and in the absence of head-

hunting, they have to remain contented with the full scalp of a mithun with its massive horns tied to the poles, in the outer open platform, supporting the roofs. Bows and arrows and spears with red tufts of hair are kept suspended on the walls or from the roof.

There is no drainage for the outlet of the water used in everyday household work. It is thrown just below the bamboo floor on the ground and remains stagnant there inviting swarms of flies.

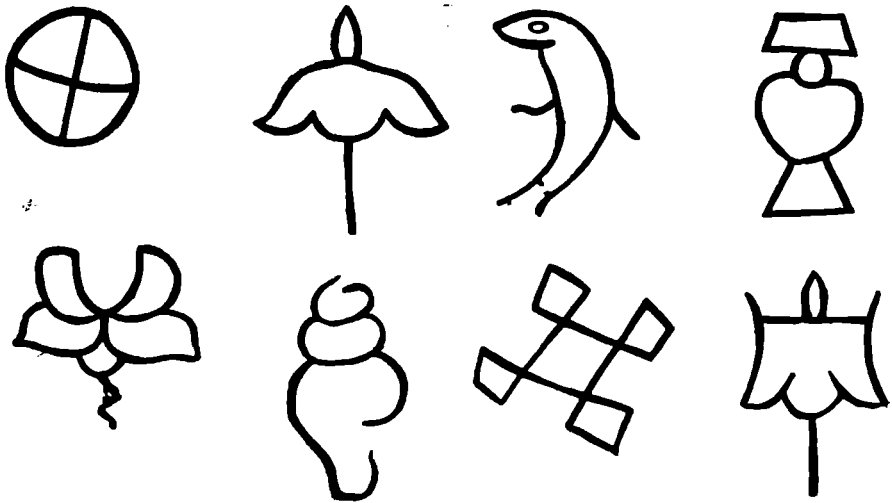
Houses are the properties of the family and are looked after by the head of it. Purchase and sale of houses are not known, as a house auspicious to one may not necessarily be so to others. And, indeed, one need not purchase a house, as one can easily get a new house made.

Household properties. A Gallong house does not possess a great number of household properties. The commonest and the cheapest are the bamboo containers both for grain and water. Baskets, made of cane and bamboo, come higher up in values, and are the properties of everyday use to them. A few utensils for cooking, purchased from the market at Pasighat or at Along, count much, and are more valuable to them. All houses do not possess looms but must have daos.



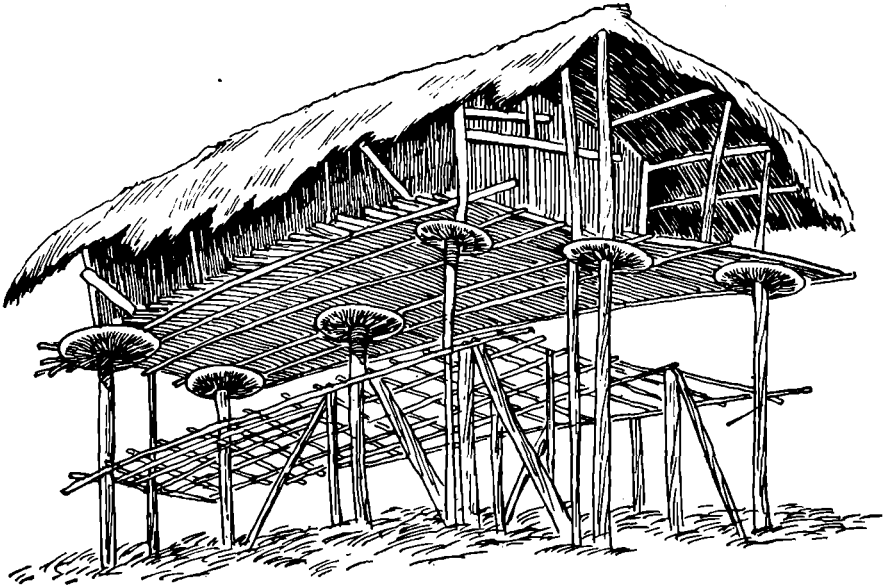
A *dangki*—brass bowl, largely used as a medium of exchange and to be given in bride-wealth

Beads — both inherited and purchased — are the most prized properties and are obtained by bartering against costlier goods, according to their own standard of purchase and sale. Well-to-do families possess big bowls — *dangki* — possibly brought from the Tibetan markets which are the costliest items of their property. Cattle which constitute their live property, are used as medium of exchange and given in bride-wealth. Slaves used to be also live property, who could be bartered against cattle, salt or other commodities.



Different designs engraved on the *dangki* (after Dunbar) .

The village granary. The structure of the village granary is conspicuous, though smaller than the house in the village. The structure of the living house does not permit any grain to be kept there for various reasons. The floor of the house is the most unsuitable place for keeping grain. Absence of any enclosure or store-room in the house further limits the possibility. The houses are in constant danger of being gutted by fire, and, in order to take safety measures, it is necessary to keep the grain separately. Numerous fowls will not spare the grain, if kept in the house. These factors have caused the granary to be constructed at a little distance from the cluster of the houses. Usually, the outskirts of the village are chosen as the suitable sites.



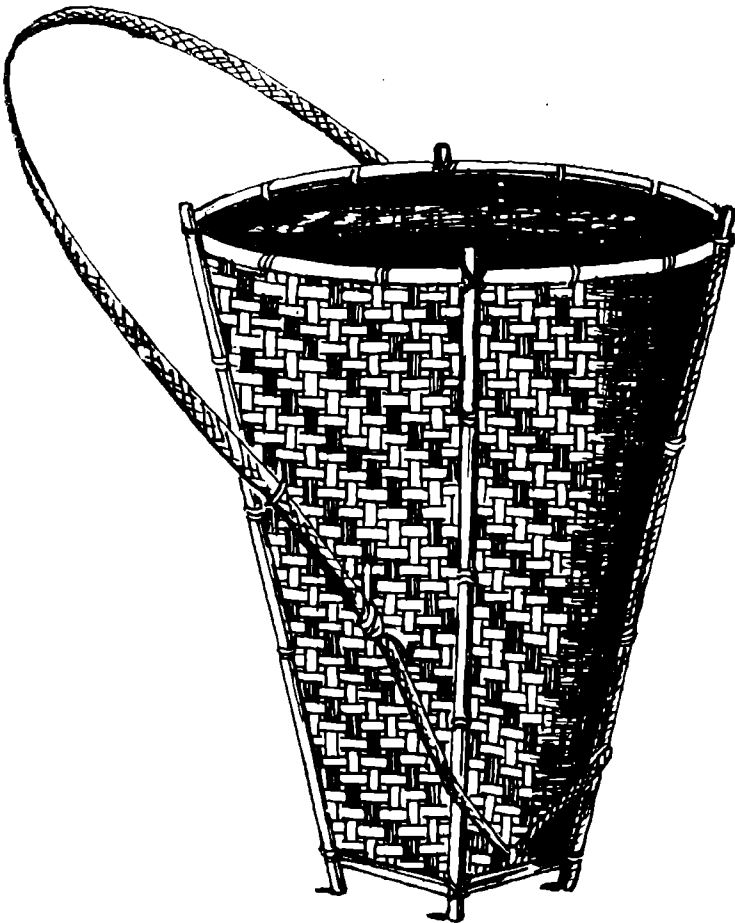
A granary with wooden disc on top of each pile
to prevent entry of rats

The structure of the granary is almost square or rectangular in shape. The same technique of construction, as for the house, is applied for the granary also. It is raised to a height of three to six feet from the ground. In a few villages, wooden discs are fixed on the poles below the floor, supporting the granary. The entry of the rats inside the granary is thus made impossible. The floor of the granary is usually made of planks to make a smooth and even surface. The walls, however, are made of bamboo or of planks, and the roof is exactly similar to that of the house. The door is very narrow and is made of planks. It is strongly bolted with wooden sticks and canes. Nowadays, one or two locks can also be seen here and there. On the ground below the floor, within the enclosure of the struts, are kept the firewood collected from the jhum fields or neighbouring jungle. The wife of the master of the house goes to the granary everyday in the early morning and in the evening, carrying her conical basket, and brings the grains to be used for the day's consumption. It is a taboo for the outsiders, more so for the plains people, to enter or sit on the floor of the granary. If such a person

sits there, the benevolent spirits, residing in the granary and taking care of it, it is believed, will go away with him and the granary will thus remain unprotected. And in the event of the departure of the spirit, there would be no grains left, as all, in the absence of the spirits, would be turned into husks.

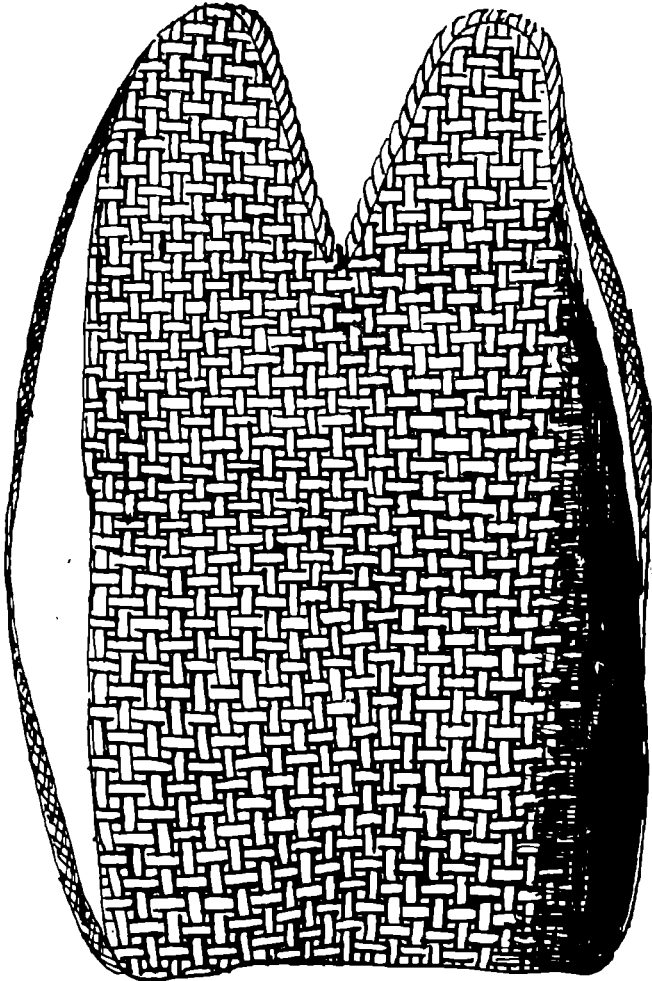
III. MANUFACTURES

Baskets. The basketry of the tribe is mainly associated with their cane and bamboo work, in which they are well-versed. Their basketry requires a great deal of knowledge and experience, besides manual labour. The most important piece of their basketry is the conical basket, which they carry on their



A creel made of cane

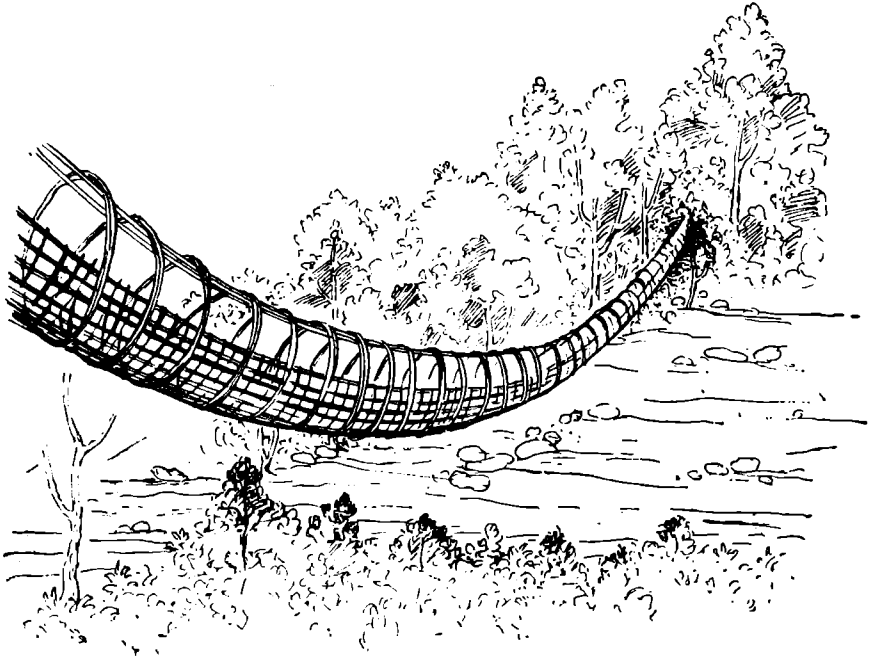
back. It is meant for carrying loads, and is very strong and waterproof. A small cane bag, hung on the back, is of great utility. Sheaths of daos and knives are also made of cane. Almost all these types of their basketry are of twilled variety with different patterns and designs. No account of their



A carrying bag suspended on the back by means of straps

bamboo and cane work would be complete without a mention of their suspension bridges over rivers. Long cane ropes are stretched from one bank of the river to the other and secured to massive trees on both the banks. Over the lower ropes, matting is laid with split bamboos and canes to make a path. The

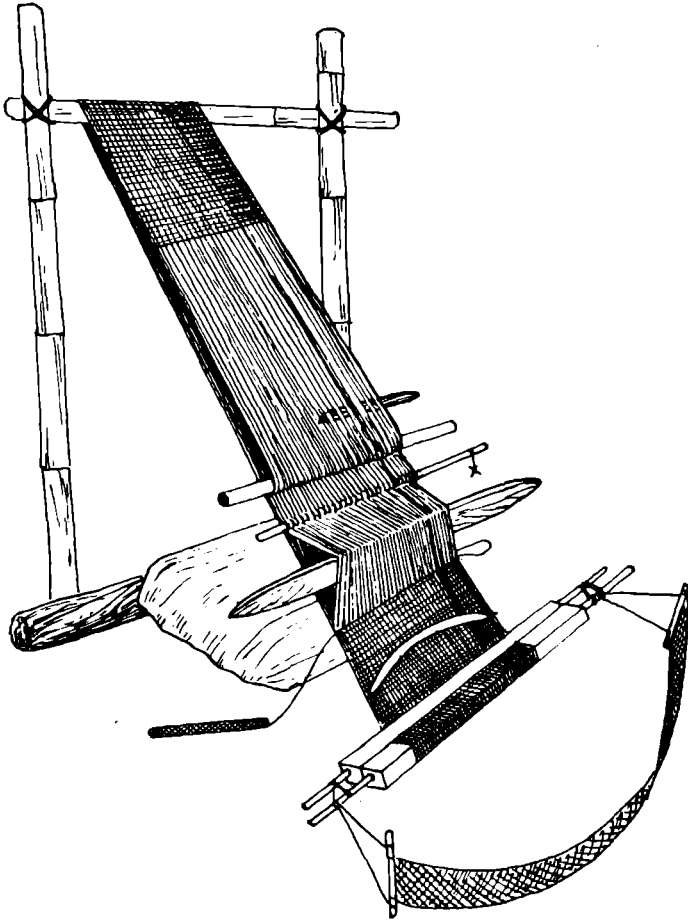
upper ropes are for supporting one's hands. Such bridges, while crossing, give a good swing. The height of the bridges above water level, evidently, is greater at the two ends and least in the middle.



A cane suspension-bridge

Weaving. Cotton is grown to a very limited extent in the agricultural fields of the Gallongs and, as there is no imported cotton, spinning is naturally limited. Easy availability of mill-spun yarn has also discouraged the home-spun yarn. Weaving is in practice, with varying degree, in some of the Gallong villages, though the number of looms varies from village to village. The Gallong loom is small, simple and easy to operate. The shuttle is thrown by hand. As the loom is small, it only produces cloth of nearly two-foot breadth. To make a skirt, two such pieces are sewn together.

Skin industry. The art of preparing articles of everyday use from the hides of domestic and wild animals is known to the people from very early times. Not much of tanning and dressing of the skin is done. The skin with the hair is first carefully scraped with a dao or a small knife and then left to dry in the



A Gallong loom

sun. Sometimes, the remaining unwanted materials are burnt over a slow fire and the hide is thus made ready to be fashioned into various articles of use. The hide, thus prepared, is used for making bags, pouches, sheaths for daos and knives, helmets and shields. I have, however, not seen any apparel made of hide, except a few hats. Hides of mithun, bear, and deer are often used.

Pottery and wood-carving. Pottery can be said to be absent among the Gallongs, except a few hand-made rudimentary bowls and pots, which are not much in use. Wood-carving is a craft unknown to them. Probably absence of good timber and workable instruments stood in the way of the initiation of



A Karka Gallong girl making yarn balls from hanks

the idea. The neighbouring tribes also lack this art. No effort from outside has yet been made to introduce this craft.

Fire-making and the use of fire. The native method of making fire is by percussion. The steel is procured from outside, though, crude types of steel for such purposes are also locally made. The flint is locally available. The tinder is obtained from the bark of a tree. But, except in a few remote villages, this method has become obsolete. It has been replaced to a much greater extent by the present-day safety matches. Cigarette lighters have also come to the area, though I have seen cigarette lighted by the indigenous flint and steel — a concoction of modernism and primitivism.

Fire is always kept smouldering in the fireplace. The hearth

fire serves all the purposes of cooking, lighting and warming the house. Burning splinters are often carried while going through dark paths and alleys. Lamps, however, have now come to the villages and are much favoured. The spirit of fire is believed to exercise control over it. When he is angry houses catch fire and, to appease his wrath, sacrifices are offered.

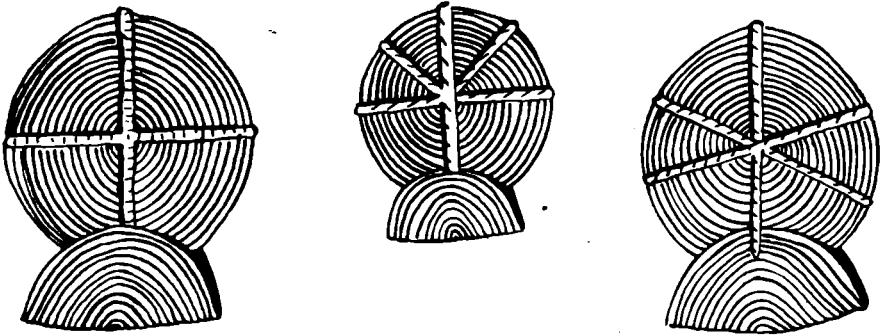
Smithy. The use of copper and bronze are unknown to the Gallongs. Iron is used for making daos, small knives and round discs to be worn around the waist by the girls and, all these are locally made. The craftsman ascends to his position by dint of his labour and experience and not by birth. His furnace is at work when he is free from his agricultural work. The bellows are made of two thick bamboo stems fixed in the ground. As there is not much of demand of the articles forged in his furnace, no large-scale production is cared for. It is more a profession of leisurely pastime than a craft for earning livelihood. The work at the furnace, however, does not bring any change in the social status of the craftsman.

IV. DRESS AND PERSONAL ADORNMENTS

Dress. The Gallongs have been using clothes, scanty though they were, for a long period, and there is no evidence to prove that, in days gone by, they used bark clothes and that only with growing culture-contact have known the use of cotton clothes. But even then, they must have started putting on clothes much later, as, even today, in the interior villages, a few persons with only a penis-cover of leaf can be seen. After seeing the people having clothes on for a pretty long time, it will not be wrong to believe that the sense of modesty must have dominated over the rigours of climate, because, in the absence of adequate clothes, the severest climate does not deter them from their work.

The dress of the Gallongs can be divided into two parts: one that is worn below the waist and the other above it. Boys up to the age of ten or twelve or, generally, until they reach the age of adolescence, go naked. Little girls have a ring of five

to eight round discs of iron, hanging around their waist, to cover the front portion. The next higher step in the direction of putting on clothes is the leaf used as penis-cover after attaining adolescence. A loin-cloth of two to three feet in length and one foot in breadth has replaced this leaf. Even today, while working in the fields or taking a bath the leaf is preferred to the loin-cloth. A loin-cloth of this size is the only dress used by men for the lower portion of the body. Grown-up girls and women put on a skirt — *jeseke* — open in front, a yard or a little more in length and so in width. Putting on of two skirts, one above the other, is also not uncommon. These skirts are, as a rule, locally woven. The

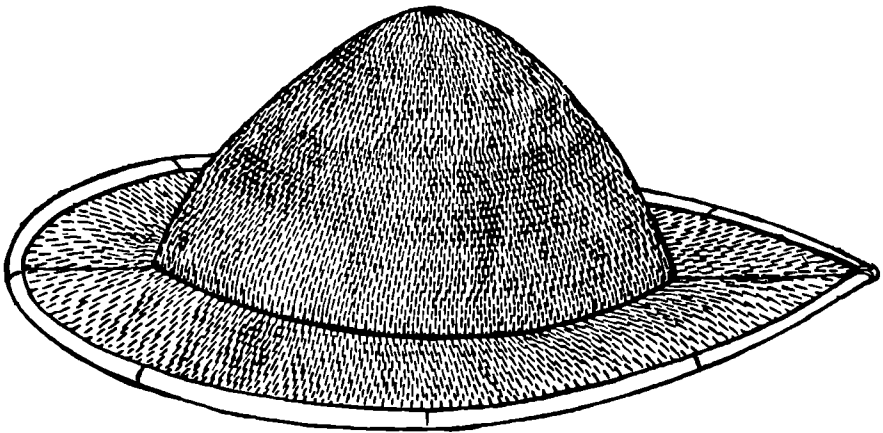


Benyop—brass disc—worn by girls and women round the loin till their first child is born

Gallong skirt is marked by its characteristic colour and design, woven in two pieces, and sewn together. Usually, the cloth is white with black geometrical designs on it. Apart from their original design, they have also borrowed the Minyong pattern in which, there are two or three horizontal lines in each of the two pieces and a broad flower-design comes vertically on the back side. These designs, generally, are in colour, different from that of the skirt. The two separate pieces used to be sewn together with the indigenous bamboo needles. Now, however, these needles have been replaced by the steel ones, purchased from markets. The yarn used for weaving white skirts generally used to come from the cotton grown in

their fields, but coloured yarn is purchased from markets. Black, red and yellow colours have become much popular now.

For the upper portion, men put on a shirt — *lalik* — with or without sleeves but open in front. It is also locally woven, with flower designs on the shoulders, in the middle around the waist and on the lowest border. In absence of any warm cloth, two, three or more such shirts are put on together, one above the other. Unlike the Minyong and the Padam, the Gallong women do not weave any upper garments for themselves. Clothes of various designs and colours have been coming into the village from outside and are being used by men and women alike.



A Gallong hat woven of cane and creepers

Mishmi shirts, similar to the Gallong shirts, but more elaborately designed and woven in cotton and wool mixed, are imported through the Padam-Minyong area. But, as this Mishmi shirt is costlier than the ordinary cotton variety, not all can purchase it. Long woollen coats brought from Tibet through the Boris are also to be seen. But as this coat is very costly — sometimes, equivalent to the price of a mithun of average size — only the privileged few can afford it.

No account of the dress of the Gallongs would be complete without making a mention of their head-dress. It is only the men's prerogative to have a head-dress. It is a helmet made of cane and another cane-like creeper. Strips of cane are fastened

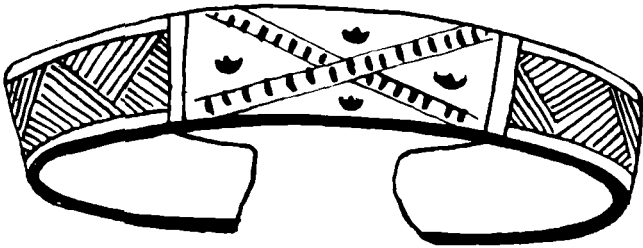
together in successive turns, and given a conical shape. Fine fibres of the same material are woven across these strips. The rim of the hat, nearly three-inch wide, is woven elliptically round the dome, with the same fibres. Thus prepared, the hat gives protection to the head from rain and sun, and is waterproof. The war helmet has additional features in the shape of tusks of wild boar and tufts of hair, dyed red, fastened in front and top of the helmet. Beaks of hornbills are fixed at the top of the cone, which thus beautified, offers a grand majestic look. Besides cane, the hides of bear and mithun are also used for making helmets sometimes with brims, sometimes without it. These latter types of helmets are very strong and are used in colder areas in the north.

Personal decoration. Among most of the tribes of the world, efforts are always made to beautify one's appearance by various ways and means, with which the tribal people are conversant. Tattooing, scarification, mutilation, knocking out and filing of teeth, and painting the body with native dyes have always been considered as beauty-aids. But, one would be disappointed to notice that all these devices of beautification are absent among the Gallongs. The absence of tattooing is particularly remarkable, because their next door neighbours, the Minyongs, who are profusely tattooed, could not disseminate this idea to them. Little efforts — both by men and women — are made to beautify and adorn themselves. The standard of cleanliness is a relative term, and it varies from tribe to tribe and culture to culture. Though no endeavour is made to clean the dirt on the body or the filth in the house and the village, they do not consider themselves dirty. This is rather a question of value-judgement, which, if applied to them according to our standard of cleanliness, conveys no significance. They consider it a natural phenomenon, and are happy with the condition of health and sanitation they are living in. Use of soap was unknown till recently, but gradually it is coming into use. Regular bathing is not considered necessary. During summer, of course, they do take baths often. Indigenous perfumes and oils are not known to them.

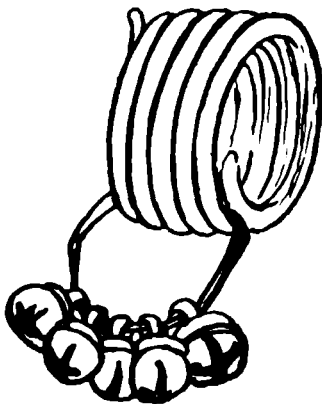
Gallong males cut their hair above the forehead in a line going above the temples behind the ears at a distance of an inch from them and converging at the back of the head. Beard and moustache are rare and generally shaven clean. Bald persons, however, are rare. Women keep long hair, parting it in the middle, and sometimes plait the tresses and sometimes tie the hair in a chignon. Karka women, however, cut the hair in front from the ear to the ear along the upper edge of the forehead and let the rest droop down behind at the back. They always keep this uncut portion of the hair loose.

No colouring or dyeing of the skin is known, except that the bark of a tree is chewed like catechu, which gives a red coloration to the lips and the tongue.

Ornaments. Not many ornaments are to be seen on the person of a Gallong of either sex. The only ornament above the neck is the ear-plug or the earring used by women. Plugs are generally of leaf, wood or bamboo, while the rings, which

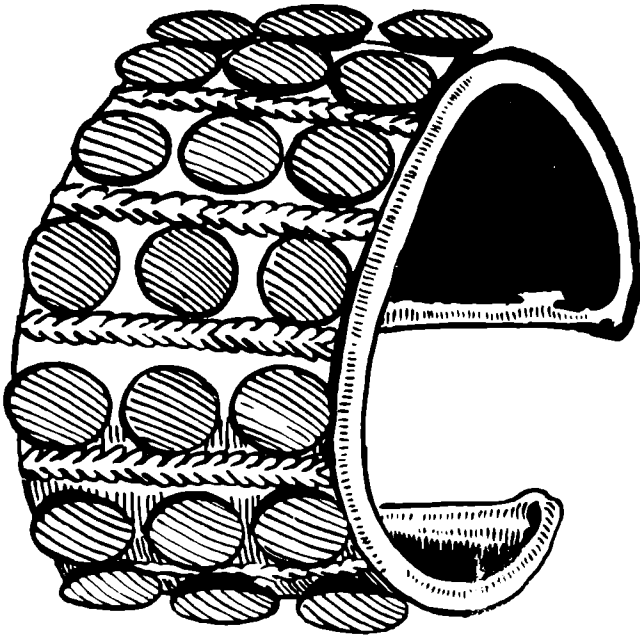


A brass bangle



An earring with bells

are very heavy — sometimes as heavy as half a pound in each ear — are made of iron. The rings are coiled in several turns, and are specially used by the Karka Gallong women. Due to heavy weights, very often the ear-lobes get slashed. Even then, women do not stop putting them on. In such cases, the rings are not worn in the lobes but are suspended with the help of a string below the ear-lobes. Bead necklaces are put on by men and women alike. Every bead has its own value, according to its colour and lustre and, very often, it is considered as the family heirloom. Sometimes, the bead necklaces are so numerous and heavy that, even if there is no cloth over the breasts, these



A metal bracelet

bead necklaces easily cover them. Piercing of the alae or the septum of the nose for putting on ornaments is not known to them. Brass wristlets are common and three to eight wristlets with increasing circumference from wrist to elbow, are worn by the women. Finger rings were not worn, but now finger rings made of brass and of plastic, purchased from markets are being worn. Around the waist, men wear several cane strips, which with constant use attain a shine and smoothness. Iron or brass

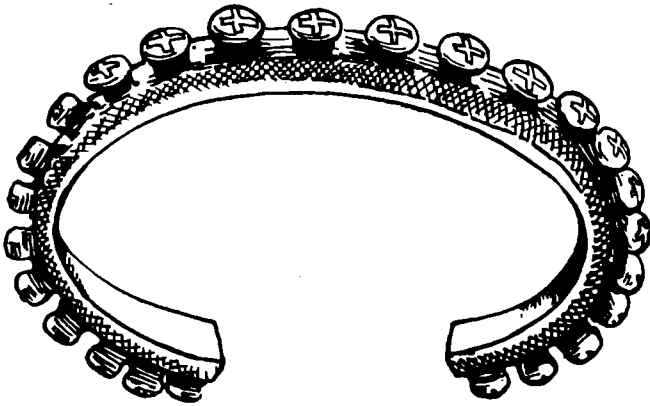


At the water-point



Making bead-chains

discs, varying in number and fastened together with a cane string or thread, are worn by women around their waist. The largest disc is in the middle, hanging in front and the succeeding ones gradually diminish in size and are on both sides of the largest one towards the thighs. Women use it till their first child is born, after which it is taken out, and handed over to the daughters of the family. Women generally use cane anklets. A thin strip of cane work is woven on the legs between the ankle and the knee. This becomes inconvenient in the beginning, but gradually women become accustomed to it and do not show reluctance in putting it on. Necklaces made of metal coins are



A brass bangle

much favoured by the Gallong women. Such necklaces generally contain one-rupee, eight-anna, and four-anna coins. Hooks are made on the coins and these are suspended with thread. These necklaces are purchased from the plains silversmiths. A few other silver ornaments like chain in the neck, are also worn by the Gallong women. Men put on a limited number of ornaments. Like women, they also put on bead necklaces, but only on occasions. Cane girdles around the waist are probably universally worn by the Gallongs, which also serve the purpose of suspending the loin-cloth. Waist-band of leather, studded with stones, is another costly item of their ornaments, which it is said, formerly used to be imported from Tibet, but now the Boris have gained experience in making it, and they barter or sell it to

other neighbouring people. The stones are bigger in front and smaller towards the two ends. One such band generally contains from 100 to 150 stones.

V. LIVESTOCK

Domesticated animals. The Gallongs have very few domesticated animals. The mithun is the most important animal for them, in the sense that most of the economic and socio-religious activities revolve round it. But it can hardly be called a fully-domesticated animal. It is allowed to graze in the jungle, and is rarely kept tied up in the house. When religious activities demand the killing or marriages demand the giving away of mithun in bride-wealth, a search for it is made and it is brought back to the village. Efforts are now being made to keep the mithuns in the cattle-sheds, constructed in the recent past in a few villages. Pigs are domesticated by all families — both rich and poor. Fowls are raised without number. This trio of mithun, pig and fowl is universally found everywhere. Goats are rare and not much favoured. Cows, in limited number, have been domesticated but not long ago. Transport animals are evidently absent throughout the area. And with dog, we almost exhaust the list. These animals fulfil the condition of being domestic in the sense, that they are not hostile to their master, and they breed in captivity, which some of the tame animals do not.

The mithuns are killed for sacrificial purposes and for giving feasts. The pigs and fowls are utilized to the maximum. The cows have been kept but never milked, nor the bullocks harnessed for ploughing, as plough-cultivation was unknown to them. The flesh of cow is not preferred over that of mithun or pig and the only use made of them is to give away in bride-wealth. Like Polynesians, the Gallongs eat dogs. But the Gallongs do not eat them because of the scarcity of food, as the Polynesians do, but, like the Iroquois and the Aztecs, prefer them as delicacies. Moreover, the dogs are not of such use, except in hunting, as they are to the Arctic settlers, where they carry sledges over ice, nor do they protect the crop from the wild

animals as the dogs of the Lapps do. The above facts go a long way to prove that the domestication of animals preceded their milking and other practical uses. With the introduction of plough-cultivation in some selected areas, in the recent past, bullocks are being harnessed in ploughing and their number is now increasing. They have, however, still the aversion towards milk, but they have now started milking cows only in order to sell the milk to the plains men living among them. As the milking of cows is gaining ground, who knows, within a reasonable time, they may not start milking the mithun as an extension of the idea. Centuries ago, the Gallong forefathers could not evidently foresee that, someday, the plough-cultivation would be brought in or the milking would be introduced and hence they should domesticate the animals. It is only after a prolonged domestication of the animals that the people have become conversant with their practical utility.

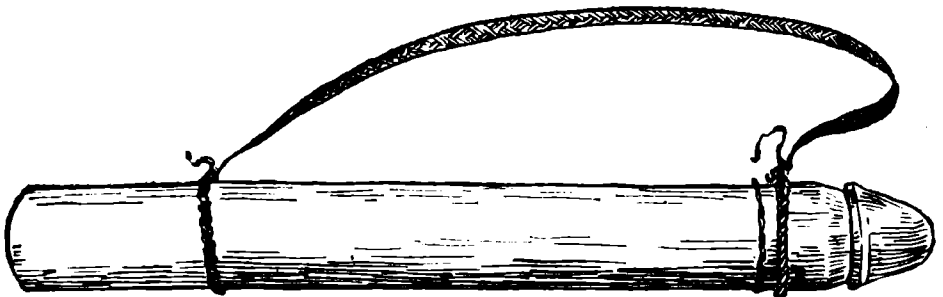
Killing of animals. The way the Gallongs kill their animals for sacrificial offerings or for a feast, is noteworthy. They, as a rule, do not kill the animal by any weapon. Killing by weapons unnecessarily wastes a lot of blood, which otherwise would make a good soup for them. The mithuns are generally killed by strangulation. A long bamboo pole is fixed and the neck of the mithun is tied with bamboo ropes to this pole. The other ends of the ropes are pulled by several persons from the other side. Some persons then start beating the mithun with huge sticks on the hind limbs until, due to double torture and suffocation, it collapses. After it is dead, the ropes are untied and first the stomach is slit open with a dao and the blood is collected in bamboo containers. Other limbs are then cut one by one after taking out the hide. Ceremonial killing of the mithuns by axe, specially on the occasion of marriage, is however, also in practice.

The pigs are strangled between two vertically fixed sticks. The neck of the pig is thrust between the sticks and the latter are pressed inwards with the hands and thus the pig, due to suffocation, dies. The sacrificial pigs are, at times, killed in a different way. The feet of the pig are tied in twos and it is

allowed to lie down on its back with two persons holding it tightly at the two ends. A few locks of hair are removed from its stomach by a small knife and thrown away in the name of the spirits. A sharpened bamboo stick is then plunged into its stomach and taken out only when the pig is dead. No blood is spilt thus, and then the stomach is slit open and the blood collected in the usual way.

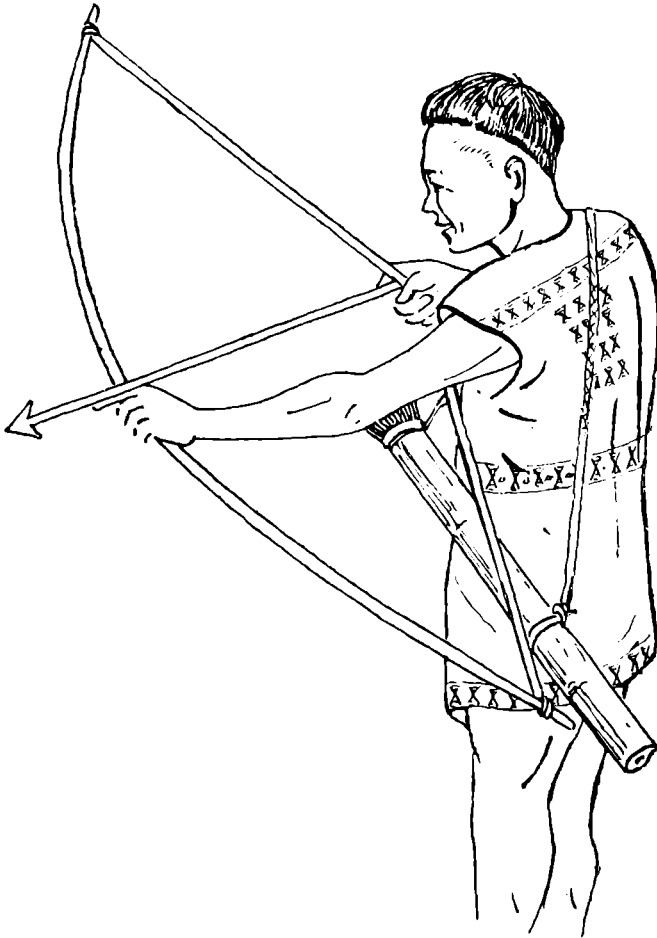
VI. HUNTING

Hunting is one of the most important aspects of their quest for food. Though organized hunting is much less in practice, yet a party of a few hunters can be seen going in search of games in the neighbouring jungle. Hunting is generally resorted to when they are free from their engagements in the cultivation of their fields or when hardpressed due to scarcity of food. The hunters track the hiding places of animals and lie in ambush for them. Much endurance is demanded of the hunters, as they have to follow the games for miles together through thick and formidable forest and difficult climbs. When the hunters go in a group, they all go together, shouting from one end of the forest to the other, so as to bring the animal at a place, where it can be conveniently shot. Dogs, on such occasions, prove to be of great help in chasing the game. Traps are generally used. Pits are dug and covered with branches of trees and earth and the animal is driven towards them. Baits are not used in such pits. Live baits are very rare, and decoys are not in use. Birds are snared with noose traps.



A bamboo quiver

The most important indigenous weapons of hunting are the bows and arrows. Arrows, with or without iron heads, are often used and are carried in bamboo quivers, decorated with cane matting. Poisoned arrows are also much in use. The poison is collected from some jungle plant. The plant is treated with water and crushed on stone and then applied on the arrow



A Gallong hunter with bow, arrow and quiver

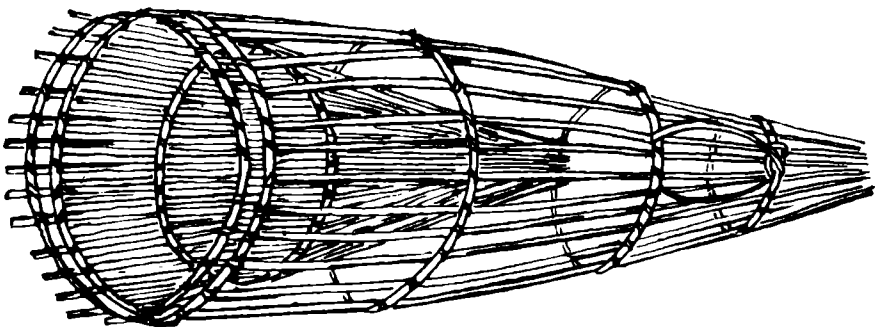
heads. Dunbar reports that these poisons are aconite and croton. A mixture of aconite and croton is deadly and causes instantaneous death and is used in fatal fights and killing big games, while pure aconite acts slowly and, if the wound is washed immediately after the injury, there would be no danger. After the game is killed, the flesh from the wounded portion

only is cut out and thrown away. The Gallongs have a varied and wide knowledge of the different kinds and the areas of availability of such poisons. Spears are the weapons for short-range killing. These spears are made of very long cane shafts with iron heads and decorated with red tufts of hair. Swords are not much used and daos come as auxiliary weapons. Guns have now become much common and their superiority over bows and arrows has been established and, gradually, they are replacing the latter.

Hunting among the Gallongs is more an individual effort than a communal affair. The whole village rarely organizes a big hunting party as the Minyongs often do, and it is left to individuals or a group of persons to go for hunting. Hunting territories are often demarcated villagewise and, if a game is shot in one's territory and after running away dies in another's, a share has to be given to the owner of the land where the animal dies. Hunters, while going for hunting, must not come down from the house by the ladder meant for women, as then there would be no game.

VII. FISHING

Fishing is yet another major pursuit in the quest for food. Large scale fishing is carried on by indigenous nets, made of fibres from *tamak* trees. Stone or iron weights are attached to the ends to facilitate easy sinking. Fishing rods with the thread of the same fibre are common. Various appliances, made



A fish trap

of bamboo, with or without valves, are common for fishing in streams and rivulets. Fishing traps are made with one-way entry and placed against the current of water. Small streams or rivulets are dammed with wood, leaves and earth, leaving a small outlet for water and the fishing baskets are placed there. This does not necessitate the presence of the fisherman always on the spot. Bigger dams of bamboo, banana leaves and branches of tree are also made to check the flow of water, in order that the fishes may accumulate near the dam. Poisoning of water with the leaves of *bipik* tree is also known. Fishes get benumbed and stupefied by this and float on the surface of water, and are caught. When the stream or the river is in flood, it becomes very easy to catch fishes by hand. Fishermen go against the current, searching in water with bare hands and as the fishes are caught, they go on putting them on their head below the helmet. Catching fish by arrow and dao is becoming obsolete. Before going for fishing on an organized scale, omens are to be consulted in the village. If the omens are not favourable, the expedition is postponed till such time, when favourable omens are forthcoming.

VIII. AGRICULTURE

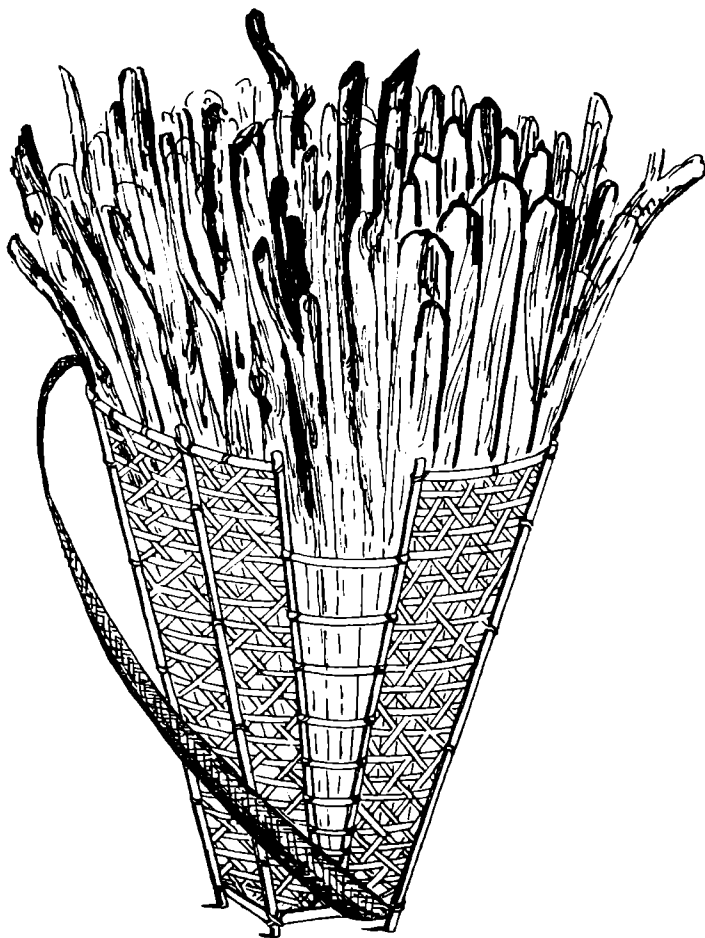
The production of food by various methods known to the people is an important — rather the most important — part of their occupation. The production of food is achieved in a number of ways: agriculture, gathering of roots and tubers, hunting and fishing. But, of all these, agriculture is the main occupation for getting food.

The people are still in the stage of jhum cultivation with a dibble. The whole area is a net work of hills, on the slopes of which, the Gallongs have their agricultural fields. Some of the fields are even at a height of 4,000 to 5,000 feet. The nature of the country is such that jhum cultivation has to be resorted to. The village chief generally initiates the cultivation, and the whole village assembles on the site selected for jhum. But the village chief, in initiating agricultural acti-

vities, is not motivated by any personal interest. He does not enjoy any economic prerogative nor has he any economic obligation to fulfil to his co-villagers.

After the selection of sites for cultivation, the trees in the fields are felled, generally in the month of February and the whole area is cleared of grasses and creepers. These cut trees are left in the field for nearly a month to dry and by March, they are fired. Efforts are made to see that the whole field is burnt together. The country has a heavy and continuous rainfall and, though March is a dry month, occasional showers are not unexpected. The result is that the felled trees never get the chance to dry up completely and hence the jhum fire is not so blazing as it is in other tribal areas. Other undesirable plants thus do not get completely burnt, which leads to their rapid growth, and thus weeding becomes an arduous job. This incomplete burning of the jhum area is also responsible for the small holding of the fields.

After the fire is out, the products of this jhum fire are utilized in a number of ways. The ashes are left strewn all over the field, which serve as manure. The unburnt or charred wood is utilized in three different ways: the big and massive logs are used for their indigenous methods of contour-logging, which, to some extent, checks the soil erosion; the thicker sticks are used for fencing the field; and finally, the smaller ones are used as fuel, which are carried everyday by women in their conical baskets, hung on the back, while returning from the field. At the time of felling the trees, cleaning the jungle, setting fire and fencing the fields, efforts are made to see that all the villagers do their respective work together, as these occupations are considered the responsibility of the whole village. Care, however, is taken to ensure that no *hilok* trees are cut, as these trees are believed to be the abodes of spirits. If, however, their cutting is essential, as it often becomes so, due to their abundance in the jungle, offerings of fowls and eggs are made to the spirits, so that they may not get annoyed and cause damage to the crops. Pute Sidi, another spirit, believed to reside on the trees in the jungle, is also propitiated with sacrifices.



Conical basket for carrying fire-wood

A major portion of their time is devoted to agricultural activities, which demand a great deal of labour and hard work. On their co-operative activities — very limited though — one might argue that, when one has to do that much of labour in everybody else's fields as a reciprocity towards the work done in one's fields by others, one can concentrate all the efforts for one's own. But this sense of extreme individualism has not developed up to this stage — though the beginning has been made — in their society. It is true that the members of a family can do the work for themselves, but then it would appear monotonous and hazardous. Co-operation has its inherent social and psychological advantages. During the work, when beer is passed on from one to the other, all sitting together, chatting and gossip-

ing, they forget the drudgery of work. They feel that one is for all and all for one. The owner of the land — each in turn — feels proud of his people and the organization of his tribe, which he can always bank upon, and this feeling gives an impetus to work.

Big plots, cleared in this way, contain a number of smaller plots, individually owned by different families. The individual families take care of their own plots. From now on, begins the individual interest in the fields as all the operations starting from sowing to harvesting are done by the individual families. This may again vary from village to village. In some of the villages, it was seen that the individual families themselves did all the felling, clearing and burning. Only the fencing was jointly made, as it catered for the common interest of all the plot-holders. But an individual has every right, guaranteed by social sanctions, to requisition the help of his co-villagers for sowing or harvesting his plot, in case he falls short of the required hands and, in return, he has to entertain those, who participate in such activities, in a feast.

Sowing is no less an arduous job than any other agricultural work. Agricultural implements for sowing lack and the tribe has not evolved any above the stage of dibble. Though it is very easy to operate a dibble, yet it is very difficult to sow a big plot of land with its help. Holes are made in the ground with the dibble, held in one hand, and seeds are thrown into the holes by the other. To ensure doubly and to cover all those



A dibble

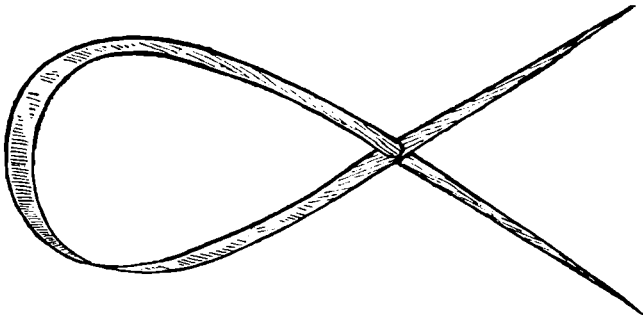
seeds which could not go into the holes, another person, following the sower, covers up all the holes smoothly with a broom-like stick. Sowing is generally over by the end of April. All agricultural activities are linked with religious beliefs and one has its bearing on the other. Before sowing Surin Ampir is offered sacrifice. What sacrifice — a mithun, a pig, or a fowl

— should be offered, is determined by divination. The *nyibo* — the shaman or the priest — is called for the rituals. The blood of the sacrificial animal is kept in a bamboo stem, its outer portion having been besmeared with it, and is placed in the fields for the spirits, and the flesh of the animal offered in sacrifice is consumed. The concept of blood having some inherent potency of fertility is unknown to them, and it is neither sprinkled in the field nor are seeds besmeared with it to ensure greater production. The *nyibo*, for his services, is remunerated either in terms of cash or kind. After the sowing is completed, something must be done, say the Gallongs, to see that all these efforts are not put to naught by the spirits, who are believed to be always lurking in the neighbourhood. Two big images are made of bamboo shavings in the shape of human beings, with distorted limbs and unproportionate eyes and heads, to represent spirits. The images are made to support egg shells in their hands. Such make-believe spirits, put there as guards in the field, it is believed, would take every care of the crops. Hingi and Digo Pinu, two other benevolent spirits, supposed to bring better yield to the crops, are also offered their due shares. Such types of images were found in great number of fields of the Karkas and the Kargas.

Together with paddy and maize, millet is also sown broadcast in the same field. Maize is sown in separate holes and millet is strewn all over the field. Maize, however, is sown in three different ways : firstly, it is sown separately in the months of January and February; it is also sown in the same field with paddy or a little after the paddy has been sown; and finally, it is sown in an altogether separate field, depending upon the condition and the quality of the soil, in the months of June and July. Chilli and *giyi* (*Brassica Sp.*) seeds are also sown at that time. The latter, however, is not utilized for extracting oil, but only the leaves are taken as vegetable. All these crops are sown together, and thrive almost at the same time. This mixed cultivation meets their three major needs : food from paddy and maize; drink from millet; and vegetables from brinjals, mustard and chilli.

The cultivation of sugar cane, the people believe, is an independent evolution in their country; at least it is not supposed to have been borrowed from the plains. But it is not very easy to substantiate this claim at the present moment. The Minyongs and the other allied sub-tribes also cultivate it, and it is difficult to say where it was independently evolved and where taken up as a borrowing. The claim of each of the tribes seems to be equally logical and convincing. It has been grown here only for chewing purposes, as making of mollases or sugar is unknown to this tribe. Though it does not fulfil any economic need, it cannot be said that its cultivation is not motivated by any utilitarian purpose. In Samoa, we are told, it is used for thatching roofs. So here, as an extension of the idea, it can be utilized — and actually it is being utilized — for preparing mollases and later on for sugar. It is the Coimbatore variety — an agricultural expert informed me — which has been introduced in the area within the last few years, and that variety only is used for preparing mollases. The indigenous variety still remains for chewing purposes only.

After the sowing is over, the people retire for a short respite, looking forward to see the seeds thriving. The time taken by the seeds to germinate is nearly one week. The germination is, however, a little accelerated, if there happens to be a shower of rain after the sowing. Together with paddy and maize, various undesirable plants also grow and obstruct the natural growth of the stalks, and very soon weeding becomes necessary. The tribe is poorly equipped with weeding implements. They have only one weeding implement — the *yeek*. A strip of bamboo, twelve to sixteen inches in length, is taken and sharpened in the middle making blades. It is folded in such a way, that one end crosses over the other and a loop is made at the head. The two ends are to be gripped in hand. A number of such *yeeks* — as one becomes blunt and unworkable within an hour of work — are necessary to weed a small patch of land. In absence of any other implement, weeding has got to be done by it, though it does not prove to be of much value and is not at all labour saving. It just scratches the ground, hardly to the extent of half



A bamboo weeder

an inch or even a little less, varying according to the soil. As a result, the grass and other unwanted plants are not completely rooted out and after a little time, weeding again becomes necessary for two to three times before the stalks become big enough. With such weeding, proper mulching and aeration is also not possible, and this leads to the poor yield of the crops. Weeding is generally done by women.

Birds and jungle fowls are a great menace to the crops right from the time of sowing till the harvest is complete. After the seeds are sown in the dibble-holes and covered with earth and, when the ears of paddy sown in the field start shooting out special care is taken to see that the birds do not damage the crops, and a constant watch is kept in the fields. A number of bamboo poles are fixed throughout the field and thin bamboo strips are fastened to them in the splits, which cover the whole field. These strips are controlled by one main string, which is suspended at the 'watch-tower', built in the field. Anybody sitting there tightens the string and gives a jerk and this, in turn, gives a swing to all the bamboo strips spread over the field, causing a rattling sound, which scares away the birds. Make-believe figures and images, often used as scarecrow in the plains, are, however, not known to them. But this device of theirs, though most effective, always requires the presence of somebody in the field.

The corn is ripe by September-October, and then starts the harvesting. The time of harvesting may vary according to the time of felling the trees, burning them and sowing seeds. These are dependent on the rains and the time varies from area to area.

Harvesting implements are conspicuous by their absence. The long conical basket is suspended on the right thigh and, ears of paddy are picked out by hand and put in it. The ceremonial harvesting, the people of Basar informed me, is done by a virgin girl. She brings the first basket of grain, which is generally used for preparing beer, and then the general harvesting begins. After the harvest is over, the grains are brought to the village and stored in the granary.

Each family makes its own house in the agriculture field. This house is similar to the house in the village, but fireplaces, within and outside it, are provided. During the heavy working season, the family members are busily engaged in cultivation and, sometimes, the field happens to be at a distance of three to four miles from the village, so after sunset, when the work is over, they do not want to come back to the village and spend the night there.

The period of jhum cycle depends upon two factors : the fertility of the land and the density of population in that jhum area. If the land is fertile enough, it can be cultivated for two, or sometimes, three consecutive years, with rotation of crops, and then left fallow and again taken up after a period of eight to ten years. If the density of population is higher in relation to the available land, the cycle has to be rotated after every four to six years, as the scarcity of land forces the people to take up even those lands, which are not fully covered with trees and plants and where the fertility has not been fully restored. Fortunately, as the density of population in the area is thin and the lands, in general, are a bit better than those of their neighbours, the cycle is rotated after every eight to ten years, on an average.

The abandoned jhum fields, with the annual growth of trees and plants in them, are the means of recording time. 'In the year of clearing the jhum' is a common expression for the purpose. Other expressions used are, 'in the year of earthquake' or any other important event which might have occurred in the past in that particular village. Dunbar gives an instance of 'in the gamship of so-and-so.'

No sharp line of demarcation can be drawn in the sphere of division of labour. The felling of trees, burning them and clearing the area, which are, of course, difficult tasks, are shouldered by men and sowing, weeding and harvesting go to women. But, no strict social law is prescribed for the division of labour between the sexes, though, a tradition has been maintained which they believe ought to be followed in the usual way unless some extraordinary circumstances compel the sexes to change their occupation. There are hardly any specialists in any particular occupation or craft. When the specialists are recognized in a society, a number of hands are required to do different kinds of jobs, as the specialists can do only those in which they are expert. But the people here cannot afford to provide many specialists for their agricultural and other activities and one has to do all the necessary jobs. With agriculture becoming more and more stabilized with growing technical skill and permanent cultivation, much less attention is paid now — and still less may be paid in the future — towards hunting and fishing, which in future may become more a matter of pastime and recreation than that of quest for food. Then we can imagine men, who would be disengaged from their occupation of procuring food in the shape of meat and fish, taking other work, which are today done by women. And the beginning has already been made in this direction. Similar other changes may be brought about with changing situations, and there might be interchange of work between the two sexes. Dibbling, which is primarily a woman's job today, will be replaced by ploughing, to be done by men tomorrow.

Except the agricultural fields, there are no lands for pasture for the cattle. As the cattle are not milked, they are let loose and allowed to graze in the jungle. Only on specific occasions of rituals and sacrifices, they are searched and brought back to the village. Each cattle has its own mark of identity, given by the owner.

In the recent past, say, within a period of eight to ten years, efforts have been made to dissuade the people from shifting cultivation and induce them to take up permanent cultivation,

wherever possible. In the beginning, the people showed a tenacious attachment to their indigenous methods of cultivation but, with the gradual propagation of the idea through the villages, some amount of success has been achieved. But the nature of the country does not provide scope for bringing about permanent cultivation on a large scale, so that it can completely replace shifting cultivation. In the areas, where there is no scope for plough cultivation, terracing of the jhum fields with provision for irrigation by tapping the hill streams has been done. People, as a whole, still show a tendency to cling to their own traditional methods, having socio-religious sanctions.

Distribution. As everybody owns land and is engaged in his own cultivation, the labour problem does not arise. The society is also not stratified in different social classes, so that the poor and the needy can be employed as labourers. Recently a few labourers from the Bori area are seen coming down to work in the wet rice fields of the Gallongs on wage basis. Should a man, compelled by his vast land and inadequate working hands, wish his villagers to co-operate in his cultivation, he will have to call his relations, clansmen or co-villagers to work for him, and he, in return, will have to entertain them with food and drink so long as they are engaged in his fields. Apart from this material aspect of the whole affair, it has its social aspects too. When a man gives out some goods or renders services to somebody else, he always bears in mind that he is giving the goods or rendering the services in order to get them back, at such time, when he may be in need. Though no time and exact value are stipulated for the return of goods given or services rendered, yet the recipient is bound by social traditions to repay the obligations within a reasonable time. Giving of goods and rendering services are not motivated by material but social needs. The donor, by this, is not supposed to establish his supremacy over the recipient. He knows, while doing this, that he is tied with the same bond of lineage, clan or village ties, which he can only sever at the cost of social disgrace, which will not be a palatable pill for him. This principle of reciprocity among the villagers works a long way in establishing and

strengthening social relations. The goods given and the services rendered create a good will not only in the heart of the recipient but the whole village. And this cycle of reciprocal give and take maintains an equilibrium in the economic status of the individuals.

The village headman does not enjoy any economic privilege at the hands of the villagers. The village priest, however, is of much help to the villagers at the time of all agricultural operations. It is he who makes efforts to establish harmonious relationships between the villagers and the spirits. And he must be rewarded for his services. His remuneration depends upon the nature of sacrifice one is going to perform. The payment varies from two rupees to 20 rupees. He may also be paid in kind. The sacrificial meat and beer are the necessary items in the payment. Now, with the influx of our money such payments are generally made in terms of cash.

Tools and implements. The Gallongs are still in the early stage of agricultural development. The dibble is still the main tool of their cultivation. The whole sowing is done by it. Then, for weeding, they have only a small weeder — *yeek* — which takes a considerable time to weed the whole field. As it is not much sharp, it hardly scratches the ground, and thus, no proper aeration of the crops is effected. The grass and the plants in the fields are not completely weeded out and the result is, that they have to weed the whole field more than once. Lushai spade, which has been introduced in its place, is now finding favour. Stone tools and implements are practically unknown to them. Dao, which is also a weapon, and small knives are of a greater utility in their agricultural activities and also in cane and bamboo work.

IX. LAND TENURE

The land tenure of the Gallongs can be discussed under three heads : agricultural fields, lands for houses in the village, and forests or barren lands.

The hills, barring greater tracts of jungle and lands not

reclaimed, are used for agriculture. Viewing from the broader perspective, all the agricultural lands belong to the village as a whole and the whole village is responsible for its protection and care. Inter-village boundaries of the lands are demarcated by the crest and trough of the hills, by streams and rivers and other natural features. No artificial boundary, however, is erected, as everybody including small children knows the area of his territory, and the rights of a village over a particular land actually owned by it are rarely controverted. Several such hills belong to a village which are taken up, one by one, for cultivation in their turn. One such hill is divided into a number of smaller plots which are individually owned by the families. As, in the past, one single clan selected a site and founded a colony there, the villages are generally known after the clans inhabiting them and land within the boundary of that village belongs to all the members of that clan. If any person, belonging to another clan, comes and settles in the village, lands may be given to him for cultivation, and that is done in two ways. He has to reclaim those lands, which have never been cultivated and do not bear the stamp of any family; or a family, which owns land in excess and cannot cultivate all the land at its disposal, may lend a part of it to the immigrant family. But, as land is inalienable, it never belongs to the person to whom it is allotted for cultivation. He is entitled to use it so long as he is in the village. He, at his own accord, cannot transfer the holdings to any other person, even to his descendants without the permission of the owner. Now, as already told, each plot on the hills belongs to an individual family. One family owns several such smaller plots on other hills also. These plots are the private concerns of the owners, and the village has no right in its use or disposal. One can do whatever one likes with one's own plots. One may or may not cultivate a particular plot on a particular hill, in which other families are cultivating, but to maintain the village harmony, often one hill is selected and all cultivate their plots there. Should a person wish to cultivate separately in another hill, he will not get the co-operation of other villagers in burning the felled

trees or in fencing, which are done co-operatively. This rarely happens, because, in the past, all used to cultivate together, so the hills were left fallow and they were covered with jungle again, in due course at the same time. Where the interest of the whole village is concerned, an individual has to conform to it. He is not to invite any stranger to settle in the village or give him land for cultivation, unless the entire village gives its assent to this. The collective concern of the village over the lands remains only to the point where arises the possibility of the interest of the whole village being jeopardized. Any individual cannot fell his trees and burn them until all are ready, as then the interests of only one will be served, while others will lag behind. Fencing of the whole field to save the crops from the ravages of cattle and wild animals is a matter of common interest and all join hands in making a common fencing around the whole area cleared for cultivation. To make individual fencing would be nothing but waste of time and the resources of the village. From sowing to harvesting, nobody bothers about others' plots, as one remains preoccupied with one's own.

Plenty of lands are still lying fallow and unreclaimed in the area. These lands were never brought under cultivation and, as such, the village, as a whole, exerts the right of ownership over them. But any enthusiastic individual, who desires to bring more plots of land under cultivation, is at liberty to choose any plot of such unreclaimed land and develop it for cultivation. After cultivation, this plot becomes his private property. By being a member of the clan, which settled in the village first and occupied the land, he acquires the right to bring such plots under cultivation. For this, he has to pay nothing to the village headman or to the elders. But the spirits, of course, would not spare him. As the land is new and he does not know what spirits have made it their abode and, since he would be unknowingly ousting them from the place, he should, after proper divination, offer sacrifices to them so as not to arouse their wrath. The members of the clan, but not the whole village, may expect to get cups of beer and steaks

of meat, if a mithun or a pig is killed. In the recent years, plenty of such unreclaimed lands have been and are still being brought under permanent paddy cultivation. Those persons, who could reclaim such lands earlier, are in a better and economically sounder position today.

Each family has its own bamboo groves within the village boundary for making houses and granaries. Similarly, the leaves for thatching the house belong to individual families. These things, however, can be brought by any individual from the jungle outside the village boundary, which is collectively owned and can not be occupied nor demarcated by any individual member of the village.

Game is bagged jointly by the whole village as well as individually, and only those who participate in it would get a share in the spoil of the game. The *nyibo*, however, gets a share irrespective of whether he joins the hunting expedition or not. No individual ownership of such hunting territories is recognized within the village. Any individual can go and hunt and is not bound, as a rule, to offer a share of the hunt to fellow-villagers.

Portion of big rivers, flowing through the area of the village, is collectively owned by the village, while small streams and springs are the individual properties. In collective fishing, the fishes trapped are equally divided among the participants, while any individual, fishing in rivers, collectively owned, is not bound to share his catch. Apart from the right of ownership, it is the labour of the individual which counts most in acquiring a thing in the village for his own use.

Jackfruit, orange and other fruit trees in the village as well as in the cultivation fields, similarly, belong to the individual families, while those in the jungle and unoccupied lands are collectively owned by the village as a whole. Any member of the clan has the liberty, to a limited extent, of course, to pluck fruits from the trees belonging to his clan members and the owner does not protest, as he may also take the same advantage from others. Unauthorized use of such items of property, however, is considered a theft and punished with fine.

Village lands, after reclamation, belong to all the clan members, and a person may erect his house anywhere after consultation with and approval of the village elders. Persons of other clans, living in the same village, who generally grow an intimacy and a sense of goodwill due to common residence, may be given land for the erection of a house, but it would always be claimed in the name of the clan, occupying the village.

X. FOOD

Food and drink. Rice is the staple food. Besides, millet and maize are other secondary but indispensable items of their food. A major fraction of the millet, however, is devoted to the preparation of beer. Pulse is not grown. Sweet potato is grown everywhere, and in case of food scarcity, it comes to their help. In the event of a famine when survival becomes difficult for the tribe, which is always from hand to mouth, jungle roots, tubers and fruits are the few things available, which can save their life. Vegetables are not much grown. Brinjal, pumpkin, gourd, green leaves, chilli, ginger and onion exhaust the list. Flesh of mithun, pig, deer, monkey, fowl, rat, squirrel, and a few other wild beasts together with fishes is another set of items of their menu.

Preparation of food and drink. Preparation of rice is a simple affair. It is boiled with water in a utensil for sometimes. Before it is fully boiled, the utensil is taken out. Its mouth is closed with banana or any other leaf, and then put near the fire. Slowly the remaining water vaporizes, and the rice is fully boiled. Water is never drained out. While on move, utensils are generally not carried, and rice is prepared in green bamboo stems. It is spread over a leaf, which is rolled and inserted into the bamboo stem containing water. A horizontal stick is fixed in the ground. The green bamboo stem is then put over the fire, resting on the horizontal support. When the whole stem is charred, the rice is considered to be boiled, and is taken out together with the leaf. Sometimes rice and meat

are cooked together in this way but then no leaf covering is used. Flesh and fish are generally smoked and roasted over fire. These are also stewed with salt and chilli and some other



A Gallong girl brewing *apong*

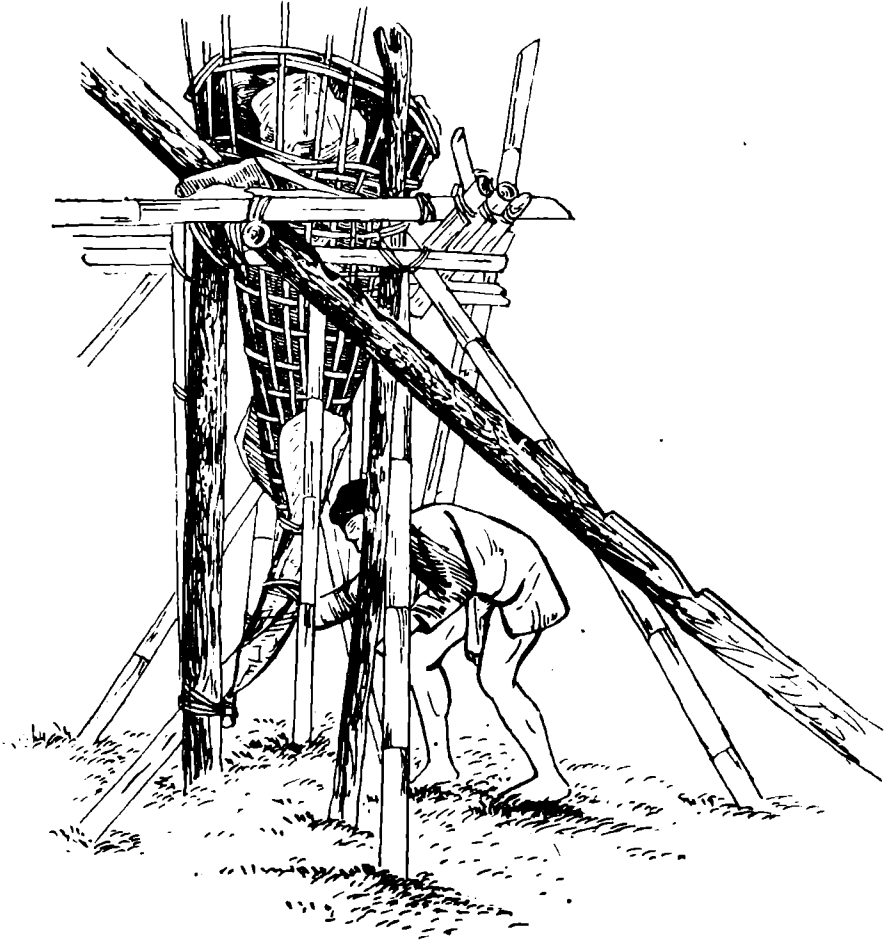
condiments, if available, and taken either with rice or without it. Pigs, fowls and birds are first singed over fire and then cooked. One of their delicious preparations is the rice bread. Powdered rice is treated with water, made into a paste and spread over a leaf, which is rolled from all sides and put over the fire. Gradually, the leaf gets charred and the bread is baked. Maize is fried over fire and then beaten flat or powdered over stone and this, when taken with sugar or, in its absence, with salt, is considered tasty.

Any indigenous drink is considered a stimulant by the tribal population. Beer — from rice or millet — is the essential ingredient of their everyday meal. It is drunk at all social, economic, political and religious occasions. Libation of beer is made to the spirits to get their blessings. Small children from the very early age are given this drink. It contributes much towards cementing the social solidarity, and in all social gatherings is passed from one to another. It is said to have medicinal efficacies, and is nourishing and stimulating. It is taken along with food as well, and more often it is a substitute for water. This indigenous liquor is prepared in all houses. Millet or rice is first fried and dried over the trays, suspended over the fireplace, for a reasonable time. It is then husked and boiled. After it is boiled, ash and the yeast — *siye* — are added. It is then packed very tightly in a bamboo container with its mouth closed and allowed to remain there for three to four days to be fermented. A funnel-shaped basket is woven with sparsely set bamboo strips and inwardly lined with banana leaves. The container is then hung over a pole at a height and the grain to be brewed is transferred to this container. A receiver is placed at the lower mouth of the container and hot water poured at the top. The liquor received at the bottom is the first brew and is comparatively much stronger. The concentration decreases with the succeeding wash. The average beer is not very strong and only lightly intoxicating.

Tea is another stimulating drink to which the people are used. As they do not take milk, tea is just boiled and sipped. Sugar is not considered essential but, if available, it is generally

not mixed with tea but taken separately.

Tobacco is locally grown and also purchased from markets. It is both chewed and smoked in pipes. Opium, in olden days, was taken on a large scale but, the cultivation and sale having been restricted, the number of addicts has considerably decreased.



Ceremonial brewing of *apong*

Receptacles for food and drink are generally indigenous. Rinds of gourds and pumpkins are widely used. Ladles carved out of pumpkins are invariably used for serving beer. Long bamboo stems are very commonly used as receptacles for grain as well as water. In the absence of pottery — one or two pots can

be seen here and there — and owing to the rarity of metal utensils, these natural objects, with or without modifications, are of considerable importance in their everyday household activities.

Food-gathering. Though the Gallongs are primarily agriculturists, yet the gathering of roots and tubers, fruits and nuts, is not ignored, and though, generally, food-gathering is the women's prerogative in most of the tribes of the world, here among the Gallongs, no clear-cut division of labour is maintained. Small children and the adult alike go out in search of roots and tubers. The leaves and creepers coming out of the earth tell them their presence and they are dug out by dibble or dao. They also gather grasshoppers, beetles and frogs.

XI. MUSIC AND DANCING

The art of song and dance is an important aspect of Gallong entertainment. While working in the fields, cooking, carrying loads, the lips of the girls can be seen rhythmically vibrating with songs. The *ponung* — the folk-dance — is performed invariably in conjunction with songs. These songs are sung in chorus. Individual dancing is unknown. In a *ponung*, the leader goes on narrating an incident, a myth, methods of cultivation and the like, and the girls repeat a refrain all the time. The movement in these dances is generally anticlockwise. No restriction with regard to age and sex is imposed for joining the dance, but the dancers generally do not like a novice to dance with them as it restricts their usual free movements. Dances are also organized on specific social and religious occasions, though dancers are at liberty to dance any time they like. No special dancing costume is in vogue, but care, as far as possible, is taken to see that the girls are uniformly dressed. The leader of the dance, often a young man — but girl leaders are also not uncommon — puts on a girl's skirt, holding a *yoksha* — a long blunt sword with a few iron plates at the butt-end which, when shaken, give a jingling sound — in his hand, and conducts the dance. Little girls start joining the party from a very early age and, within a short period due to

constant practice, learn the steps. New dances have been introduced in the recent past.

The art of the dance is believed to have originated first among the Padams inhabiting the easternmost part of the Division. From there, gradual dissemination took place and the Minyongs, their immediate neighbours, adopted it. The possibility of the art of dancing having an independent evolution simultaneously among both the Padams and the Minyongs cannot be ruled out. The Gallongs, however, borrowed it from the Minyongs. In the past, it is said, they had no dances, but only songs. This can be substantiated by the fact that, even today, there are various dancing steps prevalent among the Padams and the Minyongs, which are not known to the Gallongs. But there are none in any of the dances among the Gallongs, which are not known to the Padams or the Minyongs. Further, in the villages of the Tator-Tanis and a few other allied sub-tribes, in the north-western areas, the art of dancing is completely unknown. They, of course, have seen the Gallongs of the south-eastern areas dancing and the way they are picking up the original steps and the accompanying songs clearly proves them as novices in the art. It can naturally be inferred that the art is new to them.

CHAPTER THREE

SOCIAL LIFE

I. THE FAMILY

The combined monogamous and polyandrous family is the basic family unit. A house accommodates the man and his wife, his married sons with their wives, his married daughters till they become the mothers of children, and his unmarried sons and unmarried daughters. Two or more brothers may bring one wife each, if possible, but all the brothers have sex rights over all the wives. Thus a few combined polyandrous and polygynous families can also be seen among the Gallongs. Descent is always agnatic and the sons inherit the family property. Except for a small dowry, depending upon the amount of bride-wealth received, nothing from the property of the father is given to the daughters. A son also in extreme circumstances, as when he does not take part in the agricultural and other family affairs, can be disinherited from the property.

The younger sons even after they get married are supposed to remain in the same house. If the family affairs force a son to have a separate dwelling, a separate house at the initiative of his father, and if he is dead, of his eldest brother, is made for him, but still he continues to cultivate the fields jointly with his other brothers. If the family agrees, he can also be given separate land, a few cattle, some brass bowls and beads, and will be asked to make his own granary. On such occasions, it is customary to kill a mithun and give a feast to the clan members, if not the whole village. But at this stage he is rather in a disadvantageous position, because a few cattle have to be kept in reserve to be given in bride-wealth for the unmarried brothers, and if there are unmarried sisters, he usually does not get any share in the bride-wealth fetched by

them. Sometimes, the brothers may have their separate agricultural fields and granaries, yet may be living together in the same homestead, having separate fireplaces. But such instances are very rare and, as a rule, all the brothers live under the same roof under the patronage of the parents.

In a family which is basically polyandrous, the presence of more than one wife among the brothers, is not uncommon. In such cases, the eldest wife is the head and the granary is kept in her charge. She distributes the work to other co-wives and may delegate the power of going to the granary to any of her favoured ones. One of the co-wives may be kept engaged in pounding rice, another in feeding the fowls and the pigs and so forth. Without exception everyone of them has to go to the cultivation fields, bring firewood, vegetables, leaves and other requirements, while returning from the fields. The co-wives live in the same house but occupy separate fireplaces, and the husbands keep an overall check on their work and behaviour. A wife after the death of her husband, has to live with the brothers of the deceased husband. Her family has to pay back the bride-wealth in case she refuses to live with them. Orphans of a family are taken care of by the whole clan, and may be kept attached to any one family, according to the convenience and the willingness of the families concerned. The members of the clan are to contribute towards the bride-wealth and bring a wife for him and help in constructing a new house for him. The orphan, after he establishes his separate household, is supposed to return the amount of bride-wealth spent for him, but failure to do so does not entail any action by the clansmen. It is in the interest of the clan, that is, to increase the number of the members of it, that such helps are given. Posthumous children have no social disadvantage and are treated as regular members of the society. Tolerable amount of co-operation and cohesion is maintained among the members of the family. The quantum of co-operation gradually decreases as we proceed from family level to the clan and the village level.

The father is the head of the family and obedience to him is

expected from each member of the family. Children rarely go beyond control and never try to flout the authority of the father. Physical punishment, however, is rarely inflicted on them.



A Gallong girl husking paddy

So long as the brothers live together, the property is jointly owned and all the produce of the land is stored jointly. Payments like bride-wealth, have to be made with the consent of the brothers, from the common stock, and each member shares the responsibility for such payments.

Sociological parenthood is more important than the biological one and, as a matter of fact, the latter has no specific value. As all the brothers live together and have access to all the wives, nobody knows by whom the child has been begotten. The brother, who performed the ceremonies of marriage, is recognized as the child's father.

Sporadic cases of adoption are to be found in the Gallong society. Barrenness and infertility are believed to be curses, and, to perpetuate the unbroken family line, adoption is considered necessary. Generally, a son of one of the brothers is adopted and given the same status as that of a begotten son. The headman and the elders of the clan are invited and a feast is given to them.

Fostering of the child after the death of the mother is only possible with the women of the same family, preferably with the wives of her husband's brothers. This does not go beyond the limit of the family. No clan or village women would be ready to foster the child as, it is believed, the same fate as was in store for the deceased mother, would befall them if they allow the child to suckle. Sometimes, the child is made to suck sugar-cane juice. But in very rare cases such children are seen to have survived.

II. KINSHIP

Kinship terminologies. Morgan's classificatory system of kinship terminology applies only in a very restricted degree to the Gallongs and that also for the near kin only. Though the polyandrous custom of society does not maintain much difference between a father and his brothers, yet we find here separate kinship terms used for them. The same rule applies for a mother and her sisters. In the three generations, that is,

one's own, one higher and one lower, there is a wide variety of terms of relationship. The term for father is used for him only, no matter that he is in fact a sociological father. The brothers of father are termed differently, and even distinction is made between the elder and the younger. Father's sister wields more authority over the children than the mother's brother, so much so, that the term of address used for her is the same as that used for father; that is, she is called *abo* — father. A distinction, however, is made in the term of reference. While the term of reference used for the father is *abo*, that used for the father's sister is *nijir abo* or *abo nijir* — 'female father'. Mother's brother stands in a different position, and the corresponding 'male mother' is not used for him. Father's sister's husband and sister's husband are classed together and so are the father's sister's children and the sister's children, distinction of sex always being indicated by different terms. Father's father, mother's father, wife's father and husband's father all are called by the same term, though the first two are of the second and the latter two of the first ascending generations of the ego. The same rule applies to the four corresponding female relatives, that is, father's mother, mother's mother, wife's mother and husband's mother. Son's wife's father and daughter's husband's father are classed together. A clear distinction is drawn between the elder and the younger sisters. The kinship terminology for the son includes a long range of relations, that is, son, brother's son, husband's sister's son, in the first descending generation, and son's son, and daughter's son in the second descending generation. A term of address applied to the near relatives does not apply to the distant ones or persons from other clans or villages and younger persons may be seen calling elder persons by name. The system of kinship terminologies leads one to infer that the system can neither be categorized as classificatory nor as descriptive. The terms of reference and the terms of address are also not strictly based on the principles of generation. It is not uncommon to class together two terms of different generations.

Kinship behaviour. Little distinction in behaviour is made

towards father and his brothers. A marked difference, however, is observed in relation to the distant kins of father's generation. The behaviour of the son towards the father is that of respect but this respect rarely mingles with fear. From the very early childhood the son lives in the company of his father and the latter's brothers and learns, under gradual process, the work which he has to undertake after attaining age. He often goes to the field and helps his father and father's brothers. Occasions of hunting and fishing give him favourable opportunities to help his clan members and village elders and, under their direction, he learns how games are chased and fishes trapped. He gets his elementary lessons in obedience towards elders on such occasions. He treats his father's brothers on the same par with his father, and can neglect the orders of the clan members of his father's generation or higher at the risk of being rebuked and looked down upon.

His behaviour towards his mother is that of respect but, as the occupations generally differ, they are not so close. Behaviour with the step-mother always vary, depending upon what attitude she takes for the care of her step-children. Father-daughter behaviour is generally one of avoidance after the daughter attains puberty, but this avoidance is never to the extent of seclusion. They work together in the field and eat together in the house, and she is always obedient and obliging to him. She is more closely attached to her mother who, through everyday household activities, teaches her what would be required of her to do after she goes to her husband's house. The mother reveals to her the secrets of sex and how she is to proceed smoothly in her conjugal life.

Brother-brother and brother-sister relationships are the most friendly in one's own generation. The elder brothers and sisters take proper care of their younger brothers and sisters. They are often put in charge of little babies, when their mother goes out to the field. After the sister marries and goes to live in her husband's house, the brothers occasionally visit her, with a little meat or smoked fish. In the early childhood, their relation is that of playmates and friends, but, in matured age, a little



Sowing seed with dibbles



📍 Catching fish in a stream



A Gallong girl on the way to the fields

restraint is maintained. Father's sister is given much respect and obedience. As the society is patrilineal, the mother's brother does not enjoy much exalted status, and he has hardly any say in the matters of his sister's husband's household.

Joking relationships. The range of joking relationships is limited. One stands in a joking relationship to one's wife's sisters and brothers and *vice versa*. But this relationship does not extend to the wife's brother's wife, as she is classed with father's mother and mother's mother. There is no joking relationship between grand-parents and grand-children. Mother's brother's wife stands in an incestuous relationship, and thus jokes with her are strictly forbidden.

No strict avoidance is, however, maintained among the rela-

tions. The type of the house and the nature of work do not permit any seclusion or restraint in conversation. Talking to or touching the body of a son's wife or daughter's husband, as the case may be, is not forbidden. Avoidance is maintained by not making jokes and abstaining from sexual relations.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE CLANS

The Gallongs believe that they have descended from Sisi — the Earth Mother. Some generations after their origin, when the population increased, the whole tribe got itself divided into many groups, which we may, for the present, call sub-tribes. This division was strictly based on genealogies, and not on any political or economic factor. Each sub-tribe was patrilineal and was named after the earliest ancestor from whom it was supposed to have descended. In the beginning each was an exogamous group, the members of which selected wives from the other sub-tribes. The fact can be made clear by referring to Appendix I. Both the Bogum and the Karka descended from Rini. The Bogums, having a limited number of members, still do not intermarry and the most preferable marriage group for them is the Karka. The Karkas, having numerous members scattered over many villages, now function more or less as an endogamous unit and marry among themselves as well as with the Bogums. After some generations, when the number will increase, the Bogums may also start marrying among themselves. When the descendants of a sub-tribe became unmanageably large, the necessity of sub-dividing the sub-tribe into various exogamous groups was felt and the whole sub-tribe got divided into numerous clans. Thus, among the Karkas, we see that after some generations, Lombi was functioning as a clan, and all his descendants till today, belong to the Lombi clan. Similarly, other clans emerged from other individuals after Karka. A case given in Appendix II will make the point clear. Yijir and Yikar both belonged to the same sub-tribe, but from their respective sons Jirido and Karlo, separate clan names begin. Now Jirido and Karlo are different clans, descended

from Yijir and Yikar. Appendix III similarly shows that Sisi is the Earth Mother, Kaktor (or Tator), now an endogamous sub-tribe, Rano, a clan under the Tator sub-tribe, and Teluk is an individual member of Rano Clan descended from the Tator sub-tribe.

A clan, to a greater extent, functions as a local group, but does not function always as an economic unit. Gradual dispersion of the members of the clan to different areas has already begun but, for the present, the clans can be said to be more localized than dispersed. Neither fission nor fusion of the clans is taking place at present. No specific rights and duties are vested in the clans, as a whole, but the superimposed chieftainship gives an opportunity to every clan to have its chief in the village, though it is not observed as a rule without exception.

From the genealogies given in the Appendices, we see that the members of the clan trace their origin from living persons and not from any object of the nature or of the animal kingdom. The clans thus are not totemically named and there are no totemic objects.

Since membership of a clan is acquired by birth, the members are bound together by a bond of economic obligation. A man in need is to get all possible help from his clan members to whom, he has to pay back in due course. Though, *prima facie*, there is no feeling of superiority or inferiority among the clan members, there is an undercurrent of differentiation of rich and poor, which, at times, leads to social disparity.

IV. THE LIFE CYCLE

Conception. In different societies of the world, passing through different stages of development, there have developed different ideas and beliefs, regarding sexual intercourse and pregnancy. It is said that some of the tribes hold that sexual intercourse has nothing to do with conception and the children are the gifts of gods or that some spirit enters the womb of the woman; but it is very unusual. The Gallongs, however, associate sexual intercourse with conception and

connect them as cause and effect. The exact duration of pregnancy is also known to them.

Childbirth. The girl, after marriage, generally remains at her father's house and visits her husband's house from time to time. This custom of the girl living with her parents till her first child is born is a mere convention and not absolutely binding. Due to the practice of child-marriage it is not considered desirable to take the girl to her husband's house until she reaches puberty. During her visits to her husband's house she may become pregnant and then it is considered imperative to send her to her husband's house. But the initiative lies with him. If he likes to keep his wife with him, even before the birth of any child, there is nothing to prevent him from doing so. When the signs of pregnancy are discovered and the delivery becomes imminent, she goes to her husband's house for the delivery. No segregation of the expectant mother, however, is allowed and she delivers the baby in the same house in which the family lives. The women of the clan or the village are called for assistance. To facilitate an easy and painless delivery, the village priest is also called and he offers sacrifices to the spirits concerned in a corner of the house of the expectant mother. After the child is born, the umbilical cord is cut with a small knife without any fear of infection, and the new-born baby is washed with water. The father may give a small party, inviting his kinsmen and a few of the members of the clan, but never the whole village. The baby is taken out of the house after nearly fifteen days but presents are not usually given or received at this time. Among the Tator-Tanis, I was informed, the clansmen give a bead or two to the new-born baby.

Should the mother die a few days after the delivery, it becomes very difficult to feed the child. Generally nobody in the village, for fear of meeting the same fate as the deceased mother, agrees to foster it. Rice bread is prepared, crushed and mixed with water and the solution is given to the baby to suck. Sugar-cane juice may also be given when available. Suckling is generally done up to the age of two years or till the next child is born, whichever is earlier. There is no cere-

monial cutting of the hair or nails.

Naming. As all the crises of life are associated, in one way or the other, with ritual and belief, the naming ceremony of the new-born baby requires the presence of the *nyibo* and takes place either on the day of the birth or a few days afterwards. The *nyibo* brings an egg and boils it. He has different names in his mind, which he goes on pronouncing every time. The different cracks in the egg shell will indicate which name is auspicious and which is not. In this way he sorts out the final name to be given to the baby. Another device common in the lower Gallong areas requires the *nyibo* to bring a bamboo stem with fresh shoots which he rubs on a block of wood, pronouncing one name after another. The name, on the pronouncement of which the bamboo stem breaks with a particular mark, is given to the baby. There is no difference in the ceremony for naming boys and girls.

Infancy and adolescence. The periods of infancy and childhood are spent under the care of the elder brothers and sisters. A Gallong child learns his everyday work through imitation and observation. There is no formal education but the child picks up the rules and customs of society by listening to stories. Proceedings in the *kehang* — the village council — which he observes from his early childhood, tell him how he is to behave and act towards the village elders and his kinsmen. Shortly before he attains adulthood, he starts taking an active part in the household and village affairs, and helps his parents in their work. His attainment of adolescence is, however, not marked by any ceremony. In the association of his friends and playmates, he learns the secrets of sex life, and also how he should behave with the girls of his own and different clans. From the beginning, an aversion towards incest and endogamous sex relations with his clan members is engrained in him, which, in his practical life, he is to follow strictly. He learns much from the experiences of his friends and associates. After growing up, he starts feeling a sense of responsibility towards his younger brothers and sisters, his kinsmen, clan members and village associates. He begins taking part in the *kehang* and after marriage,

when he settles down, is expected to be consulted on all important affairs of the house as well as the village.

Age and sex-groupings. The age-group system, found in a number of societies, is not given much importance among the Gallongs. Gallong society is not stratified on the basis of age, nor is there any strict division of labour for different age-groups in the village. As there are no formal initiation ceremonies, except that a boy after attaining adolescence starts putting on the loin cloth, one age-group merges imperceptibly into the other. Boys and young men are expected to work according to capacity, and not according to their age. Despite the absence of such an age-set system the younger ones are always expected to obey the elders, irrespective of lineage, kin or clan, and failure to do so brings one down in his or her social prestige. With growing age, one becomes conversant with and experienced in all village affairs, and the words of the older men carry sufficient weight in the decision of such affairs. They are the repository of mythology and folklore, and are consulted on all important village affairs. But, when they become extremely weak physically, so that they cannot actively take part in the village affairs, their authority gradually wanes.

Sexwise stratification of society is also not found among the Gallongs. The division of labour, according to sex, is not sharply defined. The women of the village have no say in any social, economic, political or religious matters of importance. A woman is not supposed to join the sacrificial killing of animals, nor is she to take part in most of the religious activities. The behaviour of a woman towards the elders of the village is expected to be one of respect and obedience. Avoidance, however, is never maintained in talking with any member of the tribe.

Absence of dormitories. The absence of any dormitory among the Gallongs attracts the attention of the investigator at once. The Minyongs, Padams, and Boris, in the neighbourhood of the Gallongs, all have their dormitories. The girls' dormitory — the *raseng* — is also found in all the villages of the Minyongs, Boris and the Padams, except a few, where it has

died out. The Boris are, however, continuing both boys' and girls' dormitories in all their villages. The Gallongs, who have given much of their cultural elements to and taken much from them, have particularly remained disinterested in this institution of their neighbours. Speaking generally, the Gallong villages are single-clan villages. The people are conscious of the horror of incest and sexual relations within the clan. The girls' dormitory among the tribes gives ample opportunities to the people for sexual training and under the patronage of its roof, the future path of their married life is paved. But the scene is altogether different in a Gallong village. The boys and the girls are of the same clan, and the presence of any girls' dormitory would have led to the infringement of the law of incest and clan exogamy, and would have thus brought in its turn supernatural punishment on the tribe, according to their belief. The security claims of the village in the early days, when incidence of inter-village feuds was heavy, did not permit boys of the neighbouring villages, belonging to other clans, to visit the village and have love affairs in the dormitory, as a prelude to marriage with the girls in the village. The unmarried young men in the village have sex right — guaranteed by the polyandrous custom of the society — over the wives of their brothers. And thus, they do not feel the necessity of visiting some institution for their romances. Apart from training in the secrets of sex, which the youngsters receive in the dormitories, the latter also provide opportunities for the organization of the village work on a co-operative basis. *Kiruk* — the organized hunting of the Minyongs — and, as a matter of fact, the nature of their co-operative working in most of the spheres of their life, owe much to their dormitories. It is this institution, where the spirit of co-operative working is, in fact, instilled in them. The more individualistic, rather than co-operative, society of the Gallongs did not feel any necessity of establishing boys' dormitories, the raising and maintenance of which require co-operative and collective efforts. Furthermore, the boys would not have liked to sleep outside their house in the dormitory, where they would have lost the opportunities of sleeping with their

brothers' wives. Thus, with such a pattern of society different from that of their neighbours having dormitories in their villages, the Gallong ancestors, it is presumed, did not feel the necessity for having dormitories in their villages.

Adulthood. After a Gallong becomes adult he starts feeling a sense of responsibility towards the members of his family, clan and the village. If he is not already married in his childhood and if the family is in a position to bring a wife for him, his father has to make efforts to get him married. If he is in love with a girl he tries to bring it indirectly to the notice of his father. His father has to make necessary arrangements for the bride-wealth. After marriage he is considered a responsible member of the village and settles down engaging himself in the affairs of the family. When he grows old and naturally becomes dependent, it is the turn of the sons and daughters to look after his needs, till he dies.

V. MARRIAGE

Sexual relations between persons of opposite sex, it is said, have existed from time immemorial. Men, belonging to different lands and races and passing through different stages of evolution of civilization, have evolved a multiplicity of customs and manners to regulate such relations. These customs have had always a bearing on the ways and means devised by a man to woo and establish relations with the woman or women he loved. And, in order to get it socially sanctioned, he entered into the bond of marriage in the particular way followed by his society at the particular time. The respective position and importance of men and women have always varied in all societies in all ages. In some societies, women are considered a social liability, and they are shouldered off and given away in marriage, and, at times with some consideration; while in others, they are considered as assets and fetch bride-wealth for their parents, and, sometimes, for kinsmen and villages. So have the Gallongs their own ways of wooing persons of opposite sex and establishing relations with them, according to

the customs of their own society.

Marriageable age. The marriageable age of the Gallongs ranges from infancy to a little above adulthood. Minor boys and girls of five to six years of age can be married or betrothed and finally married after attaining age. It mostly depends upon the parents to decide at what age they would like to get their children married. Grown-up boys may be married to minor girls and pubescent girls to small boys. Under former condition, the husband sleeps with the wives of his brothers and, in the latter case, the wife with the husband's brothers. The minor wife remains with her parents and starts visiting her husband's house after attaining puberty. Unmarried adults can be found in no less a number, as the heavy bride-wealth does not allow all the brothers of a family to bring a wife for each. The incidence of child marriage is no less than that of adult marriage. Very few girls, who have not been married before puberty are to be found. But the amount of bride-wealth is not proportional to the age of the girl. I found a Karka girl of seven years for whom seven mithuns and four cows were given in bride-wealth.

There is hardly any freedom in the selection of wives. The girls are not left unmarried till they can express their opinion. Cases of young girls not liking their husbands, to whom they were married in their childhood, are becoming numerous and the consequent incidence of divorce is thus increasing.

Marriage restrictions. Of all the sexual relations, incest is the most dreaded and its horror is deep-rooted in the Gallong mind. It is believed to bring supernatural punishment on not only the offenders, but the whole clan and the village. It is considered inhuman and against the social laws. Nevertheless, stray cases of incest occur now and then. The offenders are first brought to shame in presence of the whole village, and then fined heavily. Special sacrifices are made to the spirits to appease their wrath, and the meat of the sacrificial animal killed is not to be taken. It is considered unholy and contaminated with inherent dangers, and is interred at the outskirts of the village. Incestuous sex relations are very rare, and in-

cestuous marriages have, perhaps, never occurred.

The rule laid down for the prohibition of incestuous marriage also applies to endogamous marriage within the clan. All the members of the clan are supposed to have descended from the same person and, as such, any sexual relation within the clan is considered incestuous. Though its frequency is more than the actual incest, it demands the same punishment to be inflicted on the parties concerned, as in case of normal incestuous relations. Endogamous marriages are, however, never tolerated. Marriages are preferred within the endogamous sub-tribe to those in the bigger framework of the tribe. Intertribal marriages are discouraged and at the present moment the frequency is negligible.

Types of marriage. Polyandry is the most prevalent form of marriage. This custom has probably not arisen due to scarcity of women in the society. The proportion of the two sexes is fairly balanced here. Though polyandry is also prevalent in Tibet, with which the Gallongs were in contact, it is not safe to infer that the Gallongs have adopted the custom from the Tibetans. Other tribes and sub-tribes which were more closely in touch with the Tibetans than the Gallongs were, have not adopted this institution of polyandry. The most important factor leading to the prevalence of polyandry is, perhaps, the economic pressure on the family. The prohibitive amount of bride-wealth does not permit each individual to have a wife for himself. Generally, the eldest brother is married to a girl and the amount of bride-wealth is given jointly by the family. As the economic condition of an average family is not always sound, the family may not allow the remaining brothers to bring wives, but they are allowed sex rights over the woman brought by the eldest brother. The woman is duty-bound to allow all the brothers access to her. As an extension of the custom, even the members of the clan of the husband have been granted sex right over the woman by the society, but the wishes of the woman are often honoured. If she is averse to a particular person, he, in that case, cannot insist on intercourse. Under this system of polyandry, it is difficult to know

the physiological father and the child born to the woman belongs to the person who actually married her and went through all the ceremonies. Apart from having sex relations with the woman, the other brothers or the clan members have no right over the children born to her.

If the economic condition of the family is fairly sound or if it is strengthened afterwards, some of the younger brothers may also get married. This time, the brother marrying the girl will go through all the ceremonies and bring the bride to the house, and the other brothers, both married and unmarried, will have sex right over this woman also. No differentiation between elder or younger brother is made. All the brothers will have the same sex right over the woman.

A rich person, having a number of cattle may bring more than one wife, giving bride-wealth separately for each of them. Such cases of polygynous marriages are always disparate and the eldest wife has a position superior to other co-wives, and it is she who holds the reins of the family affairs. Adelpic polygyny is not favoured as the father of the girls desires to establish relations with more number of families. All the wives live together under the same roof. For subsequent marriages, the opinion of the first wife is always sought. She may not have much objections to make, for she gets an additional economic partner who can share her work. After marriage in all the above cases, the residence of the married couple is always patrilocal and very rarely neolocal. A combination of polyandry and polygyny has thus emerged in the Gallong society.

With this multiplicity of rights and obligations, sexual dissatisfactions are bound to crop up, and then adultery comes there, as there is no other way of getting sexual gratification, since all the unmarried girls in the village generally belong to the same clan. The adulterer is fined. Where a married woman is involved, the husband may divorce her.

Marriage with both the types of cross-cousins, that is, mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's daughter is allowed, but the former is preferred to the latter. Bride-wealth, in this case also, has to be paid as usual. The latter type of marriage

is also prevalent, but if it is allowed it is not on the plea of transfer of one girl from the father's sister's husband's family in return for the girl (father's sister) he was given by one's family. And thus this practice is never obligatory. If the parents and the spouse agree, then only such marriages can take place. From early childhood, the cross-cousins are not considered as spouse and can start living as husband and wife only after the marriage is solemnized formally.

Marriage by exchange, where two men exchange their sisters, is also common. Here consideration of age is not a dominant factor in establishing such relations. Bride-wealth is to be given from both the sides, as the two girls would naturally differ in their virtue, beauty and capacity for work. The status of one family may also differ from the other. But the idea of establishing relations with more families inhibits the frequency of such marriages.

After the death of the husband, the woman is to remain in the house, and the other brothers — elder or younger — who, even in the lifetime of the deceased, functioned as virtual husbands, have to keep her as wife. Should she wish to marry any person other than the brothers of the deceased husband, the bride-wealth given originally has to be returned to them. This discourages any attempt on her part to take another husband.

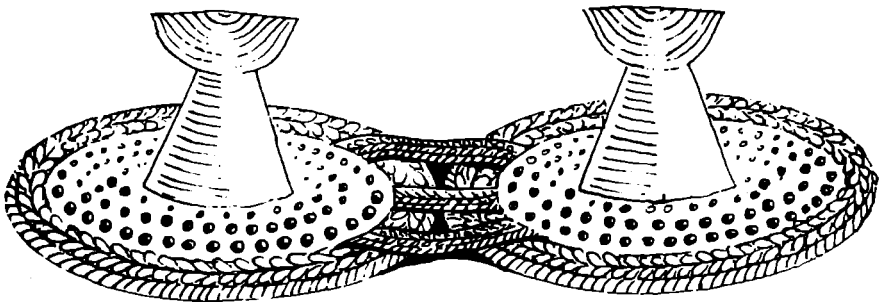
Sororate is not obligatory and is not favoured. The husband has no right, whatsoever, over the sisters of his deceased wife. If his wife's parents agree to give him another daughter, he will have to give them fresh bride-wealth. The wife's brother's wife stands in an incestuous relationship and hence marriage with her after the death of her husband is also forbidden. She would have to live with her husband's brothers, who have a legitimate right over her.

Considerations for marriage. At the time of marriage, payments are made by both the parties. The amount of bride-wealth is transferred from the family of the groom to that of the bride. This bride-wealth consists of mithuns, cows and big and small brass bowls. The family of the groom as a whole and the groom himself have to make provisions for such payments,

and these payments are made to the bride's family as a whole and not to the bride. The parents of the bride are also to transfer a little amount of their wealth to the groom's parents as dowry. This question of dowry is also decided at the time of settling the quality and quantity of the items of bride-wealth as its amount varies directly in proportion to the bride-wealth. Generally, the dowry is sent to the groom's parents together with the bride. This dowry has to be distributed among the kinsmen of the groom, on the day it reaches there, and only after a prolonged argument, it is decided as to who should get what portion of the dowry. The bride-wealth is paid before the marriage is performed. The payment of a fraction of the bride-wealth, however, can be deferred at the wishes of the bride's parents. It may be because the groom's family may not possess the entire amount of bride-wealth and promises to pay a part thereof at a later date, or, as I saw in a marriage, due to cattle epidemic rampant in the bride's village. The bride-wealth was fixed at seven mithuns and three cows, but the father of the bride agreed to receive only five mithuns and two cows. The rest were to be handed over to the bride's father after the epidemic was controlled. Two mithuns, one or two cows, one brass bowl, one pig and one piece of cloth are the customary bride-wealth expected of an average family. Richer and influential persons demand no less than ten to twelve mithuns. In case the groom's father does not have the required number of cattle to be paid as bride-wealth, the clan members may be called upon to help him with cattle on loan to be returned later. The clan members on the bride's side, do not get any share in the bride-wealth. Only a feast is given to them by the bride's father. Besides the bride-wealth, the parents of the groom have to entertain the whole party coming from the bride's village, and it may take half a day to decide how many mithuns and what size thereof the groom's parents are supposed to kill for the party. Now this number of mithuns to be killed again depends upon what dowry is paid. All these three aspects of the marriage payments are interlinked, and one has its bearing on the other. Besides all these payments, the father of the groom, whenever he visits

the father of the bride, is expected to take with him some meat or smoked fish or beer as presents for him. All these payments are thus made to strengthen social relations rather than to pay the 'price' of the girl. The cattle received by the bride's parents are again transferred to another family on the occasion of their son's marriage and the circle of transfer of cattle and establishment of relations goes on endlessly increasing its circumference.

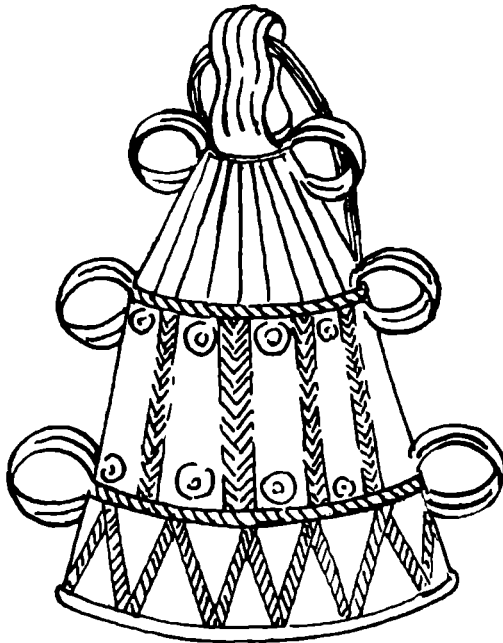
Seasons for marriage. Seasons for marriage are always taken into consideration. Inauspicious months have to be avoided and, generally, during cultivation period marriage is not performed. Marriage requires a lot of rice and millet for feasting and so it is wise and convenient, the people think, to perform marriages at a time when the granary is full. Omens have to be consulted before the date and time are finally fixed, and, should bad omens come in the way, the marriage has definitely to be deferred to a later auspicious date.



An ornament

Marriage ceremonies. After the marriage is settled, a party of kinsmen and clan members of the groom goes to the village of the girl on an auspicious day to bring her to their village. Next day, the bride's brother's wife starts dressing her from early in the morning. A big brass bowl is invertedly put on her head which looks like a helmet. Small bells are attached to this helmet on the back side. Brass wristlets varying from six to eight are worn by her. In this dress-up, her girl friends help her. The woman *nyibo*, at the same time, goes on with her incantations, saying to the girl, 'You are going to another

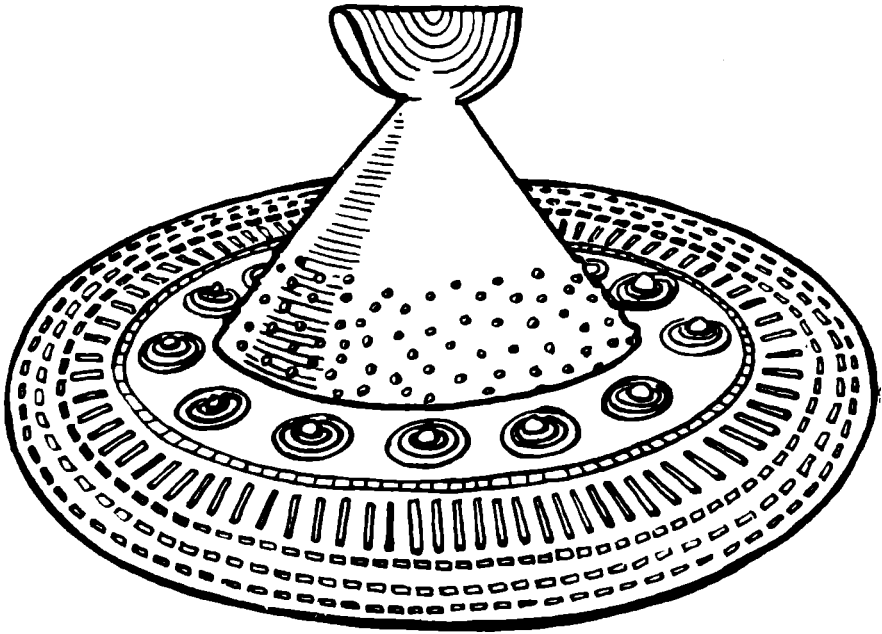
village, in the realm of other spirits, may you be helped in all your activities.' After the bride is fully dressed, she is taken out of the house and, at the door below, she is offered rice and meat. She takes only a few grains ceremonially and throws back a little of it four times over her shoulders. This done, she leaves the village accompanied by her brothers and sisters together with the groom's party. All the items of dowry, if any, are put in conical baskets, besmeared with rice paste, and are carried



An ornament worn on the chest during marriage

by the members of the groom's party. Before she starts, care is taken to ensure that no dog is allowed to go ahead of the party, as it is considered inauspicious. When the whole party reaches the outskirts of the village, they halt for a short time for preparing bamboo containers for beer which is to be offered to the members of the bride's party from the groom's side. A little before reaching the groom's village, the whole party is received by a few girls from the groom's vilage, who offer beer first to each member of the bride's party and then to their own

villagers accompanying the party. It is for the bride's brother's wife's brother to give customary gifts to the girls. The go-between from the groom's village also offers beer to the bride's party, but he is not to get any reciprocal gifts for that. On reaching the outskirts of the groom's village another party comes to offer beer, and finally, the members of the reception party come beating brass bowls and plates to receive the bride. They repeatedly create ceremonial obstructions for the bride's party on the way to the groom's village. When the party reaches the village, all of them sit down together, and rice, meat and



Bell ornament, worn by a bride at her marriage

beer are offered to them by the groom's parents and clan members. After the feast is over, the party starts again and reaches the house of the groom. A new gate is constructed at a distance of 15 to 20 feet from the house. Near the entrance below the house, a long aqueduct made of a banana stem is kept supported by two vertical poles. At the end of the aqueduct, a receiver is kept. A chicken is killed, and the blood is allowed to trickle down the banana aqueduct. A little water is

poured then. The bride takes a few bamboo shavings and sprinkles this blood three times over her head and towards the back. Water is then poured down the aqueduct, and the bride washes her hands and feet. She is a stranger to the house and she must enter it after having cleaned herself of the foreign materials. A new bamboo ladder is made for her as well as for the groom to enter. This ladder is used at this time only, and then rolled up and kept in the house, never to be used again. The bride is then taken inside the house and

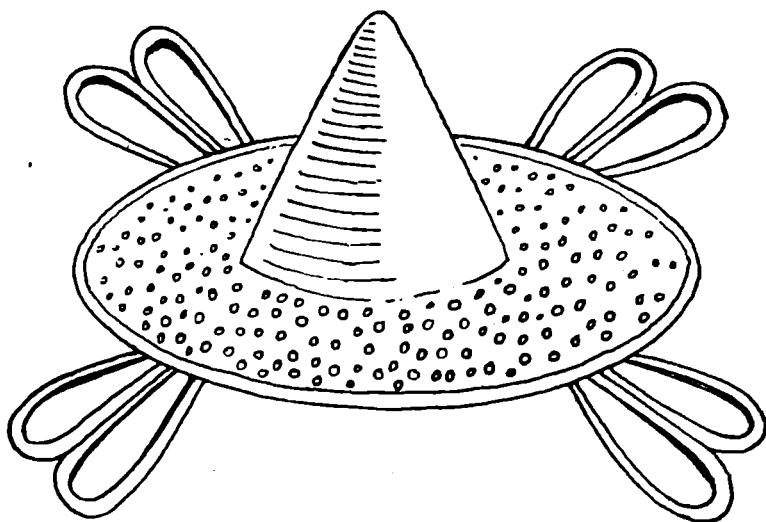


A Tibetan prayer-bell used as marriage ornament by a bride

seated in a corner, decorated with bamboo shavings and feathers. She is to sleep here with her husband at night, but no intercourse is allowed on that night. After staying there for two or three days she goes back to her parent's village. Then she starts paying visit to her husband's house provided she has attained puberty and continues doing so till she is pregnant when she finally goes and settles there. However, if the husband so desires, she may come to live with him even earlier.

Divorce. After marriage, the girl loses the identity of her

clan and merges herself with her husband's clan. Her free and unrestricted movements and laxity in sexual behaviour lead to several extramarital relations and adultery then becomes common. Adultery is one of the main causes of divorce. If the wife is divorced on this ground, the husband is entitled to get back the bride-wealth. If the adulterer likes to marry the woman, he will have to pay the bride-wealth to the husband as much as the latter paid for her. Barrenness of the wife may also lead to divorce, though efforts are made first to invoke the spirits and get their blessings for the birth of a child, failing which, she is divorced because marriage has the one purpose of begetting children to continue the unbroken



Marriage ornament worn by a bride at the nape of the neck
at the head of the bead necklace

line of descent. To be barren is considered a woman's fault and the husband should get back his bride-wealth, after divorcing his wife. Ill-treatment of the wife at the hands of the husband or his brothers or her co-wives, if any, may compel her to dissolve the union and, if the husband is found guilty of ill-treatment, he forfeits his claim to the bride-wealth, and the wife is at liberty to choose her next husband. In all cases of divorce, however, the children begotten of the union belong



A Gallong in ceremonial dress

to the father. Once I saw a little child having been snatched away from the crying mother's arms by the husband and his clan members.

VI. DEATH AND DISPOSAL OF THE DEAD

Old age. Old age is considered as a natural phenomenon and old people are not a burden on the family as, even the oldest persons do some sort of work, that is, weaving of baskets and fishing traps, making bows and arrows, and taking care of the small children. They often keep themselves engaged in other indoor activities which do not require hard labour. The experiences of the old persons always guide the young in all spheres of life and, until they grow very old, their words are honoured and respected. Their sons and daughters are expected to take care of them. When their sons and daughters were young and dependant, it was their duty to bring them up and look to their needs. But when they grow old and naturally become dependant, it is the turn of the sons and daughters to look after their needs.

Causes of sickness and death. Sickness and death may be caused by several factors. The spirits may get angry when they do not get their due shares of offerings and may bring illness to the persons and, if not appeased, may even cause death. Destroying or cutting down the abode of a spirit may also bring sickness and death to the offender within a very short period. Incestuous and endogamous sex relations may bring the severest of the supernatural punishments, and severe illness and even death under such circumstances would not be surprising. Killing of a clan member provides reason enough for the spirits to get offended and bring disease and maladies to the offender.

Death and treatment of the dead body. When the signs of death become apparent, the dying person is allowed to die at the place of confinement. After he passes away, the corpse is left undisturbed and is not removed to any other place. The dead body of a pregnant woman, however, is removed from the original place and kept at a distance, but within the house. The corpses of still-born children are not interred, but are kept in a big scooped-out pumpkin and placed at a spot in that part of the jungle which is not much frequented. The dead

body in all other cases is wrapped in a big cloth, preferably used by the deceased. The two legs are folded over the chest so as to squeeze the body into a mass of nearly three feet in length. A sparsely-knit bamboo matting is made with one side of it folded, giving it a shape of L. This bend does not allow the corpse to slide down, as it is carried by one person on his back. The man carrying the corpse comes out of the house by the back door. For this purpose a new ladder of bamboo is made for carrying down the corpse from out of the house. Care is taken to ensure that nobody goes ahead of the corpse. All the personal belongings of the deceased such as mats and other sleeping clothes are rolled together and carried with the dead body. The dead body of an ordinary person is disposed of as soon as possible, while disposal of the dead body of a rich person may be delayed by a day in order to allow all his distant relations to attend the burial.

Disposal of the dead body. The grave is dug just on the outskirts of the village, in or near a bamboo grove. It is dug nearly three feet in length with grooves inside. The bamboo ropes used for tying the corpse with the matting are cut and the body is placed inside with the assistance of two persons, with the head towards the west. The whole body still remains covered with the clothes and after placing it in the grave, the face is uncovered. Two or three pieces of clothes used by the deceased are placed below the head as a pillow. An egg is kept in the right hand of the deceased and one of the nails of the right hand is cut and thrown outside. Both the hands are joined and placed against the mouth. Wooden sticks are placed one beside the other over the groove, so that only the inner groove of the grave is covered first. Over the wooden sticks banana leaves are placed which are nailed to the earth with bamboo pegs, to be removed when the earth is put on them. All the banana leaves are carefully tied. Earth, dug out from the grave, is slowly thrown over the banana leaves and then beaten solid by two persons with their legs. With every new phase in the process of burial, all the women standing near the grave, start weeping. Weeping is, however, spontaneous and

not ceremonial. Over the earth, stone slabs are placed and at both the ends of the grave vertical sticks are fixed over which again two horizontal sticks are tied with cane ropes. On these sticks brass bowls, cups, bamboo containers and other articles of everyday use of the deceased are hung. Bamboo shavings, made into different shapes and dedicated to the spirits, are hung over the grave. Newly made bow and arrow, transfixed over the sticks and pointing towards the sky, forbid the spirits from descending down and disturbing the deceased. Spirits, however, cannot be ignored and sacrifice of a mithun or a pig, according to the status of the family is made. Everything



Graves

finished, the persons who attend the burial go back to the house through the same door and then the newly made ladder is thrown away. The house becomes taboo and nobody except the clan members can enter it for some days.

Thus comes to an end, the mundane life of a Gallong, after passing through several odds and ends, and fighting with and appeasing the wrath of a multitude of spirits. Now he goes to the next world where his new life is to begin and where also he has to go through the same cycle through which he went in this world.

Chapter Four

POLITICAL LIFE

I. THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

Every society in the early stages of development in the world, from nomadic to agriculturist, has its own system of government on the basis of its social and religious customs, traditions and modes of behaviour. We can hardly talk of codified law in primitive societies, and this holds good for the Gallongs too. Equally, we are unable to categorize their ways of punishment as civil and criminal. Often, one overlaps the other, and strictly speaking, we cannot look to their political organizations through the mirror of our own political systems where we have established courts of law with judges and juries, pleaders and assessors. It is the moral values together with traditional ways of behaviour, sanctioned by mythology, which come into play in these societies.

The Headman. In olden days, the Gallong political system did not recognize the institution of chieftainship in the village. The wealthiest and the most influential person of the village often acted as the leader in all activities, and his words and orders were given weight and obeyed by virtue of his privileged position. However, this leader did not rise to his position by election, nor was the post hereditary in any case. Wealth created influence and influence gave birth to authority. It was not considered wise to displease such a person, who could always stand by in the hours of need. Almost everybody in the village was obliged to him in some way or other. Instances of such a leader becoming a despot and tyrant were also known, when eventually he lost his prestige and authority and was thrown into the background. This gave opportunity to other influential persons to assume authority. It was not unusual for

a village to have more than one such influential and wealthy person but cases of clash among them were never known. In such instances they functioned as a body of elders.

In the past, with the advent of the British regime in this area, an institution of chieftainship was super-imposed. It was given effect to for administrative reasons. The Gam — the superimposed chief — acts as an intermediary between the administration and the people. He holds an honorary post, but is given a red coat as an insignia of his office. Generally, each clan has its own Gam, but instances of one clan having more than one, and another having none at all are also not uncommon. Population and the influence of the clan are all that matter. From among the Gams in a village an elderly or an experienced Gam holding greater amount of authority over the village is selected as a Head Gam, irrespective of the clan he belongs to.

In the absence of any social sanction, the Gam, however, wields little or no authority over the agricultural, social or religious activities in the village. For such purposes, he is nothing more than an ordinary member of the village. No economic or social prerogative is conferred on him nor has he to discharge any obligation — economic or social — with respect to the clan or the village. In the spheres of religious activities, the people have their traditional *nyibo* — the village priest or the shaman. He guides all the religious activities of the village and has his own privileges and obligations. As the institution of Gam is alien to their culture, though much assimilated now, sometimes the *nyibo* may discharge the functions of the Gam also, but not *vice versa*.

The Village Council. The most powerful body in the village is the council of elders. The entire machinery of village control revolves round this nucleus — the council. All cases arising in the village are brought before this council — the *kebang*. Any case brought before it is discussed threadbare, pros and cons are examined carefully in long and tiresome sittings, which sometimes last for weeks, and then decision is given which is binding to the parties concerned. Both the executive and the judicial powers are vested in this *kebang*. It works

through the sanction given by the society itself, to which every member owes his or her allegiance.

The traditional council of elders, however, has been retained, but another institution of *bango* — the inter-village council — has been superimposed. A *bango* consists of a few villages and all the Head Gams of the villages concerned, besides a few others, function as its members. It has also a 'secretary', who is in charge of its office. Inter-village disputes are generally brought before it and the members, who act as the body of elders, decide the case. Fine money collected from the inter-village disputes go to the *bango* fund and is spent for the welfare of the whole area, falling under that *bango*. *Bogum Bokang* — the divisional council — is the biggest superimposed unit. It consists of all the *bangos* in the division and is convened when important decisions have to be taken for the welfare of the entire population. Each *bango* sends its representatives to the meetings of the *Bogum Bokang* and decisions are taken on the concensus of their opinions. Inter-*bango* disputes, if any, are also settled at such meetings. All this hierarchical system of administration has been introduced by the British rulers and is still in vogue. But the *Bogum Bokang* has not got the sanction of the society and no social or supernatural punishment is expected to be inflicted on the defaulters who fail to obey their decisions. The defaulters then come under the purview of the usual penal laws and are punished accordingly by the Administration. The policy of the Administration is to administer justice through the *kebang*, and only in cases of disregard to this authority, the Administration may decide to intervene.

II. CUSTOMARY LAW AND JUSTICE

A Gallong follows the same mode of behaviour, social and political customs and treads the same path in religion, as his father and forefathers did. He never stops to think why and how he does all these things. There is no place for logic in his beliefs and customs. Most of the social customs are obeyed 'automatically', because infringement will bring supernatural

punishment on the offender. As already stated, there is no codified law in the Gallong society. The social customs themselves embody the legal rules. From the very childhood, one learns them and the consequent punishment which follows their transgression. By the time he attains maturity he is expected to know all these rules.

Of all the crimes, adultery is the most common. Girls are generally married in childhood and sometimes do not go to their husbands' houses even long after attaining puberty. Normally they do not settle there before the birth of the first child. This intervening period is the most critical one for them, for, if we would compute the instances of adultery among the Gallongs statistically, we will find the major percentage of such cases falling in this age group. The unawareness of the husband of the whereabouts of his wife, and the unrestricted movement of the wife combined with freedom in sexual matters permitted by the society conspire together to make approaches easy. Physical violence may take place if the couple are caught *in flagranti delicto*. The seducer is brought before the *kebang* and, his guilt having been established, the *kebang* inflicts a fine of a mithun or a heavy amount of cash money. The husband may also divorce the wife on this ground, and, if the offender likes to marry her, he would have then only to pay back the bride-wealth and to take the woman. The amount of fine may vary according to the status of the husband. The fine, if any, exacted from the woman, which she pays from her own purse or which is paid by her brother and father as it is their sister or daughter who has brought disgrace on the husband's family, goes towards a feast to village elders or to the *bango* fund. In olden days, seduction of woman of another clan usually led to a clan-vengeance, but now the tension has relaxed and satisfaction is achieved by the payment of a fine, as in ordinary circumstances. The frequency of adultery has led to three types of psychological reaction among the Gallongs. Some think that the wives of other persons but their own, are unfaithful, and often feel themselves proud of it. Others become eternally suspicious of their wives and go on brooding over it, while the

rest think that, even if their wives are not faithful to them, they can do nothing about it without definite proof or unless their wives confess the guilt of their own accord.

Another sexual crime, less common but more abhorrent, is incest. The horror of incest is ingrained in them, and the offenders become the subject of public ridicule, shame and sometimes ostracism. A heavy deterrent fine is imposed, and the cattle received from the offender is killed as an expiatory measure and buried in the jungle or outside the village. Nobody eats this meat. The whole village is considered defiled, and this sacrifice is meant to lift the taboo on the village. Supernatural punishment is bound to befall the offender, and he cannot escape without an adequate sacrifice to the spirits.

Cases of theft do occur in the villages. Bead necklaces, brass bowls and cattle only are worth stealing. The thief, when caught, is subjected to public indignation. He is forced to return the stolen article and to pay a fine over and above. The members of his clan, unless there is a definite proof against him, try to defend him. The guilt having been established and fine imposed, they try to contribute towards the fine money, if he is not in a position to pay. Stealing of crops from the field or from the granary is not common. Taking grain or fruits or sugar-cane from the fields of a member of one's own clan is not considered a theft.

Homicides and infliction of bodily injury often led in the past to blood feuds and the aggrieved party retaliated by taking a head or inflicting injury on the body of the offender or one of the members of his clan. Nowadays such cases are not coming to notice. For such crimes, social as well as supernatural punishments are in store for the culprit. The spirit of the murdered man will trouble him and offerings are to be made to his spirit. For bodily injuries, a fine—the usual form of punishment—is imposed. A portion of the fine goes to the sufferer, and the rest to the village elders or the *bango*. Inflicting injury on cattle is also considered wrong and is punished. As a matter of fact, all the offences, civil and criminal, though not well defined in the Gallong society, have to be punished

in terms of fine now. Taking life, shedding blood, committing adultery and stealing, all can be requitted by payment of fines in varying measures. We have to keep a watchful eye on whether this leads to actual increase in the frequency of the crimes at the hands of those who are economically better off and so can afford to commit them.

Ownership of property and inheritance. Besides land and houses, cattle, beads, brass bowls, implements and fishing nets are the important properties of a family. Ornaments and clothings are individually owned. Beads, though used by any one in the family, belong to the family as a whole and, in times of stress and strain, can be sold or bartered at the wish of the head of the family. *Dinyi Monyi* — an arrow head — is exclusively used for sacrificial purpose and can never be disposed of. It is a family heirloom. Property is owned in common by the family members. After the death of the head of the family, the eldest brother takes the rein in his hand. If the brothers wish to divide the property, the largest share goes to the eldest brother and the balance is equally divided among the rest. Girls are not given any share in the property. Dowry and compensation or liquidation of debt then becomes the responsibility of the eldest brother, and he meets these expenses from his own share. Due to absence of any law of primogeniture or ultimogeniture, land is fragmented in as many segments as the number of brothers, and thus a fissiporous tendency is developed.

In case a man dies without issue, the property goes to his brothers or kinsmen or, in the absence of the latter, to his clan members.

Levirate is another form of inheritance. Wives are inherited by the brothers as a matter of right and not as obligation. Debts are inherited by the sons, brothers or the clan members who are obliged by custom to liquidate them. In case of any dispute with regard to the inheritance of property between the brothers or the clansmen, the *lampo* — the go-between settles the case or else it goes to the *kebang*.

If a pregnant mithun or cow is given as bride-wealth or as a compensation or in payment of a debt, a time bar is fixed by the

giver. If the cattle delivers within the stipulated period, the recipient will have to pay a brass bowl in exchange of the calf, if not, the giver loses all claim.

Right of having a share in the spoils of the game conforms to different rules. The hunter, who bags the game, gets half of the quarry as he has to kill a pig to celebrate his bravery in hunting. The *nyibo* also gets a share out of it, irrespective of participation, and the remainder is equally divided among the participants.

Oaths. Oaths are taken in the event of disputes and accusation for theft or infliction of injury or sexual crime. Oaths taken in the name of Doini-Polo — Sun-Moon — are the most sacred and binding. Oaths are taken in the presence of the village elders in a *kebang*. The two parties involved in a dispute call their own *nyibo*. The members of the parties raise their left hand and take oath by biting the tooth of a tiger. If both the parties agree to take oath in this manner, decision becomes difficult, and then ordeals are resorted to. For the administration of oath, the *nyibo* gets his fee.

Ordeal. Ordeal is resorted to testify the innocence or the guilt of the person taking it. Dipping hand in hot water and putting fire on the palm were once the most common methods of ordeal, though they have become obsolete now. A person getting his hand burnt is acclaimed guilty. Another method of ordeal is by biting the tooth of a tiger. After biting, a date and a disease are announced. Whoever suffers from the proclaimed disease within the stipulated time is proved guilty, and then the customary fines are imposed on him. If he escapes the disease, he is pronounced innocent and congratulated for his coming out unscathed from the ordeal.

III. METHODS OF WAR

Gallong warfare had its basis on the social system and economic needs. Revenge for the death of a clansman caused by another individual or group of individuals of another clan was the primary cause of such feuds. The economic gains,

resulting from capture of slaves and herd of cattle were more the cause than the effect of a feud. Trespassing into the territory of another village for trade purposes often led to skirmishes, which were often aggravated by a chain reaction of attacks and counter-attacks by the villages involved.

The Gallong method of warfare was nothing but an organized raid by one village on another. Accidental or intentional murder of a clan member, capturing of cattle or slaves by any member of another clan were the most important causes. This caused the whole clan to unite against the offender and his village, and inflict retribution. All the members of the clan were collectively responsible and duty bound to muster strong to avenge the death or seek compensation for the economic loss. The clan members of the wrong-doer also stood on guard as they would also naturally apprehend sudden attack by the members of the aggrieved clan on any silent hour of a treacherous night. The initiative for the organization of the clan and launching of an attack rested with the kith and kin of the deceased or the sufferer or with those who were the members of his clan. As the solidarity of the clan was to be maintained, the loss had to be avenged and for that preparation was made for the collection of poison for the arrow heads, and gathering and sharpening of weapons of war. Before the raid was launched, divination was made to see if it would be a successful encounter. Mithuns were killed, beer and rice bread in huge quantities were prepared. A good feast preceded an attack. After all, who knew who would return from the raid and who would not. In a dark night, the party of raiders got fully equipped with bows and arrows—both poisoned and non-poisoned—spears, daos and swords for offence and shields for chest, back and hand and helmet, for defence. Belts of bamboo spikes were provided to make it impossible for the raided village to follow the raiders while returning. The leadership of the raiding party rested usually in the hands of those who were known in the village for their hunting skill and doing arduous jobs. The raiders made a surprise attack on the village, killed whoever came in the way, put the houses to

fire, drove the cattle to their villages and looted beads, bowls, clothes and other valuable articles, captured slaves and freemen alike, and returned to the village with the booty, within a very short time. Due to the surprise attack in the dead of night, practically no resistance could be offered by the raided



A Gallong in ceremonial head-dress

village. As the raids could not be launched with calculated weights and measures, the raiding village got either in excess than what it lost or a little less than that. In the latter case, another raid had to be organized to compensate the loss, while the former case gave a chance and right to the raided village to launch a counter-attack on the raiding village to bring back

the excess. Head for a head, cattle for cattle, and slave for slave was the fundamental logic. Slaves also got a chance in such raids to kill and plunder. After return from the raid, the captives were kept in stocks, to ensure that they did not run away. The booty was distributed among the participants. Generally, it was then the turn of the raiding village to be raided in a way similar to what they had done and, if the equilibrium was not maintained, which often was difficult, they got a chance to raid that village once again. Thus this endless clan vendetta embittered greatly the relations between the villages and enmity was inherited from generation to generation. As the clan ties were stronger than the village ties, care was taken to see that any member of the raiding clan, living by chance in the raided village, was not killed, or looted. Secret messages were sent to him for his protection. Similar care was taken not to ravage and insult any religious place or thing as it would arouse the anger of the spirits who would harm them on their encounter. Wholesale murder and plunder of a clan or village was never attempted nor intended. After the raid, it was expected of the raiding village to send a go-between to settle the payment of compensation. The raided village did not take any lead in it. Should the two villages wish to enter into a peace-pact, they communicated their desire to the other through the go-between. Any place, midway between the two villages or a third village, was selected as the venue of the pact. The go-betweens put their demands separately to finalize the peace-pact. If both the parties conceded, the two villages contributed towards a feast by offering mithuns or pigs. Both the parties, together with the village, where peace was established joined in such feasts. Signs to commemorate the day were engraved on the trunk of the trees and, since that day, they put an end to their age-long enmity.

As the spilling of human blood is considered unclean, the killers became taboo for three days after returning from the raid. They were not to go to their cultivation, nor did they take meals prepared by anybody else but themselves. Only a few varieties of fish were permissible to them and same for the



A Gallong hunter in the act of shooting with bow and arrow



A 'Pomung' dance

A Kebang in progress



meat of the wild animals. Sexual intercourse was strictly forbidden for a period of from one month to two months.

IV. SLAVERY

From very early times, the institution of slavery has been maintained by the Gallongs. This practice existed in the north-eastern areas. Almost all the neighbours of the Gallongs kept a number of slaves and carried on regular trade in them. Gradually, with the change in economic conditions, this institution underwent changes, and after being discouraged by the Administration, it met with a gradual decay and in most of the areas, it has died out completely. Inter-tribal feuds, in the olden days, also encouraged the maintenance of this institution of slavery, as persons caught in the raids were kept or sold as slaves.

The treatment which the slaves received at the hands of their masters was different from that received by a freeman. The slaves were kept in stocks for a certain period to ensure that they did not run away. After the period of confinement was over, they were assimilated in the general household of their masters. But, on the other hand, certain privileges were awarded to the slaves by their masters, and they made a free and unrestricted use of them. In the ordinary course of behaviour, they were addressed and they also, in return, addressed their masters, according to the generation, in which they stood to each other. Terms as grandfather, father, brother and son were most commonly used for the persons in the respective generations. Both the masters and the slaves were also addressed by name, depending upon their respective age in relation to the other. Not much distinction was made in the quality and quantity of food given to the slaves. Food for them was prepared in the same house and nobody objected to their taking meal with the members of the family.

The slaves could represent their masters in the village council. It is the power of oration, the people believe, and not the social position that matters in putting or arguing a case before the



A 'Ponung' dance

A Kebang in progress



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The slaves could represent their masters in the village council. It is the power of oration, the people believe, and not the social position that matters in putting or arguing a case before the

village council. They could also act as village priests.

The sources of increasing the number of the slaves were numerous and varied. All the children of the slaves were born slaves and belonged to the master. They could be obtained through barter. A raid on another village brought a man several slaves. Debtors, who could not liquidate their debts, had to work for the creditors for a stipulated period as slaves, if the members of the clans of the debtors failed to repay the debt on their behalf.

The slaves were additional working hands in the fields of the masters and hard labour was demanded of them. Sluggards and shirkers were tortured and beaten, and, if incorrigible, were sold out to any person at the masters' sweet will. They had to fight in feuds for their masters and they always took the lead in such feuds. Before a raid, it was customary to kill a mithun, and the slaves got their due shares of the meat. The slaves lived in the same house with their masters but, when the family of either of them became very large, the family of the slave had to be shifted to another house, built by the master, with the cooperation of the villagers.

Sexual relations between the members of slaves' families and those of the master's was a very heinous crime. A slave, having such a relation, was generally killed, while the member of the master's family was turned out and all social and religious ties with him or her were severed. Sexual relations with a slave girl of another master caused the offender to be expelled from the village, and, over and above, he had to pay a fine to the aggrieved master. The slaves had their own marriage groups within themselves and the same rules of endogamy and exogamy were applicable to them, as were to their masters. If someone persisted in marrying a slave girl — which very rarely happened — and the villagers could not prevent him from doing so, he was expelled from the village and was disinherited from his father's property. After having expelled him, the villagers considered him also a slave. But, at the time of marriage, within his own group, a slave received adequate help from his master

to pay the bride-wealth, because, after all, the wife of the slave would also become his slave.

The deposition of a slave in the village council had to be taken into consideration and often the masters tortured them to give evidence in their favour.

The slaves were living items of capital for the master and were often used as a medium of exchange. Salt and cattle could generally be bartered against them and they could be given in bride-wealth. As a matter of fact, they constituted an important factor in the economic structure of the whole society. If cattle and beads and brass bowls were the warp of the structure, the slaves were the woof of it.

The Administration has made efforts to put this institution of slavery to an end. Wholesale liberation of the slaves, without any corresponding compensation, would mean a great economic loss to the masters, and it may bring dire consequences on the whole economic set-up. In the beginning the masters were not willing to do away with this institution, as it has had special social and economic values attached to it. But, with gradual propaganda and persuasion and in exceptional cases the grant of compensation, the number of slaves has decreased considerably in the recent past. Except a handful of slaves maintained in the inaccessible areas, the Gallongs do not have this institution now. It is expected that, within a short period, this evil will be completely eradicated.

CHAPTER FIVE

RELIGION AND CEREMONIES

MAGIC AND RELIGION

Before we embark on the task of giving an insight into the magico-religious beliefs and practices of the Gallongs, we may better try to describe, rather than define, magic and religion. From time to time, anthropologists have given their definitions, which at times have not been accepted in part, with relation to other tribes. Durkheim's theory which makes a distinction between religion and magic as sacred and profane respectively is not always tenable. Its superficiality has been established by the garden magic of the Trobriand Islanders, dealt with at some length, by Malinowski. Frazer is inclined to describe magic as 'next of kin to science', while Marrett describes magic as the 'disreputable sister of religion', 'a value judgement that has no more validity than Frazer's opposite one'. Other definitions for magic and religion have not found universal acceptance, and it seems futile to attempt at a categorical definition of magic and religion. These two terms cannot perhaps, be held in two water-tight compartments and branded 'magic' and 'religion' separately in clear distinction.

Religion presupposes an attitude of reverence and respect, propitiation and conciliation of, and abasement to the super-human being in its different manifestations. Magic, on the other hand, is, in the shape of charms and spells, utilized to attain a desired end at its own accord. Frustrations, inability, dejectedness generally (but not always) originate magic. In the words of James: 'primitive man dances out his religion, manipulates his magic and utilises his *mana* for specific purposes without analysing or theorising about his methods'.

I. MAGICAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

In magic, we see that no request is made to the spirit to achieve a desired end. Some formula and techniques are worked on, and the result is supposed to follow itself. Magical performances can be directed both for good and evil ends. It may be practised to bring fertility to fields, success in war, and other spheres of life, and games and fish in hunting and fishing. It can also, on the other hand, be directed to cause illness, death, defeat and other calamities to others. Magic can also be directed to give a rebuttal to these efforts by the person, on whom they have been directed or on one of his representatives. Magical beliefs and practices are inextricably interwoven with the everyday life of the Gallongs. On one occasion or the other, they have to take resort to such practices. During sowing in the agricultural fields, make-believe 'images' of spirits are made of bamboo and fixed in the fields. Egg shells are kept in the hands of such images and feathers suspended from them. They are put as watchmen in the field and are believed to protect the crops and bring more yield. The dynamic power, believed to be inherent in the images, is to work itself for the protection of the crops. Magical practices to acquire potency and fertility have their own efficacies. Oma Uyu, a spirit concerned with this phenomenon, is supposed to preside over such practices. Yapi Doke married seven times, one after another. But all the seven husbands died and she remained without a child. She got very much disappointed but again married, for the eighth time at the age of 40, with Takar Karlo and such magical practices brought her three children. Her last husband also died recently. For protection against illness and other troubles, beads beaded with charms and incantations are worn in the neck. Hunting and fishing are protected by their own magical practices which are the responsibility of the *nyibo*, and are directed with a view to bag the maximum of game and catch plenty of fish.

To direct illness or death upon an enemy or a rival, the magician, who is often the *nyibo* himself, is called and, after

divination, he advises the person concerned to cut a certain tree. Here the tree is cut, there the intended person falls ill or dies. But these things can easily be counteracted by another magician who can divine by his magical skill, the source of the disease. A constant tussle between the two experts, sometimes, becomes a regular affair.

A separate institution of magic, warlockery or witchery is not known in the Gallong society. The *nyibo* — the religious functionary — also functions in the capacity of a magician or a warlock. A prophet, if we can use the term in this context, is to be seen here and there. He prophesies about a particular disease or ill luck going to befall a person. Such persons are not dreaded in the village and their prophesies can be analysed and counteracted by the *nyibo*.

II. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Though image-worship is not found amongst the Gallongs, we often come across make-believe images made of bamboo shavings to represent spirits or persons against whom black magic is to be directed. Different spirits are represented differently by the images and find their separate places in different cultivation fields or corners in the village, where offerings of eggs or fowls are made to them.

Incantation at the time of invoking the spirits take the form of prayers. These incantations are pronounced at the time of illness, calamity, offering sacrifices, and other occasions. These incantations are very complex and are understood only by the *nyibo* himself. They contain the name, place and the designation of the spirit invoked, the purpose of invocation, and request for the redress of misfortunes. An announcement of sacrifices to follow is also to be made here.

Offerings to spirits are made on various occasions, but these offerings always carry an appeal. Sacrifices are made to spirits with the hope of receiving blessings and help in various spheres of life. No offering of first fruit is made. Beer, however, prepared out of a portion of the first harvest is specially meant for

the spirits, as their active good will is supposed to bring about better yield of crops. The flesh of the sacrificial animal is not to be offered to the spirits. Only the blood of sacrificed animals, gathered in a bamboo stem, is kept apart for the spirits. It is the soul of the sacrificed animal, rather than its flesh or blood, that counts, for it is to serve the spirit in its own world.

Rituals performed at the time of construction of a house have their social implications as well. Before the house is raised, a hole is dug in the ground and as many grains of rice are put therein as there are members in the family and the hole is covered. After a short time, the hole is uncovered and the rice grains are examined. The number of grains found missing would indicate the death of as many persons, in the family, should the house be constructed at that spot. Should such occasions arise the site is abandoned for another auspicious one. Just before the erection of the house starts, an egg is placed below the main post of the house as a measure against its fall.

Dream. Dream plays always an important role in the life of the Gallongs. Dream is an indication of things to happen. The bad effects of dreams are counteracted by sacrifices, as indicated in divination, done by the *nyibo*. It gives warning and often acts as an incentive and fillip to several constructive works in the village. When one sees a tooth knocked out in a dream, it indicates that one will kill a game in the hunt, and thus serves both as a good omen and consequent incentive for hunting. Broken legs in a dream signify the death of a child or the wife of the dreamer. Death may befall him, if he gropes in complete darkness. Plenty of food is assured, when small fishes are seen in the dream.

Taboo. The fear of the unknown always haunts the minds of the people and results in imposition of several taboos in the various walks of life. A patient, recovering from a prolonged illness, has meat tabooed for a period of two to six months, depending upon the spirit causing the illness. Breaking of this taboo brings defilement, and purificatory sacrifices are to be made. This taboo has practical benefits also in the way of preventing the patient from a relapse. Tiger is believed to be

similar to human beings and hence its killing is also a taboo. Breaking of this taboo causes the offender to abstain from meat for a very long period, if not for the whole of his life. This helps much in the prohibition of tiger or leopard hunting in the area. The bridegroom, after shooting the ceremonial arrow at the sacrificial mithun does not take *tingir* fish for one whole year. A menstruating woman becomes a taboo. She is not to touch any household things, clothings and food. She has to sleep at a separate fireplace. Persons, carrying corpse to the burial ground, are also subject to such restrictions. As the corpse is considered unclean and unholy, the carrier, through transmission of uncleanliness, becomes polluted and, by imposing a taboo on him, he is prevented from polluting other persons. He is also debarred from agricultural activities, as then a poor yield is apprehended. Sacrificial objects are taboo for girls and women whether in their periods or not. Only the *nyibo* can ask any of them to help under very special and extra-ordinary circumstances, but special purificatory rites have got to be performed for the purpose, by sacrifice. Cooking utensils used by a person bitten by snake, are taboo to others, and only he can use them for the following fifteen days and then he throws them away.

No taboo on words are, however, imposed. Names of husband, husband's father or any relation, standing in a position of respect and avoidance, are not tabooed but spoken, if occasion arises. Heads of the sacrificed animals, which are cooked separately, are taboo for unmarried persons and persons of other clans. The pot in which the head is cooked is also a taboo for them and cannot be used by such persons. Taboo is also imposed on a warrior, after return from a raid, and he must not touch anybody for a prescribed period. Sexual intercourse thus, becomes a taboo for him.

III. THE GALLONG PANTHEON

The Conception of Supreme Being. Gallongs are the worshippers of supernatural beings — benevolent and malevolent

—by whom their everyday life is surrounded. Jimi is the Supreme Being who has created this world and rules over it. He has also created the firmament and studded it with beautiful stones. He is the creator of Doini-Polo who are at his beck and call, and give heat and light to the inhabitants of this world at his orders. He resides in the sky and keeps a watch on the duties of all living beings. Great as he is, great are his responsibilities. He is to look after the whole universe. The Gallongs take him to be neutral and sacrifices are rarely offered in his name. He is invisible but all-pervading; he is here, there and everywhere. He has appointed a number of tutelary spirits who look after the world on his behalf and reward or punish the living beings of the world, as they deserve.



Altar erected near the house to drive away sickness

Gods and Spirits. Doini-Polo come next to Jimi in the Gallong pantheon and are very popular. Sacrifices are offered to them and oath taken in their names is considered absolutely binding. With regard to the sex of Doini-Polo, the Gallongs are not unanimous. A section believes that it is a single deity with a double personality and with the functions of the sun and the moon, while others believe that the sun is the husband of the moon. We shall see in the subsequent lines that the dual personality of the gods and spirits of the Gallong pantheon is very characteristic.

Spirits are both benevolent and malevolent. They have their separately assigned residences in a distinct province, and exercise their power within their limitations. The most influential of all these are the spirits of the cultivation fields and the granary who constitute the back-bone of the Gallong religious rites. They take a major share of the sacrifices offered by the Gallongs. They, in turn, are responsible for the care and protection of their cultivation and help in bringing good yield, for which they are reciprocated in terms of various sacrifices. Of all these, *Pirku-Pirte*, *Liku-Lite* and *Pinku-Pinte* are the most powerful and important.

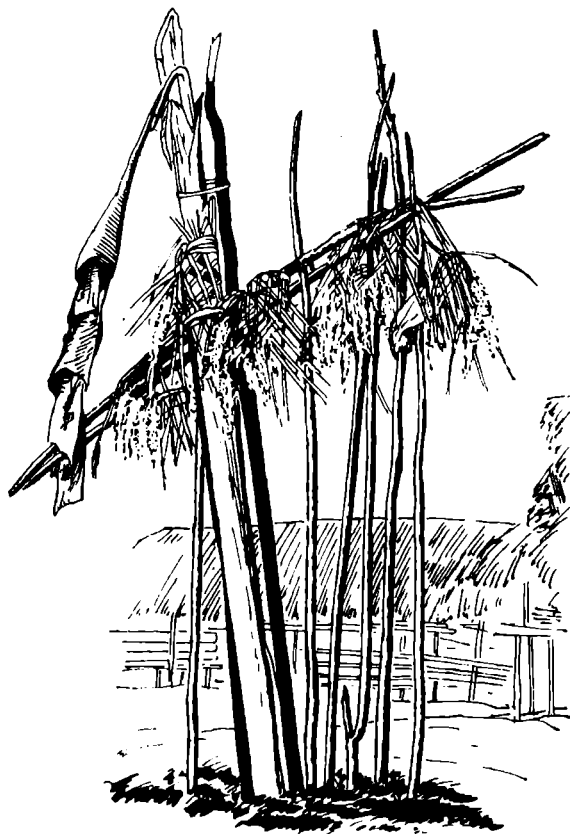
Spirits, residing in the house, take care of the inmates and warn them of any impending calamity. *Chute-Gamte* and *Ite-Botte* come in the list of the house spirits before all others. While offering sacrifices to other spirits, causing disease or otherwise, they are also invoked and given their due shares.

Water spirits play an important role in the economic life of the Gallongs. They preside over the fish and other water animals. No fish will be available, if *Jeru-Poru*, *Lipe-Pompe* and *Kiru-Ramro*, who are venerated before the rest, are not willing to make the catch successful.

Pomte-Sarte, *Bute-Kamdu*, *Liru-Karu* and many others have their dwellings in the jungle and on the village trees. They are supposed to be the watchmen of the village and warn the villagers in advance of any misfortune about to take place. Similarly, there are spirits in the sky, in the air and underground. All these spirits dwell always in pairs; the first being

the husband and the second his wife. Life of the spirits, in their own world, is similar to that of human beings, though they are more powerful than the latter.

The Nyibo and his functions. The *nyibo*, as already mentioned, is the only functionary in the religious rites and ceremonies. He, on behalf of the people, offers sacrifices to and invokes blessings of the spirits. He is the mouthpiece of the peo-



Altars for driving away spirits

ple to communicate their grievances and sufferings to the spirits and to request for redress. He is, so to say, the intermediary between the two. From very early childhood, one shows special talents by foretelling some incidents, falling into trances and all that which is required of a *nyibo*, and, after attaining manhood, one becomes an acclaimed *nyibo*. Neither election nor selection comes into play. Early proof of one's inherent qualities

and talents determines one's real qualification for the eligibility for the profession of a *nyibo*. It is believed that a certain spirit is extraordinarily pleased with him and directs and guides him in all spheres of his activities. Unless the *nyibo* becomes conversant with the ins and outs of all the religious rites and incantations, and gets into touch with the spirits, he is not to take the flesh of the sacrificial animal. When he becomes spirit-possessed, his body starts trembling, he starts scratching his body and dancing. He may become naked and lose consciousness. He, sometimes, after getting into trance, eats coal, ash, dung or his own sputum. But, when again he comes back to his normal self, he does not remember to have indulged in these. *Tabo Goar* is one of the most important spirits, who when pleased, directs a man on the way to becoming a *nyibo*. A pig has to be sacrificed for him. The spirit, in turn, leads him along the right direction, advises him against unnecessary sacrifices and helps him to divine diseases and suggest suitable sacrifices for the cure.

Eschatological Beliefs. *Yasi* — the spirit of the deceased — and *yalo* — the soul substance inherent in the living being from conception to the grave — play important roles in the eschatological beliefs of the Gallongs. *Tamik Dabi*¹ informed me that after death, the spirit of the deceased which is incorporeal and invisible, goes to the spirit world and merges its identity there. The soul, after the person is dead, may go either to *gite* (heaven) or *giche* (hell), if we may substitute these two most common conceptions of the world beyond, according to the type of life the deceased has lived in this world. Those, who lead a pious and spotless life in this world, go to *gite*, while the sinners and breakers of law invariably go to *giche*. Both these places are believed to be situated underground. As man is originally born of the earth — *sisi* — he, after death, must go back to it. *Jiku* and *Jite* are respectively the rulers of *gite* and *giche*. There are three different paths leading to these places: *dirte*, for old and invalid persons; *dirde*, for young men and women; and *yapchi tabi*, for children. Life in these worlds is similar to that

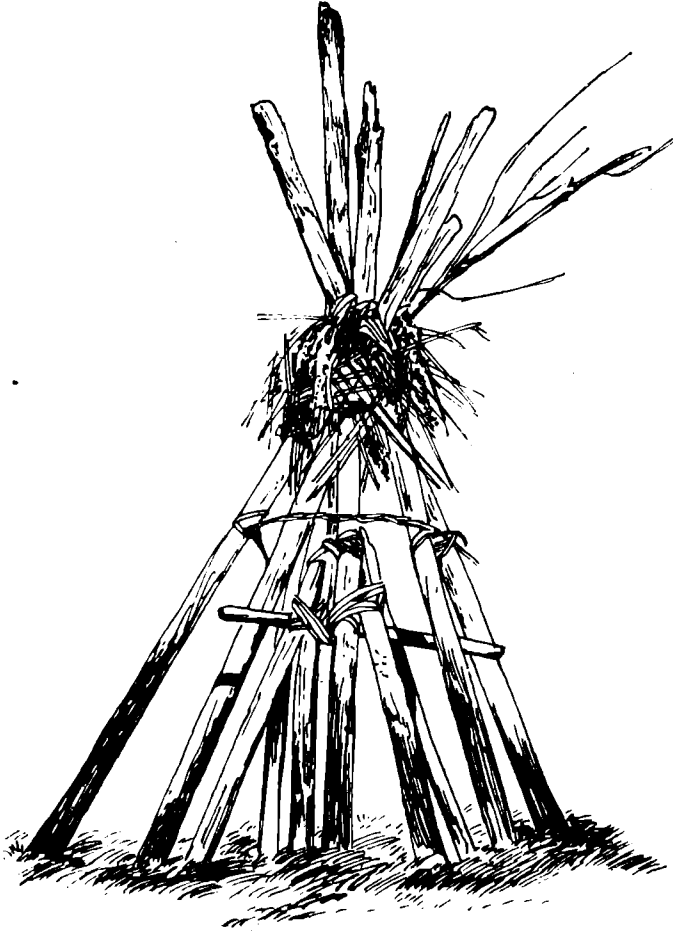
¹ An educated *Adi*, who is an officer of the Administration

in this. Rich and poor will have the same status there, as they enjoyed here. Married persons will find the same wives to whom they were married in this world. The unmarried, evidently, will have to remain without any wife. They have to cultivate land and make houses exactly similar to those in this world. Relation between the dead and the living always exists. The dead still take care of the living as their guardian, but constantly call the living to join them in their world. Fortune or ill-luck could be bestowed on the living by the dead, according to what sacrifices are made to them at the time of death and at all subsequent events. These spirits of the dead are similar in appearance and form to the living and put on the same type of dress; only they are not visible.

Shrines and Sacred Objects. The absence of any shrine or sacred place is very conspicuous in the Gallong area. Sacrifices and offerings are so frequent that a fixed place of worship would hinder rather than facilitate their performance. Every house is the place of worship and a place for offering sacrifices. Outside the house, the place of worship is determined by divination. Sacrificial animals are to be killed there. In case of sacrifices to be offered at the graves, the sacrificial animals may not be killed there, but only the chants and incantations are pronounced there and the animal may be killed at a different place. A sign-post may be put up to mark the place where a sacrifice has been made. Animals killed at the grave or at any other place for a dead person are supposed to go to the world where the deceased has gone and to serve him there. Another sacrifice is necessitated by the appearance of foot-prints about the grave on the day following the burial, as this appearance of foot-prints would cause death to a person whose foot-prints are of the same measurement as those found on the grave. For his safety a sacrifice has to be made to the spirit of the deceased person. Sometimes, it is observed by certain especially gifted persons that somebody is being taken away by the deceased and on one of the following days death takes that person away.

Sacred objects are very few and cannot be distinguished from the rest by mere appearance. An axe used for killing

animals for sacrifice becomes a sacred object and cannot be used for any other purpose. It is not to be touched by menstruating women, who have their separate cooking utensils, as they are considered unclean and unholy, and are not to touch non-menstruating women in general, and men in particular.



A sacrificial altar for killing mithuns

IV. DISEASES AND REMEDY

Causes of Disease. Sickness and disease are generally supposed to be caused by malevolent spirits. Spirits, not getting their due share of sacrifices, may cause disease and death. Spirits residing in the cultivation fields, when not propitiated and offered sacrifices before the cutting and burning of jungle, have

reasons enough to get offended and harm the offender in any way they like. The possibilities of evil eyes, causing disease and other maladies, cannot be ruled out.

Divination and Remedy. The causes of disease and death are diagnosed by divination. The *nyibo* is also a conjurer and a diviner. He divines with the help of the spirit whom he has pleased with his power inherent in him. The most common method of divination is by reading into the heart and the liver of a fowl. The fowl is killed, its stomach slit open and the membranes are removed from the heart and the liver. The different folds, holes, size and colour of the heart and the liver signify different causes. Before the *nyibo* begins his divination, he starts chanting incantations and prayers, requesting the spirit to be in communion with him. After he finishes his incantations, the spirit helps him in his divination. He then starts singing and dancing and falls into a trance and, when he is fully possessed, he starts telling the cause of the disease which is later confirmed by reading the heart or the liver of the fowl. Divination with a pig was also seen only at one place, in the north-west, among the Topo-Ichis.

After the cause of the disease is established, and the spirit responsible identified, the next step is to know the particular sacrifice to be made and this too is ascertained by the same process of divination over the same fowl or a fresh one. Sacrifices are to be made strictly in the way revealed in divination. The *nyibo* gets a fee varying from two to twenty rupees, depending upon the nature of divination and the consequent sacrifice. He also gets a share of the sacrificed animal. Success in feud or agricultural activities is divined by another method. Before proceeding to a raid a cock is killed by cutting off its throat and thrown at a distance of about three to four feet. A bamboo basket is placed nearby. If the head, when chopped, falls into the basket, the expedition would be a grand success. Before beginning the cultivation, beer is prepared and the beer together with rice dough is then sprinkled along the path leading to the field or over it. If by that time the beer turns sour, the cultivation would not be fruitful.

Omen. Omens can either be approval or warning given by the spirits. One of the most common omens is a snake entering a hole, which signifies the death of one of the villagers.

We thus see that social customs and the magico-religious beliefs and practices are inextricably intertwined together and one has its bearing on the other. And the Gallongs surrounded by a host of spirits — malevolent and benevolent — carve out their destiny, fighting the curse and ill-luck bestowed by the one and acknowledging the blessings and the good-will of the other.

EPILOGUE

In the preceding chapters an attempt has been made to portray the important aspects of the life of the Gallongs. In the changing world of today the life of the Gallongs has not remained unaffected. The perpetual dweller in isolation has now emerged into the open and is viewing the world with a broader perspective. The walls of isolation are crumbling down gradually; the horizon is expanding. The zeal for developing their own areas and coming at par with other people of India has caught them and there appears no sign of its flagging. The constant danger of being made captive, reduced to the status of a slave or murdered which lurked in the villages a few decades ago has disappeared. Peace and tranquillity now reign supreme. The ubiquitous dao which once was used to cut the throat of a human enemy is now used to cut the natural enemy in the shape of the jungle and increase the area of cultivable land to grow more food and have more mental peace. The inter-village and inter-tribal feuds which were once the order of the day have now given place to inter-village-and inter-tribal trade. The Gallongs who once were afraid to go from one village to another are now peacefully visiting far-off villages for trade and other purposes. The inter-village raids have totally ceased; slaves emancipated. The whole store of energy which was spent in war is finding expression in an altogether different way. It is expended for bringing more lands under cultivation and consequently getting more food to eat which in turn has created an urge for living. The faces which remained overcast with the gloom of servitude and shadow of death are now beaming with smiles. The contagious feud has been replaced by an infectious peace. 'Might is right' has become an obscure myth and a case, instead of being decided by a treacherous raid

resulting in a blood-bath, is being decided by oratory in a peaceful and orderly village *kebang*. Kidnapping has disappeared; regular and arranged marriages are tempting. Children and invalids no longer live in confinement for fear of being kidnapped or murdered but play cheerfully in the village and fill its life with merriment.

During the past decade there have been tremendous achievements in the direction of making communications easier. The unstable hills, the formidable rivers, the difficult terrain all amalgamated their cruel forces together to make the construction of roads and paths extremely difficult. But, in the teeth of serious opposition from these forces of nature, roads and paths have been built, and built at considerable length. The high hills and turbulent streams which separated villages from one another have been subjugated and most of the villages are now connected with bridle-paths. New roads and paths have brought new hopes and new ideas to the people. Bridle-paths connecting one village with another have made the migration of cultural traits from one area to another easy. People have now developed an urge for knowing their neighbours and benefiting from the experiences of their life. These paths have brought them in closer contact and provided them with better facilities for understanding each other. The Along-Majorbari road which passes through a number of major Gallong villages will connect the area with towns in Assam. This has provided them with double benefits: given them sufficient money while working on the road and provided them with a line of communication with the rest of India. It will also be used for transporting tools and implements for carrying on the various developmental activities in the region.

Medical help has reduced the suffering of the people to a considerable extent. The opening of hospitals and dispensaries has created an atmosphere of seeking medical help. Injections are becoming very popular and whenever a physician visits a village a host of patients flock around him for medicine. But

this liking for 'modern' medicine has not reduced the importance of the native medicines nor the medicine-man. The people still have their implicit faith in their magico-religious methods of diagnosis and their own *materia medica*. Since the very conception of sickness and death is based on the tempers of the spirits rather than on the mal-functioning or non-functioning of the organs of the body, the recourse taken to cure sickness and to avoid death is to propitiate the spirit and not to put the organs of the body in order. In the event of sickness both the native medicine-man and the physician try their best to cure the disease by using their own methods: the former kills a fowl for the spirit, the physician gives a few pills to drive away the spirit and whichever is a stronger inducement for the spirit to quit the body of the patient, gets the upper hand. But the 'modern' medicine made available to them has, in any case, banished the sufferings and made them more cheerful and happy. People are reacting favourably and adopting these medicines gradually.

The Gallongs have expressed a great desire for education. In the pre-independence era the schools in the area could be counted on the finger tips and none of the boys reading in such schools reached even upto high school standard. Now there are a number of lower primary schools and a few middle schools. The area has a full-fledged high school of its own at Along. Some of the boys from this area are also getting higher education in different parts of Assam. The number of students is increasing and the quality of students at the same time is also going higher. Education has enlightened the people and brought a great amount of confidence in them. It is only with education, they feel, they can compete with the world outside and make themselves felt beyond their own horizon. Parents are now eager enough to send their children to school even though they are inconvenienced by depriving themselves of the little work the children could do for them and for the family. This enthusiasm will go a long way in the spread of education in the land.

Attempts at the improvement of agriculture are being made

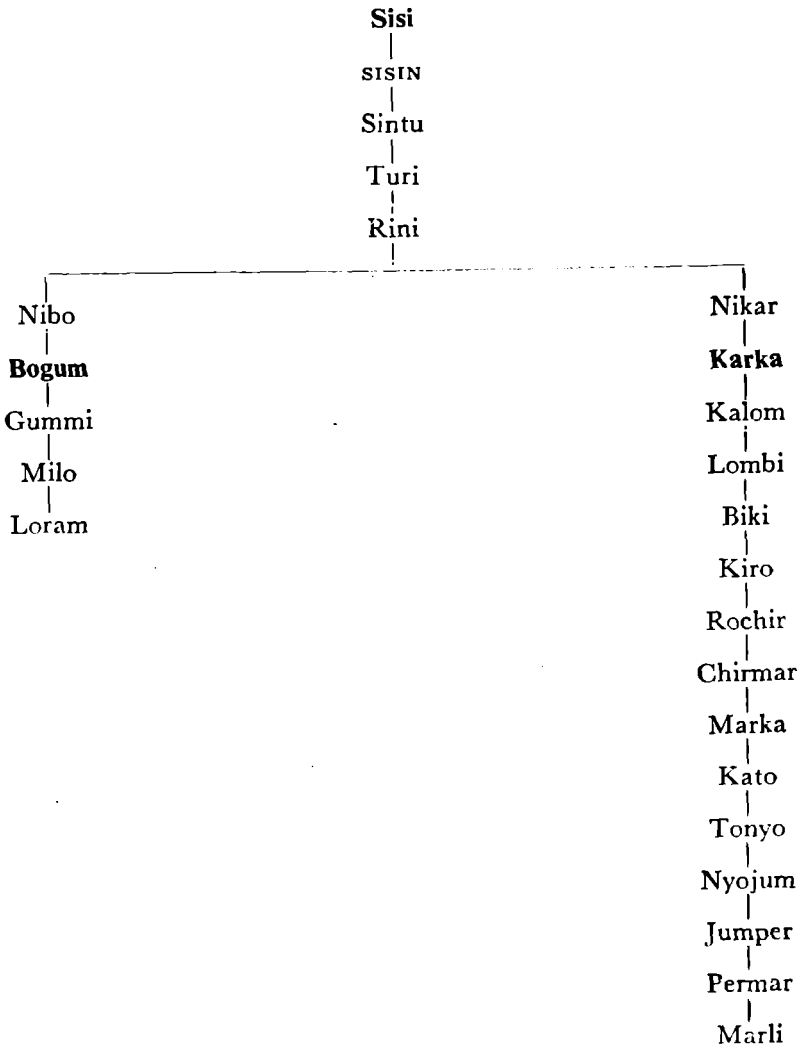
over a wide field. People are exhorted to bring more land under cultivation and thereby grow more food. Improvement of jhum fields has caused the yield to increase. Fertilizers are not much favoured but a little manure in the small kitchen gardens attached to the house is being used with profit. Improved seeds and agricultural loans have given an impetus for better and increased cultivation. These useful improvements in the technique of cultivation have given a fillip to their interest in agricultural activities. Permanent cultivation has been adopted to a very little extent, but wherever it is, all technical help in the shape of seeds, bullocks, ploughs and other essential requirements is made available to the people. Better agriculture has meant more food and more food brings more happiness and peace. Introduction of new cash crops has established a regular trade with the plains of Assam and this is gaining them more money. This all-round development in the field of agriculture has given the people an incentive to adopt the various improved agricultural techniques.

The co-operative movement has stirred the Gallongs. Co-operative societies have been opened in their area and they are showing great interest in associating themselves with them. The Multipurpose Co-operative Stores at Along is the result of their own enterprising effort. Even in small co-operative stores they are enthusiastically and eagerly purchasing shares and thus patronizing them.

The scene in the land has completely changed today. Within the last few years the people have come to know the benefits of peace in the country. The N.E.F. Agency Administration is taking all pains to develop the area and the people too, have put their reliance on the developmental activities and are cheerfully co-operating with them. From chaos has emerged a lasting peace; from suspicion, confidence.

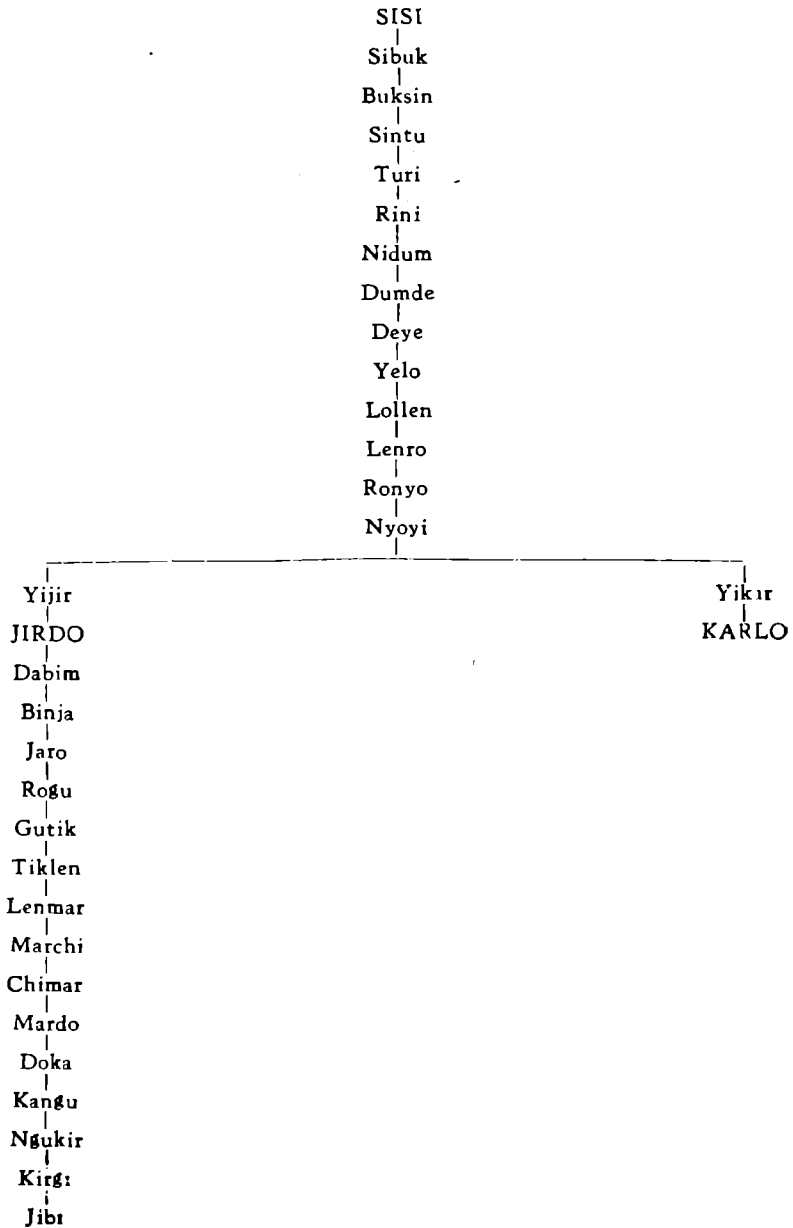
APPENDIX I

GENEALOGY OF THE BOGUM AND THE KARKA



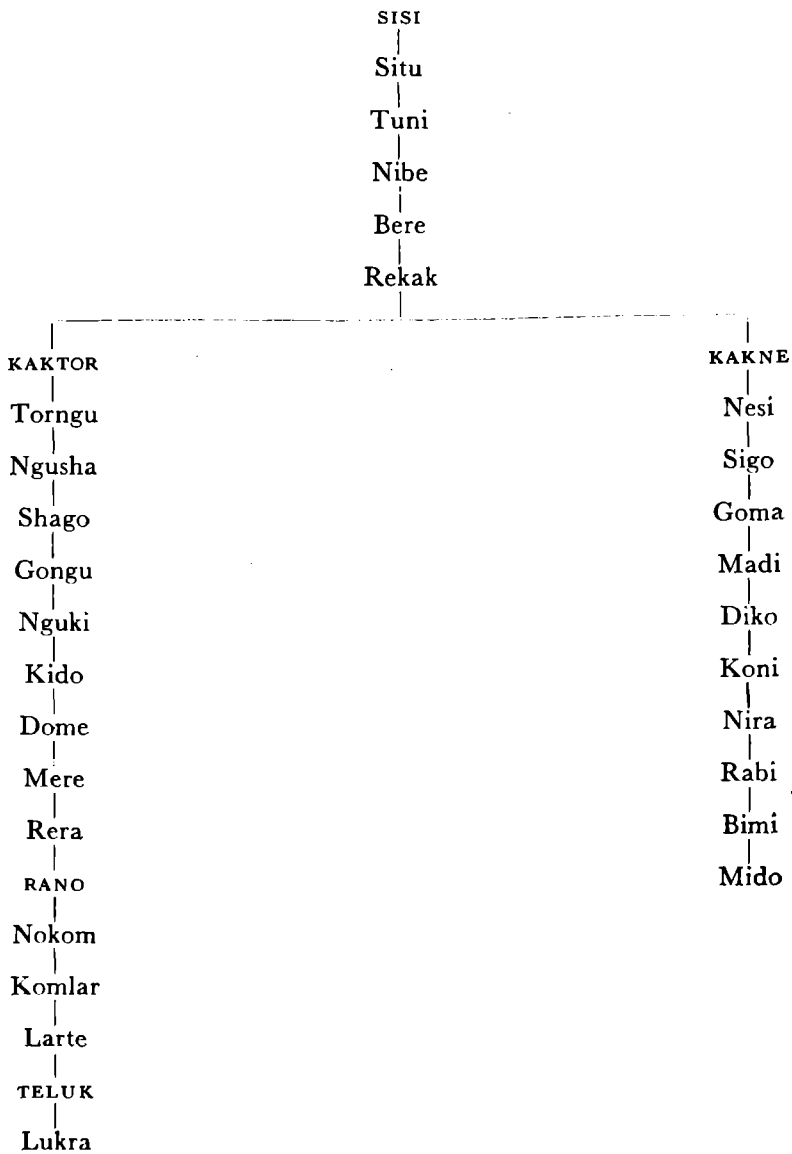
APPENDIX II

GENEALOGY OF JIRDO AND KARLO



APPENDIX III

GENEALOGY OF THE KAKTOR-KAKNE (TATOR-TANI)



GLOSSARY

<i>Abo</i>	—	Father.
<i>Bago</i>	—	The side of the fireplace facing the entrance of the house.
<i>Dirde</i>	—	The path leading to heaven or hell meant for young men and women.
<i>Dirte</i>	—	The path leading to heaven or hell meant for old and invalid persons.
<i>Ebing (or Eshing)</i>	—	Firewood or any other kind of wood.
<i>Gam</i>	—	The Village Chief.
<i>Giche</i>	—	Hell.
<i>Gite</i>	—	Heaven.
<i>Giyi</i>	—	Leaves of a variety of the mustard plant. (Brassica Sp)
<i>Hilok</i>	—	A tree, where spirits are believed to reside.
<i>Jesek</i>	—	A skirt open in front.
<i>Keba (or Kebang)</i>	—	The village council.
<i>Kiruk</i>	—	The organized hunting by the Min-yongs and other allied tribes.
<i>Lalik</i>	—	A shirt, locally woven and meant for men.
<i>Nijir Abo (or Abo Nijir)</i>	—	The 'female father', the term of reference used for the father's sister.
<i>Nyibo</i>	—	The village priest.
<i>Nyode</i>	—	While entering the house, the left hand side of the fireplace.
<i>Nyosi</i>	—	The side of the fireplace opposite to <i>bago</i> .
<i>Ponu (or Ponung)</i>	—	A folk-dance.

- Raseng* — The girls' dormitory among the Min-yongs and other allied tribes.
- Siye* — The local yeast used for beer.
- Tali* — A black fly with a thick and hard body.
- Tamak* — A tree, the fibres of which are used for making fishing-nets.
- Tanyak* — A greenish yellow fly.
- Tingir* — A fish.
- Udu* — While entering the house, the right hand side of the fireplace.
- Yalo* — The soul substance.
- Yapchi Tabi* — The path leading to heaven or hell meant for children.
- Yasi* — The spirit of the deceased.
- Yeek* — A weeder made of bamboo.
- Yoksha* — A long blunt sword with a few iron plates at the butt-end which, when shaken, give out a jingling sound.

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NORTH-EAST FRONTIER AGENCY

