

The GORKHAS

A glance at their culture and traditions



Min Liwang

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(Revised Edition)

Min Liwang

Himal (India), Kalimpong

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The words/common nouns that are italicized are actual words/names in particular dialect of each caste/tribe where that appeared and words/nouns in bold letters are Nepali words.

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This book is not a rulebook. While every care has been taken to provide correct and authentic information but the author and the publisher assume no responsibility for any errors and omissions therefore interested persons/groups are being advised to contact authoritative persons before performing any of the rites/ceremonies that are described in this book.

Dedicated
to
the traditionalists

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Preface

I had a great desire to write a book on customs, traditions and culture of the Gorkha community for those who might be eager to know about them. When I started this challenging job I too was not quite familiar with all the customs and traditions, in vogue or extinct. After going through various books and having numerous interactions with learned persons as well as common people I could finally gather the required information that enabled me to materialize my desire. However, I still believe that it is not complete in all aspects. It would take a larger volume to write on the customs and traditions of even a single caste or sub-community of the Gorkhas. I would be happy if this book can provide a first hand knowledge to many inquisitive readers, besides eliciting interest amongst many readers who are more or less familiar with the culture and traditions of the Gorkhas.

While going through the customs & traditions of the Gorkha community it is found that some of them are irrelevant and old enough in the present context while others, though apparently primitive, have sufficient reasons of acceptability behind them. In this book I have tried to put on record all available such customs/information with a view to provide sufficient information to the readers.

Since the beginning of the society, people have moved from one place/country to another, shaping and re-shaping human history. As such, migration of people has always played an important role in human history. Until the formation of political barriers people moved freely from one place to another, the Gorkhas are no exceptions. Their movement was mainly concentrated in the (sub) Himalayan region. As such, today they are found scattered all over these areas. I have

only endeavoured to record a few of their customs and traditions in this book.

However, the customs and traditions discussed in this book may differ from those that are followed by the Gorkhas in some other parts of the country because like many other communities, they also have an verbal tradition. Many of their traditions have been passed verbally from generation to generation. So, there should be no surprise, if their traditions and customs differ, a bit, from place to place. Of late they have been trying to record the customs systematically and also various groups are working for uniformity in the customs they have been following. Anyway, I have written this book with my sincere desire to present the Gorkha society to the outer world and, definitely it would not have been possible for me to succeed in this enterprise without the help of many friends and well wishers who, without any hesitation, supplied me the required information. I put forward my sincere thanks to Shri T.B.Thakuri, *Ex-Principal, Junior Basic Teachers' Training Institute, Kaleybung*, Shri Nardhoj Limboo, *President, Yakthung Shong Chumpho, Kaleybung*, Shri L.N.Sharma, *Secretary, Hitkari Sammelan, Kaleybung*, Shri N.R.Pradhan, *Principal, SUMI, Shri Laxman Gurung, Treasurer, Tamu Chhonj Dhin, Kaleybung*, Dr. Jyoti Prakash Tamang, *Chief Editor, Journal of Hill Research, Gangtok*, Shri Manindra Bhujel, *Secretary, Bhujel Association, Central Committee, Kaleybung*, Shri Sonam Dorjee Bhutia, *Ex-Secretary, Dendruk Kyiduk, Kaleybung*, Shri Indra Bahadur Chhetri, *Teacher, Pagang Gumba Jr. High School, Kaleybung*, Shri Arun Prakash Rai, *Secretary, Khambu Rai Kirant Sanskritik Sansthan, Gumbahatta Unit, Kaleybung*, Shri Kitar Sherpa, *Asst. Secretary, Sherpa Buddhist Association, Kaleybung*, Shri Arun Kumar Rasaily, *Member, Press Association of Darjeeling*, Shri Dennis Karthak, *Bong Busty, Kaleybung*, Shri Shyam Lama, *Relli Road, Kaleybung*, Shri Hira Chhetri, *Topkhana, Kaleybung*, Shri Subash Subba, *Rausey Bazar, Kaleybung*, Shri Nar Bahadur Tirwa, *Chhibo Busty, Kaleybung*, Shri Ratan Thami, *Gumbahatta, Kaleybung*, Shri Ratna Upasak, *Basundhara Distributors, Kaleybung*, Shri Dun Shung Lepcha, *Bong Busty, Kalimpong*, Shri Sahadev Giri, *Chandralok, Kaleybung*, Dr. S.B.Rai, *Kaleybung*, Shri Kishore Thapa, *Kaleybung*,

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With gratitude I would also like to thank those writers and editors whose books/magazines proved valuable for my compilation.

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I thank Himal (India) Printing and Publishing House, Kaleybung for giving this book an opportunity to see the light of day.

While my hearty thanks go to Shri R.P.Lama, who took time to pen down the forward, special honour and thanks go to Shri Solon Karthak and Shri Yogbir Shakya for valuable help rendered by them.

Last but not the least, I would not forget to thank my wife Joy Subba and sons Pranay and Prashant who helped me to light many candles at the hours of need and who passed many sleepless nights along with me in the course of writing this book.

I dedicate this book to those, who inspite of many adversities, are determined to preserve their customs, traditions and culture in the modern world. They have remained undeterred by the inroads made by modern technology, which often seems to eclipse into insignificance some of the cherished possessions.

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Min Liwang

PREFACE
for the revised edition

My heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the numerous readers who are responsible for this revised edition of the book. I hope that their love and affection will lead to further editions in future.

Meanwhile as advised by some readers/authoritative persons I have revised and rewrote a few paragraphs and also added/deleted a few of the traditions and customs. While the first edition was also a sincere endeavour to provide sufficient information to readers to enable them to know more about the Gorkha community, this second and revised edition, I hope, will prove further more valuable to them.

For this revised edition too, I thank Himal (India) Publishing House. My sincere thanks also go to Shri Shamsar Ali, *Kalimpong*, Shri Uttam Chhetri, *Nagrakata (Dooars)*, Shri R.B.Mukhia 'Rujich', *Gangtok (Sikkim)* and Shri Jiwan Bantawa, *Ghoom*. Many thanks to Shri Apoorva Mukhia, *teacher, St. Augustine's School, Kalimpong*, who toiled hard to re-edit the entire book and thus helped to keep the words of this edition in right places and made it grammatically fit for the readers. I would also like to thank Shri Purna Mani Pradhan, *Imprinta, Kalimpong* for the attractive cover design.

Kaleybung, 15 March 2006

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Member, Panel of Experts, Union Public Service Commission.

Nature-centric culture of the Gorkhas

Oral tradition prevalent among different castes and communities has always played an important role in the process of preservation of our age-old traditions and customs. Print media has appeared only recently when music, songs, dances, folktales and other forms of art and literature have been written down by the present generation. Religion has rooted deeply in the traditions and customs of our society. Fear of God among the Gorkhas are some of the contributing factors for enriching their culture mostly based on religious themes. No religious ceremonies, rituals and functions are complete without the invocation of Gods and Goddesses and in some cases even to the departed souls of forefathers are in practice among the Gorkhas.

The book 'The Gorkhas-a glance at their culture and traditions' by Shri Min Liwang of Kalimpong has portrayed a critical evaluation of Gorkha traditions, customs, beliefs, behaviour and social systems of different castes and communities. The Gorkha culture and tradition is an assimilation of varied cultural heritage of different castes and sub-castes and even the tribal groups of the area. The author has done an in-depth study and critical evaluation of the spiritual and metaphysical values of the Gorkha culture and tradition in a very comprehensive manner.

The tradition of spirit possession in the society, occult art in the form of Jhankri (witch doctor) and Bokshis (witches) have a close link with the nature and environment. The art of ghost busters in the society and its social tradition have influenced the life and society of the Gorkhas for ages. As John Masters has rightly remarked – 'the legendary Gorkhas are ever smiling people, their loyalty, devotion to duty, honesty, amiable disposition and the habit of hard work are some of the inborn qualities of the Gorkhas'.

The following inscriptions in a sculpture of a Gorkha soldier in Central London supports the above views: -

“Bravest of the brave
Most generous of the generous
Never had a country more faithful friends
Than you”

Culture is understood in the sense of the way of life of a particular group of a society. The proposed publication will act as a catalyst in the fact of the onslaught of cable culture when our culture and tradition are on the brink of extinction and eroding fast due to demographic problems and environmental degradation.

Socially, culturally and even from demographic point of view, the hill areas of Darjeeling is a miniature of India. It might be said a conglomeration of diverse and varied culture and traditions, superstitions and beliefs.

Shri Min Liwang has gone into the depth of the complexities of tradition and culture of the Gorkhas and has made a sincere attempt to bring home some of the rare and salient features of social values of the Gorkhas to the light.

Systematic and scientific research, process of preservation and documentation of our culture and traditions should be the priority of both the official and non-official agencies, which may act as an inspiration to the posterity.

My best wishes and congratulation to the writer/author of the book for such prolific writings on a difficult yet untouched subject in English, which may fulfill a longfelt need of the hour.

R.P.LAMA
Darjeeling

June 28, 1999

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fructify my desire of writing a book of this nature.

The Gorkhas - a glance at their culture & traditions

INTRODUCTION

Between 26° 31' to 27° 13' north latitudes and 87° 59' to 88° 53' east longitudes, lies the northmost district of West Bengal - Darjeeling, shaped like an irregular triangle. Being situated in the tri-junction of the boundaries of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, Darjeeling is bounded in the west by the 12000 ft. high (sub) Himalayan peak of Phalut, in the east by the Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal besides the sovereign states of Bhutan and Bangladesh. The district has Sikkim in its north and the district of North Dinajpur of West Bengal and the Purnea district of Bihar in the south.

Topographically the district can be divided into two distinct tracts- the hill areas in the north and the plain areas at the foot of the hills. Tourism and tea are the two most important pillars of Darjeeling's economy which, to say the least, is ill balanced and under-exploited as well. The majority of the local populace are primarily agriculturists. They depend on subsistence farming. These days, educational institutions are also playing a major role in generating income and employment.

The hilly tract that consists of three sub-divisions of Darjeeling, Kurseong (Kharsang) and Kalimpong (Kaleybung), which became a part of India in the middle of the nineteenth century, is the homeland of a timid community called Gorkhas. In the plain areas of Siliguri sub-division and Dooars of Jalpaiguri district too, a large number of Gorkhas reside, besides being a force to reckon with in the state of Sikkim, which joined the Indian mainstream in the mid-twentieth century.

The sizeable presence of the Gorkhas in the Northeastern states and hilly tracts of Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh are never to be wished away.

The Gorkhas are physically short & stout and amiable in nature. Their primary occupation is agriculture. They, other than the agriculturists, depend mostly on Government and private jobs; only a few are engaged in business. A large number of Gorkhas are in the defense services of the country.

Although Gorkhas may look homogeneous but culturally and traditionally they are heterogeneous. Recently they have been trying to revive and establish their individual culture and tradition. This process may have made them conscious of their own culture and traditions but to some extent it has also, culturally and traditionally, alienated one from other within themselves. This book will discuss all about the culture and traditions, in vogue or extinct, of these communities separately but as a single unified Gorkha culture.

HISTORY

The **Khukuri** (a traditional weapon) wielding warrior Gorkhas known all over the world for their valour and uprightness, are but an assimilation of various castes and sub-communities. The process of assimilation of these castes and sub-communities started way back in the early 18th century with the expansion of the Gorkha Kingdom. At the beginning of the 18th century till 1815 A.D., Nepal was not like what it is now-a-days. Before the 1815 treaty of Sugaully between the Gorkhas and the then British India, the boundaries of Nepal were: -

‘ In the east – the whole of Sikkim upto Damsang Garhi and Dalimhatgarh of Bhutan, Darjeeling District, some parts of Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar and upto Goalpara of Assam; in the south – the whole of the Gangetic plain upto the Ganges

river; in the west – from Garhwal-Kangra to Chhamb separated by Ravi (Rapti) river from Kashmir.’ (See diagram)

It was Prithvinarayan Shah, the 18th century Gorkha ruler, who was responsible for carving out the kingdom of Nepal by annexing and consolidating small fiefdoms ruled by Newar, Tamang, Rai, Limbu, Magar, and Lepcha etc. Thus it was largely due to Prithvinarayan Shah, a new kingdom called Nepal and a new nationality (or community) known as the Nepali came into prominence. In India, although the word Gorkha is commonly used as synonymous with Nepali, the Nepalis, who are in India due to annexation of the territories held by them or settled permanently after retiring from the Indian Army or Labour-works etc., however prefer to be called Gorkhas to differentiate their identity from the citizens of the sovereign state of Nepal. This identity crisis among the Indian Gorkhas has become one and the most important of the reasons for their current struggle for a separate state of their own within the Indian Union. Though this demand is not a new one and its origin can be traced back to the pre-independent India, it was a low-key affair till the mid-80s. The movement however gained momentum after the mid-80s leading to a violent agitation that compelled the Indian Government to think and act towards formation of an autonomous administrative unit for the Indian Gorkhas in deference to their demand for a separate statehood. Finally, a tripartite accord was signed between the Gorkhas, the state Government of West Bengal and the Indian Government on 22nd August 1988 and thus Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council came into existence.

DEFINITION

The nomenclature of this unified community called Gorkha or Nepali has always been in controversy since its inception. Even today tug-of-war among them regarding nomenclature of their community is on. It seems very hard to find an amicable solution as far as use of the word ‘Gorkha’ or ‘Nepali’ is concerned.

Before assimilation or unification as a single community they were known by their respective caste/tribe names like the Bahuns, the Chhetris, the Newars, the Limbus, the Rais etc. Even after assimilation due to the Gorkha expansion and their subsequent settlement in India they were, till recently, together known as **pahariya** (hillmen) and not as Gorkhas or Nepalese as they are otherwise known today. They realised the importance of a strong single community when they started to live together sharing common language and traditions. Social, political and cultural pressure of the numerically dominant and educationally superior communities was also a factor which forced them to unite under the roof of a single community which eventually termed as Gorkha or Nepali. This unification has however pushed their respective culture, language and religion into the oblivion.

A section of the Gorkhas who claim that they should be known as Nepali put forward many explanations in support of their claim. It is believed that the word Gorkha has come from **go**, means 'cow' and **rakh**, meaning 'protector'; thus Gorkha means 'protector of cows'. This meaning ought to create discontent among a few befeater animist tribes. It is also believed that there is a place called Gorkha in Nepal, which is homeland of the present ruler of Nepal and the place is said to have derived its name from a Hindu sectarian sage called Gorakhnath. Hence, many are of the view that the name of a community cannot be based on the name of a foreign land. Moreover to most others, Gorkhas are those people of Mongolian origin who are regarded as the military tribes or the fighting classes and who are enlisted in the Army including, of course, their families. Besides these, there are also sections of the people who are reluctant to accept the word Gorkha, as they believe that the Gorkhas are actually invaders who invaded upon them. While people who prefer the word Gorkha feel that the word Nepali indicates 'of Nepal', 'belongs to Nepal', or 'Nepal national', hence the name of a community should not by any means be related with a foreign sovereign country. To differentiate this, the Nepali speaking people in India these days use the word Gorkha abundantly and in this book too the word Gorkha is used to indicate the community whose culture and traditions will be discussed.

The controversy does not end with the settlement of the issue of nomenclature of their community. There is also no unanimity over the composition of the Gorkha community. Occasionally some of the tribes/castes that comprise the Gorkha community try to voice silently their discontent for their inclusion in the community. There is no definite yardstick to verify the genuineness of the definition or composition of the Gorkha community. According to the renowned historian Dr. Kumar Pradhan, people residing in the **pahar** (hills) below the alpine zone called **Bhot** (Tibet) and above the **Madhes** (plain) are culturally identified as Gorkha or Nepali. But in many occasions even people residing in high altitude and low plain are also seen calling themselves as Gorkha. However, taking Dr. Pradhan into consideration all the tribes/castes who originally hailed from the region that lie between the high altitude Himalayas and the plain can be termed as Gorkha and accordingly all the known and available castes/tribes of the region are included in the ambit of Gorkha in this book.

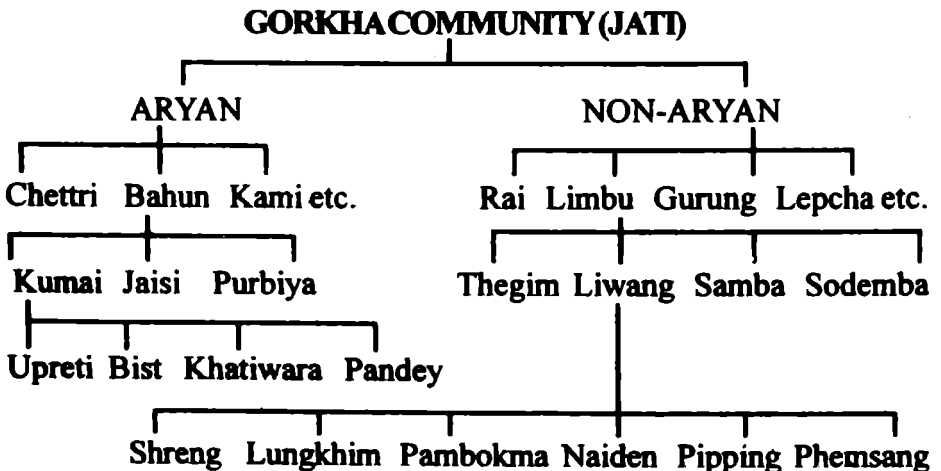
ETHNIC GROUPS

According to the above definition if we look into the Gorkha community we can broadly divide them into two different races – the Aryan and the non-Aryan or Mongoloid – locally distinguished as **tagadhari** (sacred thread wearer) and **matwali** (the class of people who drink wine/liquor). Barring a section of the Chhetri who fall under the category of the **matwali**, the majority of the Chhetri, Bahun and Thakuri fall under the first category i.e. **tagadhari**. The Newar, Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Rai, Limbu, Sherpa, Lepcha etc. are non-Aryans in which except Newars, who are believed to be of Dravidian race, others are mongolians. The Yakkhas, the Limbus, the Rais and the Sunuwars are together known as **Kirata**. Although a few castes like the Kami, Damai and Sarki etc. is Aryan but they are termed as **matwali** for use of liquor and meat in their rituals. Whatever be their origin but the individual traditions, folk lores, folk culture, rituals, rites and customs followed by them exhibit distinct feature of unique Tribal character.

Almost each caste is again divided into groups or classes, for example, the Bahuns are divided into three groups viz. **Purbiya** (people from east) or **Parbatiya** (people of Hills), **Kumai** or **Paschhimay** (people from west) and **Jaisi**. Similarly the Gurungs are divided into **Char-jate** (four castes) and **Sorha-jate** (sixteen castes). The Tamangs into **Barha-jat** (twelve castes) and **Athar-jat** (eighteen castes). The Limbus into **Paanch-Thar** (five clans), **Mewakholay** (people of Mewakhola), **Chhatharey** (six clans) etc. However this classification has no social relevance. A few castes are considered as the progeny of two different castes such as Jaisi, believed to be progeny of a Kumai and a widow Bahun and as such Jaisis are not allowed to perform certain religious ceremonies. Likewise, Khawas or Bhujel is the progeny of a Thakuri and a slave woman. Similarly, Hamal is the progeny of a Bahun and a Thakuri couple. But these days castes falling under these categories outrightly reject this theory of progeny and they term it as baseless and motivated.

The two races, The Aryan and the non-Aryan, combined together makeup a **jati** (community or society). This **jati** is again divided into various **jats** (castes or sub-communities). **Jats** can further be subdivided into various **thars** (sub-castes or clans) and Thars into more minute categories of kindred called **pachha** or **gotra**.

An example of the classification of the Gorkha community is given below:



The details of various **thars** of the different castes are briefly summarized in Appendix I.

LANGUAGE

As we knew that the Gorkha society consists of many sub-communities or castes. Each of these sub-communities is having their own distinct customs and traditions. With passage of time and due to socio-cultural assimilation, as described above, the customs and traditions of each community have become complimentary to each other. Resultantly, the Gorkhas have come to be regarded as a single homogeneous community to an average person, notwithstanding the cultural and linguistic pluralities inherent in it. Similarly, Nepali language has also emerged as the common linguafranca and the most acceptable mother tongue of all in spite of each community having own dialect (**kura**). Today when each and every sub-community or caste has been trying to revive and safeguard their respective dialect (language), Nepali language is playing the role of a common denominator by ensuring their co-existence. And it was due to the joint efforts of all sub-communities or castes that Nepali language was recognized and was included in the 8th Schedule of the constitution on 20th August 1992. However, like nomenclature of their community, the row over the name of their language also took an ugly turn at the time of its recognition. But as their language is being recognized as Nepali in various forums and by various national academics, universities and institutions, by and large, people have found the name of their language as Nepali more acceptable. As such, besides their castewise dialect or **kura** (language), they consider Nepali language as their mother tongue.

SCRIPTS

The Indo-Aryan language Nepali, refined **khas** or **parbatey-kura**, is predominantly spoken by the Gorkhas. Being the linguafranca Nepali

has also assumed the position of their mother tongue. Nepali is written in **devanagari** script.

Besides Nepali, there are varieties of other languages or **kura** (dialects) belonging to the Tibeto-Burman group. Except in the state of Sikkim, where these languages/dialects are recognized as official languages and are also taught in the schools, elsewhere these dialects are used very rarely. Tamang, Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Sherpa, Sunuwar, Lepcha, Thami, Newari are the languages/dialects belonging to the Tibeto-Burman group having its own scripts and grammar. The scripts of a few dialects/languages are appended in annexure II.

RELIGION

The Gorkhas are basically animists, having strong faith in Shamanism or nature-centric religion. Each and every sub-community or caste follows a distinct custom relating to childbirth, marriage and funeral rites etc. Each caste has its own traditional ways of life, myths and dances. They, except the Chhetris and Bahuns, extensively use **raksi** (alcohol), **jaanr** (alcoholic beverage made-up of grain) and **maasu** (meat) in all ceremonies. However, at present, the majority of the Gorkhas are Hindus and it is believed that the Chhetris and the Bahuns spread Hinduism amongst the different segments of the Gorkhas but strangely a few religious rituals of the Chhetris and the Bahuns are also quite different from that of the other Hindus of the country. Buddhism has the second largest following. A few follow Christianity and a small section, Islam.

Unlike the tribals of the Northeastern states, the majority though Christian, perform ceremonies according to their own customs and also observe their own festivals besides the Christian festivals like Easter, Christmas etc., the Gorkhas following different religions seldom adhere to their traditional customs and festivals which has hastened their customs and traditions to the brink of extinction.

The Gorkhas believe that after death the soul of the dead remains wandering in the world of the dead. Even after death they do not completely sever their ties with their families. As such they always remember the dead members of their family with offerings and try to keep the dead happy and in peace so that they do not bring misfortune to the living members of the family. Therefore each and every segment of the Gorkhas worships **kul** (tutelary god/ancestors). **Kul** worshipping is entirely a family affair so no outsider is allowed to witness the ceremony. A section of the Chhetris (especially **matwali**) worships community-god called *Masto*. Their temples do not possess any idol and are looked after by a priest called *Nangri*. Another section worships **kul** called *Dewali* in an open field where they sacrifice a goat. The Chhetris and Bahuns also perform **goth-dhoop** every year in the month of Baisakh (April-May) and Mangsir (November-December). Each **thar** (clan) performs this **puja** jointly in a **goth** (cowshed) where members of other **thar** or caste/tribe are not permitted to be present. The Tamangs worship *Lha* during Jeth-Fagun-Mangsir (May-June, February-March, November-December). If this *Lha* is performed by Bonbo (community priest), sacrifice of an animal is permitted, but if a Buddhist Lama performs the *Lha* then animal sacrifice is strictly prohibited. These days as the majority of the Tamangs follow Buddhism they rarely sacrifice any animal. Tamangs and Sherpas put *lungdhars* (rectangular piece of flag like cloth, or handkerchief like piece of cloths tied together in a row and hung like flags) after religious ceremonies. The Thamis usually worship **Bhume** (land or earth God) and never touch pigs while the Magars sacrifice pigs to worship their tutelary God **Baje-boju** (ancestors/forefathers). Another section of the Magar worships *andalay* (disguised tiger) with **dhoops** (incense) only. The Rais worship **Chandi** (a form of Goddess Durga) as well as their family God **Tin-dhunga** (literally means three stones/tripod stove) known as *samkhalung*. Animal sacrifice and use of alcohol is compulsory, barring a few exceptions, in all **Kul** worshipping ceremonies of the Rais. Lepchas believe that they came from the valley below the mighty Kanchenjunga and that is why they consider *Kingtsoonzaangboo* as the holiest peak. The Limboos have the most complex system of animistic customs. They consider *Yumasam* (divine soul/principal

diety) as their creator and always worship them first before worshipping any other form of god. In case of Rais it is *Paruhang-Sumnima* who is their principal deity. Most of the Rais also worship *Pangsamman* and *Pangdangba* (their ancestral deities).

Like the Lepchas, the Sherpas too consider the Himalayas as their creator. Therefore, once in a year they worship *chyangi* or *kangso* (snowy peaks i.e. the Himalayas) in the month of Jeth (May-June).

The Gaine worship their musical instruments **Sarangi** and **Awano** during **dashain** festival and in the month of Chait (last month of Vikram era). They also worship *bai* (evil/spirits of dead) on the riverbanks.

The Thakuris have no family deities. They worship Gorakhnath, a sectarian sage, whose doctrine is followed by other segments of the Gorkha community also. For the Sunuwars **Chandi**, **Buri-boju** and **Bhimsen** are the supreme deities. Before the festival of **dashain** they perform **Bhimsen puja** in front of a stone sacrificing a hen. Sunuwars also perform their religious ceremonies in two distinct ways (i) **devkarya** (divine worshipping) and (ii) **pitrikarya** (ancestral worshipping). These two are again divided into six different rituals, which different sects of Sunuwars perform according to their beliefs. The myth of **Buri-boju & Baje** (ancestors or a form of Shiva-parvati) and **Jungalee** (a person who lives in jungle or hunter or a form of Lord Shiva) are dominant factors in the religious rituals of the Gorkhas. Almost all the segments of the Gorkha community endorse this myth and worship them with high esteem.

JHANKRI CULT

The cult of spirit possession and their customary community priests are still found in the Gorkha society. These community priests, who can possess supernatural powers, are supposed to perform all the customary rites from birth to death. They act as a priest as well as

perform the role of a medicine person to heal the patients and ward off intruder evil spirits from the body of a possessed person. Whenever necessary these community priests are also able to introduce, voluntarily, the spirits in their body. These community priests can be termed as Shaman as defined in various books and dictionaries. The folklore of the Gorkhas is full of legendary characters like **Ban-jhankri** (jungle's priest), **Buriboju** (old grandmother), **Jungalee** (God of jungle/nature), **Shikari** (hunter or God of jungle/Shiva) and **Boksi/Boksa** (witches) etc. that are considered teachers and inspirations of these community priests. **Buriboju**, **Jungalee** and **Shikari** are considered friendly souls who do not harm the human beings unless they are disturbed or not given due respects/offering at the time of performing various rites. **Boksi** and **Boksa** are wicked souls who cast bad spells on people especially on children. They assume the shape of black cats and attack at night. **Ban-Jhankri** is believed to be the first Shaman who was taught the knowledge of mastering the spirits by god Himself with a promise to teach and pass the technique to the human beings for their welfare. Since then, **Ban-Jhankri** has been teaching the technique to selected persons. However, it does not mean that all Shamans found in the Gorkha society fall under this category or all are disciples of the **Ban-Jhankri**. Actually there are varieties of Shamans with different powers and uses. *Fedengba, Samba, Yema, Yeba, Poinbu, Ngiami, Bonbo, Pajiu, Khepre, Bijuwa, Garau, Mangpa* etc. are some of the Shamans who are found in the Gorkha society.

According to a myth, a **Ban-Jhankri** lives in a deep forest. He is short like a dwarf with long profuse hair jingling like tiny bells, covering almost his entire body. He likes clean and neat places and also **chokho** (pure/holy) persons to be his disciples. He selects young boys of any ethnic group who do not have any scratches or cut marks over their body and takes them to his cave house deep in the jungle. There he teaches them the art of controlling the spirits. In the course of teaching them all the techniques, he offers them earthworms and the eggs of the ants to eat. After imparting his knowledge, he leaves them unharmed at the same place from where he had earlier lifted them. At the time of parting he presents **dhyangro** (a traditional drum used by

Shamans), hairs, etc. to his disciples. While at confinement, **ban-jhankri** keeps the boys hidden from his wife, as it is believed that she devours human beings, if found. Such boys consequently become **jhankris** who can solemnize ceremonies to ward off evil spirits. However, in some cases the word **jhankri** is also used as common noun to indicate a customary Shaman having supernatural powers.

The *Fedengba*, *Samba*, *Yema*, *Yeba* are the priests of the Limbus. The first one performs religious rites mostly linked to the various life-cycle ceremonies like birth, marriage and also can invoke tutelary or lineage deity. In such cases, the *Fedengbas* do not go to trance. *Samba* is the master of the *mundhum*, the oral religious verse of the Limbus. He is the person who can voluntarily possess the soul of the dead, in last rites, and with the help of *mundhum*, makes the safe way to heaven for the dead. *Yeba* and *Yema* are two male and female Shamans who can control the evil spirits. While *Fedengba* and *Samba* use a bronze **thal** (plate) as a drum at the time of performing rites, it is **dhyangro** (traditional drum used by Shamans) that is used by *Yeba* and *Yema*. However, in most cases all the Shamans can be seen using **thal** as a drum. *Yeba* and *Yema* usually wear white frocks, headgear with feathers stuck to it, **rudraksh** (a holy bead), **cowrie** (conch/shell), **ghanti** (bells) etc. While other Shamans hardly wear any specific dress unless it is necessary, except a turban like **pheta** or a traditional **dhaka topi** (traditional cap), which is necessary for all to wear while performing rites and ceremonies.

Rais use the services of **Bijuwa**, who wears similar dresses as described above, to ward off evil spirit and to take the soul of a dead to heaven or safer place by performing **chinta** (séance/trance) at the time of last rites. *Dewa Nakcho* is their priest who invokes lineage deity. *Mangpa* and *Nopa* are other customary priests found in Rai community.

The religion that is followed by Gurungs is a blend of animism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Lately they have started to follow Buddhism strictly. As such, animism and their traditional priests have little place in their society. Even little animism that is followed by them is also

greatly influenced by Bon religion of Tibet. Their priest is known as *Pajiu* and *Khepre* or *Ghyapring*. Nowadays they use the services of Buddhist Lama to perform their rituals and life-cycle ceremonies. Like Gurungs, Tamangs too are Buddhist by religion hence their rituals and other ceremonies are also performed by a Lama. However, it is necessary to include a Bonbo in a ceremonial team along with other dignitaries. Sherpas too follow monastic religion. As such they too use the services of a Shaman, very rarely, in a ritual. Their female Shaman *Doloma* is not capable of voluntary possession as other Shamans.

Lepchas' male Shaman is *Boomthing* and female one is *Mun*. They perform all the rituals from birth to death: Similarly Sunuwar too have two types of Shamans, one male called *Poinbu* and another female called *Ngiami*.

Besides these, there are other practicing Shamans found in all ethnic community. The most common one is **Dhami**. Another type of Shaman is **Mata**, which is relatively new concept but is spreading fast in the society. There are some basic differences between a **Dhami** and a **Mata**. The former is old, and customarily recognized male Shaman while the latter, either male or female, is very new to the society. **Dhami** performs anywhere anytime but **Mata** performs only in a specific place and at a specific time. However, the similarity is that the both Shamans can voluntarily possess their tutelary god or **guru** (teacher) and can ascertain the disease or misfortune befallen on a person. They are also capable to predict the future. Remedies are also available with them.

Even today, the above described Shamans have a very special place in the Gorkha society. Although with the advent of the modern technology and medical science, the concept of these Shamans is gradually vanishing. And some section of so called modern and developed society is branding it as superstitious, without doing any in-depth research. But it is an invaluable segment of the Gorkha traditions, full of unsolved mysteries.

BIRTH

Due to rapid urbanization and with the spread of education and intermingling with other religions, adherence to their traditional customs is fast diminishing in the Gorkha society. Even among the Hindus there are various sects who prefer to follow customs as professed by their sects only. It has great impact on their unity and cultural identity. However, there are a few traditional customs that are still followed, in part or toto, by them irrespective of the religion they follow.

Traditionally, there are little differences amongst the Gorkhas in performing a rite after a baby is born. In a family of the Chhetri and Bahun, the most orthodox of all, when a baby is born **nwaran** (naming and purification) ceremony takes place on the fifth day for a girl baby and on sixth day for a boy baby. **Pasni** (first rice feeding) ceremony is done on the sixth and fifth month for a son and daughter respectively. When the boy reaches the sixth year it is time for **chhewar** (tonsure) ceremony. Kami, Damai and Sarki also perform similar ceremonies.

Among the Gurungs the *tha swa vaw* (naming) ceremony is performed by a Lama or *Ghyapring*, their community priest. When a baby boy becomes three years old the maternal relatives of the baby perform *putputey* ceremony. *Kaikaw* is their feeding ceremony.

Among the Gorkhas, Thakuris is the only community that perform their customary rites facing west. Thakuris perform **nwaran** (naming) ceremony on the sixth day and **pasni** or **bhatkhwai** (feeding) ceremony on the sixth and the eighth month respectively for a son and a daughter. Thakuris, instead of engaging a priest, prefer to feed the baby through the hands of the eldest member of the family. This ceremony is also known as **panch-gans** (five course of meal) since the feeders feed the baby rice and milk five times. **Chhewar** (tonsure), according to Thakuri custom, is done between the eighth and twelfth year.

The Tamangs, basically Buddhists, perform *thapsang* (naming) ceremony on the third day or the eleventh day, as convenient to the

family. A Lama reads *chhoi* (holy books) and names the baby. Some families use the services of a Bonbo (community priest) for this purpose. When the newborn son reaches the sixth month or the daughter reaches the fifth month they perform *kankhwaba*, feeding ceremony. It is said that once they had a system to feed the baby through the beak of Maina (black bird). Perhaps they believed that such a system would sweeten the voice of the baby. But today hardly any Tamang family is found following this system. The Tamangs also perform *tapche* (tonsure) ceremony for a boy baby, at the family's convenience, between the third and the seventh year after the baby's birth. When a girl baby attains the age of seven or eleven, they perform a ceremony called *shyama hanger pinba* where they offer *shyama* and *hanger* (their traditional ladies dress). It is a way to declare their womanhood. In a similar fashion, some castes/tribes of the Gorkha community also organize a ceremony to offer *guniu-cholo* (traditional Nepali dress for women) to their daughters when they reach puberty age.

Perhaps Thami is the only community that does not perform any other ceremony after *nwaran* (naming) for a newborn baby till his/her marriage on attaining adulthood.

The most cultured, developed and a complete community among the Gorkhas is, undoubtedly, the Newars. Pradhan, as they are otherwise known in India, are also perfect businessmen and are often called 'the Marwaris of the Gorkhas'. When the first baby is born to Newari parents they perform *machabu-byakegu* (purification) ceremony on the fifth or sixth day. For every other child born, this ceremony is held on third day. *Machajunko* (rice feeding) ceremony is held within six to seven months for a son and within five to seven months for a daughter. Like Thakuris, they also place toys, paddy, pen, books, bricks, and soil etc. on a plate and to presume the occupation to be pursued by the baby in future, they allow the baby to touch any object, of his/her choice, so placed on the plate.

The Rai or Khambu, who are also known as Jimdar, have the largest number of dialects. Their community priest *Bijuwa* or *Mangpa*

performs their religious rites. When a baby is born in their family, like other communities, they too perform *hangchhananglotma* (naming) ceremony on the sixth day for a son and fifth day for a daughter.

Fedengba or *Fedengma* is the main priest of the Limbu community, who are also known as Subba or Tsonq or Yakthumba. Their customary rites, known as *sapokchomen*, starts from the sixth month of the pregnancy of the mother. The fourth and the third day after birth, for a boy and a girl respectively, is the day for *yangdangfoma* (naming) ceremony. When the boy becomes six months and the girl five months old, they are fed with the solid food in a ceremony called *taksi*. It is *nalingken thangben* for boys and *sisaken menchhin* for girls through which their adulthood is declared.

Sunuwars performs *sapuflafla* (naming) ceremony on seventh or eighth day of birth of a daughter and on tenth or twelfth day for a son where the mother and the new born baby is made to cross over a holy fire. They perform *khame-umcha* (feeding) ceremony on seventh/eighth month for a male child and on fifth/seventh month for a female child.

The Sherpas and Lepchas or Rongs follow Buddhism but the Lepchas do not follow Lamaism strictly. They instead have their own customary priests called *Mun* and *Boongthing* who perform almost all the rituals from birth to death. On the other hand Sherpas use the services of their priest or healer *Lhawa* only occasionally because of their strong faith in monastic religion. The Sherpas perform simple rites at the time of the birth of a child. The Lama fixes the day for the naming and purification ceremony. They serve *chhyang* (local alcoholic beverage) and *rotis* (breads) to relatives and friends present on the occasion. When the son grows a little, they perform *chharten*. The Lepchas accept the birth of a child only on the third day after the birth. The *Boongthing* performs *tungbaongfat* (naming and purification) ceremony on the third day. On this day all the members of the family take bath, as a symbolic purification, and is followed by a grand feast.

The Gaine community performs **chhaithi** on the sixth day after the birth of a baby. On this day they name the baby and make **cheena/kundali** (document that records position of different stars at the time of birth and also predicts the future). On the ninth day they organize a feast for their relatives. They perform rice-feeding ceremony for the newborn on the sixth month. The main occupation of the Gaine community is to visit the neighbourhood, singing in tune with the **sarangi** (musical instrument). Their songs can usually be classified into three groups. The first contains the deeds of individuals. Religious song containing the stories from the holy books of the Hindus is the second. The third one contains vivid aspects of day-to-day life that is usually sung in **jhyawrey** (a folk tune) tune.

In India Yakkha are more popularly known as Dewan. They very rarely use their clan name. Ritually & culturally they are very close to Limbus as well as to Rais. Sometime they are mistaken for Rais. After the birth of a child they perform naming ceremony on the fourth day and after six months they perform feeding ceremony.

Gorkhas believe that on the sixth day after the birth of a child **bhawi** (god who decides the future of mankind) comes and writes future of the child on the forehead.

MARRIAGE

When a baby is born in a Gorkha family, the first ceremony performed by them is called the **nwaran** (naming and purification), after which comes **pasni** or **bhatkhwai** (rice feeding) ceremony followed by **chhewar** (tonsure) and **bartaman** (investiture of sacred thread ceremony, only in the case of Chettris and Bahuns). As believed by the Gorkhas, the most important phase i.e. the second phase of life starts with marriage that is relatively liberal, free and non-conservative in the Gorkha society. Though as per traditional custom, inter-caste marriage is prohibited but there is a provision in their custom to bring a girl of another caste to the bridegroom's fold after marriage. However, in the

modern Gorkha society, exogamy is seldom seen as a taboo. Basically there are two kinds of marriage systems found in the Gorkha society, one **magibihe** (arranged marriage) and another **choribihe** (marriage by elopement).

Magibihe i.e. arranged marriage in Gorkha community, unlike in other communities, is finalized by the girl's family when the boy's family puts forward the proposal of marriage. **Choribihe** i.e. marriage by elopement is socially acceptable and is common in the Gorkha society and is usually done when the boy and the girl belong to different castes or religions. In certain castes like Rai, Limbu, Gurung, Sunuwar etc. **choribihe** is actually pre-arranged by both the parents, where bride's parents send their daughter to a pre-determined place or spot like fair or market place where the prospective bridegroom comes to take her home. However, the girl is taken into confidence before finalization of such arrangement. Usually in **choribihe**, with or without the consent of their parents, an adult boy and a girl, normally in love with each other, elope. There is however no customary rule to endorse the elopement by the parents of both sides. They may disagree with this marriage. In such situation, the boy and the girl are free to start a new life of their own. Their offsprings are not considered illegal. After elopement it is the duty of the boy or his family to inform the girl's family about this elopement on the third day. This ceremony where a few relatives and friends from the groom's side visit the girl's house with customary **sagun** (offerings) to inform as well as to persuade the girl's family to agree of this elopement is called **chorko sor**. Ordinarily every marriage of this type often settles with mutual understanding.

In this type of marriage normally two ceremonies are performed. The first ceremony that is performed at the boy's house is called **sindoorpotey** or **tikatalo**. The next one, which is solemnized at the girl's house, is called **dhogbhet**. **Sindoorpotey** or **tikatalo** is performed in the boy's house on the day when the girl is brought or some other day as determined by the boy's family. Usually, close relatives and friends from the boy's side attend this ceremony. However there is no restriction for other invitees to attend it. As the name indicates, in

this ceremony the boy sprinkles **sindoor** (vermilion) in the parting of the girl's hair and puts necklace of green **potey** (tiny beads) around her neck. The elder relatives bless the couple by putting **tika** (a mark on forehead) made of **achheta** (rice mixed with curd and colour) on their foreheads.

When the girl's family accepts the elopement they fix a date and intimate the boy's family to call on them to solemnize the **dhogbhet** ceremony. On receipt of this call the new couple along with their close relatives or friends pay a visit to the girl's house on the fixed date when the boy is formally introduced to the girl's family with customary **dhog** (to bow down in respect or an act of touching feet of the elders). Till performance of this ceremony family members from the eloped couple are not permitted to meet each other.

The affluent families often organize receptions separately, in the boy's as well as in the girl's house, either on the day of the above ceremonies or on any later date, although there is no social or customary obligation to do so.

Traditional customs are rarely followed in all its details at present. But it is worth knowing about the marriage customs of the Gorkhas where women are given equal treatment and every care is taken for their secure future. Among the Gorkhas, the Lepchas have the unique marriage custom.

‘When a Lepcha boy attains a marriageable age, a suitable girl is found out. The uncle of the girl is first approached for negotiation. If approved by the parents, one *pami-bu* i.e. the maker is selected and sent to the house of the prospective bridegroom to communicate the proposal. Then a day is fixed for the prospective bridegroom to visit the bride's house, when he should carry a load of presents on his own back to prove that he has attained the age of doing manual labour for his livelihood. The *boongthing* i.e. the family priest may ask complex questions on behalf of the bride's parents to test the ability of the boy who is expected to answer politely and

prove his mettle. If successful, he is to stay in his fiancée's house, and serve her parents for about three years doing all sorts of manual labour and household duties. The father of the bride, if satisfied, gives his final word of giving away his daughter to his son-in-law. After all these formalities are satisfactorily observed, the marriage is finalized and the bride is allowed to leave her parents and go to her husband's house.' (see '*Hill people of Darjeeling*' by *Parasmani Pradhan*).

It is a matter of research whether above described marriage is still followed by the Lepchas or not, but it is believed that to test the manhood of the bridegroom the girl's father orders the prospective bridegroom to split a firewood into pieces when he comes to propose for a *bree* (marriage). However, both customs described above are hardly in vogue in modern Lepcha society and where as these days their *bree* (marriage) usually comprises seven stages: - *nyomvyat*, *nyompanol*, *nyomkhyomoo*, *nyomthongbong*, *a-sek*, *ramphat* & *lihrone*.

According to a custom followed by the Limbus, the married-off daughters are not considered totally out of their family fold until *sehmui* or *saimundry* ceremony is performed. The death rituals of the married-off daughters whose *sehmui* ceremony is not solemnized, is performed not according to her husband's customs but according to the customs of her father and it is the members of the father's family who are authorized to observe the restrictions. Infact, *sehmui* or *saimundry* is nothing but a barrier to check whether one's daughter will remain happy, content and secure in her husband's house or not. If the girl's parents are satisfied about the security of their daughter, they agree to perform *saimundry* ceremony. In this ceremony the son-in-law needs to pay a negligible amount along with other necessary items and in return the father-in-law gives total charge of his daughter to his son-in-law. There is no time specified for this ceremony to be performed. The girl's father may agree to perform this ceremony at the fag end of the life of his daughter. Rais also follow similar systems.

With or without *sehmui* or *saimundry* the long and tedious marriage ceremonies i.e. *naksingma metkham* of the Limbus comprise **char kalam dus reet** (four stages & ten customs). The first stage is *naksingma*, the proposal stage; the second stage is *thakkewa*, the girl's farewell from her homestead. *Metkham-thim* is the third stage that is to be performed compulsorily. In an orthodox society *metkham-thim* of children cannot be performed if their parents had not performed this at the time of their marriage. The fourth stage is the offering of ten customary offers viz. *yangthokma*, *pantakma*, *sepma-topma*, *haktoba*, *thisaptemma*, *sangsingmayang*, *fundomgyangma*, *turaimma*, *metkesamayand* and *panchupma*.

Marriage systems of the Yakkhas are similar to that of Limbus. They pay bride price, which includes cash, **raksi** (liquor) and **jaanr** (fermented millet/alcoholic beverage). Like Limbus, Yakkhas also practise *saimundry*.

After the acceptance of the marriage proposal, a Newari bridegroom sends ten pieces of *gwaya* (betel nuts), *sinhamu* (vermilion), cloths and other ritual items in a velvet bag to the bride's house. This ceremony is called *gwayabiyegu*. A fortnight before the marriage ceremony another pack of *lakha* (sweet meats) is sent to the bride's house, which is known as *lakhabiyegu*. After these, they perform a series of ceremonies like *kalya nhyak wanegu* (anklet wearing), *bhoumacha ka wanegu* (marriage procession), *bhaoumacha pit biyagu* (bidding adieu to the bride from her house) and *khwa swa wanegu* (literally meaning 'to see the face of the married-off daughter at the groom's house after marriage').

A peculiar custom, prevailing only among the Newars is *ehi* or **belbihe** (marriage to wood-apple) through which a young unmarried girl, between five to twelve years of age, is married to a **bel** (wood-apple). There are various reasons given for selecting the **bel**, a sacred fruit among Hindus, as a symbolic husband for a Newari girl. The acceptable reason is that the fruit has strong unbrittle cover and a Newari woman

is not considered widow inspite of the death of her human husband until the fruit with whom she is married remains intact. *Ehi* is solemnized individually or in groups in the presence of a large numbers of relatives and invitees as in a real marriage. After the ceremony the **bel** is either preserved or immersed in the river.

The Sherpa has four stages of marriage customs – *tichyang*, *pechyang*, *demchyang* and *gonékutub*. The first one is proposal stage and *pechyang* is a meeting between two parents to fix the date of marriage after the acceptance of the proposal by the girl's family. The third is the marriage ceremony and the last one is the farewell of the girl from her parental house.

Gurungs' marriage system is the simplest. They have the system of **rodighar** (community house for the young ones). Characteristically, this **rodighar** is similar to **gotul** of the Maria tribe of Baster district of Chhattisgarh. The young boys and girls meet in this **rodighar** through which they get the opportunity to know each other. When a couple decides to tie the knot through **rodighar** encounter, the boy's parents approach the girl's parents with *pa* (liquor) and *nak* (chicken) as **sagun** (offering as a mark of good luck) and put forward the proposal. On acceptance, the boy, accompanied by his friends, goes to the girl's house on a fixed date and brings her home. However, nowadays Gurungs hardly follow this custom, instead they go to the girl's house with pomp and show, beating drums and dancing. And whereas **gotul** is still preserved and continued by the Marias in a changed format **rodighar** has almost completely disappeared from the Gurung society.

While proposing a marriage, the Thakuris (from the boy's side) send a basket of dishes to the girl's family, known as **kutiro-khuwaunu**. On acceptance of the proposal, the day for the marriage is fixed and the boy's family performs certain ceremonies before leaving for the girl's house like the breaking of **shyauli** (small plants), on the day when marriage is to be solemnized. Before letting a newly wed bride to enter into the house of her groom, a **yagya** (a religious fire-place considered holy and where sacrifices/offerings are made) is held in the **goth**

(cowshed). The newly wed couple has to move around the fire thrice, tied together by a piece of cloth. While encircling the **yagya** there is a certain custom where the paternal aunties of the groom obstruct the couple from doing so and in such a situation the groom needs to pay money and offer cloths to let them complete the rituals. This system is called **bhanwar ringyaunu**.

To propose a marriage in the Thami community, two proposers directly enter the kitchen of a Thami girl and without any prologue, disclose the reason for coming and return back without waiting for the response. Twelve days later, the proposers revisit the girl's house with **raksi** (liquor) as **sagun** (drink offered as a mark of good luck). If the proposal is accepted the marriage is held on a fixed date. The marriage is solemnized by simply colliding the head of the boy with the girl's head. However, they also follow another system of marriage called **chardam**.

According to the Tamang custom, when **jant** (a group of marriage party from the groom's side) reaches the girl's house, the girl's family greets them by placing *airak* (liquor), *mhendo* (flowers), *kororogeng* (breads) etc. on the door. After greeting them, various ceremonies of the marriage are performed throughout the night. *Tamba* (a learned man) narrates the stories of their ancestors and also a session of questions and answers, between the girl's and the boy's side in lyrical form with beating of *damphu* (a traditional drum of the Tamangs) goes on simultaneously. The next day, before parting-off, they perform **chardam** (four payments i.e. rice, coin, liquor and flower.) **Jant** leaves the house of the girl after a grand **samdhi-bhoj** (feast for in-laws).

The Kagateys are akin to Tamangs. As such, their rituals are not very different from those practised by the Tamangs. The marriage ceremonies of the Kagateys are also officiated by the Lamas and are generally performed as other Buddhists perform.

The Sunuwar, also known as Mukhia, engage either **Bahun** (a hindu priest) or *poinba* (a community priest) to perform their religious rites.

It is a **lhamee** (informer or mediator) who takes a marriage proposal to a girl's house with a bottle of *sanyabu* (liquor). The girl's father while accepting the proposal touches the bottle. After performing **magne** (to propose/ask) ceremony and before the marriage ceremony *saimundry* i.e. changing of girl's title to would be husband's title is done. *Pidar* (a learned old man) performs **Graha-shanti** (propitiation of planets or stars) ceremony at the girl's house that is followed by other marriage ceremonies. After performing all the rites and after the ceremony is over, the **behuli** (bride) cooks food and serves for the whole family and relatives present. Marriage ceremony of Sunuwars can also be divided into three categories viz. *punish a gyabe*, *damushyo gyabe* and *khui gyabe*. The first one is marriage being solemnized by parental arrangement while the second one is marriage by love duly consented and arranged by the parents and family. The third one is marriage by elopement without formal consent of the parents and family.

The Chhetris, Bahun, Kamis, Damais, Sarkis and Magars follow similar types of nuptial customs. Their marriage ceremony is solemnized by moving around **yagya** (holy fireplace) and presided over by a Brahman reciting holy verses from the holy books of the Hindus.

To finalize a marriage, the Gaine community compares **cheena/kundali** (document that records position of different stars at the time of birth and also predicts future) of the boy and the girl. If the match is right then the boy gives a rupee to the girl's father as a token of acceptance of his daughter as his bride. On the day of marriage they compulsorily sing *jaimalpata* (a song) using **awano** and **sarangi**.

Excluding the Chhetris and Bahuns, alcoholic beverages like **raksi** (liquor) and **jaanr** (alcoholic beverages made of fermented finger-millet) are extensively used along with meat in all ceremonies including marriage. Beside these, **supari** (dried betel nuts) is a must item in a Pradhan/Newar's marriage. *Kokomhendo* or **totolako phool** (flower of *Aroxylum Indicum*) is equally important in a Tamang's marriage. **Ratyoli** (a song and dance play) is performed in a Chhetri and Bahun groom's

house in the evening when the groom is away with **jant** (the group of marriage party) at the bride's house to solemnize the marriage. Among the Gorkhas only the Thakuris follow matriarchy. The Gurungs and Tamangs practise cross-cousin marriages.

A common practice found among the Gorkhas is **behuli farkaunu** (returning of the bride). On the third day after solemnization of an arranged marriage, according to this system, the groom along with the bride visit the house of his father-in-law. Another unique system found in the Gorkha society is **jaari**. It is actually an act of marrying other's wife. Marrying other's wife is not considered indecent in Gorkha society and simply by paying **jaari-kal**, as demanded by the abandoned husband or his family, such marriage can be legalized. **Jaari-kal** is actually a fine (compensation) imposed by a **pancha** (committee) or **samaj** (society) on a **jaar** (relationship with a person who has married his wife). However, modern Gorkha society does not endorse this **jaari** system and as such these days it is very rare in the Gorkha society. Nevertheless, the **jaari** system proves that the Gorkha women are free to choose their man at any stages of their lives. Re-marriage of widow/widower and polygamy is not seen as offence and indecent. Another praiseworthy system fast disappearing or has almost completely disappeared from the Gorkha society is the way of placing invitation for a marriage ceremony. They have a system of inviting friends, relatives and guests by giving pieces of **supari** (dried betel nuts), **lwang** (clove) and **alaichi** (cardamom). Instead of following such a nice system, now a days, they prefer colourful invitational cards for extending a **nimto** (invitation).

Dowry is unknown in the Gorkha society but of-late a few bridegrooms have started to ask **daijo** in the line of dowry as prevailant in some parts of the country.

Almost each caste/tribe has provision for women to sever their nuptial ties when they don't find peace in their marriage. Similarly men-folk also can be out of the marriage as and when they desire so. In both the cases they have to follow and perform certain customs that differ from clan to clan.

The younger ones in a family are permitted to solemnize their marriage even if their bachelor elder brothers or spinster elder sisters are yet to be married off. Such supersession is neither uncommon nor inappropriate, whether such a marriage is an arranged one or one contracted through elopement. Such an act, however, is considered to lower the prestige and the dignity of the person thus superseded. As an act of restitution, therefore, the couples contracting such a union needs to perform **sir uthaunu** (make to rise again/head held high) ceremony. This can be done by offering a bottle of liquor, nominal amount of money and a piece of cloth along with customary **dhog** (to bow down in respect or to touch the feet of the elders).

The Gorkha society is liberal towards their women-folk and it is more interesting to witness, rather than read, their rich customs in a typical marriage.

DEATH

The Gorkhas are ritually very rigid so far as funeral ceremonies are concerned. Although each caste has its own way of performing funeral rites, however, like any other community, the only reason for performing these rites is said to make an easy passage to heaven for their dead ones and also to seek eternal peace for the departed soul.

The Chhetris, Bahuns including Kamis, Damais, Newars, Sanyasis, Tamangs etc. cremate the body after death, whereas the Rais and Limbus bury their dead ones. Though the Lepcha community practice burying, the final decision of the way to dispose the body rests on their community priest. Similarly the Magars, Sherpas and Gurungs either cremate or bury the dead as decided by their priests. They also have a tradition to immerse the dead in the river; however this system is not in practice at present.

The Chhetris, Bahuns, Kami, Damai and Magar after cremation of dead body, immerse the last remains **asthi** (a piece of skull or ashes) into the river. Those, who have the means, may immerse the **asthi** in

the river Ganges, which is considered holy according to Hindu belief. The **kriya** (a period of ritual) lasts for thirteen days. On the first day, after the cremation of the body, the sons of the deceased clean shave their head, moustache and beard and stay aloof for remaining thirteen days in **koro** (certain place for people observing funeral rites) wearing white unstitched new cloth pieces. They cook their own food and perform other ritual daily. During this period they do not take salt/oil and are not allowed to talk unless there is an emergency. Even in an emergency they are not allowed to repeat the sentences, once spoken. The last day i.e. the thirteenth day is called **suddhi** (purification performed by a Bahun). They have the practice of donating utensils and other household items including cow, to the Bahun after the ceremony is over. The Thakuris donate a cot on the eleventh day. People from the neighbourhood and relatives are called on for a feast. They do not take milk of any kind for a year in memory of the dead mother. The process, like the cutting of hair and remembering the deceased parents repeat every year on the death anniversary and also during **solah-shradh** (an act of sixteen days' devotion to the deceased) just before **dashain** festival in the month of September/October.

The funeral ceremonies of the Gurung also last for thirteen days. Along with the dead body they also bury a piece of metal, eatables, liquor and customary **accheta** (rice mixed with curd). *Paye* is an expensive rite performed by them within six months or a year to end the restrictions. The Lama or *Ghyapring* (community priest) performs their funeral ceremonies. Some of the Gurungs perform *syarge* dance while taking out a dead body.

It is said that the Tamangs' *ghewa* (last rites) is the most difficult one. As soon as a person dies, the dead body is kept on the ground preferably in a sitting posture and 108 lamps are lit. Although they have the tradition of taking the dead body to the burial ground or crematorium in sitting posture, now-a-days they hardly follow this practice. Another practice, they almost relinquish, is blowing of *ghyarling* (a wind instrument) and beating of *dhyangro* (a drum) while taking dead to the disposing site. Instead, like other castes, they too

blow a **shankha** (conch/shell) while leading a funeral procession. Their funeral procession is led by a head Lama clinging **ghanti** (a small bell) and reciting holy verses. The Lama pulls the dead body with the help of a long piece of cloth. At the time of cremation the Lamas read verses from their holy books and in-between offer various items into the funeral fire one after another.

The Tamangs normally like to cremate the dead body on a hillock rather than on the banks of a river as Hindus do. Their funeral ceremonies include *shyaktinsshi*, performed between seven and thirteen days. *Ghewa* (last rites) is performed after forty-nine days or after six months as decided by the family of the dead. It is said that the expenses for the feast & ceremony for the *ghewa*, which lasts for two days and which is attended by numerous friends and relatives, is very high. Hence, many defer this ceremony for years. Tamangs also perform *daura* and *jungbe* dance with **kangling** (shine-bone) on the day of *ghewa*.

After cremation of a dead relative the Kagateys observe forty-nine days of pollution period. Sometime this pollution period is shortened to a week. During this pollution period Lamas (number varies as per economic capability of the family of the deceased but generally more than one) read holy verses from the Buddhist scriptures. On last day they prepare *cho* (different fruits offered to Buddha) and *torma* (dough made of wheat, rice and fruit in different shape).

Like Tamangs, the Lepchas also prefer to take the dead body to the burial ground in a sitting posture. Though their community priests decide the way of disposing the dead-body, they prefer burial. The last rites, in the Lepcha tribe, take place three or four days later.

The Thamis, after either cremation or burial of a dead on a hillock like Tamangs, leave a bronze vessel near the spot. **Jutho baarne** (restrictions in eating) period is for three days during which period they refrain from eating **sishnu** (*urtica dioica*-a thorny plant, which when touched creates burning and etching sensation), **kodo** (finger-

millet), **faapar** (buckwheat). Within three days, the family members construct a **chautaraa** (a resting platform on roadside) in memory of the deceased and on the third day, during the purification ceremonies, the male relatives of the deceased cut their hair sitting on this **chautaraa**. The rites are completed after a **Guru** (community priest/Shaman) performs the last rituals that include sacrifice of a **kukhraa** (chicken) and a feast of **raksi** (liquor), **jaanr** (alcoholic beverages) and **maasu** (meat) to the friends and relatives present.

The Newars, after cremation of their dead, perform **ghahsu** (purification ceremony) on the eleventh day. **Vicha-wanegu** (mourning) is a process of mourning by the male relatives on the second day after cremation. The fourth or the sixth day is called **locha** when women-folk visit the house of the deceased to mourn with **baji** (flattened rice), **dhow** (curd) and **ayela** (liquor) etc. On the day of **ghahsu**, the members of the family bathe in a river where male members shave their eyebrows and moustaches.

The Rais cremate the dead if death is unnatural, else they bury. After burying they leave a small piece of bamboo on the direction of the head symbolizing a ladder to help the deceased to pave his/her way to heaven. The purification ceremony or the last rite is performed either on the third or the thirteenth day when friends and relatives gather for a feast. In the evening **Bijuwa** (community priest) performs **chintaa** (séance/trance) for total salvation of the departed soul and also to protect the family of the deceased from its wrath.

On the death of a relative the Yakkhas observe three days pollution period **kriyaa**. On the fourth day the sons of the deceased clean shave their head, moustache and beard. They officiate **phedengma** or **bijuwa** (community priests) to perform **chintaa** (séance) to guide the deceased's soul to heaven.

The Sherpas follow Buddhism. As such, their funeral rites are similar to that of the Tamangs'. Like **ghewa**, as observed by the Tamangs, the Sherpas perform **shibju-sorku** (purification rite) on the fourth day. A

feast is organized for the relatives and neighbours and later in the evening they perform *sendi-khingur* (séance) to drive away the *sem* (soul). Those, who have no means, finish the death rites on the third, seventh or eleventh day after performing *napur* or *symbinapur*.

The Limbus perform *khauma/Yumsa* (breaking of eating restrictions) ceremony on the fourth day of the death of a male and on the third day for the female deceased. The last rite is performed by *fedengba* (community priest) reciting *mundhum* (verse or holy verse which helps to make the way to heaven or interaction with deceased persuading him/her to leave the world of the livings) with the help of *tumihangs* (learned persons), five in number, representing as **pancha** (society/community). They keep various eatables including *ara* (liquor), *thee* (alcoholic brew made of millet) and *sa* (meat) etc. on a **nanglo** (a small winnowing tray made of bamboos) as a last offering to the deceased. A *tumihang* (a learned person/member of society), carrying a brittle stick, intimates the people the day of the last rites. After performance of all the rites the *tumihangs* announce the ending of the restrictions and inform the restriction observer members of the deceased that from that day they allow them to do all the family chores without any restrictions. After the announcement they break the stick, which was carried at the time of informing the people about this rite, into pieces and throw. *Kusiringba* is the ceremony when members of the family offer last prayer to the deceased at his grave lighting candles or **diyos** (small ceremonial earthen lamp). This ceremony is performed on the ninth day if the deceased is a male and on the eighth day if the deceased is a female. They perform last rites simultaneously with above ceremonies or can be deferred for uneven months like three, five or nine etc. Performing of the last rites depends on the financial capability and availability of all the members of the family of the deceased. *Samba* is their community priest who performs *tongsing* (séance/trance) on the night of the last rites to guide deceased to the heaven.

There are certain systems that are commonly practiced by all castes/tribes of the Gorkhas. **Malami** (a mourner in a funeral procession), while returning from the burial ground or crematorium, sprinkle over

their bodies water mixed with **titepati** (a bitter plant called *Artemedia Vulgaris*) or **gaunt** (urine of the cow) or **sunpani** (gold immersed water). After returning they also touch or crossover fire or a thorn. The logic behind this practice is the purification of the mourners and also to erect a barrier between the worlds of the dead and the live ones. The Gorkhas pay a token cost of the land before cremation/burial. They usually undress the dead and lit a **Kapoor** (camphor) in the mouth placing it over a coin. This ritual, which is done before disposing the body either by cremating or burying, is called **dagbatti**. A deplorable practice found in the Gorkha society is the system of **rungnu** (to guard the people observing funeral ritual). Although, the idea behind this system, where people gather in the house of the deceased, till the last rite is performed, to solace the bereaved members of the family and also give them company at the hour of such tragedy is commendable, but of-late people have played merry-hell with this system by gambling and making chaos after gathering at the house of the deceased thereby harassing already harassed bereaved family. No formal invitation is required to be served for funeral ceremonies, while it is compulsory for every Gorkha to join the funeral procession, mere verbal intimation, either directly or indirectly, is enough for the last rites. On the day of the last rites people attending the ceremony offer help in cash or in kind. The owner of the house keeps a record in a register and it is necessary for the receiver to reciprocate the help on similar occasion in future.

Gorkha women do not accompany the dead to the burial ground or crematorium but these days women are seen participating in the funeral processions. Gorkhas also avoid father and son joining together a funeral procession. Chhetris and Bahuns change their **janai** (sacred thread) after attending funeral ceremony.

According to the cause of the death they follow different systems to perform the last rites. In case the dead body is not found, in certain castes like Chhetris and Bahun, they make the replica of the body using **kush** (a kind of grass).

The Sherpas, Tamangs and a few Lepchas put a flag called *lungdhar* (a long rectangular piece of cloth, where holy verses are written) in front of their houses after performing last rites.

FESTIVALS

The Gorkhas celebrate numerous festivals, big and small, throughout the year. Almost in each month they celebrate one or the other festival. Most of the festivals are celebrated with ritualistic gaiety, either as per the Hindu tradition or in their animistic way. Even those festivals, which are based on and related to Hinduism, are also celebrated according to their traditional way. Although each caste/tribe has its own festivities, there are certain festivals that they celebrate unitedly. The most important festival of the Gorkhas, which they celebrate unitedly, is **dashain**. The festival of **dashain**, as they know Durgapuja, begins from the next day after the new moon of Asoj month (September-October) known as **ghatasthapana** (placing of holy vessels) and concludes on the next full-moon day i.e. **kartik purnima**. During this period Gorkhas worship **Shakti**, the Goddess of strength, by invoking her blessings.

‘Unlike, people of other parts of the country, the Gorkhas plant **jamara** (barley or rice plants), pray before **khunra** and **khukuri** (traditional weapons), **kalash** (holy vessels) and throughout the ten days worshipping sing **malshree** (a folk tune) instead of erecting clay idols like others do. The next day of importance, during **dashain**, is the **saptami** (the seventh day) when a colourful cultural procession of **phulpati** (floral offering) takes place where hundreds of thousands of Gorkhas in their traditional attire sing, dance and make merry irrespective of their religion, caste and belief. They march in gaiety to fetch **phulpati** which consists of flowers mainly **saipatri** (merrygold), certain auspicious leaves and fruits. The procession is led by a band called **naumati-baja** followed by **kalash** (vessel) carrier **kanye-kei** (maidens, either five or

nine in number) escorted by men bearing the sacrificial **khukuris** and **khunras** (traditional weapons). Attendants in colourful attires, their faces hidden behind masks and carrying **chamar** (yak's tail), curd and other necessary articles, also accompany the group. And they are followed by a choir, singing folk songs and **malshree** (a folk tune). Then they are followed by various **nach** (dance) parties of different groups representing their clubs, areas and caste/tribes. The eighth day is known as **kalaratri** (black night). At midnight as the half moon disappears, a buffalo or a goat, usually black in colour, is decapitated. The next **nawami** (the ninth day) is the day of public sacrifice, known as **mar**. People throng in Gairigaon (a place at Kaleybung where Gorkha Sanskriti Sangrakshan Samity organizes a fair every year during dashain festival) for the auspicious event. Among Newars, the day is known as *syako-tyako* (more you kill the more you gain). After the necessary prayers have been said, buffaloes are sacrificed according to the Gorkha customs. The men who slay the buffaloes are specially selected for the task and if they succeed to strike the head cleanly off with one blow, it is believed, that that ensures a prosperous and propitious year ahead. The tenth day, **dashami**, known as **tika** is considered a day of great importance. The priest cuts the **jamara** (barley or rice plants) sown on the first day and presents small tufts to individuals, which they take home with great reverence. From this day begins **tika** (the name of the festivity) when elders put **achheta** (rice grain mixed with curd and vermilion) on the foreheads and **jamara** (barley or rice plants) on the **sheer** (head) of the young ones and bless them. The festivity lasts till the next full-moon day spread over five days. During this period, young ones visit the houses of elder ones where they are welcomed with love and gaiety and those who have gone far away to earn their livelihood return to their homes to be with their family and loved ones to celebrate the festival. Hence, **dashain** is not only the season of gaiety and mirth but also the union of

families. (see broacher of *Gorkha Sanskriti Sangrakshan Samity, Kaleybung 1997*).

However there are certain groups, especially non-Aryan Mongoloids, who consider **dashain** as a Hindu festival imposed upon them by Aryan after capturing and annexing their territories. Of late they are refusing to accept it as their festival and gradually relinquishing to observe it. But whatever may be the controversies and the reasons behind the origin of **dashain**, today it has more cultural significance, rather than religious, in the Gorkha Society.

Tihar, as Deepawali or Diwali is known to the Gorkhas, is a festival of lights and the second biggest festival that they celebrate unitedly. **Tihar** of the Gorkhas, unlike in other parts of the country, starts with **kag tihar**, two days before the main festival on new moon day, and ends on **bhai tika**, two days after the main festival of Deepawali, thus spreading over five days. Since this festival is dedicated to Lord Yama (God of death), they also call it **Yama panchak** (five days of Lord Yama) and of the five days each day is dedicated to crow (messenger of Lord Yama, who brings death messages), dog (gatekeeper of Yamapuri, Kingdom of Yama where dead go), cow (who helps dead to cross under world river Baitarani to enable the dead to reach heaven), ox and brothers respectively. On the first day, Gorkhas venerate crow offering rice etc. with the hope that crow would not bring any bad news from Yamapuri. The second day is **kukur-tihar** (dog) when Gorkhas honor the dog so that souls after death will not face problem with the gatekeeper while entering into Yamapuri. The cow, who helps souls of dead to cross over deadly river Baitarani, is considered as the most useful and sacred of all other animals, provides **panchagabya** (five things that can be got from a cow) i.e. **dudh** (milk), **dahi** (curd), **gheeu** (clarified butter), **gaunt** (urine) and **gobar** (dung). **Pancha-gabya**, as per the Gorkha customs, is purest of all and is extensively used for purification and in other ritual. In the evening the Gorkhas worship Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth, and illuminate the house. After **gai-tihar** is **goru-tihar** (festival of the ox) and then comes **bhai-tika** or **bhai tihar** (Brothers' day). On this day sisters revere their brothers

by putting colourful **tika** (colour mark put on the forehead) on the forehead and garlanding. It is like **rakhi** (a bracelet, made of cloth or thread, tied around the wrist of the brothers by their sisters) festival of other Hindu communities when brothers renew their pledges to protect their sisters in all circumstances. The day ends with a grand feast of **sel-roti** (ring-like traditional bread made of pounded-rice), **mulako achar** (pickle made of raddish) etc.

The Main attraction of **tihar** is the system of **deusure** and **bhailo** (it is a kind of customary singing and dancing performed in groups, almost similar to carol of the Christians). The Gorkhas decorate their houses with the chain of marigold garlands on **kag tihar** itself. In the evening, on **gai tihar** after lights are lit, womenfolk visit houses in the neighbourhood singing **bhailo** songs: -

Bhailini ayaaun agana
Barali Kurali rakhana
Aausiko din gai tihar bhailo.

Hariyo gobarle lipyeuki
Laxmi mata pujeuki
Aausiko din gai tihar bhailo

Gaiko nam ta gaju
Laxmi puja aaju
Aausiko din gai tihar bhailo

Tista Rangit Triveni
Aaj aoney bhaileni
Aausiko din gai tihar bhailo

Gundruk hoina sinki
Kanney ketiko binti
Aausiko din gai tihar bhailo

Kukhrako chingna syaw-syaw
 Bhailini aayau jhyaw-jhyaw
 Aausiko din gai tihar bhailo.

(Through this song **bhailinis**, participants of a **bhailo** group, are intimating the owner of the house about their arrival and requesting him to keep everything clean and ready).

The next two days is **deusurey** for gents. In their traditional attire, beating **madal**, they visit houses singing **deusurey**. One of the **deuseys** (participants of a **deusurey** group) recites a line of **deusi** song and at the end of each line other participants chant '**deusurey**' in chorus.

Jhilimili jhilimili.....deusurey!
 Keko jhilimili.....deusurey!
 Battiko jhilimili.....deusurey!
 Hami aafai.....deusurey!
 Aayeko hounau.....deusurey!
 Balirajko.....deusurey!
 Hukum hunda.....deusurey!
 Reet janaunu.....deusurey!
 Aayeko hami.....deusurey!
 Sadai aauney.....deusurey!
 Magne thangney.....deusurey!
 Aaj aauney.....deus urey!
 Deusey bhaiho.....deusurey!

A unique part of the Gorkha folk culture, **bhailo** and **deusurey**, believed to have originated during the time of a Kiranti King Balihang, are actually sequence of songs containing vivid aspects of their society and are performed by ladies and gents separately beating **madal** (a double-faced traditional drum) and **khajari** (a single-faced traditional drum). In return, the owner of the house donates **dakshina** (offering) on a **nanglo** (a small winnowing tray made of bamboo) with **full-kalash** (vessel with flowers), **diyo** (lamp). **Bhailo** and **deusurey** parties do not forget to bless the owner before leaving. **Bhailo** and **deusurey**,

whatever reason may be behind its origin, has become a special feature of the Gorkha culture. However, now-a-days people have been making these **deusurey** and **bhailo** an occasion to collect money from the people, already overburdened by financial difficulties, by organizing **deusurey** and **bhailo** without having any cultural touch.

Pahilo Baisakh (first day of the Baisakh month) is the first day of the year according to the Vikram Sambat (era) calendar, which falls on the middle of April. It is fast becoming an event of their cultural unity. On this day they gather, exchange best wishes and make merry through dancing and singing. Though almost every caste/tribe of the Gorkha has their own calendar as well as New Year, they celebrate, irrespective of caste and religion, **pahilo baisakh** unitedly as a common festival.

Mata Tirth or **Aamako mukh herne** is actually a day to remember and worship the mothers. Celebrated during the spring season in the month of Baisakh (April-May) on this Mother's special day sons & daughters pay homage to their mothers who are dead and whose mother is still alive they bow and touch her feet, give presents and take her blessings. Since this festival is celebrated to honour one's mother hence it is a jovial family affair where every member of the house take part.

Chaite-dashain (festival of the Chait month) falls on the last month of the Vikram Sambat calendar in the season of spring. Although, as per Hindu belief, **chaite-dashain** is being celebrated to commemorate the birth of Lord Rama, but hardly any Gorkha ever worships Him on this day. Instead they pay a humble visit to their elder-ones for a feast.

Maghe-sankranti (first day of the Magh month) is being celebrated in the hills by the Gorkhas at the same time when the people of South India celebrate pongal and Assamese celebrate bihu etc. The Gorkhas eat **tarul** (a kind of edible roots) and **furaula** (a ball of buck-wheat) on this day. A **mela** (fair) is organized at the **triveni** (confluence of river) where people, irrespective of their age, gather in their colourful attires and after worshipping the river enjoy **roteping** (merry-go-round), **lingeping** (swing) and take part in **juhari**, a competitive duet songs between male and female groups, and other folk dances. **Dhintang**

(beat) of **madal** (a traditional drum) echoes whole night in the valley. **Maghe-sankranti** is actually a relaxation period for the farmers after hard cultivation season and harvest is over. Astrologically, on this day the sun enters into the Capricorn in the northern hemisphere. On this day some people sacrifice animals and fowls in the confluence of river and worship the water god to get rid of all calamities. The Limbus call it *kakphewa*, their biggest festival.

The first day of the Sawan month, when the sun enters into the cancer in the southern hemisphere, is celebrated by the Gorkhas as **sawaney-sankranti**. People throw out fire bands with a hope to get rid of skin diseases. In the evening people eat **maasu-bhaat** (cooked rice and meat), **daal** (pulse) and **bhatmas** (soyabean). This festival is also known as **harelo**.

On the full moon day of the Bhadau month comes **Guru puja**. This day is dedicated to **Gurus** (teachers/instructors). Community priests like **dhami, Jhankri, Mata, bijuwa, bonbo, fedengma** etc. of every Gorkha caste/tribe worship their **Gurus** on this day. In few places they take out a procession in their traditional attires, beating **dhyangro** (a traditional drum used in a religious rite only), **thal** (plate) or **jhyali** (a kind of musical instruments mainly used in religious songs). These community priests, considered by many as superstitious, have significant place in the Gorkha society. They not only perform **kul pujas** (worshipping ancestral deities/tutelary diety) but also treat the people from various diseases and protect or get rid off them from evil spirits. In the present modern society, narration of rich culture of the Gorkhas will not be complete without appreciating the important role of these priests in the Gorkha culture/tradition.

Sansari-puja (worshipping the nature/creator)- a true animistic way of worshipping the nature, which actually created this world, falls sometime in the month of Chait/Baisakh (March, April, May) before start of monsoon. The Gorkhas observe this **puja** on Saturday in a jungle, away from human habitation, erecting stones as idols, planting **lingo** (bamboos) and fastening different colour's **dhajas** (small pieces of cloth). The ritual include sacrifice of animals. The daylong ceremony

ends with the grand feast in the evening. However, no offerings are allowed to be taken home except **dhaja** fastened around wrist or neck. Usually this **puja** is observed to please the Rain God.

The Lepchas celebrate their New-Year as *namboon*, sometime in the month of December. The survival of their identity largely depends on this festival, which is slowly, but steadily transforming into a great jamboree of the Lepchas. A timid community, the Lepchas start celebrating *namboon* three days before the ending of the year, and lasts for the total of seven days. On the last day of the festival they gather in a place and play *dhukothyuk* (stone throwing), *thahul* (jumping), and *chhonge* (archery) unitedly. The celebration ends with a grand feast including folk-dances and songs

One of the biggest festivals of the Rais is *Sakela*, which they celebrate twice a year. Usually on this day the Rais worship their god *Henkubung* (or *Paruhang*) including eight others viz. *Chuilvngvak*, *Khilingwa*, *Gholtangwa*, *Maksuli*, *Furlangwa*, *Maikeiwa*, *Nunihang* and *Sankhiya*. The ritual of this festival is performed by *Mangpa* (or *Raben*, the priest). The main highlight of this festival is *sakeli-sili* (sakela-dance), believed to be one of the longest performing dances. After a long ritual, where a host of Gods are worshipped, the festival is concluded with drinking of *Khamawadimawa* (liquor), *umak* (alcoholic beverage made of finger-millet) with various types of *achar* (pickle) and dancing-*sakela*-the whole night in the tune of: -

*'Lahai Nungnuma Loktama chunne
Maisung dakhava muimunne
Sakela nuwak munne'.*

As per the Hindu mythological beliefs, Buddha is the ninth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Born as Siddharth Gautam in the Lumbini forest of Rupandehi district of Nepal in the year 563 B.C., Buddha is honoured and worshipped with equal reverence by the Hindus and the Buddhists alike. As per the Hindu calendar, the birthday of Lord Buddha falls on the full moon day of Basaikh-month (April-May). Buddha jayanti

(birthday) is celebrated, like a festival, in the **gumbas** (monasteries) by lighting lamps and reciting verses- especially by the Tamangs, Sherpas, Gurungs and Lepchas.

The Limbus celebrate the birthday of incarnate Sirijunga Teongsi, who preached and propagated Kiranti culture and language, as a festival in the month of December. They gather in a common place where they worship incarnate Sirijunga after which they drink **ara** (liquor), **thee** (alcoholic beverage), **maasu** (meat) and dance beating **chyabrun** (traditional Limbu drum).

Lho-chhar is the new year of the Tamangs, Gurungs and Sherpas. The Tamangs who prefer to celebrate this festival individually, usually organize picnic on this day. The Tamangs' and Gurungs' *lho-chhar* falls a few days apart at the fag end of December or early January whereas the Sherpas' *lho-chhar* falls during February/March. The Tamangs celebrate their *lho-chhar* by throwing *champa* (flour) towards the sky and dancing in the tune of *hwaisyaba* and *mhendo* etc. Including *lho-chhar* the Sherpas also celebrate *dumje* and *manirindu* once in a year beating *vab* (clanging of two metal-plates) and singing: -

‘ *Ye pacheki sarke Do Bo-serke Telali Joye* ’.

The Newars celebrate their new year as *mha-puja* on the day of **gai-tihar**. They also celebrate various festivals like *chatha*, *panch-dan*, *gai-jatra*, *Yamahripuhri* etc.

Besides these, the Gorkhas also celebrate various festivals like **rikhi-dori**, **teez**, **nag-panchami**, **goth-puja**, **shivaratri**, **bhumi-puja**, **naya puja**, *tendong-hlo-ramfat* etc.

DANCES

Human beings are sentimental animals. They can feel as well as express and share their joy and happiness, sadness and grieves with their

fellow brothers. At the very beginning when people started living in a society, expressing and sharing of their happiness and sadness became more organized. They started showing their feelings through dances. Their day-to-day activities, description of nature and their way of living become a part of their songs. Thus originated dances, songs and system eventually became an integral part of every tradition, custom and culture.

Traditional folk dances of the Gorkhas are no exceptions to this rule, they too comprise love, happiness, anger and their life-styles. The jovial Gorkhas are very fond of dancing and singing. Like their festivals, their dances and songs are also occasion and season related.

Of all the dances of the Gorkhas *tamang-selo*, *juhari* and *chutki* are the most liked dances amongst them. Besides these, *kelang*, *Kaura*, *yalang*, *balan*, *maruni*, *tungna*, *bethi*, *ghatoo*, *sorathi*, *jungwa*, *sakelasili*, *mhendomaya*, *sangini*, *ratyoli*, *jhyaware* including a host of other dances are also found in the Gorkha society.

Tamang-selo, basically performed by the Tamangs beating a *damphu* (a traditional drum), either solo or in a group, is also known as *damphu-naach*. The Tamangs call it *tamsyaba*. Now-a-days, this dance is not confined to the Tamang tribe only but irrespective of their caste, each segment of the Gorkha community also perform it with ease and without any hesitation. Thus today, *tamang-selo* has become one of the strongest pillars of the Gorkha dances.

Jungwa, a ceremonial dance of the Tamangs, is performed by their priests holding *kangling* (human spine bone). There are many varieties of *jungwa* such as *bhirfamchham*, *ghuptomg*, *sundong*, *dunchhyam*, *ghuchhyam* etc.

Mhendomaya, a Tamang dance, is also similar to *kaura* and *chumlu* dances where men and women dance together forming two separate rows.

Juhari (gambling) or **dohori** (duel) dance is performed in groups during festivals, fairs or in *rodighar* (community house for young ones found in the Gurung and Magar tribes). Two groups, male and female separately, one after another sing and dance. As it appears from its name, it is like a gambling played in a lyrical form. Once there was a tradition of the looser marrying the winner. However, now-a-days this system of marriage is almost abolished. But even today, if one cares to search, old couples married through this system can be found in their society.

Chutki belongs to the Chhetris, Bahuns, Gurungs and Magars. The Chhetris and Bahuns perform **chutki** to the rhythmic beats of **khajjadi** (a kind of damphu-like drum) while the Gurungs and Magars use **madal** (a traditional drum). It is a form of dance with full of speed and movement of body. Hence whenever a group of the Gorkhas gather, their merriment always include **chutki**.

The Kirants, especially the Rais and Limbus, perform a form of dance after harvest, which is known as *yalang* or **dhannaach** (peddy dance). However, among the Kirants, it is the Limbus who perform it most. Usually, young boys and girls perform this dance by holding each other, swaying to and fro and swinging their feet in the beat of *chyabrun* (traditional Limbu drum). As its name indicates this form of dance is performed at the time of harvest. Since almost all dances of the Limbus are performed using the *chyabrun*, their dances are also commonly known as **chyabrunnaach**. But according to the rhythm and occasion there are numerous kinds of **chyabrunnaach** such as *mekamgam*, *yalang*, *tamrange*, *kosrokpa*, *kawalang*, *hakpare* and *himkamgam* etc. The Kirants love to twist their feet whenever they get an opportunity to do so. With vibration of *chyabrun* beat the beguiled dancers' feet automatically start moving. It is believed that there are, at least, thirty-seven varieties of *chyabrun* dance. Some even believe that there are not less than one hundred eight varieties of *chyabrun* dance.

Kaura dance that is believed to have originated from the Magar tribe is performed in groups, either by men and women or women only. The

Tamangs and Gurungs also perform this form of dance. Today it has become a prominent and high technique dance of the Gorkhas. This dance with women in a row and men in another row holding *damphu* (a traditional drum) is considered one of the oldest folk dances found in the Gorkha community. The way of *kaura* dance resembles with that of the Tamangs' *jumla* dance. Perhaps, both are same type of dance known differently in each tribe.

Hurra is a form of dance performed by Magars during the festival of **Dashain**. Dancers, male and female, form two separate rows holding each-other and swing their feet to the beat of **madal**.

Balan, especially performed by the Chhetris and Bahuns during religious ceremonies, mainly centers on different *lilas* (acts) of different gods. The dancers holding flowers, form two separate rows facing each other, one row for men and another for women, move together forward and backward.

Maruni is one of the most loved dances of the Gorkha community in which a male dancer, disguising himself as a woman and wearing long frock-like dress, takes the charge of dancing while other male members take the charge of song and dance known as **madaley** (person who beat the traditional drum *madal*). A **dhatuwarey** (jester) accompanies the team. Although the jester tries to mimic the dancer and play comic role, he is actually backbone of the dance on whose shoulder many movements depends.

Tungna is a form of dance started by the Gurungs, a shepherd community. It is believed that after a day's hard works Gurungs used to gather in an open field around a fireplace and began to sing as well as dance to forget their tiredness and to kill the monotony. They dance to the tune of *tungna*, their musical instrument, holding each other and swaying their feet in rhythmic beat around the fire.

Bethi dance is most probably originated from the agricultural field that is why it depicts fun of paddy transplantation. This dance has no

systematic especially composed tunes, songs or movements. It is usually performed in the tune of **panchebaja** (a traditional musical band consisting of five instruments). It is believed that this dance originated when rich farmers began organizing a feast for the farmers who are invited for transplanting of crops in their fields. While farmers plant crops simultaneously they sing and jest to lighten their workload. Other farmers gradually followed this system too and thus today it became a folk dance performed not in the field but on the stages with a set of music and song.

Ghatoo is a difficult form of dance performed before the monsoon season by the Gurungs. It is an old classical dance based on mythological stories. This dance has great significance in the folk culture of the Gorkhas and is usually performed by a group of trained unmarried girls. As such the Gurungs as well as other castes/tribes revere *Ghatoo* and they seldom perform this dance without invoking gods. Perhaps for this reason and also for other necessary factors it contains, *ghatoo* is undoubtedly a technically fit classical form of dance found in the Gorkha society. There is another form of *ghatoo*, known as **barhamase**, which can be performed anytime by anyone without any restrictions.

Sorathi, like *maruni*, is also a **madaleynach** (dance with a traditional drum) performed once in a year especially in the *rodighar* (community for the young ones). Before performing *sorathi*, the dancer worships **Saraswati**, the goddess of knowledge, to invoke her blessings. It is actually a dance drama, which narrates the story of a king called **Jaisingh** and his queen **Hemati**.

Sakelasili, a dance performed by Rais during their *sakela* festival, is known as the longest performing group dance, which sometimes continues for days together. Disciplined dancers, whatever in number, form a circle and dance with rhythmic steps of their feet. There are various kinds of *sili* (dance) each having its own gestures based on nature, animals and ways of life.

The Newars perform various types of dances, usually wearing masks, during festivals. *Lakhe* is such a mask-dance performed during festivals. It has about seventeen branches viz. *majipat*, *mikha*, *guenla*, *yaula*, *po*, *iyapu* etc. This dance form consists of two members, one bodily strongman *Lakhe* and another weakling *jhyalincha*, and group of musicians. *Lakhe* is actually a *yakshhya* (demon) and *jhyalincha*, physically inferior to him, is actually a human being. Thus this dance depicts conversations between the two, the demon and the human.

Matrikastam is another form of mask-dance performed by Newars during **dashain** festival depicting eight forms of goddess **Durga** viz. **Brahmayani, Rudrayani, Kaumari, Vajshanavi, Indrayani, Chamunda, Mahalaxmi, Varahi** including other forms gods-goddess such as **Ganesha, Bhairav, Singhani** and **Vijagrini**. Trained dancers are only allowed to take part in this dance. **Matrikastam** dancers have to undergo rigorous confinement for a week before the start of **dashain**. They shave off their heads, bathe daily and stay on vegetarian foods for the whole period of the confinement. A day before **ghatasthapana** (placing of holy vessels to mark start of dashain festival) or start of **naurata** (nine days period of dashain), the dancers worship **Natyaswar** (the god of dance) and perform in front of Him without wearing masks as a token of offering. From the next day starts the community dancing for the general public.

Another dance with all potentialities of a classical dance form found in the Gorkha society is **sangini**. Normally the **Chhetris** and **Bahun**s perform this dance during **teej** (a Hindu festival of women) either holding plates of **kansha** (bronze) or **diyo** (ceremonial lamp) or carrying **kalash** (vessels) on the head. It is a slow dance and depends entirely on movement of hands and feet.

In the eve of a marriage ceremony when **behula** (groom) with **janti** (a marriage party of groom) has gone to the house of **behuli** (bride), people, especially married women, gather at the house of groom and enact a dance drama where a woman who pretends as bride is teased by other women in lyrical form narrating her encounter with groom

and also narrating about married life. This dance, known as **ratyoli**, is also performed during the birth of a son in the houses of the Chhetris and Bahuns.

Jhyawarey is a popular and extensively performed dance of the Gorkha community. **Jhyawarey** songs contain simple stories of the practical life in a melodious rhyme. The songs are catchy because of its down to earth character and its dance, being fast, fascinates everyone. These days, **jhyawarey** songs also carry the themes of social messages.

Almost all castes/tribes of the Gorkhas believe in **tantra-mantra** (exorcism) and almost each and every caste/tribe have their own community priests. While in trance or séance these priests, wearing their traditional gears, move or shake their body beating **ḍhyangro** (traditional drum) or **thal** (a metallic plate). These movement when enacted on the stage for public viewing is called **jhankrinaach** or dance performed by community priest i.e. Shamans. Usually only Shamans perform this dance form after worshipping their tutelary deities. Sometime non-shamans also dare to perform this dance, as this dance has no such restrictions.

Deura is a dance performed by Damai community in the tune of **naumatibaja** (a traditional band consisting of nine instruments)

The Gorkhas, being martial race, are known for their bravery. They fought many battles holding naked **khukuri** (a traditional weapon) with battle cry of '**AYO GORKHALI**' (here comes the Gorkhas). **Khukuri-naach** (dance) depicts their valour and pride. It also exhibits their expertise in the use of **khukuri**.

It will be too long a list, if all the dances of the Gorkhas are enumerated in one place, as there are so many forms of dances. Only a few, which have significant bearings on the Gorkha society, are therefore included above.

DRESS

Although every Gorkha caste/tribe, barring a few, has its own dress-culture, but as a unified community the men-folk wear **daura-suruwal** and women-folk wear **choubandichola-fariya**. **Daura** is a double-breasted shirt falling upto knee fastened by **tuna** (a rope-like piece of cloth) at four corners across the body. The lower part of the **daura** below the belly is a bit larger in size. They put **askot** (waistcoat) over the **daura**. On the head they wear **Dhaka-topi**. **Patuka** (a lengthy piece of cloth) is fastened at the level of waist under which a **khukuri** (traditional weapon) is placed. Women wear **chaubandichola**, a naval length blouse similar to **daura**. **Fariya** or **gunew** is worn below the waist. They also fasten **patuka** like men do. Another piece of cloth spread around body between bust and hip is called **hemmari**. They cover the head with a piece of cloth called **majetro**. And **pachhauro** is their shawl to wrap the body.

However, Lepchas always wear their own traditional dresses called *gada* for men and *dumdyan* for women. *Gada* consists of a long piece of cloth loosely spread down from shoulder to knee. *Phomu* is their trousers worn upto calf. Women wear a robe called *dumdyan*, which is fastened at both shoulders by brooch and at the waist by *namrik*. They also wear a coat called *pago*. Their shoes are called *lhom*.

The traditional dress of Yakkha women is called *meklin*, which is also worn by Rai women.

Gurung men wear **bhoto** on the upper part of the body and cover it by **askot** (waistcoat). They spread a **kachhad** around lower part of their body from waist to knee. On the head they too wear **dhakatopi**. Gurungs also wear **bakkhu**. Women wear **gunew** and **cholo** with **patuka** at the waist. Some wear **shyama**, a piece of cloth spread over the body whose two points, one from the front and another from the back, are held by a knot or brooch at the right shoulder. They also spread, below the waist on the hind-part of their body over the buttocks, a triangular shaped piece of velvet cloth called *tamlovatiki*. Gurung and Magar

menfolk spread across their chest a long piece of white cloth that makes a bag like carrier on the back.

Although a few Tamangs wear dresses akin to Tibetan dress but most of the men prefer to wear **daura-suruwal**. Over the **daura** they wear woolen hand-woven **bhoto** (coat). They also fasten **patuka** under which they carry a **khukuri** as a sign of manhood. Tamang women wear *dorma*, a fulllength robe, *shyama* (like Gurung women wear) and *pangden*, a rectangular shaped piece of cloth, behind the body over the buttock. In recent times, they have developed a separate dress of their own that includes a cap for both male & female. Kagateys also wear dresses akin to Tibetan dresses.

The dresses of the Sherpas are similar to the Tibetan dresses but most of their men-folk are seen wearing **daura-suruwal**. Basically, the Sherpas wear *chhuwa* and *nagorya*, similar to **daura-suruwal**. Under the *chhuwa* they wear *tutung*. The Sherpa women wear *bakkhu* and *bangjur*. They also wear a small piece of cloth under the waist called *pangden*. However, unlike *pangden* of the Tibetan women, Sherpa women wear it on the hind part of their body and they call it *gemtel*.

Limbu women wear *sardakpa*, *sim* and *thakume*, a dress that looks like Lepcha women's *dumdyan* and men-folk wear dress not much different from **daura-suruwal** called *hanjam-hangpen*.

However, in the present changed scenario most of them, barring Sherpa women and Lepchas, have by and large accepted **daura-suruwal** and **fariya-cholo** as their traditional dresses, although now-a-days these dresses are also confined to ceremonial functions only.

FOOD

The traditional staple food of the Gorkhas is **daal**, **bhaat**, **achar** and **tarkaari** (pulse, rice, pickle and curry). Most of their dietary menu consists of hot and sour dishes. Their traditional food also includes

dhiro (a paste like food prepared of flour or pounded finger-millet) and of course **selroti** (a round sweet bread made of pounded rice). Most of the Gorkhas like to take **maasu** (meat), **jaanr** (locally homemade alcoholic beverage) and **raksi** (liquor). The Chhetris and Bahuns prefer milk and curd instead of alcoholic beverages. However, now-a-days even Chhetris and Bahuns take alcoholic beverages without any hesitations whereas due to the change in religion or due to some compunction many **matwalis** (group of people who drink liquor) have been refraining themselves from taking **raksi** and **maasu** (liquor and meat). Some of the dishes of the Gorkhas, which they love to take, though occasionally, are given below,

Kinema: - A fermented food made of soyabean, **kinema**, is extensively used to prepare **achar** (pickle) and soup. Stickiness and ammonia flavour, with a white rough viscous mass, are some of the main qualities of the **kinema**. Soaked soyabeans are boiled and, after draining, are crushed and wrapped in fresh leaves. After covering it with sack, wrapped beans are kept in the container in a warm place for at least three days before consumption.

Gundruk: - Leafy vegetables (**saag**) are first dried-up and after washing them properly stored in a pot, especially perforated tin to enable water to drain out. Fifteen to twenty days later these spinages are taken out and dried-up again. This dried fermented vegetable is called **gundruk**. Sour in taste, it can be stored for days and when in need, tasty curry or **achar** (pickle) can be prepared

Sinki: - It is a Newari word for fermented radish. **Sinki** is also can be stored for future use to prepare curry and pickle.

Dhiro: - It is a paste-like food prepared from flour or pounded finger millet. Gorkhas eat **dhiro** with **gundruk** curry or **maasu** curry. Hot and sour **achar** adds extra flavour if it is given with **dhiro**.

Selroti: - It is a ring like sweet bread prepared from pounded rice. Rice-flour mixed with sugar, milk and spices etc. are left overnight to

ferment. The next day, the paste like mixture is fried. Even today, no festivities or ceremonies are considered complete, in a Gorkha house, until **selroti** is served.

Chhoila: - It is a Newari dish prepared by mixing boiled meat, especially buffalo's meat, with chilly, salt etc. There are two types of *chhoila*, *haku* and *makhmali*.

Kachila: - Pieces of chopped meat, mixed with chilly, salt etc., are kept inside a jar, and filled with mustard oil. This jar with airtight lid is exposed to sunlight for days before consumption.

Dhakani: - During **darkhanu** ceremony, a day before the **teej** (women's festival), women prepare a special dish by frying soaked and swelled rice mixing with milk and sugar. In the similar way Newars prepare their dish called *wo*. While the main ingredient of the **dhakani** is rice, it is pounded-pulse in case of *wo*.

Furaula: - Small balls of pounded buckwheat fried in oil are specially taken during **maghe-sankranti** with tuber-roots and hot pickles.

Dahi: - Curd i.e. **dahi** is not only a dish for the Gorkhas but it is also used as an offering in various social and religious ceremonies.

Jaandr: - Prepared from rice or finger millet or other cereals and even from fruits, **jaandr** is a must in most of the houses while performing ceremonies. Cooked rice or finger millet, after dewatering, cooling and mixing powdered **marcha** (a kind of traditional yeast) in it, is fermented by keeping it in an airtight pot for the minimum of three days. After fermentation rice/millet is taken out and by mixing water in it, alcoholic portion is drunk or sipped through **pipsing** (little bamboo pipe i.e. straw). The pot that is used to serve **jaandr** is called **tongba**, a mug like wooden or bamboo pot. **Jaandr**, before mixing water for consumption, contains little quantity of thick liquid with high alcohol is called **nigaar**.

In another process the fermented mass is mixed with water. After mixing properly, the water and rice or finger millet are separated by a **chhapani** (a bowl like pot with small holes, a strainer). Thus stained water, **jaanr**, which contains alcohol, is drunk.

Yet in another process high quality rice is fermented to prepare **jaanr**. After fermentation the mass is stirred properly, with or without mixing water, and is consumed directly. This sweet and sour alcoholic paste is known as **bhati-jaanr**.

The left over sucked grits of finger millet or rice, known as **chhokra**, are either served to domestic animals or used to prepare **raksi** (liquor).

In some sub-communities of the Gorkhas this **jaanr** is used as an offering in their **pujas** (worship) and also served to the invitees in religious as well as other ceremonies. Women, among some caste/tribe, are also served **jaanr** during post-delivery period for strength and stamina. **Jaar** is known to different castes/tribes of the Gorkhas in different names: - *thee* (Limbu), *ummak* (Rai), *pa* (Gurung), *chhee* (Tamang), *shyabu* (Sunuwar), *han* (magar), *chhyang* (Sherpa), *chhee* (Lepcha) and *thon* (Newar).

Kwanti: - Pea, soyabeans or similar other lentils are soaked overnight and cooked to prepare *kwanti*. It is especially taken Newars on **janai-purney** (full moon day of August).

Meso: - Young bamboos after chopping into pieces and pressing tightly into a pot with airtight cover are left to ferment for a fortnight. After fermentation the bamboos convert into a sour product that is known as **meso**. It is used to prepare pickle and added to curry for extra flavour.

Massyora: - Soaked gram seeds, after grounding into a paste and mixing with turmeric powder and tuber-roots, are left to ferment for a couple of days. After fermentation the paste is moulded into balls, which are known as **massyora**.

Raksi: - Fermented cooked rice or finger millet (even fruits and flowers), especially **bhati-jaanr** or leftover strained **chhokras** (cooked & fermented rice/finger millet after alcohol is sucked), after mixing with **gurh** (hardened molasses/juggaries), water and **marcha** (traditional yeast) are allowed to ferment for a couple of days further. Above mixture after fermentation become **paas**. When **paas** is ready it is put into a container especially a tin. The top of this container is covered by a **bhaddu** (a pot) with water in it and after which it is placed over the fire. The joint of the container and the pot is covered/fastened tightly by a long piece of cloth called **pheta** (turban) so that air may not enter inside. **Bhaddu's** water, when becomes hot, is changed at a regular interval. Simultaneously, the **paas** evaporates and, with the help of the crescent shaped bottom of the **bhaddu**, moist so evaporated falls back into a small pot kept inside the container above **paas** or is drain-out through a pipe. Thus collected distilled liquid is called **raksi**, containing alcohol. The quality of **raksi** is determined by the number of times water in the **bhaddu** is changed. **Tin-pane** (**bhaddu's** water changed thrice) is considered the best.

In addition to the above food items, the Gorkhas take various kinds of other food like **khalpi**, **khatte**, **kanchu-churpi**, **chamre** etc. including pickles made of **sungurko-khutta** (pig's trotter), **khasiko khutta** (Lamb's trotter), **kimbu** (mulberry), **timmur** (a kind of fruit-like black pepper), **silam** (a mustard like grain), **mula** (raddish) and many other dishes.

ORNAMENTS

The Gorkha women are fond of ornaments especially gold and silver. The most important and popular ornaments are **potey** and **tilhari**. **Potey** is a tiny bead. They make a necklace weaving together these **poteyes**. This traditional ornament **Potey** is worn by married women only.

Tilhari is actually a necklace made of **potey** holding **tilhari**, a hollow golden cylinder like locket, worn by married women. **Tilhari**, in the

Gorkha society, is like **mangalsutra**, found in other Hindu community. Other traditional ornaments usually worn by Gorkha women are: -

Head: - **Shirbandi** (for married women only), **kantha**, **lunswan**, **nyapusikha**.

Nose: - **Jhumke-bulaki**, **dhungri**, **fuli**.

Ear: - **Top**, **mundri**, **silmundra**, **lurka**, **kundal**, **cheptesun**.

Neck: - **Kantha-har**, **kanthashree**, **tilhari**, **potey**, **mohar**, **naugedi**, **tikh**, **tayo**, **haari**.

Hand: - **Chura**, **bala**, **aunthi**.

Leg: - **Kalli**, **tulibaki**.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

By nature the Gorkhas are jovial. They love dancing in any occasion. Their folk culture is very rich, similarly they have varieties of traditional musical instruments to suit any occasion and merriment. Almost each caste/tribe has its own instrument. A few of them are described below.

Naumati-baja: - A traditional band, consisting nine instruments actually belongs to Damai community. However, without playing **naumati-baja** no ceremony of the Gorkhas is considered complete irrespective of organier's caste/tribe. The nine instruments that consist this band are **two sanais (sahanai)**, **damaha**, **tyamko**, **dholak**, **narsingha**, **karnal**, **jhyamta** and **bautal**.

Panche-baja: - It is another traditional band that consists only five instruments viz. **sanai**, **damaha**, **tyamko**, **narsingha** and **jhyamta**. **Naumati-baja** and **panche-baja** are normally used to lead a religious or social procession and also to herald the beginning of any function or ceremony. It is like triumph cry.

Madal: - A small hollow-cylinder like instrument covered by leather at both ends, **madal**, is extensively used instrument of the Gorkhas.

Pantong-pallit: - It is a single flute found in two sizes, one lengthy and another short, and are generally used by the Lepchas.

Drung: - It is a long hollow metal, consisting of three attached pipes especially blown by the Sherpas during their religious ceremonies.

Kaha: - A Newari instrument that looks like **sanaï** (a kind of clarinet) blown during funereal rites.

Sarangi: - A violin-like instrument played by Gainey community holding over the chest.

Murchunga: - A small metallic instrument played holding in the mouth.

Binayo: - It is similar to **murchunga** but made of bamboo.

Khin: - It is a Newari version of **mridunga** (a drum found in other parts of the country), bigger than **madal** in size. There are varieties of **khin**.

Damphu: - It is a round, moon-shaped drum covered by leather from one side only.

Khajjari: - It is a damphu/daphali-like instrument. It has small round metals around it. Especially the Chhetris and Bahuns use it while reciting **bhajans** (hymns).

Damaru: - It is an X-shaped hollow instrument whose two hollow ends are covered with leather and is little bigger than the palm of a hand. Two ropes are tied at the middle with knots at each end, which make a sound when the leather is struck for desired effect. Usually, **damaru** is used by the **dhamis** (Shamans) or **kusule** (a sub-community of Newars).

Chyabrung: - A hollow parallel cylinder-like instrument whose two sides are covered with leather, **chyabrung**, is used by the Limbus.

Dhyangro: - Round shaped instrument, larger in diameter and thinner in breadth, usually used by the community priest Shamans like **dhamis** and **jhankris** etc. by beating it with a stick on both sides, one side at a time, which are covered by leather. **Dhyangro** has a handle to hold it, which is called **murra**.

Tungna: - A small wooden hollow instrument whose hollow part is tightly covered by leather with strings on it, like violin, is called **tungna**. It is played with the fingers.

Nyamrok-pallit: - It is a pair of flutes blown at a time, found in the Lepcha community.

Feri: - The animal horn, especially blown by Jogis at night while moving from house to house. They again visit the houses during daytime for alms (usually nine items). It is believed that the Jogis **feri** protects the humans from evil spirits.

The other traditional instruments of the Gorkhas, some being used during religious rites and some during social ceremonies, are *dhime*, *tembuk*, *jhyali*, *basuri*, *majhira*, *kathtal*, *bhury*, *tongling*, *jhyamta*, *damaha*, *kangling*, *thal*, *tyamko*, *talki*, *dagankhi*, *hushya*, *bobhucha*, *tasa*, *muhari*, *dyam*, *mushya*, *bano* and *sanai* etc.

WEAPON & TOOLS

The Gorkhas, besides using modern utensils and tools also use their traditional one either in daily life or occasionally in ceremonies. Some of the major weapons and tools are described below.

Khukuri: - The **khukuri**, a traditional and religious weapon of the Gorkhas, is an inalienable part of their culture. A martial as well as a household weapon, **khukuri** is found in varieties like **sirupatey**, sleek and handy used in battles, **talwarey**, sword like, **bhunte**, short and blunt, etc. When a person dies in a Gorkha home, the first thing required

is a **khukuri**. At the side of the corpse, a **khukuri** with point of the blade touching the floor is kept to ward off evil spirits. The first person that leads a funeral procession holds upright a naked **khukuri**. The **khukuri** is kept sheathed in a scabbard encased in leather. Different parts of a **Khukuri** are known as **Bind** (handle made of wood/horn/ivory/metal), **Kaudo** (double half moon through which liquid substances/blood drips), **Khol** (drain-like lines which start at the top and end at **kaudo** which help liquid substances to flow through), **Mahur** (decorated **khol**), **Talli** (metal that is fixed at the end of the **bind**), **Fali** (decorated or embossed portion at the middle of the **talli**), **Dap** (the scabbard), **Kathi** (a metallic piece fixed at the tip of the **dap**), **Kanjo** (metallic band fixed at the top of the **dap**), **Khissa** (three chambers of the **dap** where **karda**, **chakmak** and **jhulo** are kept) and **Jhulo** (dried tiny fibres made from banana trunk used to make fire).

Khura: - A big knife having moon-shaped top, is also considered as a symbol of their bravery. **Khura** is used to decapitate **rango** (buffalo) during **mar** ceremony of **dashain** festival.

Katti: - A long, with narrow breadth, knife usually used in ceremonies, especially used to decapitate small animals like goats etc. during **dashain**.

Karda: - Small version of **khukuri** generally carried with **khukuri** which can be used as knife.

Chakmak: - Like **karda** it is also carried with **khukuri** and is smaller than **karda** in size. It is used to sharpen the edge or blade of the **khukuri** and also used to make fire with the help of **jhulo**.

Kodalo: - It is a spade, having long handle. A spade with short handle is called **kodali**.

Khurpa: - It is a sickle-like knife used to cut firewoods etc. Small version is called **khurpi**.

Hasiya: - It is a sickle used for cutting grasses etc.

Karauti: - It is a sickle-like saw.

Ara: - It is a saw generally used by two persons holding at each end to cut logs etc.

Kachiya: - It is a kind of **karauti** with plain blade which also known as **asi**.

Ramo: - It is a chisel.

Chulesi: - It is a small bird like knife used in the kitchen to cut vegetables with a fixed stand.

Bancharo: - It is an axe used to split firewood etc.

Guleli: - It is catapult also known as **kyatis**.

Guyentro: - It is also a catapult made of two parallel ropes joined at one end with a piece of leather/cloth where stone is held and used to throw the stone at a target after rotating it usually over the head.

Tabal: It is smaller version of axe used by the carpenters.

Basila: - It is a spade-like small tool used to scrap-off wood.

The Gorkhas use their own traditional plough, different from those that are found in other parts of the country, to tilt the field. Advent of the modern technology in agricultural sector has not deterred the Gorkhas from using their own **halo-juwa** to plough their fields. The different parts of a **halo-juwa**, as given in the diagram, are as follows:

- **Halo** is the main body whose upper part is called **anau**, the handle and the lower part at the tip holds a **fali**, a metallic blade, which actually tilts the field. The **fali** is secured by two metallic **karuwa**. At the center of the halo at an angle of about 30° a straight piece of timber, about

4"x2" in size, is rammed, known as **haris**. The **haris** joins **halo** with **juwa** at the other end by a fastener called **hallud**, a rope made of dried skin of buffalo. **Juwa**, 4 to 5 feet long piece of timber, when joined with **haris** looks like English letter T. Oxen are tied at both ends of the **juwa** between two **soylas** by a rope called **jotaro**. A small piece of timber, which helps **haris** to stick in **hallud**, is called **theri**. The man who plough the field is called a **Hali**.

After ploughing of field **dande**, **pataha**, **fyawri** etc. are used to stir and smoothen the field before plantation is done.

DWELLING HOUSE

Traditionally the ordinary Gorkha huts are made of either bamboo or trunk of small trees, with or without smoothing plain and whose walls/ floor are plastered with mixture of mud and cowdung and later they colour with another kind of red-mud. With the passage of time they started constructing their houses with smoothen timber & planks. Most of the modern houses, found now-a-days, are multistoried R.C.C. buildings. However, even today houses of old designs can be seen in the rural areas. A typical Gorkha house is constructed in the following manner.

First, the plot is measured and there after the **bhumi-puja** (worshipping of mother earth/plot) is performed. Then the main pillar **dhuri-khamba** is erected by piercing an unsplit bamboo or wood of desired height. The king pillar, **mul-khamba**, is considered sacred thus they never kick it. The pillars erected at the four corners, little shorter than the main pillars, are called **surkhamba**. The pillars are actually unflattened bamboos or wooden posts. Bamboos are again placed and fastened horizontally, one above **dhuri-khamba** and two above **sur-khambas**, known as **dhuri-bolo** and **sur-bolo** respectively. Below these **bolos** a few pieces of bamboos are placed and fastened, tilting downwards from **dhuri** to **sur-bolo**, which are called **dharma-bolo**. Under these **dharma-bolos** a bamboo is placed horizontally at the center, between

dhuri-bolo and **sur-bolo** that is called **pani-bolo**. Above these **bolos**, flattened bamboos are densely spread-out horizontally and vertically known as **bhata** and **dara** respectively. **Dharam-bolo** and these **dara-bhata** are little bit stretched out of **sur-bolo**. On the edges nicely knit bamboos are fastened, called **gauthali**. One flattened bamboo known as **batase-bhata** is placed and fastened little below the **surbolo**. On the edges one layer of thatch is spread, top facing upward, over which more thatch are spread layer after layer, each layer pressed by a **bhata**. The first layer of thatch is known as **dhanti**, whereas the rest of the layers, top facing downwards, make up a **chhana** i.e. roof. **Bhitta** i.e. sidewalls of the house are made of either **ekra** (a kind of bamboo) or flattened bamboo, which after knitting, is plastered by mud, especially red in colour and mixed with cow dung. **Sikuwa** is the verandha and **balesi** is the place, in front of the house, where rainwater drops from the edge of the roof. **Jato**, pounding wheels, and even **dhiki** and **okhli** (husking tools/instruments) are kept on this verandha. A little raised portion surrounding the house is called **pidi**. The courtyard where **biskun** (grains spread on the ground for the purpose of drying) is spread, in front of the house, is **aagan** and the open place behind the house is called **kareso**. **Bari** is their kitchen garden. **Bhakari** is the place for storing grains. They either use big bamboo-baskets for this purpose or separate room to use as **bhakari**.

UTENSILS

Gorkhas are good craftsmen. They make wooden utensils for their own uses, though, they also use utensils made of metals. A few of the utensils generally used by them are as follows: -

Mana-pathi: Measuring pots, **mana** is equal to half **sher** (almost equal to half kilogram) or ten handfuls. Eight **manas** make a **pathi**. Therefore one **pathi** is equal to four **shers**. With the introduction of modern weighing machines, **mana/pathi** is fast disappearing from the Gorkha society.

Theki: - Milk or curd carrier, **the ki**, varies in sizes, from **ek-mane** (one **mana** of liquid carrier) to **dus-mane** (ten **mana** liquid carrier). **Thekis** are made of wood.

Arsi: - It is a bowl-like pot made of single piece of wood and usually used to store grains.

Kunde: - A pan used to boil cattle-feeds and also to feed the cattle.

Gariyo: - A bottle-like container made of single wood used to store cooking-oil upto half liters is known as **gariyo**.

Harpe: - A similar bottle made of wood where **gheu** (clarified butter) are stored is called **harpe**. Gorkhas also use **singmang**, a bottle-like container made of wood, to store **gheu** and oil.

Chautho: - It is a container made of wood to store oil above two liters.

Mali: - A ball-like round container opened in the middle, which contains oil, especially for massaging purposes, less than a quarter litre is called **mali**.

Dabilo: - It is a wooden **paneu**, a flat ladle, used to stir and serve solid food.

Chimta: - It is a kind of twizzer used for picking up burning coals in oven.

Chimti: - It is smaller twizzer specially used for plucking grey hair.

Odan: - It is a tripod, circular in shape, used as stand and also used as a makeshift oven.

Sotey: - It is made of bamboo or metal for blowing air to ignite the fire normally a flute length in size.

Sanaso: - It is like a big twizzer curved on the top and used for holding utensils usually hot.

Kasaundi: - It is a utensil made of copper used during festivals for cooking a large quantum of food.

Tasala: - It is a brass/copper pitcher used for cooking food.

Daru: - It is a deep ladle, either wooden or metallic, used to stir and serve liquid food.

Wan-gilas: - Perhaps corrupted from the English word 'wine glass', it is generally made of metals like brass or bronze but wooden ones also found. **Wan-gilas** is used to serve liquors.

Lota: - It is a small pitcher-like vessel, made of bronze, used for drinking purposes and also used to make **kalas** (vessel with water and flowers) in ceremonies.

Amkhora: - It is like **Lota** with a curved pipe at one side to drain-out liquid in it.

Gagri: - Bigger than **lota** usually used to carry/store drinking water and also used as **kalas** in ceremonies.

Batuko/dabako: -Small bowl made of bronze for sipping soup, tea etc. is **batuko** and when its size is enlarged it is called **dabako**.

Jharke-thal: - Bronze plates with designs on them are used for eating foods and also as drum by Shamans while performing **chinta** (seance/trance). The Gorkhas have high regards for bronze utensils, so they also use these utensils in religious ceremonies.

Duna/tapara: - **Duna** is a small leaf-plate and a bit bigger in size is **tapara**. Both are used in ceremonies to serve dishes to invitees and also offerings to gods.

Dudero: - A wooden bucket-like vessel made of a single wood used to milk a cow.

Kharkudo: - A large cooking vessel made of copper with rings i.e. handles, on both sides, used during feast to cook curry especially meats. It is found in different sizes.

Besides these, the Gorkhas have also a number of other utensil or artifacts which they make themselves such as **doko, thumse, namlo, dali, nanglo, chalni, chimta, sanaso, chapani** etc.

BHUTIA

Any discussion on the Gorkhas will not be complete, in the context of the social structure of the Darjeeling hill areas, unless the Bhutias are included in its ambit. Besides the historical reasons, the geographical contiguity, the porous trans-state boundaries and the racial affinity of the people, make it imperative to consider this tribe in this study.

The Bhutias, the people of **Bhot** or **Bhod** i.e. Tibet who are locally known as **bhotey**, can broadly be divided into three major categories.

- i) Bhutias of Sikkim,
- ii) Bhutias of Bhutan,
- iii) Bhutias of Tibet.

The first two categories of the Bhutias prefer themselves to be called as Sikkimese or Denjongpa i.e. the people of Denjong (Sikkim) and Drukpas, the people of Druk or Bhutan, respectively instead of Bhutia. The third category of Bhutia can further be divided into two categories:

- i) Those who came to India and settled here before 1959 and
- ii) Those who came to India after 1959 as refugees.

Yet another category of the Bhutia also exists in the Gorkha Community known as Bhutias of Nepal which includes Sherpas, Yolmos etc. But these days they are more popularly known with their tribe name rather than Bhutia as they were known in bygone days.

Of all the categories of the Bhutias, only the Bhutias of the third category i.e. those who came and settled before 1959, commonly use the title of Bhutia. Now-a-days the descendents of the Tibetan refugees, who form the majority among the urban Bhutias, also use the word Bhutia as their surname. Bhutia in this study means Bhutia of Sikkim, Bhutia of Drukpa and Bhutia of Tibetan origin who came to India and settled before 1959.

The Bhutias are Buddhists by religion, belonging to different sects viz. Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya and Gelug. Being Buddhists their main priest is a Lama who performs all the ceremonies from birth to death. They use U-med and U-chhen scripts of the Tibetan language. However Nepali language, which is spoken fluently by all, has become their lingua franca.

The Drukpas, that is the Bhutias of Bhutan, can be divided into different clans viz. (i) Shenga-guru, (ii) Parop, (iii) Sarchogpa, (iv) Sucheb, (v) Shab and (vi) Smabob. Similarly, the Sikkimese are divided into two main groups (i) Tondu rus-shi and (ii) Beb tsen gye. They use the title according to their original place of settlement like Chumbipas means people from the Chumbi valley) similarly Droptapas, Tromo-pas, Lachen-pas and Lachung-pas etc. The Bhutias of Tibetan origin can also be classified according to their original place of settlements like Thoma, Kham, Utsang, Amdo etc.

The Bhutias, the male as well as the female wear a dress called *gho*, locally known as *bakkhu*. Their married women-folk wear apron-like piece of cloth, *pangden*, in the front part of their body below the waistline lengthen upto the knee.

Kyi-dug, social association or community welfare body plays a very important role in the welfare of the Bhutia community. An independent body, *kyi-dug* helps its members in their hours of needs. Each and every member of the Bhutia community is, therefore, required to be associated with *kyi-dug*, resultantly which helps to strengthen their religious, cultural, social, political and traditional unity.

A marriage in the Bhutia society is conducted through negotiation in which the parents take an active part. The astrologers also play an important role making a pair. *Khachang* is the ceremony when the boy's family members go to the girl's house with the marriage proposal. *Nangchang* is the next ceremony when the boy's family offers gifts. Among the Tibetans, this *nangchang* ceremony is known as *bangchang*. The send-off of the newly married couple from the girl's house after the completion of the marriage ceremony is called *tong-len*.

In olden days there was a system of having a common wife among brothers. However now-a-days this system is not in vogue.

The Bhutias, before taking-out the dead body for cremation perform a ritual known as *pho* or *phowa*, which normally takes a couple of hours. The process, which at the advice of the *chipa*, astrologer, sometimes spread over three to four days also, is actually performed to separate the soul from the body of the deceased. After cremation, they continue to offer food to the deceased for forty-nine days. On the forty-ninth day, they perform *shibchu-sergu*. After a year Tibetans and the Drukpas perform the anniversary rituals called *shie-due* ceremony whereas the Sikkimese call their anniversary ritual *lom-cho*. They erect a prayer flag *darchog*, a rectangular piece of cloth, in memory of the deceased.

Lasoon, *sonam lossar* and *gewa-lossar* are their new-years. Besides these, they celebrate numerous festivals like *chhokor*, *tshechhu*, *panglhabsol*, *sagadawa*.

BELIEFS

Some of the traditions and beliefs, prevailing in the Gorkha society, are unique. It is quite interesting to know a few of their social beliefs. Perhaps, they are one of the few communities who have high regard for their **cheli-beti** (sisters & daughters). As such they never kick them and never allow them to touch their feet. Instead they touch the feet of their **cheli-beti** with great reverence.

Buharis (sister-in-laws i.e. younger brother's wife) never expose their heads, especially parting of the hair, in front of their **jethajeu** (husband's elder brothers). They always cover the head with a piece of cloth.

The sons and the daughters are considered equal. Therefore they have, almost, equal responsibilities towards their family. As prevailed in the developed society, sneezing, empty-pot and path crossed by a black cat while moving out is considered ill omen by the Gorkhas too.

The Gorkhas never sweep the house at night. If the house has to be swept, they do not throw the rubbish out. They never cross over a broom nor do they crush it with their feet. They also do not keep the broom horizontally.

The cutting of nails at night is prohibited. Similarly, standing or sitting on the threshold is not considered good. They do not use broken mirrors, cracked glasses and damaged utensils. They do not whistle inside the house. Marrying in the month of **Kartik** (October/November), **Push** (December/January), **Magh** (January/February) and **Bhadau** (August/September) is prohibited.

While handing-over a thing to an elder they use both hands. Anything given with a single or left hand is considered lack of etiquette.

A Gorkha never stitches cloths over the body. They consider the yellowish sunrays of dusk and dawn to be carrier of **se** and **bayu** (evil spirits).

There is restriction of leaving the house for a journey on Saturday and entering the house after the journey on Tuesday. They consider number three as unfavourable. As such they always avoid starting a work or an assignment with three members. They also avoid any two members of the family leaving the house for different directions at a time because of **tin-bas** (three lodgments, third being the main residence). If it is unavoidable, the number is evened by keeping a broom outside the house for a night. Entering the house on the ninth day after leaving it also considered as ill omen.

A unique relationship called **mitery saino** is found in the Gorkha society. It is a bond of friendship between two contemporaries of the same gender. When relationship grows between two individuals and their habits, outlook and mode of life are in consonance with each other's, they or their families decide to establish a formal relationship of friendship between them. After the formal ceremony, they become **mit** (friend). Unlike in normal friendship, the persons who have contracted **mitery** treat each other with due respect. They never misbehave with each other. They also need to treat each other's family members with reverence. Infact, in their estimation, the place of a **mit's** family occupies a superior position in the social hierarchy.

The custom of contracting **mitery** is fast disappearing from the Gorkha society. Such an affinity is becoming the thing of the past.

The Gorkhas have rich cultural heritage. Some of their beliefs and etiquette, discussed above and others, which are not included here, have satisfactory reasons behind them. It is necessary, therefore, to have a thorough research on the subject matter.

CONCLUSION

The world is fast changing, so are the Gorkhas. However, in the comparison to the speed in which changes are taking place outside, the socio-economic life style of the Gorkhas has been changing at a

very slow pace. Likewise, culturally too, they are becoming an almost extinct community. The position of the Gorkhas in the present society, due to their ignorance, carefree attitude and lavish spending on drink and merry-making are still the same as described by L.S.S.O'Mally in his book 'Darjeeling District Gazetteers' way back in 1907.

'They (Gorkhas) drink far more than the inhabitants of any other part of Bengal- to their propensity to gambling, to their simple delight in display of all kinds, which leads to an extravagant outlay, on dress, ornaments and jewelleries and finally in their improvement habits. When in want of money they at once turn for a loan to the moneylender, the Marwari, or, as he is called locally, the Kanya or Kaya.

The ignorant hill people are recklessly willing to sign bonds at high rates of interest for ready money, interest accumulates on interest, and the unhappy debtor rarely manages to clear off his crushing debt. The moneylenders are always ready to accommodate a fresh victim; and are willing to allow him to become involved fully upto the limit of what they think he can be made to pay....in one (case) a poor old woman was compelled by hunger to borrow three sheers of rice, and only succeeded in getting a loan of that amount on condition that she repaid thirty seers of maize in two months' time; in another (case) a peasant, who had been driven by scarcity to borrow 10 1/2 rupees worth of rice, had managed to pay off Rs 76/= in five years and still owed Rs.140/=.'

In socio-economic scenario the only visible change has been the fact that most of the descendents of the peasant are now government job holders earning a fixed salary every month. They are now fond of modern dresses and liquors instead of old **daurasuruwal/guneucholo** and **raksi** which their forefathers used to wear and drink. But their indebtedness to the businessmen and moneylenders are more or less the same, as prevailed in bygone days. Barring a few, most of the salaried families are in the habit of procuring monthly food provisions

from a **modi-pasal** (grocery shop), mostly owned by the **maḥheses** (people from the plain), on credit. As a result a large portion of their salary is always spent repaying old dues, keeping little or nothing at all for other needs. The condition of a large segment of the peasants and daily wage earners is far worse. The Gorkhas are hard-working people but amazingly the sense of the dignity of labour is nil in the higher set-up of the middle class people, who constitute a major section. In spite of their hard labour attitude they don't muster enough courage to undertake any complex assignments fearing mental tensions and loss of peace. Perhaps, they lack tolerance. However, bunch of new generations are already in the field undertaking jobs/assignments that till date were considered as odd or alien in the Gorkha society.

The Gorkhas have a rich cultural heritage to be proud of. However, due to their habit of imitating others, their ignorance regarding cultural values in the modern society and their shyness to accept their customs, have pushed their culture to the brink of extinction. Therefore, today most of them are unable to associate themselves with their rich cultural heritage.

A heterogeneous community, the Gorkhas who took a long two and half decades to become a homogeneous community in India, are today in dilemma. Most of them are a confused lot today. They are in crossroads, one way leading to heterogeneity and another way leading to homogeneity. They are divided into castes, each organizing their own groups and thus paving a backward swirl to their heterogeneous era. However, diversity in their unity is a unique feature, which one seldom finds in other communities. The present situation in the Gorkha society can be well described, as they are so different among themselves yet they are united as a group. They are united but dismembered from within. Individually they are conscious about their culture but unitedly they are ignorant. They are numerically strong yet socially feeble. In spite of their efforts their rich cultural traditions have yet to get concretion and exposure for the reasons best known to them. For the purpose of safeguarding their unity, they do not have any cultural association nor do they have any social or religious

congregation to lead them socially. A Nepali proverb '**Nepaliko sallah kharaniko dalla**' (their decision is like a ball of ash) reveals, to some extent, their vacillating nature. But while peeping into the brighter side of their society we find that ignoring racial and traditional differences amongst themselves many Gorkhas, who believe in their old customs and traditions, are out on the street for survival as a single unified community by keeping their traditions and customs united & intact.

Although the world is standing on the threshold of the third millennium of the Christian era still people are inquisitive to know more about their past and more about their ancestors. The Gorkhas are also no exceptions. They, inspite of many ups & downs, too have concern for their future, their contributions in the development process, their role in the coming century and also survival as a single and socially & politically strong community in a modern world of tomorrow. Simultaneously they are also eager to discover their roots. Perhaps in the modern politicized world one may make progress to the highest limit, it is the root where lies the sap of one's survival. After all, it is dignity, not food, which makes survival more comfortable and meaningful.



APPENDIX I**THAR**

Brief summary of various thars (clans/kindred) of different castes/tribes.

BAHUN

Kumai (Bhata, Bist, Dotel, Gyawali, Josi, Khatiwada, Kadariya, Lohani, Paitila, Panera, Pant, Pathak, Singuli, Soti, Upreti etc.)

Purbiya (Acharya, Adhikari, Aryal, Banskota, Banstola, Baral, Belbasey, Bhandari, Bhattarai, Bhurtel, Bhusal, Chapagai, Choulagai, Dahal, Deokota, Dhakal, Dhital, Gagtola, Ghimiray, Gotame, Guragai, Dhungana, Dungal, Kafley, Kanel, Khanal, Kharel, Koirala, Kuikel, Lamsal, Lamichhaney, Newpaney, Ojha, Panthi, Parazuli, Paudyal, Pokhrel, Pudasaini, Pyakurel, Regmi, Risal, Sapkota, Sigdel, Timsina, Tiwari etc.)

BHUJEL(KHAWAS)

Chungapattitsa, Depatsa, Durbitsa, Garshiyata, Kyampatitsa, Thumbutsa, Tungsutsa, Turpitsa, Yata etc.

CHHETRI

Baniya, Basnet, Bhat, Bogati, Bohara, Burathoki, Chauhan, Chundal, Deoja, Karki, Khadka, Khulal, Kunwar, Mahat, Oli, Pandey, Parazuli, Rahut, Roka, Suenl, Thapa etc.

DAMAI

Bagdas, Baiju, Bardewa, Bhitrikothi, Bhusal, Budapirthi, Char, Changudel, Chauhan, Das, Darnal, Ghimirey, Hingmang, Jairu, Kalakhati, Karkidholi, Labar, Maley, Mohar, Mothey, Naubag, Panchkothi, Pariyar, Pokhrel, Ranpaheli, Ryaidhyal, Siwa, Sunam, Sundas, Sungurey, Suji, Thatal, Tikhatri etc.

GAINI

Adhikari, Baikar, Bhat, Bhusal, Bogale, Burathoki, Kalakaushal, Kayastha, Samudri, Sursaman, Thakuri etc.

GURUNG

Chorbe, Dorjali, Ghale, Ghotaney, Ghyabre, Hajyu, Jangre, Kayabje, Khatra, Kromje, Kholali, Lama, Lamichhaney, Megi, Paigi, Porne, Rilame, Sogun, Thome, Thorchhe, Thorgami, Yojme, etc.

KAGATEY (YOLMO)

Dongba, Sarpan, Shyangba etc.

KAMI

Asurpati, Bataula, Iswarpati, Kalikotey, Kamoula, Kapurpati, Khapangi, Koirala, Magranti, Paudelilamdagey, Rahalpal, Rasaula, Rizal, Ruchal, Siwapati etc.

LEPCHA

Ademu, Barfongmu, Brimu, Chongmu, Chyongsingmoo, Fonningmu, Fungtalmu, Gawlokmu, Joriboo, Kabomu, Karthakmoo, Kuhiphujomoo, Kunchudyangmu, Kurbomu, Lemyongmoo, Lucksommmoo, Lutsommu, Mulloammu, Namchaamoo, Namchumu, Panlook, Phipon, Rongongmu, Sadamu, Same-ilemu, Sandyangmu, Simickmoo, Sithlingmoo, Sompomu, Sumburmoo, Sungutummu, Taknyelmu, Tasomu, Thamsangmu, Yongmu, etc.

LIMBU (SUBBA)

Angbohang, Angbung, Angdembe, Benem, Bhavuhang, Chemjong, Chitlek, Ektinhang, Fagu, Fanghang, Febbu, Feduva, Folungba, Fombo, Fudong, Furumbo, Hangsurung, Hellok, Isibu, Jabegu, Kambang, Kandandva, Karumag, Kebuhang, Khongvahang, Lawati, Lingbhim, Lingden, Liwang, Lucksom, Lumfunga, Mademba, Maden, Mangphu, Mayam, Mehim, Namlok, Nembang, Ningleko, Okhabo, Pahang, Pangenhang, Pegahang, Pongthak, Pongyangu, Robon, Samba, Sambahang, Satihangma, Selle, Sigir, Singhang, Singthebe, Sodemba, Sodung, Songbo, Swaurumba, Tamaden, Thamsuhang, Thangden, Thebe, Thegim, Tholang, Thopra, Thupyoko, Tumba, Tambahangphe, Tumrok, Tungdhong, Tungyangpa, Yoksuhang, Yongyang etc.

MAGAR (THAPA)

Thapamagar (Aley, Bachhey, Bachhaley, Bachhum, Baijali, Balami, Bamcha, Basi, Chhantel, Chohan, Degal, Darlami, Dhakal, Doreli, Durel, Gidel, Halaki, Hoslami, Kamu, Lamchhaki, Palungi, Parel, Sathigharey, Sinjali, Sinyali, Sunpati, Suyel, Thamu etc.)

Ranamagar (Aley, Archami, Barhapanthi, Bhusal, Burathoki, Chumi, Darlam, Dangali, Fiwali, Fiyali, Kamchaki, Kekali, Khadka, Kirache, Lungali, Lungeli, Makim, Pachai, Palli, Rilami, Runlija, Sarakoti, Simase, Sinjali, Thara etc.)

Aleymagar (Balam, Bamethi, Barase, Bazi, Bhadari, Bili, Darlami, Gherali, Gelami, Khali, Khulang, Kyapchaki, Lahari, Legali, Lumjali, Maeg, Paharey, Palan, Pangmi, Pulami, Raya, Sirpali, Sithug, Sitwali, Tarukchey, Yangmi etc.)

Burathoki (Arkali, Baijali, Balkothi, Birjali, Darlasi, Gamal, Janjali, Karal, Kechki, Lamchhaney, Namjali, Paharey, Ramjali, Ramu, Sibji, Sijapati, Sinjali, Ulunge etc.)

Gharti (Arghaley, Baijale, Baima, Bhant, Bhujiyal, Bulami, Darlami, Fagami, Galtami, Gamal, Hojali, Lammchhaney, Machal, Rijal etc.)

Pun (Baijali, Balami, Darlami, Fungali, Holangi, Hunali, Jagaley, Perali, Sothi, Tamey, Tejali, Tendi, Thani, Tirkhey etc.)

Roka (Bajhangi, Ramjali, Rokaya etc.)

MAJHI

Kusuwar (Chusunka, Parbeli, Maikule, Varleni etc.)

NEWAR (PRADHAN)

Bajracharya, Chhepa, Dhwabya, Dhyala, Dui, Jogi, Jyapu, Kau, Kulu, Kush, Malakar, Nau, Nay, Pu, Rajopadhyay, Sayami, Shakya, Tuladhar (Udash) etc.

RAI

Athpaharey, Bagale, Bahing, Batu, Balung, Bangdel, Bantawa, Bhalili, Bhola, Bolna, Chamling, Choursia, Dalhang, Diwaraj, Dodang, Dumali,

Dumi, Falim, Ghume, Kewa, Khaling, Khamla, Khukkhang, Koyu, Kulung, Lengmuk, Lehrung, Nakchung, Namlung, Newali, Newahang, Noika, Ochaihangesalten, Ombole, Pelmung, Puchenbung, Pupabung, Rumdali, Sakham, Salten, Samard, Sampang, Sokap, Sondel, Songang, Songbong, Suvarcha, Tamchhang, Thulung, Yangtongpa etc.

SARKI

Balkuti, Bisunkey, Lamjel, Magranti, Mijar, Purkuti, Roka, Rumlal etc.

SHERPA

Chiyaba, Dawa, Goparma, Gardaza, Higorma, Kushewo, Khambache, Lankshindu, Mande, Mopa, Paldorje, Pangdorje, Pangkarma, Pinasa, Solaka, Shagup, Sherwa, Thakut, Yazo etc.

SUNUWAR (MUKHIA)

Bij, Binich, Bujich, Chach, Dajich, Danrach, Darbich, Dasuch, Demvach, Digarch, Fatic, Goroyach, Jentich, Jespuch, Jijich, Jyati, Katich, Kormoch, Kuitachi, Lan, Laspach, Lilami, Linnoch, Lukhich, Mulich, Ngawach, Noflich, Pargali, Rapach, Ravach, Rujich, Rupach, Sochul, Sopule, Suchuch, Thunguch, Tokunch, Wangde, Yata etc.

TAMANG

Bal, Blon, Chhapenkar, Chhemmen, Chyangri, Damrak, Dimden, Dong, Dongba, Dumchan, Durpa, Gingthan, Ghaley, Glen, Goley, Gomcha, Gyaba, Gyalden, Gyamden, Gyan, Gyekey, Hangju, Jimba, Kalden, Karma, Karmaba, Kitung, Loba, Locker, Lopchan, Maden, Memekhor, Moktan, Namrak, Negi, Ngeke, Ngyasur, Pakhrin, Palchok, Panchathen, Rumba, Syangbo, Syangden, Syangsen, Syarbakhor, Thing, Thocker, Waiba, Yonzon, etc.

THAKURI

Chan, Jyu, Kha, Kalsahi, Medhasisahi, Malla, Rana, Rai, Sah/Sahee, Sahi, Singh etc.

THAMI (THANGMI)

Akyangmi, Bagale, Chathok, Damsipere, Gorke, Jaidhane, Namkha Pandey, Peskhare, Reshmi, Roimidati Yanteshree etc.

YAKHA (DEWAN)

Chhala, Kirenge, Kongren, Longchawa, Limbukhim, Makhra, Musahang, Sambehang, Tamaphok & Yopaliba etc.

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APPENDIX IISCRIPTSNepali (Devanagari) ScriptsVowels

अ आ इ ई उ ऊ ऋ ॠ

A Aa I Ee U Oo Ri Ree

ए ऐ ओ औ अं अः

Ey ai o ou an ah

Consonant

क ख ग घ ङ

Ka Kha Ga Gha Ng

च छ ज झ ञ

Cha Chha Ja Jha Ny

ट ठ ड ढ ण

Ta Tha Da Dha Na

त थ द ध न

Ta tha da dha na

प फ ब भ म

Pa Pha Ba Bha Ma

य र ल व श

Ya Ra La Wa Sa

ष स ह क्ष त्र ज्ञ

Sha Sha Ha Ksha Tra Gyan

Gurung (Tamu Khema Phri) ScriptsVowels

अ आ अं अ

A

Ama

E-ma

U-ma

अं अँ अं अँ

Ye-ma

Yai-ma

O-ma

Ou-ma

Consonanants

क का ख खा दू

Kakhe

Khakhe

Gakhe

Ghakhe

Ngakhe

म मा ख खा ल

Chakhe

Chhakhe

Jakhe

Jhakhe

Hakhe

द दा थ था व वा व

Takhe

Thakhe

Dakhe

Dhakhe

Wakhe

ल ला थ था न

Takhe

thake

dakhe

dhakhe

nakhe

प पा थ थ म

Pakhe

Phakhe

Bakhe

Bhakhe

Makhe

य र ल श

Yakhe

Rakhe










Lakhe

Sakhe


























THE Gorkhas

Lepcha Scripts





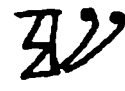



Vowels

				
A	a	I	ee	O
				
	ou	U	oo	ey

















Consonant

				
Ka	Kha	Ga	Nga	
				
Chya	Chhya	Jya	Nya	
				
Ta	Tha	Da	Na	
				
Pa	Pha	Pha	Ba	MA
				
Cha	Chha	Ja	Ya	Ra
				
La	Ha	Ba	Sha	
				
	Sa	A		

Limbu (Sirijunga) ScriptsVowels

					
A	Aa	I	ee	Ey	Ai
					
	ou	Ari	erey		

Consonants

				
Ka	Kha	Ga	Gha	Nga
				
Cha	Chha	Ja	Jha	Nya
				
Ta	Tha	Da	Dha	Na
				
Pa	Pha	Ba	Bha	Ma
				
Ya	Ra	La	Wa	Tra
				
Sha	Sha	Sa	Ha	Gyan

Magar (Akkha) Scripts

Vowels



A



a



I



ee



U



oo



Ey



ai

Consonants



Ka



Kha



Ga



Gha



Nga



Cha



Chha



Ja



Jha



Ta



Tha



Da



Dha



Na



Pa



Pha



Ba



Bha



Wa



ma



Sa



Ha



Ra



La



Ya



Nya

Newar (Nepa) ScriptsVowels

अ	आ	ए	ए	उ	दु	सु
A	aa	e	ee	u	oo	ii
सु	र	र	न	न	उ	उ
ree	Lri	lree	ey	ai	o	ou
		अं	अं			
		ang	ah			

Consonants

क	ख	ग	घ	ङ
Ka	Kha	Ga	Gha	Nga
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
Cha	Chha	Ja	Jha	Nya
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण
Ta	Tha	Da	Dha	Na
त	थ	द	ध	न
Ta	tha	da	dha	na
प	फ	ब	भ	म
Pa	Pha	Ba	Bha	Ma
य	र	ल	व	श
Ya	Ra	La	Wa	sha
ष	स	ह	क्ष	त्र
Sha	Sa	Ha	ksha	tra

अं
Gyan

Sunuwar (Koinch Bres) Scripts

Vowels



Dewih



Taslaa



Gko



Emar



Teoo



Utth

Consonants



Kik



Mamaah



Aafflo



Pip



Gil



Hasho



Chahararmi



Nanh



Bur



Jyuh



Lauhachaa



Aaunth



Shele



Baahrachan




Yaatta




Hwo

Tamang (Sambota/Tamahik) Scripts

Vowels




 A a I ee u oo Ey

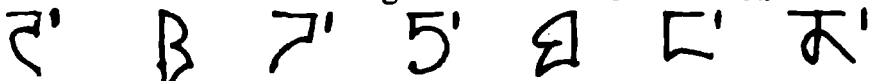


 a o ou chhala Kigu shyabku Dengbu Naro

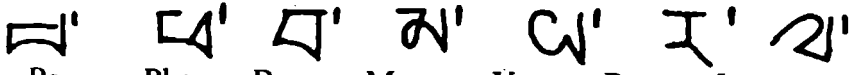
Consonants




 Ka Kha Ga Nga Cha Chha Ja



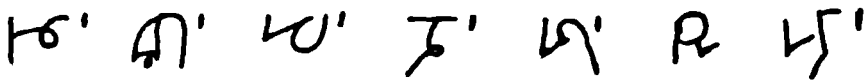
 Ta Tha Da ta tha da na



 Pa Pha Ba Ma Ya Ra La



 Wa Sha Sa Ha Rda Ngah Nah







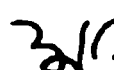
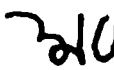




 Mha Gha Yha Rha Lha Shah Sah




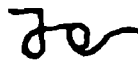
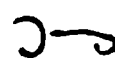











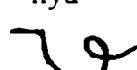


















 Hah

Rai (Khambu) Scripts

Vowels

				
A	a	I	ee	u
				
Oo	ey	ai	o	ou

Consonants

				
Ka	Kha	ga	gha	nga
				
Cha	chha	Ja	Jha	nya
				
Ta	Tha	Da	Dha	Na
				
Ta	tha	da	dha	na
				
Pa	pha	ba	bha	na
				
Ya	Ra	La	Wa	sha
				
sa	Ha	rda		

APPENDIX III

DAYS

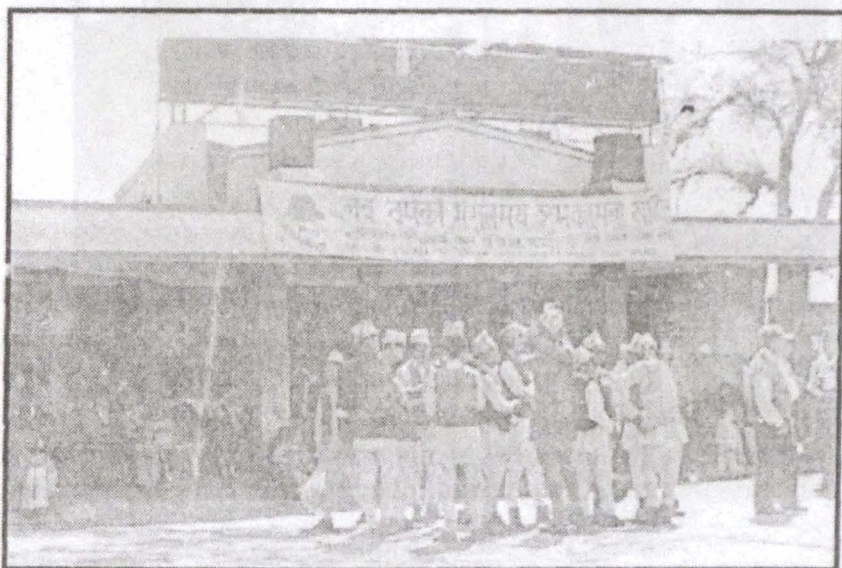
English	Nepali	Tamu Gurung	Nepa Newar	Tamang	Rai	Limbu	Lepcha	Sunuwar
Monday	Sombar	La	Somba	Som	Ladunglen	Foroba	Mi-sayak	Naken
Tuesday	Mangalbar	Myi	Mangalba	Angar	Khamlen	Mikbangba	Ung-sayak	Rib
Wednesday	Budhbar	Taho	Budha	Budh	Suwilen	Kheksuba	Lung-sayak	Tip
Thursday	Vihibar	Mhi	Basuba	Wasti	Palen	Kuruppa	Sukmut-sayak	Ruk
Friday	Sukrabar	Si	Shukraba	Sukra	Ruwalen	Fasuppa	Punjyang-sayak	Hansa
Saturday	Sanchabar	Kaho	Shamba	Sanchar	Pumalen	Senchhengba	Fat-sayak	Suk
Sunday	Aitabar	Ngit	Aaitaba	Aditya	Namlen	Teneba	Kung-sayak	Rubr

APPENDIX IV**CALENDAR**

Christian Era	Vikram Sambat	Taku barsh	Lepcha Parvatak	Tamang Lho	Limbu Yalember	Rai Langnag	Sunuwar Jitti
January	Push Magh	To Hin	Karnit Kursong	Boitapa Tapala	Sisekla Kakthekwa	Chitimla Malanla	Gilach Ngarich
February	Magh Fagun	Hin Pra	Kursong Thon	Tapala Khrela	Kakthekwa Safekwa	Malanla Bhetimla	Ngarich Chabra
March	Fagun Chait	Pra Pri	Thon Sam	Khrela Benela	Safekwa Cherengnam	Bhetimla Temla	Chabra Farich
April	Chait Baisakh	Pri Ta	Sam Tafa	Benela Namdung	Cherengnam Therengnam	Temla Chhimla	Farich Gigij
May	Baisakh Jeth	Ta Ihum	Tafa Blung	Namdung Dugula	Therengnam Kopmeppa	Chhimla Dirinla	Gigij Jihmana
June	Jeth Asar	Ihum Pra	Blung Namkan	Dugula Dwafre	Kopmeppa Thakmeppa	Dirinla Darula	Jihmana Hubanan
July	Asar Sawan	Pra Chya	Namkan Parubhim	Dwafre Byalbola	Thakmeppa Sisekpa	Darula Mungla	Hubanan Khuhbanan
August	Sawan Bhadau	Chya Khin	Parubhim Gloop	Byalbola Gonela	Sisekpa Thesekpa	Mungla Bhungla	Khuhbanan Jiloj
September	Bhadau Asoj	Khin Phon	Gloop Eth	Gonela Yandela	Thesekpa Sisekro	Bhungla Kasanda	Jiloj Buroj
October	Asoj Kartik	Phon Chyu	Eth Rah	Yandela Mheningla	Sisekro Thesekro	Kasanda Pimla	Buroj Jyura
November	Kartik Mangsir	Chyu Lon	Rah Mar	Mheningla Sokrati	Thesekro Senchhrengpa	Pimla Upla	Jyura Hansoj
December	Mangsir Push	Lon To	Mar Karnit	Sokrati Boitapa	Senchhrengpa Sisekla	Upla Chitimla	Hansoj Gilach
New Yr. January	1 st Baisakh	1 st To	1 st Karnit	1 st Khrela	1 st Kakthekwa	1 st Malanla	1 st Ngarich
Year 2000	2056	2582	2320	2836	5060		1777
	2057	2583	2321	2837	5061		1778

APPENDIX VNUMBER

Eng	Nepali	Tamu Gurung	Nepa Newar	Rai Subba	Limbu Mukhia	Tamang	Magar	Lepcha	Sunuwar
1 One	१ Ek	१ Kri	१ Chhi	१ Ak	१ Theek	१ Geek	१ Kat	१ Kat	१ Ka
2 Two	२ Dui	२ Ngyo	२ Nasi	२ Hawa	२ Netsi	२ Nee	२ Nis	२ Nyet	२ Neen
3 Three	३ Teen	३ So	३ Swa	३ Sumkatal	३ Sumsi	३ Som	३ Som	३ Sam	३ Sanh
4 Four	४ Char	४ Pli	४ Pi	४ Lektat	४ Lisi	४ Blee	४ Buli	४ Fali	४ Leg
5 Five	५ Panch	५ Nga	५ Nya	५ Nektat	५ Ngasi	५ Ngah	५ Banga	५ Fangu	५ Ngloh
6 Six	६ Chha	६ Tu	६ Khhu	६ Tuktat	६ Tuksi	६ Doo	६ Hanga	६ Tarok	६ Rakuh
7 Seven	७ Saat	७ Ngi	७ Hney	७ Yaktat	७ Nushi	७ Nees	७ Ranga	७ Kaky:k	७ Chaneeh
8 Eight	८ Ath	८ Pre	८ Chya	८ Rektat	८ Yetkhi	८ Brat	८ Khasum	८ Ka-ku	८ Sasee
9 Nine	९ Nau	९ Ku	९ Gu	९ Bhautat	९ Fangsi	९ Ku	९ Khasrek	९ Ka-kyot	९ Yanh
10 Ten	१० Dus	१० Chyu	१० Jhi	१० Pautat	१० Thibong	१० Chyui	१० Tyak	१० Kati	१० Gauh

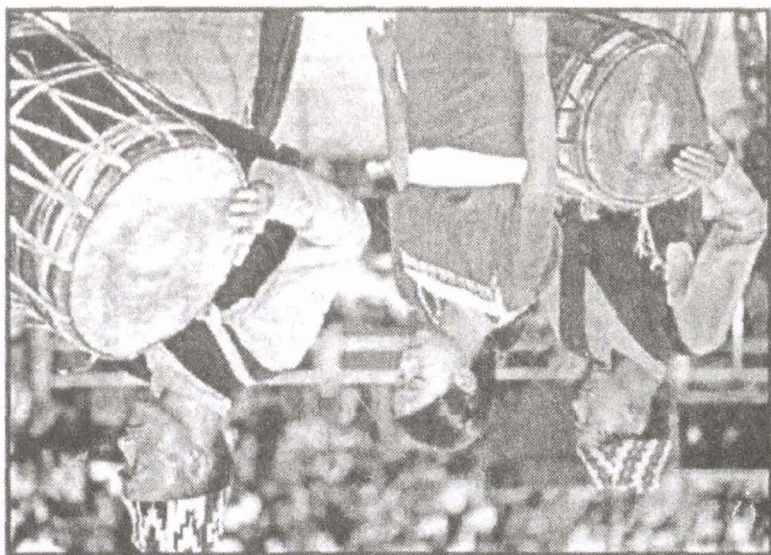


1. 1st Baisakh - Heralding the New Year

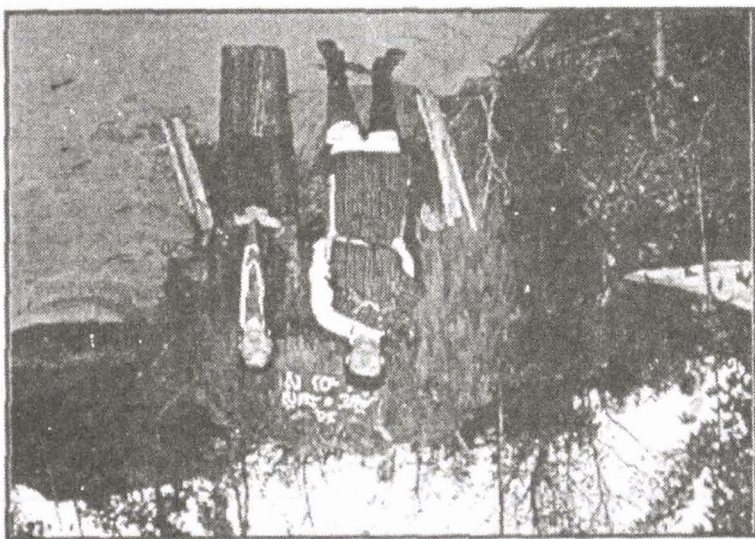


2. Gurung couples with Lamas

4. Limbus - dancing with Chyabrung



3. A Lepcha Couple





5. A typical Gorkha dance



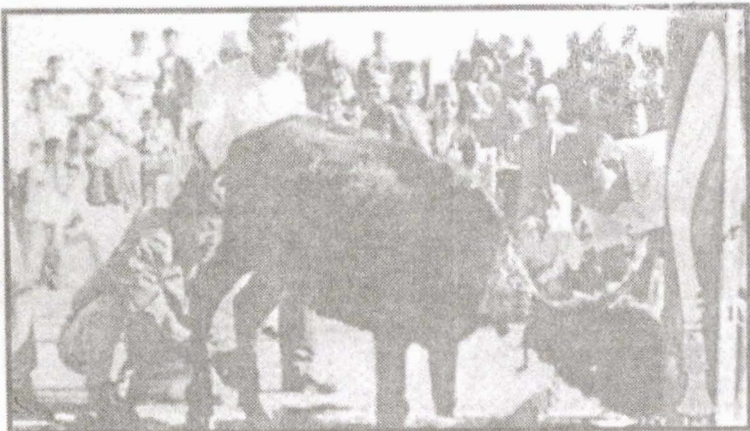
6. Sangini dance



7. Khukuri dance



8. Rais' Sakela



9. Mar - sacrifice during Dashain



10. Lakhe dance



11. Maruni dance



12. Shaman priests during Guru Puja



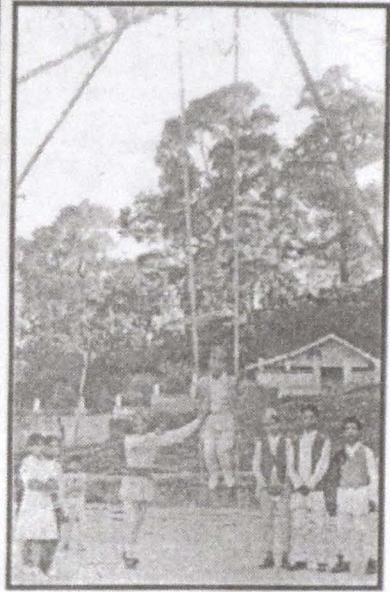
13. Sherpa dance



14. Ehi - marriage to wood-apple



15. Sindoor-potey ceremony



16. Swing - Linge Ping



17. Traditional Band - Naumati Baja



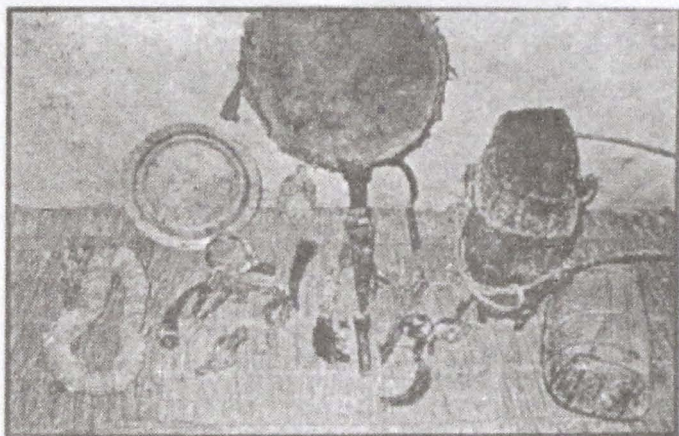
18. Lepcha dance



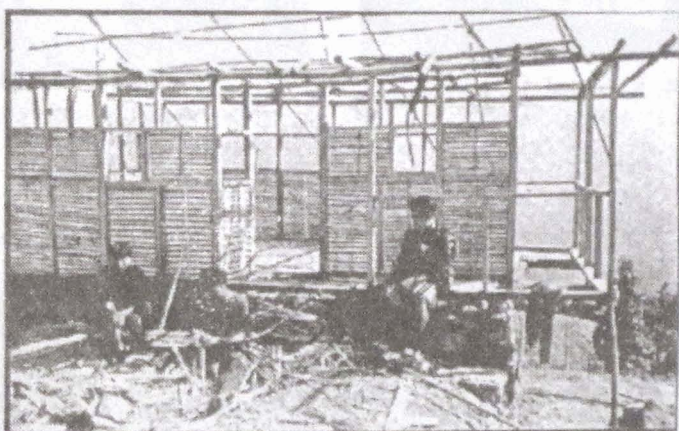
19. Dain - thrashing of grain



20. Ploughing the field



21. Instrument used by Jhankris



22. Constructing a typical house



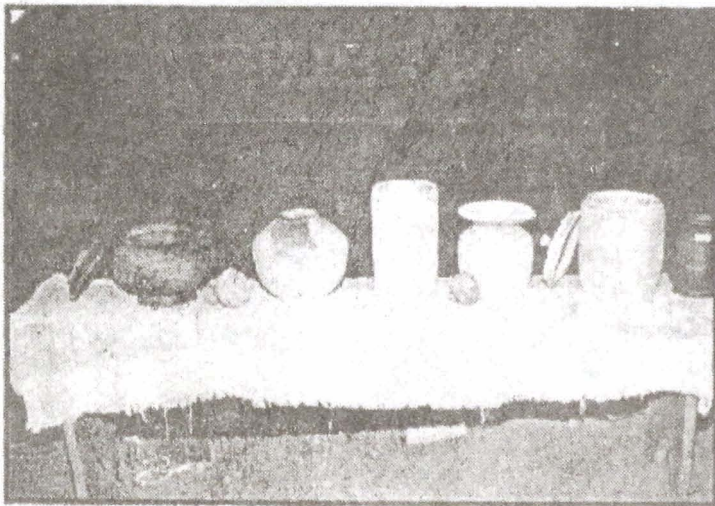
23. A Dhimi - curing a patient



24. Kusule - begging alms

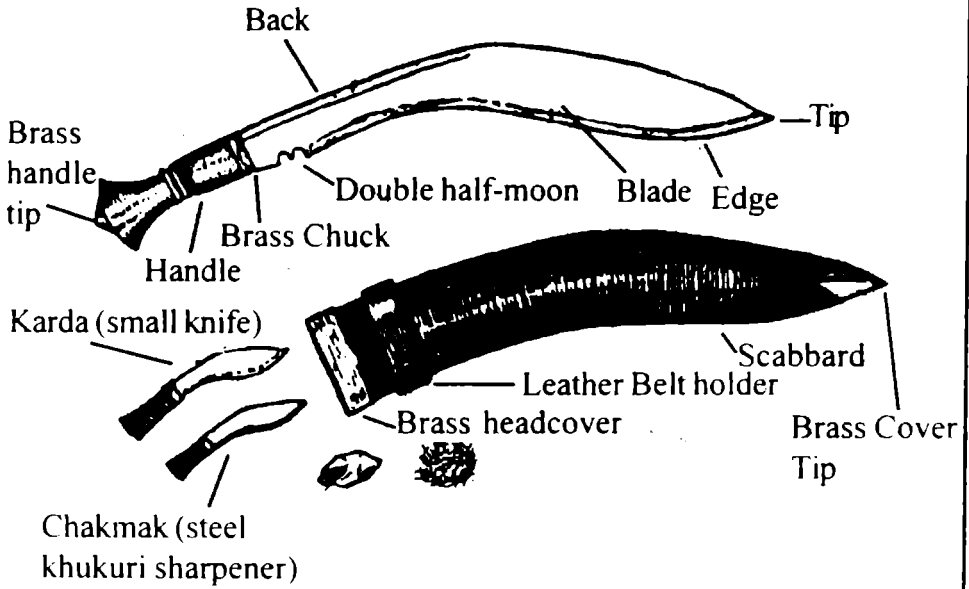


25. Bartamaan ceremony



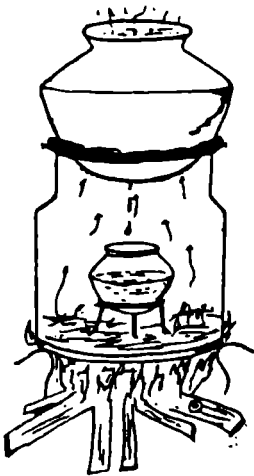
26. A few traditional wooden pots

KHUKURI

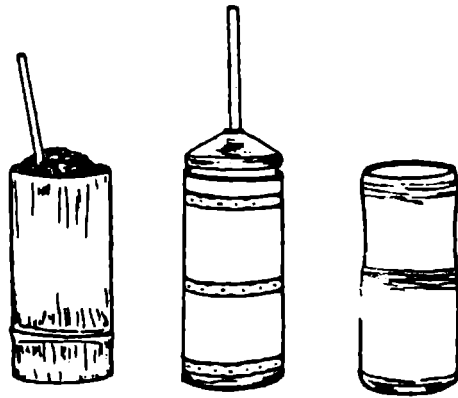


courtesy: younker/L.B.Rai

27. Khukuri



28. Raksi



29. Tongbas & pising

courtesy: J.P.Tamang



30. Bhaitika - Brother & Sister's festival



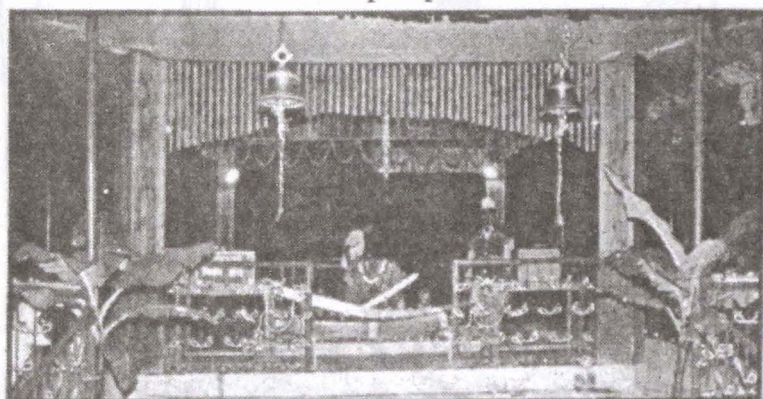
31. Receiving Tika during Dashain



32. Maghe Sankranti - worshipping the water



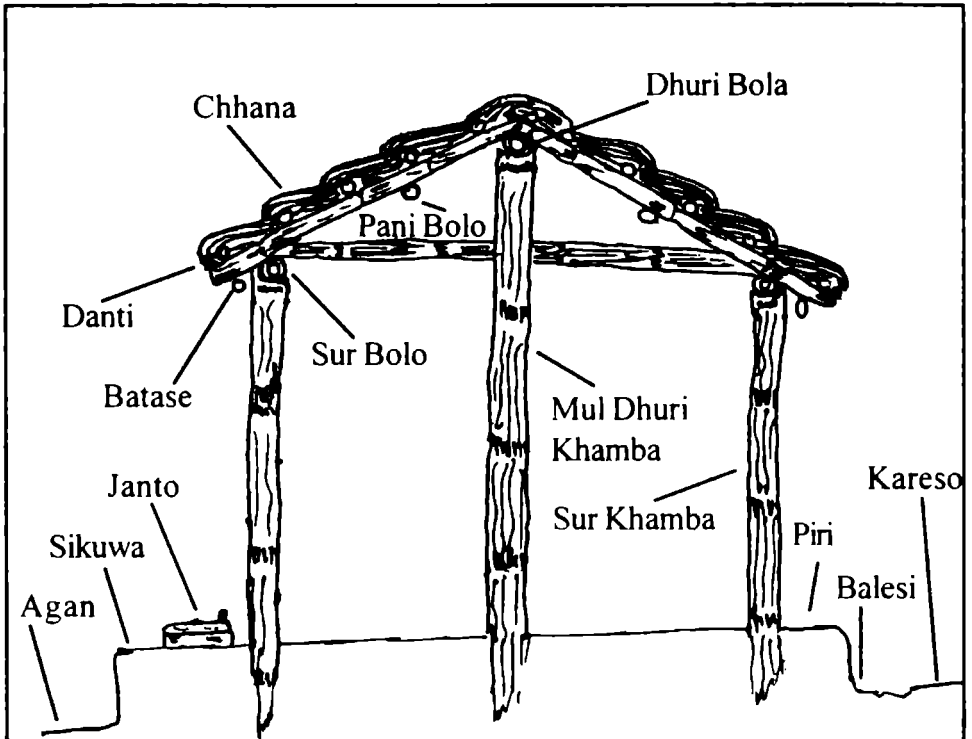
33. Phulpati procession



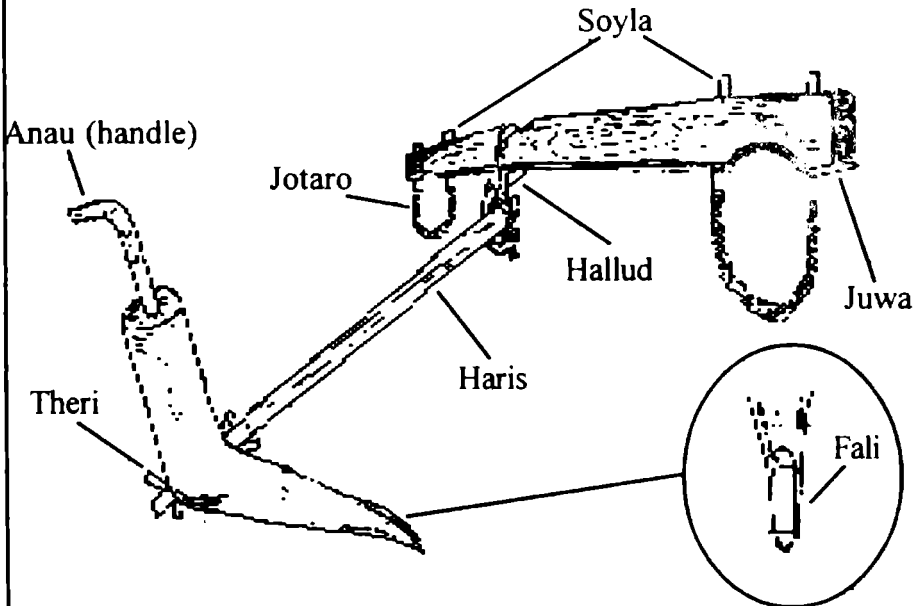
34. worshipping Shakti during Dashain



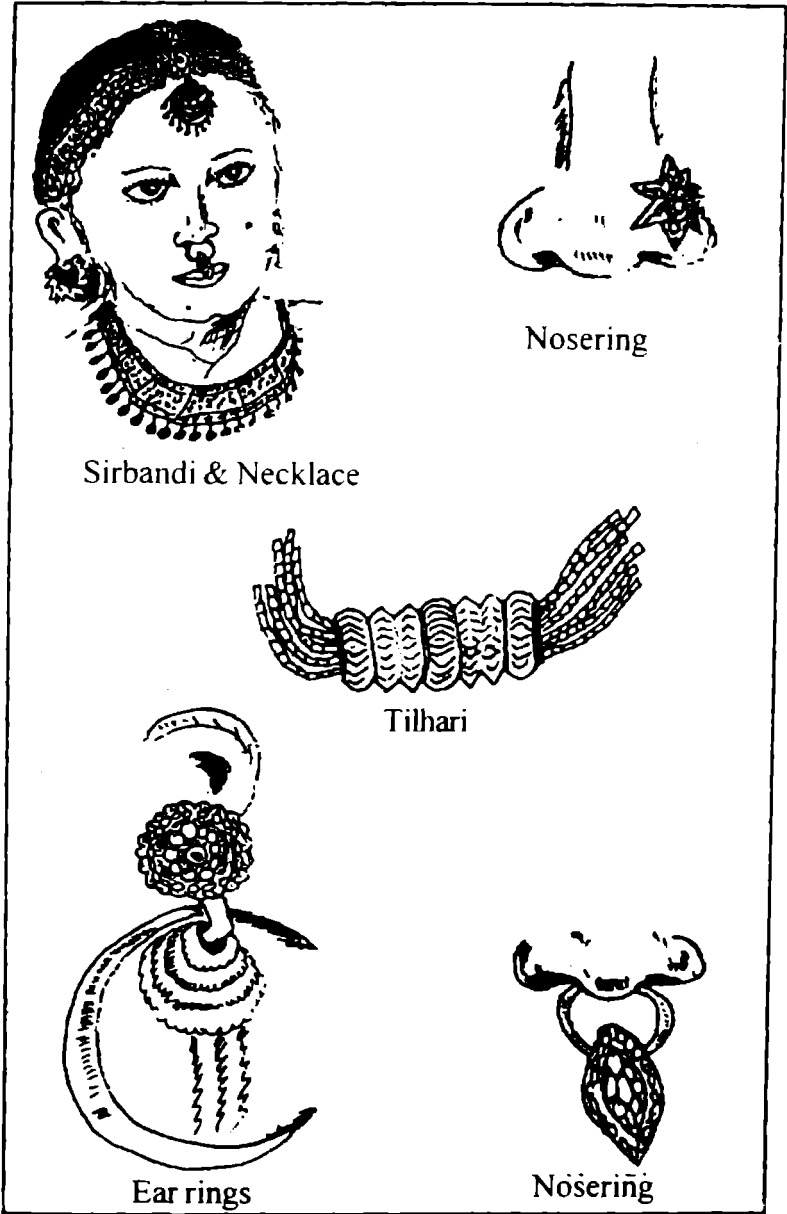
35. Sorathi dance



36. Dwelling House



37. Halo



Sirbandi & Necklace

Nosering

Tilhari

Ear rings

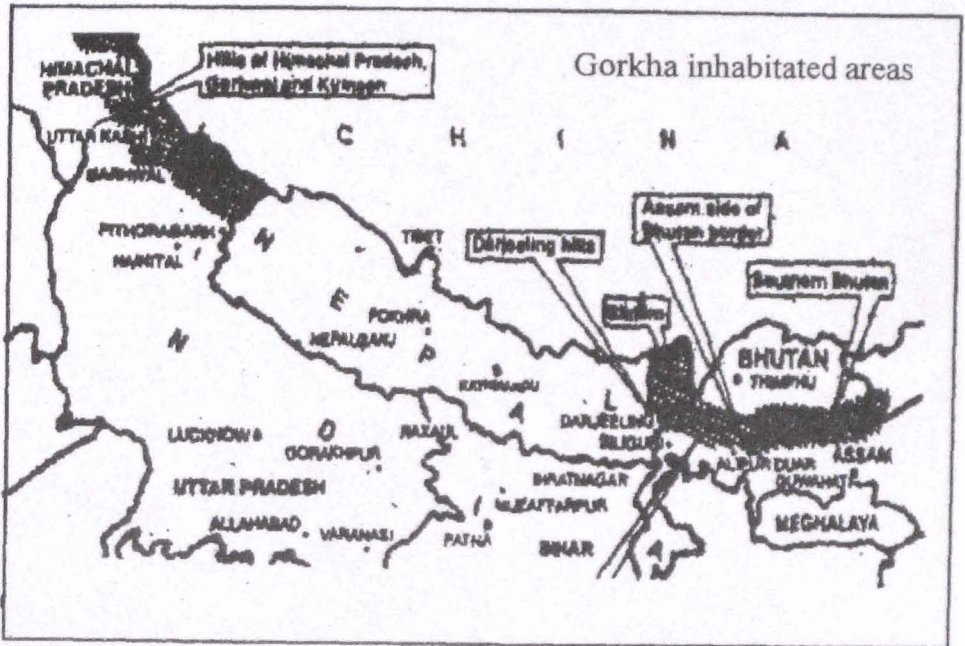
Nōseriṅ



39. Phedengmas - performing the last rites



40. Worshipping the nature



विशाल नेपाल

कोशी नदी

कागडा

गढ़वाल

नेपाल

प. बंगाल

रावी नदी

सुगौली-सन्धि (१८१६) ई-अधिको गोरखा साम्राज्य की स्पष्ट भूलक

सीमा परिचय :- पूर्वमा- वर्तमान सिक्किम का सम्पूर्ण भूभाग, भोंटाङ्को दामसङ्ग गढी र दालिमहल गढ सम्म, दार्जीलिङ-जिल्ला, जलपाई गढी, कुचबिहार का केही भूभाग र ओसाम का ग्वालपादा सम्म भूमि हरू क्रम संख्या-१,२ भनी जनाईए को छ।
दक्षिणमा- गंगावारी को भूभाग हरू क्रम संख्या-३,४ भनी जनाईए को छ।
पश्चिममा- गढ़वाल कागडा देखी लिएर छम्ब भूमि सम्म जसलाई रावी (राप्ती) नदी ले काश्मीर देखी दुल्हार को थियो, क्रम संख्या-५,६ मा देखाइए को छ।

Map extracted from the book "AN ACCOUNT OF THE KINGDOM OF AND THE TERRITORIES ANNEXED THIS DOMINION BY THE HOUSE OF GURKHAS (1819)" written by Francis Buchanan Hamilton, M.D.

COURTESY: Shri Narayan Shrestha, Banskottar who extracted the map for his weekly newspaper "JITIKARAN" in 1979 A.D.

41. Gorkha inhabited areas/map extracted from the book "An account of the kingdom of and the Territories annexed this dominion by the House of Gorkhas (1819)" written by Francis Buchanan Hamilton M.D.

A gallant Gorkha, with a pushing personality, identified by his friends through his pen Min Liwang is not a new name in the list of promising young writers in the field of Nepali language and literature. He has authored and published three Nepali books dealing with contemporary issues pertaining mainly to our social, political, cultural, literary and varied aspects of our day-to-day life. His endeavour to seek and find a new world within the existing world appears worth acknowledging. He is always on the move to bring out his hidden potentials into actuality. This time, he has added a new dimension by opting to write in the English language in order to present a glance about the Gorkha's culture and traditions. It wouldn't be a surprise if he publishes his next book in his own Limbu language.

The contents, justify the title of the book. The book, I am sure, will assist many busy students as a help book although not necessarily a guidebook. It is not a complete book but is a work well begun waiting to be completed. Its contents carry rich information for many readers hitherto unknown facets of Gorkha's culture and traditions. The book provides a lot of food for mind such as the items of Gorkha's dance, food, ornaments, musical instruments, weapon and tools, and utensils. Readers will be able to expand their Nepali vocabulary. The author has introduced different scripts such as Magar, Khambu (rai), Tamang, and Tamu too than the available scripts in usage like Nepali, Lepcha and Limbu.

On the other hand, the readers may have differences about the definition of the Gorkhas as explained by the author. Also the authenticity of information and reports has rooms for plenty of questions.

As a friend, I salute Min Liwang for attempting to introduce in brief, some facets of the Gorkhas to a wide number of readers. I consider this venture a commendable effort of his own degree.

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