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From the Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia

ETHNOLOGICAL FIELD-RESEARCH IN CHITRAL, SIKKIM, AND ASSAM

Preliminary Report

BY

HALFDAN SIIGER



København 1956
i kommission hos Ejnar Munksgaard

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HENNING HASLUND-CHRISTENSEN, the late Danish Asian explorer, reached the apogee of his life with his Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia. He formed the projects, made the plannings, and started those extensive field-researches which were to cover so many areas and disciplines.

At his tragic death in Kabul, September 13th, 1948, Denmark lost an eminent organiser of expeditions, an indefatigable field-worker, and a distinguished collector. We, his colleagues, lost an inspiring leader and a great friend.

He will always be remembered in sincere admiration and profound gratitude in the history of Danish scientific expeditions.

Field-research like this, — covering different, rather remote Asian areas and lasting for about thirty months, — could not have accomplished its objectives without generous benevolence and extensive facilities from the governments concerned and the local authorities.

I am therefore very glad to get this opportunity of expressing my profound gratitude for sincere understanding of the importance of scientific investigations and for efficient actual support to:

THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

and to:

His Highness the Mehtar of Chitral

His Highness the Maharajah of Sikkim

and further to:

The Governor of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan

The Political Officer of Chitral

The Political Officer of Sikkim

The Governor of Assam

In the publications to come I shall get an opportunity of thanking all those institutions, officials, scientists and private persons who so kindly placed their help, experience and advice at my disposal.

1. Introduction.

Danish scientific ethnological field-research in Central Asia is of old standing. Professor Ole Olufsen was the leader of two expeditions to Pamir, 1896—97 and 1898—99, and made comprehensive studies and important ethnographical collections in Bokhara and Khiva.¹

In 1936 Professor C.G. Feilberg visited Persia and returned with significant results and typical collections from the folk-culture of the Lurs.²

For three years Henning Haslund-Christensen was a member of Dr. Sven Hedin's Sino-Swedish Expedition 1927—32 and collected important information concerning Mongol music and specimens of musical instruments.³

In 1936—37 and 1938—39 Haslund Christensen was the leader of two Danish expeditions to Manchuria and Eastern Mongolia. On the second expedition — under the auspices of the

¹ Ole Olufsen: Ueber die dänische Pamir-Expedition im Jahre 1896 (Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde in Berlin, No. 6, p. 1 ff., Berlin 1897).

Ole Olufsen: The Second Danish Pamir Expedition. Old and New Architecture. Copenhagen 1904.

Ole Olufsen: Through the Unknown Pamir. The Second Danish Pamir Expedition 1898—99. Copenhagen 1904.

Ole Olufsen: The Emir of Bokhara and his Country. Journeys and Studies in Bokhara. Copenhagen 1911.

A. Hjuler: The Languages Spoken in Western Pamir (Shugnan and Vakhan). The Second Danish Pamir Expedition. Copenhagen 1912.

² C.G. Feilberg: La Tente Noire (Nationalmuseets Skrifter, Etnografisk Række II). Copenhagen 1944.

C.G. Feilberg: Les Papis (Nationalmuseets Skrifter, Etnografisk Række, IV.) Copenhagen 1952.

³ The Music of the Mongols, The Sino-Swedish Expedition, Publication 21, VIII, Ethnography, 4, Part I, Eastern Mongolia. (On the Trail of Ancient Mongol Tunes by Henning Haslund-Christensen. Specimens of Mongol Poetry translated by Kaare Gronbech. Preliminary Remarks on Mongolian Music and Instruments by Ernst Emsheimer. Music of Eastern Mongolia collected by Henning Haslund-Christensen, noted down by Ernst Emsheimer). Stockholm 1943.

Royal Danish Geographical Society — he was accompanied by Professor Kaare Grønbech, Head of the Institute of Central Asian Studies, the University of Copenhagen, and the ethnologist Werner Jacobsen. Some of the results of these expeditions have been published,¹ others are still in preparation.

During the second World War Haslund-Christensen worked in the National Museum of Copenhagen, registering his great collections, giving advice as to their display, and planning his third expedition. With the gracious approval of His Majesty the King of Denmark this Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia was placed under royal patronage with His Royal Highness Prince Axel as president. The Carlsberg Foundation granted the necessary economic basis of the Expedition, supplemented by subsidies from the Danish Government. The East Asiatic Company generously donated free passage for the members of the Expedition and their equipment, and many private companies and Danes abroad supported the Expedition.

Professor Kaare Grønbech acted as the scientific head of the Expedition in cooperation with a board of scientists among whom Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, Head Curator of the Ethnographical Department, National Museum, Copenhagen, was the representative of the ethnological section.

It was Haslund-Christensen's intentions to connect the earlier Danish ethnological investigations of western Asia with his own explorations of Mongolia and Manchuria through a long series of detailed studies in different Central Asian localities. Moreover, he planned to take with him a number of naturalists in order to give various branches of science an opportunity of carrying out

¹ Kaare Grønbech: Turkish Inscriptions from Inner Mongolia. *Monumenta Serica*, Journal of Oriental Studies of the Catholic University of Peking, vol. IV, 1939, p. 305 ff.

Kaare Grønbech: *Sprog og Skrift i Mongoliet. Foreløbig beretning om det sproglige arbejde paa Det Kgl. Danske Geografiske Selskabs Centralasiatiske Ekspedition 1938—39. With an English Summary. Geografisk Tidsskrift*, vol. 43, p. 56—93, Copenhagen 1940.

Werner Jacobsen: *Mongoliets Arkæologi. Fra Danmarks Ungtid* p. 206 ff. English Summary. Copenhagen 1940.

Henny Harald Hansen: *Mongol Costumes (Nationalmuseets Skrifter, Etnografisk Række III)*. Copenhagen 1950.

Martha Boyer: *Mongol Jewellery (Nationalmuseets Skrifter, Etnografisk Række V)*. Copenhagen 1952.

Cf. also Henning Haslund: *Tents in Mongolia*. London 1934.

Henning Haslund: *Men and Gods in Mongolia*. London 1935.

Henning Haslund: *Mongolian Journey*. London 1949.

specific field-research. Due to political circumstances in the years after the war it proved impossible to visit all the places planned by him, and the Expedition had to limit its work to selected areas of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India.

2. The Expedition.

In October 1947 the first team of the Expedition set out by boat, numbering four members: Haslund-Christensen, leader and ethnologist, Dr. Knud Paludan, zoologist and physician, Lennart Edelberg, M. Sc., botanist and ethnologist, and the present writer.

Due to a dock strike in Bombay we disembarked at Calicut and went by train to Bombay, where our mission was honourably received by Sir Rustom Masani, Chairman of the Indian Institute for Education and Cultural Cooperation and by the University of Bombay. We stayed in Bombay for a week, studying the museums, and proceeded by boat to Karachi, went by train to Peshawar, hired a lorry, crossed the Khyber, and drove via Jalalabad to Kabul.

Representatives of the Afghan Government welcomed us cordially, and we made our headquarters in Kabul for the winter, my colleagues planning their prospective work in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and with Dr. Mohamed Anas Khan, President of the University of Kabul, while I prepared my own journeys.

During my participation in this mission I concentrated on studies of cultural and religious problems and collected specimens of typical ordinary material culture for the National Museum, Copenhagen. I never made any kind of archaeological excavations.

It was my intention to investigate a couple of indigenous cultures of the Hindukush-Himalayan areas. The mountain cultures in these regions attracted my attention in particular because it seemed probable to find old, unknown ways of life still flourishing in many of the remote, secluded mountain valleys, and because these cultures might retain many old traits of Indian and Central Asian influences. Both from a functional and a historical point of view they would be fields where a student of ethnology and comparative religion might find much of importance.

The choice fell first on the Kalash or Black Kafirs of Chitral, the last remainder of the once mighty Kafir culture of former Kafiristan, the scattered and variegated information available concerning their old habits of life being most promising for field-research. As Edelberg and Paludan intended to investigate Nuristan (Kafiristan) our studies would in this way cover the old Kafir areas.

The Lepcha of Sikkim were to be my second field. A group of this people of indigenous mountaineers has for many years lived in a secluded district (Jongu), where they have been able to keep up many of their old traditions.

Before returning home my participation in the mission was prolonged, and I got an opportunity to go to Assam in order to visit the Boro. I was glad to round off my studies among a people of the plains because I hereby came to know indigenous Indian life of quite another type.

Whenever possible I made anthropological observations and took anthropometrical measurements according to instructions given by Dr. Kurt Brøste, the late Head of the Anthropological Institute of the University of Copenhagen.¹ The material collected will be dealt with by the Anthropological Institute, and will be published seperately.

In the middle of February 1948 we left Kabul for our respective places of field-research. While Haslund-Christensen remained in Kabul in order to receive the second team of the expedition, Paludan and Edelberg proceeded to the mountains of Nuristan, and I returned via Jalalabad to Peshawar in order to go to Chitral. Before going to Chitral and on my return from Chitral I enjoyed cordial hospitality and was given valuable

¹ The observations of the individuals investigated comprise:

1. Information: Name, race, sub-group, sex, age stated, birthplace, parents, occupation of individual, occupation of group, religion.

2. Observations: Colour of skin, character and colour of hair, character and colour of beard, body hair, eye colour, form of the aperture of the eyes, epicanthic fold, form of the nose bridge, form of the nasal apertures, form of the lobe of the ears, form of the angle of the jaw, form of the chin and its prominence, degree of shovel shaping of the upper incisors.

3. Measurements: a. Body: height of stature, height to tragus, height to suprasternal notch, shoulder height, height to fingers, sitting height, breadth of shoulders. b. Head and Face: head length, head breadth, minimum frontal breadth, bizygomatic breadth, bigonial breadth, face height, upper face height, nose height, nose breadth, ear height, ear breadth.

assistance by Rev., now Bishop, Jens Christensen and Mrs. Christensen, the Danish Mission of Mardan.

At the end of March 1948 I crossed on foot the still snow-covered Lowrai mountain pass and was taken comfortably to Chitral Fort by the Mehtar's driver. His Highness welcomed me and invited me cordially to stay as his guest during my preparation for the coming field-research. His Highness generously gave me Mr. Wazir Ali Shah, one of his secretaries, now Treasurer to the Government of Chitral, as my adviser and interpreter. Wazir Ali Shah accompanied me on my journey to the country of the Kalash, helped me splendidly in my work and rendered me invaluable assistance.

I visited Chitral City three times: the second time when I went up to court in order to congratulate His Highness at the annual celebration of his ascension to the throne, and the third time when I took leave of His Highness. On all occasions I acquired specimens of material culture from Chitral proper and made anthropometrical measurements. Before I left, His Highness graciously presented me with a complete, typical Chitrali choga.

I am highly indebted to the officers of Peshawar and Chitral for good advice and actual help on my journeys: Colonel Kushi-waqt-ul-Mulk, Colonel R.V. Proudlock, Major D. Foskett, and Captain Rutter.

According to instruction from Haslund-Christensen I left Chitral in the middle of the summer of 1948 and returned via Mardan and Peshawar to Kabul, where at that time the Expedition suffered its great loss through the tragic death of Haslund-Christensen. While my colleagues resumed their projects in Afghanistan, I returned to Peshawar and went via Lahore-Amritsar to New Delhi.

I was there introduced to Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, who graciously placed his advice and assistance at my disposal, and on kind invitation from the Anthropological Department of the University of New Delhi I gave a talk on my studies among the Kalash. It was very fortunate that Mr. R.N. Rahul, M.A., was willing to join my expedition to the Himalayan areas and to let me profit from his rich experience of travelling in these mountains.

From New Delhi Mr. Rahul and I went by train to Calcutta, where I was invited to give a lecture to the students of the An-

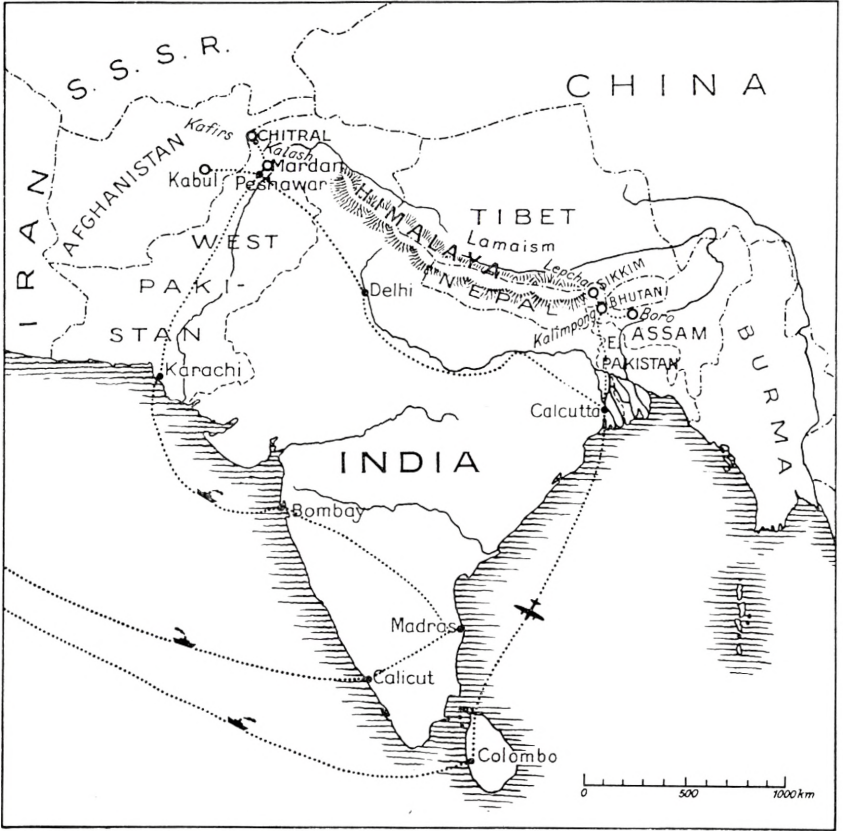


Fig. 1. Sketch-map: Author's journey (The air route from Calcutta to Colombo goes via Madras).

thropological Institute of the University of Calcutta. My best thanks are due to Professor K.P. Chattopadhyay and to Dr. B.S. Guha for kind instruction on anthropological and ethnological field-research in the Indian countries. I also want to thank Professor G. Tucci, who at that time was in Calcutta, for good help and advice.

From Calcutta Mr. Rahul and I went to Sikkim, where we arrived at the end of 1948. I am sincerely grateful to His Highness the Maharajah of Sikkim for cordial reception at his court, for granting me a permission to visit the closed Jongu area, and for presenting me with a complete uniform of a Lepcha soldier. I am also highly indebted to Mr. H. Dayal, the then Political

Officer of Sikkim, and to Mrs. Dayal, for kind hospitality and good friendship, and to Mr. Lal, the Dewan of Sikkim. My best thanks are due to the Prime Minister Tashi Dadul Densapa Barmiak Kazi for kindly giving me his aid and support in my studies, and to Mr. Tseten Tashi Rhenok Kazi, the Secretary to the Maharajah, for much practical assistance.

The first months of 1949 were occupied by necessary preparations for my Lepcha investigations, and as the season proved opportune for visiting monasteries in Sikkim, I made several tours to various parts of the country, studying the famous lama ceremonies. I also made some trips to Kalimpong, where I met Mr. David Macdonald, the well-known author on Tibetan culture, who was extremely helpful to me and generously placed his rich knowledge of Tibetan and Himalayan cultures at my disposal. At Kalimpong I later became acquainted with the tibetologist Dr. R.K. Sprigg, and he and I once made a joint excursion to a small Lepcha community in the eastern Kalimpong district, where Father Brahier showed us kind hospitality and assisted us in contacting the Lepcha. My sincere gratitude is due to Dr. Sprigg for valuable cooperation, help, and advice in my studies.

After some smaller excursions to Jongu, I selected a locality called Tingbung in northern Jongu as the best place for my particular Lepcha studies, and at the beginning of April I left Gangtok for Tingbung.

His Royal Highness Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark had at that time joined our expedition as the leader of the Tibetan section. As things developed, Prince Peter came to work in Kalimpong, but during his participation in the expedition for four years he succeeded in achieving extraordinary results.¹

At the end of October 1949 I proceeded to Assam in order to make some studies among the Boro of northern Assam. I am highly indebted to Rev. Johannes Thoft Krogh, Danish Mission, Bongaigaon, and to Mrs. Thoft Krogh for cordial hospitality and

¹ H.R.H. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark: *The Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia: Its Work in the Himalayas* (Royal Central Asian Journal, vol. XLI, Parts III and IV, London 1954, p. 228—237).

H.R.H. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark: *The Books of Tibet* (Libri, International Library Review and IFLA — Communications — FIAB, vol. 5, no. 1, Copenhagen 1954, p. 20—28).

valuable assistance, and to the members of the Norwegian Mission for kind help in the anthropological measurements of the Boro.

At the end of January 1950 I returned to Kalimpong, did my final packing and left Siliguri by the new train connection to Calcutta, where I had to wait for a Danish boat. As one day in the middle of March I got a wire informing me immediately to catch a boat in Colombo, I had to go by plane from Calcutta to Colombo, where I embarked. I arrived in Copenhagen on April 22nd, 1950.

I am glad to get an opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Harry Tøyberg-Frandzen, Royal Danish Minister to the Government of India and to the Government of Pakistan, to the Danish consuls, and to many individual Danes, for much good advice, splendid actual help, and kind hospitality.

My special gratitude is due to Professor Georg Morgenstierne, Oslo, to Rev. A. Kristiansen of the Danish Boro Mission, Rural Dean of Laastrup, Denmark, and to the tibetologist Mr. E. Haarh, M.A., of the Royal Library, Copenhagen, for invaluable advice and instructive aid in the adaptation of my material for publication. Professor Morgenstierne has kindly handed over to me his ethnological observations from the Kalash, while I have placed my Kalash texts, collections of words and names, etc., at his disposal. In a forthcoming publication on Kalash culture Professor Morgenstierne's contributions will be marked distinctly.

But above all I owe Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith and Professor Kaare Grønbech my particular and most sincere thanks for the opportunity of participating in this expedition, for never failing support of my work, and for an intense interest in the publication of the results.

3. Kalash Kafirs of Chitral.

The Kalash or Black Kafirs of Chitral inhabit three valleys in western Chitral: Rumbur, Bumboret and Birir, and a few minor villages outside these valleys. The total number of the Kalash is estimated to be 3000—4000. We shall here only deal with the Kalash of the three valleys mentioned.

Kalash culture had attracted my particular attention because of very interesting information gathered from several explorers: Robertson's classical book on the Kafirs of Hindukush,¹ Morgenstierne's linguistic investigations in 1929,² Schomberg's journeys in the mid-thirties,³ the German Hindukush expedition,⁴ and several other sources.⁵ It was obvious that this culture might be a fruitful place for ethnological field-research as old customs seemed still to be abundant and flourishing not only within social and material culture, but also within religion.

The language of the Kalash, called Kalasha, is a purely Indian language, in many ways related to Khowar. Probably both languages belong to the first wave of the Indo-Aryan immigrants from the south.⁶

The people has been classified as belonging to the Proto-Nordic type.⁷ I made anthropological and anthropometrical investigations of 167 Kalash men.

Rumbur valley became my first place of investigation, and I settled in the village of Balanguru. Later I travelled through the valleys of Bumboret and Birir, visiting as many villages, sanctuaries, and burial places as possible.

Balanguru is by far the largest Kalash settlement, consisting of several villages and hamlets lying rather close together as a village complex. Here there are many sanctuaries, and the life of the people is typical. The life of the Kalash in Bumboret is to some extent influenced by immigrated Chitralis, and some Kalash have embraced Islam. Birir in some ways represents an obsolete type of Kalash life, they have, e.g., kept up some ancient customs and ceremonies connected with the cultivation of grapes and the making of wine.

Material Culture.

The men wear grey woollen trousers, a black-brown poncho, and often a small cap. The women and the girls wear long black-

¹ Robertson, p. 4 ff., 49 ff. passim.

² Morgenstierne 1932, p. 51 ff.

³ Schomberg, p. 36 ff. passim.

⁴ Deutsche im Hindukusch, p. 50 passim.

⁵ A comprehensive bibliography on the Kafirs has recently been published by Fazy (see References: Fazy).

⁶ Morgenstierne 1932, p. 51.

⁷ Guha 1937, p. 136 and 1938, p. 316.

brown skirts and the characteristic, woollen, black-brown head-gears, hanging down the back to the waist, decorated with hundreds of cowries and petty trinkets. The women are fond of jewellery and adorn themselves with many necklaces, bracelets, and ear-rings, but the head-gear is their most precious possession and great care is taken in its making. Most people go bare-foot, some wear sole-shoes. The men seldom wash, the women bathe regularly in the river at the end of the catamenial period.

The Kalash live in permanent houses, gathered into hamlets or villages. The ordinary one-room house has a structure of timberwork, sometimes with flat stones in the spaces between the planks, but many people have houses built solely of timber with several rooms, sometimes with two storeys and a cellar. The granary is often in a separate building quite close to the house. I saw in Birir a large house built round an open yard with rooms on all sides and with water from a near-by spring led through the interior.

In the middle of the house is the hearth with a smokehole in the roof above. The scanty furniture consists of beds, baskets, a box or cupboard, kitchen utensils on a shelf at the backwall, some blankets, wooden spoons, and jugs. In a corner can be found bows and arrows, sometimes a spear, and in a few houses an old gun.

The larger villages have their own carpenter, who is in charge of the building of the houses, assisted by the local men. He also makes wooden effigies, and decorates posts and planks with carvings. I only met one blacksmith, who lived at Bumboret, and he was a Moslem, but they stated that in former days they had many blacksmiths.

The Kalash are both agriculturists and pastoralists. The main crops are wheat, barley, maize, apples, mulberries, walnuts, and in Birir also grapes. Wooden pipe-lines are in some places used for irrigating the fields. They keep goats, sheep, cows and bulls, and have pastures high in the mountains.

The staple articles of diet are chupatties (circular unleavened cakes), milk, ghee, cheese, dried mulberries, and walnuts. It is strictly prohibited to eat eggs. On festival occasions they eat meat, and in former days the hunting of ibex and markhor was of great importance.

The women move unveiled and freely among the men, the relation between the sexes being informal. They take care of the children, prepare the meals, and weave the clothing and coarse blankets on big looms standing outside the houses and leaning against the walls. In the morning the women gather in the water-mills at the river banks, and while grinding grain for chupatties they circulate village gossip and sing jolly tunes of the day, often with satirical hints at noted persons.

Social Life.

The official, legal leaders of the villages, the aksakals, are appointed by the Chitral authorities. The aksakal sends Kalash labourers to Chitral (a kind of tax), receives officials, settles minor disputes, and is a Justice of the Peace. Severe offences against the law are referred to the Chitral authorities.

From olden times the land belongs to certain patrilineal lineage groups dating back to the conquest of the country. They claim in Rumbur that all the inhabitants are descendants of a great king called Adabog, who conquered Rumbur and left the land to his four sons. All lineage groups and sub-lineages of Rumbur originate from these four brothers and their descendants. A lineage group or sub-lineage with many members may therefore have little land per head, whereas a lineage group or sub-lineage with few members may have much land per head. But nowadays land can be sold, and some few persons are rich in land, others are very poor.

In Balanguru and adjoining villages I registered 55 home-steads (houses) with 404 persons (84 men, 105 women, and 215 children). The richest man of Balanguru was said to possess: 140 goats, 8 cows, 3 bulls, 16 sheep, 4 goat-houses and 3 fields. He had also two wives, which is rare. There was a poor man who had only one field.

The girls are often betrothed when they are 8—9 years old, the boys when they are 15, but marriage within specified groups is prohibited (cf. p. 16). The ordinary wedding ceremonies are long and complicated, with exchanges of gifts between the families concerned, but marriage by elopement occurs, even if it is not

considered as honourable as a normal wedding. Both men and women can divorce.

In former days the Kalash had frequent wars and fights with the Bashgali of Kafiristan, the hereditary enemy, and they still remember with obvious pride many stories of famous warriors and their remarkable deeds, while nowadays cases of manslaughter rarely occur.

Occasional floods are the great danger to the Kalash villages, overflowing the river banks, drowning people, and washing away houses, cattle and trees. When the floods withdraw, huge immovable stones are left, spoiling the arable land.

Places of an Extraordinary Character.

The number of the Kalash is small, and the area comprised by their culture is very limited, and yet the country displays many strange features. Most conspicuous to the traveller are the numerous places with immanent extraordinary characteristics.

I. The Ordinary Village.

1. The socio-religious centre of a lineage group is the *Jestak han* (*j'ęstak han*),¹ Jestak's temple, the only roofed temple building among the Kalash. A small group may have its Jestak in an ordinary house, a large group has a common house for the Jestak. It looks like a large one-roomed house, the interior of which is supported by carved wooden pillars around a fireplace, and with the Jestak altar on the wall. Jestak is a goddess protecting the family, the children, and the house. The new-born children are initiated before the Jestak; at the spring festival the family-fathers pray to Jestak for prosperity; and many minor ceremonies connected with the life of the family take place there during the year. At the winter festival ceremonies for the spirits of the dead are performed outside the Jestak han. If a man marries a girl of his own lineage, which is only permitted when they are separated by seven generations or more, he must put up a new Jestak altar in his own house and perform the ordinary Jestak

¹ Kalash words are transcribed according to Professor Morgenstierne's phonetic observations.



Fig. 2. Kalash: Mahandeo altar at Grom, Rumbur.

ceremonies before this new altar. The Jestak han seems to be the only shrine to which women have admission.

2. *Mahandeo* (*mahand'ēū*) is a god whose open-air shrine is found in several villages. The centre consists of four rudely carved wooden horse-heads protruding horizontally from a plank, often with an empty hole below¹ (Fig. 2). In front of the heads is a stone where the sacrificial animals are killed, a fireplace, and rows of benches with wooden memorial posts decorated with carved geometrical ornaments and stylized animal pictures, e.g. of billygoats. These posts are raised in honour of bestowers of splendid sacrifices.

¹ In 1929 a carved head could still be found, looking like a man's head, in the hole of one of the shrines (Information from Professor Morgenstierne).

Ceremonies in honour of Mahandeo take place on many occasions, e.g. during the spring festival; when a suspected thief swears himself free; in olden times when the warriors returned from warfare. Wine was in former days libated to Mahandeo.

3. *Bashali* (*baš'āli*), the birth-house, reserved for parturient and menstruant women, can be found in most villages close to the river. This house and its inmates are protected by the goddess *Dezalik* (*dez'ālik*), whose name is also used of a yoni statue said to be there. The *Bashali* and its surrounding field is an impure place, and strict precautions prevent the pollution to spread to the villagers. Men are in particular prohibited admission to the *Bashali*, and should a man ever visit the house or just accidentally cross the field, he must undergo a troublesome purification ceremony and defray the expenses for a sacrifice.

4. *Mandaujau* (*māṇḍaujau*), the burial place, can be found on the outskirts of most villages. The dead are laid in coffins, which are usually placed on the ground. Wooden effigies (*ghanḍ'au*) as tall as a man, sometimes mounted, are carved and erected for the deceased. The effigies are frontal, and carved according to certain stylistic traditions associated with the old well-known Kafir effigies of which specimens can be seen in the Museum of Kabul and in the Museum of Peshawar.¹ The *Mandaujau* is a very impure place, infested with sickness and death, always avoided by the *Kalash* and only visited when necessary.

5. Small crude stone altars for *Jach* (*jaç*), female spirits of the soil, can often be seen in cultivated fields. On certain occasions vegetable offerings with simple rites are performed for the *Jach*.

6. The *Suchi* (*sūçī*) have their residences on the summits of the high mountains, on the tops of big rocks, in mountain passes, etc. The foremost *Suchi*, the Golden King, resides on the summit of Terich Mir, the Silver King on another summit. Round about in the country smaller spots consecrated to the *Suchi* can be seen: a crude stone altar and sometimes a vertical post with a hole in the centre, the abode of the local *Suchi*. High in the mountains above Balanguru the solitary Bahuk lake and a fertile pasture belong to the *Suchi*, and nobody ventures to approach this lake or to graze his goats in the pasture. Any violation of the rights

¹ Hackin p. 58 suggests that these effigies may be linked up with Iranian archetypes. – Cf. also Shakur p. 1 ff.; Kohzad p. 1 ff.

of the Suchi brings about severe punishments, e. g. heavy rains, big stones falling down from the mountains, etc. An old legend relates how the Suchi punished an instance of brother-sister incest with a terrible death.

II. Some Particular Sanctuaries.

1. *Sajigor* (*sajig^lōr*), a very holy shrine, lies hidden in a sacred grove in Rumbur. The old holly-oaks, hung with horns from sacrificed animals, the altars for sanguinary sacrifices and vegetable offerings, and the long rows of benches with carved posts raised in memory of great donors of lavish feasts testify to the importance of this sanctuary.

A square, closed stone building, *Sajigor dur*, said to be the depository of the most sacred object, an old knife, represents the power of the shrine and is revered by three circumambulations.

During the year many functions take place here, e.g. ceremonies for fertility and prosperity at the autumn and winter festivals, the "trousers' ceremony" of the boys, etc.

According to tradition *Sajigor* is an old trophy from the wars with the Bashgali, and on instruction from the Nanga dehar, the most renowned ecstatic priest of Kalash history with a legendary fame attached to his name, was made a common Kalash shrine. Since those days it has been revered all over the Kalash country.

Quite close to *Sajigor* is *Kacavir* (*kacav^lir*), a stone altar for the god of hunting, to whom they kindle a fire and burn juniper twigs and walnuts while praying for a fortunate chase.

2. Below Mahandeo at Balanguru is *Shingmou* (*ṣiŋm^lōu*) the horn altar: carved vertical posts connected by horizontal sticks, hung with some old horns. At the spring festival the altar is decorated lavishly with flowers. It has nowadays lost much in importance as the hunting of markhor and ibex has come to an end, but some songs to *Shingmou* from the spring festival still bear evidence to its former significance.

3. *Praba dur* in Birir is a peculiar, very sacred sanctuary with a small altar of two horse-heads carved in wood, and some very tall masts. In the course of the autumn festival young boys compete in climbing up these masts. The Kalash sacrifice goats and sheep to *Praba* and pray to him for protection from illness and floods.

4. *Varin dur* of Birir, a sanctuary for Varin (Birir: *ver^lin*) has an altar of two wooden horse-heads where offerings are made during the wine ceremony of the autumn. They also settle litigations about land before Varin; he is worshipped at Sajigor during the winter festival, and there is an altar to him in Urtsun, a village outside the investigated area.

Various other sanctuaries exist here and there. They have their own altars where offerings and sacrifices are made on certain occasions.

Sacrificial Functions.

Whenever the Kalash approach the supernatural powers, they make a sanguinary sacrifice or a vegetable offering. The sanguinary sacrifices usually consist of goats or sheep, on more important occasions of cows or bulls.

Both at the great festivals and on private occasions the sacrifices are offered according to certain rules, the proceeding reaching its climax when the animal's throat is cut and the blood spurts out while the men pray to the supernatural powers. Great care is taken that the blood of the animal is not polluted. Young boys who have never had any sexual experience stand near by, ready to collect the blood in their meticulously cleansed hands. They sprinkle some drops on the altar and some into the flames of the fire.

The animal's head is separated from the body and burnt a little over the fire in order to stop the bleeding. The animal is sometimes skinned on the spot, grilled and eaten by the assembled men or brought home to the family. If it is a sacrifice to the Suchi, the body may be hidden away for later consumption by the Suchi.

During the great festivals many animals may be sacrificed. A man who gives animals in large numbers achieves a coveted reputation, and a memorial post is raised in his honour. They stated that the family of the present aksakal of Rumbur had become rather poor owing to abundant sacrifices.

The Dehar.

Some few men hold a special religious position among the Kalash. They act as ecstatic prophets, enjoy a general esteem, and are treated with sincere reverence, sometimes even awe. The Kalash stated that in former days there had been many ecstatic prophets, but their number had been declining steadily, and in 1948 there were only three. The word *dehar* (*deh^har*) is used of a man who is in possession of particular prophetic gifts.

I made the acquaintance of two dehar, and one of them told me of his vocation as a prophet. He was now a middle-aged man and had lived an ordinary Kalash life until he was grown up. Then once at a winter festival when many goats were sacrificed, he suddenly heard some indistinct, drowsy voices, coming from somewhere far away. He had never heard anything like that, but he soon fell unconscious, and began telling the people what he heard. This was his initiation as a dehar, and from now on he frequently heard similar voices at the sacrifices, but he did not know for certain whether the voices came from Mahandeo or from the Suchi.

During my travels in Bumboret I once attended a great funeral ceremony going on for several days. Mourners from far and near danced solemnly around the deceased lying on his death-bed in the gathering place of the village. One day a famous dehar suddenly stepped forward, turned towards Mahandeo, raised his hands above his head and murmured a long prayer (Fig. 3). The mourners immediately stopped their dances and lamentations, obviously captivated by the serious moment. An impetuous tremble ran through him from top to toe announcing the supernatural obsession. He made an enormous jump and rushed at the mourners as a madman, striking everybody within the reach of his arms. The people dispersed in horror, but some tried to touch him from behind in order to benefit from the supernatural powers. After some ten minutes he collapsed, foaming at the mouth. Half an hour later he walked around among us as if nothing had happened.

A dehar must be very scrupulous in observing all Kalash rules. He is called for when someone is ill; a sacrifice is arranged, and he then tells which of the supernatural powers has been



Fig. 3. Kalash: Dehar praying to Mahandeo before ecstatic performance at death ceremony. Bumboret.

insulted and what must be done in order to propitiate it. In case of theft he exposes where the stolen goods lie hidden. In former days the dehar accompanied the men in war, acting as prophets and promising victory to the brave. It still occurs that the supernatural powers instruct a dehar in dreams about the future, and one of them recently foretold an outbreak of typhoid fever among the people of Rumbur. I was told that all dehar in the unconscious state could tread bare-foot on redhot ashes, and when nowadays immigrating people sometimes use "charms" against their enemies, a dehar is often requested to find the charm and counteract its evil influence.

Annual Festivals.

The new year begins at winter solstice, and *Chaumos* (*čaum¹ōs*), the greatest Kalash festival,¹ is celebrated on this occasion. It can be divided into two parts: (1). The ceremonies and festivities during the last ten days before winter solstice, (2). The celebration of the sun's stay in its winter home. It covers fifteen days, and during this period the people will not go out of doors, the men remaining in the goat-houses, the women in the homes. It is an interesting illustration of the religious correlation between nature and mankind, typical of several indigenous people.

From the first part I shall just adduce a few ceremonies as examples: Sacrifices and prayers to Sajigor for fertility among cattle and men, and for fine weather,—making of soot-drawings of men and goats on wet clay on the walls of Jestak han (Fig. 4), —making of small dough figures of animals, —ceremonial purification of women by virgin boys who throw burning branches over their heads, —cleansing of the houses and renewal of the kitchen utensils, etc.

The deceased are commemorated through a particular ceremony. A tower of pine torches is built outside the Jestak han and offerings of loaves and dried fruits are placed beside. An old religious leader calls on the spirits of the dead saying: "Oh, you spirits! We have put this food outside for you! Come and eat it!" He lights the tower and hurries inside the Jestak han, where the people have gathered as nobody may watch the spirits of the dead.

On several occasions men and women meet in the evenings, sing, dance, and make merry. They volunteer teasing allusions to objectionable episodes from the past year: a husband may rebuke his wife for her extra-marital adventures, and a chorus of women will retort in her defence, etc. Some men pose in women's dresses, girls in men's garments, making fun of the oddities of the opposite sex.

Behind the numerous detailed events of the winter festival some main ideas are conspicuous: The request to the divine powers for fertility and prosperity in the year to come, — the

¹ For this and other Kalash festivals cf. also Schomberg p. 48 passim and Morgenstierne 1947.

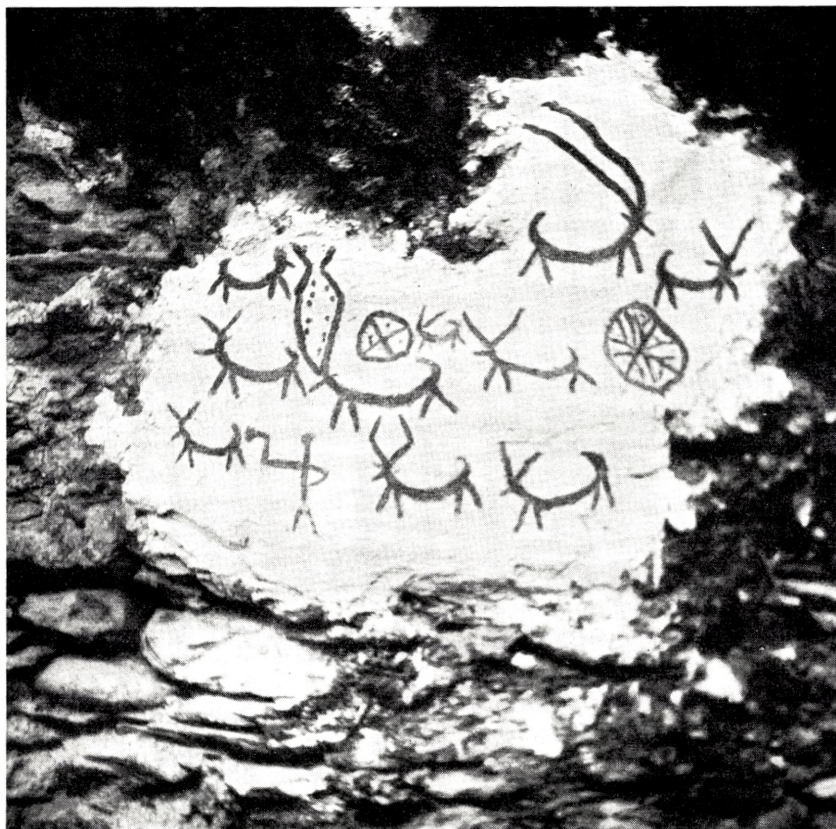


Fig. 4. Kalash: Soot-drawing on clay, backwall of Jestak han in Bumboret.

leave-taking with the dying year and the welcome to the new year through the bathing of men, the cleansing of the houses, and the renewal of the utensils, — the feeding of the spirits of the dead, for the purpose of commemorating them and to prevent them from harming the survivors, — and the purification of men's souls through joking festivities with obvious references to personal vexations accumulated during the past year.

Joshi (*jōži*) is the happy spring festival, looked forward to for months. Minor preparatory ceremonies commence at the vernal equinox and continue at intervals up to the beginning of the proper festival, which in 1948 began in Rumbur on May 9th. Among the preparatory ceremonies can be mentioned that the

goat-herds bathe and cleanse the goat-houses, decorating them with holy branches.

The Joshi covers three days. On the first day the men cleanse Shingmou, put up fresh branches, offer dried mulberries and walnuts, and sing some Shingmou songs dealing with the markhor and signifying the importance of this animal to the people in former days. One of the songs is particularly interesting because it enumerates the places where the Joshi festival was celebrated in former days when the Kalash sway was extended far into Chitral proper.

In 1948 the ceremonies of the second day began shortly after midnight. Men from the villages and the far-off homesteads, summoned by young drummers, arrived in long processions with pine torches in their hands, descending the hills to the river and ascending to a level ground between Shingmou and Mahandeo. I was given a torch and invited to join the procession, which moved forward for the solemn sacrifice of the spring. It was a magnificent view seeing all the hillsides illuminated by those long rows of torches gleaming in the dark night. Words can hardly re-evoked the enchanting sensation experienced by one who had the good fortune of attending this event.

Every procession sacrifices its own kid and offers some loaves, holy branches are placed at the goat-houses, and milk and cheese are offered to Mahandeo and the Jach. The kid is skinned, and the meat is grilled over a fire and partaken of as a feast.

The next day men and women gather on the dancing ground below Shingmou and begin a long series of Joshi songs (hunters' songs, love-songs, etc.) and dances. Some of the songs are short, merely a couple of lines, repeated many times for a quarter of an hour, others are long with many stanzas.

A famous song recounts the memorable past when the Kalash were masters of entire Chitral. It records the conquest of the country and enumerates the places where they fought their enemies, thus giving much important information on the history of the people from the days of the invasion.

Early at dawn on the third day the men make offerings to the Jach and decorate the goat-houses with flowers. A great dance for the Suchi of the mountains play a salient role, and as the song of this dance is secret, we had much difficulty in persuading

the officiant leader to confide its wording to us. In the course of this dance a virgin boy milks a cow on some holy branches, and drops of milk are sprinkled towards the mountain of the Suchi. Some of the dancers often fall into ecstasies.

An impressive song with a lingering dance commemorates the deplorable story of a loving couple pining after each other, but not united until death. For months the young lover has stayed in a goat-house high in the mountains, when he returns to the village at the time of the autumn festival, — only to learn that his fiancée has died recently. Driven to despair he hurries to the burial place, opens her coffin, embraces her dead body, and places his dagger with the point upwards beside her. He then goes to the dancing ground, sings the tragic story of their love, hastens back to the coffin, and throws himself into the arms of the beloved one, plunging the dagger into his heart.

When the sun sets, the men proceed to Mahandeo, make vegetable offerings, and return to their homes. This is the end of the Joshi, the great festival of the spring, so dear to the Kalash. During the following weeks a few minor after-Joshi ceremonies are performed.

Uchau (uč'āu) is an autumn festival at the time when wheat and barley have been harvested and stored. Loaves and cream cakes are taken to Sajigor as offerings, and the men pray for abundance of corn, walnuts, grapes, and fruits. Offerings of loaves and cream cakes are also made to other sanctuaries and Jach. The remnants are brought home and eaten, except by the women to whom it is prohibited. In the evenings boys and girls dance at the Jestak han.

Bribo is a minor festival at the time of the harvest of walnuts and grapes. They make offerings to Sajigor, but there are no dances.

Pru (přñ) is a joyous festival performed in September-October when the grapes are ripe and the young goatherds come down from the mountains. Nowadays it is only performed in Birir, but it is probable that in former days it was performed all over the Kalash country.

Three goats are sacrificed to Praba, and two virgin boys press the grapes with their feet in a large vat while the people sing of the different places where grapes are (were) harvested

and pressed to wine. It is interesting to note that Waigel of Nuristan (Kafiristan) is mentioned, indicating the old connection with the people of this area.

The wine is offered to Praba, and for three days dances and plays take place. Young goatherds, returning from long stays in the goat-houses of the mountains, occupy a prominent place in these dances. They disguise themselves, veil their faces, — some are said to put on horns, — and under the name of “Budalak” they startle the girls and women, jumping about and crying: Ho, ho, ho! They chase them into the bushes, catch them, and indulge in erotic and sexual pleasures. It is a privilege of the “Budalak”, but just for the period of the festival, and no man can make any protest against a “Budalak” chasing his daughters or his wife.

Several minor ceremonies take place during the year, but I must refrain from describing them here and shall refer to a forthcoming publication.

Pantheon, Mythology, Legends.

The supernatural world of the Kalash comprises many figures, ranging from divine persons to quite demon-like beings: a creator god, several other gods and goddesses, minor gods, spiritual beings, bhuts and jinn. Some of the divine persons are arranged in family groups, their interrelation being rather complicated and sometimes obscure. The names of the Kalash deities can in some cases be correlated to the names of Kafir gods.

Several myths recount of the origin of the world, the creation of prehuman beings, the creation of mankind, and the end of the world. They have myths of Heaven and Hell, and of the first human beings: Adam and Hava. Some legends relate of great men and their contacts with supernatural powers, and how they benefited from these contacts. I also met traces of a belief in the transmigration of souls.

On the whole this sphere of the culture displays a vivid picture of Kalash spiritual life, but at the same time demonstrates a complicated mixture of influences from various cultural contacts: Hindu and Kafir, and in more recent times Islamic.

Some Fundamental Characteristics of the Kalash Culture.

This short description of some outstanding features of the Kalash culture will not suffice to give an impression of the culture in function, and I shall therefore try to call attention to a few fundamental characteristics.

Every Kalash who lives heart and soul in his culture — as most of them do — is well aware that he moves about in a world controlled by different extraordinary (supernatural) powers who exercise their influences through certain spheres (qualities) inherent in the Kalash country and way of life. When living in this Kalash world he must conform to the laws of these extraordinary powers and be very careful never to violate them.

The spheres mentioned are — broadly speaking — characterised by the words: impure — pure — sacred. A Kalash man leads his normal, daily life in the pure (neutral) sphere, but he must always guard against pollutions from the impure sphere, and he must regularly apply for fresh strength from the sacred sphere.

I cannot go into detail here, but a few examples may be illustrative. The entire Kalash country is pure, whereas the surrounding Islamic countries are impure, and any Kalash becomes impure if he visits an Islamic area. As some men must regularly go to Chitral City on official tasks, this rule cannot be observed strictly, and the country is therefore continuously infected with impurity. When a Moslem settles in the Kalash country, and when a Kalash embraces Islam, this impurity is of course aggravated.

The goat-houses and the space between the hearth and the back wall of the ordinary houses are imbued with a certain pure or sacred quality, and several strict precautions, particularly regarding the women, protect them from pollution.

The birth-house and its surrounding field are very impure places. Every woman must pass through elaborate cleansing ceremonies before leaving it, and after parturition they may not touch the kitchen utensils for a long period. It is stated that in case a woman gives birth to a child in the coldest midwinter, and midwives are called from the village, they must take off their clothes and walk about naked while assisting her, and afterwards



Fig. 5. Kalash: Wooden figures from burial place. Birir.

they must bathe in the river. If a woman dies while staying in the birth-house, she is buried on the spot without any further ceremony. These precautions intend to prevent any pollution of the village and its inhabitants. If a man by mistake should merely cross the field belonging to the birth-house, he must be purified and offer a sacrifice.

Death, however, is the most “negative” experience to the Kalash. The burial place and anything associated with it radiates sickness and death: the ground, the bushes, the coffins, the skeletons and their outfit, and the effigies. Nobody runs the risk of going there except on necessary official occasions. The place is never cleared, and if an effigy has fallen down, nobody dares

to raise it again. It aroused much astonishment, sometimes even confusion, that despite my frequent visits to burial places I did not suffer from illness or had any accidents.

Many restrictions spring from the dangerous influence of death; a widower, for instance, cannot touch the kitchen utensils for the first month after his wife's death, and he cannot go to the sanctuaries or to the goat-houses.

The sanctuaries and shrines are spheres of concentrated sacredness. The sacred quality of some of the sanctuaries can be so powerful that nobody can visit them without making a sacrifice or an offering. A man who is temporarily impure cannot visit a shrine, Moslems are always prohibited admittance, and women cannot go there; regarding Sajigor, the women may not even throw a glance at it from a distance.

The periods of the great religious festivals are permeated with the sacred quality. On these occasions the divine powers are present and active and bestow prosperity and fertility upon human beings, and fertility upon animals and crops. Their gracious activity is therefore regularly applied for through greater or minor functions with sacrifices, offerings, and prayers.

The dehar is a person somewhat apart because of his special vocation. He has particular contacts with the sacred places and must therefore be very meticulous in avoiding any pollution, and the usual restrictions on men rest much heavier on him, e. g. in his relations to his wife, to death and to non-Kalash people. As it is impossible nowadays completely to avoid contacts with Moslems and their spheres, the dehars cannot keep up these old rules. The Kalash say that this is the reason why the number of dehars is declining.

Any collision between the impure sphere and the sacred sphere is of course very dangerous, and must by all means be avoided. The climax of the sacrifices is therefore performed by virgin boys who have never had any sexual experience, and if a man has visited a burial place he cannot on the same day approach a sanctuary. In case a Moslem pays a visit to a house during the sacred period of the winter festival, all the loaves of this house and of all other houses of the village will be polluted, and must be thrown away.

Some Cultural and Religious Elements.

An examination of the elements composing Kalash culture brings to light some interesting historical connections and frequently discloses a strange cultural heterogeneity. I shall here just mention a few striking examples.

The women's habit of wearing the characteristic cowrie-covered headgear presumably is not very old. According to one tradition this custom was adopted during the people's stay in Waigel, i. e. it cannot be dated further back than 500—600 years. According to another tradition this custom has come from the Kati or Red Kafirs and probably would be younger.

The shrine of Sajigor is said to be of Bashgali origin. It was captured by Raja Vai in a war against the Bashgali and was made a common Kalash shrine at the order of the great Nanga dehar. As a Kalash shrine it therefore cannot be dated further back than some time after 1500.

Even Mahandeo is probably of Kafir origin. According to a tradition the shrine for Mahandeo of Rumbur is an off-shoot of the chief temple of Presungol.¹ There is a tradition that a small stone with some inscription (!) was brought from there and buried in the ground above Grom in Rumbur where is now the present shrine for Mahandeo, and that the carved horse-heads were added later.

The name Mahandeo itself suggests the Hindu god Siva, and I presume that we here meet a variant of the widespread cults of this god. Some literary sources make it possible to trace the worship of Mahandeo among the Kafirs for more than 300 years. We know that a worship of a deity called Shee Mahandeo existed among the Kafirs of Aghanistan before 1815.² A short remark by the Jesuit Gregorios Roiz takes us back even to some years before 1678 as in a report from a missionary expedition to Kafiristan he writes that “. . . they worship a stone called Mahdeu . . .”³ In this connection it is significant that Gregorios Roiz talks of a stone called Mahdeu because there actually is a big stone behind the altar to Mahandeo in Rumbur.

¹ Robertson p. 389 ff.: the temple to Imrá (Imro).

² Elphinstone p. 621.

³ Maclagan p. 126.

The above-mentioned habit of placing a man-like wooden head in the altar to Mahandeo (these heads had disappeared when I visited the Kalash, but Professor Morgenstierne still found one) seems to be old, having a probable parallel in the remarkable worshipping of a human-like idol which can be traced back even to 1625 when a deputation of Si'ah Posh Kafirs came to Muhammad Jahangir Badshah at Jalalabad. The royal chronicler states that they make an idol in the resemblance of a man and worship it.¹

A tradition from Rumbur recounts that the Jach has come from the Bashgali at the time when they embraced Islam, i. e. at the end of the last century. It was brought to Pinda vat in the mountains above Sajigor and from there the habit of raising Jach sanctuaries in the fields has spread over the Kalash country.

Historical Problems.

Historical problems are always particularly difficult with indigenous, illiterate tribes as one has to deal with oral traditions and comparisons with occasional pieces of information from other sources. The history of the Kalash is no exception, the more so as we — to my knowledge — have no archaeological evidence from the old history of the Kalash. We therefore have to rely on what may be concluded from linguistic studies, the ordinary history of Chitral, and the tradition of the Kalash.²

The most important language of Chitral is Khowar, the language of the Kho tribe, which has its home in the northern part of the country. Khowar and Kalasha are closely related and, as stated above, probably belong to the first wave of immigrants from the south. There is no reason to believe that they came direct from Central Asia across Hindukush.

The early history of Chitral is veiled in uncertainty, but it is probable that the country was under Chinese overlordship when the T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618—906) extended its powers even to the south of Hindu Kush. It is recounted that when the Arabs in the seventh century fought the Chinese in Turkestan, a small party came to Chitral, that the local king of Persian origin

¹ Raverty p. 76.

² On the following passage cf. Morgenstierne 1929, p. 47 ff. and Schomberg p. 261 ff.

was slain, that most of the people then were Black Kafirs, but that they gradually accepted Islam. A rock inscription records that in A. D. 900 there were Buddhists in the country, and a later legend tells of attacks by Genghis Khan (d. A. D. 1227).

It is known that the dynasty of the Rais Mehtars was ruling in Chitral in the sixteenth century, but according to Schomberg 1570 is the first authentic date of Chitral history, and after that time the power passed from the Rais Mehtars to the Kator dynasty, the present rulers of Chitral, who trace their ancestry back to Timur Leng. At that time, however, the Kalash was an un-influential, subjugated tribe, ousted to the side-valleys of Chitral.

When we turn to the Kalash tradition from Rumbur, we get a more comprehensive picture of the historical events from these last centuries. The genealogy of the Kalash royal family is here of great importance. The present aksakal of Rumbur, Kuvat Shah, could trace his genealogy back to Adabog, the first Kalash king of Rumbur, from whose four sons the present population of Rumbur is said to be descended.

Adabog of Rumbur and Rajah Vai of Bumboret were brothers, grandsons of Shalak Shah, the paramount king of Kalash history, who has achieved a fame equalled by no other Kalash king. According to the Kalash tradition Shalak Shah had come with his people from an obscure country called "Tsiyam". Due to tribal quarrels Shalak Shah left "Tsiyam" and invaded Chitral, which he conquered. Shalak Shah was succeeded by four sons, who divided the country into four parts: Chitral Fort and its surroundings, — Drosh, Gairet and Birir, — Bumboret and Rumbur, — and the Lutkoh area.

That the Kalash once held sway of Chitral proper agrees with the tradition in Chitral itself, and quite close to Chitral Fort is the Chiv bridge, which the Chitralis state was built by the Kalash during their reign.

Kuvat Shah said that this Kalash reign of Chitral lasted for one (or two?) generations, then they were driven away by the Rais Mehtars to their present valleys. It agrees with the Chitral tradition that they were defeated by the Rais Mehtars. But many Kalash remained in Chitral proper and embraced Islam. That is to say that this Kalash rule of Chitral can be traced back to some time before 1500.

Having come back to this time the next problem arises: How long did the Kalash possess power in Chitral? Kuvat Shah says that it lasted one (or two?) generations, i. e. the years when Shalak Shah and his sons were reigning. If that holds true, we may suggest that Shalak Shah invaded Chitral some time before the middle of the fifteenth century or a little earlier.

There seems to be no doubt that Shalak Shah invaded Chitral from the south, following the Kunar river. This supposition is supported by much evidence, e. g. the Joshi and Chaumos songs of Rumbur, which mention places where the Kalash fought the then inhabitants of Chitral.

In this way the Kalash can be followed down the Kunar river to places about Pech river, and can presumably be traced to Waigel. Some names from various Kalash songs seem to indicate places in that neighbourhood. If we try to go further backwards, we meet the obscure country "Tsiyam" of the Kalash traditions. According to Professor Morgenstierne "Tsiyam" is situated still farther south, and the Kalash only stayed for a few generations in Waigel. And there all information stops.

Even this short historical sketch will suffice to give an impression of the importance of Chitral. For many centuries this state, situated in a corner between the Himalayas and the Hindu Kush, was a meeting point for influences from Western, Southern and Central Asia. Intermittent waves of immigratory tribes, various political powers, different religions and many languages, have left their stamps on the culture of the country. In this confusing course of events the Kalash have played their part.

The Rumbur tradition around Shalak Shah gives rise to many problems. Professor Morgenstierne's linguistic investigations demonstrate that Khowar and Kalasha are intimately connected, having fundamental elements in common. These elements, that are deeply rooted in the linguistic structures of both languages, must be very old, and cannot be explained by mere cultural contacts dating back to the fifteenth and the sixteenth century. It might be suggested that Shalak Shah and his men represented a small invading group that for some decades arrogated the power over an indigenous population.¹ But even then many problems remain unsolved.

¹ My best thanks for this tentative suggestion are due to Professor Morgenstierne, who, however, emphasises that the whole complex of problems is a great dilemma (Letter from Professor Morgenstierne to the author).

At the present moment it will be impossible to say anything conclusive, and we may only hope that future investigations will throw new light on the history of the Kalash.

Kalash Material Registered.

Registration of the Balanguru village complex, inhabitants, houses, number of fields and cattle. Many personal names. — Description of the building of a house. — The Aksakal institution. — Theft. — The calendar system. Daily and yearly routine of life. — The life-cycle: habits and ceremonies connected with childbirth, betrothal, wedding, marriage, adultery, divorce, and death. — Autobiographies of two men (one autobiography in Kalasha with a word-for-word English translation) and one woman. — Several versions of the history of the people.

Descriptions of the greater religious festivals with many prayers and songs in Kalasha with translations. Descriptions of some greater and many minor ceremonial sacrifices and offerings. — The rules for a dehar's life and performances. Descriptions of various dehar ceremonies. — Registrations of the gods and goddesses, their functions and places in the pantheon, other divine, semidivine and demoniacal powers, their cults and accompanying ceremonies. — Myths concerning the world, mankind, the end of the world, etc.

Some games and sports. — Some narratives, folk songs, and proverbs. — About 300 photographs. — Collections of material culture: more than 100 specimens.

From Kabul, the Pathans of Mardan, and from Chitral proper: more than 50 specimens of material culture.

4. Lepcha of Sikkim.

When we come from the Kalash to the Lepcha we have to adapt ourselves to quite new conditions, the differences in race, language, culture, and religion being very great. The Lepcha live in the Sikkim Himalayas and in the adjoining Indian districts of Kalimpong and Darjeeling, numbering about 40,000. A small Lepcha branch, the Limbu, long ago migrated to eastern Nepal, but as we have merely scanty information about their culture and I had no opportunity of visiting them, they will be left out of consideration here.

The Lepcha belong to the Tibetan type of the Mongoloid race.¹

¹ Guha 1937, p. 137.

I made anthropological and anthropometrical investigations of 207 persons, some of whom were women.¹

The language of the Lepcha, pertaining to the Tibeto-Burman family,² has an alphabet of its own, according to tradition invented by King Cha dor (*Phyag rdor rnam rgyal*) of Sikkim, born in 1686.³ This alphabet is still taught in some Lepcha schools, but most Lepcha are illiterate, and the alphabet is not much used.

It is more than a century since the Lepcha were introduced to ethnology in some articles by A. Campbell and through the report on the travels of the botanist J. D. Hooker in the Sikkim Himalayas. Since that time this people has attracted increasing attention, as their culture displays a strange mixture of old indigenous traits and influences from the great neighbouring cultures, especially the Tibetan.

Mainwaring compiled a Lepcha-English dictionary and published a short grammar, — Waddell collected important material, particularly illustrative of the infiltration of Lamaism into Lepcha religion, — Stocks took down many myths and legends in English, — Gorer and Morris, who worked together, were concerned to elucidate the functional side of common Lepcha life and have procured much new information about their religious institutions, — while Nebesky-Wojkowitz recently published highly informative studies on selected problems from the Lepcha religion and culture.⁴

However, the knowledge of Lepcha rituals and prayers is very fragmentary, and as I had reason to suppose that such material might be at hand and that it might throw new light on the original Lepcha religion, I decided to devote my main interest to these studies. During our field-research my interpreter and I succeeded in obtaining about 40 hitherto unknown rituals: prayers, songs, etc. My interpreter wrote them down in Lepcha script with a word-for-word English translation and a current English translation.

¹ My sincere gratitude is due to Dr. A. Craig, the Scottish Hospital, Kalimpong, for facilities at my anthropometrical investigations of the Kalimpong Lepcha.

² Grierson vol III. Part I, 1909, p. 233 ff.

³ Risley 1894, p. 13, Mainwaring/Grünwedel 1898, p. IX.

⁴ Cf. References: Campbell, Hooker, Mainwaring, Waddell, Stocks, Gorer, Morris, Nebesky-Wojkowitz.

In order to find the most suitable area for these studies my eyes fell on Jongu, the closed Lepcha reservation in central and northern Sikkim, where the Lepcha live almost undisturbed by the numerous immigrant Nepalese.

The Government of Sikkim sent Mr. Pollo Tsering Lepcha of Gangtok with me as my guide and interpreter. He was of Lepcha birth, educated at the High School of Gangtok and well qualified for this work. He accompanied me during my whole stay among the Sikkim Lepcha, and I am highly indebted to him for efficient cooperation and sincere interest in the field-research.

The three first months of 1949 were spent with preliminary Lepcha studies in Gangtok and Kalimpong, visits to Sikkim monasteries and temples, and smaller excursions to Jongu. On April 11th, Tsering and I went to Tingbung (Tung vung), a locality in northern Jongu, and as the spot proved exceptionally suitable for our purpose, we remained there until June 27th, when the monsoon forced us to retreat to Singhik, east of Jongu, where we worked for seven weeks with the local Lepcha. During our stay in Singhik we made a short excursion to Lachung in eastern Sikkim, on the route visiting some Lepcha villages.

Later on I worked in Kalimpong among the Lepcha of this district. I am very grateful to Mr. Kharpoo Tamsang and to Mrs. Mohan, official representatives of the Lepcha, for good and valuable assistance on Lepcha matter, and I thank the School of Oriental and African Studies, the University of London, for kindly permitting Mr. Tamsang to record some of my Lepcha rituals on the gramophone, when in 1952 he worked as a research assistant at the University.

The history of the Lepcha is rather obscure, but it seems that the people has its origin in two waves of immigrants of Mongoloid race, the last one coming in the middle of the seventeenth century.¹

The present Lepcha are mountain agriculturists, the main crops being wet and dry rice, buckwheat, maize, cardamom, and millet, while sugar cane and manioc are grown in some places. They keep oxen, pigs, goats, fowls, dogs, and cats, and hunting in the jungle is still practised in some places. They live in houses

¹ Risley 1892, II, p. 6; Waddell 1894, p. 249; Rock p. 929.

of timber, but smaller bamboo huts can also be found. As their material culture has been dealt with by several authors¹ I shall confine my description to some few social and religious problems.

The Socio-religious Structure.

The Lepcha have from olden times been intimately associated with the natural conditions of Sikkim and with Mount Kanchenjunga in particular, and this geographical association is interestingly reflected in the socio-religious structure of the society.

The society is divided into a great number of lineages, *pu tsho*² (*pu so*, *ptso*) and as a rule marriage within the same *pu tsho* is only permitted when the couple concerned is separated from the common ancestor by nine generations.

Every *pu tsho* has its own priest called *bong thing* or *pa dem*, whose office is hereditary in his own *pu tsho*, but depends on a particular vocation. He can perform any ceremony on behalf of his *pu tsho* except the delivering of a dead person's soul, but it is his main duty to act as a doctor and perform a cleansing ceremony called *phik*. As a *bong thing* he must perform an annual ceremony called *sa gi*.

Furthermore, there are two kinds of priestesses, called *mun* (this word is sometimes also used of priests): *a ding mun* or standing *mun* and *a nan mun* or sitting *mun*, these names referring to their postures during the ceremonies. They can perform the same ceremonies as the *bong thing*, but the sitting *mun* can in addition liberate a dead person's soul (*a pil*) through a trance. On the whole, when one compares the functions of the *bong thing* with those of the *mun*, the latter seems to have a closer association with the supernatural world.

The *bong thing* and the *mun* are distinct from ordinary people by having a *tsat* (*tshet?*), which seems to constitute their special powers. This *tsat* leaves them at their death and transmigrates to one of their grandchildren. The transmigration becomes obvious through some unusual behaviour on the part of the grandchild, — as regards the *mun* frequently through a trance.

¹ Gorer p. 51 ff; Morris p. 165 ff.; Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1953.

² Cf. Tibetan: bu tshá, bu tsá, children's children, son, Jäschke p. 368 b.



Fig. 6. Lepcha: Old bong thing.

Among the Lepcha of Jongu exorcists of non-genuine Lepcha origin can be found. The male *pa o* or *pa wo*¹ and the female *nyen jo mo*² are of Tibetan origin, whereas the male *ja ba* or *ya ba* and the female *ja ma* or *ya ma* are of Nepalese origin. They are all instructed and trained according to certain traditions.

A distinction between *a tshong*, *tshong* (pure) and *a jen* (impure) plays an important role, at any rate among the Lepcha of Kalimpong district. Pure are: all gods (*rum*), *bong thing*, *mun*, all persons who have not become impure, all eatable animals, and clear drinkable water. Impure are: all evil spirits (*mung*)

¹ Cf. Tibetan *dpá-bo*, strong man, hero, Jäschke p. 325 b.

² Cf. Tibetan *rnal-byór-pa*, devotee, saint, sage, miracle-worker, Jäschke p. 315 b.

and their abodes, menstruant women, parturient women until three days after confinement, relatives of dead persons until three days after funeral, dirty water, and non-eatable animals, e. g. dogs, monkeys, snakes, cats, rats, crows, vultures, kites, etc.

Any person may become impure and must then pass through a purifying ceremony, but a *bong thing* and a *mun* must of course be particularly careful not to become impure.

Religious Ceremonies.

The features which make up Lepcha religion are characterised by an almost countless number of ceremonies encompassing the various activities of the people. Some of the ceremonies are performed by the heads of the families or by the villagers in common, but most of them are generally conducted by the *bong thing* or the *mun*. Whereas Lamaism has many temples in Sikkim, I found no original Lepcha temple.

Certain elements occur in most cultic performances: The ceremonial place is consecrated, and altar structures of bamboo, mats, and the like are arranged. The main functions are offerings or sacrifices or both, — invocations of gods and conjurations of *mungs*, or both, — and sometimes a trance by a *mun*.

The ordinary minor offerings consist of rice, local beer, a coin, some small birds and some fishes, but on more important occasions, *tor mo*,¹ small conical figures made of vegetables, usually rice, are used in addition.

The Lepcha distinguish between cultic performances to the gods and to the *mung*. While the *mung* require sanguinary sacrifices, the gods usually get vegetable offerings, but sometimes also sacrifices of animals, depending on the character of the god. When a male animal is sacrificed to the gods, it may occur that it is purified through a castration.

The rituals accompanying the offerings to the gods consist of requests for protection and fertility, whereas, in the rituals accompanying the sacrifices to the *mung*, the people beseech the *mung* to accept the meat and the blood of the sacrificial animal instead of devouring the bodies of human beings. We here approach a

¹ Cf. Tibetan *glór-ma*, Jäschke p. 210 a.



Fig. 7. Lepcha: Man assisted by wife at ceremony to local demons.

remarkable complex of ideas, as the sacrifices to the *mung* seem to indicate a kind a substitute, the meat and blood of the sacrificial animal replacing the human body or bodies.

The Lepcha world is dominated by the divine powers and the evil *mung*. The supreme divine powers are rather distant and do not interfere with this world, others are minor creative powers who still contribute to this life through benevolent actions, and their assistance is therefore regularly applied for.

But the "negative" powers, among whom the *mung* and the *dut* are the most significant, seem to be paramount to Lepcha imagination. Their continual attempts to destroy mankind through attacks of disease and accidents must constantly be counteracted

by sanguinary sacrifices, and these functions therefore play a predominant role among the Lepcha ceremonies.

The myths relate that both human beings and *mung* have their common origin in a primordial couple, but while the human beings were taken care of and nursed, the *mung* were neglected and repudiated. Since their very beginning they are therefore furious with jealousy of the human being, and in their craving for revenge they ever and again attempt to destroy mankind. The mythico-psychological idea behind the sanguinary sacrifices to the *mung* is mankind's constant endeavours to satisfy them.

These two aspects of Lepcha ceremonial functions must always be kept in mind when one tries to comprehend a Lepcha cult. It is intended either to invoke the divine powers or to avert the *mung*, both intentions sometimes finding expression in the sequence of ceremonies and rituals of the same function.

In the actual, everyday life the averting ceremonies seem greatly to outnumber the invoking ceremonies. This fact gets an illustrative explanation through the current Lepcha saying: The gods have merely benevolent intentions, and it is therefore unnecessary to approach them frequently. The *mung* are always evil, and for that reason we must always endeavour to satisfy them.

The Kanchenjunga Cult.

There is at Tingbung a peculiar shrine for *kong čhen*, the god of Mount Kanchenjunga, which deserves particular attention.¹ As it is impossible in this report to describe all the ceremonies we wrote down concerning this shrine, I shall here point out a few significant details only.

The structure of this open-air shrine, which is in the charge of an old hereditary priest, is rather strange. It is composed of two groups of large, unfashioned stones, each group having a bigger stone as centre. One centre stone represents the god *kong čhen*, the other stone his wife, while some smaller stones surrounding them are minor peaks, representing their soldiers or followers.

¹ Cf. "A Cult of the God Kanchenjunga among the Lepcha of Northern Sikkim. A Himalayan Megalithic Shrine and its Ceremonies", by Halfdan Siiger. Actes du IVe Congrès International des Sciences Anthropologiques et Ethnologiques, Vienne 1952, Tome II Ethnologica, Première Partie, Wien 1955, p. 185—189.



Fig. 8. Lepcha: Shrine (*hla thu*) for kong òchen (Kanchenjunga) at Tingbung. The man points at the stone for kong òchen.

Thus the shrine is a rough imitation of the mountain panorama and is, so to speak, an artificial replica of the divine and spiritual environments.

The Lepcha term this sanctuary *hla thu*, a designation to all appearance identical with the Tibetan *lha tho*.¹ Both Roerich² and Tucci³ found megalithic shrines of the same name in Tibet,⁴ and such shrines are supposed to be connected with the old pre-

¹ Das, p. 1334 a: *lha tho*, heaps of stone erected on mountain passes or on tops of mountains as votive cairns.

² Roerich, 1930, p. 33; 1931, p. 415 f., 451, 461.

³ Tucci and Ghersi p. 42 and 47; Tucci 1949, p. 729.

⁴ Macdonald, 1953, has made an interesting comparative compilation concerning the *lha tho* problem.

lamaist Bon religion. Even if the structure of this Lepcha shrine is somewhat different from the Tibetan shrines, the meaning of the word is the same: abode of a *lha* or god. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that this shrine dates back to the pre-lamaist days of Sikkim, i. e. before A.D. 1641 or 1642.¹

With this shrine as the cultic centre the Lepcha of Tingbung annually celebrate a great ceremony for *kong čhen*, culminating in the sacrifice of a yak. The entire function is intended to secure the benevolence of the divine powers and to satisfy the evil powers in order to prevent them from doing any harm.

One of the averting rituals of this ceremony throws light on the original diffusion of Lepcha culture, containing an enumeration of 21 *mung* from Sikkim, Kalimpong, and Chumbi. Additional information acquired on the spot furnished me with some particulars concerning the abodes of these *mung*, e. g. a lake in Gangtok and a big tree in Kalimpong, both of which have now disappeared. The present Lepcha of Kalimpong were much astonished to learn from me of the former existence of a *mung* tree in Kalimpong, and had not even heard of it before. The people of Chumbi now profess the Lamaist religion. These circumstances seem to demonstrate that the ritual may date back to a time when the Lepcha religion was more widespread and had a greater impress of unity.

Mung of Bhutanese, Nepalese, and Limbu origin occur in some of the rituals. I was told that they referred to quarrels and wars which the country had had with these neighbours during the last centuries.

A correlation of these and other particulars induces me to make the suggestion that the shrine itself may be of pre-lamaist origin, and that the rituals may contain a historical core which dates back at least two hundred years.² It does not preclude that some parts of the rituals are younger, as indigenous rituals often get supplements in the course of the centuries.

¹ Waddell 1894, p. 249. Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *The Eastern Anthropologist*, vol. V, no. 1, p. 37, note 1, and Rock p. 926 ff.

² Concerning worship of a mountain god among the Sherpa of Nepal compare: Fürer-Haimendorf, 1955.

Origin of the Lepcha Religion.

The problem of the origin of Lepcha religion is complex and rather difficult because Tibetan Bon and Red Sect Lamaism for centuries have influenced the religious practices, but I am inclined to join Risley's suggestion that the original Lepcha religion was closely connected with old Central Asian shamanism.¹

Among the arguments which might be advanced in favour of this suggestion I shall concentrate on one: An investigation of the functions of the *mun* leads to the hypothesis that the *mun* in all probability is of shamanistic origin. The main points are:

- a. The *mun* is vocated through a sudden ecstatic experience, followed up by an instruction given by another *mun*.
- b. The *mun* uses a particular headgear at her performances.
- c. The most important ceremonies of the *mun* culminate in ecstatic performances.
- d. The exorcising ceremonies play an important role among her official duties.
- e. I was told that "spiritual fights" between *mun* sometimes occur. If a *mun* experiences that her ceremonies are counteracted, she ascribes it to malignant influences from another *mun*, and immediately requests her "spiritual army" to attack the spirits of the hostile *mun*.
- f. At the death of a *mun* her *tsat* (*tshet*), constituting her ability as a *mun*, transmigrates to one of her granddaughters.
- g. When a *mun* dies her soul leaves this world by a "symbolical ladder".²

It is instructive to observe the intimate connection between the *bong thing* and the *mun* on the one hand, and the *pu tsho* organisation of society on the other. It may point in the direction of a kind of family shamanism.³

I am therefore inclined to suppose that the Lepcha religion represents a southern off-shoot of the pre-lamaist Central Asian shamanism which can still be found in Siberia and Mongolia

¹ Cf. Risley II, 1892, p. 10, and Nebesky-Wojkowitz, The Eastern Anthropologist V, no. 1, p. 38, note 12.

² Nebesky-Wojkowitz, The Eastern Anthropologist, vol. V, no. 1, p. 36.

³ Czaplicka p. 192 passim.

and was once widespread in China,¹ and which is the historical background of the Tibetan Bon.²

Lepcha Material Registered.

The locality of Tingbung and surrounding villages and hamlets: the houses, their inhabitants and their relationships. — Structure of an ordinary house. — Calendar system, daily and yearly routine of life. — Nutrition. — Autobiographies of some men and women. — Hunting: proceedings of a battue in the jungle, hunting of birds with sling and pellet-bow. — Ceremonies associated with fishing. — Two games for young folks. — Dancing performance of *nyen jo mo*. — Collections of material culture: about 80 specimens. — About 250 photographs. — Collections of material culture from Lachung: about 20 specimens.

Rituals and prayers taken down in Lepcha script with a word-for-word English translation, a current English translation and commentaries:

Ceremonies connected with the family: ceremony for *kong čhen*, for *li rum* (the god of the house), for the sun god, for *lyang rum*, for *pa dim*.

Ceremonies associated with agriculture: Rice ceremony for abundant yield (here occurs the "grandmother of the rice"), several cultivation ceremonies intended to avert *mungs*.

Ceremonies for the increase of the number of domestic animals.

Hunter's ceremonies before going out hunting.

Occupational ceremonies: carpenter's ceremonies when building a house, blacksmith's annual ceremony, blacksmith's ceremony when retiring and handing over his work to his son, the blacksmith's son's ceremony when he takes over his father's occupation.

Ceremonies associated with the life-cycle: several long ceremonies associated with childbirth and wedding.

Occasional ceremonies: several rituals in case of disease and accident, ceremonies associated with warfare (now out of use): before the warrior leaves his home, during his absence, and on his return.

Greater ceremonies: the New Year festivities, the *che rim* ceremony for *kong čhen*, the particular *kong čhen* ceremony of northern Jongu.

Ceremonies performed by the *bong thing* and the *mun* as priest and priestess, respectively.

Legends noted down in English:

The legend of king *gye bo*, i. e. the Lepcha version of the epic of King Kesar of Ling.³ This Lepcha version contains parts of the epic, mainly the fights with "Hor", by far the most popular part of the great Central Asian epic.

¹ Eliade p. 168 ff.; Groot VI, p. 1190 ff.: cf. the male "hih" and the female "wu", into which the "shen" descends.

² Hoffmann p. 197 ff.

³ Cf. Stocks p. 404 ff.; Roerich 1942, p. 279.

The legend of King *hla bo*. — The legend of King *dong*. — The legend of King *lang du*. — The legend of King *lyang bar*. — The legend of King *ryot kup*. — The legend of King *jer ban kup*.

Several legends about the origin of the world and the creation; several minor legends of kings; some narratives of animals.

Lepcha Manuscripts.

The acquired manuscripts are written in Lepcha script. Most of them are translations from Tibetan or displaying a strong Lamaist influence.¹

1. MS concerning the origin of the world. Fol. 1—17; 10 lines on each page (some lines lacking). Measure of sheets: 16.5 cm × 20.5 cm.
2. MS: *ta she thing* (Padmasambhava). Fragments of the legend of this saint. Fol. 1—5, 1—2, 1—2, 1—5; 6 lines on each page. Measure of sheets: 42 cm × 15 cm.
3. MS: Advice to mankind, given by a minister of the gods. Fol. 1—9; 8—9 lines on each page. Measure of sheets: 26.5 cm × 10 cm.
4. MS: *king tsum dar mit*. Moral instructions, given by the goddess *dar mit*, including punishments and rewards, — and the appearance of the thunder-bolt in the world. Fol. 1—11, 1—5; 6—7 lines on each page. Measure of sheets: 31.7 cm × 9.7 cm.
5. MS: Lamaist prayers for the soul of a deceased person, and instruction concerning the soul's wanderings in the heavenly regions. Fol. 1—7; 7 lines on each page. Measure of sheets: 33.2 cm × 9.7 cm.
6. MS: Prediction of the last days of the world and the disappearance of mankind. Fol. 1—30; 7—8 lines on each page. Measure of sheets: 16 cm × 17 cm.
7. MS: Instructions concerning ceremonies intending to propitiate demons who cause diseases. Fol. 1—11; 8—9 lines on each page. Measure of sheets: 22 cm × 11 cm.
8. MS: Account of *sa mik dye lok*, who recovered from a disease and related his experiences. Fol.: front-page + 11 sheets (only one side of each sheet is used); 6 lines on each page. Measure of sheets: 24.3 cm × 8.5 cm.
9. MS: Observances for travellers. Fol. 1—13 (only one side of each sheet is used); 6—10 lines on each page. Measure of sheets: 14 cm × 9.7 cm.
10. MS: Book of prophecies. Fol. 1—38; 5—7 lines on each page. Measure of sheets: 21.6 cm × 10.6 cm.
11. MS: Man's character and fate disclosed through the spots and marks on his body. Fol. 1—7 + 1 (only one side of each sheet is used); 8—9 lines on each page. Measure of sheets: 21.5 cm × 10.5 cm.
12. MS: The narrative of the ants. Fol. 1—12; 6—8 lines on each page. Measure of sheets: 34 cm × 10.4 cm.
13. MS: Lepcha Primer. Fol.: front-page + 1—21; 6 lines on each page. Measure of sheets: 25 cm × 10 cm.

¹ Cf. Waddell 1939, p. 166.

5. Tibetan Culture.

1. Temples, Monasteries, and Religious Performances.

Sikkim has more than thirty Ningmapa¹ temples and monasteries and so affords plenty of opportunities for studying Red Sect Lamaism, the elder branch of Northern Buddhism. I am very grateful to the Government of Sikkim for kind permission to visit the temples, the more so as the admission to other Red Sect countries is very difficult.

As the guest of the Maharajah I was present at the great annual lama dance of the Gangtok palace temple. Disguised as well-known mythological figures the lamas performed their Chams, by Europeans erroneously called "devil dances". The ceremony reaches its climax with the cultic killing of a dummy representing the Tibetan King Langdarma, who about A. D. 840 persecuted Buddhism, intending to eradicate the creed from Tibet. He was assassinated by a lama, who in the disguise of a Black-hat dancer shot the king with an arrow. This important event, the backbone of the lama dances, is not merely a dramatic performance of the final victory of Buddhism, but is still more through its annual repetition a continually renewed cultic destruction of all the enemies of the creed.

On another occasion I studied in Gangtok the War Dance of Sikkim, celebrated as a worship of Kanchenjunga, the war god of the country.

I visited the monasteries Enche, Pemayangtse, and Ramtek, where I witnessed various festivals, and in Ramtek I observed the so-called "Eucharist of Lamaism", the distribution of flour and water to the believers.²

Once lay actors from Lhasa arrived at Gangtok and performed a great play of Gautama's life, assisted by local people. It attracted many spectators and was an illustrative Buddhist "mystery play", demonstrating that the original Gautama and his life-story are essential powers in the religious life of the common man.

¹ The spelling of Tibetan and Sanskrit names is not consistent, as the usual European rendering of well-known words has been adopted.

² Waddell 1939, p. 444 ff.



Fig. 9. Sikkim: Ceremony for Kanchenjunga. Warriors' dance at the temple of the palace. Gangtok.

2. Study of Dancing Pilgrims.

In Sikkim and Kalimpong one often comes across Tibetan monks, nuns, traders, and caravan drivers, as the traffic between the southern part of Tibet and India must pass either through the Chumbi valley or through Sikkim, the two routes joining in Kalimpong.

Small teams of lay Tibetan pilgrims can frequently be seen on the mountain tracks and in the bazaars of Kalimpong. Driven by an urgent devotion they walk on foot thousands of kilometres from far-away places of Tibet, cross the Himalayas, and proceed to the old Buddhist sanctuaries of India. On the way they earn

their living by making small theatrical performances with dances and songs, afterwards collecting bakshish from the lookers-on. They represent a particular type of Buddhist pilgrims, significant for the apprehension of lay Tibetan piety.

In January 1949 I made the acquaintance of such a team and for some days its members performed their dances for me, sang their songs, and told me about their pilgrimage. Later on I acquired a complete dress and equipment from a dancer of another team. I have published the results of the studies of those teams,¹ and shall here sum up the main points.

The teams usually consist of some ten persons, men, women, and children, under the guidance of an experienced leader. The leader of the team in question, who had twice before been on a pilgrimage to Nepal, was 41 years old, and was accompanied by his two wives and their two sons.

The pilgrims came from eastern Tibet (Riwoche, Kham), where they lived as tillers of the soil.² When going on a pilgrimage they adhere to the rules laid down by the poet-saint Milarepa (A.D. 1040—1123), whom they consider their tutelary deity (*yi dam*). They sing and dance according to instructions dating back to Milarepa and acknowledge the traditions going back to Dilo, Naro, and Marpa, Milarepa's predecessors. An old lama from Riwoche had initiated them into these rules and traditions.

The teams possess particular dancing-equipments comprising black, flat masks, kilts of ropes, dancing staves, drums, cymbals, and sometimes a cither. They often use a tail from a yak-cow and the horns of a cross between the wild and the tame yak. Some teams have a deer mask, used in a dance depicting the conversion of the hunter *Mgon po rdo rje* by Milarepa.

The route of the pilgrimage demonstrates the great importance of the old traditions associated with Gautama's life. The team studied had paid visits to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet and a residence of the Dalai Lama, the incarnation of Chenresi (Avalokitesvara), — Tashi-Lumpo, residence of the Panchen Lama, the incarnation of Amitabha, — Mount Kaila, the ter-

¹ Halfdan Siiger: *Dancing Pilgrims from Tibet* (Geografisk Tidsskrift. Copenhagen, vol. 51, 1951, pp. 1—26).

² Cf. Bell p. 61.

restrial counterpart of Mount Meru, — Benares, in the neighbourhood of which Gautama delivered his first sermon, — Bodh Gaya, where Gautama attained his Buddhahood, — and Tsam cho dung in Assam, where Gautama died according to a common Tibetan mis-interpretation (?).

Their dances comprise 13 group dances, 5 solo dances, and one separate dance. Two of the accompanying songs are rendered in Tibetan with an English translation in my article. It is impossible to draw up principal lines for their performances, which seem to consist of fragments of a greater whole. Maybe they are taken from various sources. Two dances are particularly illustrative. One represents the scene where *Sha khya hi rgyl met shan* has dressed in the guise of a poor beggar and plays with his monkey before the princess, — the other is a long peacock dance.

Many explorers have met with such wandering groups of dancers, and their descriptions of the dancers' equipments and habits are rather concurrent. I am therefore inclined to suppose that in these teams of lay pilgrims we find an old Tibetan custom which probably may date back to the days of Milarepa.

3. List of Acquisitions.

a. Books.

1. *Tibetan Xylograph*. Front title: *sBas yul 'bras mo ljongs kyi gnas yig phan yon dang bcas pa ngo mtshar gter mdzod zhes bya ba bzhuqs so* (Contains a topographical description and the bliss in the country Sikkim in *sBas yul*: the wonderful treasury).

Marginal title: *gNas yig* (topographical description).

Printing space: 22 cm × 5.8 cm. Measure of sheets: 28.5 cm × 8 cm. 5 lines on each page. Fol. 1—58.

2. *Tibetan Manuscript* (in *dBu can*, capital script). Front title: *Oyan Padma mdzad pa'i phun tshogs rten 'brel sgrigs byed lha bsangs bar chad kun bsel zhesya ba zhugs bswo*. (Contains the god who creates order in the complete harmonious bliss, protecting all parts of the middle (i. e. all beings and things in this world between Heaven and Hell). Written by Padmasambhava from Udiyana. Contains tantra rituals by Padmasambhava. Fol. 1—173 + 13 unnumbered folios.

New text and new title: *gNas chen 'bras mo bshongs gyi gnas pa sol gtor mo'i zin / rig 'dzi rgya mtshos / bri* (presumably = *khri*) *bkod pa de nang gsal bar bzhuso*. (Here is the end of the prayer *gtor ma* for the places of the great country Sikkim (called?), that which unravels in the interior of the throne which is placed by (through?) the ocean of the sages). 1 folio in italics. Measure of sheets: 25.2 cm × 9.2 cm. 6 lines on each page.

b. Thankas.

The thankas were acquired in Kalimpong. As none of them have inscriptions on the front, the analysis of their pictures is based partly upon information received on the spot, partly on comparison with publications on thankas. The terms "right" and "left" are used in the heraldic meaning.

1. *Thanka*. Measure: 40.5 cm × 31 cm. (R. 187).¹ (Fig. 10).

Top: Sakyamuni, Buddha posture on lotus throne, left hand holds beggar's bowl, right hand in *bhumisparsa* mudra.

Central figure: Chenresi, princely equipped, four-handed, white complexion, Buddha posture, front pair of hands in *namaskara* mudra, upper right holds rosary, upper left a long-stemmed lotus flower.²

Bottom right: Manjusri, right hand wielding the sword of knowledge, left hand holding book of wisdom on lotus.³

Bottom left: Vajrapani, the fierce fiend type, dark blue, holds a vajra in his right hand and a snare in his left hand. He is represented in the form of *phyag rdor gtum chung*, the fierce young Vajrapani.⁴

As probable provenance Lhasa or Saskya was mentioned.

2. *Thanka*. Measure: 79 cm × 55 cm. On the reverse: "*Om ah hum*" in red. (R. 185).

Central figure: Padmasambhava seated on lotus throne, right hand holding a vajra, left arm the magic wand. He wears a red garment and the peaked hat ending in a half vajra. The lappets over the ears are turned back. Green halo. At his

¹ The numbers in brackets refer to the Collection of the Ethnographical Department of the National Museum, Copenhagen.

² Waddell 1939, p. 357 and 228.

³ Waddell 1939, p. 12.

⁴ Waddell 1939, p. 356. Pander/Grünwedel no. 169, p. 81. Schlagintweit, p. 114, Plate II.



Fig. 10. Tibetan scroll. Thangka no. 1.

feet are his two wives. He is surrounded by several subsidiary figures.

Above him is a four-handed figure in princely bodhisattva attire with his two natural hands at the chest in namaskara mudra, upper right hand with mala, upper left hand with lotus. Green halo. Suggestion: Avalokitesvara, Chenresi.

Above him: Small figure, dhyana mudra with jar (?). Green halo. Suggestion: Amitabha or Amitayus.¹

They are all sitting in a temple-like building surrounded by several subsidiary figures, presumably from Padmasambhava's parivara. According to information received on the spot, scenes from the life-story of *Nang sa* are depicted round the building.²

Bottom: *Nang sa* is driven out of her home.

Top: *Nang sa* in Hell.

Heraldic left: *Nang sa* in the convent.

As probable provenance Lhasa was mentioned.

3. *Thanka*. Measure: 83 cm × 54 cm. Presumably unfinished: colours are lacking in some places. On the reverse: "*Om ah hum*" in black. (R. 186).

Same theme as on previous *thanka*. Central figure: Padmasambhava, above him: Chenresi, above him: Amitabha, Amitayus. They are sitting in a temple-like building. Below Padmasambhava are his eight acolytes and on his right and his left his two wives.

Round the building are depicted scenes from the life-story of *Nang sa*, just as on the previous *thanka*.

4. *Thanka*. Measure: 90 cm × 60 cm. Spotted. On the reverse: "*Om ah hum*" in red. (R. 183).

Central figure: Milarepa, white cotton garment, seated cross-legged on a cushion. Red halo. Left hand holds beggar's bowl in lap, right hand with all fingers extended is elevated a little above the right knee. Below him is a low table with seven religious attributes, among which bell and skull are easily recognisable.

Above Milarepa: White figure with halo and three heads. Right head is yellow with one visible eye, left head is blue or green with one visible eye. Six arms. Front right hand in bhumi-sparsa mudra, front left hand is in the lap with an unidentifiable symbol. Back left hand is raised to shoulder-height and carries an unidentifiable symbol.

Above this figure: A figure in monk's habit, red halo, peaked cap, right hand raised before the chest, presumably in abhaya

¹ Ribbach p. 19, Abb. 6: Über Padmasambhava sein geistiger Vater Amitabha. — Pott, p. 81: Amitayus.

² Waddell, 1939, p. 553 f. and Bacot p. 223 ff.

mudra. Left hand holds unidentifiable symbol in lap. Suggestion: Milarepa's teacher.

Top: Yellow figure, red halo, crown, long-lobed ears, right hand in bhumisparśa mudra, left hand in dhyana or samadhi mudra. He sits cross-legged on a cushion, the support having a vajra.

The surrounding pictures represent dramatic episodes from Milarepa's life-story, e. g. Milarepa's uncle persecuting his mother and other members of the family, etc.¹

5. *Thanka*. Measure: 81 cm × 51 cm. On the reverse: "Om ah hum" in black surrounded left and right by two monasterial property-marks.² (R. 184).

Central figure: Yama, judge of the dead, sitting, right foot resting on a lying, naked man. Raised right hand holds sword, left hand holds a mirror.³ Below Yama is an enclosure with figures from Hell, e. g. one figure weighing the pebbles of good and evil deeds, etc.

Below is Hell with its dreadful punishments. On the right and above are scenes from human life. A woman in green and red garment can be seen everywhere. According to a local interpretation she represents the story of the woman who came to Hell and saw all the punishments inflicted, and returned to human life again.

c. *Statuettes*.

1. *Bronze*. Height 11.3 cm. (R. 170. A).

Buddha, seated cross-legged on lotus throne, right hand in bhumisparśa mudra, left hand with patra. The face is painted yellow, the hair blue, the lips and lower eyelids are red, the upper eyelids, pupils, and eyebrows black, the eyeballs white. He has urna and usnisa and elaborate dhoti.

The interior, closed by a piece of wood in the bottom of the figure, contained: (1) Tibetan copper coin, (2) a piece of porcelain, (3) a piece of pink glass, (4) a nut-fruit, (5) a tiny lug, (6) a human tooth (healthy 3. molar from upper left jaw, probably

¹ Waddell, 1939, p. 65, note 5, and Schmid, p. 33 ff.

² Pott p. 52.

³ Cf. similar equipment on fresco in Tashiding temple, Waddell, 1939, p. 91.

wisdom tooth from middle-aged or elderly person, trace of betel chewing),¹ (7) a tiny square piece of wood with “*om ah hum*” written on either side, and wrapped into three strips of paper, with the printed confession formula “*Ye dharma hetu prabhava*, etc . . .” repeated three times on each strip, (8) remnants of plants.

2. *Bronze*. Height: 16 cm. (C. 6381).

One head, four-armed, seated cross-legged on lotus throne, bodhisattva crown, high usnisa with flaming pearl. Natural hands in namaskara mudra, upper right hand holds rosary, upper left hand holds lotus. Nepalese cast.

Suggestion: Sadaksari, tantric form of Avalokitesvara, the form incarnate in the Dalai Lamas.²

3. *Wood*. Height: 14 cm. (R. 158).

Non-tantric, standing on lotus, five-leaved crown, presumably namaskara mudra. Behind right arm a lotus, behind left arm a similar but unidentifiable symbol. Brown wood, face painted yellow, lower part of crown and lips red, eyebrows and eyelids black, eyeballs white.

Local information: Chenresi, probably from Saskya.

4. *Wood*. Height: 13 cm. (R. 159).

Non-tantric, standing on lotus, leaved crown, urna, right hand in varada mudra, left hand in vitarka mudra.

Probable provenance according to local information: Saskya.

Suggestion: Avalokitesvara.³

Registered material from Red Sect Lamaism: Descriptions of observed ceremonies in temples and monasteries.

Collections of material culture:

Tibetan culture and Lamaism: about 80 specimens.

Nepalese culture: 8 specimens.

Bhutanese culture: 12 specimens.

Photographs: about 150.

¹ My best thanks for this analysis of the tooth are due to Professor P. O. Pedersen, the Danish High School of Dentistry, Copenhagen.

² Gordon p. 65, no. 7 b.

³ Gordon p. 64.

6. Boro of Assam.

The Boro or Bodo or Plains Kachari, who live in scattered groups in Assam¹ and speak a language belonging to the Tibeto-Burman family,² constitute a division of the former great Kachari people, whose history through the annals of the Ahom can be traced c. 700 years.³ The Kachari may be described as the aborigines or earliest known inhabitants of the Brahmaputra valley, and it does not seem improbable that at one time the major part of Assam and North-East Bengal formed a great Boro kingdom.⁴ Nowadays many Boro have adopted Hindu religion and customs, and the Hindu background will be obvious in many of the following statements.

During the last months of 1949 and during January 1950 I made investigations in some Boro localities (Bongaigaon, Parikijuli, and others) of Goalpara and Kamrup districts of Northern Assam, where Mr. Dinesh Boshumatari, a Boro by birth, assisted me as adviser and interpreter, whom I owe a personal gratitude because of his sincere interest in my studies and his gifts for establishing confidential contacts with his countrymen.

Among the Boro, who appertain to the dolichocephalic Mongoloid type,⁵ I made anthropological and anthropometrical investigations of some 170 persons, many of whom were women.

The Boro live as peasants in villages under the leadership of headmen, keep horned cattle, pigs, and fowls, and catch fish in the rivers. Cultivation of rice, often by means of irrigation, is their most prominent occupation, but mustard and jute is also of importance, just as small gardens with tobacco, bananas, bamboo and betel can be found. The women weave Assam silk on big looms. As Hodgson, Endle (see References), and others have given descriptions of various aspects of their ethnography, I concentrated on particular subjects.

I investigated their kinship terminology, made a survey of

¹ Grierson vol. III, Part II, 1903, p. 1 map, cf. Endle p. 121 map.

² Grierson vol. III, Part II, 1903, p. 1 ff.

³ Gait, Report on the Census of Assam for 1891, p. 224, cf. Grierson vol. III, Part II, 1903, p. 5.

⁴ Gait p. 242 f.

⁵ Guha 1937, p. 138.



Fig. 11. Boro: Weaving woman.

their terminological habits, and collected information on the life-cycle: pregnancy, childbirth, childhood, wedding, and marriage, but I mainly focussed my attention on religious problems.

In the ordinary Boro house, built of wood, bamboo, and jungle grass, the kitchen is a holy room with three altars for the housegods. One of these altars is for the goddess Mainao, whose husband Bathau has his holy tree, the Siju (*Euphorbia splendens*) outside in the courtyard. The Siju is encircled by sticks of bamboo, where at many ceremonies an altar for Bathau is arranged, and on ceremonial occasions sacrifices and offerings are made to minor gods on a row of small altars, built from the kitchen wall to the Siju. The Siju and the Bathau play a very important role

in Boro ceremonial life, and occur repeatedly in the myths and legends.

The Boro pantheon, comprising more than twenty gods and goddesses, some of whom have a demon-like character, can be divided into two main groups: the house or family gods, and the village gods.

Three types of persons act as intermediaries between the supernatural powers and mankind:

1. The *ojha* (male) acts as an exorcising doctor by consulting his nine cowries about the wills of the supernatural powers. He knows the medicines, the herbs, and the proper treatment of patients, and he controls the mantra by which he can hurt and even kill enemies.

2. The *deori* (male), of whom there are three kinds:

(a) The family *deori*, who is the leader of the ordinary festival ceremonies of the family, is selected by the *ojha* among the members of the family, and instructed by him.

(b) The village *deori*, who is the leader of the common village ceremonies, may be selected by the villagers, but as it is an exacting task to be a village *deori*, it may be difficult to find someone who is willing. In that case a gathering is arranged, and, through an ecstatic performance, the *deodini* (see below) will disclose whom the gods have selected to be the village *deori*.

(c) The *baman deori* (*baman* = *brahman*) is selected by the villagers, but must belong to a particular *hari* (clan). He performs the purification ceremonies in case of unchastity, adultery, killing of cows, etc. Disasters and misfortunes are supposed to be punishments for secret adultery not propitiated.

3. The *deodini* (female) is selected by the *ojha*, who requests the gods to give her their initiation. There is only one *deodini* in each village, and she acts at the selection of the village *deori*, at certain religious festivals, and as a doctor, falling into ecstasies during her performances.

The following descriptions are short summaries of collected material concerning some festivals and ceremonies:

1. The New Year Festival is celebrated about April. The *deori* bathes, puts on new clothes, builds the Bathau altar in the

courtyard and arranges a row of banana leaves with rice as offerings to the gods, while other altars are arranged in the kitchen. He prays to the gods, stating that the people have sold their jewelleries in order to make sacrifices. Then he sacrifices a chicken before each banana leaf, both outside and inside the kitchen, and sprinkles water on the banana leaves.

Next day a ceremony in commemoration of the dead is celebrated. Banana leaves are placed in the courtyard for each deceased member of the family from grandparents down to the present generation, and the *deori* puts some pieces of meat and some rice on each leaf, mentioning the name of the departed person. During the following five days they make merry.

2. The Rice Harvest Ceremony in May—June comprises performances not only for the harvest, but also for the tools and the oxen. The *deori* arranges the altars as at the New Year festival, recites a prayer with invocations of the gods, and stating what the people have given to them, he requests the gods not to forget them and to give them peace.

In the evening the head of the family places the tools used in the fields in a row, puts some rice and vegetables on banana leaves before the tools and thanks them ceremoniously because they have not hurt the people during the work. He states that they now give this meal to the tools, and requests them to eat it. Then he goes to the oxen that have drawn the plough and gives them some bundles of paddy, saying that the people have given gifts to the gods and to the tools, and that they now give gifts to them, too.

At the rice harvest ceremony in December a similar ceremony is performed.

3. At the Spring Festival in February—March the *deori* makes arrangements almost similar to those at the New Year festival, but on this occasion the goddess Buli Buri is specially approached. The *deori* sacrifices hens, praying in the same way as at the New Year festival. They paste the east side of the entrance door with rice-powder and water, make merry and dance while knocking their elbows against the west side of the entrance door until a hole is broken. This is greeted with loud shouts of joy, and they indulge in merry wine-drinking and dancing.



Fig. 12. Boro: Corner of courtyard with the holy Siju (*Euphorbia splendens*).

4. The shepherds celebrate their own festival Kherai in March. They collect rice, wine, chickens, and eggs from the villagers, take it to the grazing field and build a Bathau altar with a branch of the Siju as the centre. All the religious persons are invited with singers, drummers, and flute-players. The *deodini* sits on a chair in front of the altar, a sword is stuck into the ground, and the *deori* offers milk, rice, and leaves of grass.

5. Suppose a man has got too little rice in his store; he then consults the *ojha* if Mainao has abandoned him. In case the *ojha* agrees, the *deori* and the *deodini* are invited, and a ceremony is arranged. The *ojha* invokes the gods, calling them by names, and recites a long prayer about Mainao, while the assembled people circumambulate the place singing.

During the performance the *deodini* on a sudden becomes possessed by Mainao, jumps to her feet, runs to the river, and dives into its waters. When she reappears she has in her hands something from the river bottom, e.g. a snail. The *deori* receives her and sprinkles her with some drops of water in order that Mainao may leave her again.

Once more the *ojha* invokes the gods, the *deori* sacrifices chickens, pigs, and goats and sprinkles drops of blood on some leaves with gifts to the gods. The ceremony ends by a saluting of the gods and happy merry-making. The snail is given to the head of the family, who keeps it in the kitchen under the ceiling.

6. About June the Ceremony for the Menstruation of the Earth is celebrated by every family. They cleanse their houses and their clothes, and plaster the Bathau altar with fresh mud. The *ojha* invokes the gods, and the *deori* sprinkles water on a chicken and sacrifices it, while the walls of the house and the members of the family are sprinkled with water. Afterwards they drink.

7. In January the Cowherds' Festival takes place. The cowherds collect rice and eggs from every house, gather in the evening near the river, eat the eggs and the rice, and set fire to a big pile of wood. They sing a song with blessings of their benefactors and curses of all those who have maltreated them during the past year.

8. Long purification ceremonies are performed in cases of adultery and incest, if a man kills a cow, if a man has eaten meals from non-Boro people, and if a Boro marries a non-Boro.

Boro Material Registered.

The calendar: names of the months, the weekdays, divisions of the day, phases of the moon, points of the sky, some stars. — The religious calendar: festivals of the year. — Nutritional conditions, meals. — Society and its divisions. — Life-cycle. — Three autobiographies. — List of personal names of men and women. — Names of gods and goddesses. — Seven plays and games.

Myths and legends: Traditions concerning the origin of the great families. — The legend of Bao Buli Rajah. — Myth concerning the origin of the gods. — The myth of Mainao.

Folklore and tales: The story of Mauria Kumar. — The story of Adi Budi. — The story of the king's minister. — The story of how the moon got its spotted face.

Prayers, rituals, songs, etc., taken down in Boro language with a word-for-word English translation, a current English translation, and commentaries: Prayer from the New Year Ceremony. — Prayer from the Rice Harvest Ceremony. — Recitation from the Rice Harvest Ceremony. — Two songs from the Mainao Ceremony. — Recitation from the Cowherds' Ceremony. — Blessings from the Kherai Ceremony. — Wedding ritual. — Ritual for sick person. — Purification ritual in case of incest. — Purification ritual in case of adultery. — Ritual from the initiation of a new *deori*. — Saying concerning Bathau. — Love song. — Three children's songs. — Some proverbs.

Collections of material culture: (Rev. A. Kristiansen has presented the National Museum with a good collection of material culture from the Boro, and I therefore only made supplementary acquisitions) about 40 specimens.

About 200 photographs.

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