Chapter IV

Introductory Remarks:-

Sense of rootedness to a place is an essential hallmark of a traditional culture. If the culture happens to be a tribal culture, then the place assumes significant role in shaping up the world view of the community occupying the place. One of the important ways in which humans establish their relationship with a place is in the way they name the place. Thus place names assume great importance in understanding the history, culture, customs, manners, behavior and way of life of a people. Place names and the oral history surrounding them in that sense can become a formidable area of inquiry. The Tiwa place names undertaken not only throw light on the way the Tiwas as a community behave but also add to the narrative of migration, settlement and engagement with reality.

In the engagement with everyday life, a society faces certain challenges which may not be met with ordinary responses. As a result, heroes are born, their praise sung over periods of time and they become celebrated through songs and legends. In Part II of this chapter, an attempt has been made to look into Tiwa oral sources which contain narratives of legendary heroes. Some of these heroes are as follows: Jongal Balahu also called Jonalkhitri or Jonal Porukh, Mohan Phador, Budhbor, Hebera Lalung, Bhibi Kamar and so on. The legendary heroes capture the folk imagination of the Tiwas and their exploits are recounted in legends and lore which form part of their oral narrative.
Since the Tiwa history has largely gone unrecorded, the myths and legends associated with places and heroes are scattered across the Tiwa habitat in the living memory of the people. The Tiwa experience with literacy has been a recent phenomenon dating back only to the end of the beginning of the last century. The historical references to the Gobha kingdom and the *Sato Rajya* and *Pancho Rajya* have certainly brought place names like Gobha and Raha to the fore in terms of their currency in the popular imagination. Same can be said of historical figures like Jongal Balahu or the participants in the Phuloguri *dhewa* of 1863 who were tried and sentenced in the Nowgong Court. But most Tiwa places and legendary heroes have been confined to the folk imagination of the Tiwa people. Even among the Tiwa people, these place names and heroes are alive only in the extremely localized context. The mythic origins of many of the places and their significant are lost for people outside the localized context. In the discussion that follows in this chapter, an attempt has been made to collect and present the myths, legends and stories of localized places and heroes.

It is very difficult to come across dedicated studies directed towards place names and legendary heroes. However, Tiwa place names are briefly discussed in, *Textile Tradition of the Tiwas of Assam*, a research-based book by Thunu Kalita (2013) in which the writer deal with Tiwa places in terms of their population in a district wise study where certain villages are named. Cultural historian Sarbananda Rajkumar has a couple of pages devoted to the discussion of the Tiwa habitat in his work (Rajkumar:2000:487-488). Sharma Thakur mentions names of the Tiwa villages that includes the villages of Dhemaji and Jorhat districts, besides its main concentration in Nagaon, Morigaon, Kamrup Metro and Karbi-Anglong districts of Assam and Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya (Sharma Thakur:1985:12).
Discussing Tiwa Place Names:

The way a place acquires a name is determined by a number of mythological, historical, biographical or even whimsical factors. A place may have a mythic origin implying the fact that in one primordial moment of mythological past, a group of people may be struck by the novelty of an action, a phenomenon or a climactic moment which may give birth to the name of a place. A place may also have a historical origin implying that in one moment of history of the people, that group of people may choose to commemorate the significance of the moment by attaching a name to the place and the place may be known by that name. A place may also have a biographical origin implying the fact that a particular person of great heroism or leadership may inspire the group of people living in that place to name their habitat after his name. Again, a place may be named by a particular group of people for the most arbitrary of reasons born out of the most commonsense considerations.

Tiwa Place Names with Mythological Origin:

Gobha:

Of the numerous myths connected with the name of Gobha, the anecdote narrated by Phulsing Maloi Kunwar is the most comprehensive. Here is a reproduction of the anecdote: ‘according to myth, three brothers of royal lineage, namely, the Gobharaja, the Khemraja and the Jetharaja, were born inside a cave at Tin-Mokhlong. All three brothers grew up playing with each other. In course of time they were tired of staying there and decided to come out from the cave through the three exit doors. The Khemraja took the western door; the Jetharaja took the southern door whereas the Gobharaja, the eldest of them, took the eastern door. Before leaving Tin-Mokhlong, there was an agreement among them according to which no one could look back. Because, if any of them did so, he would become subordinate to the others. Being the eldest, the Gobharaja could not control his patience. Out
of his affection for his brothers he looked back to know their whereabouts. This was the breach of agreement. And for this violation of the agreement he had to pay the price of being subordinate to his brothers. He left the two brothers and started his journey alone when he was guided by a crow. The crow after reaching a certain place started shouting ‘Kuwa-Kuwa’. The king thought that it was the place that he should stay and make the seat of his kingdom. He named the place after the crowing of the crow ‘Kuwa-Kuwa’ as’ Kuva’, and from Kuva it turned into Gobha”.

Reportedly, as the king was coming from the guha i.e. the cave, the name of the place, where he halted became Gobha from guha. It is noteworthy that Tin-Mokhlong is a stone-barricaded cave-like lake source of the Umrangshu river located at Jayantia hills of Meghalaya. Informant Suhansing Maloi Kunwar opines that Umrangsu is popularly known as the Gobha River in the Tiwa habitat.

**Dimoria:**

Informant Ramesh Kunwar narrated a myth on the origin of the name of Dimoria. His narration was corroborated by Babul Pator, another informant from another village of Dimoria kingdom. According to the myth, the people of Dimoria discovered a prince on the top of an erect and massive rock beneath a huge dimaru tree. The people could recognize his royal lineage. On an auspicious day, they anointed him as their king. The association of the prince with the dimaru tree was responsible for the naming of the Dimoria kingdom (the myth is discussed in detail in Chapter II).

**Sahari:**

According to informants Surendra Nath Kunwar and Mahendra Manta, the kingdom of Sahari is believed to have been carved out of the old kingdom of Tribeg in the midst of three currents or rivers i.e. Kapili,
Barapani and Haria. The boundaries of Tribeg were Kapili and Barapani in the east, Khala kingdom on the west, Kolong on the north and Karbi hills on the south. When the legendary king Jongal Balahu (14th C E) established his sahar (capital) at Bagariguri with fortification of ditch and ramparts, the kingdom came to be known as Sahari from the word sahar.

Khala:
The name Khala, attached to one of the four main kingdoms of the Tiwa habitat seems to have been named after the physical deformity of the founder of the kingdom. According to oral traditions, narrated by Subhen Bordoloi the founder of the kingdom was one Khala. The meaning of the word Khala is deaf in the Tiwa dialect. As the person was deaf, he was identified with that particular word. The name Khala might have been the nick name of the king, and he was popular with that nick name not only in the Khala area but also in the hills too. The name of the kingdom was also named after that name as Khala, which in course of time was corrupted as Khala. The name Khala became so popular that even the paddy fields and jungles of the area were named after that name of Khala, like Khala pathar, Khala bon etc. The hill people called the kingdom as Khala naling which means the Khala village in the Tiwa dialect. The founder king of the Khala kingdom was from Moshrong kul (clan) and hence the royal clan was known as Moshrongwali. Khala and his followers had migrated to their Khala habitat from Bar-Amli of Karbi hills. The informant further said that elderly people in the area still hold the view that there was a Harikunwari of the Moshrong kul who was married to Khala. By virtue of that wedlock, Khala became the king of the Harikunwari's kingdom. It is believed that Khala was a mighty and capable man and he managed all the affairs of the kingdom with utmost efficiency. He took the title of Deoraja, the title of the traditional Tiwa kings of the Datiyalia kingdoms.
Neli:

As regards the genesis of the name attached to the Neli kingdom, there is a popular legend that has been discussed in detail in Chapter III. According to the legend the name Neli derives from Nilraja, the first king of the kingdom.

Silchang:

According to informant Subhen Bordoloi, the Khala king constructed a venue of a royal court with stone plates as its seats for sitting arrangement for the officers. He did it on order of the Jayantia king, the suzerain of Khala kingdom, in his visit to Khala along with the Gobha king, the immediate master of the Khala kingdom. Hence, the name of Khala became more popular as Silchang, means the plate form of stone than Khala. (There is a myth connected to the construction and is discussed in the legendary heroes part of the same Chapter as Pun and Apun).

Morigaon:

According to a legend told by informant Mileswar Pator the king of Boghora used to live in a place called Dhuisinga. The place in course of time took the name Rajagaon after the residence of the king. The king had to abandon the place temporarily in favour of Bhurbondha, due to marimorok (large scale famine and death) caused by an epidemic. But the king liked the place very much. Therefore, he did not leave it forever. He returned there after the condition became normal and conducive for rehabilitation. Ultimately it became his permanent residence. The place later on came to be known as Morigaon ("Mori mori huwar babe Morigaon" or village after death). This legend testifies the origin of the place called Morigaon.
**Raha:**

The popular oral tradition on the origin of the name of Raha as narrated by informants Mahendra Manta, Sarat Ch. Pator, Bolairam Senapati, and Mileswar Pator is connected to the legendary Tiwa king, Jongal Balahu. According to the myth it was the place where he halted for some time, when he was on run to save his life after facing defeat in the hands of the Kacharies. The meaning of the word *raha* is to halt or to stop temporarily. Historically, it was the seat of the Ahom. Records indicate that most of the Tiwas residing in the Kolong-Kapili valley migrated during the reign of the Ahom king Jayadhwaja Singha. Jayadhwaja Singha directed the Barphukan (Ahom general) to make a settlement under the jurisdiction of the Rahial Baruah. Rahial Barua established three Tiwa kingdoms in the Raha area. Those three were Topakuchi, Barapujia and Mikir. Again, during the reign of Rajeswar Singha (Ahom king), two more Tiwa kingdoms were established further east of Topakuchi. Those were Khaigarh and Sara. These all five constituted the *Pancho Rajya* of Raha. Since the Ahom officer had to set up a station at the new place under the supervision of the Borphukan at Guwahati, the place came to be known as Raha (literally, resided or was stationed) and the Ahom officer was designated as the Rahial Baruah.

**Saragaon:**

As recounted by informant Gamaan Kunwar Saragaon was the eastern most Tiwa kingdom established by the Ahoms. It was constituted with three villages, Saragaon, Kotohguri and Bagara-at. The boundaries were Sarabeel on the east, Ranthaoli on the south, Khaigarh on the west and south and Kolong on the north. Sara in the local dialect means highland. When other places in the surrounding areas were inundated during summer, Saragaon remained immune from floods due to the fact that it was
sufficiently high. The king made this village his capital and named it Saragaon.

**Gariapukhuri:**

As reported by informant Durgasing Pator it was customary for the *garia*, people of Islamic faith belonging to the Neli area to have an audience of the Gobharaja. The *garia* people after being granted the royal audience used to pray for the wellbeing of the king and his subjects. After completion of the Id-ul-fitr namaj performed by the faithful, the Gobha king used to offer them rice, pulses and a young sacrificial bull. The *garia* people then organized a community feast beside a pond at Gobha. Because the *garia* people used the pond for their cooking and eating purposes, the pond became popular as Gariapukhuri and the nearby place also used to call as Gariapukhuri.

**Silphata:**

Concerning the origin of the name of the village Silphata, informant Rabindra Bordoloi narrated a myth based on the local lore as follows:

“There is a cave like rock at Silphata' where Hayenthal is located. Hayenthal was the traditional royal granary of the legendary Tiwa hero Jongal Balahu. Adjacent to the cave like rock, there is another mass of rock believed to have been formed from the piles of paddy heaped over a long period of time. People of the nearby villages regularly frequented the hill for their usual errands like hunting wild animals and gathering firewood. But the people were being harassed by a resident evil spirit. This evil spirit used to sleep by the daytime over the big rock and used to unleash unspeakable misery during night by killing and devouring members of the community. To get rid of the evil spell of the spirit, the villagers started to pray *Fa Mahadev*. *Fa Mahadev* was pleased with the propitiation offered to him by the villagers became angry and threw the *brajapat* (thunder and lightning)
from the sky upon the evil spirit who was then sleeping over the rock. The evil spirit was killed and the rock over which he was sleeping was split asunder and took the shape of a cave. As the rock was cracked or split, the place came to be known as Silphata, *sil* means rock or stone and *phata* means cracked or split.”

**Jonbeel:**

The writer collected a number of oral accounts from the informants of different areas on the origin of the name of Jonbeel. Informant Jursing Bordoloi recalled that Gobha king Jonsing was a powerful and ambitious king who extended his kingdom in a series of campaigns. In the course of his campaign for expansion of kingdom, he had to halt on the bank of a *beel* (swamp). The view that the *beel* presented was quite impressive. The shape of the beel resembled the rounded shape of the full moon. The Tiwas refer to the full moon as *jonai*. Therefore, king Jonsing named the *beel* as Jonaibeel. According to the informant, *jonaibeel* is now-a-days called Jonbeel.

Another version of the account was narrated by informant Mileswar Pator. Pator’s version is as follows: “Once Gobha king Pantheswar went out to visit his countryside to assess the condition of the subjects. He also had the added duty of inquiring about the condition of some places in his kingdom. In one of sojourns of the tour, he ordered his camp to be pitched in a place near a huge beel. The place where he rested presented a delightful sight. He also observed that the beel was shaped like the *Purnimar Jon* (full moon). Therefore, he named it as Jonbeel, as it resembled the *jon*.” The informant again said that king Jonsing organised a *mela* (fair) on the bank of the *beel* which in later times became a regular affair.

The popular memory on the origin of the name Jonbeel, as prevailed in Kandali area and narrated by informant Baliram Bordoloi is that the name
Jonbeel is derived from Jongal Balahu, the legendary king of the Tiwas. He was also called Jonal Porukh and was given the Dimasa (Kachari) princess in marriage by the Dimasa king. The informant said that the Dimasa king organised a mela in a place where the Jonbeel mela is held, in honour of Jongal Balahu. The mela came to be held regularly in later times. The mela was called Jongal Balahu Mela to commemorate the name of his chivalrous son-in-law.

**Kothiatoli:**

It was collected from informants Baliram Bordoloi, Jeton Deuri and Rabindra Bordoloi that the popular oral tradition regarding the name is connected with Jongal Balahu, the great Tiwa king. This area was his plot of sowing paddy for transplantation. *kothia* means seeds and the *toli* means the plot. In this regard a lore is narrated by informant Jeton Deuri as follows: “Once a Kachari king and the Tiwa king Jongal Balahu were engaged in a spur over pulling out seed plants of paddy from under water, which were sown under water and not visible from the ground level. In the spur, the Kachari king was roundly defeated. He had to forego his claim over the plot of the nursery to Jongal Balahu.”

**Origin of Tiwa Place Names with Traditional Craftsmanship:**

**Komarkuchi:**

As informed by informant Rajita Maloi Kunwar it was the place of the Harikunwari of the Gobharaja. The word *komar* means the blacksmith and *kuchi* means village. The village had a concentration of blacksmiths, who made iron implements. These implements included war materials like *langkhui* or the sword, machetes, spears and cannon balls.
Amswai or Umswai:
It was pointed out by informant Sidu Hukai that *am* in the Tiwa language means bamboo mat and *amswai* means decorated bamboo mat. The people of the place were skilled in the craft of bamboo mat-making. Hence the village they lived was called as Amswai. It is known as Umswai also. In Umswai, on the other hand, *um* is a Khasi word which means water and *swai*, that is a Tiwa word which means sand. It was the original seat of the Gobha king.

Origin of Place Names with legends:-

*Molankota*:
The village of Molankota is located in the Raha area on the bank of the river Kolong. The myth related to the name, narrated by informant Mahendra Manta is as follows: “During the days of the *mlang* (the Burmese, as they are called by the Tiwa), the villagers deserted their village in fear of the advancing marauding group of *mlang* soldiers. The *mlang* were very cruel and the story of their cruelty had already preceded their arrival in the area. Most people fled for safe destinations before their arrival to the area. But in the commotion one pregnant women was left behind to fend for her. She delivered a baby on that day and with the infant she could not go nor could she be carried by others because of pregnant state. As anticipated, the *mlang* came to the village in the evening. They found the village a deserted one except for the lone woman and the newborn.

The *mlang* invaders demanded meal from her and asked some meat to be served with the meal. But there was no animal of any kind to be slaughtered for the meat. At this, the heartless *mlang* soldiers demanded the meat of her infant baby. The poor woman was forced to butcher her baby and prepare the meat mixed with *maan kochu* (a species of wild arum that was even not eaten by the pigs in normal circumstances). She served meal to
the beastly soldiers who were fast asleep as soon as they could satiate their appetite with the meat of the infant. The lady now dared to pick a dao (machete) and separated the necks of the mlang soldiers from their body one after the other. Next morning when the villagers returned from their hide out, they saw what had happened overnight and the story of the brave woman spread all around. From that point of time the village came to be known as Mlangkota (chopper of the mlang), and in course of time it took the corrupt form of Molangkota and then Molankota as it is now known as.”

There is a slightly different version of the same myth as told by informant Sukhen Bordoloi. According to the myth, the brave woman was not a mother but pregnant one, who was left in the nabara or the barghar at the mercy of the gods when the enemy soldiers arrived. Before deserting the village, the villagers had stored the foodstuff collected from the community including zu or rice beer in the barghar. So the pregnant woman need not cook anything. When the soldiers arrived and demanded food she mixed the zu with the paste of eri (castor oil pant) and dhuturaguti (thornapple) and made a deadly potion. After consuming the contaminated potion of zu, all the soldiers lost their consciousness and fell down. It was then that the brave woman killed each one of the mlang soldiers.

The eminent Tiwa cultural leader and our informant, Bolairam Senapati, offers a totally different version of the origin of the place name of Molankota. According to Senapati, “The Lalungs called the Ahoms as mlang. The mlang had a settlement on the other side of the river Kolong. They had their cultivation there, which was sometimes damaged by the cattle of the Tiwas living on the other side of the river. Once when a group of Tiwa people went there to herd their cattle back, they were captured by the Ahoms. The Ahoms killed all the cowherds. As the people were killed by the mlang (Ahom), the place where it occurred came to be known as
Mlangkota (cut by the mlang), which in course of time took the corrupt form of Molankota as it is known today.”

**Rantholi:**

As recounted by informant Dhupsing Kunwar and Gaman Kunwar, Rantholi literally means *theatre* of war. It is near Saragaon, where Lakhmansing Senapati, Bhibi Komar and Hebera Lalung of the *Phulaguri* *dhewa* fame gave a clarion call to the Tiwa people to unite against the oppression of the British officer Singer. It is a historical fact that the then British Commissioner of Nagaon was ambushed and killed by a huge group of Tiwa farmers under the leadership of the three leaders mentioned above. Rantholi was never witness to the actual rebellion but the exhortation to the people to join in the uprising was made from this historical village. Hence the name Rantholi came to be associated with the village.

**Namgaon:**

Informant Probesh Dekaraja and Milenai Senapati informed that the village Namgaon acquired its name from the cultural practice of *joranam* for which it has been famous for over a century. *Joranam* is a competition of songs by young singers particularly at the time of harvesting. This is a kind of a duel of teasing songs, sung by the young boys and girls of the community in groups. The teasing songs have erotic overtones and are performed in confined situations where the entry of the aged members of the community is not encouraged. According to local belief, as said by the informants, the people of this locality are experts in the performance of the song recitals which were laden with magical powers. Local lore has it that the power of the songs could even mesmerize elephants and tigers. Here elephant and tiger represent the might and courage respectively. Because of the expertise in the *joranam*, the area became famous as Namgaon or the village of *nam*. Before being called Namgaon, the area was called Khahigar.
The story behind the name is that once some people were coming to the eastern side of the village in search of the state of Khaigarh near Raha. They mistook the place to be Khaigargh. As they called it Khaigargh by mistake, it became famous as Khahigargh as they pronounced Khaigarg as Khaiggar.

**Mortem:**

It was recollected by informants Chatrasing Darpang, Jursing Maslai and Sarbosing Maslai that Mortem is a vast hilly area in the Karbi hills on the Amsoi and Ulukunchi road. It is named after a legendary hero named Mortem. The hero was also popularly called Mortemkhitri. *Khitri* means a mighty hero. Mortemkhitri was a *Zela* and known as Mortemzela. He had a long-standing dispute with Amrikhitri or heroes belonging to the Amri area. As regards his prowess, he was credited with eating stone for food. Informants reported that when he defecated, the stone boulders passed out like pellets of bullets from his rear.

One day, when he went to pass motion his rear was secretly hurt by an arrow. He died an unceremonious death. The informants again said that the Loro of the *Amkha khel* was rich too and took birth over the packets of paddy and donated the paddy to those who pour water over him. Nafit, one of the messengers of Mortemkhitri informed Mortem about the richness and generous quality of the *Amkha Loro*. Then Mortem asked him to pull out one gush (stock) of paddy which the *Amkha Loro* could not do even with the help of an elephant. At this clash of supremacy between two the *Loukhumi* was suffering and she and family decided to leave the place and fled, only one blind aunt of *Loukhimi* failed to go. They tried to prevent *Loukhumi* from leaving the place and for that they created a barricade in the form of a rampart which came to be known as *Mindai ali*, but did not succeed. It is said that from that time the place Mortem has poor production of paddy.
Origin of Place Names with Natural Features:

Bherakunchi:

Informant Babul Pator gave the following account on the origin of the name of Bherakuchi. According to him, Bherakuchi lies in Dimoria area and is believed to be the first capital of the Dimoria kingdom. It literally means a filthy village. *Bhera* means a place which is damp. The soil of the area is very soft and that never dries out in any season of the year. There is another version narrated by Pator regarding the name Bherakunchi. *Bhera* is supposed to be the corruption of the word *bera*, which means barricade. Once it was the capital of the kingdom, when the *bera* was made or barricades for reasons of security of the king and his family. Because of the *bera* or the barricade, the village became popular with the name of Bherakunchi. The word *kunchi* is means a village.

Bamforgaon:

Informant Ramesh Kunwar pointed out that the word *bam* means high or shallow which is free from inundation. The village is situated on a high land. It is said that animals like deer, wild buffalo etc from the neighbouring area used to come for shelter at the time of seasonal floods from low-lying areas submerged in flood water.

Dahali:

Informant Sigrab Pator informed that the word *da* means low or deep and *ha* means land. Dahali is a low-lying village, located on the eastern border of Neli kingdom. The village is famous for the *Sima than*, where the worship is done by the Karbi *Loro* of Pachalaghat.
**Thengkuchi:**

Informant Baliram Bordoloi recounted that the Thengkuchi village is located in a low-lying area. Earlier there was no access to the village except through a muddy approach across the paddy fields. People used to pull their lower garments like *dhuti* (male lower garment) and *mekhela* (female lower garment) to the upper parts of their legs from being wet. The word Thengkuchi consists of two words i.e. *theng* means leg and *kuchi* means to shrink or to pull, and hence it is Thengkuchi.

**Meruwagaon:**

It was recalled by informant Ratneswar Bordoloi. The word *meruwa* in the local language means wrapping. In this part of the kingdom of Tetelia, the river Kolong takes too many sharp curves. The meandering river seems to entwine the land of the area. Therefore, it is believed to be called Meruwagaon.

**Andherisal:**

Informant Mahendra Manta said that Andherisal lies in the In Sahari kingdom towards the Karbi hills. The word *andherisal* means a place engulfed in darkness. Andherisal is surrounded from all sides by the hills. Therefore, it remained dark even during daytime. During the time of Burmese incursions in the 19th Century, people of the locality used it as their shelter against the Burmese. It is believed that a large number of people died due to starvation at that time.

**Mowlang:**

Informant Sidu Hukai informed that Mowlang is a village in the Tiwa habitat. It is a Khasi word and its meaning is a village of stones.
**Kraithagla:**

Informant Sidu Hukai told that the word *krai* in the Tiwa language means village and *thagla* means bald. The meaning of the word is a barren or unproductive village.

**Gorongkuchi:**

As informed by Durgasing Pator, Gorongkuchi is a village under the Gobha kingdom. The Shape of the village is like that of a bamboo pipe which is called *gorong* in Tiwa. The name Gorongkuchi got attached to the village because of its peculiar shape.

**Makhaguri:**

According to Harsing Amchong the people of Makhaguri village were originally from a village in the hills called Natral. They migrated to live on the foot hills of Mukunder. *Makh* means beneath. The village was established on the foothill, thus began to be referred to as Makhaguri meaning village of the foothills.

**Jakhoishila:**

It was informed by Lakhikanta Deuri that there is a low lying area in the midst of the Dumura hill known as Jakhoisila. The shape of the village is believed to resemble *jakhoi* (a fishing implement made out of bamboo and used by the womenfolk only). The village is swampy in the sense that water in the fields never dries up even in winter. Jakhoisila is also known for a wild variety of paddy that grows naturally in the low-lying swamps. This stretch of paddy field belongs to the community and it is harvested collectively with full observance of rituals. After harvesting the paddy of Jakhoisila the community members celebrate the *Lokhumi* puja.
**Pittipaleng:**

Informant Sarat Pator reported that Pittipaleng is a Tiwa word and the meaning is low lying area. It is a dead channel of the river Kolong, where the Tiwas of Topakuchi and Barapujia made their first settlement.

**Origin of Place Names after Animals, Birds and Reptiles etc:-**

**Kasojan:**

Informant Chanakya Kunwar and Chandra Kanta Bordoli reminded that the Kasojan village is on the bank of a *jan* or sub-channel of the rivulet Sonai, known as Barjan. In the olden days, this stream would be marked by the *jan* on the act of coming out of *kaso* or tortoise in shoals during the first flash monsoon waters in the rainy season. The people of the nearby villages would catch the tortoise in great number for consumption. Since the villagers hunted the tortoise, the village as well as the channel came to be known as Kasojan and Kasomari respectively.

**Waguri:**

Informant Sigrab Pator recounted that the people of the Waguri village are migrants from Bar-Amli. They found the place abundant with *wa* (pig). Therefore, they called the place Waguri. The *wa* or pigs were perhaps wild. Initially, the people of the village did not have any deity to worship. Then they became devotees of Mahadeo and started worshipping him in the name of Korok. It is because of the Korok puja that the neighbours of the Waguri village started to call the village as Korok.

**Khaigar:**

According to informant Sarat Ch. Pator this village was a seat of three *thans* (shrine), and Kesaikhaiti was one of them, where regular
worship of the goddess was held with full earnest. The shrine was taken very seriously by the people as a potent one. Once a gar (rhino) entered the shrine and created havoc by destroying valuables and chasing away devotees from the place. People called the rhino as sahial or the brave one and from sahial gar the place came to be known as Sahialgar. Khaigar is believed to be the corrupt form of Sahialgar. Khaigar was a thriving rural hub in the Tiwa kingdom under the Rahial Barua and one among the five Rajyas or kingdoms of Raha.

**Baduli Khurung:**

Informant Rabindra Bordoloi reported that Baduli Khurung is in the Chapanala hills. Baduli means bat and khurung means a hollow in the tree or stones. According to local lore, one of the big rocks in the hill had a hollow formation where thousands of bats used to reside. There are many myths associated with Baduli Khurung in the folk imagination of the area.

**Misa Kunguri:**

As reminded by Chatrasing Darpang misa in the Tiwa language means tiger and kunguri means den. This place belongs to the hills at Mortem where members of the Maslai clan used to live in clusters. They changed the name of the village from Misa Kunguri to Maslaikhunji in course of time.

**Thourakrai:**

Informant Khodarsing told that Thoura in Tiwa means crow and krai is village. There is a stream near the village, where once a crow was cut to death. This cruel act is referred to thouratonati. So, the bank of that stream became famous as Thourakrai.
Origin of Place Names after Plants:-

**Polahguri:**

It was collected from informant Sigrab Pator on the origin of the name Polashguri. He said that when Nilraja, the young brother of the Gobharaja, escaped from Gobha, he took shelter in a place which was located on the eastern bank of the river Gobha or Killing. The place bore a beautiful look, because it was filled with the *polas* (butea or bustard teak) flowers blooming with a riot of red colour. The Polash is called the flame of the forest. Nilraja was quite fascinated by the blooming ‘Polash’ trees because they added great touch of beauty to the natural surroundings. He made it capital of the kingdom and named it Polashguri The word Polahguri is the corrupt of Polashguri.

**Kotohguri:**

Informant Dhupsing Kunwar told that Kotohguri happened to be the capital of the Sara kingdom. The village is founded amidst groves of *kotoha bah* (the spiny bamboo) The local lore has it that during the Burmese incursions, in order to get rid of the atrocities of the Myanmarese soldiers, the Tiwa people of Sara kingdom shifted base to this bamboo grove. *Guri* in local language means bottom of a tree or the part of the trunk of a tree just above the ground or proximity.

**Topakuchi:**

According to informant Sarat Ch. Pator the word Topakuchi means the village of cotton and cotton cultivation. This place is at Raha proper, and it happens to be the first Tiwa kingdom in the Raha area. Informant Bolairam Senapati gave another account of the name. He said that the word *topa* derives from the word *thapa*, which means bush plants and *kuchi*
means village. It means the village of bush plants. Being the first Tiwa kingdom under the Ahoms, Topakuchi is credited with organizing the *Bihu mela* before it became a practice in the other kingdoms.

**Khumrai Khare:**

As informed by Jursing Maslai the village is in the Mortem area which is full of *khumrai* trees. The exotic name of *khumrai khare* also has a botanical origin. Khumrai means *nahar* in Assamese and gamble in English. *Khumrai* is a sacred tree for the Tiwas. During the festival of *Sagara* the *Samadi* is decorated with its branches. Another informant Jursing Bordoloi told that *khumrai* wood is used for posts to raise the building of *Samadi*.

**Origin of Place Names after Caste, Community, Cluster (*khel*) and Clan (*kul*):**

**Markhangkuchi:**

Informant Nadiram Deuri recounted that the settlers of the Markhangkunchi were originally from the *Markhang kul* of the *Magrowali khel*. They first migrated to the place from their habitat in the hills. The place name was given after the name of the *kul*. The village is located in the midst of Jagiroad town and it has become a village with mixed population with people from all castes and communities, but the name has stuck to the place.

**Gariajuri:**

Informant Rabindra Bordoloi reported that Gariajuri is a small canal running through a Tiwa village with the same name. The story behind the village is that the *garia* people of nearby area of Panikhaiti and Borghat dug a canal to provide respite to the area from drought. That canal later on
became known as Gariajuri' and village through which it runs also came to be known as Gariajuri.

**Nibokali:**

Nibokali is believed to be named after a middle-ranking Burmese commander who died here. Rabindra Bordoloi was the informant of the data.

**Mikirbheta:**

It was recounted by informant Mileswar Pator that the word Mikirbheta has two parts mikir and bheta. Mikir is an ethnic tribe of Assam, now called Karbi. They live in close proximity with the Tiwa people. The word bheta means to check or prevent. A group of Mikir people migrated from the hills along with the Tiwa people who were believed to have been prevented from settling down beyond the place that came to be known as Mikirbheta.

**Kachari Khonda:**

Informant Mileswar Pator informed that it is a ditch near the Sahari fort. It is believed to be dug by the Kacharis at the time of their attack on the Tiwa king Jongal Balahu. The word kachari is to identify a particular ethnic tribe and khonda means to dig. This place is connected with the reminiscence of the freedom movement. Hemoram Pator dedicated his life here for the cause of nationalism.

**Tiwa Jonthon:**

Informants Hadon Maslai and Nagen Amshong recollected that the village was originally inhabited by the Karbis. They acknowledged the people of Ulukunchi as their Guru. They were later on adapted into the Tiwa fold. The Karbis were originally from a
place called Chinthon, which they changed to Jonthon from which the place acquired its current name.

**Ulukunchi:**

Informants Hadon Maslai and Nagen Amchong narrated a myth on the transformation of the name of the village Ulukunchi from Gurukunchi as follows: “According to a local lore, the people who came from the Fat-Magrow area of the hills and settled in the present village of Ulukunchi were very wise and learned people. All of them were very cultured and learned as regards their traditions and customs. They were called and recognized by the people of the neighboring villages (including Tiwa Jonthon where the Karbis lived) as the *Guru* and as it was the village of the *Guru*, it was named as Gurukunchi. Later on it became famous for the *ulu* (a species of thatch) available in abundance in the village. Therefore, people started to call the village Ulukunchi instead of Gurukunchi.

**Bar-Marjong:**

Informants Harsing Maslai and Dipsing Madar recalled the following account on the origin of the name of the village Bar-Marjong. “There was a tribe in Meghalaya known as Norjong who lived in this area. They left the area for reasons not known. The Tiwa people then migrated to live here after being deserted by the Norjongs and they called the place as *Norjong*. Later on the word *norjong* got corrupted to Marjong and the place came to be identified as Marjong instead of Norjong. Much later, the Tiwas from this area migrated to the plains and settled down in a place which they called Saru-Marjong. The original Marjong then was referred to as Bar-Marjong. The words *bar* and *saru* in the local language imply great and small in terms of numerical strength but the two words in the present context probably imply the old and the new *Marjong*. Bar-Marjong was the seat of the *Harikunwari* of the Gobharaja, when he lived at Amswai. It is the original
place of the Amkha khel and all the Amkha clan members show their allegiance to the customary officers residing in Bar-Marjong”.

**Legendary Heroes:-**

It is true that the Tiwas do not have a tradition of recording their history in the written form, nor a well-developed oral form to capture the events of the past in terms of songs, ballads or legends. The present researcher came across references made to a particular oral form called the ‘goith’ during field trip but was unable to trace the existence of the said oral form. However, the numerous interactions with the informants in the field yielded a narrative of the past which somehow approximates a historical account. This historical account is marked by the Tiwa endeavour to migrate internally and search for settlement. Interesting point about the Tiwa history is that in the story of their migration as well as settlement, the Tiwa people do not seem to inherit a unifying narrative that would bind them together as a race or a tribe. Instead, the narrative is more indicative of a search of particular exogamic cluster of clans seeking settlement and defining their symbiotic relationship with the habitat which the cluster of clans chooses to make as its own. It was observed that only in the modern times, say, towards the mid-1950s onwards, that the Tiwas began to assert their identity as a tribe or a nation.

This search for a new consciousness and identity resulted in fresh reorientation of the past. The exploits of the past seemed now to be driving force in the redefinition of the Tiwa identity from an exogamic clan-oriented one to a ‘nation’ oriented one. It is in this context that the legends about heroes (*jatiya bir*) assume great importance. The legends about the heroes that the present researcher has collected are from the field and these legends are mostly specific to a particular clan cluster. There are, however, two exceptions. Firstly, the legend about Jongal Balahu cuts across clan limitations and becomes a legend of the whole Tiwa community. Secondly,
the legend about the peasant leaders of the famous Phulaguri dhewa is of fairly recent past and widely reported in written records, encomiums and panegyrics. A description of the legends of the heroes of the Tiwa people as a source of oral history is presented below:

**Jongal Balahu:**

Informant Mahendra Manta recounted the following narratives on the Tiwa legendary king Jongal Balahu. Jongal Balahu was a devotee of goddess Basundhari and worshipped in the Basundhari than (shrine). He said that legend has it that he received the famous langkhui (deo langkhui or divine sword) by satisfying Goddess Bhagawati or Jayanti Devi. Langkhui is also used to mean the sacrificial sword (balikata dao, the machete for sacrifice). It is said that this divine sword rendered Jongal invincible. He is credited to have conquered all the territories of the neighboring kings including that of the powerful Kachari king of his times (the name of the Kachari king is not mentioned). The defeated Kachari king in desperation for revenge conspired against Jongal and gave his own daughter in marriage to Jongal to acquire secretly the strength of the great hero. After getting married to Jongal, the Kachari princess came to know that so long as the deo langkhui was with Jongal, nobody could defeat or harm him. She also came to know that if Jongal, armed with the langhui, went to war after having meal of parboiled rice, nobody could defeat him. After receiving all the secrets of Jongal's invincibility from his daughter, the Kachari king instructed her to steal the sword secretly, and not to cook rice on the day of attack on Jongal by the Kacharies. Jongal's wife, the Kachari princess, stole the magic sword and dispatched it to her father. She did so by hiding the sword inside a big cat fish which was caught at Silbhet, from the river Kopili. Laced with the magic sword, the Kachari king declared a war on Jongal. The Tiwa King Jongal Balahu was taken aback by this new development. He asked his wife to cook rice and rushed to the holy arsenal to complete the holy rituals of the
Divine sword. But to his astonishment he found out that the magic sword was missing from the decorated sheath. He then asked for the meal of parboiled rice. But to his utter disappointment his meal was not served. He entered the kitchen and discovered that his wife was boiling pebbles instead of rice. Now everything became clear to Jongal. He realized that it was his own wife who was indulging in the act of treason. He became angry and severed the head of his wife with the sheath of the magic sword. He rushed to the battlefield to face the Kacharies. He fought valiantly but was no match to the Kacharies without the deo langkhui and an empty stomach. Jongal was defeated. He fled from the battle ground by taking the course of the river Kalang. He halted at a place which came to be known as Raha, took a meal at a place known as Chapormukh, came to his full sense in a place called Jagi. The Kacharies went after him and killed him with a spear called mokal bahar jathi (spear made out of a species of bamboo called mokal) at Kajolimukh. Kajolimukh means folded palms over the mouth. It is said that Jongal gasped for his breath and struggled to drink water by cupping his palms on his mouth (kajoli means palms together and mukh means mouth).

Coupled with this legend about the death of Jongal, there is another lore that is popular. This lore was narrated by informants Mileswar Pator and Santanu Bordoloi. According to this lore, "Jongal's mother once cursed her own son to the effect that one day he would be compelled to become gomukhi (bovine mouth) caused by extreme thirst. Such a day would come when Jongal would have plenty of water all around him but would not be able to drink water even with cupped hands. It is said that Jongal was the son of a non-Tiwa king Arimatta who ruled over a state west of the Tiwa kingdom taken away from a Tiwa lady, probably a Harikunwari, with whom he had illicit liaison. Arimatta went back to his own kingdom after some time, leaving his Tiwa wife there. Being the son of the Harikunwari Jongal became the king of a Tiwa kingdom. It was Jongal who is credited with
constructing his sahar (capital) at Bagariguri and fortifying it with ditches and ramparts. He used to worship both at Mahadeosal than and Basundhari than. It is said that he satisfied goddess Basundhari who gave him the boon of the famous langkhui (machete or sword). After getting the deo langkhui (divine sword), he became almost invincible and carried out a series of successful military campaigns and conquered the territories in all the directions. Before the start of the campaign when he met his mother for permission and blessings, she advised him not to go to the west without explaining the reason, because, Arimatta, his father, was still ruling on that side, whose identity was not divulged to Jongal Balahu. Lest there should erupt a fight between the father and the son, Jongal’s mother tried to prevent him from going to the west. But Jongal was unrelenting. He saw no reason to halt his military operations. He ignored his mother’s advice and attacked the western boundary also and fought with Arimatta. Both father and son without knowing each other’s identity fought in the battle till Arimatta’s death. Jongal severed Arimatta’s head and took it to his mother as a war trophy. Jongal’s mother mother was deeply pained and told her son at her wit’s end and told him that it was his father that he had killed. She then cursed Jongal that he would have to drink gomukhi (bovine-like mouth) at the time of his own death as the hands that killed his father would cease to function.

Informants Mahendra Manta and Rabinda Bordoloi informed that Jongal Balahu was very fond of eating dishes made from fish. In order to indulge in his hobby of catching fish, he constructed a stone dam over the river Kopili, in a place which later on came to be known as Silbheta (sil means stone or rock and bheta means to check or dam) to fix a chepa (bamboo made fishing implement placed in a narrow water current). For the construction of the dam, the stones were carried from the hills on bhar (a pair of bamboo baskets tied to a pole to be carried on the shoulder). One
such bhar of stones fell down and stone boulders were scattered all over the place.

There are many variants of the myth of Jongal Balahu. Some of these myths are more specific than the narrative given above. According to one variant, collected from informant Baliram Bordoloi, is as follows: “Jongal was also known as Jonal Porukh and was born out of the wedlock between Arimatta and the Tiwa princess Ganga. Ganga kept Jongal in the dark regarding the true identity of his father and sought to prevent him from a direct confrontation when Jongal was planning an expansion of his territory towards the western side of his kingdom. The defeat of Arimatta, the severing of the head of the defeated father and the presentation of the same to the mother are also recounted in great detail in the myth. The Kachari king in the narrative presented above who managed to kill Jongal through dubious means is specifically referred to as a Dimasa king. The princess who was given in marriage to Jongal was part of a conspiracy hatched by the Dimasa (Kachari) king’s chief counselor Dhanbar Mudoi”.

The stone boiling episode recalled by informant Mileswar Pator is immortalized through a ballad called Monikunwar Akhyan or Geet. In folk conversations, the adage “Jongal Balahur ghainiyekor bhat randha disa neki” is a recurrent refrain commonly used by the Tiwa people thus referring to the stone boiling incidence reflecting the insensitivity and cruelty of wives towards their husbands. The cruelty with which Jongal was killed is also in folk memory in numerous allusions to the way he died. According to belief, when he died, Jongal’s skin was peeled off with the sharp-edged leaves of birina grass, as was recounted by informant Baliram Bordoloi.

According to informant Sarat Pator, Jongal Balahu is regarded as the greatest hero of the Tiwa people. He lives in folk memory as a benevolent ruler who set up the capital of the Sahari kingdom at Bagariguri and fortified
it. He is also known to have founded many settlements in the Kandali, Kothiatoli and Basundhari areas. He is also credited with digging numerous ponds in the Tiwa habitat in places like Bamuni, Kandali and Kothiatoli for the benefit of his subjects. These are his places of activities and it is said that most of the place names of the area are connected to his activities.

**Bandardewaraja:**

The following myth on Bandardewaraja, the legendary figure of Mokoria village of Neli was collected from the informant Sigrab Pator, and the narrative of the myth is as follows:

"There was a strong, energetic and generous person named Bandarrewaraja who lived on a stone in a jungle near Mokoria village before the creation of the Neli kingdom. He was domineering by nature and nothing was possible to be accomplished without his knowledge and permission. He protected the people of the locality both from enemy and wild animals. He also practiced black magic and witch-craft and was well versed in traditional medicinal practice. Once, the villagers of Mokoria wanted to dig a *dung* (canal) to harvest water from the neighbouring hill. However, the matter was not intimated to Bandardewaraja. This act of supposed omission infuriated Bandardewa. So he prevented the work of digging by the means of black magic. He created some magic stones alongside the *dung*. The villagers tried their best to remove the stones from the *dung* but all their effort went in vain. The villagers then realized that it was because of the black magic of Bandardewaraja. They begged pardon for not taking permission from him to dig the *dung* and requested him to be generous to them. But he was so infuriated with the villagers that he refused to allow the digging. Then his own brother advised the villagers to kill him. The villagers made several attempts to kill him but failed. At last, Bandardewa himself told the villagers that if they really wish to kill him, then they must look beyond the conventional weapons. He himself gave the
secret of killing him. He asked the villagers to build one bow with the slice of a piece of bijuli-bah (a species of a bamboo) and an arrow of kohuwa-bon (Tall thatch like plant). The people then went according to the tips of Banderdewaraja and killed him. The digging of the dung then became possible. He was arrogant and man of word. He felt humiliated for not being given the due respect by the villagers in terms of building the dung but realized that the construction of the dung was really important for the village. So, as a man of word and authority, he maintained his position by preventing the work, but as a generous and kind person he allowed it at the cost of his own life. His name is taken with humility and honour very often by the people of the area even today.”

_Mohan Phaador:_

Informants Harsing Amchong and Dipsing Madar recounted the heroic episode of Mohan Phador. They said that Mohan Phador was a khitri. The word is used in the Tiwa language to mean hero. He was originally from Lumphoi of Meghalaya. He was worshiped as Botolmaji. He wondered everywhere to help the people by teaching them the ways of leading a good life. Once, a demon in the shape of a huge snake came to swallow the entire villagers of Bar-Marjong. Nobody dared to stand up to the snake demon. Mohan Phador came forward and with the help of his huge langkhui, killed the snake and saved the villagers. It is said that Mohan Phador was appointed as commander by the Gobha raja. After killing the demon he went to Lumphoi but he left his mark over Bar-Marjong.

_Pun and Apun:_

The following legend of Khala kingdom was narrated by informant Subhen Bordoloi:

“Once, the Jayantia king paid a state visit in the kingdom of Khala with the Gobha king. He saw that there were huge stones in great numbers
lying around the place and asked the Khala king to prepare seats from the stones for the royal court. Since Khala was a subordinate kingdom under the Jayantia kingdom, the king also set a deadline for the seats to be made from the stones. The Khala king ordered his subjects to carry and collect stones, but his subjects were unwilling to carry out the orders from the king. It became a matter of grave concern for the king because if he failed to accomplish the project, it would be a loss of face for him before the Jayantia and the Gobha king. The Khala king was so worried at this that depression became visible on his face. He had two loyal servants named Pun and Apun. They were observing the sorrowful face of the king. After much hesitation, they asked the reason for the king’s worry. The king then explained everything to his servants. The two servants took it upon themselves to accomplish the task of making stone seats. Pun and Apun then began the painstaking work collecting and carrying the huge slabs of stone to the designated site. They finally managed to finish the work well within the stipulated time. The seats were like *chang* (platform). As the seats were made out of *sil* (stone) and in the shape of *chang* (platform), the place came to be famous as Silchang. Pun and Apun are remembered for their endeavour and hard work in the Tiwa community.

**Budhbar:**

Informant Rabindra Bordoloi recounted that one huge sword and two shields, made out of the leather of rhino are ritualistically preserved in the *barghar* of the *Amshi* clan of Thengkuchi village. The war materials are said to used by one Budhbar, who was believed to be a lieutenant of Jongal Balahu. As reported by the informant Budhbar was a capable warrior, who was made the local commander and administrator by Jongal Balahu. The villagers of Habigaon celebrate a festival in the time of the *Bohag Bihu* named *Parumisawa* where they used the sword and the shields as a part of the reminiscence of the local hero.
Heroes of Phulaguri Dhewa:

On the 17th of September, 1861, thousands of peasants of Phulaguri and neighbouring areas assembled in front of the Nagaon Deputy Commissioner Lt. Herbert Scones and held a protest demonstration. The demonstration was in protest against the imposition of income tax and agricultural tax on such items of household utility as betel nut and leaves, timber, cane and bamboo, thatch and reeds available in the open clearings of ordinary farmers' land. The Deputy Commissioner rather than giving the peasants a patient hearing used force to dispel the gathering of the peasants from his office premises. The peasants met again in the same venue on 9 October, 1861 to press for their demand of lifting of the taxes on the agricultural items but the Deputy Commissioner refused to accept the demands. The leaders of the peasant demonstration then called for a Nowgong District-level Raij Mel or a conference of the peasants on 15 October of the same year. On the day of the meeting of the Raij Mel the police arrested most of the leaders of the agitation. Next day, the peasants were humiliated by the Assistant Commissioner led by Lt. Singer. The lathis of the peasant leaders were snatched away and they were mercilessly beaten. The peasants in retaliation beat up the police party led by Lt. Singer. "The police mohurrer reported that under orders of Singer he had bound up the hands of two men and Singer himself had endeavoured to seize the lathis of one Moria Singh. While both of them were pulling the stick in opposite direction, the two men whose hands were tied, asked their fellowmen if they were going to desert them. Hardly had the mob raised their sticks to reply in the negative when one Bahoo of Koashipur (i.e. Hatigarh) mauza fell down Singer to the ground by single blow on the head. Of those mentioned in the murder, the mohurrer mentioned names of Bahoo, Kati Lalung, Thomba
The peasant uprising of 1863 is popularly referred to as *Phulogurir Dhewa*. Most of the peasants were from the Tiwa community. There are numerous lores and legends regarding the uprising among the Tiwa people. It was reported that as many as nineteen peasants were killed in the police firing after the death of Lt. Singer. The injured in the firing were left to die. Most of the peasants were taken into custody. Dead bodies were left on the site of the demonstration for days on end. Putrefied stench from decomposed bodies emanated from the site for weeks. Finally, the bodies were allowed to be handed over to the next of kin. The dead bodies of the peasants were taken to a nearby swamp and cremated. The swamp is still existent and it is called the *Pora beel* of burnt swamp.

Post-riot, the British-led police force unleashed a reign of terror on the people of the Phuloguri-Raha area of the Tiwa habitat. Lakhmansingh Lalung, Rongbor Lalung, Lakhmansingh Deka, Rupsingh Lalung, Sibsingh Lalung, Narahari Lalung among many others were imprisoned and a trial was held in the Nowgong Court. Lakhmansing Lalung, Rongbor Lalung and Lakhmansingh Deka were found guilty of high treason against the state and hanged to death in the Nowgong prison. The other peasant leaders were given life imprisonment and sent to the Andaman Circular Jail.

Lakhmansing Lalung was from the Kotohguri village of Phuloguri area. In the popular imagination he is referred to as Lakhmansing Senapati. There are ballads, legends and myths woven around the names of the Phuloguri rebels among whom Lakhmansingh is celebrated with fulsome praise:

*O hoi! Kaiguri gaonore*  
*Sokotir tulona O naie*
(Meaning: O hoi! The mighty dear Lakhan Senapati of Koiguri village is not comparable. Once you have cut pieces of immature betel-nut, you have beaten the drum, oh yes! Where have you gone today? Oh my dear! You are hanged along with Sangbor and Rangbor, you have sacrificed your lives for the cause of the country, immortalizing your fame forever.)

Concluding Remarks:-

Tiwa place names and legends about heroes contain critical information about the history of the Tiwa people. Since the Tiwas do not have a tradition of recording their history in the written form, the place names and legends about heroes serve as important sources of oral history. In the discussion above, it has become abundantly clear that as far as place names are concerned, there have emerged certain patterns which the people must have followed in naming their places. These patterns are mentioned here as part of the findings in this chapter:

a) Tiwa place names with mythical origins: Place names like Gobha, Sahari, Neli, Khaigar etc are a throw-back to a mythological past and therefore are important sources of oral history.

b) Tiwa place names with professional guild: Place names like Komarkuchi and Amswai indicate the prevalence of a particular
traditional profession in a particular place and are therefore important sources of oral history.

c) Tiwa place names with specific features of the natural habitat: Place names like Gorongkuchi, Bherakuchi and Andherisal reflect specific unique feature of a habitat and therefore can be important sources of oral history.

d) Tiwa place names with heroic myths: Place names like Molankota and Mortem are commemorative of the heroic deeds of a leading personage of that place and are therefore important sources of oral history.

e) Tiwa place names indicative of the symbiosis between humans and the animal and plant kingdom: Place names like Kasomari, Waguri, Dimoria and Gomariati reflect the intimate relationship between the Tiwa people and their habitat and are therefore important sources of Tiwa oral history.

f) Tiwa place names reflective of the dominance of a particular cluster of clans, caste and community: Place names like Markhongkuchi, Tiwa Jonthon, Mikirbheta and Gariajuri reveal the control of a particular group of people over the habitat and therefore are important sources of Tiwa oral history.

g) Tiwa place names suggestive of physical features of human beings: Place names like Khala indicate the oddity of human beings and therefore are important sources of Tiwa oral history.
h) Tiwa place names indicative of size or geographical contours:

Place names like Bar Marjong and Hatbor reflect the human tendency to be impressed by the mass or size of the habitat and are therefore important sources of Tiwa oral history.

As far as the legends about Tiwa heroes are concerned, anecdotes, legends, myths and ballads are firmly ensconced in the memory of the people. These forms of verbal art are one of the most crucial sources of Tiwa oral history. It is because of these sources that Tiwa heroes like mythical figures like Jongal Balahu, Mortem Khitri, Pun and Apun and historical figures like the peasant leaders of the 1861 Phulaguri Dhewa are vivid in the memory of the Tiwa people. Together with the place names, these legendary figures help construct a narrative of the history of the Tiwa people.