CHAPTER - VII
the Gorkhas, the Rais and the Limbus have different ritual ceremonies “Kul Pujah” and “Kul Devta” particularly known as God and Goddess by Limbus. The Limbus worship their old grand mother as “Budhi Baju” The ritual of “Budhi Baju” is associated with “Sansari Pujah” and “Devi Pujah”. There is a particular period and also a place for performing the Pujah. The pujah is calling down the rain and there is also sacrifice of a Goat (Bakhra). The Brahmin chanting or read Sabta Sati a story related to Devi. There is also the sacrifice of Pigeon, Goat, Cock etc. at the end of the Pujah and all the people eat the sacrificed animal.

“Chandi Pujah” is performed by the Rais of Gorkha in the month of February or March. Their ritual is also something similar with the Limbu but they had a ritual dance programme.

In the Gorkha community in every festivals they prepared different food items. Some of them prepared vegetable foods and fruits and some other also prepared fish and meat. During the Pujah, all the members of the Gorkha family are very busy for the arrangement of their ritual ceremonies as well as preparation of foods. Their preparation of food takes too much care in order to make the most delicious food.

The practise of untouchability was in vogue in the past and is still prevalent in the villages. However, the educated and urbanized Gorkhas are less concerned with this system. Generally the Gorkhas are Hindus and they follow all the religious practises and rituals followed by the Hindu. According to the Hindu religion when a child is born, one of the primary social and religious function is to perform “Naoran” which means Swasti Pujah. “Vartaman” or “Logun Thangba” in Manipuri for boys and “Kumari Dikhya” for girls are also main ritual for Gorkha community.

In a particular day, the male Gorkha use to put the sacred thread with a ritual function which is known as “Vartaman” like wise giving sacred “Mantras” to young Gorkha ladies known as “Kumari Dikhya”. 
In Kanglatongbi there are two famous Temple or Mandir for Gorkhas. One is the "Shrivishnu, Durga, Shiva" Mandir located at the centre of the Kanglatongbi village and another one is small "Durga Mandir" located inside the Mandir hamlet.

**SHRI VISHNU, DURGA, SHIVA MANDIR:**

It is a beautiful Mandir and built by Laxmidate Bahuguna from Imphal for the interest of the Gorkha of the village and other Hindu communities. Inside this Mandir complex there are two small Mandir. One is for Hanuman facing towards the south and another one is for Shiva linga facing towards the west. The largest main Mandir is facing towards the west and having three doors. However all the doors are fitted in the same big room.

In front of this main Mandir there is a large Mandap constructed by Shri Ramchandra Bagri of Imphal in the memory of his beloved father Tarachand Bagri in 1986. In the middle door, Maheshwor (Burma), Vishnu, Laxmi are worshipped. In the northern door Ganesh, Shiva and Parvati are worshipped and the southern door is specially reserved for the Goddess Durga. The Shiva linga Mandir is the smallest Mandir and Shiva linga is made up of black stone and in the Hanuman Mandir there is a statue of Hanuman. In the northern side of the "Shri Vishnu, Durga, Shiva" Mandir there is a bell to be used at the time of pujah. It was established in 1980 by Samasta Kotwal family. There is a kitchen behind the Hanuman Mandir which is used for cooking purpose. In the centre of the Mandap there is a fire place commonly known as "Jagae" by Gorkha for performing marriage ceremony and a Tulsi moth is situated at the centre of the courtyard. There is a main Iron Gate in western side of the Mandir which is newly constructed and this Mandir is also under construction.

**DURGA MANDIR:**

The Durga Mandir is smaller than the Vishnu Mandir and has only one room. It is made up of mud and C.I. sheeted roof. It opens during pujah festival
for the ten (10) days. The Mandir has a courtyard or Bali ground in front where on
the 8th days of pujah wardgani rite (Bali) is performed.

Although the Durga Mandir is opened only 10 days in a year, the people come and worship there when they are in sorrow, illness etc.

The annual Hindu ceremonies like Durga pujah Shivasthami (Shivarati), Janmasthami (Krishna's birth day) and marriage ceremony and daily rites of the villagers are done in this Mandir. This community mandap is busy throughout the year with ritual activities. Most of the rituals are attended by men, women and children.

There is a committee for this Mandir known as "Vishnu Durga Mandir Committee" to look after the developmental programme and arranger of the pujah festival. This committee is functioning since 1952 onwards. They organized a "Viswa-Santi Bhagawat" purun in 1984 where all the religious minded and pandit were present even from outside the state. There are many other Mandir in Kanglatongbi. All the villagers use to go to the nearest Mandir for worship. Beside this there are various form of rituals practises at the time of Birth, Marriage and Death. The president Vishnu Durga Mandir committee is Shri Churamani Kharel and Purna Bahadur Katwal is the secretary of the Mandir committee.

TIME OF WORSHIP:

The villagers do their prayer three times in a day, one in the morning at about 5.30 a.m. to 8 a.m. and it is locally known as "Pratha-prayer". In the afternoon, they pray to God at about 12.30 p.m. to 1.30 p.m. in the village prayer house and it is known as "Meidhya prayer". Lastly the prayer is done at about 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the evening is known as "Shyam pujah".

Beside this there are main special religious ritual ceremonies and festival of Gorkhas. The Gorkhas also performed many ritual ceremonies of Hindus.
However their ritual items were some what different from others. Some of them are as follows:

**Makar Sankranti**: Maker Sankranti is observed by the Gorkhas of Manipur. Most probably it is held in the month of January. On this day people use to take bath in the morning and sit in the firing place and all the member of the family will eat "Haa" or "Sweet potato" after offering to the God. There is no any ritual programme for them in this ceremony.

**Swasthani Brata**: Another religious ritual called "Brata of Swasthani" generally the women perform fasting for one month. However they take one meal at night. It is for wishing a good and welfare of the husband in their life. After the completion of the pujah i.e. on the last day the married women offer "ek sau aath roti" (one hundred and eight bread) to their husband and unmarried girl will throw it to the river. It is equally important in the fasting on Rishi pachami.

**Nav Varsha**: It is a day of starting a new year (naya saal). It is in the month of April 13 or April 14 on this day they arrange some items of food and eat together. It is like the "cheiraoba" of Meitei.

**Aashar Pandara**: It is a day for remembering their birth in this day they used to rest from the work (not for harvesting) and eat some special items of food prepared from Dahi, flattened rice (chempak). In this ceremony they may sit on individual birth place, and eat that special food. It was perform in the month of July.

**Sharvan Sankranti**: It is the pujah of "nag" (snake) and celebrated in the month of August and people use to go near the water from the place of dryness. They worship to "nag" with milk and rice with flower. By pouring these material into the place they pray to "nag" in order to get prosperity in their life. After items of foods prepared at home, there is no other ritual ceremony.

**Janai Poornima (Rakhya Bandhan)**: It is also a religious ritual for men. Nowadays this ritual ceremony is modify a lot in Gorkha community. They
are not performing this ceremony like earlier period and also not common to all Gorkhas.

**Tholi Akadashi**: It is a type of religious ceremony observed in the month of last week of October or first week of November. On this day the Tulsi (ocimum) moth is decorated with colouring generally few branches of bamboo were erected surrounding the Tulsi moth and garlanded by marigold. All the family members were fasting and worship with Tulsi moth in order to get wealth, prosperity of the family.

**Teej**: Teej festival falls in the month of Bhadra (August-September) Five days festival with religious pujah and pray it is just like "Ningol Chakouba" of Meiteis. Father, brother or any relatives must go to the house of their daughters and bring them to the Masta "father house". The women folk sing the songs before the Teej festival at their home waiting their fathers to come and take her. She could not go if any one of her father or brother does not come to take from her husband house. After coming at her parent's house, she is treated very well and offer her with "Dar" or "Teeja ko Dar".

**Saraswati Pujah**: Saraswati Pujah is celebrated in the month of February. It is the Goddess of Vidya (education) and mainly it was worship by the students in order to get blessing for education.

In Kanglatongbi this festival is organized by the local club for an individual hamlets and some are organized by the school authority. Nowadays it was performed with pujah and different programmes of children entertainment like recitation, monolog, song, drama, dance etc.
Durga Pujah (Dashein): It is one of the famous festivals for Hindus. In Kanglatongbi it was organized by Mandir committee. Durga Pujah fall in the month of October and it was celebrated very nicely by the Gorkhas.

"Dashein" is the local term used by Gorkhas which means "Durga Pujah". Durga pujah is the biggest festival of Gorkha community which is celebrated from "Chaoren houba" day as "Ghastasthapana" in every Mandir of the villages. Chandipath Devi Pujah etc. are main religious function. At evening and night the pujah mandap is full by devotees.

Natak (short play) Kirtan - Bhajan and "Balan" Geet are the main function of the festival upto "Vijayadarshein". In Dashein festival the Gorkhas enjoy with the Balan Geeta at the pujah mandaps:

"Jai Devi Bhairavi Gorakh Nath
Darshan Deu Bhavani
Jai Mata Devi Bhairavi Gorakh Nath
Give me Darshan"

The Durga Pujah festival is continued for 10 days, it is usually takes place in early October, but the actual date for its commencement is determined by astrologers. During this festival women are blessed and brought all maiden home by their brothers. The following are the nature of ceremony during the 10 days of the pujah festival.

In the first day the pujah begins as the Goddess come to earth and this day is called "Pratiprodha". The second day of the pujah is known as "Brahmacharini pujah". In this day Goddess Durga has left her husband Shiva to come to earth i.e. her maiden home. In the mean time she has no marital relationship in a strict sense with Lord Shiva. This day is otherwise called "Dwitiya".

The third day is for “Chandraghata” which means pujah of moon. The Hindu people think moon as a God and worship it. This day is called “Pritiya”. The fourth day is called “Jothi” and Krishnanandan pujah is performed at Mandir. The fifth days is called “Panyami” and in this day a pujah called “Sakynna Mata” pujah is performed. The sixth day is called “Shasthi” and Ktyami pujah bill patra vimatrasan pujah are performed. The seventh day is called “Saptami” and in this day unmarried girls undergo a pujah called Patra Prabeja. The eight day is called Aastami. It is an important day a rite called Wardgani pujah (Bali) which means sacrificing of the animals. For this a small firewood rite (Agni pujah) is done offering fruits, flowers and sweets which are of 5 in numbers. In this rite, 2-8 years old girls are allowed to participate. This night is called “Kaltratri Ratri” and this is performed at the Durga Mandir of the village. The ninth day of Dashein is called “Nabami” and a pujah called Sistri Dhapti pujah is performed. The tenth day of Dashein is called “Dashami”.

During this pujah festival they worship Goddess Durga by offering red flower, fruits, red sindhur, rice, sweets, plantain leaf, sugarcane etc.

_Tika Laonu (Vijoy Dashami/Vijoy Tilak Tika)_: From this tenth day of Dashami, Tika laonu is started and continue upto full moon day. This pujah festival is performed commonly at home or at the pujah mandap. In most of the house of Gorkhas, the head of the family bless their elders for a grand success. They put Tika (making with rice, dahi with sindhur i.e. red powder) on the forehead of their younger. It should be done by the eldest one of the family or relatives. If there is any old aged of our kin, one must go to him or her for taking Ashiribad i.e. “Vijoy Tilak Tika”. The married daughter also use to go with her husband in their maternal house to get such “Vijoy Tilak Tika”.

_Diwali_: Diwali is also known as Laxmi pujah. This festival takes place 20 days after the conclusion of the Dashein<sup>15</sup>. Diwali is the festival of light. In the morning of the Diwali day they performed cow pujah and in the evening after lighting the deep (candle) “Laxmi Pujah” was held. The whole night the men folk, women folk and children were roaming house to house by singing

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<sup>15.</sup> Brook Northey and Morris _CF. The Gorkhas, Mittal Publication New Delhi - 1994. P-78_
"Bhaillo" Geet and "Deushi" Geet to donate money like "Nakatheng" of Meitei in Holi. The owner of the house welcome them with ritual arrangement and give dakshina (money) to them. After getting dakshina they bless the family.

"Laxmi mata will remain for ever in this house children of this house live long like Banyan tree. Children of this house will grow like Tingthou (Dub grass)

**Tihar festival**: It is celebrated in the month of November (Kartik). It is performed for five days, in the first day Crow celebration is done. From each household some capable material are kept at the front lawn of the house, this is done by the elders of the house. In the second day, Dog festival is celebrated, Dog of all village are garlanded and foods are given to Dogs at every house The third day is the Laxmi pujah. The fourth day is Goru pujah or Ox pujah or Goverdhan pujah. On this day just after the day of Laxmi pujha, at morning Goverdhan pujah was performed i.e. Ox is performing pujah and as a continuation of Laxmi pujah (Diwali) and Nakatheng is also continue upto morning with singing song called "Deushi".

**Harvesting festival (Nauana)**: This festival is done in the month of December, only important among the Brahmins, here at the Tulsi moth and near it a fire is lighted and pujah is done in vedic hymns.

**Bhai Tika (Invitation of Brother)**: Bhai Tika is celebrated on the fifth day of tihar festival. On this day married sister invite their brothers and perform the pujah by garlanding with Marigold. They offer a grand feast with varieties of sweets and give presentation to brother inturn Dakshina is given to the sister and hold one night to the sister house, for those persons who do not have sister he may not allow to eat food prepared by his wife even not allow to drink tea but he may call a sister from his locality and if she prepare the food he may eat the food or he may prepared himself and eat. On the other hand if the women have no brother she may prepared garland of Marigold and pray to Banyan tree or Amla or Tulsi with pujah, after completed such pujah she may take food. Bhai
Tika is one of the most interesting ritual ceremony performed by the Gorkhas of Manipur.16

**DRESS AND ORNAMENTS:**

Gorkhas have their own traditional dress and ornaments. Both man and woman use simple items of dress. Some of the aged person in the village still wear their traditional item of dress like Dhakatopi "hat" and Daura-sural "the lower garment" and Gunui "shari" Chhols "blouse" by female. Most of them wear Meitei pattern of cloth or Indian type and modern type specially among the youngsters. As far as the Gorkha women folk, irrespective of ages they do wear Manipuri type of dress while working or in day to day activities.

The women are fond of ornaments, old women and newly married girls wear full sets of ornaments, typical type of Gorkha custom consisting of Godawadi and Marwadi (ear rings), Phuli and Dhungri (nashika), Maugidi (necklace), Pote (special type of necklace), Schur, Aunthi (ring). Generally most of these ornaments are made of Gold. Some youths and educated ladies do not give much emphasis on these sets of ornaments. Simply they wear simple and modified item of this traditionally pattern sets of ornaments.

**FOOD AND DRINK:**

Rice is the staple food of the Gorkha various items of rice products and Dal are use as their main food. On special occasion or in general a few items of traditional nature is still persisting. In festival and pujahs they take "khir" (rice cooked with milk and sugar) "shel roti" a special type of Gorkha bread made out of Moida. It is a circular coiled one after another. For curry they are mostly vegetable eaters but other meat like Goat (bakhara) and Chicken (chala) and Fish (macha) are also special dishes taken.

The most important reliance of the Gorkha are used milk and milk products. At the time of festivals they also take local bured wine (rakshi). Maize.
(makai) is a traditional type of food which is found throughout the year for it is grown in every household seasonally. Such type of food items were taken by the villagers.

In Gorkha Community, there are certain rituals and beliefs related to pregnancy and child birth. During the Eclipse periods the pregnant women is not allowed to go outside the house. She will remain inside the room where the light cannot pass. It is believed that, if she does, the child inside the womb will be handicapped at birth. At the time of child birth, generally local mid wife (Sudeni) are called, and they message the pregnant women. When the child is born the umbilical cord (Nalcalne) is cut off and this Nal is put in the motherland. The Umbilical cord is cut-off a bit longer. Some people also bury a piece of umbilical cord in the cooking place (Chulah). Thus it belief that the child will stay with the parents forever. The mid wife will be presented with sari with Blouse or any gift from the family.

In the 6th day a ritual ceremony locally called "Chaitoun" is performed. It is a kind of worshipping gods like Ashwathami, Bali etc. The child parents along with families will be given a grand feast.

**Name Giving Ceremony:**

Noaran (Swasti Pujah) is done in the 12th Days. The name of the new born child will give by a Brahmin Priest. The name will be given from the first alphabet of the day in which the child is born example if the day is started from 'S' the child can be name as Shyam Kumar, Sushil etc. Inspite of all these the parent can name another one in the recent year. Here also all people assemble at the ceremony and they are given food items.

**Rice Eating Ceremony (Bhat Khailaya):**

In the 4th month, the first food-giving ceremony will be performed. Here Brahmin priest will chant Hymns, the relatives are called. Food, Silver old coins
are put at the place of the Pujah and later on with a spoon (Chadi) will take up rice and feed the child.

**Ear Boring Ceremony:**

In the sixth month period the ear boring ceremony (Nak Kansherni) will be performed. No Brahmin Priest for Rais and Chhetrys rather than Limbus. Some Newar community did not perform it.

**Hair Cutting Ceremony (Sewar):**

This ceremony is performed when a boy child reach the third year. A belief is that the hair of the mother womb is not fair.

**Sacred thread Ceremony (Vartaman):**

At the age of eight or in accordance to the Horoscope 'Vartaman' ceremony or sacred thread. Here, a belief is that they have the right to read the Veddas.

**Puberty Rites (Thietho Longnu):**

Such kind of rites is not prevalent among the Brahmin and Chhetrys. The other groups like the Rais, Limbus takes it seriously. The girls when they reach this (Nashuna) i.e. the first menstruation, the girls are not allowed to look upon the menfolk. Even the girls cannot look at the top of the house. She will be deported to the house of her mothers relatives for atleast a month. Nowadays this system is relaxed a little. For boys there is no puberty rites like this.

**Marriage:**

Marriage is one of the sacred social interrelationship between the members of the community. There are two types of marriage i.e. marriage by engagement and marriage by elopement. In the earlier period, marriage by
engagement was practised in every community. In the Gorkha community marriage by engagement is most prevalent. Marriage by elopement have not performed particular ceremony. Nowadays marriage rituals ceremony is somewhat change from the earlier period. Traditionally it has a lot of religious. For engagement, the father of the boys go to the ladies house. They will produce the Horoscope before Brahmin Priest and if it is agreed in both side, the priest will give a fixed date for marriage, then they performed their marriage with ritual ceremony.

_Death Rites:_

If a person die, the dead body will be kept near Tulsi Plant at the lawn, if it is women, she will be first bathed and the husband will give Tika. But for male such thing is not there. All the males in the family will shave their hairs. The body of the deceased will be put with foot facing away from the house, give pinda (a rice ritual) and the sons or near relatives will carry the dead body towards the funeral place.

Near the funeral a fire is prepared along with the Pujah by the Brahmin known as "Mrityu Agni Pujah". Then all the relative will carry fire round the dead body for three times. Some people used to take a cloth soak with water and put it on the forehead of the deceased and with a bamboo stick the Asti (Astinikal) in taken out. When the dead body is almost burnt, the charcoal is covered by sand and earth. Then all the people will bath in river. On the way back a fire will be set and along with scent and Tilani, all the man will be given food by the women folk but nowadays food are not taken. The death days as well as the second day all the family and relative fast. On the first day a person will go to the stream near by, take a bath, cook the food and eat it himself. On the tenth day, all members of the family take rice only with Ghee and Sugar. Every day as the death ritual is concerned a sand hill (Dhikuro) is made at the funeral place and pujah is done by the Brahmin. In the pujah water is given once in the first day, twice in the second day and so on upto tenth day.
In the middle of the tenth day any members of a family from the village will come and bring rice (Namu Chamel) to the decease’s family believing that the family cannot eat its own grain. After tenth day the mound will be break at 12 O’clock and the special Brahmin will be called locally the “Kato Khane Brahmin” will perform pujah. On the 13th day all the people who attend at the funeral pyre will be given cow’s urine (Gahut). Then a Shradanjali will be given by the people even a kirtan (a religious song) and Gita recital (Gita path) known as Vasta Gita is performed. Then the people will be given a grand feast along with all the members of the deceased family. A difference is found among Limbus that they did Shrada on 4th day and take meat.

**Memorials (Annual death Ceremony) :**

Annual death ceremony locally called “Barkhanta” ceremony is also performed in Gorkha community. In this day a cow is presented to the Brahmin Priest. The cow should be specially brown - colour. The Basik Shrada same as Barkhanda is done and some people read “Bhagawath Path”.

**Christian Sects :**

Few Gorkhas have followed the Christian religion. These are converted from the Hindu religion and they are few in number. The Gorkhas who has converted to Christian are Baptist. They believed Jesus very much and pray with heart and souls. On every Sunday those Gorkha Christian use to go at Church to pray the Jesus for their prosperous life. Nowadays some of them use to go at Church on Saturday instead of Sunday. They observe some festivals like Christmas, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. On Easter Sunday there is a grand feast for all the Gorkha Christian.
For birth there is no any specific function or ceremony. After one or two months the child is taken to the Church by the mother and name is given.

Marriage by engagement is more prevalent where as marriage by elopement is very rare. Marriage ceremony is performed at Church. A day before the marriage, the friends of the bride are invited and there is a tea party which are offered by the bride and friends give gift, to the bride.

A person, if dead at night, all the relative wait till the sunrise. Any dead occurred in the village, the alarm bell of the Church will give a different sound. This sound is quite different from the prayer bell. This sound is commonly known by the people. After listening this sound most of the people were gather at the deceased house. They help in many ways for performing ritual programme. At last the dead body is carried to the funeral place for burry. After finishing funeral, those attending the funeral will be given a grand feast by the deceased family.

There are some beliefs in Gorkha community:

(a) Beliefs in plant and animals:

Plants:

(i) Tetri: A person planting a tetri plant will not be able to eat its fruit.

(ii) Banyan (Bar): A person planting a Banyan tree even if he is not performing shrada at death will get sanctification (Punya).

Animals:

(i) Fox (Shial): If a fox howl then it is believed that a person will die in the village.

(ii) Vulture (Jhide): If a vulture sits at the top of the house, a person will die in the family.
(iii) Crow (Kago): If a crow come in the morning and sits at the branch of the tree some faraway people or relatives will come.

(iv) Dog (Kukoar): When the dog cries, it is believed that some one will die.

(b) Miscellaneous Beliefs:

(i) In the kitchen place if fire makes a sound then guest will come.

(ii) A chilly is never given to another's hand believing that there will be a fight. At times it is not given hand to hand.

(iii) While cooking if a women is seen paint of charcoal on face guest will come.

(c) Beliefs in Dream:

(i) If white clothed Brahmin is seen, shrada should be done for the death people in the family.

(ii) If a naked women is seen at dream a bad omen as like dead

(iii) If the upper jaw is broken elders will die in the house, if the lower jaw younger people will die.

(iv) If in dreams one is eating Kheer he/she will be lucky.

(v) If a person see faeces he/she will get money.

(vi) If there is itching of the palm then wealth comes.