CHAPTER II

SOCIAL SETTING
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The novel is expected to represent, in a certain way at least, life as it is lived in this world. Our world is one of flesh and blood with men and women, with towns and villages, with all that nature offers us. Those who take literature as a mirror of life, especially, would be interested in the social setting of the novels under examination. Jyrwa's novels offer only two types of social setting: rural and urban. Therefore, in this chapter, I propose to examine his works with reference to those settings.

U Kynjri Ksiar, the story is about Juban, the hero, a village preacher who hails from Siah Pongdeng village. While preaching the Gospel from one village to another he accidently reaches Shillong, the State capital.

In Shillong, Juban meets Phylla who sends him to meet Kyrmen, a person who possesses supernatural powers and is the owner of a workshop at Mawkdok village. The author says that the hero buys a ticket from the Cherra bus stop and boards a bus bound for Cherrapunji which after sometime reaches Umtynngngar.
The author fails to describe the size, colour and type of the bus; the number of passengers travelling in it has not been estimated. It seems that there is only one bus bound for Cherrapunji and besides the hero no one else is present as an atmosphere of dead silence prevails.

After leaving Umtyngngar, the author narrates that due to the high speed of the bus they quickly reach Mawkdok and just before reaching the sohbrilong tree under which the workshop is situated and which the hero sees from afar he stops the bus, returns the ticket to the conductor and alights from it. He is filled with joy when he sees the workshop and the people working there (p. 5). After meeting Kyrmen the hero returns with him to Shillong as Kyrmen has some urgent work at the Civil Hospital. The return journey is rather fast in comparison with the outward one. Here the hero and his friend travel by a bus but the author fails to mention whether they travel by a Cherra bus or by another bus and as there are no stoppages on the return journey it seems as if it is some sort of an express or superfast bus because it does not take long for them to reach Shillong.

Though the bus is full of people yet there is absolute silence and it seems as if there was no conductor as the hero and his friend explain the urgency of their
work at Shillong to the driver of the bus who allows them to travel by it (p. 7). On reaching Shillong, Kyrmen, the hero's friend hears the call for the city bus going towards Laban and he goes to it without delay.

On a closer examination, the distance from the Cherra bus stand to Laban is not very far, as one can easily walk there. Maybe due to the shortage of time or the urgency of the work at hand, Kyrmen boards a bus bound for Laban. We are not allowed to know if there are other passengers in the bus as the author is silent on it.

On reaching the city, Juban, the hero is confused as he is not familiar with the streets leading to Mawkhar. So he goes and inquires from two bystanders near a tea stall. Eventually, he reaches the centre of the city and again inquires from the people who are in their courtyards. An old man gives the direction to Phylla's house saying, "down there, the red painted house near the car from which the people are alighting" (p. 8).

The old man who gives the directions to Juban seems to be very curious and talkative as he wants to question Juban as to why he wants to meet Phylla the strange man. The old man tells Juban that he knows from his face that he is a stranger to the city and is full of worries. (p. 8).
The author is right in giving this statement as actually the city folks can always very easily differentiate the villagers. On reaching Phylla's house Juban sees a youth coming out of the courtyard who turns out to be Phylla's son and invites Juban to wait for his father inside the house. By the time he has had kwai (betel nut) and tea Phylla arrives (p. 10).

It is not in accordance with the convention to serve tea without acquaintance and moreover, Juban is a stranger to the family.

The next scene is the welcome of the daughter-in-law. According to Khasi custom, the daughter-in-law is to pay a visit to her in-laws on the third day after the wedding. Jeebon Roy writes:

On the morning of the third day the husband and wife accompanied by the relatives from the wife's side should pay a visit to the in-laws and only after that they can visit according to their convenience.1

1 On that day she is to come with her male relatives and her sisters but not her mother or her aunts and as a mark of respect she has to bring along home made cakes,

fruits and bananas though there is no strict rule for the items to be brought by the daughter-in-law to the in-laws' house. This is always a happy occasion as it marks the beginning of a cordial relationship between the daughter-in-law and her in-laws. Those who stay far from the in-laws house may stay back for sometime if they prefer to do so, and the daughter-in-law is to behave as one of the members of the family and assist the in-laws in domestic chores without waiting for any order. For those who stay close by they may just pay a visit without staying but the same cordial relation is maintained and there should always be a feeling of a close family who are to share the joys and sorrows of life later. On arrival of the daughter-in-law for the first time at their house the mother-in-law is to welcome and bless her so that she is blessed with many children and prosper in life.

The flow of events which according to the novel is to be of joy and celebration turns out to be a sad one due to the untimely and sad demise of the son. The author describes the custom prevalent in the Khasi society at the time of bereavement — Phylla's house is full of people from far and near who come to share their sorrow. Juban becomes close to Phylla and feels it is his moral
duty to share the sorrow of the family and so stays in Phylla's house till the last rites connected with the funeral are over. On the fifth day, after having a bath, Phylla takes Juban for a walk. According to the Khasi custom, bathing by the bereaved family is done three days after the cremation of the body. However, this practice varies from clan to clan, as in some clans it is the custom to take bath one day after the cremation but so far no known clan takes bath five days after the cremation of the body. As this practice is not in accordance with the accepted Khasi custom it needs careful examination. Moreover, according to the novel, the body is buried not cremated so the question of observing three or five days mourning is of no relevance as this period is of religious significance.

The scene of the evening walk describes the beautiful sunset enjoyed after heavy rain on the previous days. The author says that they take a short cut through a lane that leads to the jail. (p. 19).

Juban learns from Phylla that the motive in bringing Juban to the jail is to show him its location. Phylla then points out that the jail is a place where they keep wrong doers like thieves and murderers and predicts that Juban in another week's time from that day will have to
stay in the same jail. Juban cannot rationalise why he is to be thrown into a jail when he commits no wrong, is not a thief or a murderer but only a village preacher, preaching the gospel of God and accidently reaches Shillong, the city (pp. 19-20).

Juban gets up slightly later than usual as he spends a restless night at Phylla's house, being disturbed by the prediction that he is to land in jail. The author describes the morning sky as hazy and cool and gradually as the hours tick by the sky becomes brighter. Here again the element of silence is maintained as neither the wind blows nor the birds fly or sing, there's no human activity or the sounds of animals and insects to kill the silence of the morning.

The time for Juban's departure arrives and he is accompanied by Phylla to the bus station where they part with a handshake. No description of the station, the number of buses, the timings and the routes are given. Moreover, there is nobody around, no passengers except the hero. Like a bolt from the blue a car carrying a loud speaker passes by announcing that there is going to be a public meeting (p. 23). Soon after that he goes to a ghost market to buy snacks for the journey. Surprisingly, the shopping takes so long that by the time he completes
it, it is almost dusk. On reaching the station he finds to his dismay that all the vehicles have left. So silence reigns supreme. In order to avoid the predictions he forces himself to continue with the journey to Sohryngkham (p.23). Then he proceeds on his way by going through a path till he reaches Laitkor. It is a lonesome trek.

At Laitkor by the wayside, he sees two sackfuls of rice and a boy who is passing by calling out to the owner to fetch them (p. 24). A closer examination would make us hard to believe that the author can turn the clock backward because before leaving Shillong city it is almost dusk, and by the time he reaches Laitkor it is afternoon and starts getting dark only when he goes beyond Laitkor.

Juban stops for a while before proceeding to a village called Rynseng and passersby think that he is one of the drunkards. The owner of the local brewed ka

Juban says he is on his way to Rynseng. The character is sceptical of Juban's reaching Rynseng as it is already late. So she invites him to stay with her in that village. Juban almost accepts the invitation but at that very moment he remembers Phylla's prediction and tells her that it is imperative for him to reach Rynseng that very night or early the next morning (p. 24).
When the evening gives all signs like a little away from that village the crows and eagles are seen flying towards the valley. Not far from there Juban sees a group of young cowherds watching the event and he joins them by climbing on to a rock to have a better view and sees that a cow has died, may be by the impact of its fall into the gorge (p. 26). This is the sight that attracts the birds and the boys as always happens in the rural areas but here again no sound breaks the silence of the sunset as the birds do not flap their wings, the cowherds do not utter a word of comment or shout at one another to have a closer view of the event and everything is quiet. The cows which the cowherds are supposed to look after do not come into the picture and everything takes place as if observing a picture book. Only the hero Juban utters some words of pity for the dead cow and then proceeds on his way (p. 26).

As twilight approaches only the silhouettes of the hills are visible. Juban is surprised that he does not come across any village where he can get some food and water. The food which he has received from Phylla's house and those which he has purchased from the market are no longer with him.

The novel tells us that Juban leaves Phylla's house after lunch and the lady of the house gives him
betel nut (pynthe·p kwai) to take with him (p. 22). The time that Juban leaves the house is after lunch which should be before noon and as soon as Phylla bids him good-bye he goes straight to the market to buy food and snacks which is to last till he reaches his destination (p. 23). The time he spends in the market is very long as it takes him from morning to twilight to complete his shopping with the result that he misses all buses. Judging from the duration of time he spends in the market he must have bought a large quantity of food and snacks which should have been more than sufficient to see him to his destination.

To proceed with his journey to Rynseng he walks till he reaches by late night a forest beyond Sohryngkham where he decides to rest for the night. The author mentions that Juban prays to God Almighty during that particular night to protect him from danger and hunger (p. 27). One cannot help wondering where Juban has eaten all the food and snacks that he buys from the market as not even once during the course of the journey does he stop to take food and if all the food is eaten how could he be hungry for there is an instance when he feels that he would die of hunger without the grace of God.

The author further describes that the heroine
enters the scene of action on a pony cart and the dead setting is broken by her arrival. Seeing the heroine coming alone in her pony cart, Juban is filled with suspicion as no lady travels alone, especially at night. This is quite obvious as among the Khasis there are snake worshippers who murder people. She could be a female murderer.

The author describes that the heroine leaves because her husband was killed. Juban asks Sharai, with concern of her destination. She replies rudely by saying that she is just wandering and is going wherever fate takes her. She replies rather invitingly "To Rynseng, get into the cart first" (p. 28). This shows that right from the first moment of their meeting the heroine is in command of the action in the text. If her command is absent, her relatives are.

A strange phenomenon occurs as the hero and the heroine become man and wife just after a very brief encounter. In real life especially in Khasi society marriage cannot take place in the sly. Marriage to the Khasi involves a long process. Though it is a fact that young people have got the right to select or reject their mate, yet before the marriage takes place the consent and blessing of the parents and other relatives is very important. The elderly persons' wisdom helps to avoid what is most dreaded in the Khasi society — incest.
In this context the question that comes to our mind is whether it is a feeling of pity of the hero for the heroine or is it love at first sight? If it is pity it might be after hearing the narration of the sad incident concerning the heroine but the author justifies the action of the hero by comparing his fall to that of Samson at the hands of Delilah. But the fall of Samson is different from that of Juban. As told in the book of Judges:

And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death. And he told her all his heart, and said unto her. There hath not come a razor upon my head for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.2

On the third day after the marriage by accidence, the author shows that the couple could not bear hunger any longer; so the hero goes looking for food. Before going he warns Sharai not to disclose to anyone about their real identity but just to say that they are from Rynseng.

One cannot help wondering how the couple could survive without food or water for three days as the author mentions that it is only on the third day that they feel

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hungry. In the previous chapter the author says that even though Juban had bought a large quantity of food he feels famished after a short while. So how could he have survived without food for three days as stated in this chapter. While Juban goes to look for food and later on when the passersby see them they become suspicious as they are strangers to that place. Being convinced that it is not a safe place for them to live, Juban and Sharai decide to look for manageable rooms to stay temporarily.

According to the novel, the time when Juban goes looking for food is early in the morning. As soon as he returns they start eating but how long it takes the hero to come back from the market is not clear because while eating he worries lest the night should fall. On careful observation it shows that the author is unable to give an accurate account of time and place. If he succeeds it must be a success in adjusting the events with the cost of production which is not a hallmark of a creative writer.

In real life when anyone goes to rent a house he does not expect the house owner to ask personal questions. However, in this case the author shows that the owner cross-examines the tenant right from the very moment they set foot on the property. This clearly shows that
the owner is suspicious of the tenants whereas the usual practice is that before renting a house the owner is to clear all the doubts and not after letting it. It seems rather strange that the owner should try to probe into the private life of the tenants when they are perfect strangers and that also at the very first encounter.

The landlady leaves the tenants only when she gets all the answers to her questions. Before leaving she invites them for dinner but they decline the offer. An urgent need is felt to wash the blood stained clothes and dye them. So Juban goes running to the market to purchase the necessary articles and by the time he returns it is very late as it is already dark. This time the silence is broken by the sound of vehicles, footsteps and the knocking on the door by Juban.

The setting of this story is in the rural areas of modern times but the author does not describe clearly what mode of transport Juban the hero uses while returning from the market. This makes the story not true to life as he misses out on many important details.

Once again the market scene is quiet and the author says that the hero goes out to look for a cheaper garment which he does not get. The author does not describe the
size of the market or whether it is a weekly or a daily market. The only description that he gives is that there is a barber's shop and a foodstall but once again it is a ghost market where the hustle and bustle of a market is missing save for a few sellers, who whisper when he asks for ladies garments.

Chapter V gives a brief description about the lonely night with warning of rainfall and the commencement of a cloudy day. They begin a new day by washing their faces with warm water provided by the landlady followed by tea which surprises the couple. After sometime the landlady sends an invitation to them to lunch with her, which they accept.

On reaching the house they talk for a while. When the table is laid and all is ready the landlady asks Juban to say the grace. After lunch they chat again for a while and casually the landlady asks if they are aware of a murder that had taken place a few days earlier. Before they can answer she says it might just be a rumour as it is not reported in the newspaper.

Chapter VI relates that though it is a very cold dawn yet Juban and Sharai force themselves to start on their journey. They continue on their journey till dusk
when they reach a small village near Shillong. Throughout their long journey they do not come across anybody and everything is quiet. All of a sudden like a bolt from the blue a man and a woman carrying firewood appear on the road. As the couple are strangers they ask them for directions and the description they give is that of the town of Shillong. Juban and Sharai proceed on their way according to the direction given till they reach the top of a hill. From there they clearly see the glittering town. The distance to the town is still far and night is approaching but they continue on their journey till they reach the outskirts of the town and once again they spend the night in their pony cart.

A dark night brings a less frosty morning. The chirping of birds on the pine trees wakes them early. As the day advances it becomes warmer and people from different parts together with cars plying on the roads fill the town once again. The couple's world becomes warmer with confidence as they take shelter in the shadow of the town which is full of pleasures everywhere (p. 53). The author goes on to state that the bell from the Police Station strikes exactly at ten o'clock and is followed by the ringing of the school bells from every corner of the town. It is then that Juban whispers to Sharai to
hand him the golden necklace which he plans to sell in the town.

The description of the sound of the bell from the police station at ten o'clock is misleading. The author once again fails to give an accurate account of the distance from one place to another. If the ringing of the bell from the police station cannot be heard throughout the town then how can it reach the outskirts of the town as the author says. The journey from the outskirts to the town is very vague as it just ends when he reaches a tea stall at Motphran. A brief description of the tea stall is given as it is early in the morning and there are very few customers. Juban goes directly to the shop owner to sell the necklace. To ascertain the exact weight of the necklace the shop owner sends his son to the goldsmith to have it weighed. On seeing the necklace and from the description given earlier by the police the goldsmith at once realises that it is the same necklace which is connected with the recent murder case. As a reward is offered to anyone giving information on the necklace the goldsmith telephones the police. When the police arrive they question the goldsmith about the necklace, who in turn tells them that it belongs to the youth. After further questioning it ultimately leads to Juban the hero. The
policemen then tell Juban that they are on the lookout for a woman wearing the same necklace and who they believe is dead. On hearing this, Juban tells them that the woman is his wife who is waiting for him on the outskirts of the town. So the hero along with the police go together to meet his wife.

While the police are questioning Juban people from everywhere ask about the incident as no one seems to know the facts and all are just assuming as to what has taken place.

On reaching the spot where Juban is to meet his wife, the place is deserted. Juban is then taken into custody. The news about the incident spreads far and wide and even to the landlady where the couple had stayed as man and wife for a short time.

Chapter VII narrates that Juban spends half a day and a hectic night in prison followed by a bright morning. The striking of the bell at the police station at six o'clock wakes him up from his late night sleep. He then remembers that everything is happening just as predicted by Phylla and hopes that his wife will be coming to the court house to rescue him.
The way from the prison to the court house is deserted as no description of life or traffic is given. The author is unable to give a vivid description of the police van or the police party that take the hero to court.

As the trial proceeds, one after the other the witnesses are cross-examined till it is Sharai's turn. Juban hopes that she is going to stand by him and tell the truth, but to his dismay she lies, saying she does not know Juban and his claim that he is her husband is wrong. Juban cannot believe that Sharai can do that to him. Actually Sharai is being forced by her relatives not to let them down. As a result he is sentenced to ten years imprisonment on the charge that he is one of the murderers.

The author throws Juban into prison to show that it is a punishment he deserves as he fails in his duty as a preacher. So once again the hero has to live with the condemned and undertrial prisoners.

The only consolation up to this time is a visit of a friend. Both of them discuss with a heavy heart and
part. While discussing with his friend Juban realises his mistakes. He begs his friend to pray for him. Juban tells his friend that he has made up his mind to seek God's guidance so that his presence benefits the other convicts (p. 66).

Though Juban is convicted on the charge of murder yet Sharai does not get any peace of mind as her conscience pricks her; so through the help of her maternal uncle Juban is set free. Early one fine morning, Shot the uncle of Sharai goes to meet his lawyer friend to find out ways and means to free Juban. So with the help of this friend, Shot frees Juban. The moment Shot reaches Juban's cell he tells him that he has come to bail him out and at that very instant without introduction Juban realises that he is Sharai's maternal uncle, which is rather peculiar.

On their way from Umsohsun to Mawkhar Juban meets Phylla. Juban tells him that Shot had bailed him out and Phylla invites him to visit his house in the evening. For the visit Juban needs new clothes, so both of them go to the market.

While Juban is waiting for Shot at Motphran the description of a busy area is missing except for a newspaper boy. Shortly after, Shot arrives in a jeep. From
Motphran they go to Umphyrnai, so the scene of action shifts once again to the rural area. After sometime they reach Sharai's house when Juban and Sharai are re-united.

On a detailed analysis of the novel one can conclude that the setting shifts from the rural to the urban and then back to the rural. Throughout the novel the scenes of action are completely dead and portrayals are not true to life but misleading.

_U Khain Bad Ka Ngen_ — The action is set in the rural area in ancient times as it mentions places like Iew Mawngap, Lad Wahtham, Lawlyngdoh, Pyrda, Umsohpet, Nonglwai, Ladlynniong, Wah Thapbalieh, Thynroh, Riwar and others, all within Khasi Hills.

It happens in the beginning of Autumn when nature begins to shine with the golden rays of the sun on the flowers, the brooks and the hills and the sound of insects.

Early one morning on a market day Ngen gets up from bed. As soon as she opens the door she is struck by the beauty of the sun rays and the chirping of the birds which fills her with joy. She goes to the Mawngap market with her friends. That market resembles a legendary animals' fare of ancient times where people from far and near came to buy and sell as there were very few markets.
It is in this market that Khain, a son of a well-to-do family, frequents, meets and falls in love with Ngen. We are happy to see life and activity. Since Mawngap is still a small village and the market too is small the description promises a clue: that Jyrwa studied the scene.

As Khain is buying a turban from the store of Kai, Ngen is buying cloth from a nearby shop, the noise of laughter makes Khain turn towards that direction and he sees a beautiful girl that he had seen weeks before. He enquires from Kai about her. Kai tells him that she is Ngen from Nonglwai. Kai calls Ngen to his store and introduces her to Khain. After talking for sometime, Khain promises to return home together because their villages are in the same direction. Many more can go together both for safety and for joy. Besides Ngen, her friend, Dit, also was present in the return journey. We are allowed to see the concern of the relatives of both the girls in that they wait to receive them home. The episode promises of activities.

In this novel we are allowed to observe through the eyes of the author, and hear rather clearly through his ears what are going on. What he sees: flowers and other members of the plant kingdom; places like villages, and houses; the footpaths (no road in the ancient setting);
plantation like paddy, pumpkin, sweet potato and other cash crops, the rising and setting of the sun in the Khasi way of description which is still ptolemaic in both theory and practice are there. We get so many days of action in U Khain Bad Ka Ngen because of sunrise and sunset. Night divides one day from another, much after the Book of Genesis. We get cloudy days, misty morning beside days and nights.

We could also see important characters which contribute to the central theme: in brief the Rynniaw and Sohlyngngem theme. When a girl is frustrated and a boy leaves like a real Khasi youth who can have one wife today and another tomorrow. This sounds monogamous and hence lousy like a harem. It must be clarified that a husband can divorce his wife according to ancient divorce custom and marry another. In Jyrwa's novel Khain is made to suffer for love: sent to the field cheerfully at home; but unlike Juban who is allowed to meet and re-unite with his beloved, Khain stays in another place like an exile. Jyrwa has no relief for his hero though he has allowed him to meet his girl friend frequently and even to promise to marry her. Like Sohlyngngem who suffers for obedience to parents, here the author makes both the lovers suffer.

On the other hand, Jyrwa ends the sub-plot, that
of another pair of lovers (Rang and Dit) to realize their dream of starting a family through proper marriage ceremony according to the Khasi custom. As against the quietness which marks the main episodes in the previous novel, we have in this one other crowded places than the venue of the wedding. We are allowed to hear through the ears of the author the song of a Khasi harpist and the implied meaning for the hero, Khain; in that he would not marry his girl. A song, after all, is only a song for Khain to realize its message later. We are led to the traditional hunting of the Khasis of old and their cantation while bringing animal they got home; also to the harvest when cultivators thrash and winnow the paddy before bringing it to their barn. In depicting a true rural setting in the ancient Khasi society when people walked on foot to any distance the novel is a success. Other considerations in relevant chapters will bring to light more about it.

In U Kyrdoh Mawlynnai the author chooses to take the readers to both urban and rural settings. It must be kept in mind that only Shillong, the capital of Assam, was considered as real urban area before 1981 national census of India. In this sense, Jowai and Tura in Garo Hills were considered rural. Whether or not Jyrwa succeeds in depicting the settings is a point for examination.
We recall that in *U Kynjri Ksiar* also the scenes of action get interchanged; now in urban, now in rural areas. Until the hero comes of age, he is under the care of the Welsh Mission hospital authorities, and later in that of his foster parents. We could discern the sense of responsibility of the hospital authorities for the safety of the baby Bhakupar in the fact that all formalities to that effect are completed by signing of agreement by both sides. Here, we find Jyrwa's interest in the safety of children who are friends of God. Unlike Tiewsoh who allows children to suffer, Jyrwa would shed sacred tears when such episode is allowed in the novel. In this novel, we could see the philosophy that Jyrwa harbours in his mind for children.

The author grants us a free pass to all actions in this novel. We are allowed to see the crowd at baptism of the child-hero that even his real mother stands from a distance to see that her child is blessed by a Christian pastor, after awhile. Of course, because she has deserted the baby for want of money to pay the hospital bill, she cannot claim him. Thus, pathos has a role to play in this particular episode.

As Bhakupar is grown up, he is sent to study medical science in Dibrugarh. He maintains his contact with his foster parents through letters, and occasionally through
personal visits during vacation. It is there in the hostel for the first time that he overhears a rumour that he is no son of his foster parents at all. The scene is quite tense because he begins to feel ashamed of his own identity. His foster mother tries to persuade him not to lend any credence to such rumour. She is successful for a few years, though the question still hangs itself in the mind of both the son and his parents.

The hero in due course, completes his study and is now a doctor in the Welsh Mission Hospital, a name given to the present K.J.P. Hospital at the time the novel was written. As a normal youth, the hero falls in love with a fellow doctor. It is not wrong to be in love and even to get married for even a doctor. So, as an obedient youth, Bhakupar reports his plan to his foster parents. The course of action now changes. In a Khasi society, nobody would venture to allow even an adopted child to get married without first ascertaining his parentage lest an incest taboo is encouraged. If the couple is found later on to have entered into marriage matrimony in the same clan, both stand rejected by the society. Jyrwa has done well in creating an atmosphere of concern on the part of the foster parents of his hero. Accordingly, the engagement is delayed at their behest. He is at last taken
into confidence. He is told that the first task is to find his real mother wherever she may be. Hectic search by both the son, his foster parents and relatives is made in villages wherever his real mother was seen many years ago. Bhakupar and his foster parents need not bother much about his real father. He died perhaps of heavy drinking. Moreover, it is not difficult to know since the father's brother visited Bhakupar's mother in the hospital till he was either posted or transferred to Jowai.

The hero might have become frustrated like Khain in the second novel of Jyrwa; but, as he too is keen to know the truth about his real mother as are many other characters in the novel, he is patient enough to wait for time to unravel the temporary complication in the family. Much to his credit, Jyrwa succeeds in his design to bring the hero's mother. She has been ailing, according to the findings of the doctors in the same hospital. And Bhakupar himself attends to her without even knowing her. Through the help of the chief medical officer, and matron and some elderly nurses, the discovery is effected. It now comes to light that the man who accompanies his mother is the local chief; and her two daughters are his step-sisters. What a joy to be united to a real mother. Is there any sense of loss on the part of the foster parents?
It should not be there. They do not want to get a daughter-in-law and grand children without finding the real mother of their adopted son. Moreover, it is not the practice in the Khasi society to leave the property to be inherited by a son save that the childless couple is deprived of female relatives from the wife's side. Jyrwa compensates the foster parents of his hero at last, by the mutual agreement of both his mother and step-father on one side and the foster parents on another that one of the hero's step sister becomes the adopted daughter of the childless couple.

An atmosphere of happiness prevails at the end of the action. As mentioned earlier, the action begins in Shillong; but happily it now ends also in Shillong.

In U Pyrkhat, the scenes of action are in Shillong in the modern times. Through this novel the author reminds us that life is not a bed of roses but a challenge at every step. In order to get a certain position in life sincerity and hard work with good education are necessary. Man's destiny is in the hands of the Creator; but personal efforts are necessary. The author tells us that Pyrkhat, the hero, is a smart and intelligent high school student who aspires to be a judge. Usually we see that good and obedient students earn the respect and goodwill
of teachers. Possessing these qualities Pyrkhat earns the goodwill of his favourite teacher who turns out to be his guide and mentor right up to the bitter end of the story.

Examinations and their outcome are a part and parcel of education, while success calls for a celebration, failures are met with consolation and encouragement. Pyrkhat, who comes out with flying colours at the matriculation examination celebrates his success with other successful friends in the form of a picnic at Shillong Peak. We are allowed to observe through the eyes of the author the scenes enroute to College which passes through congested places and roads of Police Bazar (Khyndai Lad), Court House (Iingshari), Jacob's Ladder (Law Pomdngiem) and Don Bosco Square (Mot Don Bosco). These places and roads are full of activities lots of fun and laughter. On one instance we see a demonstration being taken out towards the Court and on another occasion a fire brigade van rushing noisily towards its destination. College life is not all study but sports and games, recreation, dramatic arts and more are very much part of it. Accordingly, the author tells us that Pyrkhat and his friends refresh themselves after classes by going over to the Polo Grounds to witness a football match. They also take part in the college func-
tion where Pyrkhat is invited to write a play. Here, once again, Pyrkhat's desire becomes evident as his play is very much in conformity with his ambition to be a judge. It is unfortunate that the author has not yet published a full length play though the skit inserted in the novel shows his own interest in dramatics.

Pyrkhat like Khain in Jyrwa's second novel could have ended up in frustration but being a deep thinker he decides that he could lead a happy and comfortable life if he married a rich girl, preferably a doctor. Maybe this is the reason why Pyrkhat has to pay a heavy price later. The author is successful in finding ways for the hero to meet a partner of his choice. After the college function he meets Bakor, the heroine, who is studying medicine at the Dibrugarh Medical College and is immediately attracted to her. In pursuance of his goal Pyrkhat goes down to Guwahati to study Law and keeps his affair with Bakor alive by an exchange of letters. As expected the author joins them in wedlock in Shillong after completion of their studies. Pyrkhat and his escort walk from Mawkhar to the bride's residence at Laban flanked by inquisitive onlookers on both sides of the road which is quite relevant to modern times.

In order to project his views the author removes the heroine from the scene as we see that she falls ill,
delivers a baby son and later dies. The fact that man has no control over his own life which is entirely in the hands of God is as old as mankind itself and it is folly to think otherwise. Pyrkhat is punished for deviating from this fact, but like any other normal being all he has and seeks is an ambition and an easy and comfortable life. Through this novel the author wants to remind his readers that they should place their entire trust in God and accept His verdict, come what may.

Except for a picnic which is normal in modern life all the activities of the major characters are concentrated in towns like Shillong, Dibrugarh, and Gauhati. A touch of modernity in the author's outlook could have been reviewed to make the characters life-like. We do not know much of the activities at Dibrugarh and Gauhati as we know those in Shillong with which the author himself is fully acquainted.