CHAPTER-2

2.0 CULTURAL AFFINITIES

2.1 Introduction: Racially the Boros and the Rabhas have long years of association. So they have developed certain amount of cultural and linguistic similarities. From the folkloristic point of view, the traits of culture and its ingredient elements have a sociological importance and function to some extent. In this analysis, there are three major areas i.e the oral narratives, the material culture, and the proverbial sayings. Cultural affinities of the Boros and the Rabhas are taken into account as reflected in the oral narratives, material culture and proverbial sayings as a whole.

2.2 The oral narratives: The oral narrative is an important sub-genre of the folklore. It differs from customs, beliefs, rituals and other materials of folklore. Noteworthy is that as the form of aesthetic expression, oral narratives are expressed in words and diffused through improvisation. It remains alive in the context of the folk society. Traditionally it is known as folk-literature or oral literature. William R. Bascom used the term ‘verbal art’\footnote{Bascom, William R: Folklore International Encyclopaedia of Social Science, pp-496-497} to denote any kind of verbal forms of expression. Whatever it is, the oral narrative has its various sub-divisions with different contents and forms. It has three sub-divisions:

A) The verse narratives

B) The prose narratives

C) The proverbial sayings

The verse narratives include various sub-genres with different forms and contents. These are: folk epics, ballads, lullabies, folk songs, work songs, songs associated with the ritualistic and
festive occasions etc. On the other hand, the prose narrative includes myths, fairy tales, jokes and anecdotes, numskull tales, legends, animal tales etc. Besides the proverbial sayings and incantations are also the most important sub-divisions of the oral narratives. Handoo asserted that unlike prose narrative forms and oral poetry, proverbs and riddles don’t show much multiple existence; but are highly structured set forms of oral literature.\(^2\) It is worth mentioning that all these oral narratives are the proper way of folklore and folklife studies.

The Boros and the Rabhas have rich oral traditions and oral narratives of which they are very much proud. In both the societies, the oral narratives are still prevailing in the form of oral tradition and have been transmitted orally from generation to generation. The Boros and the Rabhas possess various kinds of oral narratives which depict different kinds of social picture and profound thought and imagination of the folk-society. It has also a sociological and anthropological significance besides folkloristic importance.

As a major genre of the Boro and the Rabha folklore, the oral narratives are categorised into the following three sub-divisions:

A) The verse narratives
B) The prose narratives
C) The proverbial sayings

It reflects variety of pictures of the folk-culture and folklife of the Boros and the Rabhas. As they are genetically related, both the communities have inherited more similar sort of racial and distinctive cultural features. Inspite of these, linguistically they have also been configured separately a variety of characteristics which differs from each other as distinctive linguistic and cultural community. In this analysis, a comparative framework on the oral narratives of the

\(^2\) Handoo, Jawaharlal: Folklore, An Introduction, p-14
Boros and the Rabhas is to be done to realise the affinities of the folklife and folk-culture as reflected in the oral narratives as well.

2.2.1 *Folklife as reflected in the verse narratives:*

2.2.1.1 *Songs associated with the worship:* The Boros and the Rabhas perform different rites and ceremonies which are still prevailing in the context of the folk-society. The medicine man known as ‘*oza*’ (*oza/ derived from Asamiya word*) in both the languages, recites incantations and charms in the name of the deities. Most of the songs and incantations associated with worships are basically reflection of the folklife and folk-culture of the Boros and the Rabhas. Though the ceremonies and festivals performed in both the societies are not almost similar; but they show certain similarities in respect to the function and purpose of the occasion. It is mentionable that the song and context of the occasions are similar from the functional point of view. For example, the Boros worship ‘*kherai*’ (*k^b^eraï/-a kind of religious worship*) and ‘*garza phuza*’ (*garza pʰuza/-a kind of ritualistic worship*). During these worships, the “*oza*” recites charms for the welfare of the villagers, for their prosperity and good health and also for production of good crops from their paddy fields while the Rabhas worship ‘*Baikho*’ (*baïkʰo/-a kind of worship*) for welfare of the villagers as well as for production of good crops from their paddy fields. They also propitiate the deity to make them free from the evil influences, ailments and all kinds of diseases. The deities are propitiated by reciting charms with the help of the priest and the medicine man. The following is one of the incantations:

```
orihon orihon raisok
renetô renani renetô se orihon
aya ha ha ha hui
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3 Baikho is propitiated as the principal deity of the Rabhas. She is the mother Goddess of the Rabhas.
Meaning: (You are the mother goddess, Great Spirit of this universe, Chief of the heaven, hell and the nether world.)

Thus, during the kherai and the Garza worship, the priest and the medicine man recites incantations to propitiate the deities. The following is one of the incantations associated with the kherai worship:

\[
\text{ohom de k}^b\text{uria burwi k}^b\text{uria bwr}^wi\text{ moharaza!} \\
\text{swrgwaw dono dw}^h\text{wr}^w^m\text{ deu} \\
p^b\text{at}^b\text{alo dono } r^h\text{nu}^s^s\text{ deu} \\
\text{erp}^b\text{ora nai seu} \\
\text{nai seu } \text{bwi } ap^b\text{de} \\
\text{swrgw mwr}^k^w\text{ p}^b\text{at}^b\text{al}^h\text{n}^i\text{ mn}^h\text{z}^n\text{w}^i\text{ dono} \\
\text{nobag raza} \\
\text{ba}^i\text{w}^i\text{ h}^y\text{n}^q\text{ h}^y\text{n}^q\text{ h}^d\text{w}^h\text{b} \\
\text{mumusu maya ba}^i\text{ra ray}^q\text{ p}^b\text{o}^n\text{ha p}^b\text{o}^n\text{ha} \\
\text{dayni giri zw}^q\text{ k}^b\text{emani giri } mn^h\text{ de ap}^b\text{de} \\
\]

Meaning:

(Oh k^buria burwi, oh k^buria bwrai,

In the heaven there is the god of religion.

In the nether world there is the tulsi god.

There is none else to worship but thee,

---

4 Rabha, Biren: Rabha lok-git ar parampara (article), published in the Rabha magazine “Tikri Rao”. 2002
5 Brahma. M.M: Folk Songs of the Bodos. pp-49-50
Oh father,
You are the Nobag Lord of three worlds
BatN^u is said to have five rings of bamboo,
The plant sizv^u of the cactus family
is said to possess five edges
Men have five essential things likewise
We are sinners; you are the forgiver, oh father)

Incantations are also recited during the Garza worship to propitiate the Garza deities. The priest and the medicine man recite charms in the name of the deities. The following is one of the charms which depict the profound devotion and prayer to the Garza gods and goddesses. For example:

w^ym de ap^p wr ap^p wr
m^y^da ap^da ap^da sw^r sw^r d^r
budaru Garza, asu maynaw, sali maynaw
b^frai raza, zw^fnburi, zat^aimara
k^aloimara, gambari, d^w^nsri m^nsri d^n
ayrakh^i bayrakh^i p^p wr d^n
ronp^agli ronp^agla d^n
duhula baza d^n, b^na baza d^n
ar^a dw^naom basi raza
dohay ap^p ap^p wr ap^p wr
......
......
rog biadi dan^e dan^e
k'alamnanwi hynangw

dohay de ap’h ap’wr ayp’hwr

dwmgam.Diagnostics.sur’w dwn

mstu nari p’isap’wrk’wu got’o go’tay lanamwi

mystu mystu may bak’ri lanamwi

suk’h sant’wri rak’inangw 6

Meaning:

(Oh you father and mother,

Who of you are here?

Budaru Garza, Asu Lakshmi, Sali Lakshmi

Bura raza, Jwmyn buri, Jakoimara,

khaloimara, Gambari, Dhanshri and Manashri are here.

Here are their companions too

Here are Rangphagla, Rangphagli, Dhula Baja

and Benabaza and Basi raza are there

... ... ...

We shall protect all

from all dangers and diseases.

Take your swords and shields

and cut into pieces all dangers.

Make the villagers happy and prosperous.

... ... ...

Give them fair harvests

6 Brahma, M.M: Folk Songs of the Bodos, p-48
Give the hungry food
Give the thirsty water
Forgive all our offences
and accept our offerings.)

The 'Garza' is the ritualistic worship of the Boros. It is the combination of different gods and goddesses worshipped in order to purify the village as a whole and to expell the evil deities from the village who may spread dangerous diseases. During the worship some other benevolent gods and goddesses are also worshipped for the good health of the village folk and the paddy field as a whole. The benevolent Garza gods and goddesses are: Lwkhi Garza (/lwykʰi garza/), Asu Garza (/asu garza/), Dhwn khuber Garza (/dʰwn kʰuber garza/), Bwrai raza Garza (/bwrai raza garza/) and others. The 'Bwrai raza Garza' is worshipped as the chief deity among them.

Likewise, the 'Hasong' (/hasɔŋ/- a kind of worship) is also a ritualistic worship prevalent among the Rangdani group of the Rabhas. This worship is a combination of 13 deities of which the 'Darmang' (/darmɔŋ/- a deity) deity is honoured and placed in the middle as he is the chief deity among them. All the deities are worshipped collectively by the villagers to keep them free from the influence of dangerous diseases and on the other hand to make prosperous with good health and wealth. They also worship for the good of the paddy field and the other crops as a whole. After completion of the worship as done by the Boros during the Garza worship, the worshippers of the Hasong worship kneel down before the deities and the priest recites incantation for good health, plenty of crops and prosperity. The charm is as follows:

\[ p^{h}ai \, masi \, p^{h}ai \, may \, oi \, oi \, oi, \]

---

7 Narzi, Bhaben: Boro-Kacharir Somaj aru Sanskriti, p-174
8 Brahma, Dr. Kameswar: Aspects of Social customs of the Bodos, p-76
9 Rabha, Rajen: The Rabhas, p-223
bancha k\textsuperscript{h}okche oe-oe\textsuperscript{10} 

**Meaning:**

(Come crops, come paddy  
in basket full or winnowing fan)

When the worship is over, the worshippers come to the home of the priest and share each other with dancing and drinking rice-beer.

The Boros and the Rabhas (particularly the Maitori and the Rongdani group) perform a similar kind of worship which is related to the deity of the crops and the paddy. This worship is known as 'Maynaw phuza' (/maynaw p\textsuperscript{h}uza/-a kind of worship) by the Boros and ‘Grimbuda’ (/grimbuda/-a kind of worship) by the Rabhas. Both the worships are performed in the autumn season. This is nothing but a ceremony related to the agriculture. The ‘Maynaw’ and the ‘Grimbuda’ goddesses are honoured as the owner of the crops. A few incantations are sung at the time of the worship. The Rabha villagers recite the following charm:

\begin{align*}
\text{p\textsuperscript{h}wi hasisa p\textsuperscript{h}wi kurisa p\textsuperscript{h}wi} \\
hii hi oi
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{p\textsuperscript{h}wi asu p\textsuperscript{h}wi sali p\textsuperscript{h}wi} \\
hii hi oi
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{p\textsuperscript{h}wi hampa p\textsuperscript{h}wi may p\textsuperscript{h}wi} \\
hii hi oi\textsuperscript{11}
\end{align*}

**Meaning:** *(Come all my villagers  
Come the sali (a kind of paddy)  
Come the asu (a kind of paddy)*

\textsuperscript{10} Op-cit. p-224  
\textsuperscript{11} Rabha. Rajen. Rabha lok-git. p-9
**Come the cotton**

*Oh! come the corn-deity."

At the time of worship, the priest of the Boros also recites charm to pay honour to the corn-deity and welcome the same.

**2.2.1.2 Songs of love and yearning:** The Boros and the Rabhas have love songs which depict deep passion and feeling for the beloved. Passion for sexual union is one of the features of this kind of songs. Some songs reflect the agony of the love-sick heart. Some of these are expression of the pangs of separation from each other. Generally love affair is the central theme of the song.

Most of the Boro and the Rabha love and yearning songs are sung during the seasonal festivals. Both the young boys and the girls express their love to the beloved one by singing songs. There are certain similarities in case of text and context of the love songs. The following is an example of Boro love song in which the girl expresses her eagerness to marry the beloved one by singing songs:

```
an k^\nu la n p^b \nu
an k^\nu la n p^b \nu
za m p^b \nu se r aw n i s a y a r a m
ma nd a r b i b a r
a d a s a y a r a m m a n d a r b i b a r
a n k^\nu l a n a b w \nu
ha n m a l^a g w n a d a
B o r o m u z w n n u s e h a n m a l^a g w n a d a
ha r s a m u z w n n u s e h a n m a l^a g w n
```
**Meaning:**

(Oh my dearest elder one
Take me along with you
Oh my dearest ‘Mandar Bibar’ (a kind of flower)
If you don’t come and accept me
I shall feel sorrow and pain in the heart)

Young boys are eager to express their love to the beloved ones. So, they also sing songs while are busy in dancing collectively:

**Meaning:**

(There are ‘hololokha’ vegetables in the hills
You are the only girl to get marry with me.)

As a response to the song sung by the boys, the girls also reply addressing their beloved ones: 

**Meaning:**

(Oh my dear beloved brother
Please bring me a bottle of chanted perfume from the market

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12 Narzi, Bhaben: Boro-Kacharir git-mat, pp-17-18
13 Ibid, p-20
14 Ibid. p-20
A bunch of necklace and bracelet
You are also to keep ready for me.)

Before falling in love, the girl thinks of deception by the sudden encounter with an exuberant youth. So, at the first sight, she suffers in suspicion. The following lyric is the specimen of such a song:

\begin{verbatim}
gazamk^y garnarngi gadanaw bagwra
ha bilai gwsy sik^iri bere mw^lay
haz^q sak^h^iri dwisa zenaw
man^q p^ayd^y mw^lay gadow saraw
ayo hai sik^h^iri mani asaraw
uraybayd^y mw^lay
\end{verbatim}

\textit{gaza gwsym bibar barwiawlay}\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Meaning:}

(By leaving the old one
You embrace the new one
Oh you fickle butterfly.
By the slope of a hilly land
Why have you come invisible?
In what tendency of mind
Flying here and there
On the flowers of garden)

Likewise, the Rabha love and yearning songs are also reflection of youthful exuberance and deep passion for the beloved youths and maidens. These kinds of songs are sung after the

\textsuperscript{15} Informant: Banaisree Boro, 57, house wife, vil: Katalpara, Dt: Kamrup
completion of the ‘Baikho’ worship. These songs are known as ‘Sathar’ (/sathar/-love songs) by the Rabhas. Both the boys and the girls sing and dance along with the rhythm of the love and the yearning songs during the ‘Baikho’ worship. The following lyric depicts erotic feeling and deep passion of the beloved ones:

\[\text{mini mini tabobay} \]
\[o \text{ an } \text{ sona} \]
\[p^h \text{ari handar sok don} \text{an sale} \]
\[\text{riba an } k^h \text{ata} \text{nase} \]
\[\text{riba an } k^h \text{ata} \text{n}\]  

**Meaning:**

(Oh my dearest

You don’t talk with a smile

You will come to me in the night.)

As response, the girls also sing songs addressing their beloved ones:

\[\text{o sen} \text{ra gabur kay} \]
\[\text{ato ina nama} \]
\[\text{an} \text{nano nukbar san} \text{a} \]
\[kadi} \text{nay kai}^h \text{a} \]

**Meaning:**

(Oh my dearest

I know what you are willing to say

Your face is showing your mind.)

\[^{16}\text{Rabha, Biren: Rabha lok-gitar paramparm (article), published in the Rabha magazine “Tikri Rao”, 2002, p-64} \]

\[^{17}\text{Ibid. p-64} \]
2.2.1.3 *Work songs*: The folk-society of the Boros and the Rabhas mostly depend on agriculture. Agriculture is the basic means of livelihood of both the peasant societies. Both men and womenfolk engage themselves in different agricultural activities. In the paddy field, they work hard labour with potential skill. At the time of working, the peasant folk sing different songs in which various pictures of the agricultural society are fairly reflected. The text and the context of the work songs are more or less similar to be compared. In ancient times, the Boro peasants cleared their agricultural land by burning the forest and the jungle areas. They searched for new fertile land for the good production of paddy. At the time of burning forests and jungles, they sang different songs in the name of "**Baubuli**" (/baubuli/-the king of wind). The song runs as follows:

\[\text{riu riu riu riu}\]
\[\text{ayo he ba}^b\text{a raza derhabay}\]
\[\text{borma raza zenbay}\]
\[\text{p}^b\text{wid}^b\text{he baubuli maharaza}\]
\[\text{sohay hwp}^b\text{wid}^b\text{18}\]

**Meaning:** (Oh the great king of the wind “Baubuli” is blowing, the king of the fire “Borma” is losing, oh the king Baubuli, come and help us.)

Some of the songs are reflection of determination of the peasants. The following song is sung at the time of hard working in the paddy field during the rainy season:

\[\text{hinzaw h\text{wu bo}b\text{y}}\]
\[\text{k}^b\text{wse zanan\text{wi halau }t\text{u}}\]
\[\text{hadank}\text{w}\text{u se}^b\text{ayt}\text{ar nang\text{wu}}\]

---

18 Brahma, M.M: Folk Songs of the Bodos, p-4
ayo maibra zwā golay mỳnder
gasibw gayzwfb'amangwu
ayo gayzwfb'amangwu

Meaning:

(Both men and women
Let's work together
And plough the new plot of land
And plant summer crops
Like joha and bora
Plant all the varieties
Oh friends, plant all the varieties.)

Like wise, the context of the Rabha work songs related to the agriculture is almost similar one. The work songs of the Rabhas are also mostly related to the agriculture and the paddy field.

For example:

hal bakayni sabra sime
patʰariyan kʰene toño
patʰariyan toa chiṅi charpak be
patʰariyan toa chiṅi
sona rupa ḍon

Meaning: (We are the son of peasants; we shall work together in the paddy field. The earning of our wealth is produced in the paddy field.)

19 Basumataiy, B.G: Boro harimuni mohor-mushri, p-37
20 Rabha, Rajen: Rabha lok-git, p-44
Besides, a vivid picture of doing labour in the agricultural field and ploughing paddy land is also reflected in the following song. The song runs as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ran} & \quad p^h \text{wito sir sir} \\
\text{aro} & \quad p^h \text{wito lampar} \\
\text{bv\textisak}^b & \quad \text{mas noia din} \\
\text{gur} & \quad \text{gur gar gar karto} \\
\text{may} & \quad \text{gayna mak}^b \text{u gayna} \\
\text{n\textanol} & \quad \text{zonol hal boaito} \\
\text{n\textyn} & \quad \text{eratan\textk} \text{ kodak\textdia} \text{hal kodlaina} \text{21}
\end{align*}
\]

**Meaning:** (The rain is dripping and the wind is blowing together in the new month of (bv\textisak\textb) the year. We are cultivating paddy by ploughing land with the help of plough and spade.)

This kind of song is known as ‘Hamzar’ (/hamzar/-a kind of work song) song in Rabha i.e. the song sung at the time of ploughing land or burning forest for the cultivation. ‘Ha’ (/ha/-earth) means land or earth and ‘mazar’ (/mazar/-in the midst of) means in the midst of the forest or the jungle where the paddy is cultivated. Some of the songs of the Boros and the Rabhas are also reflection of their fishing custom. Generally they perform community fishing in day to day life till date. But most of the songs related to the fishing culture are in the way of extinction due to the lack of proper preservation.

In the ancient context of the Boro and the Rabha folk-society, the men and the women folk sang some songs while they went to lake or river for community fishing. Boro damsels and women sang some songs which reflect their fishing tradition and community habits:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{p}^b \text{wi} & \quad \text{hay} \text{lygyr}^b \text{yr} \\
\text{sansar} & \quad \text{bihyaw nat}^b \text{ur honi}
\end{align*}
\]

\text{21 Informant: Kastomuni Koch, 60, house wife, vil: Khungkhrajani Koch para, Dt: Goalpara}
(Come oh my friends
Let's go to the Sansari Lake
For fishing and collecting prawns and snails
Zugur gur zugur gur
Let's catch the fish
You will get more and more fish in every attempt.)

There are also some work songs related to the preparation of rice-beer. Occassionally rice-beer is offered to pay respect to the guest or to the deity during the worship. In ancient days, the Boros and the Rabhas were accustomed with such kind of traditional habits. Even today they take rice-beer in their family or during the time of community feast.

The Rabha women recite the following song at the time of the preparation and the preservation of the rice-beer:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{natur holtaw samu k'onl'aw} \\
\text{zugur gur zugur gur} \\
\text{gurd'h hay de byg'y} \\
\text{hogap'a map'a murugap'a} \end{align*} \]

\text{Meaning:}

\text{(Come oh my friends}
\text{Let's go to the Sansari Lake}
\text{For fishing and collecting prawns and snails}
\text{Zugur gur zugur gur}
\text{Let's catch the fish}
\text{You will get more and more fish in every attempt.)}

\text{There are also some work songs related to the preparation of rice-beer. Occassionally rice-beer is offered to pay respect to the guest or to the deity during the worship. In ancient days, the Boros and the Rabhas were accustomed with such kind of traditional habits. Even today they take rice-beer in their family or during the time of community feast.}

\text{The Rabha women recite the following song at the time of the preparation and the preservation of the rice-beer:}

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{kan'ku taman} \\
\text{kan'be taman} \\
\text{an' choko tana} \\
\text{an'i choko tanka ana} \\
\text{kuben' kuben' dwp'ana} \end{align*} \]

\text{22 Informant: Jiten Goyari, 75, cultivator, vil: Dhulaura, Dt: Bongaigaon}
\text{23 Rabha, Rajen: Rabha lok-git, p-46}
Meaning:

(From where you come ant
Where is your residence?
You don’t come here
I am preparing tasty rice-beer
You don’t make worse to it.)

The following song is also related to the preparation of the rice-beer. The Boro women sing such kind of song at the time of preparation of rice-beer or rice-husking:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{may swuru ru su} & \text{ hay p}^b \text{agli} \\
\text{may swuru ru su} & \\
\text{nanzamadi hat}^b & \text{ ay galawa} \\
p^b & \text{ayno namaydo} \\
z\text{wu t}^b & \text{aysese son hay lok}^b & \text{ay} \\
z\text{wu t}^b & \text{aysese son} \\
z\text{wu boro nam hay lok}^b & \text{ai zyu boro nam} \\
k^b & \text{obor hymani zyu manabala} \\
\text{ma bundani nam hay lok}^b & \text{ai ma bundani nam}\n\end{align*}
\]

Meaning:

(Husk rice my dear
Husk rice
And prepare a pitcherful of rice-beer
Your son-in-law is willing to come
Oh my dear friend
Prepare a pitcherful of rice-beer.)

\[\text{\textsuperscript{24} Informant: Rohini Basumatary, 65, cultivator, vil: Mazpara, Dt: Goalpara}\]
Besides these, in both the societies there are some other songs which are associated with cutting trees, grazing cows, collecting vegetables and so on. These songs depict curious social picture of the Boro and the Rabha peasant society.

2.2.1.4 Songs associated with lullaby: Lullabies and children games are connected with the children. Generally lullabies are sung to pacify the weeping children i.e. songs sung to quite infants. Some of the rhymes are sung or recited to entertain the weeping children. In both the folk-societies lullabies are sung by the mother of the children or sometimes by grand parents or sometimes by the maid servant. In lullabies of both the languages, there are references of animals, birds, creatures or natural phenomenons like stars, moon, cloud, wind and others. Sometimes, lullabies are also sung by describing the appearances or the fearful faces of animals or birds and the weeping children are tried to quiet and lull to sleep. It is worth mentioning here that lullabies of both the languages are almost similar from the textual and contextual point of view. Examples are stated below from both the languages:

A) Boro:

sanrema os os
gongarni p'isa lawl'ob 'ob
aw aw hambai hambai
dagab dagab sona mainaw
hwi hwi ham p'aidly
k'writ'a k'writ'a manly gadbly
synbariaw sel gadbly
k'wma gan'san gan'san myday p'aydly

---

25 Informant: Dharani dhar Basumatary, 40, teacher, vil: Bennabari, Dt: Barpeta
**Meaning:** (Come, come oh firefly, our baby is as like as the fleshy child of bhutia, oh my dearest, you don’t weep. Here comes a beast, keep silence, why are you weeping? The fox is rowring in the nearby jungle and the ghost with long ears is also coming.)

A) Rabha:

\[ \text{en\ moina\ en\ en} \]
\[ \text{miŋku\ zimen\ parbayta} \]
\[ \text{to\ maychuk\ saeta\ en\ en}^{26} \]

**Meaning:**

(My dearest child is weeping

The grass ‘miŋku zimen’ (a kind of flower) is blooming

The bird is eating crops

My dearest child is weeping.)

There are references of animals in another lullaby of the Rabhas. The rhyme goes as follows:

\[ \text{kʰape\ toa\ kriŋe\ toa} \]
\[ \text{kʰa\ rasa\ ana} \]
\[ \text{hago\ hago\ ribaeta} \]
\[ \text{masa\ maru\ sana}^{27} \]

**Meaning:**

(Don’t weep, don’t weep

Oh my dearest listens to me

The tiger is coming and rowring

And will soon eat up you.)

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26 Rungdung, Binay Rabha: Rabha lok-xahityar alokpat (article), published in the souvenir “Rangkarang”, p-36

27 Rabha, Rajen: Rabha lok-git, p-52
Besides these, there are also some other lullabies in both the languages, which depicts the picture of natural phenomenon. The natural objects like moon, stars and other species or insects like firefly are also given prominence in these lullabies e.g:

A) Boro:

\[\begin{align*}
M ji dudu p^h\text{j}i p^h\text{j}i \\
Mji dudu p^h\text{j}i \\
\text{myr) p h M jiab\ijla th alir i'aise hor} \\
t^h\text{alir t'aise horabyla} \\
t^h\text{alir t'ainqi hor} \\
\text{wi dudu p^h\text{j}i p^h\text{j}i agwizwni geleni} \\
\text{met^h ay sini rannanyi zani}\end{align*}\]

**Meaning:** (Oh moon come down please. If you don’t come down to us, please send us a banana or two. Oh moon come down to us. Let us play with our beloved baby and take sugar and sweets.)

Sometimes grand parents also sing lullabies to amuse their grand children. The rhyme goes as follows:

\[\begin{align*}
bogolorid geb geb \\
za\text{n}a ab\text{w}umi k^h\text{ugaya} \\
gageb geb\end{align*}\]

**Meaning:** (The bird ‘bogolorid’ is twittering. Our grand son’s mouth is also flat.)

2.2 The prose narratives:

The prose narrative is an important sub-genre of the folklore. It is narrated in prose form. Generally it constitutes a larger area of the verbal art i.e. folk-literature. These are: myths, legends and tales. Similarly, these three verbal arts are extant in the Boro and the Rabha folk-

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28 Brahma, M.M: Folk Songs of the Bodos, p-5
29 Ibid. p-6
societies. Most of the Boro and the Rabha prose narratives show certain similarities in respect to the motifs, texts and contexts to some extent. In this analysis, attention has been given on these genres of the Boro and the Rabha prose narratives.

2.2.1 Myths extant among the Boros and the Rabhas:

The myth extant among the Boros and the Rabhas are closely related to the origin of the earth, ritualistic ceremonies and worships, musical instruments, certain natural phenomenon etc. As a part of the oral narratives, myth denotes an imaginary value in the context of the folk-society. It has a socio-religious background having sociological implications. The creation myth of the Boros and the Rabhas is highly specific one. There are two different versions of the Boro creation myth as extant in the Rabha folk-society. One is recited during the ceremonial festival and another is found in the folk-society as a part of the folk tradition or oral tradition. A few myths current among the Boros and the Rabhas are very interesting one from the textual point of view.

2.2.1.1 The myth regarding the creation of earth: As described in the Boro myth, the text of the myth runs as follows:

“Once upon a time, there was no existence of earth. There were no animate and inanimate things or objects anywhere. So, the almighty God wished to create the earth and do something phenomenal. So, the God asked the crab to bring a lump of soil to create the earth. The crab went to the ‘phathal’ (\(p^h\at al\)-nether world); but returned empty handed. Then a pig was asked to bring the soil from the phathal; but had also to return empty handed. Later, the pig went again sitting on the back of the crab. But they also returned without any success. The ‘singgi’ (\(singi\)-a kind of thorny fish) fish also tried to bring the soil; but he too failed in his attempt. Likewise, finally the ‘magur’ (\(magur\)-a kind of thorny fish) fish was asked to
bring the soil from the platonic world. The magur went and able to bring a sufficient quantity of muddy soil. But unfortunately in his return journey, he felt very tired and hence informed the almighty about his state through a messenger.

The magur fish wrapped the mud with the leaves of 'benna' (/benna/-a kind of grass) grass and kept it aside him and had died ultimately.

Thus the almighty god finally brought the mud himself and created the earth and its beings and objects with the help of all prevailing power."

Likewise the myth current among the Rabhas are also very interesting which describes the origin of the earth. The story of the myth runs as follows:

"As believed by the Rabhas, there was no existence of earth earlier. There were only water and water everywhere. There were 18 ‘Risi’ (/ risi/-the supreme God) i.e. deities before the creation of earth. Among the deities, “krimisung” (/ krimisung/-a deity) was the eldest and the youngest was “Nomal” or ‘Numil’ (/ numil/-a deity). One day a meeting was called with due permission of all the deities to find out proper means of creation of the earth. For the successful completion of this great purpose, the deity ‘Numil’ was selected and nominated by other deities.

At the very beginning the deity ‘Numil’ created a crab and directed it to bring many things from the under water of the nether world so that he can create a place of soil. The crab said- “oh lord! water is very deep and there are many things by which the ‘pinda’ (/ pindo/-a place of soil) is to be created. I have only four legs. So, I request you kindly to create another more legs in my body.” The deity ‘Numil’ agreed to the request of the crab and created ten legs for him. The crab went to the under water and brought various kinds of materials, soil etc.
and finally created a form of earth within the water. The crab designed a circular form on the earth.

After designing of a circular form by the crab, the deity created the species earthworm. The earthworm was directed to make hard the 'pinda' and then the deity created many things like hills and mountains, ponds, lakes and rivers, creatures and animals, ants and insects etc. After these creations, a great tortoise was created and kept the earth on the backbone of the tortoise. It is believed that if the tortoise begins to walk, then the earth becomes unsteady. Thus it is believed as creation of the earthquake.”

According to the other notion, the chief deities of the Rabhas were ‘Risi’ and his wife ‘Saripok’ (saripok -wife of the / risi bay/). The Rabhas believe that both the deities dwelt in the heaven. They created this beautiful universe at the first time. As directed and advised by the Risi, the deity ‘Tokbora’ (tokbora -a deity) created many men and animals, things, hills and mountains, trees and creepers, ants and insects, grass and jungle etc.

It is worth mentioning that from a comparative analysis of the two myths recounting the origin of the earth show some esoteric informations and certain amount of similarities in respect to the motifs, texts and contexts. Both the myths of the Boros and Rabhas were recited as well as narrated in the context of ritualistic ceremonies or the religious festivals. The text of the myths recounts the story of creation of the earth. It describes that how the earth, men and animals, trees and creatures and many other things were came into existence with the help of all pervading power. Besides, there are certain similarities in case of the mythical motifs. As narrated in the Boro creation myth, the creator of the earth ‘Sibwrai’ (sibwrai -the almighty God) is the principal character. Similarly, in the Rabha creation myth, the almighty God ‘Risi’ is also the

31 Rabha, Rajendra Nath: Rabhar xadhu kotha, pp-127-128
creator of the earth and the principal character. Mythical animals and creatures like crabs, earthworms, pigs, fishes and tortoises have a major role in the creation of earth.

2.2.1.2 The myth regarding the origin of the worships and the musical instruments: There are a few myths extant among the Boros and the Rabhas which recount the origin of the worships and the musical instruments. The origin of the "kherai" (kʰerai) worship, musical instruments like serza (/serza/-a kind of stringed instrument), siphung (sipʰun - a kind of flute consisting of five holes), kham (/kʰam/-a kind of big size drum) etc. are Boromysms which exist in the folk-society. Besides these, there is a myth in Boro which recounts the origin of the thunder and lightning. There are also a few myths among the Rabhas which describe the origin of the ‘Baikho’ or ‘Khoksi’ worship and origin of the some musical instruments like ‘karha-nol’ (/karha-nol/-a kind of flute made of nol reed) and ‘badung duppa’ (/badun duppa/-a kind of drum made of bamboo) etc.

The mythical tales regarding the ‘Kherai’ and the ‘Baikho’ worship explain how the worships are originated in the folk-society. Both the tales are very interesting in which human and supernatural traits are attributed. The mythical tale recounting the origin of the ‘Kherai’ worship of the Boros has a great socio-religious and cultural significance. This tale contains many human characters along with the supernatural traits. The story goes as follows:

“Once upon a time there was an old man. His name was Zara phagla. People called him phagla jokingly, but he was not phagla (/pʰagla/-mad man). He had five sons, who were all grown up. During the course of time all the sons of the old man were married. But as the family grew enormously in size, the old man found it difficult to maintain the family. His granary became empty. So one day he asked his sons to go in search of fertile land and set up firm there. His obedient sons did accordingly. They went in search of fertile land for
cultivation and started farming far away from home. The old man, here in charge of his original place was supervising his family and his daughter-in-laws. He loved them as every old man and guardian in the family does. Of course he liked one of them best. Her name was Mongli. She was the youngest daughter-in-laws. (Another version of the tale says that she was the eldest). He loved her because she was not only beautiful but she was expert in household activities. The old man wanted her to remain near him. He took excessive care of what she had done and what she had eaten. This type of behaviour on the part of the old man created a misconception in her mind. She misinterpreted his intention and being alarmed fled away one early at dawn. Finding her missing, the old man went in search of her and moved from place to place. He could not find out her whereabouts. But he did not take rest. He went on searching for Mongli. He forgot to take food. He forgot to take care of his dress and health. So people called him phagla (a mad man). After many days the old man dreamt a dream. An old man appeared before him in his dream and told him to perform the Kherai Puja with the help of the musical instruments like kham (drum), serza (cerenda), siphung (flute) and thal (cymbal). The old man visited all his sons and performed a grand Kherai worship in the night of full moon. As the musical instruments were played, a woman appeared there from somewhere and began to dance as the Doudini. This woman was none but Mongli, the lost daughter-in-law of the old man. This is how Kherai was originated. The old man who performed the Kherai worship was Monsing Sing Brai and the old man appearing in dream was Bathou Brai.”

Thus there is a mythical tale in Rabha narrating the origin of the ‘Baikho’ worship. The story goes as follows:

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32 Source: Boro, Dr. Anil: Folk Literature of the Boros An Introduction, pp- 169-170
“There was a village situated by the hill ‘Lodrang’ (/ lodraŋ /-a name of hill). An old man inhabited in that village. His name was ‘Phella’. He was a blind man having a beloved son and two daughters.

One day his son went to the paddy field and daughters also went to the forest in search of fire-wood. They were searching fire-wood for day long here and there. As a result, the younger sister felt very tired and she was getting thirsty. The elder sister went in search of water and after sometimes she saw a pond. She went to the pond and fetch sufficient water for her. After drinking water they were taking rest a while by the side of the pond. Suddenly they saw a ‘rou’ fish by the side of the pond. The younger sister went to the pond and caught the fish and packed it with the leaves of the ‘oxi’ tree. Quickly they returned to home and asked their father to see the fish. But their father found nothing else in that packet. There was only a piece of stone but nothing else. They were surprising for such an occurrence. They were deeply thinking of this supernatural incident. The old man was also deeply thinking and after a while he told them to preserve the stone sacredly in the corner of the granary; because this is nothing but a divine grace. As advice of their father, they kept it in the corner of the granary and begin to worship with the name ‘Baikho’. Then all the villagers also accepted sacredly to worship the goddess ‘Baikho’. This is the story how the ‘Baikho’ worship originated in the Rabha folk-society.”

In these tales, there are some human characters and supernatural traits which are attributed. Human characters and supernatural traits i.e divine grace have a great role in the story of the tale. Divine messages of the gods and goddesses are also attributed in both the tales. This is a striking motif in the story of the origin of the ‘Kherai’ and the ‘Baikho’ worship.

33 Source: Rabha, Rajendra Nath: Rabhar xadhu kotha, pp-51-55
The creation myths regarding the musical instruments of the Boros are related to the origin of the kherai worship. As described in the tale, the musical instrument “kham” (a kind of big size drum) is created by the God “Brahma”, the musical instrument “siphung” (a kind of flute) is created by the God “Bishnu” and the “zotha” (/ zotʰa /-a kind of cymbal) is created by the God “Khuria byrai”.

Thus as described in the Rabha mythical tale, the musical instrument “karha-nol” (a kind of flute in long size which is made of ‘nol’bamboo) is created by the direction of the supreme god ‘Risi Bay’. As recounted in the mythical tale the story runs as follows

“The supreme lord ‘Risi bay’ created four young men having divine quality. They were directed to go to the earth and to teach the people everything about the music. They promised to serve for the welfare of the human beings and to teach formal knowledge of music. The ‘Risi Bay’ again and again alarmed the youths not to enchant by influences of the earth’s amusement. They assured to abide by the rules and advices at any cost.

The divine youths came down to the earth and wandered here and there. They saw beauty and charm of the earth in every where. Suddenly one day, they saw and observed some beautiful damsels by the side of the rivulet. The damsels came to the rivulet with pitcher for taking water of a marriage ceremony. The divine youths were charmed by the beauty of these girls. As a result, they were accused of misdeeds and became four kinds of bamboos for violating the divine advices directed by the god Risibay. The names of the bamboos are namely: nolua, solua, hulung lunga and zolung lunga. It is believed that the ‘nol’ bamboo was one of the divine boys of the ‘Rangkarang’ (/ raŋkaraŋ /-the heaven) who knew very well to

34 Source: Narzary, Mohendra: Boroni nidan, pp- 23-24
play musical instruments. According to this faith, the Rabhas made the ‘karha’ musical instrument of ‘nol’ bamboo by the grace of the god ‘Risibay’.\textsuperscript{35}

Similarly the Boro mythical tale narrating the origin of the ‘siphung’ (flute) is almost similar with the Rabha mythical tale regarding the origin of the ‘karha-nol’. In both the myths the supreme god ‘Bvraei Bathwu’ (in Boro) and ‘Risibay’ (in Rabha) have supernatural influences in the creation of the musical instruments. These two myths explain how the ‘siphung’ and ‘karha-nol’ were created and used in the context of the religious and the ritualistic worships. It is worth mentioning that these two myths contain the role of the human characters along with the superhuman attributes.

It is interesting to note here that the Boros have a faith on the origin of thunder and lightning. It is a mythical tale prevalent among the folk-society. This mythical tale describes how the natural phenomenons like thunder and lightning was come into form in this universe. Besides the tale narrates an emotional feeling and an incestuous relationship which is rejected by heroine. According to the story of the tale the hero ‘Raona’ wishes to marry his younger sister ‘Raoni’. This story is also recited or sung in verse form during the ritualistic ceremony i.e. the doll marriage. In Boro, this ceremony is known as ‘phuthli haba’ (/pʰuṭʰli haba/) or ‘zali phuthli’ (/zali pʰuṭʰli/). Whatever it is, this mythical tale contains human characters along with the supernatural traits. This mythical tale is as follows:

\textit{\textquotedblleft Once upon a time there was a brother and a sister in a family. The lad was called Raona and his sister’s name was Raoni. Thus they began to grow up and when attained the marriageable age at that time Raona fall in love with her sister. Thus without her consent, one day he fixed a date for their marriage. But Raoni was not informed about the fact.\textquotedblright\textsuperscript{35}}

\textsuperscript{35} Source: Rabha, Charumohan: Rabha sanskritir chamu parichay, pp-50-53
One day paddy was spreaded over the courtyard for drying and preparation of rice that would be necessary for the marriage of Raona and Raoni. Their grandmother was keeping keen watching on the spreading paddy and was driving away the birds coming to eat the paddy with such words: "Go away you birds, don't eat up the paddy. My grandson and granddaughter are going to marry and this paddy is meant for their marriage." Raoni heard what her grandmother was saying and this message gave her an intolerable shock. In order to save her from the clutches of wicked brother, she straightway flew to the sky. Raona saw her flying away and followed up to the sky. Raoni showed him her buttock and abused him bitterly in the name of their mother. She flew above the clouds and the pursuing Raona began to roar in vexation. Raoni showed him her buttock again and again and it is believed that it became the sparkle of lightning in the clouds. The voice of Raona became the roar of thunder. The tale indicates an incest relationship which is rejected by the heroine.

2.2.2 The legendary tales extant among the Boros and the Rabhas:

Legends are generally sub-genre of the prose narratives and “based on facts, with an intermixture of traditional materials, role about a person, place or incident.” Hence legends are considered as folk history, as it has a historical basis about some persons or places.

The Boros and the Rabhas are rich in the field of legendary tales. There are different types of legendary tales which are associated with the great heroes and heroines. Most of the characters of the tales have a historical basis. Some of the tales are also associated with the name of places. Mythical, religious and etiological legends are also found in both the folklore domains. For example, the legend of Dodan, Marukshtery and Bogezary of the Rabhas are basically based on the historical background. As oral tradition current in the Rabha folk-society.

36 Source: Narzi, Bhaben: Boro kacharir git-mat, pp-95-96
37 Leach, Maria (ed): The Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend, p-612
was a great general of the king Bana of Sanitpur. He was a skilled warrior. When the king “Bana” was defeated by the Hari (Krishna), he escaped from that place with a band of his soldiers. Marukshetry was also a skilled soldier of the great general of ‘Dodan’. The Rabhas believe that most of the kings and soldiers of that time were defeated by the great king and warrior Dodan. But in a war, this great soldier was killed by the king Orimond and his soldiers. The king Dodan escaped here and there and in the long run he stopped at a place from which he propitiated the god ‘Risibay’. The Rabhas believe that from that time onwards the name of this place was known as ‘baydam’ or ‘bayda’ where the king Dodan took shelter.38

There is an oral tradition which is termed as legendary tale current among the Rabhas. This legend is associated with a woman namely ‘Bogezary’. As described in the legend the story goes as follows:

“Once upon a time there were two sisters in a village. Their names were ‘Thope’ and ‘Boge’. ‘Boge’ was lyricist and a skilled singer. She sang many melodious songs in different context of the social ceremonies or festivals.”39

So, it is believed that all the songs composed by ‘Boge’ were improvised orally from time immemorial in the social context and in course of time these songs are known as ‘bogezari’ (/bogezari/-folk-song of the Rabhas) by the Rabhas. So, she is believed as a legendary woman of the Rabhas.

The Boros have also a few legendary tales which are associated with the place names, heroes and heroines of historical basis and also of others.

The legend narrating the origin of ‘Samsing khila’ (/samsîhîla/-a name of a village) village is associated with the place name. The village ‘Samsing khila’ is located about 20 kms

38 Source: Rabha, Charumohan: Rabha bir dodan marukshetry, 1997
39 Rabha, Malina Devi: Rabha bhaxa xahitya aru sanskritir bikaxat Rabha mahilar daybodhata (article), published in the mouth-piece of BRKR, pp- 6-10
away from Kokrajhar town. This village is situated by the side of the Samphur River. As believed by the Boros, there was a king by name ‘Sikhna Raza’. He had two sons. Their names were ‘Bisen Sing’ and ‘Samsing’ respectively. They were skilled warriors and were like tigers of the jungle. During the rule of “Sikhna Raza”, the Bhutiya invaders came to attack them time to time. The king Sikhna commanded the warriors to fight against the invaders who marched towards the palace of Sikhna Raza. The princes Bisen Sing and Samsing prepared a plan to build up forts outside the palace. One day a fearful war was held between the Bhutiya invaders and the Boro soldiers. As a result the Bhutiya invaders were defeated by the soldiers of the great general Samsing. From this day, the great general Samsing lived happily for long times in that place where he had a big fort by the side of the Samphur river. This is an oral tradition how the name of a village originated from the word ‘Samsing khila’ i.e. the fort of the great general Samsing.

There is also a legendary tale current among the Boros which is associated with the name of a pond. The name of this pond is known as ‘Sona Phukhuri’ i.e. the pond of gold. How the name of the pond originated in the Boro folk-society particularly known in the district of Kokrajhar is a popular local legend. It may be noted that the story of the tale has a historical background narrating role of the supernatural character i.e. Bathwu Bwrai, the supreme God of the Boros.

There are a few legends which are based on historical background and such characters are also human. These kinds of legends constitute strength of the Boro oral narratives. It is believed by the Boros that the stories of the legendary tales are based on facts or oral history that happened in the remote past. The followings are considered as interesting and typical Boro legends which were collected and recorded by some folklorists. These are:

40 Brahma, M.M: Sonaphukhri, pp-14-15
41 Ibid, pp-37-40
A) The legend of Gambani Sikhla i.e. the legend of Gambani, who is believed as a Boro heroine. As narrated in the oral tradition, she was an enthusiastic woman and devoted her life to the Boros. Once she fought against the Bhutiya invaders when they came to attack them. As described by M.M. Brahma, the enthusiastic and intelligent woman "Gambani Sikhla" once did a business of timber. She also worked hard labour and rode horse easily.42

B) The legend of Basiram Zybwlaw i.e. the legend of Basiram hero. As recounted in the tale, he was a Boro hero who had an immense devotion and sacrifice to the Boro community in particular and to the nation of India in general. Basiram also started the battle against the Bhutiya invaders and attempted to defeat them. Basiram had a most faithful soldier. His name was 'Dawharam'. They jointly attacked the Bhutiya soldiers in the battle and easily defeated them43

C) The legend of Birgwysri Sikhla i.e. the legend of heroine Birgwysri. As described in the legendary tale, she was a noble, intelligent woman of strong spirit. She had ever love and devotion to the nation. She was well known among the Boros as a skilled soldier who took part in the battle held between 'Zawlia Dewan' and the British soldiers and rulers. Zawlia was a Dewan of the Bijni Paragana. He was appointed by the Bhutiya king. Once Zawlia Dewan was cheated by the king of Bijni and so, he expressed his reaction against the king of Bijni. The king of Bijni took help from the British rulers and soldiers. Zawlia opposed against the Britishers and their policies. The heroine Birgwysri also helped Zawlia Dewan and attacked the soldiers with her sharpen sword. But they could not defeat the Britishers in the battle. So, they had to escape from that place. The hero Zawlia and the heroine Birgwysri were brutally killed by the British soldiers. Birgwysri was killed by the soldiers when she was drinking water in the river of 'Ai nodi'. Likewise Zawlia was also killed when he was drinking water in the river 'Alaikhungri'44

43 Basumalay, Baneswar. Basiram Zybwlaw sase khiriminary bir (article), published in the magazine "Bagduar Thandvi", pp-1-4
It is said that most of the Boro writers and the peoples want to suggest that all the legends cited above were a historical account of a Boro hero and a heroine. The Boro heroes and heroines like Basiram, Zawlia Dewan, Gambari, Birgswri etc depicted in such tales were real persons who lived in the past, but were not recorded in history. So, for dearth of perfect historical data all the characters are considered as legendary figures, though there are opinions in support of historical facts. It is worth mentioning that the historical legends of the Boros and the Rabhas portray a strong spirit and love to the nation.

2.2.3 The tales:

Generally tales are prose narratives which are regarded as fiction. Most of the tales are simple and entertaining. They have or have not a moral teaching in the context of the folk-society. Unlike myths and legends, tales are regarded timeless and placeless and may be shaped in any time and at any place. Tales are oral fictions which are orally improvised through words of the mouth.

The tales current among the Boros and the Rabhas are generally animal tales, wonderous tales, jokes or humorous tales, cumulative tales, trickster tales and others. Most of the tales are very interesting, entertaining and humorous. There are certain amount of similarities among the tales of the Boros and the Rabhas. Basically there are common stories and motifs which establish their affinities regarding the oral narratives as well as folk-culture. In Boro and Rabha, animal tales are very interesting. In this type of tales, animals play an important role. As the hero, animal thinks and acts like a man. Thompson writes regarding this tale. “Animal plays a large role in all popular tales. They appear in myths especially those of primitive peoples where the culture hero often has animal form, though he may be conceived of as acting and thinking

44 Brahma, M.M: Sonaphukhri, pp-31-33
like a man or even, on occasion, of having human shape. This tendency toward ascribing human qualities to animals also appears when the tale is clearly not in the mythical cycle. It is such non-mythological stories that we designate by the simple term animal tales. In the animal tales available among the Boros and the Rabhas, majority of the characters are animals. Animals can speak, think more and trick other animals by cleverness like human characters as occurred in the real life. Such type of animal tales of the Boros and the Rabhas are:

A) The tale of the frog hero

B) The tale of the old man and the tiger etc.

The tale of the frog contains animal as its principal character. The frog plays a vital role in the tale while human characters also play most necessary role to some extent. In the Boro tale ‘Embusryn Zvhwylaw’ (‘embusryn zvhwylaw’-the frog hero) the ‘embu’ i.e. the frog is a hero while in the Rabha tale regarding the frog king, the frog plays a pivot role. As narrated in both the tales, the frog knows how to plough land and each and every agricultural works. Besides he knows something about the magical power by which he could changed his appearance. As a specimen, this kind of tale is quoted below:

A) Boro:

“Once upon a time there lived an old man and a woman in a village. They had no children. One day in the evening time they hold a trap for catching fish and returned to home. The next day early in the morning, the old man went to see the condition of the trap whether there is any fish or not. But to his surprise instead of fish there were an abundant number of frogs inside the trap. This makes the old man very angry and he begins to kill the frog one after the other. At that time a frog was hiding inside the fishing basket to save his life. The old man became much anger and tried to kill it with his stick. But to the utter surprise of the old

45 Thompson, Stith: The Folk Tale, p-9
man, the frog called him as father and requested to save his life. The frog also promised to take care of them in near future. Thus the frog began to live in the old man's home and took his promise by ploughing a vast area of cultivated land.

One day a king went for hunting riding on an elephant. On his way the elephant trampled the crops of the frog. Such activities of the king made the frog angry and he rebuked the king. The king also became angry with the misbehaviour of the frog. The king ordered the elephant to trample the crops again and again and he returned to his palace. The frog also followed him taking along with him a flock of bees. He ordered the bees to sting the king and as compensation he demanded king's beloved daughter. Due to the unbearable sting of the bees, the king also promised to give marriage his daughter to the frog and thus performed their marriage joyfully. King's daughter didn't like her husband at all. So during marriage ceremony of her younger sister and her friend, she went alone leaving her frog husband. But her husband also followed her by hiring a horse of his friend. On his way the frog changed his form and configured in the form of a beautiful youth. In the ceremonial place, he used to play "serza" (/serza/-a musical instrument) which attracted the attention of the audiences as well as his wife. Thus she felt in silent love with the frog hero and reached to his home following him. This surprised and made her very happy. One day she feed more rice-beer made of 'maybra' (/maybra/-a kind of rice) rice which was very sweet and tasty. After taking a lot of rice-beer, the frog felt very sleepy and went to the bed. At that time his wife removed his skin and burnt it which she kept ready nearby the bed. Thus the frog changed into a beautiful youth and they enjoyed a happy life.46

B) Rabha:

"There was an old man and a woman. They had no children. The old man always trapped the fishing traps in his cultivated land. For few days there was not even a single fish in the trap. One day a frog was found inside the trap. This made the old man very angry and he asked his wife to fry its meat. Again the old man went to the paddy field. When the old woman went to kill the frog, then the frog addressed her as grand mother and promised to do

46 Source: Brahma, M.M: Boro-kacharir solo, pp-74 -78
all their household activities. The old woman exempted the frog. When the old man come to
know that his wife didn’t killed the frog, then he went to kill it; but was also to return back.

The frog began to cultivate in the highland of the old man. On the other hand the
crops of the old man’s low lying areas were growing day by day. One day there was a great
flood. At that time a king was approaching sailing boat over the crops. By seeing this, the frog
rebuked the king and his soldiers. This made the king very angry and he asked his soldiers to
take away the frog and his bullocks to the palace. But suddenly the frog flew away from this
place.

The frog went to home and told the entire happenings to his grand parents and said his
grand mother to prepare ‘kharai’ (/kʰarai/-a kind of dry food prepared from rice and sesame);
because he has to go so long way. Thus he moved to the king’s palace. On his way the bees
and the snakes also accompanied him for his help.

In the palace, by meeting the king he asked to return his bullocks. But the king refused
to his sayings. So, the frog ordered the bees and the snakes to attack the king and the others
present in the palace. This frightened them very much. The king promise to surrender before
the frog and also declared to give away his daughter to the frog and accordingly performed the
marriage. This made his daughter and the entire palace very upset. But in the very first night
of their co-habitation, the frog turned into a beautiful youth. This surprised everybody and the
frog told the entire events of his previous life. Later on they lived very happily and the king
surrendered to the frog entire responsibilities of his kingdom. This king is the frog king.”  

The tale of the old man and the tiger is also an animal tale current among the Boros and
the Rabhas. In these tales animals are not the principal characters; but they are acting and
thinking as human beings of the real life. As narrated in both the stories, the old man plays a

47 Rabha, Rajendra Nath: Rabhar xadhukotha, pp-28-36
principal role rather than the role of the tiger. The old man tricks and ultimately the tiger is subdued by him.

Besides animals like foxes and cats, birds, fishes and crabs and other varieties of creatures also play a principal role in the animal tales current among the Boros and the Rabhas.

3.0 Proverbs:

In Boro, the term “bathra phao” (/batʰra pʰaw/-proverb) is used as equivalent to the English meaning of proverb, while “katha zibra” (/katʰa zibra/) is used in Rabha for the same. There are numerous proverbs which are still prevailing in both the societies. Proverbs of both the languages have an important moralizing function in the context of the folk-society. These are almost didactic and metaphorical in nature. It depends upon “topic-comment constructions”.48 Proverbs are “fixed phrase” genre in both the languages. Texture and context of proverbs are untranslatable and invariable than the text of proverb. In this analysis, textual aspects of proverbs are taken into account. Following are some similar examples from both the languages:

i) Br. / bipʰaʰaw mwphᵇيثu /
     / hayaw bahagy / ⁴⁹

Rb. / karay toa matʰa /
     / hay dana bokra / ⁵⁰

**Meaning:** The mwphᵇيثu (iguana) is sitting on the top of the tree. On the other hand, peoples are busy in making a plan to share meat of the ‘mwphᵇيثu.’

ii) Br. / sigunni sawzibh mwphᵇيثu biwai ḏʰiʰya / ⁵¹

Rb. / sogunni saw digi buda masu sicha / ⁵²

**Meaning:** Not a single old cow dies in curse of the vulture.

iii) Br. / ṯʰiʰya ḏʰiʰya aganaw /

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⁴⁸ Dundes, Alan: Essays in Folkloristics, p-33
⁴⁹ Informant: Mrs. Alaisree Basumatary, 68, house wife, vil: Bennabary, Dt: Barpeta
⁵⁰ Rungdung, Binay Rabha: Rabha lok xahityat alokpah (article), published in the magazine “Rangkarang”, p-35
⁵¹ Informant: Mrs. Alaisree Basumatary, 68, house wife, vil: Bennabary, Dt: Barpeta
⁵² Rabha, Mani: Rabha bhaxar phokora-jojana aru jatua thas, p-3
Meaning: Deer dies in foot print, fish dies in marry making, hare dies in stool sign, man dies in mode of speaking.

Rb. /kay sia tepe, to sia pannipoke /

Meaning: Man dies in speaking; bird dies in the branch of the tree.

iv) Br. /ha gurun aw maugia k'i n /
Rb. /ha raykay nukdom menku zita /

Meaning: The cat passes stool on the soft earth.

v) Br. /gasibq daua na zayq /
/Rb. /dwndak tooan na saa /
/manchalenkawsan dos manna /

Meaning: All birds eat fish; the kingfisher has only a bad name.

4.0 The material culture:

The material culture grows up from the matters or objects of the community products. It is more visible than the verbal art. From this point of view, it is known as physical folklore in the folklore scholarship.

The Boros and the Rabhas are traditionally cultivator. So, the village economy depends upon the production of paddy. For household and agricultural purposes they use different
implements and tools in their day to day life. Material cultures of both the communities include various items that have been considered in this analysis. Affinities are found basically in the structure of the settlement and housing, tools and implements, food recipes and food habits, the art of weaving of costume and textile, the art of making of crafts etc.

4.1 Settlement and site selection for housing: Generally the Boros and the Rabhas are much more interested in agriculture. The majority of the populations of both the communities are cultivators and they constitute fully a peasant society. So the mode of settlement and the pattern of the housing are basically based on their needs. Formerly their homesteads were situated nearby the forests, on low lands or hillocks and nearby the riversides or lakes. Now a day, the Boros and the Rabhas inhabit in the plain areas of the Brahmaputra valley of Assam. Of course, the major portion of the Rabha populations are concentrated in the northern slope of the hills areas of Meghalaya border in Assam. In ancient days, the Boro and the Rabha peasant societies prefer such a place where cultivable lands were available, because their principal livelihoods were agriculture. They also selected such areas where fishing and hunting facilities were available. Today, they have almost lost hunting habits in course of time.

The Boros and the Rabhas traditionally performed some ritualistic tests in selecting site for the homestead. In ancient times, they had some folk-believes. In the Boro folk-society, it was performed on the day of Saturday or Tuesday evening. They cleaned the site and plastered it with sacred water where the test was performed. A tip of the plantain leave was kept on that place along with two leaves of the holy basil and unfragmented grains of rice of nine numbers. This was covered with a bamboo basket i.e. known as ‘don’ (/don/-a kind of small bamboo basket) and the basket was plastered Surroundingly with mud. Next day, it was investigated early in the morning. If all the things were found in disorder, then the site was believed and considered as
harmful. It was believed that the family was to be effected by the influence of some unknown spirits, ghosts or deities.

The Rabhas also believe in such a test in selecting site for the homestead. They keep some unfragmented grains of rices surrounding at the proposed site and covered it with a tip of the plantain leaf. Next day early in the morning, this place is investigated to prove the truth whether the site is favourable or not to erect the homestead. If the things are found disorder, then the proposed site is to be considered harmful and infavourable for the homestead. It is also believed that the family will be affected by the influences of deities and ghosts. In this regard Rajen Rabha described, “Some grains of rice (5, 7 or 9 in number or a handful) are placed in the evening at the four corners of the proposed site with a simple worship to God and are covered with plantain leaves. Next morning these grains are inspected. If they remain just as they were left the previous evening, the site is taken to be fit for settling. But, if the grains are disturbed by ants or birds or any other animals, the site is considered to be bad and it is believed that if the homestead is selected there, the family would be reduced or get divided in the same manner as the grains.”

In course of time, the Boros and the Rabhas are looking for the modern civilization and its values. So they are in need of modern values in every spheres of the society. Folk beliefs or traditional notions are considered obsolete in the proper sense of adjustment. Social attitudes of the Boros and the Rabhas are changing gradually.

4.2 Types of housing: In both the societies, the dwelling house is constructed with bamboo wood, straw and thatches. The main house building of the Boros and the Rabhas are generally made of three parts. The main house of the Boros is known as ‘noma no’ (/noma no/) while it is known in Rabha as ‘barghar’ (/borgbør/). The main house of the Boros has three parts i.e. /isin, okboŋ, kbohra/.

59. Rabha, Rajen: The Rabhas. p-30
The /isirj/ portion is used for kitchen where the goddess ‘mainaw’ is worshipped with special honour. The /okho T/ portion is used for dining room and the conversation room with other relatives or guests. The /khophra/ portion is used as bed room for the family members. Besides they use different houses for domestic purposes. One is known as /swura no/ where the unmarried boys and girls, the servants of the family have to stay. The main house of the Rabhas is used by the parents for sleeping. In this regard Rajen Rabha described about the needs of the different portions of the main house. “The ‘bar-ghar’ is generally used by the father and mother as sleeping room. This may be divided into several rooms. The household deity is worshipped in a room of the ‘bar-ghar’. It is also used as the dining room for guests and also as the house for the conversation with strangers and persons coming from distant places and for the relatives. While the ‘khapra ghars’ are used as a sleeping house for adult children and paid servant, bed room for female guests and also as a store house for rice, jonggas of rice-beer, and other domestic things and so on.”

Beside these, the Boros and the Rabhas build some sheds for poultry, cows, pigs and others. They also build a store-house to keep their agricultural products. This is known as ‘bakhri’ (/bakhri/-granary) in Boro and in Rabha it is known as ‘may-jham’ (may zam/). The kitchen is also constructed separately nearby the main house. This room is considered as holy place by the Boros and the Rabhas. They also build some store rooms for keeping fire-woods and domestic tools etc.

4.3 Domestic utensils: In ancient days, different types of traditional utensils were used by the Boros and the Rabhas. The village folk of both the communities were interested in using brass, bamboo, wooden and earthen utensils. They used bamboo tube to store water or any other earthen

60. Op-cit. p-33
utensils. They used bamboo tube to store water or any other liquid things like rice-beer or water. But time is leading them to the modern world. Instead of the traditional utensils, today they are more interested in using modern types of vessels which are the inventions of modern civilization. As a result, today they use sophisticated utensils made from iron or other metals. At present, these kinds of utensils are popularly accepted in both the communities. They use iron pan to cook the curry or to fry the eatable foods. Rice is boiled in metallic vessels instead of the earthen vessels. Earthen pitchers are very commonly used in the everyday domestic life of both the communities. The village folk use this for keeping water as well as rice-beer. In Boro, the water pitcher is called ‘dwihu’ (/dwihu/) and the pitcher used for keeping rice-beer is called ‘zwudw’ or ‘zudu’ (/zwudw ~ zudu/). The size of the pitcher is long in shape having narrow passage and mouth. On the other hand, the earthen water pitcher is called ‘tangi’ (/tanji/) or ‘mukh’ (/mukh/) in Rabha. It is big in size and almost rounded in shape with a passage and wide mouth. They also use the earthen pitcher for preparation of rice-beer. It is known as ‘zongga’ (/zonga/) or ‘baro’. Beside these, they also use different types of earthen pitchers for different purposes in their day to day domestic life.

In ancient days, the Boros and the Rabhas used bamboo and wooden vessels for keeping cloth and other household articles. Different types of common baskets were made of bamboos in both the communities. These were basically the handicraft products. For agricultural purposes also they use different containers. The agricultural societies of both the communities use a big size of bamboo container for keeping the paddy. This is known as ‘duli’ (/duli/) in both the communities. For sifting paddy and others, they also use a kind of bamboo sieve which is either big or small in size. This sieve is known as ‘sandri’ in both the languages. Agricultural societies of both the communities use a kind of small size container which is used for measuring unboiled
rice or other things. This is known as ‘don’ in both the languages. Big and small sizes of baskets are also made of bamboo in both the communities. These are used for keeping rices or other household things.

Various agricultural tools, fishing tools and different types of necessary tools are also made of bamboo for domestic uses. In both the societies, the use of bamboos in every domestic purpose has also been displayed as vital role even in the present day context. So, the culture of both the communities are known as bamboo culture as a whole.

4.4 Musical instruments: Traditionally the musical instruments of both the communities were related to the religious and non-religious purposes or performances. Most of the musical instruments are made of bamboos or wooden materials. Some of these are made of brass metal. In the Boro society, a small size brass cymbal is used in a ritualistic ceremony which is known as ‘zotha’ (zot’h/a/). Different types of flutes are also made of bamboos by the Rabhas. There are different names for the flutes of different sizes. These flutes are played in different religious and non-religious purposes. For example, the ‘karha brangsi’ (karha bran’si/) is a long size flute of almost 6 or 7 feet.

The musical instruments available in both the societies are very similar in size and structure in comparison to other Aryan musical instruments. Particularly the Rabhas use various types of traditional musical instruments while the Boros have only a few musical instruments namely: /kham/, /zot’h/a/, /serza/, /siph’un/, /thork’h/a/, /gongwana/ and /biŋi/. The flute is known as ‘siphung’ which is made of small bamboo tube and five holes are perforated on it. The musical instruments like ‘kham’ and ‘serza’ are made of wood. The kham is a big size drum. On the other hand, the serza is a stringed instrument as like as violin having five strings made of thread. The musical instrument ‘thorkha’ is also made of bamboo and in size it is almost two or three
feet long. The Rabhas have also a stringed instrument known as 'badungduppa' (/baduqduppa/) which is made of big bamboo tube having four strings of bamboo split. The musical instrument 'gugumel' and 'buburenga' (/bubureŋa/) are mainly played by the women. The instrument 'gugumel' is made of bamboo and the 'buburenga' is made of reed. In Boro, these are known as 'gonggwna' (/gotgwna/) and 'bingi' (/biŋi/) respectively. In ancient times, these were also played by the Boro women.

The big size drum known as 'kham' is a favourite musical instrument of the Rabhas. This instrument is made of wood. In size, it is almost three or four feet long.

4.5 Agricultural tools and implements: As the means of production, both the peasant societies are still practising dry and wet farming. They are very fond of agriculture. The majority among the Boros and the Rabhas are busy in multifarious occupations i.e. cultivation, labour, service, fishing etc. They use different types of tools in day to day agricultural activities. Approximately 80% of the total populations of both the communities are still actively involved in agricultural works and such other activities. They are still maintaining a traditional method of production in their agricultural field. But now a day, a few of them are using seldom (sophisticated) machinery, power tiller and fertilizers for the plenty production of their agricultural products. They use traditional sets of plough which is made of wood and bamboo. These are the principal tools in their agricultural field. Even today, they use a kind of harrow which is made of bamboo and is basically used for levelling and breaking clods of the ploughing earth. Some other iron tools like spade is used for digging earth, sickle is used for reaping harvests or crops, tools for grass weeding, pouring for water, tools for sowing seeds etc. are also used in present day agricultural field.
4.6 *Diet and food habits:* Rice is the staple food of the Boros and the Rabhas. In ancient times, they collected green vegetables from the jungles or the forest lands. Hunting and fishing were also practised by both the folk-societies. They were very expert in this business. These were the habitual behaviour in their day to day life. But these habits are dying out slowly from both the societies. They eat dry fishes and meat of pigs, chickens, deers etc. They don't take beef at all. Beef eating is strictly prohibited according to their social fokl-customs. They are very much interested in the pounded dry fish which is preserved in bamboo tube for a long period. In Boro it is known as *‘napham’* (napʰam/) and in Rabha it is known as *‘nakhem’* (/nakʰem/). In ancient times, they were habitually used to drink rice-beer at domestic life and festivals and other ritualistic ceremonies. They didn't feel hesitation in drinking rice-beer in the community feast or function. Instead of this habit, today they prefer tea, sweets and curd even in the religious or other social functions. In recent times, the Boros and the Rabhas are looking for changing their ancient behaviours. They are influenced by the modern life and ideas. At all levels of the day to day life, they are looking for adjustment of behaviours within the multi-cultural sphere. The educated peoples of both the communities are interested in using sets of dining table instead of the low stool for sitting. The stool used for sitting is known as *‘khamphlay’* (/kʰamplay/) in Boro, while it is known as *‘dokhom’* (/dokʰom/) in Rabha. It is worth to mention here that the low stool used by the Boros and Rabhas is considered as the symbol of social status.

The Boros and the Rabhas are commonly taking some items of food. These are varieties of green vegetables, dry fishes, meat and pulses etc. Traditionally curry is prepared with the help of plantain alkali (i.e known as /kʰarwi/ in Boro) or oil and sometimes with the help of fat of the pig. Dry vegetables and bamboo shoots are also very favourite dish of them. There is also a common taste of curry which is prepared by rice powder. It is known as *‘onla’* (/onla/) in Boro. This kind of curry is mostly necessary for marriage ceremony of the Boros and the Rabhas.

4.7 *Costume:* From the folkloristic point of view, the discussion of traditional costumes and ornaments are one of the most interesting subjects of material culture. In the tradition oriented society, the design on costumes and ornaments are found in full of floral. In the tradition oriented society, the design on costumes and ornaments are found in full of floral. In both the communities, basically all these things are made of and designed by hand and not in the machinized industry. They make clothes in their wooden loom. Like other societies, the Boros and the Rabhas use different types of dresses. In both the societies, male dresses differ from female dresses. Generally female dresses are made by designing in full of floral. The Boro and
the Rabha women are generally fond of weaving and they have a good skill in weaving art. The art of making clothes and choices of colours are very peculiar in both the tradition oriented societies. Basically they are fond of red, black, green, yellow and indigo colour. Sometimes white colour is also preferred particularly in the occasion of sacred and religious practices.

In comparison to male dresses, the Boro and the Rabha women use various types of dresses. The dresses used by the Rabha women are: /khodaboy/, /kambun/ and /riphan/. The ‘khodabong’ is used to tie the head. The ‘kambung’ is looked like a wrapper and is used to cover the breast. The ‘riphan’ is worn both in the waist and the breast. There are two types of ‘riphan’ in Rabha society. One is worn in the breast and hangs down to the knees. This is called ‘lema riphan’ (/lema riphan/) and another one is worn in the waist. The riphan is adorned with varieties of floral designs.61

The costumes used by the Boro women are mostly similar with the costumes worn by the Rabha women. The Boro women use a kind of wrapper which is used to cover the body. This kind of costume is known as ‘alowan’.62 ‘Dokhona’ (/dokhona/) is also a kind of female dress. It is worn in the breast particularly by the aged women and also by the females of tender age (gurl) in the waist and hangs down to the knees. In ancient days, the Boro and the Rabha women had no wear blouse. But in the present times maximum of the women without any age restriction use the blouse. Bhaben Narzi described that the female garment worn by the Boro women is known by different names basically according to the floral design on it. These are: “dokhona thausi” (/dokhona thausi/-a kind of female dress designed by multicoloured flowers), “dauhthu godo” (/dauhthu godo/-a kind of garment having floral design as dove’s neck), “pharyq megon” (/pharyq megon/-a kind of female dress having floral design as pigeon’s eye) and “salamatha” (/salamatha/-a kind of garment without any floral design). 63

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61 Rabha, Mani: Rabha sanskritir dhara, p-27-28
62 Narzi, Bhaben: Boro-kacharir somaj aru sanskriti, p-151
63 Ibid, p-154
On the other hand, the traditional male dress is almost same in both the communities. The Boro male dress is known as ‘gamsa’ while in Rabha it is known as ‘pazal’ and is worn in the waist and hangs down to the knee. It is usually shorter than the ‘dhoti’ (/dhoti/). The male dresses are basically made without any floral design. But sometimes, it is designed by stripe of different colours. This kind of dress is very popular among the Boros and the Rabhas. The ‘phali’ (/ p'ali/) is a kind of towel used by the Boros for making turban on the head or to tie round the waist while the ‘senka-nen’ is used by the male section of the Rabhas. It is basically shorter than the ‘gamsa’ and the ‘pazal’.

Besides, both male and female uses a kind of big and long cloth which is basically used as wrapper in winter session. In Boro, it is known as “hima” or “simu” and in Rabha, it is known as “pachar”. In ancient times, this kind of wrapper was made with ‘endi’ threads. But all these items are changing day by day and are being used popularly with some modifications.

5.0 Folklife as reflected in the religious and ritualistic ceremonies as well as customs:

Of the religious ceremonies, “kherai” (/k’erai/) is the greatest religious ceremony of the entire Boro community. It is like a festival; because all of the villagers take part during the worship. On the other hand, “Baikho” (/baik’o/) is also the greatest ritualistic as well as religious festival of the Rabhas. It is the festival of mirth and joyfulness; because all the villagers take part joyfully during this ceremony.

The purpose of the ‘Kherai’ worship is the welfare of both private and village life. The supreme God Bathwu (or /kh uria byrai/) and his wife Bathwu burwi /bat’wu burwi/-the goddess of wealth i.e. Mainaw burwi) and along with other eighteen couples of gods and goddess are propitiated with suitable offerings like rice-beer, domestic cocks and pigs etc. The Kherai worship is performed collectively once or twice in a year for the welfare of the villagers as a whole. It is performed with the help of reciting charms by Oza (/ozə/-the chief priest as well as
medicine man), dancing by "Dwudini" and the villagers by playing traditional instruments like /kham, sip'ung and zot/a/. Dr. K. Brahma writes a few notes about the purpose of the Kherai worship, "Besides welfare of both private and public lives, the Kherai puja is performed for the good harvest of crops. The Bodos are generally dependent on agriculture. So, before and after cultivation, they perform Kherai puja and propitiate different gods and goddess for the success of cultivation."

Thus the 'Baikho worship' is also performed collectively once in a year for the welfare of the villagers and their cultivation. She is the goddess of crops and wealth that propitiated as the principal deity of the Maitori and the Rangdani group. The deity is propitiated with much suitable offerings like pigs and fowls. At the time of offerings the 'Oza' recites charms in the name of goddess. Rajen Rabha described a picture on the preparation and propitiation of the Baikho puja. He wrote, "Generally the worship is celebrated with great preparation once in a year during the month of April or May and lasts for three or seven days. There is much feasting and drinking of rice-beer. At the time of worship several numbers of big fat pigs and fowls are sacrificed to the Goddess so that there may be plentiful crops, copious rains, good health, prosperity and no earth quakes." The songs are also recited during the 'Baikho worship'. These songs are known as 'hoimaru chay' (or huimaru chay) which vividly reflects the purpose of the worship. The following is a specimen:

hoi maru hoi maru a-ha
bwṣai dwmsa mai badi aya tamai
sona sona hadami dwmsai ba aya tamai
bwṣai tak samai badi
sata saṇa hadami
rata kʰuraḥ hadami
bwṣai toimwaṭaya tamai

/dwudini/- A sacred woman who takes principal role during the /kʰerai/ worship.

Brahma, Dr. K: Aspects of Social customs of the Bodos, p-62

Rabha, Rajen: The Rabhas: p-214
Meaning: (Oh mother tamai

Why don’t you germinate in the seedling field?
either in the high land paddy field
or in the low land paddy field?
If you don’t germinate in the field of grass
Then be rain profusely in the paddy field

You please germinate in such a land

Where the sunshine and the moonlight spreads

Oh mother tamai

You please germinate in the low and fertile land.)

In both the communities feasting and drinking of rice-beer is a very much common business during the ‘Kherai’ and the ‘Baikho’ festival. Offering of rice-beer and sacrifice of domestic birds and pigs etc. are indispensable rites of the Kherai as well as the Baikho festival. But in recent times, the Boros are abstaining from sacrificial rites at the time of worship of the Kherai or the Bathwu. There is an important rite which is associated with the propitiation of the god Khuria and the Baikho. This rite is performed on the first day of worship to keep sacred all houses and the village as a whole. In Rabha, it is known as “nok- khitharkay” (/nok-khitharkay/-purification of house). Such a purification function is also observed during the “Garza puja”, “Kherai festival” and the “Bathwu puja” of the Boros. In religious functions, the ‘oza’ and his

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67 Rabha, Rajen: Rabha lok-git, p-3-4
68 Rabha, Rajen: The Rabhas, p-216
69 Narzi, Bhaben: Boro-kocharir somaj aru sanskriti, p-180
assistances (the main priest and his assistance) play an important role during the propitiation of the god and goddess. The ‘oza’ recites charms in the name of gods and goddesses. It is a common feature of both the communities. Without an active involvement of ‘oza’ and ‘d̪wuri’ (priest) no worships are possible to perform at all.

Another important similarity is that the Boros and the Rabhas have no special temple or shrine of worship. Each of the communities has gods and goddess to worship by performing various rites having a great purpose in it.

The ‘Garza’ (/garza/) and the ‘Langa’ (/lanña/) are the village gods of the Boros and the Rabhas respectively. The worship is observed once in a year during the month of ‘Bwįsagw’ (/bwoʒaŋ/, a month) and ‘Zeth’ (/zetə/-a month) in the name of the deities. It is mentionable that the ritualistic worships Garza and Langa are still prevailing in both the societies. The Garza worship is almost similar in comparison to the rites and customs of the Langa worship. The tradition of the worship and rites of the Garza is being observed in the Boro society particularly in the districts of Barpeta, Kamrup, Nalbari and Darrang. These two worships are performed for the welfare of the villagers, particularly to purify the village folk and to get rid of evil influences of the gods and demi-gods. So, the Garza and the Langa worships are considered as the most sacred ceremony among the concerned communities.

It is said that the deity Langa is generally worshipped among the Pati, Rangdani and Bitalia groups.70 The ‘Langa’ is worshipped as a village deity along with the other four minor deities such as Dhan kuber (owner of wealth), Thakurani (a Hindu deity), Dudh kuber, Phul kuber (owner of object), Khoksi (a deity of water). Similarly there are many Garza gods and goddesses who are propitiated by offering sacrifices. The Garza gods like owner of wealth, water,

70 Rabha, Rajen: The Rabhas, p-197
crops, objects etc. are propitiated for the welfare of the village life and cultivation. They are:

A) Lakhi Garza (the goddess of wealth)
B) Dhan kuber Garza (the god of wealth; but regarded as evil god)
C) Asu Garza (the god of Asu crop)
D) Bwrai Raja Garza (the god in chief).

Likewise the Langa is also worshipped with the hope of welfare of the village, crops and animals as a whole. Similarly sacrifical and offering rites are also observed during the worships. Drinking of rice-beer and feasting functions are also observed during the worship. When the worship is to come to an end, the priest pays homage to the deities reciting incantations for their good health, prosperity and to get profuse crops. Generally, these are the agriculture based worships of the Boros and the Rabhas.

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