CHAPTER IV

TRADITIONAL GARG RELIGION IN THE MATRIX OF GARG SOCIETY

Concept of Supernatural

In every stage of religious consciousness, man feels immediate or direct presence of some supernatural and supersensitive being or beings. Thus, the concept of God, immortality of the soul and freedom of will are the three fundamental postulates of every form of religion, and the traditional Garo religion is also not an exception. If one with all sincerity looks into the inner core of the traditional Garo society, the way they live and the manner they worship, we find ample materials to show that traditional Garo religion is not lacking in essential elements of basic concept of God. In traditional Garo society, such supernatural, superhuman and supersensitive force is called mite which approximately corresponds to the word deity or god both in spirit and content. Hengmuthu verbally informs the author that correct spelling of the word should be mitdei which admittedly appears to be in accord with the common utterance. According to him, mit means darkness and dei means being or beings; so literally mitdei means being or beings abiding in darkness, or invisible being or beings. Hengmuthu also says there could be as many as 150 mitdei under different titles but he is not certain about the actual number. One may partially
agree with Bongauthu's spelling of *mitdi* but with regard to the etymology of the word, none could, during my inquiry, inform me satisfactorily. So, we take it to be simply a rational interpretation rendered by the modern intellectuals. In course of our visit to different Ambeng areas, and also in our day to day contact with the people of the traditional society, particularly the Garos representing Ambeng sub-tribe, we often hear the pronunciation as *mtddi* not *mite* and as such it is clear that the popular spelling of *mite* is loosely improved spelling of the original word *mtddi*. Whatever might be the meaning and origin of the word, I shall henceforth use the spelling *mite* since it has come to be so in the standard language. Sinha (1965:48-49) has mentioned as many as 230 names of Garo *mite* and, he has given a short description about the nature and function of some of the apparently major deities which are invariably linked up with day to day socio-economic pursuits of the tribe. Burling (1963:54-56) has also given a brief account about the Garo concept of the supernatural.

It is very difficult to obtain a clear-cut definition of the supernatural or god in the traditional Garo society. Definition and description of the deities usually depend on the occasion, situation and the circumstance under which the deities are being pronounced. From the following nomenclature of the deity, it appears that traditional Garos believe that God is the ultimate judge of our
moral life. He has no partiality, no prejudice and he is the ultimate authority to reward or to punish the soul. They decorate their deity with what is best and highest conceivable according to their social norms. Thus, the real concept of the supernatural is best known from the different nomenclature given to different deities. Garos define their deities in and through various beautiful words; it is not that each definition relate to a particular god, rather, all those definitions express the different attributes of the one and the same supernatural. The following definitions will, to a great extent throw light with regard to the basic concept of the supernatural in the traditional Garo religion. dakovipa (creator) is given other names by the Garos under different beautiful expressions, such as:

rugipa meaning, moulder; the one who moulds; bisikipomo in exhaustible source of invisible or self existent energy - the mind supersonal in essence; bidhatare, the unchanging core or repository of all things; atura, the sole knot or cord of all things; pantura, the sole junction on which all things hang; tatare, the sole one to whom alone things speak; rebuaga, the sole one invisible who takes all things in; ranaage, the sole one who takes things out or reveals; daikame, the sole one whose power of producing things is unlimited; the causeless cause rurimo, the sovereign one whose power to mould, to prepare to plan out and design is limitless; the sole one who designs; the sovereign designer; suulgira, the sovereign one, who cuts and fixes edges on all things; imbinggipa, the sovereign one, who works out limits
or ends to all; baragjpa, the sovereign conserver of all things; sitregjpa, the sole one, who arranges all things in their places; and setter of things in order; rakkigjpa, the sole one who keeps all; dingjpa, the sovereign one who provides in the production of things to a determinate end; babwa, the sovereign one who gives sustenance to all; gesonggjpa, the sovereign one who plants all things and makes them stand; gebotgjpa, the sovereign one who makes foundations of all things firm; maregu, the sovereign one who sieves all things through; janggini nogjpa, the sovereign owner of breath; jamoni biambi, the sole immutable source of life; marebok, the sovereign purifier of all things; korabok, the sovereign neutraliser of all things; korapin, the sovereign regulator and opener of the doors of or the shadow of death; me'gjpa jagring, the mother who is as if in a mirror; the mother spirit, the mother goddess; jikmitdei gomme, the sole life's partner for all, who guards over; patigjpa, the sovereign one who blesses; rarongjpa, the sovereign one who apportions; shijanggiko ripingjpa, the sole sovereign preserver of the water of life; shiehrike rakkigjpa, the sole sovereign keeper of the particles of the water of life; shijanggiko kangjpa, the sole sovereign one who offers water of life to drink; shiehrike ongjpa, the sole sovereign one who gives particles of the water of life; ambi nori, the sovereign grand mother who is unmoved mover underground; s'ning reck rani, the sole underground sovereign queen in whom are identified essence and existence; mikpugjpa, the sole one who pierces eye-sockets for eye balls; mikdakgjpa, the sole one who makes seeing eyes; ja'regjpa, the sole one who fashions legs; susimena, the
sovereign setter of dominions of the ordinances of heaven; aati biati, the sole sovereign one who puts wisdom in the inward parts and given understanding to hearts; chingohini chingohina, the sole immutable sovereign one who is all aglow with lights.

The above definitions are the descriptions of the different aspects of the supernatural power to which the name mite is given by the Garos. The supernatural or Garo deity, thus, becomes all powerful, all embracing, all comprehensive energy to suit the socio-economic life of the Garos, but, it is doubtful if any of the above definitions cover the God's vital attribute such as omnipresence; the quality of being omniscience thereby making the mite capable of helping human beings whenever necessity arises in their day to day socio-economic activities. They do not know their deities by all those names at a single breath, but whenever such situation arises as to make all human efforts fail in solving any problem the deity is invoked with appropriate names to suit their needs at the moment. Ordinarily, Garos do not call any of the deities by its name in public talks; they are however heard to utter isol or nokgipa. The word isol seems to have been derived from other Indian languages like Beagali and Assamese from the word iswar whereas the word nokgipa which means master or lord is known to be of Garo origin. Whenever they say isol the term might be equated to mite-dalgipa; salgra or dalgipa rehupa which means great god or the creator and the sustainer (Marak, 1975). So, random, careless and irrelevant uttering of the name of any deity is often avoided by the Garos.
In the present study, what is observed is that the more one comes in contact with the people of different areas of the main Garo land as well as the Garos living in other parts of the region like Assam and Bangladesh, the number of deities grows. So, we thought of stopping collection of names as more and more deities appearing under different titles or nomenclatures as we find it of little use of simply increasing the number of gods or deities. We also think that it does not require so many names to meet the human problems which usually confront humanity if at all the name involved is really sympathetic towards men and capable of helping him in the time of need. In this regard, our ground is supported by the fact that in course of our investigation, it invariably came to our notice that the infinite number of deities are due to the absence of well defined well conceived titles of each name universally applicable and acceptable to different sub-tribes living in the different areas; same deity being called by different names with slightly regional variation although the nature of the worship and the diseases or other phenomenon connected with particular name remains the same. In this way, in most cases names of some of the deities are found to be overlapping. Moreover, author's long association with the Garo elders living in traditional way of life with traditional religion gives him ample scope to know the fact that most Garos are equipped with inherent wisdom backed by wit, humour and jokes for all occasions. In Garo society, elder people stands responsible in looking after the affairs of the younger depending on them and as such, men of older generation are supposed to be the immediate friend, philosopher and guide in the whole Garo social set-up. There are instances to show that, whenever
a person falls ill, a practising *sima kamaäl* (*sima* means to consult the deity and *kamaäl* means priest) is called for divination; to find out the causes of the ailments because, every kind of disease or health hazard is believed to be due to the evil influence of certain *mite* or deity over that ailing person or over the family to which the person in trouble belongs. Sometimes, it happens that even after calling the names of all the known deities, the *sima kamaäl* might fail to give a proper diagnosis of the disease, and in such a situation the *kamaäl* with perfect boldness and calmness would make a peremptory pronouncement by naming of such *mite* yet unheard to the waiting persons along with the list of appropriate offerings to propitiate the influencing *mite*. Thence forward, the new deity or *mite* appeared to remain in the minds of the people of that particular place, and this way, with the progress of time, the number of *mite* (deities) multiplied. But whatever might be the size or figure of the *mite* might be the basic idea above the deities amongst the traditional Garos irrespective of different geographical and topographical conditions of the areas, the slightly different dialects from one sub-tribe to another and slight variation on their social practices and usages, remains almost the same. In the field work, we heard innumerable names of the deities but after carefully scrutinising the nature and character of each *mite*, I have recognised the following few.

Therefore considered from different angles of the various definitions of *mite* given above, it is found that the Garo concept of *mite* approximately coming near to the definition of religion
as "man's belief in a being or beings higher than himself and inaccessible to his senses, but not indifferent to his sentiments and actions, with the feeling and practices which flow from belief".

Now, as discussed earlier, the author wants to try to give the detailed descriptions of some of the important deities falling under different categories.

Categories of Gare Deities

Malevolent Deities. From the study of their nature, character and functions, Gare mite may be grouped under three main categories viz., (1) the mite connected with all human physical maladies that means diseases causing and curing deities, (2) the mite of general well being, that the deities generally believed to be connected with the welfare, prosperity and health of people. Gare consider certain material objects as having some sort of power or spirits to influence human lives and as such, they regard them as visible deities which are also discussed separately in this work. In traditional Gare religion, the division of the deities under the above two categories are simply provisional since some of the mite are found to have hands upon both in health and the sickness of man. Gares do not say anything about the physiological characters of any deity; they do not give any importance about the sex of their mite. If they are asked as to whether that particular mite is male or female, they would simply reply mite 'de bima bila gri'(deities are sexless). Although Gare mite are not sexed,
from the nature, character and function of some mite it can be
presumed that they possess all the feminine virtues thus giving an
ample ground for observation that these are certain deities which
might be taken more as a female than as a male, otherwise, almost
all the mite are found more on the side of the feminine gender
although definite distinction of sexes are not discernable.

1. tatare rubuga: Its other name is tatare kore rubuga kore
means insane, for whom everything is possible, nothing is restricted
or limited to it. Lalsing Ajim Marak, an old Garo gave me the meaning
of tatare as creator and rabuga as destroyer. So, the full meaning
of them stands as creator and the destroyer with whom nothing is
impossible. Of all the mite, this deity is, regarded as the greatest
or the chief mite of the house (nokni mite dal'gipa). Sometimes,
the same deity is designated as mite kalkamba (mite whose abode
is in the high). Along Garos give the high position to waimong
which bears the same attributes as that of tatare rabuga (wai means
deity and mong means great). In southern part of Garo Hills, many
Ambeng Garos believe that, at the time of worshiping the tatare
several minor mite like rabuga misi-saljong (sole owner of
millet), mini-ma (owner and begetter of paddy), misima (mother of
millet) and risi saljong (one who apportions) are invoked. Therefore,
tatare-saus (invocation of tatare mite) is the worship of as many
as of five mite combined. We tried to make out the distinction
between tatare and dakgipa, the literal meaning of dakgipa is
the creator or the moulder but most Garos identify dengiga with tatera; in fact some Garos informed me that dengiga is simply a nickname of tatera-rabuga. Sinha was told by one keman that dengiga (dakaba) as the chief of the gods and tatera as his manager (Sinha, 1966 p. 49) but when tatera-rabuga is held in great esteem, giving the highest position in all over the Garo habitat, how could it be the manager of dengiga. So, if one could study in true perspective, one could find that most Garos maintain that dengiga is another name of tatera, more or less like a petname. Now, since tatera-rabuga is considered to be the chief god or presiding deity no one can ignore or neglect it and in every occasion this deity is first invoked. The informants were asked to explain as to why other minor deities are taken along with tatera-rabuga and to this question, the reply was tatera-rabuga apananga, chingaba seken one'ie minima, misi-saljong, kalкамbe, waimong, jat mahari beng'bea jelbea, chingaba suale antie cha'na rinma nenga, tatera is believed to be saying as we are not alone, there are others too like minima, misi saljong, saljong kalкамbe, waimong etc. multiple of clans and sub clans, we have to share among ourselves the food and drinks. Perhaps, this might be the basic principle why several deities are brought in the time of tatera-auma or tatera-krita (ceremonial worship of tatera-rabuga) tatera-rabuga being the deity occupying the highest position in the Garo pantheon of so many deities, it is said that the whole being and the very existence of man is caused by this mite, obviously, therefore the entire humanity is created and caused by it. Although this mite is the highest and the biggest, presiding over every household, it is not
necessary that one should perform, in the event of need _tatara-krita_ in a big way with full grandeur befitting the high status of the _mite_ but every household is free to go within the limits of one's family economy, such a great concession allowed by a great god. This _mite_ is remembered and prayed in all important occasions of conventional community feasting and drinking. In Garo practice, love, friendship and charity are expressed through generous sharing of food and drinks with other fellow beings. Thus, besides ceremonial or organised worship in connection with certain ailments or physical troubles of man, this deity is all along cherished in the minds of every traditional adult Garo. In every occasion of eating and drinking, a little quantity of the drink (rice beer) or food is dropped or put or poured out on the floor as a mark of offering to this deity first before it is taken by man, signifying that it is the god who is served first and thereby the food or drink is purified.

The main diseases believed to be connected with _tatara-rabuga_ are general weakness and debility. There are other indications as well which appear due to the evil influence of _tatara-rabuga_. Sometimes, in certain family it might so happen that though a grown up child refuses to wear clothes and the child is unwilling to wear dresses; thus, in such circumstances, _tatara-krita_ is performed in order that the situation might be rectified by proper propitiation of this deity. Such a practice is generally found amongst the Ambeng Garos of the South Western part of Garo Hills. When a person, after a serious illness, started steady recovery and reach a convalescent stage, _tatara-krita_ or _tatara-amua_ is performed with a view to
win the favour of the deity to bless the patient to regain original health and strength and to protect the recovering person from other possible physical deformities etc. Alters are erected in front of the house and propitiatory rites are held in the morning. One he goat and one fowl are the essential animals for sacrifice. Cows and pigs may be killed for public feast.

Another form of tatara-krita is performed by richer households once a year. In such ceremony, all the different stages of rituals are followed. Some other mite (deities namely, saljong, susime, jaripak, jariting, ohura and bikesil) are also included along with tatara rabuga. Since in the process every detail of the ceremonial worship is very elaborately observed, the function runs for three days. In Atong Garo habitat, the great god is called waimong or wei shunggaba. The symptoms of diseases connected with tatara of ambeng garos except saying that KALAZAR type of disease also comes under the influence of waimong, it is made in a bigger scale, because one bull, one goat, one pig and one fowl are considered to be essential offerings to this mite. Other rituals including the language of propitiation remains the same as in that of Ambeng areas. Thus, during investigation, it is found that characteristically, the waimong or weishunggaba of Atong Garos enjoy the same status as that of tatara-rabuga of Ambeng Garos.

2. rishi-tila: This is another great god usually worshipped by the Ambeng Garos living in the Western foothills of Garo Hills. Diseases connected with this mite are any serious disease akin to Kalazlar,
loss of appetite, intermittent high fever and shivering with chill and sweating and the health of the ailing person getting reduced day by day. One black he goat and one red cock, both uncastrated are sacrificed to the deity, in addition, cow or bull is also killed for public entertainment if of course one can afford to do so. Alters are constructed in front of the house. Materials used for alters are wa'ge (Bambusa tulda) used for the main structure to support the main setting and completed by covering with cane and tree leaves (a particular tree called sha'ko and popular among the Garos). The god is invoked by beat of dema (drums) and sounding of rang (brass gong) and amus or krita is held in the afternoon before sunset. All the attending people enjoy the food and drinks at the close of the function.

3. rishi-dopola : This deity is also propitiated for children’s diseases. When a child suffers being struck by this deity the patient develop intense and irresistible desire to eat meat fish and dried fish and the ailing child grows lean and thin day by day.

4. rishi : This deity is popular among Ambeng as well as Atong Garos rites are performed for this deity for curing glucomma and other eye diseases. Drums and gongs are not sounded at the time of performing the rites. A nominal alter is erected inside the house. One cock is enough for sacrifice. The priest invokes the God and the rituals are performed in the evening before sun set.
5. nokni-rishi (rishi of the house) : In the south west region of Garo Hills which is predominantly inhabited by the Ambeng Garos, this mite is popular. Diseases connected with this mite are all types of skin troubles like Leprosy, Eczema, Dermatitis, Fungus and some other pains due to sore, cut and wound both internal and external. Alter are constructed by making a small jaleng (a small porch or balcony like structure without roof) at the back side of the dwelling house. Some Ambeng Garos say that rites to this mite could be performed mainly by such family who is capable of doing annual denbisila denjaringa rites but, such restriction is not rigid rather it is provisional; other households of lesser standing might also propitiate this mite if they can afford. All rituals for this mite should be held by the side of the path outside the household precinct.

6. tokkol : This mite is said to be an orderly and messenger of tatara rabuga. At the time of denbisila denjaringa (the rites of which are described in subsequent discussion) separate alter is provided in honour of tokkol on the left of the main alter for tatara rabuga.

7. susime and saljong : In my investigation, now where we find that saljong is worshipped singly, but, this mite is either related to susime or it is included in the worship of tatara rabuga or daksipa when denbisila denjaringa (annual sacrificial ceremony) is performed. As regards susime it is called by two names according to the time and hour considered to be
proper for its propitiation, namely, *susime pring* (susime morning) *susime attam* (susime evening). The diseases that could be possibly caused by *susime pring* are the ailments having the symptoms of Typhoid and Pneumonia as believed by the Garos living in the southern stretch of Garo habitat and in the Mymensingh District of Bangla Desh. But, again in certain parts of Garo habitat, it is taken a bit differently, such as maladies like lameness of legs, blindness and ruin of family properties also fall within the divine power of *susime pring* on the other hand, waist pain and throat pain are connected with the *susime attam* as the names indicate, rites to *susime* is held in the morning and to *susime attam* in the afternoon before sunset. Essential offerings include one pig, one goat and one cock; in addition a cow may also be killed for community feasting depending on the size of the gathering. Since *saljong* is taken along with *susime* one white fowl is sacrificed to *saljong* also and a separate alter is allotted to it. Alters are set up in front of the *mijam* (granary) and the whole set of alters are fenced around. *susime attam* on the other hand, is worshipped in the evening before sunset with only fowls. Materials used for the construction of alters in both the cases are *wa'ge* (*bambusa tulda*) *wa'tre* popularly called *tarai* with cane and bamboo leaves used for decorative coverings of the entire bamboo structure.

8. *bidawe* : This *mite* is said to be connected mostly with the ailments such as, weakness and debility, insomnia persistent headache, fever, cold and cough, the patient getting reduced day by day. In
south west Ambeng habitat, this mite is propitiated only with a fowl, but in certain cases a pig is also offered to the god. So, they classify this mite as do'ni bidawe (bidawe requiring fowl) and wakni bidawe (bidawe requiring pig). Yet in another Ambeng areas, particularly in the extreme south and in the valley of Mymensingh District of Bangla Desh, there is no such discrimination, only one category being ascribed to this god and only one fowl is invariably sacrificed to bidawe. The mode of worship of this deity also slightly varies from place to place. In the former, rites are performed at the water-ghat or near the stream where from the performing household draw drinking water; all the rituals being completed on the spot of the rites, but, in the later case, it is most vigorously and elaborately done. In this way several spots like, water-place nokmikkang (front side of the house), and nokgil (back side of the house) are involved. From the main alters just set up at the water-ghat, a thread is stretched out all along the way reaching the dwelling house. The thread enters the house through front door further runs to the middle of the house, and thence passes on to the opposite extremity of the house called nokgil. The actual rituals take place in the afternoon although asambasia (necessary preparations and workings on the alters) had to be completed earlier. In Atong and Ganching divisions, no such mite like bidawe is found, but, among those subtribes, it is usually seen that diseases connected with waimong or waichunggaba of Atong Garos are more or less identical with the diseases related to bidawe of Ambeng Garos. But, then, from the sacrificial point of view, while Ambengs can perform the rites only with a pig or only with a fowl, Atongs are to offer cow,
The explanation justifying such discrepancies is given to me that the *wealung* is considered to be the greatest of all deities.

9. *shendi* : *mite* of this name is very popular among the Ambeng Garos. This deity is believed to be affecting the health of small children and babies. The symptoms are that the body of the boy or girl turns yellowish, pain in the neck; the ailing child or baby, at times becomes insane. One cook of any colour is sufficient for sacrifice. Light alters are fixed up on the roof of the dwelling house at the extreme end of ridging towards the back end of the roof. In some Ambeng villages however, no alters are made for this *mite*, the priest starts his chants invoking the *mite* in the house itself and goes out along the public path with non stop chanting at the same time behaving like a mad or drunken man all along the way.

10. *shendi-kore* : This deity bears almost identical name with earlier *shendi* but from the nature of diseases, for which it is propitiated, this is found to have separate character. This *mite* is known mostly to some Garos living in the extreme southern border of Bangla Desh and those living in the adjoining areas of Mymensingh District of Bangla Desh. This *mite* is said to be connected with all types of female diseases a duck is sacrificed to this deity. Alters for this *mite* are erected outside the compound by decorating a piece of bamboo with dried banana leaves. Rites are held in the afternoon, and ceremony being complete, the alters are dismantled, carried off
and thrown away by the side of the public path. Food and drinks are also served outside the compound.

11. udim : In some parts of Ambeng habitat, this mite is propitiated for diseases like strong influenza and fever, tortoise, duck and dove are sacrificed to this deity. Alters are constructed on the way side; and, an effigy of a man is made out of clay and placed at the alter. Food and drinks are served outside the house. In certain areas of Ambeng sub-tribe this deity is designated as udim bima (female udim) and is believed to cause the ailments like muscular contraction and rheumatic pain etc. Then, to construct an alter to this deity, one young banana tree and one plant of an small herbal shrub called dojagini by the Garos are planted on the selected place and a piece of cloth is spread over them to form a tiny roof as to protect the image of the man which is made of clay and already placed below the shade of the cloth from sun and shower. The place selected for performing the rituals is invariably on the roadside. Udim is very common amongst the Hajongs living in different parts of Garo Hills and as such, it can easily be believed that the udim deity of the Garos is borrowed from Hajong Pantheon (Majumdar, 1972).

12. okmarenga (anjoka or mangjoka) : This mite is familiar among the Ambeng Garos living in the southern stretch of Garo habitat. It is worshipped after the delivery of a child; only eggs are offered to the mite and alters are raised on the road side. Food and drinks
13. **dareohik**: This mite is very common among all the sub-tribes. Diseases caused by this mite are all female diseases such as, child birth and its after effects and other chronic troubles peculiar to the ladies. Rituals in respect of this deity vary from place to place even within the same tribal division. Ambeng Garos of southern region worship it on the roadside and rituals are performed on the midday; a dog is sacrificed to the god. In this particular case, only the male relations of the ailing women must perform the rituals, that is, only the man of the same lineage of the suffering lady (either brother or material uncle) can act as *krite kamal* in order to make it acceptable to the deity and as such, it is not necessary to engage any *kamal* from outside. Food and drinks are not necessary as a part of the rituals, but, there is no bar to provide for public entertainment provided the *kritupa nok* (performing household) can afford the same, and provided that can be arranged within the premises.

In certain places, the same mite is worshipped during the time of child-birth with double alters one at the front and another at the back of the dwelling house. A cock is sacrificed to the god and any *kamal* of the locality can conduct the ceremony. There is another dareohik mite called *dareohik bima* which literally means female dareohik but actually they mean great dareohik. When a man experiences frequent dreams of having illicit sexual connection with his close female relatives such as, sisters, niece, etc. which are within the
prohibited degrees this *mite* is propitiated in order to rid the person from such unchaste experiences. In such event, rituals are performed away from the house. One cock and one dog are offered to the deity.

14. **salbamon** : This *mite* is common to all the different tribes. All kinds of eye diseases are believed to be caused by this deity. In some part of the Ambeng habitat, the deity is worshipped for all types of irruptions on the skin, bruises, and blister etc. In former case all rituals are performed outside the compound a goat and a fowl are sacrificed to the deity; food and drinks are made part of the ceremony. In the later case, only one cock is necessary for the god and regarding the place of the rites it can be arranged in any convenient spot within the compound, and yet in certain groups of villages, usual practice is that, even one duck is enough for offering other rituals remaining the same. We have also discovered that in Lasker elekha 24 and 25 of Mouza III, particularly in and around Damjonggri Ambeng village, there is a popular *mite* called *ghura* whose function appears to be identical with that of *salbamon* as because similar diseases are related to this *mite* and the manner of performing the rites to *ghura* *mite* is found to be the same as to *salbamon*. Therefore, we have not given special room for *ghura* here since it can be easily understood along with the deity *salbamon* ceremony in respect of *ghura* is held in day time.
15. *simbu* : This *mite* is known to the Garos living mostly along the southern part of the Garo habitat bordering the Bangla Desh. Ailments like stomach ache, pain in the abdomen etc. are attributed to this *mite*. One cock of any description is enough for offering. Rites are performed on the side of public thoroughfare. Food and drinks are also served outside the house. In some interior Ambeng areas, this *mite* is called *simbu naran* and offerings are also a bit different; one fowl, one egg and a handful of cooked rice are offered to the deity. The effigy of a cat is also made of straw and it is placed at the altar.

16. *banpang* or *tongrengma* : This *mite* is familiar to the Garos living in the southern valley of the Garo habitat. All types of rheumatic pains and other such bodily troubled are supposed to be caused by the evil influence of this *mite*. One duck is essential for offering to the deity. Rites are performed on the public path. Food and drinks being part of the ceremony are served outside the compound.

As a part of the rituals, the effigy of a duck is made out of split bamboo and is laid somewhere on the roadside, not necessarily at the ceremonial alter. The language used in invoking this deity is Garo. It may be observed here that, one deity *gamlabisi* by name and worshipped by the Atong Garos bears a resemblance to *banpang* or *tong-renga* of Ambeng Garos in all its characteristics.

17. *banpang* or *banpang moila* : This is another deity bearing almost the identical name with the above *banpang* or *tongrengma* and
this deity is familiar amongst certain sections of Ambeng Garos. This deity is believed to be the cause of child diseases of malaria type and it is also the cause of leprosy in the adults. One duck is essential for offering to the deity. In some regions, while banpangmoila is worshipped, ducks, fowls, pigeons and goats are sacrificed to the deity, but, cow sacrifice is strictly prohibited. The place of performing the rites is found under a Bolsil tree (stereo pernum cheonoides) or under Rangre tree (vitex peduncularis) outside family compound. The conducting kamal starts his chants, from the compound of the performing house, goes on invoking the deity till he reaches kimindam (the place where the alters are raised) under a tree mentioned above and the kamal (priest) makes a non-stop invocation till the close of the rituals. The peculiarity of this deity is that, a shape of a peacock is made out of dry straw and is placed at the alter.

18. dalwa : It is a mite having evil influence over the health of human beings causing stomach troubles like diarrhoea, extreme weakness, physical run down and swelling of the body etc. Essential offerings to this deity are one pig, one fowl and one tortoise. This mite does not admit of cow sacrifice. Although the Garos are beef eater, they are not permitted even to touch while worshipping this deity. kimindam (main sacrificial spot) is smeared with fresh earth; cowdung cannot be used for plastering the ground. The alters are raised in close front of the house. Eating of beef is prohibited to such an extent that, not to speak of actually eating but, even the simple taking or carrying beef inside the performing
house is restricted, for the period of one week following the ceremony. In some parts of Ambeng habitat another identical deity called **dalwa chiring** is popular. We do not get any clarification as to whether **dalwa chiring** mean this same one site. But, it is found that **dalwa chiring** is propitiated for the diseases like jaundice and a tortoise is offered to the deity. Beef is similarly restricted. This site is invoked in jharua dialect (local Hajong or Rohha dialect). Alter for **dalwa chiring** are constructed just close to the front of granary.

19. **deker or denochambak**: This deity is connected with the troubles like excessive coughing, throat pain, and deafness resulting in physical breakdown. Only one cock of any colour is enough for offering. Alter are simple and might be raised at any convenient place within the compound.

20. **daini skal**: This site is called the site of the roadside, literally meaning of **skal** is demon. As the name suggests this is believed to be the cause of choleric diarrhoea, extreme weakness accompanied by loss of appetite. One pig is necessary for offering and rituals are performed on the side of the public path. In certain areas, offerings to this god are made as per given by the **sima-kamal**, depending on the **sima indication** and as a result, sometimes, bigger animals like cow, pig and fowl are made essential offerings and in certain cases, even **nakam** (dried fish) might also be used for offerings to this site.
21. **dole-chiring** : This deity is believed to be connected with stomach trouble like diarrhoea and vomiting, extreme weakness and drowsy. This deity is propitiated by the side of a stream. The effigy of a man is made out of dry straw and is placed at the base of the altar. A cock or a hen is enough for sacrifice.

22. **pongrena** : This deity is propitiated against health hazards like persistent headache, the body of the ailing person turning yellowish presumably a case of jaundice and general debility. Cow sacrifice is not permissible to this deity. One cock is enough for sacrifice. Place of rituals is inside the house at the *shusima* (a mainstay of beer jar). Two *muga* plants with leaves on it are tied up to the Central Pillar of the *shusima* and a *gherek* (a tiny conical basket) attached to it constitute an altar. *Muga* is a kind of reed readily available in the jungles.

23. **gali chiring** : This deity is identical with *pongrena* in respect of symptoms of the complaint but the *kamal* invokes the deity in *jharua* dialect and one small chicken is enough for sacrifice. Place of worship must be by the side of a nearby stream or rivulet. For making alters, small mole hill is raised then, thread is stretched over it and a tiny boat is carved out of banana stem.

24. **chisalbata or jaringa** : This is evening deity since rituals to this deity are performed in the evening after sunset. Diseases coming under this deity are all symptoms of black fever (*kalaazar*). The ailing person develops an intense desire for meat,
fresh fish and dried fish etc. and gets reduced in health day by day. The patient feels more serious at night than in the day. The place of worship is selected just near a stream from where the performing family draws drinking water. Two separate wadang are erected, that is the wadang at the right side for chisalbata and another at the left for biwawa. One jar of beer and one cook are the offerings to this deity. Rice and curry are cooked on the spot and food and drinks are served to kama and other attending persons.

Additional entertainments are also arranged inside the house. Another salient feature of this form of rituals is that two bamboo poles are linked up by a thread and from the left wadang the thread is stretched out at least 500 yds or so in the direction towards the performing house. In this case, it is peculiar to note that, whereas bidaw mitt enjoys an independent status elsewhere, it seems to have lost its original position as it is simply been lined up along with chisalbata. We could not get any justifiable explanation for this.

25. remba : This mite is also found among some sections of the Ambeng Garos. Passing stool with blood, presumably blood dysentery, external pile and such other complaints are believed to be due to evil influence of this deity. Rice, beer or liquor need not be offered to be offered to this deity, but peculiarly enough, a dog is sacrificed to the deity and no other animal is used for this purpose. All rituals are held at the public path. As for alters, a piece of Mandal tree (erithrina suberosa stricta) is treated so that it looks like two
horns one with kalpa (small reck made of bamboo strips) on old unused shasan is fixed at the base of the whole structure.

26. ehokdepa: This deity can give troubles like high fever accompanied by extreme cold skin to what can be called Malaria. The alter consisting one seekrek and the contour of a human body made out of thatching grass is raised on the side of the public road. A little quantity of yeast or leavened bread made of rice powder for use in preparation of rice beer is sprinkled over the ground base of the alter. One fowl of any description is enough for sacrifice. The kamal invokes the god in jharua dialect.

27. rangea: This mite is worshipped by certain sections of Ambeng Garos. This deity is believed to create physical ailments like chest pain, and other complaints of similar nature. A suitable place is selected on the stream side for performing the rituals to the deity. To raise an alters, one usual ohekrek is made and placed at the top of a 7 and 8 feet long bamboo pole and the standing bamboo pole is scraped so that masses of shaving hang down from the ohekrek pole itself representing human beard and a piece of banana stem is placed on the ground base of the alter and a little quantity of yeast is sprinkled on them. The kamal invokes the deity in jharua dialect. One fowl of any description is enough for sacrifice.

28. jengkipang: This is another deity which causes swelling of hand, foot and body. The patient can get rid of the trouble, by propitiating it. Alters are raised just at the main entrance of the
dwelllag house in front of noktra. The alter is simply one obekrek (tiny conical bamboo basket) rested on a bamboo pole of certain height and a piece of unginined cotton hanging on it; one piece of cane leaf is also fixed up to the standing bamboo pole. One fowl and one jar of rice beer are enough to the deity.

29. sangkalbala : This mite seems to have similar characters with that of dalwe and dole chiring. The kamal invokes the god in jharua dialect. Diseases related to this mite are swelling of the abdomen, followed by shrinking of buttocks and debility. A pot of rice beer and one fowl are needed for offering. The alters consisting of one bamboo strip bent into the shape of a bow; and a piece of bamboo is split into two halves we'korang and it is placed horizontally where a little oil-lamp is put lighted. A handful of yeast is sprinkled on the base of the alter.

30. a'ni matchi : This is believed to be the cause of headache, disiness and giddiness. Certain sections of the Garos worship this deity on the roadside but in some villages, the rituals are performed by the side of the dwelling house. Construction of alters are also done in a slightly different way in different places but, most complete one seems to consist in one full size wetre with leaves on and a piece of unginined cotton lie hanging above it and below it, four wetre poles of certain lengths are posted in each corner of a rectangular space representing four legs of an animal and a obekrek, is placed by the side of earlier tall bamboo pole. One coock of any colour is enough for sacrifice; no bear is
required for offering. The deity does not accept beef as such cow sacrifice is prohibited.

31. gongebu rete : This can give some minor physical trouble to man. It is usually propitiated by offering one cook only. Like other deities it does not require rice beer. Alters are also very simple. One bamboo pole is made pointed at the top and posted on the ground and the same pole is treated so that a huge masses of shaving appear from the pole itself.

32. wadot : This is also familiar to Ambeng Garos. This has also similar characters to that of dola ohiring the diseases related to this deity and the language of invokation are the same. The kamal generally makes chanting in jharua dialect. Place of worship is by the close side of the house specially below the caves. One black hen is enough for sacrifice.

33. a'isi : This mite is known to Ambeng Garos but among the Atong Garos also there is one such mite to which they give the name taisuk and it is in all respects identical with a'isi mite of the Ambengs. a'isi mite is connected mostly with the child diseases specially with such complaints which can not be easily diagnised. The ailing child or baby cries ceaselessly. Rituals are performed on the road side. The kamal invokes the god in Garo. One cock is enough for sacrifice. To make an alter, a water is cut through into two halves and posted vertically and then, another two pieces of split
bamboo are attached to those two already standing vertically.

Ambeng Garos perform *a'gi krit* in the event of sudden serious illness. The person suffers from high fever and sweating one fowl of any description is sufficient for offering to the deity. Place for performing rituals is found somewhere in the jungle. Under the practice, alters to this deity consists of one scrapped bamboo with masses of shavings drooping down is posted on the ground and then a piece of stone, one old worn out dao without handle, one fowl, one imitation gong made of *kimbal* (*a small tree, callicarpa arborea*) leaves are put under the standing bamboo alter.

34. *genchu*: This is believed to be the cause of insanity of man. Whenever its evil influence act upon a man he develops insanity, becomes uncontrollable and runs away from home. At times, the affected person in sub-conscious state runs out at random and often gets lost in the deep jungle temporarily. It renders difficult for the relatives to call him home and to bring him back to normality. Under such circumstances, rituals are performed in the highest available peak that may lie on the public path. Only one fowl is enough for sacrifice.

35. *sunj marang*: All throat troubles such as intense pains in the throat, vomiting blood and other like symptoms supposedly tuberculosis are believed to be caused by the evil influence of this deity. This deity is propitiated by offering eggs only and alters are raised by the side of the dwelling house.
This is generally believed to be the cause of pneumonia type of ailments. Invocation to this deity is done under a tree. Either a duck or a fowl or a pigeon is enough for sacrifice. *kamal* invokes the deity in Garo.

This is worshipped whenever a person suffers from painful swelling of belly and not only for man, but even for cows and bulls whenever similar trouble occurs, this is propitiated. Chicks are used for sacrifice. Rituals is performed at any convenient place within the household precinct.

All ailments of pneumonia type are taken to be due to the evil influence of this deity. Rituals to this deity are held at the approach of the village. The *kamal* invokes the deity in jharua dialect. *amua* or *krita* can be performed either by an individual family alone or it can be done by the whole village jointly. In case of only single household doing it, only one pair of pigeons are given for offering to the deity but when the ceremony is being performed by the whole village, a goat and one pair of pigeons are usually offered to the god. As a part of the rituals, thread are wired across the path at the point of *krita* and none is allowed to enter into the village during the performance; and the whole village is sprayed with water by the *kamal* as a mark of purifying the entire locality.

This mite is popular amongst the Ambeng Garos. The deity is connected with choleric types of diseases. The
place of performing rituals is chosen by the side of a stream or on the river side. The priest invokes the deity in jharua dialect. *krita* may be performed either by an single family or by several households jointly. To form a part of an alter, a little boat is carved out of banana stem and the figure of a man made out of straw is seated on it and is drifted down at the close of the ceremony. The *kamal* first takes bath as if for cleaning his body and dress up in a plainers style before entering the sacrificial alter; goat is enough for sacrifice to the deity. Cow sacrifice is not allowed and not only that, but, the performing family or families are not allowed to eat beef for the period of one month from the day of performing rituals.

40. *churu chupal* : This *mite* is worshipped when the health of man gets reduced and thereby becomes thinner day by day accompanied by a loss of appetite. *krita* is then performed either within the compound or on the road side. Animals used for offerings to god are either duck or a fowl or a pig. The priest invokes the deity in jharua language. This deity does not accept cow sacrifice.

41. *holdam chiring* : This also usually torment the human beings by creating all sorts of stomach trouble such as passing stool with blood, mucous stool and acute pain all over the abdomen something of the kind of blood dysentery etc. The priest invokes deity in jharua language. Only one goat is offered to the god; cow sacrifice is prohibited rituals is hold under the grove of trees outside, away from the house. As for construction of alters, a lump of soft earth is collected and raised into a pyramidal mole hill at its top two hand like forms
are made and in each horn a green chilli is tagged and then, a bamboo cage (usually used for carrying fowls and chicks) is put on the top of the altar.

42. **ohura gitting** : This is worshipped whenever a man suffers from heavy external bleeding due to accident or cut etc. This deity does not accept cow sacrifice and could be appeased with offer of only one full grown red cock. The priest invokes the god in jharua dialect. Rituals is performed on the road side.

43. **ebisik** : According to Ganching Garos, this is the smallest of all the deities. This can cause severe chill and sudden warmth of the body. It is worshipped in the upper reaches of the stream. A piece of banana stem is treated into a cylindrical form in the shape of dama (typical Garo drum) and Gongs are made out of tree leaves. One fowl and one egg are offered to the god. Although this is known to be the smallest, Ganching Garos believe that it has got peculiar nature and say that if no timely appeasement with necessary offerings is made to this deity, it could sell the patient to bigger or higher deities like dura or duramong which would then entail heavier and more extensive sacrifices such as pig etc. So, whenever a person is attacked by this, one should promptly go for appeasing this deity so that heavy expenses might be avoided.

44. **kore mite** : This usually dwells in the high rocky inaccessible an out of way places. It can cause insanity in man. In its nature, this deity is identical with the Ambeng deity named
gonshu, but Ambeng Garos worship gonshu on the hill top, whereas the Ganching Garos do not perform invocation in any manner nor offer any sacrifice.

45. salboka or salni mite: This is popular amongst the Ganching Garos. Whenever a person suffers from Kalaazar, Jaundice and swelling of the body etc., salboka krita is performed. Altars are erected within the compound and a goat is sacrificed to the god.

46. jaringa: This is commonly known to all Garos living both in hills and valleys. It has got very interesting characters. Whenever a person suffers constant sickness gradually getting reduced in health without any recognisable diseases, Garos believe that the soul of the ailing person, in such case, is going to be reborn in other family near or distant, close relations or otherwise, known or unknown. It is strongly believed that the soul of the suffering man is being conceived in a woman's womb elsewhere. Whenever such case occurs the pregnant woman concerned usually experiences such a dream that, a person has come to her house bag and baggage to permanently live in her family. The few member might be known or unknown, from near or far, close or distant relations, and might belong to her own community or to other non-Garo community. The family and other kins desire that soul of the decaying sick man returns to him so that he might enjoy his original health and strength. It is generally believed that the more new baby in the womb of the concerned pregnant woman becomes developed the more serious the conditions of the ailing person becomes and ultimately, with the delivery of the child, the suffering
person dies. The whole phenomenon is said to be caused by *ma'bra* the spirit which lies behind all human births and as such, in order to honour it, ceremony must be arranged to propitiate such supernatural power. But no one has given special position to this in the Garo Pantheon. It is also observed from the manner of worship of such spirits as *ma'bra* that, in some sections of Ambeng Garos, the same procedure are followed while performing *bidawe*. One person has told us the meaning of *bidawe* as debility or decay. As regards the place of worship, the entire distance starting from the water place from where the performing family draws drinking water, a thread is stretched till it reaches the house and the thread enters the house through the back end of the house, further runs to centre of the house, and a Gong is seated on the floor and over that gong the end of the thread coming from the water place droops down just above the gong with a piece of hand ginned cotton hung from the end of the thread. The priest starts his chants right from the water place and goes to the house, following the course of the thread invoking the deity all the way at the top of his voice and finally reaches the house and enters inside. By this process, Garos mean that the departing soul of the patient is being recalled and prayer to the concerned deity is being offered so that the soul of the ailing person might return to its original body. The gong is kept below the drooping tip of the thread in order to receive the returning soul. The thread is the symbollic representation of road by which the out going soul could return to its former abode. Rest of the rituals are completed in the house; pig is essential offering to this deity.
47. **tongkandi** : This is also believed to have had in troubles like headache etc. Whenever a certain ailment which would rather require the more powerful deity for curing the disease with bigger amount of sacrifice, this deity having lesser demand of offerings is worshiped as alternative. Only one cock of any colour is enough for sacrifice. Altars composed of one bamboo pole posted vertically with one chekrek on the top is sufficient.

48. **tongrengme** : This is another deity causing insanity temporary or lasting in man. Whenever any person of any age develops some sort of insanity, derangements or madness suddenly or gradually, this deity is propitiated. One cock of any colour is sufficient for offering. Peculiarly enough, the altars to this deity is fixed up on the ridge of the roof towards the back extremity. Altars are however very simple, a half size of ordinary bamboo species called watre with leaves on it is planted on the roof.

49. **gannolma** : This deity is popular in some parts of Ambeng habitat and connected mostly with the diseases of the babies and children. Whenever a baby or a child suffers from some sort of insanity and other like trouble, this deity is worshiped. Ceremony and other rituals are same as that of rituals offering to Tongre except in that the altars are erected by the side of the dwelling house just below the eaves. A short bamboo pole is stuck on the ground and a piece of cotton is kept hanging from the top of the pole.
50. **gonggot mite** : This is popular in the Ganching areas. Diseases connected with this deity are general debility, loss of appetite resulting in deteriorating condition of the health, duck is offered to the deity. Altar is made of one *taai* bamboo pole stuck upright on the ground with a piece of cotton hanging from the top of the pole and then a piece of short bamboo pole is scratched in order to produce a mass of shaving and fixed to support the first altar bamboo pole. The structure is then covered with the leaves of Bengaru or Araru (a species of jungle palm plants) and can leaves. Ceremony is performed in the open courtyard.

51. **ai marong** : This is popular amongst the Ganching Garos. It has got identical characters with that of *gaulabisi mite* of the Atong sub-tribe. This deity is worshiped for all sorts of pains in the joints, muscles waist pain and all other troubles of rheumatic nature etc. Two ducks are essential for offering to the deity. The propitiatory rituals to this deity runs whole night. Two priests are required to perform the *krita*; one invokes the deity from inside the house and another does his job outside the house in open space. No regular altar of any description is necessary for this but, two horses are prepared out of namana stems and both the priests pose riding on each of those dummy horses saying all the time of invocation or prayer to the god. The rituals having been performed at night, at day break those dummy horses are thrown away in the stream or river. Food and curry are cooked on the water-place and the priests and other participants eat them up on the spot.
52. chini mite or bugarani: The term means Mermaid. Some Garos believe that such deity reside in the deep water as a protector and preserver of fishes and other aquatic denizens. Such place or the part of the river where the deity is believed to live is generally deep and wide making the entire atmosphere quite grave and serene. The deity does not however demand any ceremonial propitiation and it is not responsible for any human maladies, but the people simply regard and respect the sanctity of the place, the abode of the bugarani. Fishing is done on this river or pool in a normal way; in no case, water is allowed to be polluted by applying poisonous substance as for catching fish.

53. shapal: This is known to Atong Garos. Diseases related to this deity are that, the ailing person develops extreme laziness having no inclination to physical work, loss of energy, and general debility. Invocations to this deity is done in the open courtyard of the performing family; goats and fowls are sacrificed to the god.

54. nischik: All types of eye-diseases and all kinds of injuries due to cut, wound, etc. and all sorts of sores in hands and feet are believed to be due the evil influence of this deity as told by the Atong Garos. Krita to this deity is performed at the out of the way place in the jungle or near a stream. Black he-goat is offered to the deity.
55. dakkal-hoka: Among the Atong Garos, this deity is worshipped when a person suffers from inflammation of stomach as a result of indigestion and irregularity of motion. Animals used for sacrifice are pig or fowl or egg as may be advised by the priest depending on the devination.

56. baobil kawa: baobil kawa is peculiar to Atong sub-tribe. Whenever a man married to a widow falls very seriously ill, baobil kawa krita is performed. It is believed that the spirit or ghost of the deceased husband of the widow, out of envy, cause trouble to the health of the newly remarried husband as a result, the husband of the widow falls ill. The ceremony is very queer lasting whole night that is, it starts at dusk and ends at dawn. To start the ceremony, a man representing the spirit or ghost of the deceased husband appears and enters into fighting with the party in waiting. Such mock-fighting goes on for the whole night without victory or defeat to either party, symbolising that both of them are equal in strength and everytime the fighting ends in a draw. However, at dawn, the last bid is fought and the spirit or ghost is defeated signifying that the enemy or the evil spirit which has been tormenting the ailing husband is defeated once for all and thus, the ailing person could be expected to recuperate.

57. shura or sura: Some sections of Ambeng Garos believe in this mite. All types of eye diseases are believed to be caused by its evil influence as such, it has many identical characters with salbamon of the Ambeng habitat and with nischik of Atong Garos as well. One fowl is enough for sacrifice. To prepare an altar, a
piece of bamboo is cut through into two parts lengthwise and posted on the ground vertically side by side and then two pieces of splitted bamboo bar are placed on the first two standing poles and a piece of cotton is hung on it.

Besides the nature and behaviour of the deities described above, there are still many more disease-ouring deities with varied names and titles. The mode of worship and sacrifices also vary from place to place. This is quite evident from the fact that the way the Ambong Garos propitiate bidawe, the offerings they make and the place for krita they choose might be slightly different from the practices found in Ganching sub-tribe. In old days, when the Garos were living purely traditional way of life, only such animals, which are healthy and young were taken for sacrificial purpose. Female animals were not given to the deity even in those days. Of the male animals also, castrated ones are not accepted. As regards the colour of the animals meant for slaughter, black is preferable particularly in the case of goats and bulls. In case of such colour not being available, other colour might be given but it should be of one colour and that under such customs impotent livestocks are not offered to the deity. Hens are killed only in the time of do'sia (marriage) ceremony.

The deities as far enumerated and described are the deities connected mostly with the health of mankind and as such those deities could be termed as 'cause and cure' of the human physical malaises. Those deities cannot be perceived by the human senses not we have come across any incidence of any vision of apparition of any such
deity in any form being tolled or expressed by any Garo. It is believed by the Songsarek Garos that every kind of physical malady is caused by the anger, wrath or evil influence of certain particular deity or deities, so, no suffering could be mitigated without proper propitiation of the concerned deity or deities. As told by some elderly Garos, in certain instances, it becomes necessary to take several deities along with the main or principal deity in a single sacrificial ceremony in order to make the propitiation more exhaustive and comprehensive covering all doubts and suspicions regarding other alternative causes instead of dealing with these subsidiary deities separately; thereby saving great deal of time and expenditure. For example, while performing denjaringa-denbisila (an expensive annual sacrificial ceremony) several deities like tatara, susime, saljeng, jaripak-jaritang, onura and bikesi are combined together.

Besides the above named mites (deities) there are some visible inanimate objects which are believed to be capable of doing harm in one way or other to human beings. Sometimes, for certain ailments, it is necessary to appease such object or objects by proper propitiation. The following are few of such objects believed to have certain influencing power over human health and welfare.
1. **dareng or rang**: The literal meaning of **Rang** is brass or metal gong which is usually used for beating in all important and major ceremonies and functions. Every song-sarek Garo family of average standard possesses invariably few **rang** if not many as a part of family property. There are many small household who do not have even a single **rang**. It does not matter whether one has **rang** or not, but Songsarek Garos say that **rang** also can exercise its evil influence upon the health of man. However, in such case, matter requires confirmation by the **sima-kanal** by consulting the **sima** indication; one pig and one fowl are the essential offerings to **rang**. Altars are placed on the **maljuri** (main foundation pillar) inside the house. The altar is very simple, consisting of one **chekrek** rested on the top of a bamboo pole. All garments belonging to the ailing person are put on the ground below the altar while performing the rituals. Yet, in some parts of Garo Hills, it is seen that the same type of **rang-krita** being performed for all types of pex accompanied by intermittent fever rising and falling suddenly. Altar, consisting of one chekrek as in the former is stuck upright on the open ground infront of the house, and in such case one fowl either cock or hen is enough for sacrifice.

2. **daru or rongrebu**: The literal meaning of **daru** or **rongrebu** is egg like piece of round stone. Whenever a man suffers from such trouble like hydrocele, hernia, inflammation in gullet etc. propitiation to this deity is made upon a big round piece of stone and a duck is necessary for offering. We asked several elderly villagers as to whether actually the disease is due to the influence
of *daru* or *rongrebu* or after the patient experiences such trouble as stated above the spot where the big round stone stands is selected simply as a right place for performing rituals. But, none could give us any bold reply as to whether the stone create the trouble first or the disease appears first and most of them hinted a hypothetical assumption by saying that disease comes first and then a spot where an unusually big piece of round stone lie, is selected as the most appropriate site for performing the rituals; the idea being based on the assumption that the ailments like hydrocele and inflammation of testis etc. and the forms of egg-shape stones are of similar character. Garo word *rebu* means hydrocele; so the literal meaning of *rongrebu* means stone resembling *rebu*.

3. **babare** or **boltegatchu** : It is a kind of middle sized deciduous tree widely known to the Garos. In appearance, it resembles mango tree which is called *tegatchu* in Garo and hence, the alternative name of *boltegatchu* is given to *babare* tree. It is one of the species of ordinary trees and seldom used by the people for any domestic purpose. It is not so poisonous or harmful by itself but persons are very susceptible to its influence. If such a person touches the tree or sit under it or pass through its shade, the person suffers from eruption all over the body but there are some who appear to be immune from its environmental effect. There are ample empirical evidences to prove the fact. The cases of *babare* allergy are well familiar to both Songmerek and Christian Garos in all parts of Garo habitat.
4. rongdik: An earthen pot for storing rice. Some Garos believe that rongdik also sometimes causes some sort of muscular pain in man. In that case, it is propitiated early in the morning by offering one fowl. The fowl is killed, its blood smeared on the rongdik feathers are stuck up on it and the meat is cooked for morning meal.

5. kram: A kram is a Garo drum of small oblong size larger at one end and is disproportionately smaller at the other. Since Garos regard it as drum of the deity, it is not used in ordinary functions except in certain solemn occasion. Kram is also believed to be capable of doing some harm to man and in certain cases it may cause death. So, whenever any member of the family is known to be suffering due to its evil influence, the trouble becomes very serious and consequently the patient might die. Then the troubles could be rectified by performing proper ceremony and rituals to it. Kram is used in the functions such as, in propiation of deities like bidawe susima rishi in the time of Rugals during Wangala festival, in rongchugal during the time of mangrea at the time of chanting dirge over the person, during the function of roofing large dwelling house of a well to be family.

Benevolent Deities

According to the traditional religion of the Garos there are certain deities which are worshiped and adored for the
well being of the people in general. These deities are not directly connected with any particular diseases or ailments but they are believed to possess mysterious and supernatural power of looking after the welfare of the humanity. Therefore, such deities might be classed under another category. The deities falling under this group are not visible or perceptible to human senses but their blessings or wrath could be felt in every field of socio-economic life of the people. The following are some of such deities:

1. **salbaria** ; **salbaria-krita** is usually performed in the jhum field. The ceremony is held once a year sometimes in the months of July-August when the jhum crops are in full bloom. In some cases, the ceremony is confined to one individual family or household and hence, it is proper to call it as annual family worship. The main objectives of **salbaria-krita** is for the future protection of the lives of the members of the family from all kinds of enemies seen and unseen.

2. **a'ba niamua** or **miditata** : This kind of ceremony is performed in the jhum field praying to deity for giving healthy crops, good harvest and proper rain. The ceremony is held in the jhum land but food and drinks are served in the permanent village homestead after completing all the rituals at the place of worship. Traditional Garos believe that the jhum crops being varied and multiple need to be protected from various destructive agents seen or unseen. So, through **a'ba niamua** or **miditata** the concerned
deity could be invoked and appeased so that the crops are protected from such enemies. It is a common trouble usually faced by the most jhum cultivators and their crops are very often subjected to various diseases like kubisi or mende sakani sao (effect of curse by envious persons), goera (rain god which possesses explosive energy), rakashi (one who can bless the man with good things and at the same time can devour them), saljong (one who can give more out of little), areta (which can cause wa'rama to the plants meaning, the plants become dry and yellow and ultimately die), bang (which can cause rotting of fruits), ohura (which can curse and defile the entire crops resulting less production inspite of apparent fertility of the land), mirishi (gods of all kinds of worms and insects etc. which cause extensive damages to the standing crops), karami (which cause premature decay to young crops). Therefore, the main objective of performing such ceremony is like a preventive measure taken betimes. While taking down the information, we casually asked our informants; all these rituals being performed whether there occurs any trouble still to the crops and if they could recall any precedence to prove the favourable response they received from those deities to their prayer. But, most of them gave us the unanimous opinion saying 'We cannot say to certain nor we can simply live with positive hope to get a bumper crops against our prayer and propiation; we just pray to god because we are bond by tradition. Every year, at least some sorts of troubles visit our cultivation'.

3. marang oha'a  

Under marang oha'a amua no particular deity is worshipped but the gods in general are remembered and adored. Such ceremony is observed just before touching or handling paddy and other seeds preserved for planting in the jhum. All kinds of seeds are collected together, dedicated and purified in the name of god; thus, the function marks the advent of jhum cycle. It is a ceremony to be observed by all the households of the village collectively on an appointed day in the manner they celebrate a'song tata. The krita ceremony is held in the courtyard of the noksa just close to the bandesal (an open public rest house). Cows and fowls are killed and food and drinks are served to all present. All the families contribute to meet the expenses for public entertainment. Another idea behind marang oha'a is that men repent from wrong or evil deeds which might have been done or committed in their past life. From this day onwards, they are considered morally pure and physically fit to go forward to discharge their respective functions.

4. galmak-saljong or nokmarenge-asiroka  

The ceremony is invariably held immediately in the morning of the day after the burning of jhum before planting seeds. The objective behind such observation is to cleanse the households singly or jointly before setting foot on the new jhum for cultivation. Food and drinks are served to all present according to the ability of the performing household.
5. Goera: Goera is regarded by the Ganching Garos as greatest of all deities. Ordinarily it is not worshiped nor any sacrifice is made to this deity against any physical ailments in the manner it is done to other disease causing deities, according to some Garos, it is the god of strength, wisdom, power, war and peace and as such, in every important occasion of eating and drinking this god is remembered and a little quantity of beer is poured out in this honour. However some Garos say, in the days of head-hunting, cows has to be sacrificed to a'song mite (deity of the land) and a pig to the sal (sun). Goera itself does not demand any such offerings.

6. a'mera-kalkambe: This special merit of a'mera-kalkambe according to the Ganching Garos is its power of blessing the men with life partner and of springs. It can also bless the hunters with good game. This deity a is not worshiped in the manner as it is done to other deities but even then in every occasion of eating and drinking a little quantity of drink or food is offered on the floor by way of offering. Some Garos say that if some one happens to eat food with good curry such as fish and meat etc. in presence of children without sharing any bit of stuff with them, the person is not appreciated by the god and he is not fit to get any blessing from a'mera kalkambe.

7. a'song mite or a'song tata or denbilsia: This deity and its sacrificial ceremony is given different names in different regions but the main objective behind the ceremony remains the same. a'song mite means deity of the land; a'song tata means sacrifice
to the mother earth; *denbilsia* means the annual offerings to the
god for the village welfare. Thus *a'song tata* rituals are held
during the period before starting cutting and clearing jungles for
the new jhuma. Cows, pigs and goats are killed for sacrifice to the
deity or deities. In some Ambeng villages, the ceremony is called
*denjaRINGA* which carries the same meaning as earlier described. The
objective underlying such celebration once a year is variously given
as praying to god for the protection of the whole population of the
region from impending diseases, accidents and other natural and
unnatural calamities during the year and for rendering fertility to
the land and for the protection of grains and crops from destruction
by unforeseen hostile elements. Ganching Garos believe that there are
many stray and haunting deities roaming about, some of such deities
are *chisik*, *rangi* and *shual ohongal* etc. Those deities, by their
evil spirits often poison the jhum crops and the effects of those
deities are such that crops of all kinds prematurely not away without
yielding any harvest. *kore gonchu* - the deity causing insanity
and derangement in human beings. *rakha* - the deity which causes
draught in the land; *katchi* - the deity which can suddenly emit
explosive energy causing disaster to human lives and properties.
*dhal-karap* - natural calamity and scarcity of food in the country;
*sabo-sarang* - diseases and ailments of all kinds. So, Ganching Garos
desire that the entire habitat must be freed from all these possible
dangers likely to come from such stray and hostile deities. Therefore,
by this ceremony, they mean to pray to *dura* or great god.
Along the Jmbeng Garos, at the time of doing the identical ceremony that is *denbilisja*, a group of deities are included and they are *tatara, saliong, susime, jaripak-jariting, ohura* and *balkesil* and also the function lasts for three days. From first to the third day the ceremony passes through different stages of elaborate and detailed observances. It would have therefore been desirable to deal with this particular *Ambeng denbilisja* separately in its entirety, the *denbilisja* ceremony is found to bear prophylactic meaning behind.

8. *shi-mite* or *salrak-tata* (rain god) : As the name indicates, this deity is worshiped whenever there is drought causing hardship to the whole region. Rituals are performed by the side of a deep lake or by the side of a deep pool of the river which abounds in various kinds of aquatic animals. A pigling is generally sacrificed to the god. Such practice is popular mostly amongst the Ganoching Garos and also amongst the Ruga and Chibok subtribes, but, there is another corresponding practice called *salrak-tata* in the Ambeng areas also. *salrak-tata* means to invoke the rain god for mitigating the draught; but, unlike Ganoching Ruga and Chibok Garos, Ambeng people perform their *salrak-tata* on the high place preferably on the highest available hill top of the locality; goats and fowls are offered to the god. Now, as regards the place of worship chosen by those different subtribes, it is observed that there is a contrast between the two; while one select the lowest ground the other area would go for the highest peak. Both seems to be right in their respective stand points. Such regional variations are indicative of the different sonal characteristics which on the other hand clearly reveals that
different tribal sub-divisions enjoy freedom of thought and
interpretation and the conception relating to their own faith; one
is not to be dominated by the doctrine or dogmas of the other.

9. *gitchipong a'siroka* : *gitchipong a'siroka* ceremony
is celebrated for the general well-being of the entire habitat as a
whole. It is observed in the months of February-March of the year
before burning new Jhums and also before sowing or growing seeds in
the *a'breng* (jhum used for the second year). Since *a'breng* does not
require burning like new jhums except doing minor clearing it is
ready for earlier cultivation. All the villagers freely contribute
according to their ability to meet the expenses to be incurred in the
celebration. The place of worship is selected at the cross road of
the village paths or at the junction of the public roads. As for
making altars, an oblong bamboo basket is made and tied round by
bamboo strips, then one mortar is seated upright, one bamboo ladle
and a piece of white cloth measuring about two metres are all placed
side by side on the altar. The next day after the ceremony, is
observed as a day for complete rest. Gams call such day as *salnima*,
meaning the day on which they refrain from doing any work but
considers the day as solemn and a day of rest. One cow, one pig, one
black he goat, one cock, one pigeon, one egg, one langoor and a piece
of white cloth measuring about two metres and a bunch of banana are
offered to the god.

10. *ganna-mite* : The ceremony connected with this deity
is popularly known as *nokma ganna* ceremony. The literal meaning
of ganna is to wear. Such ceremony is practised mostly by the Ganohing and Chisak Garos. Some indications of such ceremony are observable in the Atong areas also. It is believed by some that whenever a man grows very rich and amasses wealth, various kinds of physical maladies and ailments invade his family as a result, members of that family suffer from different types of complaints. Such physical troubles are many and varied occurring every now and then without any recognisable causes and not being cured by propitiating other deities as well. Whoever the ailing or suffering persons or persons might be a little remission of the trouble could be observed whenever the male relations that is brothers and maternal uncles of the principal female member of the household visits the house. That means, according to certain section of Garos, the ailing person feels better in presence of ohra brothers and maternal uncles of the female members of the family and the trouble relapses whenever they are away. Under such circumstances, all the ohra of the concerned family assemble to decide upon a remedial measure that should be taken. In such situation, there could be no other way out but to organise a nokma ganna ceremony. The ganna ceremony being mostly of the kind of 'Thanks giving' than of a simple sacrifice would rather involve huge expenses. It is therefore observed that the function is a challenge to the household; it is a test to the strength of economic soundness of the family and so, the ceremony heavily drains out the family exchequer both in kind and in cash, because of the fact that in ganna observance, the performing family has to lavishly spend for sumptuous and luxurious community feasting and other charitable purposes. One special feature of the
nokma-ganna is that, all the ehraa should bear a portion of expenditure but then, their spending would be limited to the certain essential items only, such as the cost of a red turban, baru or denil (shield), milam (Garo traditional sword), jaksil (brass or bronze metal armlet) and silk clothes etc. and the major part of the expenses still remains with the performing household. Whenever the proposal for such luxurious ceremony receives a final decision, all the ehraas of the concerned family would sit together chalkling out detailed plan for taking up necessary preparations which becomes a huge affair.

The preparations start with finding out where and how to procure sufficient lives stocks, such as cows, pikes, goats and fowls etc. for offering to the deity and for public entertainment. The second stage of discussion would be devoted to making arrangements as to the procurement of other essential articles like kotip (turban), baru or denil (shield made out of skin of rhinoceros), milam (Garo sword) and jaksil (metal armlet). Therefore, they think of some other works which need to be attended to well ahead, such as, construction of pig sty, for keeping collected pikes and to make out manger to feed the pikes and to arrange wage labourers and so on for the function, the duties and responsibilities are great and varied but these are nicely distributed and adjusted amongst themselves. In nokma ganna ceremony, all the workers are engaged on payment that is on wage basis and not as voluntary helpers as in the case of other sacrificial and social functions. Therefore, it would entail the performing household huge expenditure. There are
diverse functions and responsibilities to be discharged by different persons irrespective of age and sexes singly or in groups and all of them would be adequately paid for the days they rendered their services during the ceremony. In every traditional ceremony or observance, neighbours, relatives from far and near and other villagers usually render their services on voluntary basis but it is not so in nokma ganna ceremony. Since it is a ground celebration, much care and strict vigilance must be maintained and as such, division of labour is strictly and perfectly regulated, so that different sections of the management are efficiently run. The function starts from the afternoon of the first day but the actual nokma ganna (wearing of the metal armlet) by the nokma (head of the performing family) takes place on the second day. The nokma having been so decorated with the jaksil on his arm and a red turban on his head and with the immaculate endi and muga cloth on is thenceforth called gann nokma, a title of the highest order conferred on him as a mark of recognition to his sound economic footing and highest social status. Such persons are few and far between. The people of the region pay much respect and honour to him. The red turban worn by the nokma is supposed to be presented by any of the obra. Muga and Endi cloth are much valued and must be purchased for the occasion. Many relatives and villagers from far and near attend the function and as such, the gathering becomes unusually big, giving the occasion an extraordinary colour. On the concluding day of the ceremony, rice, paddy, dried fish and other food stuff are strewn by way of distributing free of cost to all the attending villagers and such act of open handedness and extreme
hospitality signifies that the owner, the *ganna nokma*, has reached such a high economic standard in the society, that he is able to feed the poor sections of the community freely out of his own acquired wealth.

On field investigation, it is found that innumerable deities are appearing from different parts of the Garo habitat but it is felt that such numerical figure does not count much in helping to discover the real significance of the traditional concept of god or supernatural. Moreover, most of the deities found in different parts appear to be identical and overlapping in nature and character, their nomenclature and mode of sacrifice only being slightly different in different places. We have therefore retained only such deities which we deem to be important for my study. The basic concept of the supernatural, according to the traditional religion of the Garos have already been discussed under three main categories, viz

*Unseen or unmanifested deities like, tataara, rabuaga, dakgipa, saljong, susime, rishi and bidawe and so on. These are the deities standing as causes and sure of all kinds of physical malaises. They do good to the humanity but also bring misfortune to them.*

*Under second category, we have discussed some of the material objects which the traditional Garos believe to possess certain attributes of the deities and so, due respect and veneration are paid to them and are perceivable to the human senses. Some of*
such objects are *rang, daru, babare, rongdik* and *krem* etc. But these objects cannot be regarded as real deities in the true sense of the term, yet, Garos fear them because, under certain situation, they are believed to possess influence to create trouble to human health. Therefore, in order to appease these objects, sometimes it becomes necessary to perform such rituals exactly in the manner as it is done in respect to other godlings.

Under this category, another batch of objects may also be properly included; these are *kiol, glass* and *mekindik* related mostly to the granary. Since some of them such as, *kiol* and *glass* are seen only sometimes, at times these obscure, mysterious material objects being out of sight may be called partially perceiveable supernatural beings and as such, from the point of Garo view those objects do not deserve the status of full fledged *mite* yet, they may be considered as partially visible supernatural beings.

Under third category, come all the *mite* worshiped and venerated by the people for the general well being of the whole populace of the region. They are not directly worshiped against any diseases or ailments but propitiated and prayed with the hope of getting blessings in respect to the health, wealth, happiness and prosperity of the nation.

These deities are worshiped according to the demand of the time, situation and other factors requiring such worship and sacrifice. Under normal social situation these deities are not worshiped nor propitiated. These are the *mite* of the general well being,
Partially Visible Deities. Besides, there are certain unnatural objects like mibanji, klass, kiol and mekindik to which Garos attach much respect and obedience. Such objects do not enjoy the same status as other disease causing deities perceivable or unperceivable and as such, they are not to be worshiped with usual ceremony and rituals but, they are simply regarded as some sorts of uncommon things or objects to be adored and revered, visiting only certain deserving households of sound economic standing. Though these objects are not directly connected with the health and sickness of man, their very presence is regarded by every one as good women. Some Garos say that, in some big granary there live some strange and uncommon objects mentioned above and these are not found anywhere else. Description of such uncommon objects are as follows:

(i) mibanji : It is said to be a little cat like animal found to live inside a big and dark granary only.

(ii) klass : It is a snake like living object but shorter than a common snake. Ordinarily, such object may be suspected to be a kind of work which is called chikkil by the Garos. It has bright, shining neat and clean body. It lives inside big dark granaries.

(iii) kiol : It is said that this object also looks like a snake. It usually brings dirty things in to the grain house.

(iv) mekindik or mirengdik : It means the bottom portion of the paddy stored in the granary. As the same suggests, it is not a living object like former three, but it is a name given to the bottom portion of the paddy stored in the granary. The last remnants of the paddy stuck on the floor becomes hardened as a result of long
accumulation. Formerly, in Garo families of average standard, whenever paddy is taken out for daily consumption the last quantity is left over undisturbed to remain as mikindik or mirongdik and consequently, after several years of adding with fresh grains, the old remains at the bottom becomes hard and it is called mekindik. Some Garos maintain that it is not wise to use up the whole quantity but it is good to keep something for the granary. By this, they mean to say that they are keeping it for certain deities which are supposed to be the giver and protector of wealth, obviously the tatar, rabuga, saljong and susime and others. We asked the informant as to whether, those small objects could do any harm to man entering the granary and whether their presence mean perpetual happiness and prosperity to the concerned family. The reply we got that no such experiences are heard because of the fact that, sometimes those things are not to be seen inside the granary but sometimes they are easily seen. As regards the kiol or snake, it is told, sometimes it would not allow the man to take out grain but sometimes it makes way for the man to enter and take the paddy out. In any case, the owner of the granary does not destroy them nor scare them away since according to their belief, those objects are the keeper and the custodian of the store protecting and watching grains or in other words, the owner of the granary considers them as something like meagot. Garo idea of mibanji, klasa and kiol sounds somewhat like Khasi belief in thelin in that book attach to the property of the family. But Khasi thelin is rather fear some since it harasses people. It also require to be fed and certain rites are to be performed to appease it. thelin is said to be of snake origin and it is also
supposed to have the power of reducing itself to a size of piece of thread and sometimes making itself to grow into a huge size (Gordon 1914). Gares mibani, klaas and kiel do not possess such power; these objects are not harmful to man or any sacrifice is required to them. Infact, most Gares having scant respect to ancient values do not subscribe to such ideas and look upon it as mere superstition. In respect of keeping the mekindik certain well to do present day families are also found to follow the tradition consciously or unconsciously about the principle behind such habitual action because such ideas do not seem to be of any hindrance to their new faith. Most of the modern housewives are observed to have developed the habit of taking the paddy out only in the forenoon but not in the afternoon. ‘Fetiches, too, are material things revered because of their mysterious power. The word itself comes from Portuguese explorers, who first applied it to the wooden images of the West African Negroes’ (Lewie 1947: 301-302). Considered from this angle, it is observed that although Gares do not generally practise fetishism in the real sense of the term, the belief in the power of such mysterious objects like mibani, klaas and kiel bears the elements of fetishism to a certain degree.
Divination

Method and Procedure. The people living in Garo habitat are also quite familiar with the natural phenomena such as earthquake, cyclone, draught excessive rainfall, famine etc. but the main Garo habitat being mountaneous, flood devastation barring stray cases of overflowing rivers are seldom experienced by the hill settlers. Diseases like Kalaazar (black fever) and Malaria were very common almost everywhere. Cholera, dysentery and other like troubles often visit different tracts in epidemic form. Cases of contagious diseases like leprosy and skin disease were also found at places. Besides, there are many other sickness and suffering commonly known to all the sub-tribes, but those diseases are not distinctly classified in the manner that the modern scientists render different names to different ailments such as Malaria, Typhoid, Kalaazar, Cholera, Tuberculosis etc. In fact, Garos would call the diseases by the name of certain deities whose evil powers are causing that particular disease. So, according to sangarek Garos, every physical malady is rooted in the wrath or anger of a particular deity upon the sick person. Now, when a man falls ill, the difficulty is how to know which of the deities is having hand upon the ailing person and how to detect the angry god and what are to be sacrificed to please the god in order to rid the person in trouble from the pain. In another sense, medical diagnosis would bear the resemblance with the Garo way of discovering the deity tormenting the person. The problem then crops up as to who can possibly do the job of finding out the deity causing the malady, since each
and every one is not gifted with such virtue which enables him to take up the problem, so the question of *sima nia* (devination) arises. In every *songasek* village whether big or small, we have seen there is at least one practising *sima kamal* if not more to help the people of the locality in finding out the deity or deities behind the trouble. Garos believe that there exists close correlation between certain diseases and a particular deity. So the function of the *sima* is to establish such correlation between a particular disease and its cause. The sick man or any other persons approaching the *sima kamal* tries to give a full description of the nature of complaints as far as possible. The *kamal* then performs his *sima nia* in his own characteristic way. The methods or procedure adopted by different *sima kamals* in their *sima nia* are not the same. But differs from one *kamal* to another. It is also found that some *sima kamals* are having their own way of reading the cause completely different from that of others, but the most common method of devination seems to be *pongei nia* and *risal nia* as mentioned by Playfair. Etymologically, the word *kamal* means a person who leads pilot or conducts the affairs. So in religious sense and as also found in social plane, the term *kamal* stands equivalent to the meaning of priest and no better or more appropriate interpretation could be rendered to it.

The *sima kamal* having been briefed about the symptoms of the complaints, starts divining by calling several names of different deities, suspected to be playing fault with the man in agony, and while calling the names of the deities one by one, he
also intently and dispassionately observes the indication in his sima instruments. Then, whenever, the name of the deity involved is happened to be uttered, the sima instantly shows some desired and awaited positive signal enabling the kema to detect the tormenting deity; the deity being known, he advises the party to propitiate the deity with certain prescription as to what are the essential animals to be sacrificed to that god.

Regarding the validity of the sima nia, we had on several occasions been thorough going and put questions to several elderly persons as to how they react to my view. Once in a Bangla Desh border village we were talking to several old and aged people who were staunch traditionalists, most of them being septuagenarians and octogenarians. We expressed doubt about the reliability of the sima. Our first comment was that although the kema is holding his pongai (paraphernalia or sima instrument). Motionlessly, he cannot remain stationary for a long time, as a result, his hand, after a few minutes starts moving resulting in slight changes in the position of the pongai and thus, it accidentally coincides with the name of the particular spirit or god just pronounced.

The second point of contention regarding the infallibility of sima result was that, in certain cases the troubles might have been the case of suffering from lack of nutrition for which they are performing bidawe krita or to other like deities, yet, in some other cases the diseases might have been naturally curable. But to my sceptical remarks, we get a sharp equivocal report from them saying
'you belong to the new generation, what do you know about all these, we have been living on such belief for generations and still we have faith on such treatments'.

Another common and most popular process of divination is what is called dobik nia (reading the indication in the entrails of the fowl). We have not come across or heard entrails of any other animal being examined other than that of the fowls for presaging the future event. But, there is a difference between these two sets of divination that is between the earlier methods and the sima nia through dobik nia of earlier forms are performed to discover the cause of a certain physical trouble or the causes of other kinds of calamities thereby to root out the cause in order to eliminate the effects the divination through the process of dobik nia is meant to predict the future events that is to foretell the effects or consequent phenomenon that might follow immediately or in near future. In other words, sima nia as it is popularly known to discover the causes of the sufferings and as such, it relates to the past only, whereas, the dobik nia according to their belief, one could say whether the days ahead would be favourable or otherwise; whether one would face misfortune or everything would go all right; whether one would succeed in his mission or meet failure. By the process of dobik nia, it could warn one of the impending difficulties which lie ahead and therefore, it relates to future only and not to the past. One advantage is observed in dobik nia because for examining the position of the entrails of a fowl one need not necessarily be experienced or expert in the technique but even an ordinary man is
able to know its meaning, of course, if he is once instructed about the way of taking it out and reading it. Perhaps, because of such significance and meaningfullness, Garos entertain their friends, visitors and guests with chicken curry. In all parts of the Garo habitat, it is very common that, whenever, dinner is served to visiting friends, relatives and guests, chicken is preferred as normal menu in addition to any other items if there could be any. By killing a fowl two purposes are served, that is a beautiful curry is enjoyed and a chance for divination for getting certain hints about the events that might lie ahead of both the host and the guests.

Kamal.

In every function where religion plays a vital role the services of the kamal is indispensable. The most approximate corresponding English translation of the word kamal is priest because the Garo schoolars and the church leaders of the first quarter of the twentieth century, while translating the Holy Bible into Garo frequently used the word kamal to mean the priests of the Jewih temple, priest of the Christian church and the priest of the Hindus, but then, on strict observation, the Garo kamal cannot be equated with the priests of other religions. The office of the Garo kamal is neither hereditary nor strictly professional. Dalton (1960) has also partially observed the nature of Garo priesthood. But, we find none of the earlier writers on the Garos, ever pointed out the functional distinctions between the different forms of priesthood. In traditional Garo society, there were five different categories kamal whose jobs were not the same.
(i) slma-sipogipa or sina-nigipa kamal: The kamal who mainly do the job of sina nia to diagnose the diseases. Such kamals might be man or woman. "Mikre Debra Sangma an old and aged woman of Ramchengega village who was a sina kamal was regularly contacted by local residents seeking her help in the matter of divination whenever they were in need of her help. The sina kamal is not necessarily the same kamal to conduct the actual krita or amua ceremony, might be sometimes, fortunately, the same kamal might have skill and experiences in doing the sacrificial or other propitiatory ceremonies but no such services could be expected from each and every sina kamal. The business of sina kamal is simply to discover the deity causing trouble and to prescribe the offerings. It is also not the fact that the patient clients are satisfied with the advices of only one sina kamal rather they are sometimes found consulting other practising sina kamal also for confirmation. Sometimes, the first kamal himself refers the advice seekers to some other kamal, thus, everything is managed with excellent social behaviour without injuring the sentiment of one another.

(ii) krigipa or amugipa kamal: The business of this kamal is to perform the actual ceremonial services. kamal of this category are mostly male. We have not come across any female krita kamal conducting the krita ceremony anywhere nor any one could furnish me any information to this effect. Perhaps, it might be because of the fact that krita works required mainly qualities and masculine energy. krigipa kamal are better informed and equipped
with the richer knowledge about the named nature and characters of the different deities. In addition, they must possess a clear, loud and shrilling voice so that he is able to invoke the god in distinct, clear and audible tone before the patient and other attending persons. He is generally a man of sound common sense and many of such kamal are elderly if not very old and that, they command superiority and respects among the fellow villagers.

(iii) Geera okamiga kamal who is specialised in invoking the deity - Geera (god of strength, thunder, war and peace) a'songma-chigna tatgipa kamal is one who performs the main and the biggest ceremony like a'song tata in Ganching, Atong and Chisak Zones and the denbisa-denjaringga in Ambeng Zones which is the biggest and the most solemn sacrificial ceremony of the tribe. Geera okama and a'song tata or denbisa-denjaringga rituals being of the highest order. It is said that each and every kamal of the earlier groups cannot be expected to be able to conduct the sacrificial invocation of these ceremonies.

(iv) There is another functional kamal whose job is to attend the child birth. This kamal comes from amongst the elderly women of the locality. The title kamal is given to the head lady who, being used to and trained up in handling delivery of a child is capable of facing the situation however critical it might appear. The woman kamal who acts like a midwife is assisted by a few elderly women in attending the expectant mother during delivery. Menfolks are not
supposed to act either as kamal or as assistant at the time of labour. According to the Garo traditionalists, the job belongs exclusively to the womenfolk. The attending kamal, not only deliver the baby safely, but being ever on the qui vive gives the first name to the new born child right at the moment of its birth before any evil spirits overtakes it.

(v) There is another class of kamal who conducts the marriage ceremony and such kamal is called do'sia kamal. The job of such kamal does not require much skill and experience; any elderly person, if one is aquainted with certain set verses usually chanted at the time of marriage ritual could act as do'sia kamal. The author discussed about those five functional kamals of Garo priesthood but he does not claim that this is exhaustive; there might be more offices of Garo priesthood elsewhere which escaped my notice, after all there are many Garo pockets in different regions of the country outside the main homeland of the Garos.

From the above mentioned categories of kamals, one could get adequate knowledge, in what way, the offices of kamals are run in the total social structure. One could fully understand that, the functions of different kamals are marked by the nature of the jobs they are required to perform in the society by virtue of their ability and efficiency and in no way such classifications are made on the basis of individual material possession nor on the basis on the social status enjoyed by the individual in the society. The kamals live the same life, enjoy and suffer the same lot like
other fellow citizens; they do the job of a kamal only when their services are called for. Therefore, the function of a Garo priest is something like a charitable services one is extending to others at the cost of his or her own comforts. Practising kamals are very often found leaving his own domestic urgencies for the sake of others. kamals are also not remunerated in any kind either individually or collectively except food and drinks befitting the occasion.

Suffering

Other Causes of Sufferings. The Garos are very much familiar with the various natural physical maladies like, malaria, kalaazar, diarrhoea, dysentery, pneumonia, headache, cold, wound, indigestion, bruises, skin disease, tuberculosis, leprosy, scorpion bite and many other ailments.

Unnatural maladies widely known in the homeland of the Garos are mite - ohika (bitten or attacked by deity), matahe ohika (killed by tiger), mengma doka (trampled by elephant), chipu sua (snake bite), buga raa or aringga raa (carried by iguana), nanil raa (carried by electric ell), chie sripa (drown in the water), kae sia (suicide by hanging), jawa daka or snake (foul play by otherselves either by poisoning or by magical power), beleli gaaka (falling from a tree top or high cleft) etc.
According to traditional belief, both the natural and unnatural maladies have got different causes. In some cases, the disease itself might be contagious, some are due to breaking of tribal taboos sacrilegious in nature. Some are due to false swearing. In certain cases the origin is supernatural as the Garos believe that whenever any deity happens to get angry, it gives some sort of trouble to human health. The sickness in such cases could be healed only by properly propitiating the offended god. The primitive belief of the Garos is that, some diseases are caused by *mite - obika* (bitten or attacked by deity). The uncanny power of impersonal supernatural spirits, *mite*, is believed to infect a person bringing about his malady and even death. This happens because in their belief, sometimes through ignorance or by mistake or by sheer negligence one breaks certain taboos thereby making the deity angry as a result, the person is punished with some sort of bodily pain. The angry deity being detected, the sufferings could be mitigated by performing appropriate rituals. While ascribing causes to different kinds of ailments and troubles, Garos do not seem to have distinct and separate causes to different diseases as Presler (Presler 1971 : 124-126) maintains because certain cause like *mite obika* may also produce ordinary and minor natural ailments like cold, headache, wounds and indigestion etc. which are believed to have natural causes. So, according to Garos, both natural and supernatural causes of sufferings constitute one common cause which may be called *mite obika*. Such conclusion is based on the finding that, Garos relate every bit of bodily trouble to at least one *mite* if not more and make propitiation to the tormenting *mite* accordingly. Second cause of human sickness is *jama kaleka* or
mande skani jak or snake. The meaning of the term is 'motivated action' or 'foul play' by others. The second idea of cause precisely corresponds to Presler’s Human Causes! Like other primitive religious beliefs prevalent in different parts of the world, Garos also have very strong hold on human causes. Human causes take two forms, firstly, hateful person can cause ailments and death to another person by some direct means such as, by applying poison of various intensity enough to suffer from various malaises or rendering invalid or cause death through food and drinks of the victim without giving any chance of noticing by the man intended or by others. Second form of this type of causes is that, some persons by casting magical spell can cause a man’s sickness as well as destroy the life. In such case, it is said, the process indirectly works, but, instances seems to be very rare and most persons do not subscribe to such idea. Lycanthropy is another psychological factor that is widely known and talked of amongst the Garos. According to the Lycanthropy incidence, man’s jangci (soul or spirit) during sleep, goes out and take the form of some lower animals and insects. Garos maintain that, man’s soul or spirit roves elsewhere during sleep and comes in touch with the soul of other living objects of lower species. The man’s jangci thus operates in the body of other beings living both in land and water into which the man’s jangci enters. Some of the possible living objects into which the soul energy of a man is found transferred during deep slumber are tiger, bear, elephant, bat, flying squirrel, snake (python included), rat, grasshopper, mermaids, iguana and so on. There may be some more such living objects still untold and undiscovered to the external observers,
Such psychic phenomenon does not confine to one particular class or clan of people nor it is hereditary nor contagious and as such, it remains completely a matter of accident in one's personal life. So belief in this type of psycho-physical transformation apparently implies that man is a triune being. He is a body, soul and spirit. The body is a visible part of man. The soul is the soulish life of man. The spirit is that which is God owned and God possessed. In the course of my investigation, we have contacted and asked several persons who are said to be experiencing such psychic nature. This type of psychic phenomenon may occur to persons of all walks of life irrespective of sexes. Traditionalists and the cultured, intellectual and unlettered, clergyman and the laity, servicemen or the farmers or the business men, all fall victims to such eventful dream if and when one's inner self is invaded by such psychic matters. Most of the affectual individuals who regularly experience such psychic problems told me that when a man is in unconscious sleep, his or her soul goes out and mingled with the soul or spirit of certain animals big or small, but, they say in certain cases, the phenomenon is purely fleeting and momentary and the same experiences may not be repeated, thereby giving no scope to the dreaming man to discern the dream situation from other fact situation, that means, the individual having different kinds of dreams in different times, does not meet the same situation at all times. Yet, in certain cases such psychic nature of transference of soul energy from man to other being rather permanent and durable and such psychic phenomenon can develop at any stage of one's life; some get it right from the childhood and some at the later stage; in any case when the dream becomes fully developed and
matured, there is no chance of doing away with it as it is told by the experiencers. Again, they say, if one discloses the of repeated dreams at very early stage before the public at random, the trouble leaves the man. But, at the late stage, it does not go even if one talks of the problem carelessly, then, the individual has no other alternative but to live with it for life. Through various personal contacts with the dream-experiencers and also from the sources of group discussion amongst the regularly-dreaming persons and other normal personalities, we have collected materials relating to the said phenomenon. From the expression of their personal dream-experiences, it is understood that, the life of the experiencing subject is often risky as because, whenever the object having the entry of man's soul is actively working dies due to certain accident or disease, the dreaming man too dies, but it is quite strange to hear that in case the man, the owner of the soul in reality passes away, the souled-animal or souled object survives as original natural being. Some Garos, therefore, say that, when the souled animal meets its sudden death, the related man also dies instantaneously without any assignable cause.

Although the subject matter deserves to be separately dealt with, we have taken a partial view of it in order to show that, according to certain section of the Garos, the double soul theory poses as one of the causes of unexpected sudden end of a man, though such cases are very rare and some sections of the society do not go deeper into the matter. It is also interesting to observe that such psychic phenomenon is neither hereditary nor contagious; it remains
with the individual in whose person it gets its birth. This kind of
dual life does not affect the mental balance and the efficiency of
the victim. We have not found any experiencing man or woman taking
pride or openly talking about the conditions in his or her other
life, rather, some of them consider the situation as a lasting
malady. Nowhere in my investigation, we have heard or seen anybody
propitiating any deity behind such predicament to get rid of the
trouble. So, it may be presumed that no known deity is having any
relation with the situation. Most experiencing persons commonly
agree that there are differences between the double soul experiences
and other ordinary dreams, the former being full of activities even
affecting the general health of a person and the later a hollow
without any substance.

Another type of human causes according to certain section
of the population is that, some persons are having what is called
mikskal, mik being a diminutive form of mikron which means eye
and skal means demon or devil or evil. Therefore, the literal
meaning of mikskal is devilish - eye or evil eyed. It is said
that whoever possess such power can cause harm or malady to other
fellow beings. This is not exactly witch craft. The nature and
behaviour of the mikskal possessed is that whatever and whenever
such evil-spirited man intently and greedily focuses his or her
attention on certain things may be it is food, meat, fish, fruit or
any other edible things get infected by his or her envious look and
the objects of such covetous desire might sometimes become untimely
or prematurely damaged, rendering unfit for human use and if any one
happen to eat them, the partakers might suffer from unusual trouble. By mere hypnotic power and ravenous watch, such person can afflict others and also can cause fatal trouble to pregnant woman. Belief in the possibility of this sort of psychic power is observed amongst the Garos living mostly in the plains. But, since cross migration of different sections of the tribe are currently going on ideas of such magic power are spreading even in the hills. With regard to the transmission of this kind of psychic power from one man to another, some say, if one comes in contact with such possessed person through food, drinks or saliva, he or she is likely to be infected but some Garos say, it is neither contagious nor infectious nor hereditary. It is very difficult to verify the fact, and hence the situation is felt only by the subject himself having such demonic quality and the objects who fall victim to it. If at all it has any basis to be considered as true by any fraction of the society, it constitute one of human causes of suffering.

Se'mal.

Whenever either of the spouses indulges in some sort of clandestine sexual relationship with other man or woman, such underground sex affairs of the one over the other is termed *so'mal dona* by the Garos. The belief in the effects of *so'mal* exists not only in the traditional society but it still holds good even in the christian society as well. It is commonly believed by the Garos that if a husband or a wife commits adultery with other man or woman and
if such unchaste and illegal activities continues, the health of wronged husband or wife is adversely affected. The person suffers from such mental and physical disturbance in silence resulting in consequent deterioration in health. On the other side, a concomitant brightness, cheerfulness and light behaviour are observed in the person of the guilty spouse. It is also believed by most Garos that, in such situation, the offended spouse usually experiences dreams of peculiar nature such as entering, moving or working underfloor or inside the ground below the raised floor or under the couch etc. signifying that the dreamer is being subjected to certain unseen evil forces or powers. For example, supposing a cuckold husband after experiencing similar dreams repeatedly, later finds that his suspicion and accusation against the character of his wife is revealed by the fact, the dream is considered to be a presage. This view seems to be absurd and untenable in the eye of the outside observer, yet, among certain sections of the Garos, it still remains one of the human causes of suffering experienced by married man and woman. This sounds and appears to be illogical but there might be some elements of truth in the statement which cannot be brushed aside without further thought.

There exists possibly certain psychological reaction which definitely injures the love and sentiment of the wronged person thereby upsetting the mental peace and physical balance in the personality of the one who suffers, and that, the belief in such incidence is not totally unfounded and as such, its efficacy cannot be prima facie ruled out, rather it deserves further examination and verification. In fact, so'mal amounts to envy, so, it is natural psychological
phenomenon that such deep rooted envy in one's heart takes away joy, happiness and contentment out of living and consequently brings about bitterness, hardness, frustration, confusion and even physical ailments. Jealousy, it is also likely to bring about certain nervous tension causing all types of physical disorders and less of efficiency in one's work and service.