CHAPTER 3.

RITUAL STRUCTURE.

It has been observed that the Dibangiya villagers depend much on the favours of the supernatural beings and powers as they do live in an isolated area, frequently visited by natural calamities like floods, tropical diseases, epidemics etc. They have to look for the supernatural aids and favours in their efforts to live happily and comfortably due to the absence of material equipments which can protect them from these calamities.

The following sections have been included in this chapter: Section I- Miki: The village shrine: Its socio-religious role among the Dibangiyas. Section II- Some deities of the Dibangiyas. Section III- Ritual on birth. Section IV- Ritual on marriage. Section V- Ritual on death. Section VI- Mune-hareteba: Ancestor worship.

SECTION 1.

MIKI: THE VILLAGE SHRINE: ITS SOCIO-RELIGIOUS ROLE AMONG THE DIBONGIYAS:

In Dibangiya, the village shrine is known as miki. In Dibangiya: tongue, midi denotes deity and
ku means the house or the abode. Literally it signifies the abode of the deity. The midiku of Sissikukh village is a traditional one. The Dibongiyas pay great reverence and homage to the village shrine and worship its deities regularly according to their traditional calendar. There are altogether 14 principal deities in the shrine. Of them 5 are located in the Eastern, 2 in the Northern, and 7 in the Southern shrine of the compound. There is a nanba acab in the South-Western side of the compound, where sacrificial feed is cooked. There is also a maseng gor outside the compound for cooking and feasting.

The location of the houses (see diagram 1) relates to the hierarchy among the deities. For instance, the Kundigira—the eldest deity resides in the Eastern house facing to the West. On his left hand side, his old wife Mama, younger wife Abenchi Kumwar kundi and on his right hand side Kundiyu pichchishiyru kundi are believed to have lived. Chumketeri, the eldest daughter, and Numali Kumwari—the youngest one reside in the Northern house facing to the South. His other seven sons reside in the Southern house.
DEITIES:
1. Kundirira
2. Māmāğičchi.
3. Aborčhi.
5. Kumač-kundi.
6. Chünketeri.
7. Numalikunwari.
14. Chal balkkundi.

DIAGRAM 1.
A SKETCH OF MIDIKU.
according to the seniority of age.

STRUCTURE OF THE SHRINE:

The shrine consists of 5 houses as shown in the diagram. 1. Kundinana-nya. 2. Chukateri- Numali kumwari nya. 3. Jakarusa- nya l. Numua såma, and 5. Meraq gen. in the year 1971. An additional house ( tulākuqeyo) was constructed in 1972. There is one more additional house—bedar in Bahgara Deuri Gaon, North Lakhimpur.

Kundimana -nya: It is a T type house and is constructed with wooden posts and corrugated iron sheets. It is the main house situated in the Eastern side of the shrine compound and is the abode of the following 5 principal deities. 1. Kundigirā 2. Mama(girākhi), 3. Abordā, l. Kundiyā-pīka osiguru kundī 5. Kumwar kundī.

The original Kundimana shrine of the Dibongiyas is now in a ruinous condition at Buraburi sal Deuri Gaon, Na-Sadiyāk Dibrugarh. Shakespear mentions that the original temple was situated on the Kundil river.

Brown also says that Qiraegal (Assamese Bura Buri) (the old ones) always spoken of as wedded pair are worshipped by the Dibongiyas.
The boderi (3rd from right), barbarali (6th) and other assistant priests of the midiku, in 1972.

The assistant priests cut and cleanse the ritual articles, in '72.
2. Chunketeri Nulali Kunwari: It is an abode of Chunketeri and Nulali Kunwari deities. The shrine is situated on the Northern side. It is a two-slope type of house made of corrugated iron sheets. The shrine is named after two deities viz; Chunketeri and Nulali Kunwari. Chunketeri is also sometimes referred to as Tamreswari mai. Tamreswari mai is the supreme deity and is worshipped by the Bergomya group of the Deuri-Chutiyas of Assam. Brown says "Pisani (the daughter), known as Tamreswari Mai (the mother goddess of the copper temple) and Mabakhati (the eater of raw flesh), to whom human sacrifices were offered. Her temple was some where about Cumoura on the Brahmaputra. She is worshipped by the Bergomya khal". Shakespeare also mentions "There are the remains of two shrines one famous in the far off past to which Hamun found his way viz; those of Tamreswari Mai or the copper temple, for its copper roofing and of 'Bera-Bori'. The former lies 8 miles up the Deopami stream from Cumoura and was dedicated to Kamakiya and the Yemi, but Shiva and the Linga were also worshipped with barbarous rites and human sacrifices ".

Jakarua naya: This shrine is made of corrugated iron sheet and is of two slope type facing the North.

The first deity is worshipped by the Tangapamiya group of the Deuri-Chutiya of Assam. The original shrine was situated in Sadiya, Eastern most part of Assam. The most important aspect of the different groups of the Deuri-Chutiyas is that they still have faith in the old shrines situated in Ha-Sadiya, Assam. Two main villages are found, one at the vicinity of the old temple-Kundinama shrine and the other at the vicinity of Cupura-border of Arunachal P not far away from the old Templeswari temple. The former village is inhabited by the Dibongiyanas and the latter one by the Bergonyas. The Dibongiyanas and the Bergonyas propitiate their deities according to their respective village shrines.

4. Misam ahm: The kitchen of the temple is known as Misam ahm. It is made of corrugated iron sheet on earth plinth facing the North. The votive offerings are cooked here by the lādamī. It may be mentioned here that the articles cooked outside the shrine are not offered to the deities of the shrine due to fear of pollution.
5. Mereang ger: It is situated outside the temple compound. Here sacrificial animals and birds, rice, etc. are cooked and consumed by the priests and the villagers after the performance of all community rituals of the village.

6. Tulakuchayä: Preparations of rituals articles are made before puja in the tulakuchayä.

7. Bedar: All religious paraphernalia of the shrine are stored in the bedar.

RELIGIOUS PARAPHERNALIA:

The most important ritual paraphernalia of the midiku were the following: artificial flower made of pure silver, sacrificial knife, piece of chand, copper argha, bell, trident, samkha, brass-basket, copper bowl, canopy etc. One trident was found inserted to the altar of Kundimama shrine. Some of the informants interpreted this trident as the symbol of Kundigira. These articles were exclusively meant for midiku ritual and were carefully preserved inside the Kundimama shrine. They had got ritual value and people did not use them in all their
private and public rituals outside the midiku. The villagers do not use these articles during ancestor worship.

THE SHRINE AND ITS RELATION
WITH THE DIBONGIYA SOCIETY:

Priestly functionaries: There are two sets of religious functionaries for conducting the rites and rituals in the village. One set consists of bederi, Saderi, barbarali, barabarali, kelua be-ra, ber, barik, and lâdani. These offices are hereditarily succeeded by clans. The other set is a learned group, who, by virtue of long experience in religious lore, can occupy the status of the same. The former set performs the rites and rituals of the village shrine and the latter performs the private rituals of the households in the village.

PRIESTS AND ITS RELATION WITH THE CLAN:

The Chart. 8. shows the selection of the different priests clan wise, during the year 1968-1971.
In addition to the above officials, there are four more assistant priests viz; Saderi,Sarubalal, Telia and Dupia in the Dibisgiya society. Saderi comes
The villagers offer chickens, garments, areca nuts, betel vine leaves etc. in the ritual of the midiku in 1969.

B- the village medicine-man and the village-children wearing amulets at their necks, in 1970.
from Patriye jāku. Sarubarāli can be selected from any jāku. There are certain restrictions in the selection of the functionaries. A man must be free from commission of sin. He should have been desire to serve the community. The villagers keep certain offices vacant if they do not find right persons for the same. As for instance, the offices of Saderi and Sarubarāli were laying vacant in the year 1971, for want of appropriate persons in the village. The village council held on 13.10.68 could not select a man from the bājāya for the office of a barbarāli. P, the barbarāli voluntarily resigned his office a few months earlier as he had undergone eye operation in Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh. Their popular belief is that when limbs of a ritual efficient are operated upon, the person so treated, is ritually impure due to the application of surgeon's knife and what with the contact of the physicians themselves. It was observed that the members of the council requested P to nominate a man for barbarāli from his lineage. But the latter regretted it in as much as he was unable to do so for dearth of a right person from his lineage who could perform the rituals later perfect. As a
result, the council had to postpone the date for selecting an incumbent for the said office.

ROLE OF THE VILLAGE SHRINE IN SELECTION OF THE PRIESTS:

After selection of a man to the village council, he is purified by the priestly council in the village shrine. Generally, the outgoing bedari sacrifices a cock, 3 hens and a she-pig and offer ite blood to the deities of the shrine and pray for the wellbeing of the new priest. He sprinkles purified water on the new priest from his ritual jar. To cite an example: H, P's younger brother was first selected in the village council meeting held in the L.P. School premises of the village on 28.12.69. He was then purified in the village shrine by the chief priest (M) accompanied by his fellow members by sacrificing 1 chicken in the shrine and 1 she-pig outside the compound of the shrine. It may be mentioned here that pig is not sacrificed inside the shrine as
as it is considered to be impure. So, they sacrificed whenever necessary outside the shrine compound. Blood of the sacrificial chickens and the pig was offered to the deities Kundimama and their associate and prayed for the wellbeing of the newly selected priest. A part of the purified water was given to H for sipping and a part of it was sprinkled over his body. This ritual purified him in respect of his commission of sinful acts.

Case 2: M, the present bodari, was also similarly selected in the village shrine. Barbarali P informed me that M was first selected in 1954. P sacrificed 1 she-pig outside the shrine compound and 4 chickens in the shrine. He offered their blood to Kundimama and prayed for the wellbeing of the newly selected bodari. P barbarali purified M by sprinkling purified water from his shrine-jar. M bore the cost of the chickens and the she-pig and other articles such as areca nuts, betel vine leaves, rice-beer, etc for the ritual.

Case 3: D was selected as a member and as a deondai in 1935. He handed over 1 she pig 4 chickens to the members of the priestly council to
perform the ritual. Late M -bodari and late L barbarālī sacrificed the above chickens and the she-pig and offered their blood to Kundamana and prayed for the wellbeing of the incumbent for the post of assistant priest and ādādānī. F-, B, K, D, H, M &c were present on the occasion of the ritual. The members of the council prepared and consumed the sacrificial meat of the ritual at morong gor.

Each and every member of the village priestly council must go through this purificatory ritual before being formally admitted into the priesthood of the village shrine. Otherwise no one is allowed to enter into the shrine. T and L were not allowed to enter into the shrine. They were merely helpers outside the shrine. i.e. on the courtyard of the same. T was engaged in cleansing and cutting the sacrificial chickens and pig etc. in the morong gor. M (bodari) informed that they would not be allowed till they performed the purificatory ritual in the shrine.

After the selection as a priest one is to observe certain rules of conduct to keep oneself pure by abstaining from taking tea and sweets in the
market. He is also debarred from cutting hair and shaving beards in the safon. He is to maintain long hair during his priestly life. He must not take food prepared by women in the village. Generally, he takes food prepared by a young girl outside his home. But he usually takes food at his residence prepared by womenfolk. They do not impose restriction on the women of the priest's family who are to prepare meals for him. Because his house and its inmates are considered to be pure.

FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICIANTS:

The main officiants of the midiku are boderi, barbarali, saderi, sarubarali, kaluabora, bora, barik, tullia and epia. The duty of the boderi is to sacrifice birds and animals in the midiku. Barbarali holds the head of the sacrificial birds and animals during sacrifice and collects its blood to offer to the deities. Saderi and sarubarali assist boderi and barbarali respectively during the performance of the rituals. They can also perform the duties assigned to boderi and barbarali respectively in their absence. Kelkobora announces the news to the villagers one
day ahead of holding a ritual. He also assists the priests on the occasion of the ritual. Barā engages the workers to clean the premises of the midiku. He also supervises over the feast. Moreover, he collects money from the villagers and from midiku and deposits the fund with the Secretary of the village council.

The duty of the barik is to collect country liquor, rice, from the villagers. The lādāl prepares the ritual food.

The duties of the teḷiā and dupā are to supply mil and incense at the time of ritual held in the midiku. In this way every member has his allotted duty for performing the rituals at the village shrine.

The functionaries are always selected from malefolk only. Womenfolk are strictly prohibited from taking part in the rituals of the midiku. This is because of their menstrual flow. It will pollute the ritual. But there is of course, no bar against them to attend social functions such as purificatory rite connected with birth of a child and marriage ceremony. Boys alone are allowed to do some manual work during the ritual outside the midiku. In case of bahāgye-bisu girls and women are allowed to perform dance and music on the courtyard of the shrine. But here too, women with menstrual flow are strictly prohibited against attending
DANCE AT MORONGGOR AND AT BISUKHOLA BY THE YOUTHS AND ADOLESCENT GIRLS.
the bisu—dance. The midi—girāchic can enter into the
midiku for her spirit possession on the bisu—dīberubā
day. She is considered, on this occasion, as a semi
deity and not as an ordinary human being. Moreover, only
a woman who has attained menopause is possessed by a
female deity.

SHRINE AND ITS RELATION WITH
ANNUAL CALENDRAL RITUALS:

Among the Dibongiyas, a new year starts from
the month of April. The following months are found in
the Dibongiya society. 1. Bahāg(April/May), 2. Jeth
(May/June), 3. Āsr(June/July), 4. Shām(July/August),
11. Pāgan( Feb/March), 12. cBot( March/April).

The Dibongiyas follow their own calendar.
They propitiate the deities in the shrine for the welfare
of the villagers, domesticated girds and animals and
for bumper crops. The following rituals ( see chart: 9)
are performed in the village shrine according to their
calendar.

The devotees request midigirachi to foretell future events in the courtyard of midiku during bahägiyo-bisu in 1969.
Bahāgiyo-bisu, mētua and midideruba are three primary rituals performed in the month of bahāg. Bahāgiyo-bisu is a socio-religious festival. The village priestly functionaries propitiate the deities of the shrine by sacrificing 10 chickens, plantains, powdered rice, fried maize, fried rice, areca nuts, betel vine leaves etc. on the first Wednesday of the month of bahāg. They pray to the deities for welfare of the villagers and for a successful celebration of the bisu-festival.

The following case-history was recorded:

Some youths of the village cleaned the courtyard and the surrounding of the midiku on the 23rd April, 1969. Then the priestly functionaries viz; kudari, barbarāli, kalua bōrā, bōrā, lādami etc. collected the articles such as fowls, rice beer, keu-leaves, areca nuts, betel vine leaves, kimāru etc. on the courtyard of the shrine. Ripe banana were collected by barbarāli from a ditch prepared already for the purpose of hastening the process of ripening. Gō the cook prepared bisu cakes, merku and midīna in the kitchen. The assistant priests helped the chief-priest in arranging and cleansing the above articles.
The bedari first took bath and arranged the green articles such as cakes, fried rice and maize on some kun-leaves which were placed on the floor of the shrine. He invoked the deities of the shrine and solicited them to accept the offerings and to bestow blessings on the mortal beings on earth for observing the ritual with pomp and grandeur. After this prayer, bedari invoked and sacrificed 14 chickens i.e. 5, numbers at Kundimama shrine, 2 numbers at Skaketeri Numalikumwari shrine and 7 numbers at Gailurung kundi shrine. Fresh sacrificial bleed was offered to the above deities.

After the conclusion of the ritual, the priests consumed sujan on the courtyard of the shrine. A feast was prepared at the morong gor and was consumed by the priests along with the villagers excepting womenfolk. A part of the sacrificial meat was distributed among the priests, who carried it home for their children. There is a custom to distribute surplus banana among the households of the village after the performance of the rite. But, this time, the priests could not distribute it as the same fell far short of the required quantity for distribution.
Puji at the shrine on the last day of bisu:

M - the chief priest along with the assistants priests viz; G, J, K, M, B, T, & c. sacrificed a cock and offered its blood to the deities of the shrine at 2-30 P.M. on the 1st May 1969. Later on, they cocked the sacrificial fowl and consumed with rice beer at merang gor. This was performed in order to escape from impending calamities which occasionally visited them. Failing this, they will have to face dangerous consequences, which automatically follow non-performance of the traditionally handed down rites.

METUA AND BERMETUA:

Rituals are popularly believed to believe the tension arising out of human failures to appease the benevolent deities. Besides they serve as media for establishing happy relations between human beings and supernatural beings. As for example, metua rite is performed thrice in the month of Bahāg, Abin and Pāgum annually. BERMETUA is performed in the month of Jeth. They believe that people suffer from various illness and diseases along with the change of seasons in the month of Bahāg, Jeth, Abin, and Pāgum. Metua and
Bormetua rituals are performed during these months at the *midiku* to get rid of the physical calamities. To worship *metua*, a he-goat is necessary for sacrifice. But a large number of goats, and fowls are essential for performing bormetua.

**Case:** *Metua* ritual was performed in the village shrine. It was observed that *N* (bederi) kindled 12 numbers of *shalitā* and 12 numbers of parts containing areca nuts and betel vine leaves on the altar of the *midiku*. He then sacrificed a he-goat and offered its blood to the deities. He was assisted by *berbarāli-P, bera (N), kalūa berā (G), lādani (G) ān*. The bederi uttered incantations in praise of *Kumadima* and their associates and prayed for an auspicious summer as well as for good health and bumper crops. Later on, the meat of the sacrificial goat and rice were cooked in the *mereng gur* by the *lādani* and consumed with *sujen*.

The chief priest informed that this ritual has got economic value in the life of the Dibangiyal.
He believed that if he could satisfy the deities the latter would bring good summer crops. As the wet paddy cultivation is their main crop, the Dibongiyas are bound to appease the deities for congenial showering of rain for easy ploughing and transplanting the paddy seedlings in the paddy field. On the whole, the main theme of this *mota* ritual is for welcoming the summer for bumper crops as well as for the welfare of the villagers.

**Case: Ber Shot:** M, the chief priest accompanied by his assistant priests sacrificed 12 black he-goats, 1 male duck in the village shrine on 25.5.69. He offered fresh blood to the deities and prayed for a good summer season for ensuring bumper crops. They also prayed for the welfare of the villagers. Later on, the sacrificial animals and birds were cooked and consumed in the *merang ger* by the priests and the villagers.

Again, four goats were sacrificed by M, who offered the blood to Kudimamna and their associates for bumper crops as well as for the wellbeing of the villagers.

It was informed by L, the Secretary of the village council, that the village council fixed the
term of supplying a goat or pig or chickens, or duck for the rituals performed in the shrine at each head of the family alternately in the village. Sometimes, a devotee offers a goat or pig or duck etc. to bedari for a sacrifice in the rituals to obtain favour from the deities.

SAT LABIRUBA:

It was observed that the chief priest, M cleaned all the paraphernalia of the village temple on 29.6.69. The cook killed a chicken and cooked curry in the cook shed of the shrine. All the priests were sat on the courtyard of the shrine. The cook distributed curry and gujen to the members of the priests. They offered twice a little quantity of gujen on the floor to Kundinama and prayed them for sanctifying the shrine. Later on, they consumed the rice beer and curry on the courtyard of the temple. They believe that mother earth get temporarily polluted during the yarn of Asar. So, they performed the above ritual to purify the shrine. This is comparable to the ritual impurity during Ambubasi in Hindu calendar.
CôAKCMK (CôATRANGA):

This is an annual purificatory ritual of the shrine. The chief priest sacrificed 4 chickens and prayed to Kundimama and their associates for the wellbeing of the villagers. A feast was enjoyed in the moreng gor on 1.7.70.

SHÂUMA MÎDI MUNUMA:

It was observed that the village priests dug a ditch within the compound of the shrine and introduced a bunch of green banana and covered the ditch with loose earth for ripening the same on 17.9.69. Later on they prayed to Kundimama for easy ripening of the banana on the courtyard of the shrine.

Again it was observed that the bodari offered suwa offerings such as banana, areca nuts, betel vine leaves, incense etc. on the altar of the shrine. Then he sacrificed chickens and offered their blood to Kundimama and prayed them for the welfare of the villagers. They also prayed Kundimama for a successful harvest of abu paddy. Later on, the villagers consumed a feast in the moreng gor. It was observed that the villagers stepped doing agricultural activities during the day.
(24.9.69) for agive participation in the ritual.

**MAKAN-CHIPBA**:

Makan-chibba ritual is performed collectively at the midiku, generally in the month of Bada(August/Sept). Makan-chibba ritual consists of two parts. Firstly, 7 paris of fowls are sacrificed. Later, fowls were made ready for human consumption in a feast of the villagers. It is as much a taboo for the women folk of the village to participate in the rituals as it is to partake food in the feast. It is obligatory to perform this ritual before eating newly harvested ìbu. Ritual sharing of the first fruits of a newly harvested crop(ìbu) with the relatives and the villagers after propitiatory rite aimed at satisfying the names of the deceased ancestors indicate a desire for enlisting the good will of the ancestors but for whose blessings, they believe, their crops and progeny cannot multiply. It significantly points out that they make conscious efforts to maintain the happy bonds of relationship even after death. Besides, collective sharing of the feast along with the genealogically related villagers serve as an adhesive force for maintaining the solidarity among them. It is annually restrengthened under the auspices of makam-chibba.
IYOI NIGI NUWA: (AI SABA):

Iyo i nig'i nuwa ritual was performed on the 15th October 1969, at a selected place on the bank of Sissi river in the Southern side of the village. Bedari(M), distributed green areca nuts, betel vine leaves, powdered rice, green rice, ripe banana etc. on pieces of banana leaves and offered on a medal of canoce specially constructed with banana sheaths. Earthen lamps of amva digin and mustard oil were lighted in front of each leaf containing the things offered.

Powdered rice was sprinkled on the path leading to Sissi river from the place of worship. Then amva digin was placed on the same route leading to the river. All the villagers including old men, old women, adolescent girls, youths, boys, girls, assembled on the ritual spot. The female folk sang ai-nan.

Later on, the canoe along with the offerings was carried to the river where they left it to flow along the current of water.

The priests opined that the deities of small-pox left the village along with the current of water while sitting on the canoe. They also believe that if such a canoe change its course towards the village, some
toward incident might befall to the members of the village. It was found that the canoe changed its course and struck a leg floating on the river nearby the village on 20.10.69. This incident led some informants to believe that the deity was not satisfied and she might bring illness and disease to the people of the village.

MENVÀ:

M-, the chief priest, accompanied by his assistants propitiated the deities of the midiku by sacrificing a he-goat on 6.11.69. Its blood and head were offered to the deities. They also prayed for a fine winter season and also for the wellbeing of the villagers. Later on, the priests consumed a feast in the nerong gor. The ritual has already been mentioned on pages 87-88.

BAKAT-MAKAN:

Bakat-makan ritual was held on 9.10.69. M-, the bonzeri sacrificed 14 chickens and offered their blood and heads to the deities of the shrine. He prayed to Kundimama for the wellbeing of the villagers and invoked them for eating newly for eating newly
harvested shali rice. The cook prepared the meat of the sacrificial chickens and rice etc. in the morung ger. The villagers consumed the feast with gujem. It is a ritual of offering first fruits to the deities of the shrine as makan chibba already described on pages 91.

MACHITO-MISO MIDI MINUMA:

Magiye-bisu plays a dominant role in socio-religious life of the Dibongiyas of a Sissiaga Deuri Gasa. It was observed that all the religious functionaries vis; bedari, barbaral, barab, kalua barab, ladan etc. were present at the premises of the shrine at about 10 A.M. on 22.1.69. M- the chief priest, took bath, put on a new white set of dress-chkum and kelaung. N- barbaral collected banana from the shrine-compound. Green banana were preserved for ripening on the previous Wednesday i.e. on the 15.1.69 by the functionaries. G cooked, yams, fried rice etc. in the kitchen. M and D prepared merku with a mortar and pestle. He sliced the areca nuts and betel vine leaves. In this way every one of the priestly functionaries was busy for hours together. M first offered articles like yams, merku, banana, betel vine leaves, areca nuts, lamp wicks to each deity of the midiku. Then M invoked the deities and sacrificed 1 chicken
Bisu-dance(hurâi-rângali) in the compound of midiku on bisu-dâberubâ day in 1969.

The youths ablaze the mejing and dance during magiyo-bisu, in 1969.
and offered their blood to each deity of the shrine. After some rest, he concluded the pūsa with a prayer to the deities. Then the villagers excluding womenfolk consumed a feast with chicken curry, cooked rice, sujen in the nāmey gur.

THE PROCEDURE OF PROFITIATION AT MIĐIĀU:

The chief priest bēderi, barbarāli, ṣprubāli etc. first take bathe nearby the Sīsāi river and put on new sets of dresses before starting the ritual in the shrine. Bēderi sprinkles purified water from his jar to the assistant priests. He then sprinkles purified water to all the articles of the ritual. He spreads banana leaves on the altar of the shrine for offerings to appease the deities. He distributes all the articles over the sets of the leaves and sprinkles purified water. He then recites incantations in praise of the deities. The incantations are preserved in the original form and cannot be published on account of strict assurance given to them during my stay in the village. After the ritual, the priests along with the villagers consume a feast with
rice beer in the morong gor.

SHRINE AND ITS RELATION WITH NON CALENDRICAL RITUAL:

The shrine is not only important for calendrical rituals but it also serves as a nerve centre for some occasional socio-ritual functions. A few cases which were observed directly are illustrated below:

CHUCHENGA LABURU:

L and S were caught red-handed for their alleged incestuous relation on the 24.1.69 by some villagers. The boy and the members of this family first denied the charges brought against them. As a result, the village council excommunicated both the families. At last the boy and his parents had to arrange a ritual known as chuchenga laruba. The boderi sacrificed one she-pig and 4 chickens and requested Kundimama to purge the boy and the girls and the members of their families of the sin on the 29.1.69. Both the boy and the girl were made to sip the purified water. The boderi sprinkled a portion of the same on their bodies. The household of the boy was made to pay a fine of Rs 25/- and to provide 3 jars of rice beer to the priestly functionaries. The girl and her parents
were excused as they had confessed the guilt. Later on, a feast was held in the newang gar. From that day, both the families regained their normal social life. But the most serious effect of this event is that I will never be able to become a priest in his life for his sin.

HANKIA CHAIN:

Case: X and Y:

An elopement marriage case is illustrated here to show the importance of the shrine. X, a school teacher, eloped with Y belonging to Mishing community on 1.3.69. The couple had to spend the night in the bachelors' boarding house. It was a Tuesday which is considered to be an ominous day by the Dibongiyas. The marriage ceremony was performed by the youths and the girls on the following day with the approval of the priestly council. A feast was arranged by X. But the priestly functionaries did not attend the feast of marriage on account of an illegal union. This was the first and exceptional case of union between a Dibongiya and a Mishing bride in the Sissimukh Deuri Gaon.
After a long discourse, the case was decided by the priests. They advised X and Y to undergo a chukumiai lārubā ritual. A sheep and 3 chickens were sacrificed by the bederi in the shrine and their blood was offered to the deities. A little quantity of purified water was given to sip to X and Y and a little of it was sprinkled on their bodies by the bederi. This ritual sanctified the union between X and Y. Otherwise, the villagers would not have accepted the couple; what is more, they would have excommunicated them from the society.

If alemement occurs between marriageable mates in the society, gājiai lugurubā is performed at the groom's house in the presence of the couple. The priests offer rice beer to Kundimana on the floor of the house for the well-being of the newly united couple. This is followed by the marriage ceremony held in the groom's house. In case of negotiated type of marriage the groom's family offers a packet of areca nuts and betel vine leaves on Wednesday i.e. on the previous day of the marriage to Kundimana shrine for overcoming any untoward incidence that might occur and for successfully performing the marriage ceremony. Similarly, the bride's family also offers areca nuts and betel vine leaves on Thursday for a successful celebration of the wedding.
SHRINE AND ITS RELATION WITH SHAMANISM:

MIDI GIRĀČI

In Dibangiya, midi denotes deity and girāči signifies old woman. Literally, g midi girāči means an woman possessed by a deity. Goswami has given the etymology of the term deedhani as follows: "The term deedhani has been derived from Sanskrit words deva, meaning god or deity and dhani meaning sound, echo. This popular term literally means the echo or utterings of deity. According to Neeg, the word deedhani, meaning the holy female dances, or god's women, is from Sanskrit deva(god) and dhani( woman).

It was informed that a woman of a Dibangiya village is invariably possessed temporarily by a female deity on this Thursday i.e. the last day of the bisi-festival. As for instance, on the 1st May 1969, Mrs R, was possessed by Thunketeri deity. She hurriedly came to the village shrine uttering some inaudible words. The villagers followed her with packets containing areca nuts and betel vine leaves. They took bath before their journey to the midiku.
It was considered as a purificatory bath for the devotee. The chief priest, M, opened the door of the Kundimama shrine for the shaman woman. She sat for a while there, by uttering some words and then came out and sat down on a piece of plantain leaf in front of the door of the shrine. She looked dreadful indeed while she was possessed. Her head and feet were trembling as she murmured some words.

M- bodari accompanied by P- berbarali and H- deonai offered a packet of areqa nuts and betel vine leaves to shamaness and requested her to foretell events that await the villagers. She asked them to shift the midiku site soon for the welfare of the villagers. Soon afterwards she regained her senses and left the premises of the shrine. It was observed that the girls carrying menstrual flow, the boys with long pants and shirts and men and women whose cane there without ritual bathes were debarred from attending the shamanistic ritual. Situations and conditions like these were considered as impure ones which might pollute the whole atmosphere of the midiku consequently affecting the total life of the villagers. Hence a
strict eye on conformity in respect of the above points.

SHRINE AND ITS RELATION WITH ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE DIBONGLYAS:

The chart 9 shows that out of 12 magico-religious rituals of the village shrine 10 rituals are directly involved with the agriculture— the basic economy of the Dibonglyas. As for instance, sät-lábirubá and ohekkik though not directly connected with the agriculture of the villagers, they indirectly help them for bumper crops as well as for the wellbeing of the villagers.

Bahágiyo-bisu and Magíy-bisu rituals are performed before ploughing the land for salí paddy and abu paddy respectively. Metua rituals are performed for welcoming summer, winter and spring seasons of the year, for good health and for bumper crops.

Rájkeháng (sídi derubá) is also another important ritual performed for cultivating salí paddy field and for the general welfare of the villagers. Sauna sidi sumuma and makedikibé rituals are held for reaping


ahu paddy and for eating ahu rice in the village.

Bakst make rituals is performed for eating dāli rice in the village. Thus, the above rituals show the role played by the shrine in the economic life of the Dibengiyas in the rural agricultural setting.

THE SHRINE AND ITS RELATION WITH THE OTHER GROUPS
OF THE DEURI-CHUTIYAS.

The Dibengiyas propitiate all the deities including the main deities of the Borgunyas and the Tengapamiyas groups of the Deuri-Chutiyas. Chinkesteri deity of the Dibengiyas is worshipped in the form of Tamreswari(Kābākhāti) by the Borgunyas. Similarly, Gailurung kundī of the Dibengiyas is worshipped in the form of Baliababa by the Tengapamiyas. Thus the Borgunyas and the Tengapamiyas propitiate Tamreswari and Baliababa deities in their own village shrine. Both the Borgunyas and the Tengapamiyas can participate in the rituals of the Dibengiyas held in the shrine. There is no restriction of participation in the rituals of the Dibengiyas by their fellow groups. As for instance, M (Tengapamiya)
participated bahāgiyo-bisu festival in the village. So, also D (Borgonya) and another man was found participating in the bisu-festival. But strict rule of avoidance is maintained between the Tengapamiyas and the Borgonyas in their ritual performances in the village shrine. There is a mythological story in connection with socio-ritual relations amongst these territorial groups of the Deuri-Chutiyas. The story is as follows:

"One day, Kundimama decided to distribute the main part of the North Eastern side of their country i.e. the Kundil Nagar from Dibong river to Lehit river and Chandragiri to their eldest son—Ganilurung Kundil (Baliababa). They allotted the Eastern part i.e. the Southern part of the Lehit, Patdes of Jaidev Hill, Seepani river to the eldest daughter—Tamreswari."

"But, in the early morning, Tamreswari in her disguised form i.e. in the form of her elder brother (Baliababa) deceived her father and received the Northern part of the state as well as some wealth allotted to Baliababa. Later on, when, Baliababa came to know the mischief played by his younger sister, he became very much angry and wanted to kill Tamreswari."
At the last moment, Kundimama could settle the dispute.
So Baliababa left the Northern state and came down to
the Southern state and settled there permanently.

This conflict, between Baliababa and Tanreswari
is the basis of ritual differentiation among the two groups
i.e. the Borgemya and the Tengapamiyas. This has also
led to demarcation of their village territories as
Borgemya and Tengapamiya respectively. They cannot live
in a same village. If a Tengapamiya villager dies in
a Borgemya village, or vice versa, the guardians must
purchase land for the disposal of the dead body. Otherwise,
they will not be allowed to dispose of the deadbody. In
that case the dead-body is carried to their own village
territory. This ritual conflict of the shrine is not
found among the Dibongiyas.

THE SHRINE AND ITS RELATION WITH THE URBAN
DIBONGIYAS:

Though a few families of the Dibongiyas have
settled in an urban setting like Dibrugarh Town, yet they
have not given up their traditional magico-religious
rituals and practices. As for instance, A employee
of Forest Office, M, an employee of Land Revenue Office, H a student of a College, attended bigu daboru day and offered areca nuts, betel vine leaves and then bowed down in front of Kundima shrine for personal and familial blessings. S offered a he-goat in the mela ritual for the welfare of the members of his family as well as for bumper crops on 5.11.69. In another instance, S prayed Kundima before the death of his wife at his residence on 11.6.71. The above cases show that the Dibangiyas still adhere to their traditional faith of religion though they are living in an urban setting.

THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF MIDIKU:

As noted earlier, 11 deities are worshipped by the Dibangiyas according to their tribal annual calendar. Goats, ducks, pigeons, chickens, pigs, rice beer, etc. are the main animal, bird and votive offerings offered at the time of midiku rituals by the priestly functionaries of the village. The different priests are the mediators in between the deities and the common villagers. The priestly functionaries,
vis; the bodari, barbarali, saderi, sarubari etc. sacrifice the votive and offer their fresh blood to the deities for securing blessings for general well-being, economic growth of the villagers and for the general welfare of the domesticated animals and birds.

It has been observed that the Sanskritisation is yet to get its way in the ritual life of the Dibangiya excepting a few rare cases in the urban setting. Of course, a few decandā interpreted Kundi as Siva, Mama as Parvati, respectively. Similarly, Kundiyā pise caiguru kundi, and Kumwar kundi as Ganesh and Karta respectively. This is an example of the modification of the names of god and goddess. It is mainly due to an influence of the neighbouring Assamese Vaishnavite people. Therefore, the belief in these deities and the practice of different rites and rituals play a dominant role for strengthening territorial as well as social ties in the Dibangiya society. This is the basis of the Dibangiya religion.

The midiku functions as a controlling tower of the irregular behaviour of the villagers under its
ritual domain. The village priests are the intermediaries who mediate between the world of the supernatural blessings and powers and the devotees of the shrine. Reverence for the shrine and its deities is part and parcel of the Dibengiyas socio-ritual, socio-cultural and economic life.

The cultural milieu among them generates implicit obedience to the rules and customs of the society of which the shrine is the visible custodian. Temporarily the lost socio-ritual equilibrium is balanced through the purificatory rites which normalise the abnormal behaviour of individuals. To conclude, the midiku, may be regarded as an umbrella for peace, prosperity, security and success of the villagers.
Diagram 2.
A Sketch of Annual Cycle of Rites at
Midiku.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Dibangiya</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Magico-religious rituals performed communally.</th>
<th>Agricultural activities.</th>
<th>Social function family wise.</th>
<th>Performed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bahag April/May</td>
<td>Bahagiy-biem is performed on the first Wednesday of the month of bahag.</td>
<td>Fleaing for sali paddy field.</td>
<td>Eating of bigu cakes, senn, rice beer, etc.</td>
<td>Welcoming summer for good health and for bumper crops.</td>
<td>Singing and dancing and merry making by the villagers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de.</td>
<td>de.</td>
<td>Metua is performed on Sunday after wellbeing of the villagers by sacrificing a he-goat.</td>
<td>Welcoming summer for good health and rich crops.</td>
<td>A member from each family should attend the function.</td>
<td>The sacrificial feast is held outside the shrine.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de.</td>
<td>de.</td>
<td>Midideruba (rajkebang). In this ritual Gu deities are worshipped on Wednesday for welfare of the villagers, including domesticated birds, animals, and for bumper crops.</td>
<td>Fleaing for sali paddy field and for general wellbeing of the villagers.</td>
<td>Chickens, ducks, rice beer, etc. are collected from each family.</td>
<td>The feast is consumed by the villagers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Jet. May/June</td>
<td>Barmetua is performed for securing good health by sacrificing goats, chickens, pigeons etc.</td>
<td>Welcoming summer for good health and for bumper crops.</td>
<td>All the packets previously promised by each family are offered in the ritual.</td>
<td>The attendants consumed a feast at the heremg ger.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Abru. June/July.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Set-labiruba is performed to sanctify the shrine polluted by atts.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tabu for agricultural activities.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Each family observed 3 days tabu from 7th to 9th Asur.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The functionaries prepare the sacrificed cook and consumed the same.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Mbum. July/Aug.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sakwia is performed to purify the shrine.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Purificatory ritual is performed for sanctifying the shrine.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Each family cleanse houses and cloths.</strong></td>
<td><strong>A feast is consumed in the heron ger.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Bade. Aug/Sept.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Makochibo is performed.</strong></td>
<td><strong>For eating aku-akw-rice.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Each family can eat new aku-rice after makochibo.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The feast is consumed at the premises of the heron ger by the attendants.</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Aku. Sept/Oct.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lyel-midi numa (al saba) is performed at the lower part of the village.</strong></td>
<td><strong>To bid farewell to the Lyel midi.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fill the male and female members of each family participate in the function.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The remainder of the articles of the rituals are consumed by the villagers.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7. Kati. Oct/Nov.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Matua is performed at the shrine by sacrificing a bo-goat.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Welcoming summer season.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The ritual is attended by the members of each family.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The sacrificial feast is consumed by the attendants in the heron ger.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Season/Year</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Agun/Nov/Dec.</td>
<td>Bakat maka is held at the shrine on Wednesday.</td>
<td>Each family can take sali-rice after performing the rituals at the shrine.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The villagers consume the sacrificial feast in the noreng ger.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Mag./Jan/Feb.</td>
<td>Magiye-higu is observed on the Wednesday at the shrine.</td>
<td>Each family observes it as their communal festival and drink gujen and various home made cakes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The attendants consume the feast at the noreng ger. The villagers enjoy their life by merry making and drinking gujen from family to family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Pagan.Mar/Apr.</td>
<td>Matun is performed by sacrificing a he-goat at the midiku spring.</td>
<td>A member of each family should attend the function.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The members consume the feast in the noreng ger.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION II:

SOME DEITIES:

The foregoing section is devoted to description and discussion of the mode of worshipping 18 deities collectively in the midiku. Besides these deities, other deities too are propitiated individually or village-wise in their respective house-hold and public place. The mode of propitiating some of these deities are described here.

MIDIDERUBA (RAJKEEBANG) RITUAL:

The ritual was observed in the village on 7.5.69. The following deities were worshipped in the ritual.

DEITIES OF THE MIDIKU: (see chapter 3 section I).

DEITIES WORSHIPPED OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE SHRINE:

15. Alouraj (male)
16. do. (female)
17. Diburu 3ambya baiya duwa kipangaya du a luimi lubu
   baula (male).
18. do. (female).
20. Bebaraja.
The devotees return with packets at their hands from a family ritual.

Three elderly women perform a magico-religious ritual (panyã-katã).
The baby is seen inside a plunge fishing basket (polo).
22. Associate of Bebarajal
23. Daughter (male)
24. de. (female).
25. Ouya Kach (sal kumar and malkumar) (male).
26. de. (female).
27. Oung dayeci -dish kumar.
28. de. - Chach kumar.
29. de. - Numal kumar.
30. Amcakudi.
31. Bidi bidata (2 numbers).
32.
33. Hang (2) i.e. āhachentaya (sum).
34. de Akuchā gaja (sum).

PAMACHA: (NUMALI KUNWARI AND BERENG KUNWARI):

35. Ai Jageswari Iswari Ai.
36. Ai Mehmaya Ai.
37. Ai Darasti.
38. Ai Jakala Likasti.
40. Ai Rupar Darasti Lowati.
41. Ai cileani batahi Numali Kunwari Ai.
h2. Dekaloi.
h3. Baraloi.
h4. Dekahamata.
h5. Bura hamata.
h7. Kumuni.
h8. Barang kumwari.
h9.

äotuá (aañiirá)

h9. ñotuá -.
50. ñotuá's assistant.
51. Tauki tauka.
52. Tauki tauka's assistant.
53. Biyei-biyoni.
54. Biyei biyoni's assistant.
55. Jurbari kutarbari.
56. Sat bai kakai.
to
to
52.
53. Ninushi
54. Amewidi. (Baswmati.)
The villagers perform Iyoi-sabã ritual in 1968.

D (deondâî) performs âchârã ritual in his son-in-law's paddy field in 1968.
DEITIES AND THEIR RITUAL:

The deities were worshipped at three different places by three priests of the village shrine. M- the bedani worshipped 16 deities in the shrine. D (deandai) and E (deandai) worshipped 50 deities outside the mitiku compound. It was informed that the above 50 deities were debarred from being worshipped in the village shrine as they did not belong to the local deities of the village shrine. Their abodes were outside the village shrine. Large numbers of pigs, chickens, betel vine leaves, areca nuts etc. were offered to the deities by the two deandais and prayed the deities for bumper crops and for the welfare of the villagers.

Similar case was observed on 8.5.68.

AGARIA (Agara):

Agha deity (see page 113) is also worshipped privately by the Dibegiyas. A deandai and a legu are invited on the previous day of performance of the ritual. The priest and his assistant have maintained purity of life
on the previous night. He should not consume curry
prepared with salt and mustard oil and spices. He
should sleep in a separate bed in the previous night.
In the morning, before starting to the ritual ground,
he must take bath and adorn with a white ikus and helemi.
This ritual bath and the new garments sanctify the body
of the priests and make them fit for performing the ritual.

RITUAL GROUND AND THE PRIESTS:

Generally, a paddy field is considered to be
ritually pure and hence such a place is selected for per-
forming this ritual. The demdai and the lâgwa
construct three trellies and three altars on a selected
place in the field. The trellies are made of a kind of
wild plant(mol). The priests do not allow outsiders to
participate in the ritual. But the extra-ritual food
is allowed to be consumed at the residence of the host.
The priest and his associate arrange all the articles and
offer them before the altars of the deities. The cekek
prepares the ritual food at the phase of worship.
THE PRIESTS AND THE DEITIES:

The priests especially the demsāḷ can control the deities through their powerful incantations. At the very beginning the demsāḷ accompanied with other assistants perform sujma lugurubā ritual at the residence of the host. They offer sujma and kaji on the floor and request the deities to attend the ritual in the agricultural field. After this ritual, they proceed to the field with all necessary articles and perform the ritual.

The demsāḷ first sacrifices 200 coins and offers their blood and heads to Acia, Timiki Tanka, Rixi bixendi, Jurbari kutarbari, and Satbai kakai and prays them to bestow blessings on the host. He also sacrifices 2 chickens and offers their blood and heads to Kimsāḥ and prays for yeilding bumper crops.

Later on, the sacrifices fowls and rice are cooked and offered to the above deities excepting Kimsāḥ. They offer only uncooked articles to Municā. The demsāḷ prays the deities for increasing the wealth and bumper crops of the host. Later on, the cook entertains the
priest, logu and other attendants with the cooked food and b rice beer. The host offers an uncooked hind limb of cock and cooked food both to desad and the logu as a mark of honour of their free and voluntary service.

AFTER EFFECT OF THE ACIA RITUAL:

N (H 28) and N (H 19) reported that they achieved success after the ritual in getting sufficient quantity of paddy. The green paddy field was not damaged by wild animals, ants; birds, etc. So they believed that the ritual had got some economic value in the society. The other aspect of the ritual was that the villagers who could afford to perform the Acia ritual could raise their economic condition in comparison to other common villagers.

The rich families represented by the household no 1,5,12,19, and 29, performed this ritual annually. Their belief is that continued prosperity is due to regular performance of this annual worship. On the other hand, the household no 6, and 7 gave up performing this ritual as their economic conditions deteriorated progressively.
MINUCUI

Minucui (see pp. 113, 116) is also worshipped separately. She is regarded as the goddess of wealth and is worshipped in the granary of the household by the head of the jupâ. If a man who does not know the formulae to appease Minucui, he seeks the assurance from a desadai of the village. The deity is mainly worshipped for multiplication of wealth especially the paddy in the field and in the granary.

Before the propitiation of the deities, the worshipping takes ritual bath and adorns himself with a white ikum and a chalemg. White clothes are considered as pure and auspicious for ritual performances. A state of purity is necessary to appease the deities for gaining their favour. No outsiders are allowed to participate in the ritual. After the ritual, a few girês are invited to perform a sujum lugurubâ ritual at the residence of the host. The host offers a part of the cooked food to the ancestral names at the backyard of his house and prays them for the welfare of the members of the family, domesticated birds and animals and bumper crops.
JALKAI DANGARIA:

This deity is believed to reside in the river. When a man or woman suddenly falls ill near by the river or rivulet, he or she believes that Jalkai deity is responsible for the same. A few oldmen appease Jalkai with brownish male duck, jaha rice, areca nuts, betel vine leaves, lamp wicks, etc. on the bank of the river. The duck is killed and cooked. The rice is also cooked by a lādani. The deceased offers cooked food and meat to Jalkai and requests him for the welfare of the deceased. Later on, the sacrificed parts are cooked and consumed by the priests. Again, if a man is unable to perform a ritual, he offers a tupula promising to the deity to perform the ritual later on. (M H B) reported that his illness was recovered after propitiation of Jalkai dangaria deity on 24.1.69.

BERA RAJA:

P— the barbarāli and other priests of the village inform the ethnographer that Bebaraja is the eldest son of Aberci (p 70). He is generally worshipped
at the time of acute illness. When a man is possessed by Baba, he is easily identified by an expert deondāi. A man or an woman falls seriously ill and becomes unconscious and his or her tongue unusually becomes longer. A she pig and chickens are sacrificed by a deondāi and offered their bleed to the deity. He requests the deity to leave the person and cure him from illness. Miss L (Hill) was senseless and her tongue was abnormal on 25.1.69. Two deondāis (B and S) could know that Baba raja was responsible for her illness. So they suggested B to promise one she-pig immediately.

When B offered one she-pig in front of Miss L, the latter recovered gradually from her illness. A week later, B sacrificed the she pig and a fowl and offered its bleed and heads to the deity and prayed for wellbeing of the deceased. The body part was cooked and consumed with cooked rice and rice beer at the residence of the host. It was observed after a week, that Miss L recovered from her illness.

Kalika:

Kalika is a deity who looks after the cows and buffaloes. He is duly worshipped at the time of illness
of the cows and buffaloes. When Kalika possesses a cow or a buffalo, the latter cannot eat grass; water etc.
The deity is generally worshipped with banana, powdered rice, uncooked rice, lamp wicks, areca nuts and betel
wine leaves etc. on the courtyard of the host. Such a case was observed on 23.8.69. M (H 28) propitiated the above
deity with the above articles for the welfare of his buffaloes. M informed the ethnographer that his buffaloes recovered from illness on 25.8.69.

SUBEGANI MIDI: ITS IMPORTANCE IN
LAPARU CHITIGAYO FAMILY:

"Ger dee poen hale, Ben deye kariba ki".
( Ben dee cannot do harm if Ger dee is satisfied). The above is the philosophy of the members of the Laparu
Chitigayo clan. The front room of a Laparu Chitigayo clan's house is the abode of the Subegani midi.

The Subegani room is treated as tabu by the members of the family. They do not enter the room
excepting on ritual day. It is strictly tabooed for womenfolk. The head of the family maintains the room by
virtue of his knowledge of propitiation of the Subegani.
According to S- decadai Subecami midi is worshipped annually twice in the month of bahag. for wellbeing of the members of the family. Subecami turns out to be benevolent when propitiated properly and malevolent when in case appropriate offerings are refused.

The head of the jupa propitiates the deity by sacrificing a pair of duck, a pair of chicken, banana, arnica nuts, betel vine leaves etc. in the Subecami kuta in facing the Eastern direction.

The most striking feature of this Subecami ritual is that it is only propitiated by the members of the Baparu (Bitigaye) clan of the village. M - the chief priest, H - the barbaram, H - decadai & c informed that Subecami was only propitiated by the members of S's (H 21) and M's (H 4) families in the village. They adopted this ritual from the Tengapamiya group of the Deuri-Chutiyas. The members of the Bitigaye clan and other clans of the village do not perform Subecami ritual as they consider it to be a non-Dibangiya deity.
SECTION III.

RITUAL ON BIRTH:

Generally, the Dibangiyas observe at least for a week as pollution from the date of birth of a child. The delivery generally takes place inside the house. Womenfolk help the mother at her delivery. It is a taboo for the male members of the household to enter the room at the moment of a delivery. As soon as a child is born it is washed and cleaned. All cloths are also washed by the mother. Aškarā containing uncooked rice, egg, areca nut, betel leaf, one rupee coin, bow and arrow etc. are offered near the bed of the mother by a woman of the house for the well-being of the newborn baby. Later on, on 68UA LABIRUBĀ day the above articles except bow and arrow are offered to a beggar. They believe that there would bring blessings to the new born baby.

68UA LABIRUBĀ:

The household along with the new born baby and the mother becomes impure till the purificatory ritual is performed. Generally, the date on which the naval card falls from the baby, is selected to perform this
purificatory ritual. In the morning, on the ritual day, all the cloths, the floor of the house are cleaned by the womenfolk of the household. The mother comes out of her room and shows her baby to the sun for the welfare of the baby. The Dibongiyas worship sun for the welfare of the baby. The Dibeogiyas worship sun especially during midideruba ritual in the village.

A few old men, in case of male child, and a few old women, in case of female child, are invited to perform the ritual in the residence. A pig or a fowl is killed and cooked by a village cook selected from Ditigaye clan. The gira or piracbi offer twice a little lump of cooked food and rice beer at the floor to Kundinama for the wellbeing of the newborn baby and the mother. Then the offerings of the ritual are consumed by the attendants. This restores ceremonial purity to the household.

The priestly functionaries namely the bederi, barbarali etc. refrain from eating food during the period of tabu till the duá láhiruá ritual is performed. Their fear from pollution due to birth of a child is the reason why they refrain from accepting anything edible in the family where a birth case takes place. If a baby is born in bederi's or barbarali's jupa, they stop conducting rituals in the midikku. In such a case, they postpone the
date of the ritual till a moon is seen in the sky. They believe that appearance of the moon is an auspicious sign for performing rituals. Of course, if possible, a badari from other neighboring Dibangya village may be invited to conduct the ritual of the village.

In one case, it was observed that the badari could not conduct a ritual in the village on account of a birth of a female child in the household on 11. on 2.9.68. But he could do so after the completion of the quâ labirabâ ritual on 14.9.70.

The most significant aspect of this ritual is that 7 members from seven main clans viz; Šundariye, Šitigye, Raïye, Lagasuwe, Patrïye, Mehadaye, and Aïriye are necessary for purifying a newborn child and mother and the household.
SECTION IV
MARRIAGE RITUALS:

SUJEN LUGURUBA:

Sujen is a part and parcel of socio-ritual life of the Siyengiyas. It is not only necessary to entertain the guests in all socio-ritual, socio-cultural gatherings but also essential for offering to all the deities, ancestral names and other supernatural beings. Without it no ritual can be performed; nor any socio-cultural function becomes complete without its distribution among the participants of the gathering.

In negotiated types of marriages viz; demachi, bakat rupa etc. sujen luguruba ritual is held at the residence of the bride's parent. Both the groom's and the bride's parties participate in a liberal distribution of rice-beer on the very day of celebration of the wedding rite. In fact civil part of the marriage ceremony consists of offering of sujen and kaji. This ritual marks the completion of marriage and strengthens the solidarity of the jupe, jahu and the manties. This is however preceded by another ritual known as mimo-hurerubä described below:

MIMO-HÄRERUBÄ:

In a negotiated type of marriage, ancestral names are propitiated a few days before the final marriage-day
by the head of the jupa. This ritual is elaborately described in the last section of this chapter. The amúkà of the jupa and the desíd of the village sacrifice a large number of chickens and a pig and offer their blood and their cooked meat to ancestral names. They pray the ancestral names for showering blessings on the groom and the bride.

A newly married daughter-in-law is expected to cook and serve food in her husband’s jupa. But she is debarred from doing so till gujen lugurubá ritual is performed to initiate her as cook. A few girâs offer gujen and kaji on the floor to the ancestral names and Kudimama and pray them for the wellbeing of the daughter-in-law. This ritual finally and socially sanctions her union with a groom of the selected jëku, the elders of which collectively accept foods served by her.

RITUAL IN CONNECTION WITH
MARRIAGE BY ELOPEMENT:

In marriage by elopement, a ritual is performed at the residence of the bride’s parents, at a convenient
time by the groom. Oldmen and oldwomen of both the parties including the couple, gather at the residence of bride's parents and offer sujum to the ancestral names and Kundinama in the following words. The members of the bride's party say "we have offered our daughter today. She will get get her oblation from our side after her death. " The members of the groom's party replies:" we have accepted your daughter and she would be treated with oblation after her death at her husband's residence ". The couple bow down infront of the giras and receive blessings from the latter.

It is held that this ritual enable a bride to change affiliation from the natal jaka to her husband's jaka. It appears to be a psychological fact. A woman cannot change her clan's membership merely by performing this ritual. For all practical purposes she retains the membership of the natal jaka. This becomes obvious from the fact that she cannot be married to her natal jaka after widowerhood or being divorced. Further, the change would not have permitted junior levirate because of clan exogamy. If a woman dies before this ritual a banana sheath is used as a p representative of the deceased by her husband at the time of the ritual. On the whole, this ritual (sujum lugureba or malemi) ensures the bride to receive oblation after her death from the members of her husband's jupa.
CHHOBOHMA LARUBA:

It is performed especially, when a Dibongiya boy breaches his tribal endogamy. A case of intermarriage between a Dibongiya boy and a Mishing girl has already been cited in the chapter 3 and section I.

Chhoßëmbë lərubë ritual is also a means of purifying a boy and a girl for their illicit connection. In both the cases, a she-pig and four chickens are sacrificed by bederi in the compound of the midiku. He prays Kundinama and their associates to forgive the incumbent for commission of sin. He then sprinkles sëści from his copper-jar. In addition to expenses for this ritual, to be borne by the transgressor is also fined a cash of Rs 25/- to Rs 50/- by the priestly council.
SECTION V:

RITUAL ON DEATH:

The Dibongiyanas lay great importance on the death of a man or a woman and try to dispose it off as soon as possible in the village cremation ground. They believe that death occurs mainly due to the deities – Balsa, Dalkunwar, Balianaman, and Blinkunwar. They are considered as malevolent ones. If they get chances, they snatch away man's soul from the body. An important H interpreted the above deities as Jimrara and his associates.

There are two main ways of disposal of the dead body. Generally, the oldmen and oldwomen, are cremated. The dhel is constructed with 7 layers of firewood specially for oldmen and oldwomen. Theoretically, it is prepared of fuel wood of 9 layers for the priests. But practically, they construct the pyre with 7 layers of firewood and they add additional firewood into pyre to make it 9 layers to maintain the traditional custom. The traditional custom of construction of the pyres for a man and for woman was 7 layers and 5 layers of firewood respectively.
The second method of disposal is the burial. If a child dies just after delivery, he or she is buried in the burial ground. In such cases the so-called ṭuṣu is removed within three days. Again, if a woman dies just at the time of delivery, or a man or a woman dies in accident or in epidemic is also buried in the burial ground.

TREATMENT OF DEAD BODY:

The dead body is washed with water. A man or a woman is adorned with a new white ikum, cheleng, and egum, blouse respectively. They believe that this treatment purifies the dead body.

DEAD BODY AND THE HEAD BAND:

Soon after the washing of the dead body ḋa-pa-li made of pieces of pure silver is tied on the forehead of the body. A few pure silver coins are also offered to the dead body by a well-to-do family. As for instance, S introduced 4 silver coins into the mouth of his dead wife in order to enable her soul to cross babamal and to reach her destination i.e. the heaven freely.
BREAKING THE EGG:

An egg is broken on the forehead of the dead body generally by the eldest son. He supplicates the soul of the dead body in the following words: "Your life is ended today as the broken egg. You leave all earthly objects and living beings and go to sipuri to live with the other ancestors. The significance of this ritual is to serve all kin relationships for good with the dead. They believe that if they do not cut off such relation with the dead, the latter may cause harm to the living members of the family and lineage.

THE DEAD BODY AND THE CREMATION GROUND:

The dead body is tied into a mat and carried to the cremation ground in a procession by the sons and relatives and villagers. The procession is generally led by the eldest son with a piegl cooked food, rice beer and a burning collection of straw. A man spreads raw cotton thread throughout the road leading to the cremation
ground. The underlying meaning of this spreading of thread is enable the soul to reach the cremation ground easily. While carrying the dead body, its feet are always placed towards the front. The thread of raw cotton and the dead body are carried around the pyre for 7 times anti-clockwise. Then the dead body is placed on the pyre. For instance, I wrapped cotton yarns for 7 times around the pyre and covered with additional fire wood on 12.6.71.

OFFERING OF FOOD BEFORE CREMATION:

The eldest son offers cooked food and rice beer to the soul of the dead. One part of the cooked food is also offered to Ghalakumvar and his associates. He supplicates the soul of the deceased in the following way: "Today, I have given you tepet-pinde (kama-pinde); give up all attachment for material things on earth and go to heaven." Then, he requests the above deities, to take care of the deceased and to accompany it to the ancestral world.

BURNING THE PYRE:

The pyre is first lit by the eldest son. The important point here is that the man who first kindles
the pyre, generally performs the mortuary rituals after the cremation. In absence of the eldest son, any male member of the family can perform the duty of the former. The attendants completely burn the pyre.

OFFERING OF FOOD AFTER THE CREMATION:

The eldest son offers cooked food, rice beer, for second time, near by the cremation ground. Seven parts for the name and one part for the deities are offered. A <deceased> collects 7 pieces of calcined bones and lets them fall on the 7 parts of food through the left hand fingers of the eldest son. The son then collects these parts leaving aside the part offered to the deities and ties them into a packet. The packet is then thrown at the bottom of the river after diving 9 times into water. This is what is known locally as asti utu. This ritual enables the deceased to attain mukti.

PURIFICATION:

Those who attend the cremation take bath in the nearby river and return to the deceased's home. Each
Attendants are required to raise his right foot over a fire of straw. All the attendants are purified with churhi by a wman of the bereaved family on the courtyard. The purified water is prepared with water, cow dung, tulaki, a paice made of copper, etc. by the head of the family. No Brahmin priest is engaged for the cremation or for preparation of the purified water in the Dibongiya society. The participants are entertained with a feast of pork and rice beer by the host. The most remarkable aspect of the funeral is that almost all the villagers gather at the residence of the deceased with rice beer, areca nuts, betel vine leaves etc. which mark the unity and the friendship among the villagers. Such cases were observed on 10.8.68, 29.12.68, 13.5.70, and 15.10.70.

PERIOD OF OFFERING OBLATION:

The son offers oblations from next day onward up to 14th day. He offers two meals a day. The final oblation is held on the 14th day. In all 7 oblations of food offerings are made. A chickens is killed and cooked on the final day. A few giras of the village perform cujen luguru ritual in the principal room of the host. They offer rice beer and curry on the floor and request the soul of the deceased to snap all ties with
the living beings and earthly objects. They also pray for wellbeing of the members of the family.
The sea offers oblation consisting of rice beer and curry at the backyard of his house for the welfare of the family, domesticated birds and animals and for bumper crops.

**DAHA OR KAI:**

**Daha** or **kai** is the final mortuary ritual of the Dibongiyas. There is no hard and fast rule for a fixed time to perform this ritual. It is an expensive ritual. So, they perform it in an appropriate time especially when they can afford to maintain the cost of the ritual. The ritual requires a large number of chickens and pigs, huge quantities of rice, rice beer, areca nuts, betel lime leaves etc. Generally, it is held after a year.

Wednesday is considered as an auspicious day. The elders perform *sujen lugurbā* ritual to satisfy the name of the deceased. They pray to the departed soul of the deceased in the following way:

"Apumār letā mārīchv Apumā pu, nāti, bāī āshāeri dibē".
i.e. "we have completed your rituals. Give up your attachment for your son, and brothers etc. " After the above ritual the eldest son or his substitute who performs the oblation kills the pig with the help of other bachelors of the village. This sacrificed pig is then cooked for serving in a feast. A divination is made with the help of the pig. An expert diviner can forecast the future events of the host and also suggest the remedy for the same if the omens are unfavourable ones.

Cooked food, rice beer, areca nuts, betel vine leaves are offered by the eldest son to the name of the deceased at the ritual ground and at the backyard of the house. A few parts of the food and rice beer are also offered to the names of the ancestors. A descendant offers pork and rice beer and other articles to the deities—Chila kumwar and his associates and pray them to release the soul of the deceased and to allow tit to attend the funeral ceremony.

Later on, a feast of pork and cooked rice is consumed by the villagers including men, women, boys and girls. The host offers a dhamrai and a few garments and utensils in memory of the deceased to the oldmen. T
They sell the above articles and the money is deposited in the village welfare fund.

Even after the dahā ritual the chief mourner offers oblation to the departed soul for days during which he refrains from normal activities. On each day, the eldest son keeps fasting till he offers oblation to the name at the backyard of his house. The last oblation is offered on the 7th day. A few elders perform sujen luguruha ritual at the deceased's house. They offer rice, beer and chicken curry on the floor and request the name to leave the human world and to go to sipuri and stay with the ancestors. The eldest son offers oblation with a boiled egg at the backyard of his house. He offers a portion of the egg to the name and another portion to GIlakumwar and his associates and requests them for the welfare of the family, domesticated birds, animals and bumper crops. A case was observed personally on 10.9.69.

The villagers voluntarily attend the disposal of a dead body. At least a man or a woman of each family visits the bereaved family with a jar of sujen. Generally, the eldest son first kindles the pyre or first digs the grave which is then followed by the co-villagers. He
also offers oblation during the mortuary ritual. He offers two portions of feed to Gilakumwar and to soul of the deceased before cremation. Again, 7 parts and 1 part of cooked feed are offered to the soul and Gilakumwar respectively after cremation. He collects 7 pieces of calcined bones with the help of a deceased along with 7 parts of cooked feed and then offers it at the bottom of river after diving 7 times into water. This is locally known as asti utua. The attendants purify their bodies by washing in the river and by receiving spahi ji and burning straw in the courtyard of the host. The attendants are entertained by the host with a feast of pork and rice beer. This feast is one of the factors of the social solidarity among the different clans, lineage etc. in the village.

MORTUARY RITUAL AND SOCIAL RELATION:

I has been observed in all the cases that the consanguinal and affinal kinds as well as the common villagers gather at the residence of the deceased as soon as they come to know the news of the death. They come atleast with a jar of rice beer along with the bereaved family.
Atleast a man from each household attends voluntarily at the time of disposal of the dead body. The attendants are entertained with a feast of pork and rice beer by the host. This act of ritual participation and entertainment to the villagers irrespective of kin affiliation enhances village solidarity among the different groups of the Dibegigas. The bachelors and a few interested persons recite the Mahabharata or the Ramayana especially at night. The members of the family patiently listen to recitation which give them a sort of relief from the grief.

A tabu is observed at least for 4 days after the death of a member of a family. It is also observed by the members of the clan. It affects all the consanguineal kins of the village. The granaries of each family are closed for a week and a white cloth is spread in front of the door. They believe that the goddess of wealth may leave the granary if they enter into it during the period of tabu. They also step to perform rituals in and outside the village shrine atleast for a week in the village. In this way, the family, jāku and pājā are affected by death of a person in the village.
SECTION VI:
MIMO-HARERUBA:
(ANCESTOR WORSHIP):

The Dibengiyas believe in a large number of deities which have been already described in the previous sections of this chapter. Beside these chief deities, the Dibengiyas also believe in some local deities and try to propitiate them with sacrifices for wellbeing of an individual, members of the family, clan, village, domesticated birds and animals and also for bumper crops. Among the benevolent spirits, the ancestral names are the most important in the sociospiritual life of the Dibengiyas. This discussion relates to the manner of propitiating the ancestral names. Further, the rites and rituals of ancestor worship strengthen the bonds of close tie existing among the members of the jupē and jāku.

"The mine or the name of the ancestor is one of the cementing factors among the members of the lineage( bajaya) or the clan." The souls of the dead persons of the lineage are worshipped up to second ascending generation by the head of the household. They worship ancestors in two separate alters in a
G Íūmukīa, sitting right) and H (deondāi, sitting extreme left) perform mimo-hārerubā ritual in 1968.

Arrangement for cooking ritual (mimo-hārerubā) feast in 1968.
particular place notably in the north west side of the compound of the residence. Sometimes, it is also performed on the bank of Sissi river. They appease the ancestors according to the method of disposal of the dead. The cremated ancestors are appeased with cooked food and the buried ancestors are propitiated with uncooked food. "Eswā (uncooked) and musumā(cooked) are two ways of performing a religious rite. The former consists of ripe banana, uncooked rice, powdered rice, areca nuts, betel vine leaves etc. This is what generally goes by the name of eswā. These are offered to the deities, Musumā is the method by which a sacrificial bird or an animal is cooked and then offered to the deities for the second time.

TIME AND SELECTION OF SITE FOR MIMO-HARERUBA:

Mimo-harerubā ritual is performed thrice in a year especially during bahagiya-bhig, magiya-bhig and on the death anniversary of a person. Generally the first Thursday of the month of bahag as well asef Magh is considered as an auspicious day and so they perform the ritual. Bhig-festival starts only after completion of this particular ritual.
Generally, a particular site in the Western side of the compound or on the bank of Sissiriver is selected to worship the ancestors. A shrine for the ancestral names is absent in the Dibongiyas society. The site is cleaned and cleaned with hees by the bachelors of the village. The head of the family prepares an alter facing to either North South or East West direction.

MIMO-HARERURA AND THE PRIESTS:

There are altogether two sets of religious functionaries- a set deals with the deities of the umidiku and the other set conducts the magic-religious rituals of the individual and of villagers. The former set comprises of bederi, sadani, barbarali, saru barali, berê, bârik etc. as already noted in the foregoing chapter. The latter set consists of deondai of the village. A man becomes deondai by virtue of his knowledge of the means and processes of propitiating the benevolent and malevolent spirits in the village. The deondai renders free service to the villagers. In return, he usually receives a part of sacrificed pigs and fewls from the client. The village cook cooks
the sacrificial food and meat and distributes the preparation of the feast among the gathering. H, B, H, B, S were the expert decedais and G was the cook of the priestly council of the village.

SACRIFICE IN MIMO-HARERUBA:

In traditional mimo-hareruba a number of domesticated birds, animals, rice beer, areca nuts, betel vine leaves etc. are sacrificed by the head of the joint family. These offerings consist of two parts vis; sumumā and amwā. The decedāi and the ṣumukā of the joint family first arrange and distribute articles e.g. betel vine leaves, areca nuts, rice, etc. on a few pieces of leaves and spread on the earthen altar. The decedāi conducts the ritual part of the Gilakumwar, Balancaaman and Binkumwar on the right hand side on the altar. The ṣumukā or the head of the family performs only the part of the ritual directed to propitiate the ancestral names on the left hand side of the altar.

At the beginning, a ritual known as gujen lugurubā or med bakā, literally, offering of rice beer is performed to invite the names of the dead-men of the joint family inside the performer's kitchen by inviting
a few old men of the village. The devotee offers rice, beer and curry to his ancestral masses and invite them to take part in the mune-bārurubā ritual.

The decedents and the āmukā sacrifice a pig, fowls and offer their blood and capitals to Dalkumwar, Balicosman and Bimkumwar and the names of the ancestors respectively. The āmukā offers his oblation in two halves. In one part on his right hand side, he offers oblation to the cremated ancestors and in the other part i.e. on his left hand side of the altar, he appeases his buried ancestors, as shown in the Fig 1.

After āmgā offerings, the body parts of the sacrificial pigs, fowls and rice are cooked separately by the cook of the village on the spot. The adolescent girls and the bachelors of the village help in cleaning, cutting the articles, collecting water, banana leaves etc on the ritual day. The best part of the meat i.e. liver, thighs, heap etc. are offered to the names of the cremated ancestors. A part of the cooked food is also offered to the buried ancestors.

There are two distinct ways of offering things to the living beings and the names of the ancestors. The right and left hands are used to offer food for the
living beings and the names of the ancestors respectively.
The underlying belief in offering things with the left hand is the dread for the ancestral spirits. They believe that if they offer things with the left hand, the spirit of the dead cannot harm or bring misfortunes to the living being. Again, if they offer offerings with the right hand, the names of the ancestor may cause grave danger to the members of the family.

CHIKA ITOKA: (NKACOBA):

It is a divination with the help of liver of a sacrificial pig. It is the most important aspect of the ritual. An expert diviner can foretell all the good and evil omens and also the future events of the client. He suggests it remedial measures to the host to overcome imminent danger revealed through divination.

The Dibengiyas offer oblations to a large number of ancestral names. It includes all the ancestral names. It includes all the ancestral names in the bajaye up to the second ascending generation. As for instance, the genealogy illustrates the ancestors included in the ritual. T (H 12) first offers his oblation to the names of his parents, his uncles and aunts in first ascending generation, in order of precedence. Next he offers oblations
Fig. 1. Shows the sacrifice by Deondai (S) and Ḥamikia (T) in
Mino-hārerubā ritual.
to the names of his deceased's brothers in his own
generation and lastly to the names of his grand-parents
in the second ascending generation. I informed that
he offered a part of ritual food in one container leaf
to all the ancestral names as he could not recollect
their individual names.

The main object of offering oblation to the
ancestral names is that the head of the jupa believes
that the spirits of the dead continue to direct attention
towards their living descendants. If amkia (Ego)
cannot satisfy the ancestral names if the latter may
cause dreadful harm to descendants.

In one case it was observed that G (H?)
temporarily abandoned worshipping his ancestral names
for a year from 1968-1969. As a result, the members of
the jupa, a pair of bullocks fell ill and suffered almost
continuously. Amkia approached H(descend) for help, and
the latter advised the former to perform mimo-harurub. Accordingly he propitiated mimo with the help of H.
Lateron, it was reported that the jupa recovered from
the illness after due propitiation of the ancestral
names to whose displeasure the frequent incidence of
illness was attributed by the diviner.
In all the cases, it is observed that amukia of each jupu assisted collectively, by the members of his own jupu first, arranged the ritual articles and cleaned the place for the ritual. Secondly all the members of the bājaye and jaku gathered at amuki's red dance on mine-hārerubā day and consumed the ritual feast. Before, consumption of the feast, all the members of bājaye offered a part of cooked food and guzen on the floor to ancestral names and prayed them for blessings. The participating co-villagers also followed them and prayed mine for the all round success of the feast.

The following cases have been observed directly and illustrated.

Case 1:

T (H 12), worshipped the following names and his ancestors on annual mine-hārerubā day on 6.10.68. (see genealogical table 1).

At the beginning, a few pirās e.g. 3(demael), H, E, B, M, I, A, C(eek), L, W, offered guzen and bājī to the ancestors on the floor of the kitchen of the amuki and invited them to take part in the ritual food. The amuki bowed down in front of the guests and received blessings for the welfare of the family. Then
The bachelors of the village selected a place in the North West side of the host's compound and prepared an earthen altar in the North South direction.

**SACRIFICE:**

S (daumāl), performed the duty of priest and appeased Gīlakumwar, Bāliacasan, Bīnakumwar sacrificing three chickens on the right hand and the Northern side of the altar. These deities, are referred to as Jemrajā pakiti and their associate (leguā). He also offered mērga to gātal of dead-river to enable the names to cross the same and to arrive at the place of worship safely.

T (ānumā) sacrificed 22 parts and 4 parts to the cremated and buried ancestors on the altar respectively as shown in the Fig 1. Each part contained (see Fig 2), water, powdered rice, rice, areca nuts, betel vine leaves, ḍimāru. These were offered to the buried ancestors. The second part contained rice beer, betelvine leaves, areca nuts, ḍimāru etc. and was offered to the cremated ancestors. Lamp wicks prepared from raw cotton threads and mustard imb were kindled in front of the aśār.
I first appeased the buried ancestors sacrificing a chicken and offering its fresh blood on parts on the altar as shown in the Fig 1. Be then, sacrificed a she-pig and offered its warm blood to the names of 22 cremated ancestors.

The sacrificial parts of the chickens and the pig were soaked with merk and offered to the deities by the deendal and to the ancestors by emuchi respectively. The deendal offered articles with his right hand and emuchi did so with his left hand.

It was observed that several attendants made divinations with the liver of the pig. They observed and found that the members of the family would no longer suffer from any serious illness in the year 1970.

The general feast was prepared by the youths and the adolescent girls of the village in the spot. The villagers including men, women, boys, girls etc. were entertained with the feast with rice beer. The women folk were treated separately in the host’s kitchen. Because, it is the traditional custom of the Dibengiyas to treat women folk separately in a ritual occasion. The deendal and the emuchi received with packets containing park, rice beer and rice in honour of their services in the ritual. They carried these packets to
their respective residences and distributed among the children.

A similar case was observed on 10.10.68 in which G (awukia) and H (dewdaal) sacrificed bhusabig and 3 chickens respectively and prayed to the names of the ancestors for the wellbeing of the members of the household. Again, two such cases were observed on 23.1.69. P and H, appeared the names of their ancestors with various kinds of cooked food in order to secure blessings on the occasion of the magiyoc-bicu festival.

JUQIKIN MUJA (WA-FURUKIYA):
( ANCESTOR WORSHIP UPTO 9 ASCENDING GENERATIONS);

The ancestral names are worshipped up to 9th ascending generation. The following case was observed directly.

Case 1f

N performed jukkin mujj ritual at his demandi Kutali around the dudupati on 6th Oct. 1968. He invited F (N's father-in-law's younger brother), H (N's gudi), S (Btitguye clan), J(Btitgaye clan), B(Btitgaye clan),
L (Alirya clan), B (Darviyo clan), H (Kamatay clan), and B (Sandariyo clan) to perform the ritual.

Mrs. K washed the feet of the invitees at the time of their arrival. The invitees entered the dambe jarat and sat around the fire-hearth. The host handed over the following articles to the invitees: pine cones, musk-will, jibichi areaa nuts and betel vine leaves, spalita, kaat pea, few coins and some wild leaves.

N first offered a piece of areaa nuts and betel vine leaves and hid to each member present in the function. All the members of the host's family bowed down in front of the almsen. N informed the invitees that he performed the ritual in order to appease his ancestors up to the 9th generations. Accordingly, the giraas recited incantations in which they prayed to the ancestors of the host to shower blessings on the living members of the host.

N distributed the articles on some wild leaves and offered a part to each invitee to consume the same. The host offered a 5 passes to each gira, a 5 passes to midiku and 5 passes to gure. The amount meant for gure was deposited with K. They utilized midiku-fund in the annual ritual. But they would hand over the money meant for gure when the latter or his assistant would
visit their village.

It was reported that generally nine 
girm were necessary to perform the rite. If nine members 
were not available, they performed the ritual with 
7 members in the name of 9 members. These members 
represented the number of generations of the ancestors 
of the host.

PIJO PEM:

M (H 28), was advised by the village diviner 
B to perform the above ritual in order to recover from 
ilness of the farmer's son on 18.8.69. Accordingly, M 
invited H, G, S, B, B, H, and B to perform the ritual. 
They offered opium, powdered rice, unrefined sugar, 
milk, areca nuts, betel vine leaves, coins, incense, 
lamp wicks etc. to the names of the ancestors in the big 
room around the dudspati. The host bowed down in front 
of the invited guests and received blessings. The elders 
solicited the spirits of the ancestors to cure the 
ilness of the boy. After 5 days of the ritual, the 
boy was found recovering from his illness.

A similar case was observed on 25.8.69. B 
appeased his ancestors with eswa offerings including 
opium for recovery from illness of his son.
Mina-hārerubā ritual is a private and occasional ritual. It plays a significant role in maintaining social solidarity in the society. In all the cases of the mīne-hārerubā, it was observed that almost all the villagers including men, women, children, youths and the adolescent girls were present in the ritual and consumed the ritual-feast. It is a great occasion for the villagers to meet at a particular spot and to participate in the feast with rice beer, pork, fish etc. This ritual strengthens the friendship and love among the members of the community. "Mina-hārerubā is performed for the wellbeing of the members of the family, lineage, and domestic birds and animals. It is believed that if the names of the ancestors are not appeased, the latter certainly will be angry. Incurring their displeasure amount to inviting disaster on the members of the family." Fortes opines "the ancestor cult, the supreme sanctioning of kinship ties is a great stabilizing force countereasting the centrifugal tendencies inherent in the lineage system". Mina-hārerubā ritual has also a religious bearing in the Dibengiya: society. It perpetuates the living memory of the ancestors. It directly maintains relationship between the ancestral and the human world.
Moreover, it enables the living members to make ritual contact with the king of the dead i.e. Ollakuswar, Baliadaman, and Binkuswar deities. They propitiate them for the welfare and for releasing the souls from their custody in order to participate in the ritual. They also pray for the welfare of the members of the jupā, jāku, the domesticated birds and animals and for the bumper crops.

They reckon their relationship not only among the living members of the jupā and jāku groups, but also do it with the spiritual world through the votive offerings. Thus, mine-hārerubā ritual serves the Dibengiyas in two ways: First, it helps a man to recollect the living memory of his ancestors. Secondly, the mine-hārerubā feast enables all the members of the jupā and jāku and other co-villagers to be in a get together at a particular spot. It strengthens the solidarity of the community.
T(H.12) worshipped the names of his ancestors (26) on 6.10.68.