(i) Jwnwm (Birth Rite) or Gwrlwi Borainai (welcoming the new born baby):-

"Ai fwi afa fwi
khoroni jengsikhou bwkharfwi".

English rendering –

"Come oh mother oh father
Remove the load from my head."

Following this kind of traditional version and saying the expectant father will go to the aged old women folk and seek their help and cooperation when a delivery is to take place.

Boro women prefer their child birth at their own home even toady in rural areas. Since time immemorial the Boro women folk have cooperated with each other at the time of child birth so far as old traditional custom is concerned. After getting information the elderly women folk (burwi gahela) of the village perform the duties of a midwife. When delivery takes place the expectant mother takes

1 Informant : Mrs Chidey Basumatary, (F-75), Chandana Borigaon, Udalguri.
position on her knees supporting herself on an wooden morter (uwal in Boro). No separate hut is required for the purpose.

During the hour, when Severe pain starts and the women cries, the village women folk start to charge and tell her to confess, if she had sexual relation/intercourse with some one else before marriage. She is charged with the words – “nwi faglia lethafwrsw dong wngdang! Ha dongbla thab thab khinthananwi la, nongabra mwnghasw khostha mwngwn.”2 (English meaning tell us ……if you had sexual intercourse with some one else, otherwise you are to bear the trouble.)

(ii) *Nari hanai or Uthumai hanai (cutting umbilical cord):*

After the child is born the umbilical cord (uthumai) is cut with a sharp edged blade of green bamboo skin (owa thengal/khathimal in Boro). A thread (khungdung awa in Boro) is tied around the wound caused due to the cutting. There is a rite among the followers of *Bathouism* that if the baby is male the cord is tied five times and in case the baby is female it is tied seven times.

It carries five (for male baby) and seven (for female) because of its significant meaning are (one in each): He/She must –

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2 Ibid
(i) Eat,
(ii) Drink
(iii) Sleep
(iv) Urinate
(v) Do latrine
(vi) Menstruate
(vii) To give birth the child

The modified Bathouism consider it as gwrlwi borainai (welcoming the new born baby) with the help of some practices and traditions.

The cord is cut by a woman whose hand is believed to be bitter (gwkha) so that the cut wound will dry soon. It is also believed that the cord which in cut by a woman whose hand is believed to be sweet (gwdwi) will not dry soon, so she is not allowed to cut the cord. No widow is allowed to cut the cord since it is believed that the child may not have a long life if the cord is cut by a widow.

The cord which has been cut away or separated from the child's body is usually buried at the front side of the Nomano (the main house) or of the mother's residential house at courtyard. While burying the cord, care should be taken to place it gently on the ground. In case the cord is dropped down into the burial spot or even if it is placed with a mild force it is believed that the new born baby will be gripped with a sudden fear. This act of burial in the courtyard has got a symbolic meaning so far as traditional belief and faith is concerned
since time immemorial. The little baby is recognized as a member of the family from that day and this act of burial is just a kind of wishing him or her —

(i) a better life

(ii) to do for and on behalf of the family or to serve the family.

(iii) to remain and get rebirth in this same family.

Then the mother (or any one elderly woman if the mother is unable to do on physical ground) of the baby bathes the child with tepid water (*dwi dunbrud*). Then the baby is sprinkled with *dwi gwthar* (holy water) which is mixed with a bundle of nine *dubri hagra* (*dubori bon in a Assamese/ dub grass*) and nine *mairong alua* (uncooked rice which is not broken, a small branch of basil and a golden ring or silver ring. While sprinkling the holy water the women folk who perform this rite utter the following verses:

“*Nwi gotho gwdbwba nwng mamwn,*

*Bangal mwn na jongal mwn,*

*Mefalmwn na gongar mwn,*

*Dinwi nwng Boro bimani gwrbwao jwnwm mwnbai*

*Dinwiniray nwng jabei Boro fisa*

*Boroni gwrbwao/ kulao jwnwm nwngha,*

*Boroni thakhai maonangou dong nwngha.”*

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English rendering –

“Oh child, whoever you were earlier
Whether you were a Muslim or non Boro.
A Nepali or a Bhutia
Today you got your birth from a Boro mother,
As such you become a Boro person from today
Since you had your birth from a Boro mother’s womb
You’ve something to do for the Boros.”

The mother is kept under restriction from physical labour for a period of at least fifteen days or until and unless she is deemed fit or physically strong. During this period the mother’s body is considered to be *mwdwm gwrlwi* (tendered bodied) so, during this period she is given complete rest. Eating of several items which are harmful for both the mother and baby /child is restricted during the period and the restriction remains she becomes physically normal again or till she is declared to be normal by the women folk and the *oja*. She is allowed to take only some boiled items without spices, turmeric and chillies. She is not allowed to sit on any hard type of seat (*khamflai*) but allowed to sit on “*jigab mutha*” which is made of paddy thatches.

Both the new born baby and the mother are tied with a *khasini* (a sanctified string by means of incantation) at their hands to protect and prevent them from sudden fear of evil spirit or any kind of harm.
When the mother or any women folk go for washing clothes in the river she offers an egg on a plantain leaf in the river bank. This is a kind of traditional practice since time immemorial which has been found among the rural folk.

(iii) *Uthumai Sarnai* (feasting in the name of new born baby)

It is a feasting ceremony celebrated in the name of the new born baby which is arranged by the parents of the baby particularly for the women folk who performed the duties of midwives during the delivery. This celebration is observed in honour of the women who took part in cutting the umbilical cord of the baby.

It is a tradition for the parents to offer a pair of *seref* or *jou* (liquor or rice beer) bottle to the elderly women folk and request them to be satisfied and they should not keep any malice against them. Some uncooked rice amounting to a full "*don*" or "*kherkha*" along with a pair of areca nut and betel leave, pair of rupees are handed over to the performer conveying their heartfelt gratitude and apologies for any mistake that might have happened during the moment. After that they kneel down and pay their respect, one by one, again seeking their blessing and best wishes for the welfare of the baby as well as for the whole family.

The term *Dwisarnai* or *Burwifwr rainai* are also used in place of the term *uthumai sarnai* in some other places of rural areas. It is a kind of purification and
blessing to the family especially relevant to the child birth and feasting to the umbilical cord cutter.

II. JULI (MARRIAGE)

(i) INTRODUCTION:

Marriage is called "haba" in Boro. This haba is considered as "bandwnwi" (second rite) of the bandwba (five rite) which is bound to occur during the life cycle of human beings. Haba is most important part of life cycle of human beings. Haba is most important part of life cycle because human beings start their actual songsar jointly only after getting married.

Haba is a legal union of a man and woman as husband and wife which is solemnised in the presence of mass gathering of the village people as well as kith and kin.

"Marriage has been defined as a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are recognized legitimate offspring of both parents. Marriage creates new social relationship and reciprocal rights between the spouses, between each kith and kin of the other, and establishes what will be the rights and status of the children when they are born. Every society has
recognized procedures for creating such relationships and right, and for making it known that they have been created."\(^4\)

The term "haba" is a combination of two connotations or meaningful words- "ha" which means "soil" or "earth" and "ba" which means to bear something on the back. The significant meaning of the term is to bear or carry the responsibility of "songsar" where it is aimed at to make a good and prosperous family. The word "songsar" represents the process where people have to carry out all the social and domestic burdens like dwelling houses to the family members and render his/her service to the kith and kins and members of the society as a whole. Social and domestic burden refers the trouble and distresses, peace and prosperity of all family members alongwith him.

The term 'haba' contains a folk etymology. During the marriage day a 'Barlangpha' (the key person/dancer (male) of marriage when marriage takes places) starts his dances and merry making at bridegroom's house when preparation get ready to move to the brides house by carrying a 'ha dorlase (small piece about ½ or 1 kg soil) on his back and hand it over to the groom after their arrival and all formalities are over. He will say - "Dinwinifray nwng hakhou badw mane songsarkhou badw- thamhinba songsarni gilir bibankhou khoraoa rujundw. " ("You are to carry this soil from today as because you have got married and so take the whole responsibility of your couple life as well as all your family members.") It has been an old traditional practice since time


103
immemorial among the Boro society. But now a days this tradition is hardly seen anymore.

(ii) Stages of marriage :

Marriage can be divided into three stages –

(A) Pre-marriage preparation or ceremony.

(B) Marriage proper.

(C) Post marriage ceremony.

(A) Pre marriage preparation or ceremony (Khwina nainai or hinjao nainai):

Before the marriage the parents discuss the matter in between the husband and wife about their son. If he is deemed fit and mature in age then they will decide the matter and again take comments/opinions from some relatives and well wishers who are closure to their family. If they extend their support then they take verbal consent from the boy through his friend or trusted relatives.

There may be various kinds of ground or conditions that may pressurize the expectant bridegroom to accept the proposal. These are –

(a) maturity on age,

(b) active worker in any household activities specially agricultural work like – ploughing, harvesting or if recognized as a good farmer,
(c) if there is urgent need for female worker in the family,

(d) if got any job/service or if any way of establishment or if he is a
   govt., semi govt. servant,

(e) if he seems to be steady and stable after getting married etc.

When consent is given positively, directly or indirectly, parents will select
an expert *ghotokdar* or *dalal* (middle person or mediator) and inform him on the
matter. After their preliminary discussion and taking some minimum or
maximum terms and conditions the *ghotokdar* will move and inquire about the
best bride from the native village or elsewhere.

If the *ghotokdar* individually finds a suitable bride from his side then he
will ask/ approach the parent after taking all informations in details without
bringing it into the knowledge of the girl. If the parents are interested or
convinced she will asked by the parent directly or indirectly by her friend or
trusted relatives.

After all these informations the middle man (*ghotokdar*) submit the
 intimations to the groom’s parents and start the formalities/ process as discussed
in the following manner.

(i) *Raithinai* :

Formal process starts from “*Raithinai*”. Parents of groom starts their
mission on a day which is supposed to be auspicious one, preferably on Sunday,
alongwith the *ghotokdar*. The groom’s party consisting of three to five members
carry some articles like a pair of ‘seref boto’, pairs of areca nuts and betel leaves (which are compulsory in some area) in a bag (mona) and submit it physically to the bride’s parents.

After a short while rest of the groom’s party will explain the purpose of the visit. The spokesperson (he may be either ghotokdar or any member) of the grooms party starts explanating the matter with the help of proverbs especially which has been prevailing on such occasions by the Boros since time immemorial. The proverbs are – “Jerao thuri nuyw beao bathi garw, jerao hinjao sikhla nuyw beao goy khithu garw.” ⁵ (English rendering – The thatch carrier is kept where thatch are found available, there is cut areca nut where there is a young girl,” . And hence we are here to discuss on the matter of marriage as we have a matured young boy with your daughter if you accept our proposal. Then the groom’s parents introduce themselves and give detailed information about the grooms and his family background. This is the first step after the initial negotiation is already done by the ghotokdar. This whole process is called “Raithinai” in Boro.

After this kind of formal approach the bride’s parents take their decision and inform the groom’s parents through the middle person i.e. ghotokdar.

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⁵B.G. Basumatary : Boro Harimuni Mohor Mushri, Bodo Publication Board, Bodo Sahitya Sabha, 1994, p-115
(ii) *Asan thebnai* or *Gongkhon Hwnai* :-

Another important pre-marriage ceremony is *‘Asan thebnai’* or *‘Gongkhon Hwnai.’* This ceremony has been an old traditional custom of the Boros. In this ceremony the groom’s party go to the bride’s house alongwith a pair of silver bracelets and leave it at the varandah of the *nomano* (main house) for the bride. This is performed before the pre-marriage ceremony like *‘goi khaonai or goi khithu garnai’* (cutting of areca nuts). Pairs of areca nuts and betel leaves and a pair of *seref* (liquor) are also brought as the custom among the Boros. But this custom disappeared in the present context of the Boro society.

(iii) *Asan Finfinnai (returning the bracelets):*

If the bride or her parents would not like to accept the proposal they are to return the silver bracelets within a week. Its significant meaning is non acceptance of proposal due to various reasons. This kind of custom is known as a “*asan finnai or finfinnai*” in Boro.

(iv) *No Nainai:*

The most important step of pre-marriage ceremony is *‘no-nainai’,* (observation of groom’s house). After the preliminary settlement the parents of the bride or the representatives visit the groom’s house. On this occasion the parents of the groom entertain the bride’s party with *jou, oma bedor, goy-phatwi,* (rice-beer, pork and areca nuts and betel leaves) in abundance. This ceremony is
called ‘no-nanai’, which is compulsory in the present day Boro society also. The final settlement of the proposed marriage depends on this ceremony. If the character of the family member and the conditions of the family are not satisfactory then the final settlement of the proposed marriage may be cancelled.

They will observe and take into account of their assets like land property, economic condition, now a days infrastructure, cars, bike and also some small movable assets like good quality audio-visuals, washing machine, fridge, godrej etc. and also observe the moral character of the groom as well as of the parents too.

(v) **Houa Gwdan Nainai (Groom’s Visit)**:

If result is positive the guardian or respresentatives of groom party will visit again for second time. After this process groom will visit alongwith one or two of his friends. It is believed that the groom is usually accompanied by his friend who is less handsome than the groom.

Some delicious items specially the Boro dishes like sobaijwng dao bedorjwng; onlajwng najwng, oma bedor eonai and some other special items preferably the grooms favourite are served to the groom and his friend so far as traditional practices of the Boros are concerned. She again offer a phalli (scraft) or rumal (handkershief) to the groom and also his friend is also a traditional practice which are prevailing till today among the Boros. This process is just groom’s visit to brides home to see the bride.
The decision of the prospective groom may be considered as final. When he makes the decision than the bride’s parents, will be called for observing grooms home which is called ‘no nainai.’

However, if groom agrees to accept the decision taken by the parents as final in the case of bride selection, the groom visit or this process will not be done. And also in some other cases this process may be done after the ‘no nainai’ (observation to the grooms home).

But it is very tough to reach this stage because the bride’s parents will not give their consent neither in a single or one approach nor five or more approaches or visits. They say “dubri hagrayamw mwnakhwi”, that means dubori bon (Assamese) is yet to be dried. The significant meaning of the word is the dubori bon (Assamese) of the road of brides home is to be dried by their footstep i.e.- they are to come or visit more time to convince the parents of the bride (it may be in such visit where the dubori bon is to be dried by their footstep and convinced) and if they get any positive indication they will leave “Asan jora” (a pair of silver bracelets) at the varandah which is called “Asan thebnai” in Boro. These silver bracelets will be returned within a week if this proposal is not accepted for some reasons. The main reason of non acceptance could be the unimpressive look or poor family background of the groom. But these old traditional practices are scarcely visible in the present Boro society.
(vi) **Goi khithu Garnai or Goi Khaonai (Cutting Areca Nuts):**

This is an old tradition. Just before the final settlement this pre-marriage ceremony is observed by the Boros at bride’s house. In this ceremony groom’s party go to the brides house with bundles of areca nuts and betel leaves. They distribute the areca nuts and betel leaves among the people of bride’s village and other relatives. This ceremony is known as **goi khithu garnai or goi khaonai** (cutting areca nuts)

The village people attending the bride’s house on the occasion are entertained with plenty of areca nuts and betel leaves, rice beer (*jou*). In earlier days the groom’s party had to carry sufficient quantity of *jou* (rice beer) to the bride’s house and entertain the parents of bride, relatives and the villagers as well as all people attending the occasion.

(vii) **Bibai khanai or Swmwndw Firainai or Khanai:**

After the final consent from the parents of both groom and bride formally enter into a new relationship. On the same day of goi khaonai, this kind of custom has been performed in some area of Udalguri District. For this performance both the fathers take their *gambari khamflai* or sit on *khamflai* face to face by east-west direction. An *alari bathi* (*saki*) will be lighted and place it on a *laijou lai* (plaintain leaf) keeping /offering a pair of areca nuts and betel leaf and a pair of rupee note or coin. These are kept in front of (the middle) the two
parents. The *douri* of the village will start the performance by chanting the mantras as follows —

"Aham! Wng hring khling fwa se

Ode nuathari anan gosai

Nwngnw Rangrasi, Mwithahasi, Gwhwrasi

Bari gongtham, nwng saseanw fanao fantham

Swrgwao dong nwng Bathou

Hayao dong thulunsi gwrthara

Benefraijwng raokhoubw nhuwa khwnaya

Raokhoubw jwng mithilia

He Afa Bathoubwrai

Dinwini be bibai khanai

Gwthar somao, onnanwi

Afa bwr sansrihorw

Naifindw jwngkhou alw gwjwnwi

Dohai afa Bwrai Bathou

He obonglaori jioni bifa

Sannigiria jadwng sanja

Mwdainigiria nwng Bathou gwmja

Daini giria dai khalambla

Nimahanigiria nwng Bathouanw obla

Dinwi jwng nwngninw thinnaiao
Nwngninw onnaiao..........
Be rubibar san (20 feb. 2011) khali,
Be omrabothi, Mushalpur gamini
Raijwfw, daoma, daosa, mithinga,
Lwgwse Mwinaguri, odalgurini
Raijwfwrkhou sakhi mohorwi
Lananwi dinwi bibai khana jibaib.
Dinwinifrai bithang mwnha bibai
Linglainw hasigwn." 6

English Meaning –

Aham! Ong hring khling fwd se
Oh father Bwrai Bathou the great king
Listen you listen the mugasong tree of the corner of the campus
Listen to me if you are in heaven
If you are in Mwidam
If you are on earth
Attentively listen to me .

"Today, on 20th Feb’2011, in such a blissful/ delighted evening (if it is in the evening) of Sunday, as per marriage agreement has already been settled in between Mr. Onlaram Boro of village Mwinaguri P.O. + Dist. Udalguri for his

6 Informant : Sri Siri Daimary, (M-55), Dwifangkhuti, Udalguri
second son Mr. Ransai Boro with Miss Jwnglari Daimari 3rd daughter Mr. Singkhai Daimari of village Omrabothi P.O. + Dist. Mushalpur, Baksa, Assam, India, now we are going to celebrate a traditional custom which is called 'bibai khana'. In some cases it is considered as 'swmwndw firainai' (rearrangement of relationship). The spokesperson will address that – I, for and on behalf of both the party would like to perform this ceremony. Taking the representatives, audience of this village, sun, sky, birds and fowls and also all the natural creatures as witness I would like to make a new relationship in between the two fathers/ parents. From today they will call 'biai' to each other and the other relationships which prevailed earlier will be changed formally from today.”

If the father of either bride or groom is absent or dead then any relative representing the bride’s or groom’s parents will perform the ceremony. This type of ceremony may be considered as ‘swmwndw firainai’ (rearrangement of relationship). After this formalities both the fathers exchange traditional scarfs (bihu fali) with each other. Thereafter both of them drink together the bowlful of rice beer which are already kept nearby the gambari khamflai. Of course, this rice beer is now replaced by the bowlfull of tea. This kind of practice is called the 'bibai khana' or 'swmwndw firainai' which still prevails till today among the Boro society. This ceremony is celebrated at bride’s house. Some time this kind of ceremony is held during the marriage day at bride’s house if groom’s father fails to visit the bride’s house on account of unavoidable circumstances.
However, some other pre-marriage ceremonies are made short in the present context due to non-availability of time and financial matter.

The required materials for this ceremony are —

(i) two gambari khamflai (low wooden sit made of gameri tree; Assamese gameri kator pira)
(ii) one plaintain leaf.
(iii) pair of areca nut and betel leaves.
(iv) an earthen lamp
(v) two bihufali
(vi) mustard oil
(vii) pair of rupee note or coins
(viii) small branch of basils
(ix) insence sticks
(x) uncooked rice (mairong alua)
(xi) two bowl
(xii) rice beer
(xiii) a pot with holy water.

On this occasion a grand feast is arranged by the groom’s parents in which pork or chicken, rice-beer and rice alongwith some delicious Boro dishes, are served. Of course this kind of grand feast is being arranged in any ceremony in the Boro society, even in the poor family also, as their social attachment or traditional character is concerned.
(viii) Tharik Dannai or Khalar Khanai:

This *tharik dannai* is nothing but fixation of date when and where proposed marriage is to be solemnised. In this regard both the parents submit their possibility or terms and condition and other representatives from both the parties will bring it into final conclusion as per as possible. This ceremony can be done on the day when ‘bibai khanai’ is celebrated if both the parents can arrive at the final decision.

(ix) Khatha Khobor:

Another most important pre-marriage ceremony is *khata khobor* which is considered as last part of pre-marriage ceremony. It is a kind of taking and giving information about the marriage ceremony from groom’s side just on the previous day or the day before previous day of proposed marriage date. For this purpose two or three representatives will come and they will inform all about their preparation to the bride’s parents and in return take all the necessary related report from the bride’s parents. After a delicious meal they will return to their home and submit the verbal report for the same.

(x) Gaodwn Marinai or Biban Jora Labwnai or Daimarinai:

This is a most important ceremony which is performed compulsorily by the groom’s party at the brides house on the very day of the marriage but prior to the actual marriage ceremony. This ceremony is held on the day when bride will
be taken to groom's house for marriage proper. Some selected persons consisting of around six to ten members will go for this purpose. Of this group two will carry the *biban jora* (in Assamese bhar) one in each (two earthen pitcher make a bhar by adjoining a bamboo bathi). Other member will carry the other commodities like areca nut and betel leaves in abundance, lime (*sunwi*), rice beer, one pair *seref botol* and all the requirement especially *dokhna* along with other dresses and garments, ornaments, *cosmatic* which are newly purchased for the bride. The group include the two pair *bairathi* also.

The bride's parents receive and welcome the team in the gate or entrance and all the commodities are kept near the Bathousali or the north east corner of the courtyard. After short rest the bride's parents as well as village representatives formally accept the goods brought by the team as a price for the bride.

The bride's price generally consists of the following things listed below.

(a) *biban jora* (carrying sugar, tea leaf, milk) with *bwirathi jora*.

(b) one piece of *dokhna* and a blouse for bride's mother

(c) one piece of *gamsa* for the father (some other village include *ganzi* also)

(d) rupee 5 (fifty) only in the name of village committee as *phon thakha*

(e) rupee 5 (fifty) only in the name of women organization if any)
(f) two or five phon areca nut (one phon consist of eighty pieces)

(g) two or five bia phatwi (one bia consist of twenty mutha and one mutha consist of twenty leaves) betel leaves.

(h) scarf one or two pieces and rupees 5 (five) only in the name of nirik bosonai (earlier it was Rs. .25 only)

(i) seref two botol (liquor two bottle)

(j) pairs of areca nut and betel leaves.

Different village may have different lists of their own. That is to say that the list of one village may differ from the list of another village. But attempt has been made by the All Bathou Mahasabha to do away with such differences.

It can also be mentioned here that some villages used the rice beer as compulsory items but other villages have replaced it with the tea.

This kind of practice and requirement may not be applicable in the case of kharsonnai haba. When this system of marriage takes place in the society then the brides price is paid through negotation between both the parents or parties.

The village representatives usually headed by the Secretary or the President or any other member, who are entrusted for the purpose will check the list of requirements which was already given to the groom’s parents during the earlier pre- marriage ceremony as per their village custom is concerned. If the goods are found to be okey then they are allowed to open the biban jora (in Assamese bhar) with their traditional system. On the body of the two pitchers
The signs of sun and the moon are to be painted as the Boro folk belief is concerned.

The traditional system of performance are given below-

The two members who carry the *biban jora* can only do the opening ceremony. They have to wear Boro traditional dress *gamsa* when they start opening the *biban jora* the two girls will be poured with water from the earthen pitcher. One pitcher of a bhar consist of sugar and milk alongwith an extra packet of *goi thao*. *Goi thao* packet consist of nine areca nut and betel leaves. All these commodities will be taken to the house in the container and all the bamboo ropes and plaintain leaves with which the packets were made and tietened in the bamboo *bathi* are thrown away on the roof of the main house. There is a folk belief that two of the four earthen pitchers, one of the two bathis are to be taken by the grooms party when they return to their home as a symbol of the ceremony. After their performance the ceremony get started formally

Role and responsibility of *Bairathi*:

In Boro marriage *bairathi* plays a vital role. After this function the *bairathis* start their service and carry out their role and responsibility. Two will distribute the areca nuts and betel leaves among the people and others will continue the cutting of areca nuts. One will distribute the areca nuts with betel
leaves and other one bairathi will assist her by giving the lime (sunwi) from the container (sunwi hasung).

During the whole day the bairathi have to render their service and satisfy all the gathering. They are to distribute the rice beer among the gathering. They are the authorized female who are allowed to put on dresses, ornaments and other cosmetics to the bride. Another most important role and responsibility of bairathi in earlier days, is to sing the marriage song and to dance tirelessly. They are the main female openers and concluders of the Boro marriage. They are to lead the bride and groom. Therefore, only those who are expert in all these above mentioned activities should be selected as the bairathi for smooth functioning of the marriage. Henceforth she should be patient, polite, beautiful, healthy and matured in all aspects.

(xi) Laokhar Biban :

It is another kind of bhar espically prepared for the cowherds. Laokhar are none but the cowherds. It contains some ingredients like gourd (lao fithai thaise), a nasrai fish (seng fish in Assamese; a kind of fish, ophio cephulus gochna), little bit of mustard oil, turmeric, salt, spices, chillies and mairong (uncooked rice). All these ingredients are essential so that they can cook a meal for the cowherds. So it is termed as Laokhar biban.

It is believed that the cowherds have a dominant role in the Boro society. Those who get their blessing they become successful. Hence they are invited and
entertained with a feast by childless couples in order to get their boon for the child. Seeking the same fortune or the successful marriage this kind of biban is provided to the laokhar on the way to the brides house.

(xii) Khwina gwdan dihunnai:

This is another step to reach the marriage proper. On the same day of gaodwn marinai this performance takes place. After finishing all the formalities as per their scheduled time table the bride is taken out from the namano to let her to the groom’s party. This may generally be held in the night. Some representatives deputed by the village committee and bride’s guardians will also accompany the party. During the time of bride’s coming out from the nomano a slogan is shouted and some relatives of the bride give her farewell. Bride takes their farewell by kneeling down before the elderly relatives. A grand musical band is played at the moment so as to dominate the bride’s crying.

This moment seems very sad because a daughter whom the mother had taken nine months in her womb patiently and gave her birth; taken care; made her matured and educated under their custody; or a young girl who has already been in the village society for long time who had very close to all the members of the society; such a daughter or a girl is handed over to a boy for marriage. It is sad because future is unknown and uncertain. These kind of situation make the people sad.
In such a situation, a group of people start to sing the song as given below –

"Dagabswi agwi binanao
Harsa houanwlai horakhwi
Gongar houanwlai horakhwi
Boro houanwsw raijw janwsw
Hordwng aifwr hordwng."

English rendering –

Don’t cry dear lovely sister
We are not giving you to harsa (Assomia) groom
Even not giving you to Bhutia groom
But giving you to a Bodo groom
With a view to make a songsar
As your choice to a Bodo groom.

(xiv) Khwina Borainai or Athingsunai:

When the bride and all other companions arrive at groom's house they are welcomed. For this performance a gambari khamflai (low wooden sit) is placed in the gate or entrance. She has to stand on the khamflai and a younger sister in law will wash her foot with water (somewhere water is mixed with haldi and chandan powder).

Informant: Sri Siri Daimary (M-55), Dwifang Khuti, Udalguri
There is a traditional custom that is prevailing in some other villages among the Boro Society of Baksa and Udalguri district are as given below –

The mother of the groom (expectant mother in law) will carry an egg in her right hand and turn it five times around the bride’s head and throw it away to the southern side before allowing her to enter into the gate. This performance is called *daodwi neusinai* in Boro

After that *bairathi* welcome the bride (if it is done in the gate or entrance) with hand fans (made of bamboo) and she is allowed to enter into the *nomano* and take a rest along with her friend.

(xiii) *Saha Laothi lwngnai* -

When the bride and her party are in a position to reach the groom’s house they pretend to be tired and take a rest on the road and demand a tea break or refreshment from the groom. This kind of tea refreshment is called as *sahalaothi* in Boro which is seen among the Brahma. But it is rare how a days.

**B. Marriage proper :-**

On the basis of its practices or customs the marriage among the followers of Bathouism can be divided into two categories –

(a) marriage which is solemnised at groom’s house (traditional system)

and
(b) marriage which is solemnised at bride’s house (new and latest practice)

(a) Marriage which is solemnised at groom’s house-

Again this type of marriage can be divided into two forms which are recognized in the Boro society.

(i) Hahasuni haba and (old tradition)

(ii) Bathou haba (modified form)

(a) (i) Hahasuni Haba :-

Hahasuni haba or Hahasuni khurnai haba is the earliest and traditional form of recognized marriage among the Boros which is very simple and easy to be solemnised. In the name of a hatha – a wooden tool specially made for marriage purpose (which is same as Assamese gamla) which can be used as a container to distribute the ondla khari or ondla wngkhri and wngkham (curry and cooked rice) this term is originated and came into existence in the Boro society.

The performance of hahasuni haba (as I come across in the village Bwigriguri. Dist + P.O. Udalguri, B.T.A.D. : Assam on 23-05-2011 (Monday) is described in the following manner – The name of groom is Hemen Wary, S/O.- Listiram Wary and the name of bride is Kanika Boro of Kabirali, B.T.A.D., Udalguri, Assam.
For this purpose the ondla wngkhri is most important item for the ceremony without which it is meaningless. So the ondla khari must be cooked by the bride herself. When she returns from bathing she will carry an earthen pitcher full of water from the gathwn (in Assamese ghat) and cook the ondla khari in the ising (kitchen or the inner part of the nomano). Turmeric (powder), chillies and other spices are restricted in this curry. When all the necessary items are ready then the arrangement of the ceremony start in the courtyard.

The courtyard in the southern side of the Bathousali is washed and cleaned with water and two gambari khamflai will be layed on the earth—one in the north and one in the south. Groom will be allowed to sit on the northern one and his colleague will sit on the southern one. Two gasa (earthen lamp with stand) male and female will be lighted and placed in front of the grooms and his colleagues.

Bride alongwith her helper get ready to perform the ceremony. A douri (priest) and a bailung oja or an elderly man started the ceremony.

**Boro version of mantras are as follows:**

*Dohai afa Bwrai Bathou moharaja, nwi dinwi Hemen Wary arw Kanika*

*Boro ni gwthar julini somao nwng afa Bwrai Bathouni onnai nagirdwng. Nwi afa Bwrai Bathou moharaja-gwthar laijam bonanwi, goy jora fathwi jora hwnanwi alari bathi fwjwngnanwi, gwthar laijam bonanwi duar khili fan khili, dhub-dhuna saonanwi; he afa Bwrai Bathou moharaja nwngni bwr, onnai nagirdwng-Hemen*
arw Kanika ni gwthar julini somao, biswrni jio songsarao jwi jwi mwi mwi alw gwjwnwi raijw mwnja hwnangwñ dwi afa Bwrai Bathou moharaja. Sigangni unni akhini agdani khwifwd afwd bwsrang bwsring khalamnanwi biswrni jio songsarao jeblabw ruju rumu jwi jwi mwi mwi khalamnangwn. He afa Bwrai Bathou moharaja dinwini be haba thilia jader lwnnder jadwngbla,khalai dwifwn jadwngbla,sua suthi jadwngbla, nwi be dwi gwtharjwng gaswikhoubw gwthar khalamgrwdw de afa Bwrai Bathou moharaja.

He afa Bwrai Bathou moharaja –gwthar lai jou bonanwi goy jora- fathwi jora hwnanwi alari bathi fwjwngnanwi, gasa saonanwi dhub-dhuna saonanwi,nwi dinwi Kanika ya gaoni akhajwng songwi khaowi gaoni fisai Hemen mw jahwgrwnw nagirdwng. He afa Bwrai Bathou moharaja jeblabw naha mwiha thangnai, haba hukha maonai-dangnai jeraobw khwifwd afwd bwsrang-bwsring khalamnanwi bisini jioni songsarkhou jeblabw alw gwfwñ ruju rumu raijw mwnja hwnangwn de afa Bwrai Bathou,nwi dinwi benw jwngni boro bwraini nemjwng Hathasuni Khurnai. He afa Bwrai Bathou moharaja nwngkhou sakhi dwnanwi ,nwng afa Bwrai Bathou dohai lananwi gwthar fathali jorani orkhou sakhi lananwi nwi dinwi Hemen arw Kanika ni gwthar juliao boro bwraini nwmiwng hathasuni khurnaini nwi dinwi be fwrbwao gaoni akhajwng gaoni gwsw khusi jananwi songnai khaonai wngkham-wngkhri dinwi jahwgrwnai janwswi. He afa Bwrai Bathou moharaja nwngnw swithwni debotha jananwi
English rendering:

Oh father Bwrai Bathou today, in such a moment, I, being the priest, for and on behalf of Sri Listiram Wary's family at his first son Sri Hemen Wary's marriage with Miss Kanika Boro pray for your love and blessing. Oh father Bwrai Bathou we are offering you the pair of areca nut and betel leaves on plaintain leaf lighting a dhup (incense sticks), dhuna we extend our respect and we beg your acceptance and request you to provide them a peacefull conjugal life. I also pray you to provide solution for any of problems which may come in their future life. Therefore, oh father Bwrai Bathou if any kind of malpractice is committed there in the marriage ceremony you please purify the whole ceremony as we are innocent.

Today, in this moment taking all the people who have attended here in the ceremony, lighting moon, stars, earthen lamp and all other creatures as an witness, I would like to tie their knot and pray to Afa Bwrai Bathou the great king to bless for their long life and peaceful conjugal life. So from today help and co-operation in any kind of trouble and distresses with each other will be their responsibility."

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8 Informant: Sri Rabiram Ramchiary, (M-55), Udalguri.
After this citation the groom will be garlanded by the bride and slogans will be shouted by the audience saying- “gwthar julini-jwi; Bithangmwnni jiuagwlaao jathwng- gwlaao jathwng; bithangmwnni sannaia jafungthwng-jafungthwng.” (English rendering – For the holly marriage- hurrah, let their life-long life –long life, let their thinking be successful, be successful.”

The bride distributes the rice from the *hatha* (which are already kept ready) first to the groom and then to his colleague and likewise distribute the *ondla khari*. Again she distributes the same thing to the waiting people who are sitting for the meal.

On this day and night a grand feast continue with an abundant pork and rice beer. Singing, dancing and merry making continue the whole night. There is a oral verse in the Boro language which is traditionally prevailing in the society even today which is applicable in the Boro marriage is – “bedorni akhai, wngkhamni ali, jouni fukhri.” (English rendering- the availability of (pork) meat is like the *akhai* in Boro (*akhai* is a kind of fried but uncooked rice which are let to wet in the water before fried same as *karai* in Assamese) the availability of cooked rice is like the ali ( in Assamses ali; a small road by which the water of a small plot; especially use to mean the paddy field; is made to preserve); and the availability of rice beer is like a pond or fishery. Hence the verse signify the available use of meat (i.e. pork), rice and rice beer. (It was continued up to seven days in the earliest time in the Boro marriage.) There is an availability of pork where the dogs over eat upto mouth for which they cannot bark.
The basic ingredients and materials which are most important in hathasuni haba are given below –

(i) two gambari khamflai (low wooden seat made of gameri tree)
(ii) two hatha (same as Assamese gamla made of wood especially for marriage purpose)
(iii) two ladle,
(iv) two gasa, (in Assamese saki which has a stand)
(v) plaintain leaf
(vi) pairs of areca nut and betel leaves
(vii) three lotha (in Assamese ghoti) two are to take drinking water, one is to take holly water.
(viii) two garland
(ix) rice powder
(x) chicken
(xi) alkali
(xii) mustard oil

(a) (ii) Bathou Haba:

This is a new form of marriage which is accepted and recognized by a section of the followers Bathouism who donot sacrifice the fowls and animals. Now a days this marriage has become popular, disciplined and uniform among the Boros. For this marriage ceremony a preparatory group prepar and arrang all
the requirements. A temporary *haba mondob* (marriage place to be solemnised) is made with the help of bamboo, paper, thermocol and other materials. This *mondob* contains horizontally three chambers/compartment and three gombus. The whole *mondob* is well decorated with the help of ready made materials which are made of the paper, dazzling chemicals, electronics purchased from the market.

This form of marriage require the following materials (other than the above mentioned)

(a) five pieces of *alari bathi* (earthen lamp)
(b) five pairs of areca nut and betel leaves
(c) five pieces of plaintain leaves.
(d) two *don* (full) paddy grain
(e) sufficient incense stick and *dhuna* with dry *norikol bakoli* (in Assamese) in order to blown the *dhuna* in *dhuna bathi*,
(f) nine pieces of rice (uncooked) which are called *mairong alua*.
(g) small branch of basils, nine pieces of *dubori bon* and *jatrasì*
(h) one vermilion packet and matches.

Taking these above mentioned materials the *douri* (priest) start the ceremony supported by the village people and musical group. A written programme is made for the purpose and it is presided over by selected chairperson. Programme will be as follows-
(a) sprinkling the holly water by the *asari*

(b) alaf (begining of the prayer),

(c) selection of the chairperson and his chair acceptance,

(d) introduction of the *haba dangra* and solemnization of marriage in proper,

(i) raisongnai by the *haba dangra* for himself,

(ii) handing over the bride to the groom by the brides father,

(iii) chanting for the grooms,

(iv) chanting for the brides,

(v) chanting for both the groom and the bride,

(vi) blessing to the couple by the relatives and village folk,

(vii) speech as the blessing in order to make their couple life a grand success,

(viii) *mainao thisonnai* (dropping the wealth into the ising)

(ix) end of the programme.

It can be mentioned here that the prayer group or musical group sing some selected prayer songs which are available in the printed book (*Bwidasi* — a book of prayer song, published by *Odalguri Ancholik Committee, ABRU, 2004*). At the same moment some individual relatives bless the couple one after another.

In this marriage system bride’s parents or any authorized representatives must be present to hand over the bride to the groom. So he is considered as most important in the occasion.
Besides him some other most important persons are – douri, asari, gwthari (priest) and the haba dangra. (the anchor). They are engaged in separate task of the marriage. Therefore, the function of a chairperson is to preside over the whole programme, the priest (s) has to light the saki, dhup and dhuna, the haba dangra is to solemnize the marriage and the prayer group or the musical group is to sing or prayed the prayer songs.

Before carrying out their functions each of them has to pray to the Bwrai Bathou requesting Him to support and accept their prayer.

Douri, Asari arw gwtharini raisongnai (Pray by the douri, asari and gwthari) :-

This raisongnai is nothing but a kind of prayer which is performed by the douri, asari, gwthari and haba dangra (marriage solemnizer) on the spot just before the solemnization of marriage the prayer is as follows proper. The prayer is as follows:

Oh God, coupled life make the songsar that is demonstrated by You. Today, a marriage ceremony is going to be solemnised in between Sri Swapan Basumatary son of Sri Madan Basumatary of village Sudempuri P.O. + Dist. – Udalguri, B.T.A.D. (Assam) with Miss Sushila Basumatary the elder daughter of Sri Haliram Basumatary of village Maidanguri P.O. + Dist. – Udalguri, B.T.A.D. Assam. In this marriage I have to take the role and responsibility of the
douri (priest), asari and gwthani I therefore request you to entrust me to grace the occasion” 9.

With a view to clear the idea, I would like to place an example which has come across during my field work in between the two family which was held on 27-01-2012 (Friday) at village Maidangguri, at bride’s house, Udalguri.

Name of bride : Miss Sushila Basumatary
Daughter of : Sri Haliram Basumatary

P.O. + Dist.- Udalguri, B.T.A.D. (Assam)

Name of the groom : Sri Swapan Basumatary
Son of : Sri Madan Basumatary
Village : Sudempuri

P.O. + Dist. : Udalguri, B.T.A.D. (Assam)

_Bathou Haba Mantra_

Again the following mwnthina or mantra is recited by the father headed by the person who solemnize the marriage which is known as khwina gothainai. mwnthina (handing over the bride). It can be mentioned here that during this time both the bride and groom will stand on the spot and bride’s father also stand near by them. The mwnthina or mantra are as follows-

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9 Informant: Sri Arun Boro, (M-56), Maidanguri, Udalguri.
Ang dinwi sukhrober 27-01-2012 khali swrjigiri nuathari afa iswr Bwrai Bathoukhou gwswao juna lananwi afaninw swrjinai ha, dwi, bar, or, okhrang, sayao -san okhafwr olongber hathorkhi hala mithingani nuathari jib jibi arw haba thiliao jathumnai raijw raja, ai afa, bida fongbai, bibo binanaomwnkhou sakhi khalamnanwi angni fisajw gibi thoraina Sushila Basumathary khou Sudempuri gamini musri Madan Basumatari ni fisala musri Swapan Basumatary nw thwiso thangsoni thakhai gothainai jabai. Dinwinifrai angni fisajwa biniswi. Afa Bwrai Bathouni bwr lana sanwibw be mulugao alw alw onlaina gwsw gwjwnwi raijw mwnjathwng; alari bathi jwngnai baidi jwngnanwi thathwng (sanwinibw akhaikhou homjābnanwi hwyw. Khwina-houa gwdana bifakhou khulumw)\textsuperscript{10}.

**English Meaning:**

Today on Friday the 27th of October 2012, keeping as witness all the five elements of nature as well as the Sun, the Moon, the Stars and also the invisible beings of nature in addition to all those who are present at the place of wedding, I handover forever my eldest daughter Miss Sushila Basumatary to Mr Swapan Basumatary of Sudempuri who is the son of Sri Madan Basumatary. From today my daughter will be solely his responsibility. I wish that by the grace of Bwrai Bathou, they will be able to lead a happy conjugal life ever after (he holds

\textsuperscript{10} Informant: Sri Gahin Ch. Boro, (M-50), Marriage Solemnizer, Purani Goraibari, Udalguri.

133
together the hands of both the bride and the groom, the newly wedded couple touch his feet.

**Mainao thisonnai:**

Another most important part of the Bathou haba is **Mainao thisonnai** (roping wealth into the ising from the Bathousali). The two full don (a container just like a basket which is made of bamboo) wealth i.e. rice and paddy grain which are kept inside the Bathou bindw, are carry on her head from the spot and brought to the ising in accompaniment of grand musical band and slogans. Slogans are — *bima mainao ni-jwi sali mainaoni –jwi; asu mainaoni- jwi, jwi Afa Bwrai Bathouni- jwi*” (English rendering- For the mother goddess of wealth — hurrah, the goddesses of sali wealth-hurrah, the goddess of ahu (in Assamese) — hurrah, father Bwrai Bathou- hurrah).

One of the most important ingredients through which human beings can survive is the *mainao* or wealth or food item. The rice as well as other food items are provided by the goddess of wealth. Hence, she is worshipped and has been given an important place during the Boro marriage. It can be mentioned here that an alari bathi (earthen lamp ) has been lighted inside the ising (kitchen) during the marriage day.
Nirikh Bosonai:

This is the last part of the marriage in proper as its formal custom. After this custom it is believed that the handing over of the bride is fully completed. It signifies that the complete responsibility of bride goes to the groom. For this ceremony the following materials are required:

(i) pairs of areca nut and betel leaves
(ii) plaintain leaves
(iii) an earthen lamp
(iv) rupees five (earlier it was .25 rupees)
(v) a scarf
(vi) two gambari khamflai (low wooden seat made of gameri tree)

All these requirements are enlisted with the gaodwn marinai or dai marinai or the biban jora. Bride’s parents (preferably maternal uncle) will be on the gambari khamflai in the eastern side and groom’s parent will offer the enlisted requirements initiated by the douri (priest). The requirements are – pairs of areca nut and betel leaves, a cash of rupees five, a scarf (fali) or a ganzi. The bride’s parent accepts the materials and says to the groom’s parent that from today my daughter or nice will be completely in your custody and you will be fully responsible because she became your daughter in law. If she commits any kind of mistake or misconduct you excuse her, if she remains to learn more knowledge you are to give suggestion to learn with love and affection being a father in law. You are to advice them their bright future. So you are fully
responsible in guiding their future prospect because she became your family’s member.

\textit{Alasi swngnai or alasi raiaonai} (Guest reception):

The village people who rendered their service engaged themselves as the cook, who brought the bride being the \textit{Bwirathi, Barlangpha} and all other will be provided a feast by the parents and extend their heartfelt thanks to all the people and request to excused them if they committed any kind of mistake or misbehave in all respect during the marriage ceremony.

Guest reception for the invited guest will be arranged on the next day of the marriage in proper.

\textbf{(B) Marriage at brides house:}

This system is prevalent among the \textit{followers of Brahma religion} Boro. However, now a days the followers of modified \textit{Bathouism} have also accepted this system where the marriage is solemnised at the brides house. But the other section who follow the old tradition of sacrificing the fowls and animals who solemnised the marriage by \textit{Hathasuni Haba} do not allowed the system.

For this marriage system the groom has to arrive at the bride’s house within the scheduled time. When he arrives at the bride’s house the village people accompanied by the musical band will welcome them from the entrance.
The feet/leg of the groom are washed by the younger sister of the bride and taken to the *haba mondop* directly.

All other ceremonies and practices are same with the marriage which is solemnised at groom’s house.

(C) Post marriage Ceremonies:

The post marriage ceremony of the Bathouism Boros can be found in the following manner step by step one after another.

(i) Guest Reception:

After the solemnization of marriage in proper there will be the guest reception which can be considered as new dimension, especially arranged to entertain the invited guests with a grand feast. The guests are invited with invitation cards. The groom, his parents and friends, well known persons, relatives are the ones to whom invitation cards are usually distributed. The village people render their service by distributing various items including pork to the guests. This kind of feasting ceremony may not be held if grooms family is very poor in all respect.

(ii) *Athi Mongla*:

This is one of the most important post marriage customs of the Boros. In the eight days counting from the marriage proper, this kind of celebration is
celebrated among the Boro society. The new sect (modified Bathou), the old sect (who sacrifice the fowls and animals), even the Brahma religious Boros also celebrate this ceremony as compulsory.

The newly married couple along with their fellow (who accompanied the groom and bride during the marriage in proper) go to the parent in law's house for the first time as their guest. A pair of cock and hens (male and female) are to be brought by the newly married couple which is considered as compulsory in some villages. But it may not be compulsory for some areas or villages. In some villages they are allowed to spend the night at the inlaw's house but not allowed in some other villages.

New changes and innovations have also come into existence among the Bathouism Boro society who would like to accept the new tradition. That is why some parents arrange the *athi mongla* gorgeously and colourfully if he could not arrange the feast or reception during the marriage day due to inconvenience. On this day the guest will be invited by distributing the invitation card. All the gift items presented by the invitees will be given to the couple.

(iii) *Alasi Janai*:

After this above mentioned formal ceremony the couple go to the brides parents for the guest, secondly, without any other accompaniment. They are allowed to spend two or three days as new guest and return to their home. On this
occasion groom’s parent will be invited by the bride’s parents to their house as guest and after that coming and going between the two families continue.

(III) **THWINAI (Death rite)**

Man is mortal. When man and woman take his/her birth, one day he/she must come across an old age and finally embrace death. So he/she should be treated like a man and woman even though he/she demises. That is why we are to arrange farewell through the five rites and rituals which are prevalent among the Bathou followers as its customary laws.

*Death* is the last of the rites and rituals of mankind among the five life cycle ceremonies (or *Bandw*) which is observed by the Boros and also the communities as per their ritualistic custom is concerned.

This ceremony can be discussed into three stages as given below.

(i) *Gwthwi garnai* (cremation of dead body)

   (a) *Wngkham, dwi dounai,*

   (b) *Fobnai*

   (c) *Saonai*

(ii) *Daha garnai*

(iii) *Bandra or Bhandra or Saradu* (Addya Shraddha)
(i) **Gwthwi Garnai (Cremation of Dead Body)** :-

According to the social custom of Bathouism, just after the confirmation of death, the dead body is taken out from the house and kept in the courtyard. The place where the dead body is to be kept is cleaned with cowdung mixed water, a **darha** (bamboo mat) is placed on the spot and covered with a bedsheet. The dead body is then washed (**thukhwiw**) with water and a new cloth like **gamsa** (if male) or **dokhna** (if female) is put on or tied on the body and the dead body is laid down covering it with white cloth. When the dead body is laid down on the bamboo mat his/her head will be kept in the southern side. The hair is combed after applying hair oil and even **sindur phwtha** (the vermilion taken by the married Boro and Hindu women in her forehead) is also given in her forehead if she was married woman.

Before taking the dead body to the **gwthwisali** (funeral ground) the Boros perform some traditional ritualistic practices as given below :

i.  **(a) Wngkham, Dwi Diounai :**

The family members, kit and kins or the near and dear ones offer rice, rice beer (if he/she used to drink), water and some other favourite food items (which are recently cooked without any spices, turmeric and mustard oil) of the deceased person with the help of **phakri bilai** (leaf of Indian fig tree) saying the verses –
“No lwnqdw amwkha/ amwkhi, dinwini frai nwngba nwng jwngba jwngswi”¹¹. Its meaning is - “Oh you take this water, from today you will remain as yourself and we shall remain as ourselves.”

Any one member of the family has to take the responsibility of cooking the rice and curry just to offer to the deceased. The cook use his/her left hand when he/she cook the items. A temporary o dab (oven) with the help of three post which are made from jatropha tree (a kind of local variety) is made to cook the items. Such type of tool should be used as cooking material so that it can be left in the cremation ground.

Firstly, the rice and water will be offered by the husband if the dead person is his wife or vice versa. In case the dead person is a widower father then he will be offered by either eldest son or daughter in law. It can be noted that offering any item to the deceased person is done by the left hand. The bracelets, rings, ornaments or any kind of sacred thread worn by the dead person should be removed.

Each pole bearer can use a single shoulder. Of course the reliver are allowed to relieve if some one feel uncomfortable. The things which are required for the purpose are

(a) hasung gongnwi (two water container made of bamboo)

(b) jigab buntha mwnse (a kind of indigenous lighter made of straw).

(c) narji gwran in abundance (sufficient dry leaves of jute plant)

(d) uncooked rice

(e) one piece of small size rock.

After all these performances the dead body is then placed on *sangra*, a kind of frame made of a raw bamboo. The number of rows must be five if the dead body is that of a male otherwise seven if it is that of a female. The projecting bamboo poles that rests on the shoulders of pole bearers are called *bathi* and the pole bearers are called *gworthi bangra*. Generally the sons, kit and kins or the relatives carry the dead body. Then the funeral procession with the dead body takes place towards the cremation ground. The procession is led by the *douri* or *ojā*. On the way to cremation ground some long or short pieces of *awa khungdung (ewa suta)* is left because the soul of the deceased can reach the cremation ground by following the *ewa suta* or yarn. At least one male member of each family of the village is bound to go to the cremation ground with the dead body. The pole bearers have to turn, anti clockwise, five times (if male) or seven times (if female) just before carrying the dead body on their shoulders because it is a tradition.

i. (b) **Fobnai:**

The followers of Bathouism follow both the burial and cremation system of the disposal of the dead body.
The burial process starts by digging out seven pieces of *safra* (round-sized piece of earth with grass which is dug out by the spade weighing about 3 to 6 kg), if dead person is female in the beginning after the selection of burial place. The burial process is to begin by any member of the bereaved family dropping little bit of earth on the ground. No one is allowed to bring the material and money which are left in the funeral ground. If some one brings any of these things and if it comes to the knowledge he will be punished with the help of *khawali bad* (a customary law for punishment) by the village organization.

At the time of burial the dead body is covered with a white sheet of cloth. The head of the dead body must be kept to the south with the face upward if female. A few coins are also buried along with the dead body. It is believed that the soul of the dead body is required to cross a river on the boat by paying the fare to the boat man or the soul may be required to purchase some foods on the journey.

A leafy branch of Indian fig tree is posted near the head of the grave or cremation ground. The significant meaning of this traditional practice is that if the dead person is female then she will be reborn with a huge quantity of hair. If the dead is male then it is believed that the soul of the deceased will take rest under this fig tree until he attains salvation.

It is mentionable that when an unmarried person demises then a banana tree (plant) is planted near the cremation ground to signify his or her unmarried state.
After the cremation is over all the members of the funeral party take their bath in the river or stream before returning to their respective houses and also chew a little quantity of dry leaves of the jute plant (*narzi gwran*) which is known as *narzi gwran orgarnai* in Boro. The significant meaning of the term *narzi orgarnai* means to cut off the relationship with the dead person. When they return to their respective houses they have to purify themselves by sprinkling *dwi gwithar* (holy water) which is already kept ready in front of their house by any member of the family in order to do the same. The water is sprinkled with the help of small branch of basil, nine or five pieces of *dup grass* (*dubori bon*), a small branch of *jathras* (a kind of medicinal plant) which are unitedly tied.

In the mean time the women members of the bereaved family wash the whole houses and garments. The *douri* will purify the family as well as the whole village and light the earthen lamp at *Bathou* altar. All the members of the funeral party gather at the residence of the bereaved family and discuss on the matter when and how the next social custom will be performed.

The Secretary or the President or any other expert member of the village organization (somewhere he may be Gaonburah) inform about the customs or practices of death ceremony and take the information regarding the financial position of the bereaved family. They express to extend their co-operation in all respect.

The section of modified Bathouism start the *Aroj* (prayer song) from the death day if the funeral work completed in the morning. Otherwise it will be
started on the next day of the funeral work. This prayer will continue five days for male and seven days for female which is performed as observed in the village Dolakati Daobogami, Boro Bazar Anchalik Committee, ABM of Udalguri district for the welfare of the bereaved family.

i. (c) Saonai:

While the dead body is to be burnt the pyre is arranged according to their customs. First of all four post will be posted in the four corner and then firewood will be arranged. Post should be green tree at the size of four to six feet long. Arrangement of pyre is initiated by any one member of the bereaved family and the burning is also initiated by the eldest son if the dead person is father or mother. There is a system of placing of five and seven stacks of woods while the pyre is arranged. A bonjar (torch) is then lighted and the relatives and friends of the deceased pass round the funeral pile in procession, the men five times, the women seven, after which the bonjar is applied to the pyre. A pair of chickens are taken to the cremation ground to be set free. Other social customs are same as discussed above points.

(ii) Daha Garnai:

It is a kind of pre-saradu (addya shraddha) ceremony which is celebrated on 10th day from the dead of a person. Some one said it as dosa garnai. But the modified Bathouism celebrate it after the five and seven days if dead person is
male and female. However the literal meaning and also the significant meaning of the term is giving up the grief. In this ceremony all the family members as well as people including kith and kins pray to the God (Afa Bwrai Bathou) for the welfare of the departed soul.

This ceremony is performed in a simple way. After getting up early in the morning all the members of the family engage themselves in pre-preparation for daha garnai. All will take their bath and then take part in any preparation individually. The chicken and fresh fish will be killed by five time beating while prepared to offer to the male dead person and seven for female. All the act of cooking will be done by the left hand and spices, mustard oil, chilly and turmeric etc. are not used in any cooking items.

Some favourite foods of the dead person will be cooked in order to offer him/her. Favourite items may be include ondlajwng dao (chicken curry which is cooked from the rice powder), sobaijwng oma bedor (pork curry cooked from the pea; matimah in Assamese), fish curry with any herbs or fruits, phitha like phitha laodum; phitha enthab; on asi; (tekeli pitha, dry pitha, oil pitha which are Boro variety); rice, rice beer, seref (local liquor), fruits and also tobacco if he/she was smoker. This act of offering is called gwtwinw or gwtwis baonai (offering of foods and other items to the dead person)

For this performance a place is washed with water in the south side of the courtyard and a plaintain leaf is placed on the gambari khamflai (pira in Assamese which is made of gameri wood) at the spot in order to offer the
prepared items. A pair of areca nuts and betel leaves, rupee coins, garments like gamsa, genzi, phalli, etc. (gamusa, genzi, scarf) are placed on the leaf and an alari bathi (saki) is lighted placed at the southern edge of the plaintain leaf. Five thalir dona (a kind of container made from the banana tree) will be placed in front of the plaintain leaf. All the offerings of food items will be kept on these arranged containers. Insence sticks will also be burned for the same.

The whole ceremony will be conducted by the douri or asari (priest) and eldest son (if dead person was father or mother) start the offerings and all other members of the bereaved family and also the relatives participate unitedly in the prayer for his departed soul. The douri or asari chant the following mantra:

"Aham! wng, hring, khling, fwd, se; wng, hring, kling, fwd, se; wng, hring, khling, fwd, se; dohai afa nuathari Bwrai Bathou maharaja khwnasong, khwnasong afa angni bathrakhou khwma suna khwnasong. Nwi Amwkha/Amwkhi (Thwinaini mung), honwi dukhuthia nwngsala gidir Umukhaya (fisalani mung) nokhorni boykhoubw lafananwi- beyaonw dong nwnghamjw geder, gejer, undwi, nwngsala geder, gejer, undwi arw dongbaow nwngsoulafwr, dong nwngni onjali bisi lwgwse khurma bahagi boykhoubw lafananwi nwngni mungwi mua besad baodwng – beyaonw nwngnw hwdwng –wngkham wngkhri eokhang saokhang khaji bukhri, fitha sourai, fithai samthai, beyaonw hwdwng nwng mwjang mwngra wngkhri – onglajwng dao, sobaijwng oma bedor, na magurjwng thaigir, fitha laodum, enthab, asi engkhlong, jouni jou, serefni seref –oma eonai, dao eonai; befwrjwngnw nwng gwjwndw; beni onga hwbaogwn makhou, nwngnw
স্বীকৃতি দান নকন্দ নকরাও মা ডং মা গ্যায়, থ্রেংব থ্রাং থাং মা ম্যায়, নকন্দ নকরাও সিগো ক্যালাম্ন ম্যান্ন ম্যান্ন নোং, ক্যালিয়াঙ্গ ক্যালিয়াঙ্গ লাব্ন ম্যান্ন ম্যান্ন নোং। মাবলাবা নকর্নো স্যর্বাফি হাগ্রায়াও - বোংগ্রায়াও থাঙ্গ্বলা, নাহা ম্যুহা থাঙ্গ্বলা এমোন্থি থাঙ্গ্নাঙ্গো থাঙ্গ্নাঙ্গ থাঙ্গ্নাঙ্গ থাঙ্গ্নাঙ্গ - মাওন্থাঙ্গো ম্যান্ন ম্যান্ন ম্যান্ন ম্যান্ন - মুফুর জানানী, জিবো জিবাদ জানানী, ফোট ফোট জানানী সিগো ক্যালাম্ন ম্যান্ন ম্যান্ন নোং; মাই ডো, ম্যান্সং ম্যান্সং, ক্যালিয়াঙ্গ-বাথি মেগোং থাহিঙ্গ জেখোহং হানি ক্যালাম্ন ম্যান্ন ম্যান্ন নোং দোই।

দোহাই অম্বকা ক্ষরোনী থীও ম্যুন্দ্র্যংগ্গ্রন - নী দি নী ন্যুগ্কো দ্রু জ্ঞান ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ন্যুদ্র্যংগ্গ্রন ন্যুক্তানও ন্যুক্তানও ন্যুক্তানও ন্যুক্তানও ন্যুক্তানও ন্যুক্তানও ন্যুক্তানও ন্যুক্তানও জ্ঞান ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং ফ্রেং
English Rendering :-

“Aham! Wng, hrng, khling, fnd, se’” Oh! The father Bwrai Bathou the great king, listen –listen to my speaking attentively. Hello Mr. Amwkha (name of dead person) today, your eldest son (so and so) alongwith his wife and all other members including your another sons, their wives, grand sons- daughters along with all other kith and kins gathered here to offer you some food items. There is given to you- cooked rice, curry, fried items, pithas, fruits. It includes your favourites like chicken curry cooked with rice powder, pork curry cooked with pea (in Assamese mati mah), fish (magur) curry cooked with the help of Assamese Ou tenga (elephant apple, Dillenia intica) tekeli pitha, dry pitha, oil pitha, varieties rice beer- liquor , fried pork, fried chicken, you get satisfy yourself, we have nothing more to offer you, because you are well known to the family background what are the things they can offer, albeit we prepared and offered as we can based on our capacity. You take all these items, you should not mind please- you should not frighten the family members, you should check any kind of trouble and distresses in the family. If anybody from the family goes to the jungle for fishing and hunting, or goes to any other place knowingly or unknowingly and commit any kind of wrong you should not appear and frighten

12 Informant: Sri Biswanath Basumatary, (M-58), Rangidara, Baksa.
them by assuming the form of a tiger, bear, snake, even becoming like a devil, god and goddesses; you should not harm their cattle, vegetables or any other agricultural crops. Hellow Mr. Amwkha, you can take my blood of head, we are not responsible for your demise, they tried their level best to rescue you from the demise, we could not understand, we didn’t know what was the reason behind your demise whether your death occurred or is caused due to end of your longevity by some rival or devil or witchcraft. They could not save you even if they tried their level best. They have no way because it is a maya played by the God Himself. We are to accept it. Therefore, if we committed any kind of mistake in this offerings we beg your pardon, you please accept our offerings without any disgrace. Hello! Mr. Amwkha from today you remain as yourself, we remain as ourselves. But your family is scheduled to celebrate the last rite of saradu (addya sraddha) on so and so date. We will call you on that day, you are to come and accept our offerings as well as farewell. For today bye bye. All the members who participated in the offerings will kneel down on the earth.”

After a short while all the offerings will be carried on his head by the performer (may be the eldest son) in a khada (tukuri) or dala (bamboo tray) and thrown away outside the village (wherever possible). This is the last day which is formally observed to grieve for the dead person; This is called the daha garnai (giving up the grief) in Boro.
It is also a pre-saradu ceremony of the Boros. This giathi jonai is nothing but a part of funeral ceremony which is observed by the Boros, especially in the area of Bhergaon Sub-Division and Harisinga area of the Ambagaon Mouza of Udalguri district. The term “Giathi” means “kith and kin” “jonai” here means “gathering”. Therefore the significant meaning of the term is ‘gathering of kith and kins’ of the deceased person in order to perform the traditional custom where some wooden and bamboo tools are made and also some food items are cooked within the night and offered to the dead person. This gathering and performance is held in the preceding night of the saradu (addya sraddha) in the residence of the bereaved family. One who participated in the gathering is not allowed to return to his/her house until and unless the performance is completed.

For this performance the pre-preparation starts in the bilifang (in the evening in and around 5-6 pm in the winter and 7-8 pm in the summer) when gathering starts. The family members, kith and kin and the village people engage themselves in making the wooden and bamboo tools. If he was male cultivator then all the agricultural tools such as nangwl (nangol), mwi, sikha, ruwa (dao, axe), khodal (spade), sen-khokha (fishing trap, sepa in Assamese) and ram jangkha (ladder) are made. But if she was female housewife and expert in handloom and textile then all the tools which were used by her such as sal-gandwi (tat-shal), salkhuntha, fogai, swrki, jenther (jothor), danganatha,
thaokhri, jekhai-khobai (jakoi, kolai in Assamese) etc. which are essentially used by the person are made in order to offer to her.

Both the male and female members take part and co-operate in making such items on the occasion of Giathi jonai. Each and every materials/tools will be fastened with five round awa khundung (ewa suta) if he was male but fastened with seven round if she was female. This is the traditional ritualistic belief and faith of the Boros since time immemorial.

Meanwhile some female performers make rice powder to make phitha and some others will engage themselves in the arrangement of cooking place inside the courtyard. However four persons are selected from the gathering to cook and prepare the offering items. Of these four persons two females must be widow but the rest two will be any male person. They will be given an alwn or bandw (a traditional tie knot which is made of ewa thread) in the right hand. The bandw signify the taking over the responsibility of cooking and preparing the items.

For this ceremony the following material are very essential.

(1) jinga (in Assamese Kuia tree),
(2) an alari bathi (earthen lamp),
(3) khundung awa (ewa suta),
(4) bihuphali one piece (a scarf),
(5) sufficient plaintain leaf,
(6) sufficient thalir dunaikhong,
(7) dhup (insence sticks),
(8) ripe banana,
(9) vermilion,
(10) *jugundi* or *jigab buntha* (a kind of indigenous lighter made of straw),
(11) pair of *kho*-right–left (a pair of bamboo basket),
(12) *dubori bon*. seven piece, a small branch of basil, *jathrasi* tied into seven round fastening by *ewa suta*,
(13) *ouwa hasung* (bamboo pipe) one piece –which is used to keep holy water in order to purify the items (in Assamese *ght*),
(14) *faori* or *fogai* and *swrkhi* (two kinds of bamboo tools; spinning wheel),
(15) all other tools which are used for handloom and textile like- *sal-gandwi-makhu* (tat- sal- maku), *salkhuntha*, *rasw* (in Assamese rah), *baleb*,
(16) *jatha* one piece (bijuli bamboo),
(17) branches of *enda* (jatropha) tree to arrange three kinds of oven in the three separate places of courtyard,
(18) white cloth (*markin kapur*) in abundance by which all offering will be covered and from which two bags are made one is to carry the offering items and other is to carry the biri or tobacco,
(19) *jekhai khobai* (in Assamese *jakoi kolai*; fishing trap),
(20) *khadou* (a kind of ladle made from bamboo or wood), *khamphlai* (wooden low seat),
(21) *ram jangkhla* (in Assamese *Ram jokhola*, a kind of ladder) and many more tools which were generally (just nominal) used by the dead person during his/her survival.

(22) *a bathi* (bamboo pole to carry the offerings).

It can be mentioned here that all the tools are fastened with seven rounds of *ewa suta* if the dead person was female but it should be five when the deceased was a male person. The chicken and fish are to be killed by seven and five beating. The selected cooks have to use their left hand while cooking. After completing all these offering they are allowed to throw away the *alwn* or *bandw* from their hands.

While all these tools and cooked items are ready then a place is arranged to offer them in the south edge of the courtyard headed by the *douri* or *asari* or any other expert. Some members gather the tools and cooked items near the place in the *kho* (bamboo basket). A plaintain leaf to the south will be arranged and a pair of areca nut-betel leaves and a lighted *alari bathi* (*saki*) will be placed on the plaintain leaf then the offering is performed in the name of dead person or deceased.

The mantra and its significance is same with the mantra of *Daha garnai*. When the offering is completed then all the items will be carried on the shoulder by some members and thrown away somewhere outside the village with the help of their traditional custom. This kind of performance is known as *phindu baonai* in Boro. This must be finished before rising of the sun. All the members who
participat in the offering must take bath when they return to the house of dead person and the douri will purify all the members by sprinkling the holy water. No one will be allowed to enter into their respective houses before the purification. During the whole night not a single item is allowed to be cooked in the kitchen, even the lighting of fire is not allowed till the arrival of all the members after completing the offering of *phindu baonai*. After the arrival of all members from the offering, fire can be lighted in the kitchen for cooking any items.

The eldest son who take the responsibility of the whole performance has to shave his hair completely. Other sons are also allowed to get their hair shaved in the above mentioned area early in the morning. But in some area of Baksa district this kind of practices is not compulsory.

(iv) *Saradu (Addya Shraddha)*

*Saradu* is the last part of the funeral ceremony which is celebrated on the eleventh or thirteenth day or according to their scheduled date and days. This term may be called as *Bhandra* or *Bandra* especially in the Bhergaon sub division, Boro Bazar area, Harisinga of Ambagaon mouza of Udalguri district. It can be considered as the feasting ceremony or the reception because the kith and kin, all the members as well as all the village people who participated in the cremation are entertained with feast on this day along with an observance of certain ritualistic practices.
*Narzi gwram* (fried item of dried jute leaf) or *narzi dwlw/khofo* (curry of jute leaf) is a special item of *saradu* or funeral ceremony. Some other items like *jou* (rice beer), *seref* (liquor) and also pork, chicken, fish with rice are provided by the family. Now a days some villages arrange this ceremony providing vegetarian items with rice and tea as refreshment in place of rice beer and seref. Distribution of different works is done by the village organization where some are selected as cooks, distributors, receptionist and some/few engage themselves in the ritualistic performance.

**(a) Dan Sarnai:**

*Dan sarnai* is a ritualistic performance of the Boros. In order to perform this ritualistic practice the Boros place two dons (bamboo basket) or *khirkhas* in the courtyard and the guests, relatives and village people donate some coins and alms. One of the dons will be kept for the village society/organization and the other will be mixed with alms and coins and thrown in the air. This kind of traditional practice is called the *dan sarnai* in Boro. A pair of areca nuts and betel leaves and a pair of coins or note will be placed on the don which is kept for the village organization and handed over to the Secretary or President or any representative after public donation is over.

The responsibility of this performance of *dan sarnai* is taken by the eldest son (of course it is allowed to be performed by any other son) of the dead person. He will have to kneel down just in front of village people and the *douri* will
sprinkle the holy water and chant the *mantra* or *raisongnai*. After that it will be thrown in the air among the gathering first in the east then north, west, south and to the sky or air.

The gathering people can pick up the coins whimsically while thrown in the air. At the same time after finishing his throwing the performer is allowed to leave the place. The family members, kith and kin or any other relatives are not allowed to carry the thrown coins. Because the *dan* (donation) is given to the others not to the family members.

It is noteworthy that everything offered to the dead person is done by the left hand wherever it may be in the *saradu* (addya shraddha) or *gwthwisi baonai* (offering to dead person) or everywhere which is related to the dead ceremony.

**(b) Sua Garnai Or dala Bugarnai :**

This *sua garnai* or *dala bugarnai* is another part of *saradu*. In this performance the performer has to carry the left overs on his head just before the *dan sarnai* and throw it away in the field or at the public road side. In some other villages the performer carry the unclean leaf, plates which are used as dishes by the guests, villager in a *dala* or *songrai* (bamboo tray) on his head and throw it away in the field or public road side. This kind of practice is called *dala bugarnai* or *sua garnai* which means removing of impurity. That way the impurity caused by the death is ceremonially removed.
(c) *Fafli Hukhlainai*:

The next performance on the same day as its part of *saradu* is *fafli hukhlainai* (massage of shoulders). The shoulders of the four pole bearers are massaged by the wing of the chicken mixing a little bit of mustard oil. A female member (she may be the eldest daughter in law) of the family perform this practice. The four pole bearers will take their seat on the bamboo mat in a row in the courtyard and the female member pays her respect by kneeling down to each bearer and offer them a pair of areca nuts and betel leaves along with a scarf. After that the shoulder of each pole bearer will be massaged by the female member/performer with the help of chicken wing or feather mixing it a little bid of mustard oil.

The excess meat or any other item are not allowed to be used on the next day and also not allowed to be taken by the neighbours or by the members of other family. So it should be finished and used on the day in a measure.

The family of the dead person in rural villages make sufficient rice beer which are served to the village people as well as kith and kin or to the guest. Generally this rice beer is tasty to drink but sometimes, exceptionally, it become tastless which is neither sour nor sweet. If it happens so it is believed that this jou is touched by the dead person and this kind of jou (rice beer) is called *gwthwi dangnai* in Boro. That means the dead person has touched it so it become so or tastless.
Gwthwi Mankhangnai:

Sometimes the spirit of the dead person visit the family of the death. Exceptionally, sometimes the soul of the dead person possess the one who was close to the dead person and gets an extra and abnormal spiritual power like the doudini and speak something about the wishes of the dead person. He/she introduces himself/herself and speaks in the dead person’s voice that —“I have a desire to eat so and so items (like pork/chicken/pigeon, goat etc) you must provide me all these items” 13Sometimes he/she cries, sometimes he/she express his/her sadness, sometimes he/she shows his anger etc. so you free one cow or goat or offer the above mentioned food items. Finally he/she takes leave and the living person retains his/her normal health like a normal person.

If it happens the family will free a cow or goat in the name of the dead person.

Taboo:

(1) The bereaved family must maintain vegetarian food up to five or seven days after the death of the concerned family member or until the kharmas (purification) is finished.

(2) The eldest son or the member who takes the responsibility of performance of saradu ceremony must abstain from food in the preceding night of the saradu ceremony.

13 Informant: Sri Rabiram Ramchiary, (M-55), Purani Goraibari, Udalguri.
(3) The excess meat (i.e. pork) or any item of saradu is not allowed to be re-used or take on the next day.