

a great deal of trouble to understand, and with our interpreter we thrashed it over many an evening with the head men or any other quick-minded villagers. In each village there are from two to five or even more, wards or Khels (to use the Assamese word) presided over by different head men and, sometimes, ~~strange to say~~, even in <sup>a</sup> ~~one~~ small village of not more than three hundred people ~~all told~~, <sup>strange to say</sup> speaking almost entirely different languages.

The Khels seem to take no interest at all in one another, and will not even protect each other when the Khel of an outside village has a feud to settle with one of two neighboring Khels. One Khel will stand by and calmly see the ~~others~~ <sup>members of a different Khel</sup> being slaughtered.

*to show* *utterly foreign to their minds is any trace of pity*  
 In the last census of Assam a Naga is quoted as saying jocularly that when the people from another tribe attacked one of the Khels in his village, killing one man five women, and twenty young children, he never saw such <sup>rare</sup> sport as the killing of the children, ~~as~~ it was just like killing chickens. Furthermore it is not at all uncommon to have inter-

Khel feuds in the same village, which often lead to bloody <sup>contests</sup> ~~battles~~. The khels are made

up of one or more "Jhats" (again to use an Assamese word) These Jhats or clans as we might properly call them, claim to be derived from a common ancestor, and consequently

a man may not marry in his own jhat. There is nothing in a man's name which will de-

termine his jhat and very probably in moving from one village to another the jhats are

very much mixed up. It is <sup>designed</sup> ~~intended~~ to prevent inter marriage but it only works in a

a one sided way where the children all belong to the father's jhat and no careful record

of families is kept. All trace of the mother's descent is lost and consequently the



marriage of first cousins on the mother's side are quite common, and even the marriage of uncle and niece. In one or two articles that have been published recently in the *Anthropological Journal of London* and also in the Census report of Assam, it is stated that the Nagas never marry in their own Khel, but this I think will be found to be an error; the restriction is against the Jhat and not against the khel. We were frequently told by the Nagas that they could not marry in their own khel, and then the very next time that we asked the question we would be told that marriage in the same khel was perfectly permissible. This seemed like a hopeless contradiction until we found out that some khels were made up of only one Jhat and others were composed of several Jhats, and the individuals whom we had questioned had answered only for their own Khel.

In the villages the Khels are not marked off by any line or stake nor would any stranger to the village be able to tell where one Khel began or another left off, but of course the boundaries are well known to the villagers themselves. Each khel has its own headman, but ~~but~~ his authority is very limited,; his only distinction seems to be that he lives in a little larger house than do any of his subjects, and he seems to be able to accumulate a larger store of rice than any body else. When he gets more rice than he can possibly use before it spoils, he makes it into rice beer and he buys or captures a Mittun; then he invite all the villagers to a grand feast after they shall have helped him drag down from the jungle a huge boulder which is set up in the village to commemorate his generosity, and please the spirits of his parents. After such a



feast he is entitled to put up large horn shaped cross pieces on the front gable of his house. Some of the tribes put in front of their houses, instead of the boulders, large

forked sticks to represent the horns of the Mittun. Very often these sacrifices and

feasts are given by men who have recovered from a severe illness; while they were tossing

*in fever on their hard beds*

~~on their hard fever beds~~ they have vowed to Kagong a certain number of pigs and fowls

and the sacrifice of a Mittun if he will only deliver them from their sickness, and it

may take them two or three years to accumulate enough rice beer and the price of a Mittun

*improvise themselves*

but some day they will make ~~them selves~~ poor out of thankfulness for their delivery.

*stake*

At these sacrifices the bull is tied by the horns to a forked ~~stick~~ and then either

beaten to death with clubs or else bled to death by innumerable jabs with spears, the

more suffering that they can give to the poor beast the greater is the pleasure of the

god. Portions of the bulls flesh are tied to the forked stake in front of the house

and several pieces are put in a basket and placed at the grave of the father of the man

who makes the sacrifice, and then to each villager an equal allowance is given. These

feasts often make a rich man poor in worldly goods but rich in the esteem of his village.

Relying as we did upon our interpreter and the smattering of the language that we

acquired it was exceedingly hard to get a coherent idea of their religion. Through

the different tribes, however, we were able to trace a belief in one powerful chief god,

who was known in the different tribes as "Kagong", "Chingrum", "Atzarran", "Kungumi" and

"Potso"; this particular god always seemed to have the same attributes. There were



also several other gods of evil who sent afflictions and sickness upon man and often struck him with sudden deafness and blindness. In several of the tribes there was a belief in a god, sometimes a goddess, of the harvest to whom pigs and fowls were sacrificed when the grain was planted. Chingrum, or any other of his aliases, dwells in the sacred rubber trees which are always planted in the villages and beneath which are kept a number of round stones which they say have been placed there by the lesser gods, who dwell in them and keep watch over the whole village, making it their duty to see that none of the prescribed rules of Naga <sup>social life</sup> ~~etiquette~~ are disregarded. Once a year two old men who are appointed by the villagers sacrifice a pig and a fowl to these stones and pour rice beer over them and make them generally comfortable; no one but these two old men dares to touch these mystic abodes of the gods. We were told that sometimes when the spirits dwelling in them get very much displeased, one or two of the stones disappears of its own accord; then some awful calamity happens to the village. Chingrum was not the Creator of the world, nor of the people, he simply rules over their destinies. Two other gods were concerned in the making of the land; one <sup>named Nagman</sup> made the plains by sweeping his staff horizontally in front of him, ~~his name was Nagman~~. The hills and mountains were made by Chelok, who beat with his staff upon the flat ground made by Nagman and raised it into welts. When Nagman dances in the sky the clatter of his feet makes the thunder and the perspiration dropping from his body is the rain.

When a person dies some of the tribes say that the soul or ghost remains always



with the corpse in the grave yard; others believe that the spirits go to a Heaven under the ground where they meet their friends and relatives in a life just such as this; and <sup>where</sup> the sun lights the sky by day and the moon and stars shine by night. When the souls die in this heaven, which is called "Etzuli", they go down still lower in the Earth to "Etzuli Ochungwei" where they no longer see the sun and moon nor stars. What sort of a life they lead in this heaven is not known, but when they die for a second time they come back to earth again in the shape of butterflies, and after a short life in this form the spirit perishes. Human beings never can see the spirits of the dead, but dogs see them, and when a dog howls at night or barks without reason in the daytime, they say that the spirits of the dead are passing by.

*hurriedly to trace here*

*outline*

What I have been able to ~~set down here~~ is of course but the merest ~~jumble~~ of the facts and the fancies of these people; but to give more than the outline of an idea about them would take up more of your time than is warranted, and besides I am now going to bring you face to face with a few of them and give you a glimpse into their villages and let you know how another infinitesimal corner of this world lives.