

**THE TRENDS AND THEMES OF FOLK ARTS OF  
MEGHALAYA**

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# **Contents**

## **Chapter I**

### **Folk Musical Instruments and Folk songs of Meghalaya**

- 1.0. General Introduction
- 1.1. Folk Music and folk songs of Meghalaya
- 1.2. Characterestics of folk songs
- 1.3. The Folk Musical Instruments of Meghalaya
- 1.4. Folk Instruments of Meghalaya and its classifications
- 1.5. Khasi Folk musical Instrument
- 1.5 A Folk Musical Instrument of Jaintaists Classification
- 1.6. The Folk Musical Instruments for Garos
- 1.7. Classification; Folk songs of the Meghalaya
- 1.8. Folk songs of the Khasi
- 1.9. Folk songs of the Jaintias
- 1.10. Folk songs of the Garos
- 1.11. Conclusion

## **Chapter II.**

### **Folk dances of Meghalaya**

- 2.0. Introduction
- 2.1. Traditional dance costumes and ornaments of Meghalaya in festivals
- 2.2. Folk /Traditional dance of the Khasi
- 2.3. Folk/traditional dance of the west Khasi hills
- 2.4. Folk/Traditional dances of the Bhois
- 2.5. Folk/Traditional dances of the Lyngngam
- 2.6. .Folk/Traditional dances of the War
- 2.7. Folk /Traditional dance of the Jaintias
- 2.8. Folk/Traditional dances of the Garos
- 2.9.-2. Figures of the dances of Meghalaya

## **Chapter III**

### **Folk theatre of Meghalaya**

## **CHAPTER 1V**

### **The folk tales of Meghalaya**

## **FIGURES**



## The Trends and Themes of Folk Arts of Meghalaya

*"Protect Preserve Pursue the legacy of Folk Arts"*

### 1.0. General Introduction

The name of the state of *Meghalaya* is derived from the Sanskrit word '*Meghalaya*' meaning "*The abode of clouds*". It has an area of 22429 sq kms and a population of 2964007 according to 2010 – 11 census. (geographical location. language) .Its capital, *Shillong* is known as the queen of the hill stations. The state is covered by hills and valleys with picturesque landscapes and exotic natural beauty and situated on the Plateau known as *Meghalaya plateau or Shillong plateau*. Its famous golf course is aptly called "*The Scotland of the East*". *Meghalaya*, a State in the North-Eastern Region of India with vibrant culture, traditions, with simple living people. *Meghalaya* is the home of music and dances, it is also a state of innumerable **Folklores**. *Meghalaya* have a rich cultural heritage, their history is preserved in the form of festivals, **Folk Songs**, **Folk Tales**, **Folk Dances** and **Folk Theatres**. In almost all the festivals and ceremonial celebrations there are the **Involvements of dance and music**. The music of *Meghalaya* is inspired by the natural beauties and the people who are great lovers of Music. The dances and songs are always associated with festivals. The land echoes the sound of perfect tempo, tantalising enchanting songs with numerous types and forms of traditional Instruments.

*Meghalaya* is divided into three hilly regions:

The Khasi hills The Jaintia hills and The Garo hills. The Khasi or in cognate terms, U Khasi Khyntiam U Pnar U Bhoi U War and U Lyngngam resides in the central part of *Meghalaya*. *The Pnars or Jaintias* inhabit in the eastern part of Jaintia hills. *The Garos or the Achik* resides in the western part of the State at Garo hills. The Khasi hills 2. The Jaintia hills and 3. The Garo hills. The *Khasi* or in cognate term, *Khasi U khyntiam U Pnar*. The three different tribes of *Meghalaya* has its unique culture, traditions, customs, folk costumes, language etc and a classical matrilineal system of society. Garos are believed to be the descendants of Tibeto-Burman and the *Khasis* and the *Pnars* are the descendants of Proto Australoid Monkhmer race. Amongst the three tribes of *Meghalaya* their dresses and dialects and sub-dialects differ from one another. The three tribes believe in one Supreme God the Creator. He is the Almighty and all Powerful, Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent.

Folk Arts are the living proof of our originality. The explorations of folk art and its contributions of Folk Arts cannot be ignored in its disseminating power to the society. Folk Art forms bears testimony of our being origin and the development in the most creative ways. The facts are in the state of oral tradition Folk Art form gave us our history of the state



of Meghalaya. Folk artistes by means of songs, dance, drama, paintings, and sculptures preserved our values, traditions, beliefs, ethos, legends, etc and passed the same to the new generations till we were capacitated to document by computing in history.

Most of our popular folk forms of yesteryears were on the verge of extinction, but thanks to the untiring efforts of the present day artistes and scholars and the process of rejuvenating is in full scale, and the efforts are very encouraging till date, nowadays we can breathe fresh air of folk music in the platforms through All India Radio and Doordarshan and in all festivals in the state and outside the state. It is Interesting thing to know that people in *Wahkhen*, a village about 49kms from Shillong they used a peculiar tune to communicate each other known as *rwai kynud sur* . While calling the names of persons and '*rwai lawbei*' which is created by parents. *Wahkhen* village is famous in a different way in preserving music among the khasis .The people of this village has a professional musicians who perform at the annual *Nongkrem dance* by their intricate the types of drums beating and playing of the wind instruments (*Tangmuri*) .Further the folk music of the state bears distinct characteristics of the people, place, nature, customs and practises, undulating landscape, myths and legends, the prevailing social situation and the surrounding environment, and the unique matrilineal society as well.

The *Khasi – Pnar* and Garos expressing their love and respect to God the Creator in the form of different types of dances and folk songs and music. Folk music has been defined in several ways and singers as music transmitted orally or the music with unknown composers and singers .Folk music is a reflection of the society, that inspite of many events and influences of western music or Hindustani music, Meghalaya folk music still retains and its character from the initial stage as a baby to adulthood. We have seen that even a complete blind man or deaf and dumb, or for that matter a disabled person perform on the stage or at the market places

### **1.1. Folk music and folk songs of Meghalaya:**

What is folk music and Folk songs? What is the origin of folk music?

The word "Folk" traditionally refers to the customs and traditions that are passed down through the generations by the common people. Folk music are the roots Music and it is the treasures of which every forms of vocal and Instrumental music has developed. Folk music acquires the particular characteristics which differentiates it from other forms of music. In this context for this chapter only Khasi Jaintia and Garo folk music are expounded below in the ongoing paragraphs.

Folk Music has a different forms depending upon the region it belongs .It has a peculiar expressions and established a tradition of its own .It bonds people together in language in a way that has more to do with culture and history rather than entertainment. The



Khasi The Pnar and the Garos are great lovers of music, it is believed that they are born with the music in their blood.

Folk music of the *Khasis* of Meghalaya is an important aspect which is associated with indigenous music of our land. The evolutionary stages of khasi music in Meghalaya evolved from the impulse experienced unexpectedly by man from the nature for example, the dripping of water inside the caves, the chirping of birds, insects, the sound cascading of waterfalls, the cries of animals and indeed every phases of man's life passes musically in the form of clapping, flapping of fingers, beating on the thighs and buttocks, stamping of foot on the ground, whistling, lapping of tongue and all such audibility of bodily actions are what we say Music. After all Music means to us cannot be put into words. We can feel that the music expresses joy, or sorrow, gaiety, tenderness, love, anger-all kinds of things and feelings that words alone could never do. Music can be easily understood and appreciated by people of all parts of the world. Music can also be enjoyed just for its beauty, and not for what it is saying. We can get pleasure from even a single tone of voice other than any instrument. We may love a beautiful melody for many years of our lives and always enjoy hearing it.

### 1.2. Characteristics of folk songs:

Folk songs travelled a great and different distances and live from one generation to the next, It is not taught. Folk songs come down from person to person or parents to children by words of mouth. Folk songs go off with the complete strangers like traders, peddlers who travel from place to place. Each singer shapes impulsely a song without really knowing he is changing it like a song. Folk songs unlike popular songs, are songs composed by men who make it a business for a living by making from a written note or sing songs. Folk songs is usually some sort of a story. Folk songs can be made up by anyone unlike popular songs. Folk singers are not trained but ordinary working people who by impulsion create or sing a song to anyone who cares to listen to him and no one pays for the song, and after song has travelled around no one knows who first composed it or bother to know the singer.

Folk songs are immortal. Folk songs are direct and simple structured, and it is the natural expression of the community. Folk songs can be also effectively performed without instrumental accompaniment and it tends to be more popular when performed live rather than in recorded mode. Being the unwritten music the poetic content has greater impact and rhythm plays a very important role. Songs and lyrics of folk music portrays the common life of our villages which is woven from their daily life, their work and aspiration, giving them life and energy to work in the field, to put children to sleep, to dream of love and plenty, to extol valour and virtues and thus forget their miseries. Thus folk music plays a very vital part in the rural life and it prominently influences village life.

### 1.3. The Folk Musical instruments of Meghalaya

#### What is folk musical Instruments?

Broadly speaking, let us assume that any object which can produce different musical sounds is an instrument. But as usually understood an instrument is a tool, other than the human body in fact human body itself is the oldest instrument particularly the voice produces more tunes than any musical Instruments. Musical Instruments is but an extension of the body. Musical Instruments play an important part in the dance performances.

Folk music stands on its own character. The musicians play the instrument often to a high level of skill, folk music is not popular because it is not designed to appeal to the largest group of people or a particular age or demographic first instruments. The instruments that folk musicians used are not refined as glossy as those of the commercially produced instruments of western and Hindustani musical instruments. It is found that the Instruments of the Khasis and the Jaintias are the same but the only difference is that the instruments called by different names of the instruments.

### 1.4. Folk Musical instruments of Meghalaya - Its classifications

- a. Musical Instruments of the Khasis
- b. Musical Instruments of the Jaintias
- c. Musical Instruments of the Garos

Folk Musical instruments of Meghalaya can be grouped on the basis of the material they are made of, the methods of playing, the functional use and so on. The musical instruments are classified as follows:

#### I. Percussion Instruments :

Rhythmic : Membranophones or “ ki jingtem Ksing “

#### • Khasis and Jaintias :

1. Ka Bom lane ka Nakra (big drum)
2. ka ksing shynrang ( male drum )
3. ka ksing kynthei ( female drum )
4. ka ksing padiah ( small drum )

#### • Jaintia:

- a) Kseiñ Kynring or drum
- b) U thlong or a wooden drum
- c) Ka Bom heh
- d) Ka kseiñ Sder
- e) Kseiñ nakra (Bom khian)



- **Garos:**

- a) Dama, Ambeng Dama ( long drum ) Chisak dama , Atong dama, Garaganching dama, Ruga and Chibok dama, Dual -Matchi dama , Nagra etc .
- b) Natuk or the mini drum
- c) Nagra or the drum which is bowl shape.
- d) Natik (small drum)

## II. Idiophones /autophones

- **Khasis:**

- a) ka Dymphong
- b) ka sing phong
- c) ka Kynshaw (cymbals)
- d) ka Merang

- **Jaintia:**

- a) Ka chalamen
- b) Ksein siej
- c) Takudiah
- d) Chew Chew

- **Garos:**

- (a) Kakma
- (c) Nangilsi
- (e) Nangilsi
- (f) Guridomik
- (g) Kamaljakmora
- (h) Rang local name of gong

## III. String Instruments Chordophones or “ki jingtem ksai ne jingtem kyndoh”

- **Khasis:**

- (a) ka Duitara
- (b) ka marynthing
- (c) Ka Maryngod / ka sarong
- (d) Saitar

- **Jaintia:**

- (a) Ka saitar
- (b) Ka Ramynthein
- (c) Ka Duitara

- **Garos:**

The Dotrong , Sarenda , Chigring , Dimchrang or Kimjim, Gongmima or Gonggna.

*drum* ) are placed horizontally on the laps against the stomach while sitting or by hanging from the neck when standing while playing whereas '*Ka Bom*' ( big drum ) and *padiah*(small drum) are placed vertically on the *syrwiang* (hoop) .The tuning of the Khasi drums is done by tapping the sides of the hide.

1. **Ka ' Bom''*ka Nakra*** or the big drum known as the 'mother instrument' of the khasis. It is made of jackfruit tree and covered with the skin of the cow. It is the main base drum beaten with a pair of drum sticks it is always accompanied by *ksing shynrang* (male drums). The '*Bom*' of the Bhois is made up of a kind of tree called Diengphing . The leaves of this tree is a favourite of mulching cows ,the length of this '*Bom* ' is 2-2 in conical shape and its thickness *pyllun* is 1 inch. In the olden days perhaps drum was the first instrument '*Ka Bom* used during proclamation (*pyrta shnong*) when the Syiem ( king ) or the village elders called for a Dorbar or meeting and later the *Bom* (big drum ) accompanies folk music and dance .
2. '*ka ksing shynrang*' or '*ksing thap*' or the Male drum . This male drum is made of jackfruit tree and covered on both sides by membrane . On the right side by the hide of cow and on the left side by the hide of goat . It is beaten on one side by stick and another side by hand. It is played during '*ka shad shynrang*' (male dance). While playing this instrument both the fingers and the drum stick were employed.
3. '*ka ksing kynthai*' or the female drum of the Khasis is made of jack fruit tree and it is covered on both sides with the skin of goat and it is fixed with a black paste or sealing wax on both sides in the middle portion of the hides on both sides of the drum, and it is beaten with hands. This signifies the status of women in the society . This '*Ksing kynthai*' is played during ceremonial occasions specially when the Syiem (king) and the nobles perform dances. It can also be played during '*kashad kynthai*' (dance of the virgin females) in a designated dancing ground. The players hang the instrument from his neck and plays it with fingers.
4. '**ka ksing padiah**' or the small drum , it is a small drum covered with two layers the skin of a goat. It is played with two thin specially made bamboo sticks. It takes the shape of a bowl. It is normally played when accompany the dances like *shad padiah, shad singwait, shad tyngkoh, shad singsong, shad singlynti ,sing lumpaid, singnalai* and others .

## II. Idiophones / autophone (*jingtem ba mih tang shisur*):

Idiophones are Instruments that does not require any special tuning and can be played as they are not give out a sound of definite pitch and also it produced a short sound. These instruments are eminently suited for rhythmic purpose.

- a) '*ka ksing dymphong*' made up of a fine small scraped bamboo and is diagonal in shape of about 2ft by 1ft size. The top portion of the bamboo is sliced off ,there is a square hole at the



centre of the instrument converting the bamboo into a sound box. Above the hole flat strips of bamboo

b) '*kynshaw or shaw shaw*' (cymbals) is made of a brass metal, it is a twin instrument are of the same size or quality, a hole in outer part is made so that thread can be placed for the convenience of a player. It is played to accompany any songs or dances and it goes along with the drums and other instruments. This instrument do not require any further tuning once they are made and they produced only one tune. This pair of instrument is held in hand and struck. The '*kynshaw*' is used for rhythmic purposes in folk songs and dances.

c) '*ka singphong*' This Instrument is made of small fine bamboos fastening 22 numbers of these small bamboos the length of which is one foot and the breadth is about 8 inches. It produced a gentle sound and resembles the sound of '*ka ksing kynthei*'. It is played by placing the instrument on chest and played by the palm or according to the convenience of the player. The timing is kept by striking the back strings of the '*singphong*' with the left hand.

d) '*ka Merang*' The shape of this instrument is somewhat round like a plate or school bell or a gong in the village, the diameter which is 15–20 cms and the thickness is 2–3 cms. It is played by a specially made stick and played during ceremonial occasions and other joyous occasions. It is mostly used in the Maharam areas in the West Khasi hills.

### III. Strings instruments: Chordophones (Ki jingtem kyndoh ne jingtem ksai):

The Khasi has different type of trees suitable for making and shaving the instruments or making string instruments. We have a special strings made from the tree of castor- oil plant or ricin tree (dieng Ryndia) and also string made from the muga silk fibre from cocoon of silkworm. (ñiangryndia)

Some of the string instruments of the Khasis are listed below:

a) '*Ka Duitara*' is a four strings instrument made out of muga silk thread called '*saimuka*' and its length is 75 – 85 cm plucked by a wooden strum called tymbong. *Duitara* is played in the pin drop silent of the night while sitting around the fire place singing songs and telling story. It is also played in several occasions and it accompanies folk songs.

b) '*Sarong*' is like a '*Duitara*' more or less but it is small in size.

c) '*ka Marynthing*' is like the *duitara* having nine frets it is longer than '*Duitara*' and it produces a loud sound than *duitara* because it is attached with a steel strings, its sound resembles the sound of sitar. There are two types of *marynthing*. One is the '*marynthing*' '*marynthing sharok*' it has only one string. '*Marynthing*' is almost played in the *niglong ing* ' it has five strings and another is flat and short and played with a bow. After all the work is done and people would gather together and listen to it with a relaxed mood.



d) **Ka 'Maryngod'** is made up of a kind of tree called *Diengphing*. It has three strings played with a bow on the right hand. Maryngod has no frets. Its shape resembles the old female woman with bended body. It has mourning tunes and played usually in the home where death occurs in a family. It produced the various dirges and lamentation tunes. It has four strings and the skin of jackal (Fox) or skin of *tyrpud* (anteater) is the best to cover. The *maryngod* is played in the silence of the night till morning. In the Bhoi area there are two types of *maryngod* in the Bhoi area, the female *maryngod* and the male *Maryngod* is made up of a kind of tree called *Diengphing*.

e) **Saitar** The size of the saitar is 20 – 25 cm in diameter and its length is 110 – 130 cms. It is played with a wire plectrum. The saitar of the Khasi is tied with the guard on both ends. It is tied with six numbers of steel strings and played by a wire plectrum worn on the forefinger of the right hand to pluck the strings. The perfect co-ordination of both the hands creates beautiful music on the *Saitar*. It is difficult to play the saitar. The Khasi made the saitar and plays the saitar according to his own ingenuity and talent. The saitar accompanies different types of songs, dances and during theatrical performances.

#### IV. Wind instruments Aerophones: (Ki jait jingput)

These are the instruments which are used by blowing the air from the mouth to the specially made hole which automatically produce sound. Some of the wind instruments that the Khasis are still using till the present day are listed below:

- a) **Ka 'Tangmuri'** The flute pipe instrument made up from the trunk of jackfruit tree and reed (japung). It has six holes. The reed is a miniature tongue fixed at one end, the sound heard is of the reed not the air. The reed is inserted inside a small pin which is finally placed in the *Rhang*. The shape of the *Rhang* is conical like the shape of the white stramonium flower. Of all the wind instruments *Tangmuri* is the queen of instrument. It is an outdoor instrument. It has a high pitch and it is used during joyous occasion and dance festivals and it goes along with the beat or rhythm of the drums. The beauty of the pitch produced by *Tangmuri* tears the sometimes deafening sound of *ka 'Bom'*. The *Bhois* has two different types of *Tangmuri*, one is '*Tangmuri kai*' or '*Tangmuri rong*' and others are used during religious ceremony and all festive dances.
- b) **ka 'Talwak'** - It is like a '*Besli*' (flute) and it is a bit longer in length, it is used by the *Bhois*.
- c) **ka 'Besli'** or flute is made of small bamboo called '*shken*' (*Dendro calamus hamiltonii*). It has a lead hole for blowing and the entire body has six holes, when played the *besli* is placed diagonally with the lead hole in the mouth (in the stance of Sri Krishna). It accompanies songs and mostly played by cowherds. It is a homemade bamboo instrument played by cowherds. The tunes are blending with the solidarity of nature that surrounds him.



- d) **'ka Mieng'** an indigenous mouth organ . a unique and simplest musical instrument with one strip of bamboo . The players holds it between his lips and pluck the other end which produce the tune ,it is difficult to describe to the instrument an accurate pitch .It is essentially a rhythmic instrument and **'ka Bom'**( big drum ) and **'ksing shynrang'** ( male drum ),**ksing kynthei** (female drum)and **'padiah'**(small drum ) can be played along with it though a sense of melodic variations is felt .This is a universal instrument used by all section of people.In the bhoi areas Mieng is used in the night time because it gives a melodious tunes. The Jaintias of Shangpung village used this instrument when accompanying folk songs The **'mieng'** is called **'Ramaken'** to the Jaintias.
- e) **'ka put sla'** or leaf instrument it is played regulating blow in the mouth and the leaf they used are leaf of **'lathenrait'** and **'ladiengsing'**.The leaf is thick than any other type of leaf and it produces the sound of a mini clarinet.
- f) **'ka Sharati'** or **Shyngwiang** is a kind of flute played during funeral ceremony and mostly played the mourning tunes during cremation and lamentation for paternal mother ( phur thang iap and iam meikha) and except these occasions, it is never used. The tune of **'Ka Sharati'** can be heard from a distant, and the tune of **ka Sharati** when one heard has a melancholic impact which touches him especially if one hears it in the lonely night and the tune still vibrate in the ears and the inner thoughts that lingers on.
- g) **'ka Tanglod'** It resembles besli but it has a kind of reed at the head which is made up of a kind of small bamboo called **'shken'** it is used during dance festivals. It can also be used to accompany a lullaby and when they teach the children at home to dance, it is also known as a home instrument.
- h) **ka Turoi'** and **'Ronsing'** are made of a brass metal or bronze .This instrument is curve in the lower part and somewhat conical in the upper part.It is one of the heaviest instrument which produced a very long distant loud sound. In the olden days **'Turoi'** was usually used to receive and escort the king (Syiem). **Turoi** is also used to welcome and receive the noblemen/magnate (**Bakhrav batri**) from the other kingdom or territories (**ka It ka hima**).It is an instrument used during joyous and festive occasions.In several occasions some other region the **'Turoi'** along with drums are used as additional show of pomp and grandeur at the time of marriage when the bride meets the groom at a certain designated place.
- i) **'Ronsing'** It is an instrument which is kept in the house of the headman of the village so that at any moment when there is any incident or any mishap, **'Ronsing'** is blown and when the village people hear the sound of **'Ronsing'** all will come rushing to the headman's place to know the reason of the call. **'Ronsing'** is also blown when there is any eminent danger from possible enemy or depredation of wild animals.For blowing this **'Ronsing'** a man with strong healthy chest and ingenuity is required.



*Jl'Ka Song* This kind of instruments is made out of the horn of *'shynreh'* (a buffalo). This instrument is used to call attention to the people to congregate at the designated place for the *'Dorbar'* (assembly). This instrument is played by the official crier (*Sangot*) of the village and the beat of *Lumpaid* which the congregation understand automatically.

### 1.5. Folk musical Instruments of the Jaintias :

The musical instruments of the Jaintias are more or less the same with the Khasis .

#### I. Membranophones:

- a) **'Kseiñ Kynring' or Drum** It is made of a kind of wood of a fine tree "*u dieng laphiang*" It is covered and secured tightly by cow's hide on both sides. It is a very old instrument. It is played by hands on both sides. This is a special drum and is the main drum of the Jaintias of *shangpung*, it is always played during *Pastieh* dance, other festivity and during a grand religious ceremony like during *'ka shad Kiang Nangbah'* (a Jaintia ruler who was hanged by the British).
- b) **'Kseiñ Nakra (Bom khian)** It is made of a kind of tree "*u dieng laphiang*" and covered with a cow's hide, it takes the shape of a bowl. It is played during *'Ka shad Pastieh'* (*pastieh* dance) and other religious ceremonies. It is beaten with a pair of thin sticks.
- c) ***Ka Bom heh*** it is made from '*dieng ngan*' or '*dieng laphiang*' trees. It is covered with cow's hide. It is played during any festive occasions and religious occasions.
- d) ***Kseiñ Sder*** or drum This *Kseiñ sder* is a very old instrument of the Jaintia of Shangpung. It is made of a kind of reed which is soft as a cork.

#### II. Wind Instruments:

- a) ***Bhuri***—A reed pipe instrument is more or less like that of a Khasi *Tangmuri* as innumerable in the foregoing paragraph of '*Khasi tangmuri*' made from a fine tree of '*dieng Iamkhon*' or '*dieng laphiang*'
- b) **'Put sla'**— It is made from a special type of leaf locally known as "*Sarman*". It is played with the help of tongue and lips. It is played universally by all section of people especially by the cowherds.
- c) **'Ramynken'**— This type of instrument is also made from a kind of bamboo called '*chken*'. It is mostly played in the silence of the night while sitting round the hearth inside the house and the gathering hum in consonant with the tune of "*ramynken*".
- d) ***Bikur chken*** This is made from a bamboo. Its size is bigger than that of *ka Bhuri*. It is always used during the *Beh diengkhlan* festival. It has a hole on the top for blowing and another hole on the lower portion that let the sound comes out.
- e) ***Chawiang*** or the bamboo flute - It is made from a measured type of bamboo called '*chken*'. It has six holes.



### III .Idiophones

- a) **'Kseiñ sied'** or **'Lakadong'** is crafted from the measured bamboo. It has five strings carved from the same bamboo which is tied diagonally length wise. It is beaten by a certain made bamboo sticks. This is a common type of instrument that can be played at any occasions.
- b) **'Takudiah'** It is made from a thick and dried bamboo. It has a square hole somewhere in the middle in between the two joints of the bamboo. the beating sticks should made be in such a way that the head is round. It is played on any occasions.
- c) **Ka Chalamen'** is a very old instrument of the *Jaintia*. It is made of a brass metal, it is a twin instrument which are of the same size or quality. A hole in outer part is made so that thread can be placed for the convenience of a player. It is played to accompany any songs or dances and it goes along with the *'Kseiñ kynring'* drums and other instruments. This instrument do not require any further tuning once they are made and they produced only one tune. This pair of instrument is held in hand and struck. The more the bigger sound it produces, the better.
- d) **Gong or Chew Chew** this is a brass metal and it is of the size of a plate. The plate may be held in one hand and beaten with another hand with a beating rod. It accompanies the *Bikur Chkenduring* the *Behdiengkhlam festival*. The sound it produced is similar to the sounds of village school gong beating with a pause or intermittingly.

### IV. Strings Instruments:

- a) **'Saitar'** of the *Jaintias* .from all the instruments of the *Jaintia* it occupies the category number two .It is made from a kind of wood *'U dieñ laphiang'*. Cymbal or *'shaw shaw'* is used along while playing *saitar*. It was designed in such a way that the lower part takes the shape of a guard which is secured by four diagonal steel strings. It produced a melancholy tune when played by an expert artiste.
- b) **Duitara** It is made from a fine tree. The lower part is oblong and also conical in shape. It has four strings. It is one of the very popular instrument of the *Jaintias* especially when heard by lovers of folk songs. This instrument is like *"ka syiem iung"* (queen of all the folk musical instruments of the *Jaintias*. The tune that it produced rapt attention of the listeners.
- c) **Ramathien' or Ramathai'** It is crafted from a special kind of wood *'U dieñ lamkhon'* *Ramathai'* is the first instrument of the *Jaintias*. It has a single string with nine santaris or bridges to produce the required effect. It is secured by a single string and fixed to the guards on both ends .It produced a very melancholy tune especially when played in the death of the night.



d) *U skoo kynruh* This type of instrument is a very simple to make .It is made from a dry guard by scooping the contents from insideThe guard is filled with rice or stone chips .It is played by shaking the guard to produce a beat ,it accompanies any instruments.

#### 1.6.The Folk musical Instruments of the Garos:

The different material getting from the nature, especially wood and bamboo are used to make musical instruments. Generally speaking instruments are divided into four major groups.TheGaros used bell metals more abundantly in the past.The gongs of the garos is a metal instrument and takes the shape of a plate .The metal disc has usually a diameter of it is beaten with a stick on one hand .Throughout the ritual of *Chachat soa* (burning of incense) l the *Kram* or Sacred drum ,The *Rang* or Gong and the *Dama* or the big drum are played ceaselessly

##### I. Membranophones:

The wide range of drums:

1. *Dama* is a typical Garo drum made of special kind of wood and covered with cows hide or mithuns.Its length is 42 inches.The body is hallowed it is elongated anda doubled membrane.The shape of its body is circularall along its lengthwith more or less uniform diameter.*Dama* iscommonly used during the *Wangala* festival by dancers beating it up and dancing at the time when played, it is hang from the neck and the dancer beat with two hands on both sides .The *Damas* of the Garo people has a different names in different regions as follows:  
a) *Ambengdama* b).*Chisakdam* c)*Atong dama* d)*Garaganching dama* e)*Ruga* and f)*Chibok damag*)*Dual-matchi dama*
2. *Kram* is a drum of the medium size which is similar to the *Dama*.It is made of a special kind of wood and covered tightly on both sides by animals hide .*Kram*is considered as a sacred drum. *Kram* is used to accompany the *Grika* dance along with *natik* and *Rang*.*Kram* is kept in the *Nokma*'s place.
3. *Natik*is a very small drum where its left size is more reduce than that of the right.
4. *Nagra* is shaped like a mortar carved from a tree or great branch of tree,covered by animals hide. It is an instrument which is kept in the house of the *Nokma* of the village(clan chief) and it is not allowed to be taken out of the owners place, so that at any moment when there is any incident or any mishap,*Kram* is played and when the village people hear the sound of 'Nagra'all will come rushing to the *Nokma*'s place to know the reason of the call.'Nagra'is also played when there is any eminent danger from possible enemy or depredation of wild animals or announcing a death. It is also used as a call for the people during entertainment andalso used when a special feast is given to visitors.The first strike on the 'Nagra' is to be done by the owner or any of his relatives until then anyone can touch it.



## II. Idiophones:

Idiophones are self sounding and are normally made from resonant object like wood, metals like bells, gongs, cymbals and from bamboo.

**Rangs or Gongs** is of brass shaped like a bowl with compressed rims are regarded as the items of wealth. They are also the symbol of status and even held as sacred. It is the *nokma* who usually authorise. It is mostly used for ceremonial occasions than just for a festive occasions. The Garos used bell metals more abundantly in the past. The gongs of the Garos takes the shape of a plate. The metal disc has a diameter of 7 and half inch, its depth is 4 and half inch. It is beaten with a wooden rod. The plate may be held in one hand and beaten with another hand. The sound it produced is similar to the sounds of village school bells beating with a pause or intermittingly.

The Garos have different kinds of gongs or Rangs of various sizes and different names like *Rangkilding* which is a gong on a thread, *Rangbong* a fat gong, *Gaanti* which is a big bell and various types of cymbals like *Kakma*, *Nangilsi* is a two plates of brass. *Guri domik*, *Kamaljakmora*, all these are made out of iron, brass or bell metal.

**Chupcheng** or cymbals It is a metal structure with a circular shape. Its diameter is about 2 inch.

## III. Wind pipe instruments:

The Aerophones or wind instrument which produces tunes by the action of wind when blown by mouth. for example; flutes, whistle, trumpets and horns.

- a) **Adil** is made of buffalo's horn and it produces a rough sound, it is attached with a long bamboo mouth piece.
- b) **Singga** is also a buffalo's horn. It has no holes or keys. It produces a very loud sound. The *adil* and *Singa* serve the purpose of both flutes and trumpet.
- c) **Bangsi** or Flute There are three types of *Bangsi* of the Garos and these are made out of bamboo.
  - (i) *Bangsi* is a common pipe and it the slimmest instrument among the wind instruments.
  - (ii) *Bangsi mande* which three stops and a figure of *aman* is fixed on the top
  - (iii) *Bangsi rosi*
  - (iv) *Olongma* or *ilongma* is somewhat bigger in size
  - (v) *Illep* or *Illip* is more of a fiddle flute
  - (vi) *Akok* or *Dakok* is a big flute
  - (vii) *Otekra* of considerable length with two finger holes.
  - (viii) *Imbangi* is made of short piece of thin bamboo
  - (ix) *Tilara* or *Taragaku* with one stop at the centre.
- (d) **Sanai** is Made out of along guard fitted with a tiny bamboo piece, a quarter of an inch length in which a small slip of a miniature tongue. It has holes in which a small slip or tongue is cut downwards in the upper surface of the bamboo.
- (e) **Kal** is another type of Instrument known as the trumpet, it is made by joining tightly the bamboos of different sizes.

## IV. Chordophones: String Instruments:



The strings Instruments of the Garos are as follows:

- a) **Dotrong** It has six strings without frets .It is played by a bamboo or steel plectrum.The *Dotrong* is carved out of a solid wood which finally takes the shape of a boat with a long neck.The skin of a lizard is used to cover tightly between the main body and the neck.A deep wide hollow is carved out in two parts .the lower end is covered tightly with animal's hide .The string is tied to one end .It is played with a bow made of bamboo strip or vegetable fibres.
- b) **Chingringor Bagring** This Instrument is made of bamboo.It is played by beaten with two specially made thin sticks.This traditional bamboo stringed Instrument is used in the *Denmalua* ceremony. There is a square hole at the centre that produces the sound. It is played during the victory dance conducted with the muted sound of the Chingring.
- c) **Dimchrang or Kimjim** This Instrument is made of small fine measured bamboos of 29 inch by fastening 30 numbers of these small bamboos. It is played by placing the instrument on chest and played by the palm or according to the convenience of the player. It can also produce different keys or notes depending upon the thickness of the strings.The timing is kept by striking the back strings of the *Dimchrang* with the left hand.
- d) **Gongmima or Gongima** is a reed Instrument carved with thin slips of bamboo of 4 four inches long and half inch in width is made of bamboo and steel
- e) **Gonggna** is made of a thin slip of bamboo of about 4 inch long and half in width. The player holds it between his lips and pluck the other end which produce the tune ,it is difficult to describe to the instrument an accurate pitch .It is essentially a rhythmic instrument and it produces a twanging humming sound .

### 1.7.Classification Folk songs of the Meghalaya :

The following category are the folk songs of the Khasi ,Jaintia and Garo:

- a) Folk songs of the Khasis.
- b) Folk songs of the Jaintia
- c) Folk songs of the Garos

Folk songs travelled a great and different distances and live from one generation to the next,It is not taught, it come down from person to person or parents to children by words of mouth. Folk songs go off with the complete strangers like traders, peddlers who travel from place to place. Each singer shapes impulsely a song without really knowing he is changing it like a song .Folk songs unlike popular songs, are songs composed by men who make it a business for a living by making from a written note or sing songs. Folk songs is usually some sort of a story Folk songs can be made up by anyone unlike popular songs .Folk singers are not trained but ordinary working people who by impulsion create or sing a song to anyone who cares to listen to him and no one pays for the song, and after song has travelled around



no one knows who first composed it or bother to know the singer. Folk songs are immortal. Folk songs are simple structured, these songs can be also effectively performed without instrumental accompaniment and folk songs tend to be more popular when performed live rather than in recorded mode.

Good people always carry the impression that u Hynniew trep under the influence of evil spirit, committed sins resulting to man's withdrawal of allegiance to God to the extent that heaven and earth were severed, the sun shone no more and withdrew herself (Khasi feminine gender for the sun), to the (*Lamet Latang*) and darkness spread on earth. The Khasis, the Pnar and the Garos are great lovers of music, it is believed that Khasis are born with the music.

In the olden days many of the folk songs of Meghalaya are about admiring the nature and its beauty, work songs to stimulate stamina to farmers working in the field, ballads that tell the story of the past in the form of a song, Thanksgiving to God, The derivative of tragedy and sorrowful narrative of myths, legends and parables, '*Phawar*' a taunting couplets performed by folk minstrels on various social, cultural and religious occasions, etc. different in songs of course in their respective dialects. To keep the traditional integrity, folk music was imparted orally. It has its peculiar expression and emotions and has established a tradition of its own. The people chant prayers, sing devotional songs or render ultimate sound. In Khasi social life we have a number of festivals in which music plays an important role. In fact, every phase of our life passes through music.

We cannot deny the fact that touched the feelings of man are those that have a close relation with the heart. Perhaps the Khasis and Jaintias and the Garos have a close connection with God. The maker of heaven and earth perhaps they begin by prayers and chant a tune in search of God and then praise him. Since man begins to chant till today there has been many changes in the methods of composing the tune and the instrument used in accompaniment of the songs.

### 1.8 .Folk songs of the khasi:

It is remarkable The Khasis or the Khyntriams is one of the major indigenous tribes of Meghalaya. The *Khasis* resides in the central part of Meghalaya and it is distributed into the districts of The entire East Khasi hills, the Khasis have numerous folk songs with a characteristic rhythm of their own. These songs reflect the characteristics of the people. In the Khasi agglomeration of west, east, Jaintia and Bhoi only the dialects differ. The *Khasis* are hard working and after all hard work been done they would assemble and sing songs, chants with the accompaniment of '*ka Duitara*' and would recount stories of the past or counselling their children through rhymes and melodic couplet.

- a) Folk songs of the Khasis can be placed under several basic groups below:
- b) Songs on nature or '*Ki sur lum sur wah*'

- Story songs or ballads or '*Ki sur parom ka duitara ,marynthing bad maryngod* '
- Devotional and Thanksgiving songs or '*Ki sur ainguh ne sur iaroh ia u Trai nongbuh nongthaw* '
- Melancholy songs and pathetic song or '*Ki sur sngewsynei ne sur tymfang ne myllung* '
- Lamentation or Dirges or '*Ki sur iam briew ne sur pangnud* '
- Couplets or '*Ki sur phawar* . \*
- Lullaby or '*Ki sur kynoi thiah khun* '
- Work songs , Harvest songs or '*Ki sur trei ha lum ne ha lyngkha* '
- Love songs or Serenade or '*ki sur ba iadei bad ka jingieid* '
- Patriotic songs or '*Ki sur ieid Ri , ki sur rwai ia ki khlawait ka ri ne sur tymfang ne mgop* '(home sick )
- Dance music or '*Ki sur shad ka Ksing ka Tangmuri bad Duitara* ' U briew u shad haba u sngewbha lane haba u jopha kano kano ka jingialeh.

**(a) Songs on nature or '*Ki sur lum sur wah* 'Or *ki sur iaroh ia ki jingdon ha ka mariang*.**

One of the most significant musical composition is the admiration on nature because of its spectacular beauty and undulating topography. Songs on nature sings about the mountains the waterfalls the caves the river the flowers Songs.Hillsand valleys, rivers and ponds, waterfalls the sun the moon the stars and sacred forest and many other natural landscape.Even the rainfall and crystal clear the orchids the sweet sound of the birds and numerous items available with nature are being composed into folk songs .These types of songs potrays the realistic structure of the land and its environment . Instrument like '*besli* 'and other instrument can be use to match the rthymn.

Songs. (jingrwai)

***kshaid Nohsngithiang falls***

*Napdeng ki lum rymphai pha noh*  
 Gently from the mid hills thou falls  
*Kjat sngi bathiang ia pha ki doh*  
 Sweet rays of the sun kissing thee  
*Ko nongsngithiang ka ri Sohra*  
 Oh!NongsngithianOfSohra

*Baroh ki wan peit kai ia pha*  
 All come for sightseeing thee

(Khasi and English Version by Mr.G.nongbet)

**(b) Story songs or ballads or '*Ki sur parom ka Duitara ,Marynthing bad Maryngod* '**



*Ballads* are the legendary portrayal of epic and saga. Sometimes, these songs are sung or recited more like chant in a modulated tune and telling story to people around the hearth by an elderly person of enormous knowledge. Without these instruments a song will not touch or affect the listeners. The ballad story teller had to undergo a very heavy responsibility to collect the relevant stories of the time which later on he will render the stories ultimately. Sometimes, the story teller sing the 'ballads' for the entire silent night till dawn and subsequently moved to the next destination for further narration in ballads. The ballad or story songs are sung by an elderly people in the night sitting round the hearth or the fire place within the precinct of the house. 'Ballads' tells the story about what has happened in the past. Some particular instruments like 'Duitara' 'Marynthing' 'Maryngod' are considered suitable and relevant to such performances i.e 'Ballads'. Without any of these instruments a song or story will not touch or it will not affect the listeners. The story teller strum the string of *Duitara* and sings like this :

*Mynba dang lung te ka pyrthei*

When the earth was still young

*Mynba briew u dang jan n'u Blei*

And man was close to God \*

*Na jrong sha tbian u ia kiew ia hiar*

From above to earth ascended and descended

*Lyngba kata ka jingkieng ksia*

Through that golden ladder

(Khasi and English version by Mr. G. Nongbet)

Another story song is like this :

*Ha ki khanatang jong u khun Khasi*

In the legend of the Khasi

*U Klew te ki ong u leit ing ka sngi*

They narrated that the peacock went to the abode of the sun

*Sngewnguh ban pynpaw ban ai ka khublei*

To express gratitude and to thank her

*Ia jingshai jingsyaid ba la ai sha pyrthei*

For light and warmth bestowed upon the earth.

(Khasi and English version by Mr. G. Nongbet )

**(c) Devotional or Thanksgiving songs or 'Ki sur ainguh ne sur iaroh ia u Trai nongbuh nongthaw'**

These songs are always confined to religious ceremonies and performed by the Priest and Priestess. Devotional songs or *ki sur ainguh ne iaroh ia u Trai nongbuh nongthaw* also includes songs to thank the almighty for the good harvest and praising God as the great, the creator of everything that exists on earth. The chantings during sacrifices by the diviner will request for omen from God so that appeasement be made to God for the wrong doings committed. A Khasi believes in the maxim to know God to know man and that they are here on earth to earn righteousness, knowing reverence to first ancestress.

Song (jingrwai):

*Kynrad to pdiang ka nguh ka dem*

Lord accept our obeisance

*N'u khun bynriew da ka dohnud*

From our pure heart

*Tang ia me ngin mane lang \**

U Blei ba pynneh kawei ka jutang

(Khasi and English Version by Mr. Gloucester Nongbet)

**(d) Melancholy songs or 'ki sur tym pang ne sngewsynei'**

Songs that spontaneously comes out from a singer who experiences trials and tribulations and adversities of his life. *Ki Sur 'Tym pang'* is a Doleful song /couplets, it relates to pitiful or tragic and calamity which the singer experienced in his life time. These includes the loss of his dear ones and near ones. The *sur Tym pang* is usually accompanied by the wind instruments like *Ka Sharati*, *besli*, *Duitara* and a soft beating of drum, usually this kind of '*Sur Tym pang*' is sung. this song alludes to the bewailment a disobedient son.

(a) Song goes like this : \*

*A mei jong nga mynta phi la khlad*

Oh my loving mother since you are gone

*Nga iam pangnud, nga jaw ummat*

I tearfully wail and forlorn

*Ba ngan da ngeit jingsneng i mei*



Had i listen to your admonitions

*Ngan khuslai lei ha ka pyrthei*

I don't have to grieve in this situation.

(Khasi Version by (L) Mr.T.T.Mukhim)

(b) Songs:

*Ko jingjynjar ia ngabalei kumne*

OH my distress what ails you \*

You cling to me wholly

**(e) Lamentation songs or dirges or 'Ki sur iam briew ne sur pangnud'**

They are the derivative of tragedy and sorrowful narrative of myths, legends and parables. On most occasions it is the most remorseful expression of the mother over her disobedient children. Sometimes there are romantic tragedy that reflected the social situation, and some of these are being portrayed by creatures other than human being. The elements like the sun, the peacock, while on the other hand some constitute an animated story on romantic tragedy, while on other hand some birds with their particular physical features. Death of a partner and other detachment of the temporal with the spiritual beings narrated through sad songs and the legend of the stag 'Sierlapalang' is a popular lyrical epic.

*Wow la shet ka tieh pongdeng*

Oh! betraying bended bow

*Ia ka rynieng u kynrem reng*

That shared to quench my antlered's day

*Wow la kjit u nam sarang*

Oh! The blunt rusted arrow

*I'a ka mynsiem u Lapalang* \*

That suck'd Lapalang's breath away

*Ko Lapalang phrangsngi jong nga*

My Lapalang you shine so far

*Kumba tynshaing u Mangkara*

A blessed hope, a morning star

*Khlem sngap ki ktien sangsot i mei*

Unheed you passed my tander agonies.

*Men shem lanot ha ka pyrthei*

Thus fate has bade these agonies.

(English version by (L) u Oscar M. Wahlang)

The Khasis have a great respect to the dead body. Before taking the body, the friends cry and laments and even hire dirges. The dirges while crying recollect the deeds done by the deceased during his life time.

Song

#### (f) Couplets or 'Ki sur phawar :

The traditional custom of musical chants called 'Phawar' is a taunting couplets performed by folk minstrels on various social, cultural and religious occasions. 'Phawar' is a spontaneous exuberant chant of taunt and satire in a couplet form. Each minstrel take their turn in the initiation of the chant on random rotation based on the candid impression of character, behaviour, and the surroundings situation. 'Phawar' are poetic rhyming which are recited by an individual while the crowd responds with shouts of "Hoi kiw". They are characteristics of a Khasi culture and in them one can discover the thinking pattern, the manner of speech and the belief of the Khasis of old. There are two types of Phawar, viz ; Phawar niam (religious phawar or cultic phawar) and 'Phawarsngewbha' (festive Phawar). The former type of Phawar is sung at certain religious functions like marriage or funeral, while the latter are sung during non religious celebrations to create joy and provide entertainment. One important phenomenon about these Phawars, is that they all have to do something with nature and things of nature" - Dr. Barnes L. Mawrie SDB: The Khasis and their natural environment. page 77). The phawar chant is being performed primarily on leisure during the traditional archery game for merriment, traditional land sports, community programmes like traditional marriages when the uncles (u Kni) of the both couples exchanging greetings and pleasantries, Phawar also dominates in the election campaigns like during canvassing by the supporters of the candidates, and is also done after the candidates wins the election. However occasions other community feast like annual picnic or celebration of the Newyear of the villages. Cultural festivals also motivate the performers to participate in consonant with the respective



occasions as enumerated above. These traditions are gradually disconnected due to the influence of the convenience and the effective disposition of modern music with the enhancement of the technology, particularly so in the urban areas, however in the rural villages although they have the tendency to imitate the superficial culture and at times ignore their folk knowledge but the traditional instinct handed over by their forefathers is there struggling for revival which has produced promising results.

We can group the phawar as below:

*Phawar nguh pakha - Meikha*

*Phawar thep mawbah*

*Phawar 'sing lynghai*

*Phawar iasiat*

*Phawar ioh khiat*

*Phawar ioh dngiem*

*Phawar ring mawbynna*

a) **Phawar nguh Meikha – pakha-** A couplets to pay obeisance by children to paternal grandparents. This is done to secure God's blessing by paying homage to the paternal grandparents. In this type of phawar Khasi of old has a strong affinity to nature and beseech all types of natural objects, in the wild like birds, animal. These objects are not things to be worshipped, but the Khasi believes in communion with them. This express is sometimes with particular musical instruments like 'ka ksing ka bom' and along with the dance of the males and females, like this short couplets

Phawar :

*Hei masi ha lyngkha*

Hey !the cattles in the field

*Ki iabam jyntang kba*

Eating paddy stalks

*Nga te nga leit nguh Meikha*

I will pay obeisance to paternal aunty(meikha) ..

*Bad leit nguh pakha*

And to paternal pakha) an obeisance

Another song:

*Ko meikha balah bai ai*

Oh! My most paternal mother

*Jainkup ka jainbah dei nyngkong na phi meikha*

In the beginning the two wrappers clothes is you who gave

Khiew sum khiew ranei ban khiah krat khiah sting shisha

An earthen pot for bath is your desire for good health.

- (b) **Phawar thep mawbah ne Pepbah** The couplets / versify during a religious ceremony for interring bones of dead member of the 'Kur' (clan) in the 'Mawshyieng' (ossuary – a stone cairn of the clan). The following couplets/versify will explain the ceremonial activities:

*Ka langdikhur ba pah kur kur*

The pigeon that sing kur kur

*La hukum ka bilei, la hukum ka longkur*

As decreed by the gods and the guardian goddess of clan,

U niangtari halor u sohbroi

A melepede on top of date plum

*Ba ka kur ka jait kan nang roi*

So that the clan will prosper

- (c) **Phawar 'sing Lynghai** In a similar way as in 'phawar ainguh Meikha' – Pakha, elements of nature like animals birds, and their activities is beseeched, thus :

*Kapaitpurawsawdong, Ba shrut soh lapaiat*

*Nang peit jawdud u shrieh*

*Sohbroi ba la saw*

The bulbul red chest

Knowing at wild berries,

Enviously monkey stared,

At the ripe wild date-plum.

- (g) **The lullaby or 'Ki sur kynoi thiah khun:**

It is a common practise by mother of any young infant to put them to sleep. There are lullaby to frighten the babies by humming a warning lullaby like 'go to sleep the tiger is around and also a sober lullaby gajolling sleep close your eyes, the world is silent as everybody gone to sleep. These Lullaby are very soft and tender that comes out from the heart of a loving mother and usually hummed without any instruments.

Song : (Jingrwai)

*Thiah noh seh khun pyrthei ka la kynjah shisha*

Go to sleep baby silence has fallen



*Khapbrip noh ki khmat mynsiem kynrad jong nga*

Close your eyes my beloved

*Thiah thiah seh khun ioh wan u khla*

Sleep sleep the tiger in the den

**(h) Harvest and farmer songs or 'ki sur rep':**

The dance songs are musically delivery during the working season in the agricultural field and also the sowing season has its own songs sequence which are primarily to motivate the farmers and stimulate their stamina in their respective work along with an element of entertainment. The harvest dance has its own variety of song sequence pertaining to the field activities and the task outside the cultivation field till the produces are deposited at the barn. And while sowing the seeds or planting' small group of enthusiast at work impulsively sing to their cheerful spirits which reflects the typical rural simplicity and they would implore Gods blessings through songs. However there are contemporary creative composition described about the customary activities of agriculture, farming and traditional pastime.

Song (Jingrwai:)

*Ho ho ho ho ho ho*

*Mynba dang lung ka sngi u bnai*

when the sun and moon were still young

*Dang phriang jarut ka lukhimai*

When good fortune was abundant

*U khun khasi ha pneh mariang*

The Khasis on the lap of nature

*Baroh u im la rep la riang*

All live by cultivation

(Khasi and English version by Mr. G. Nongbet)

Another song goes like this :

*Ha lum bad ha lyngkha sngap ki ia risa*

In the paddy field farmers cheering

*Ia jingwan ka jong phi ki da ap sngewbha*

Welcoming your presence with joy

*Lyer lyer beh shajan ah to beh shajan*

Wind oh wind blow closer

*Pynher i'u stait nangne ,pynher noh bran bran*

Blow the husk away, fastly drive the husk

(Khasi version by Mr.C.Khongwir)

**(i) Love songs or *ki sur rwai jingieid***

They comprises of a variety of emotional expressions of love. Even as pleasure is found in majority of the songs, however there are elements of thrill, humour and dramatic expressions. This category of love song also includes Serenade—a song by a lover dedicate to his girl friend. In the olden days young boys in the villages used to visit to the house of a potential beauty and taking along with them the instrument to woo the girl by taking part in song turn by turn. The girl will listen with attention to the song and best singer eventually falls for the best wooer.

**(a) 'Sur jingieid kmie / kpa Song 'dedicated to parents:**

*Ko mei bad Pa baieid*

oh my beloved mother father

*Daei ia phi ngan siew kylliang*

How can I repay you

*ki jingeh jingjynjaphi mad namar jong nga*  
of trials and tribulation you encounter

*Haduh ba ngan da long briew shisha*  
Till I attain my affluent wellbeing

**'Sur jingieid khun' Song dedicate to the children:**

*To sngap ka khun jingsneng i mei i pa*

Hark ,my children, listen to the counselling of your mother father

*To kynshew ka spah ha pyrthei*  
Amass the spiritual wealth in this world

*Da burom te ia i mei i pa*  
Revere and honour your mother and father

*Ha pyrthei ba phin dup man bha*  
You will prosper in this world.



Song (Jingrwai)

*Tang jingkynmaw bathiang kin sah,*  
Sweet remembrance will remain

*Ia phi ban klet kumno ngan lah .*  
To forget you how could

*Ummat na nga bunsien kin jaw*  
Tears from me often falls

*Ha phi ia phi nga iai kynmaw.*  
When I remember you

(Khasi and English version by Mr. G. Nongbet)

Another song (dedicate to a lover)

*Baieid wat ju jngai na nga*  
Darling don't go far from me

*Tang ha phi jingim nga aiti shisha*  
To you i surrender my life

*Daleilei nga ngeit phin nym iehnoh ia nga*  
I firmly believe you will not leave me

*Tang bad phi ngan iai im baroh shirta.*  
Only with you forever I shall abide.

**(j) The patriotic song or 'ki Sur ieid Ri':**

This is patriot song prevalent in the country which are usually the literal narrative of historical events, where the heroic deeds of chiefs and warriors are involved in the struggle from invasion by foreign powers. Another elements of patriotic songs are the love and respect of fellowmen and the appreciation of the land, the culture and the customs and tradition that are unique and relevant with the heroic deeds of the braves in defending the mother land.

Love for the country is express in song like this :

*Ri kyntang , Ri jong ki Blei*  
*Kum pha ngan shem ha ei*

*Naduh basdang ia pha la mang*  
*Ka jingsuk jingkmien kyrhai kin shlei,*

Oh my sacred ,country of the Gods  
 where in this universe I will find  
 From the beginning you are predesigned  
 That peace ,rejoicing dominates  
 (Khasi version by (L) Bevan .L . Swer)

Another patriotic Song (Jingrwai ) :  
*To ngin kynmaw ko khun ka ri.*  
 Oh!children of our country let us remember

*Naduh Rongdi haduh Kupli( two rivers of Meghalaya)*  
 From Rongdi to Kupli

*Shipara ho kawei ngi long*  
 We are one like brothers and sisters

*La ngi ia pher ka jait ka khong*  
 Though we differ in clan

*Nam Tirot Sing bad kiang nangbah*  
 Fame of U Tirot Singhand Kiang Nangbah

*Shi rta ha ngi junom kin sah* \*  
 forever with us it will stay.

(Khasi and English version by Mr. G. Nongbet)

### 1.9.Folk songs of the Jaintias:

*Jaintia*, the *Pnar*, the *Synteng* is the cognate term of *Jaintias* in Meghalaya . During theatrical nights or *Lahoodance* ,the *Jaintias* after coming from the fields they use to organise events in different types of seasons.The *Jaintias* according to reliable knowledge, in olden days there are only two folk songs i.e *Niaw laho* and *Pyntho laho* .The *Jaintia* people



Like any other tribe in the north east are particularly fond of songs praising the nature like lakes, waterfalls, hills etc and also extolling love for their land. Different types of musical instruments like drum, duitara, and instruments similar to guitar, flutes, pipes and cymbals are used. As a matter of fact the Khasi and Jaintia folk songs are similar in nature.

**Some of the folk songs of the Jaintias are:**

Lullaby or *ki sur kyrhu khon*

Patriotic songs or *ki sur maia ri*

Love songs or *ki sur kyntien maia*

Harvest or work song or *ki sur kreh sur khih*.

Couplets or *Phawar*

Ballads or *ki sur khana parom*

Devotional or *ki sur nguh sur dem Blai* The Jaintia chants this following folk song in olden days by both boys and girls with provoking couplets and inturn a tit for tat replies eg :

Jaintia and English:

Male (Chynrang): *Ilehphahaduhkatni?* Whats wrong with you?

*Ki Khynroo waroh da iuh*, - And you strange face

*Me wan cha nga i wa khut*- The young boys run away,

*Wei dur pho kammon tae hi*- Useless are the glamorous dresses

Female(kynthai): *I man i long iong nga da-hi*;

Male(Chynrang): That is my look up;

*I leh cha me wa ioo awri*, - Why you unnecessary bothering,

*Ong mi ki khynroo waroh da iut*; - you said ,young boys run away;

*Me wan cha i wa khut*.- you come to me who call you.

(Jaintia version Wh. (Tynraw de) Phrenet Kyndiah –Iongpiah)

*Huh ahuh, ahuh*,

*Huh, ahuh, ahuh*,

*Huh, ahuh, ahuh, ahuh*,

*Ahuh, ahuh, ahuh ahuh*

(It is difficult to literally translate the above recitation as the originality will be misleading )

The above recitation of *Huh ahuh ahuh* was simultaneously and impulsively recited freely in the olden days by the Jaintia at any occasions.

- a) **Lullaby or ki sur kyrhu khon:** It is a universal practise by any mother of any young infant to put them to sleep..By singing a lullaby in different moods of the baby either cajoling or feign a frightening song.eg of Jaintia lullaby is as follow:

*Bea bea ,ka heh wa lam lian,*

*Dep wow khyllod ileh wei wym sarom*

*Slein slein mot dei kattu, . \**

*Dadep sang – eh,daw Ioo ki bru.*

*Slein slein dei kattu*

*Da sarom sang – eh daw ioo ki bru;*

*Bea bea paia ka heh wa iam*

*Oh!my my peverish cry*

*young you are going to be don't you feel ashame,*

*Stop oh! Stop crying now*

*Oh !my,dear me,look people are watching.*

*Easy easy, now thats it*

*Feeling shy people are watching,*

*Oh!my my peverish cry* \*

(Composed by Kennet Lakhon Laloo (Ka thup ki sur chad rwa –U Wh.Wansalan.E.Dhar)

- c) **Patriotic songs or ki sur maia ri**

*U chong ha pyrthai,u chong ha mynder*

*Hajrong ka bei ramaw,jaitbru wapher*

*Kawa kyndup ,wakhat wakdung*

*Wari walum,waheh walung.*

We live in this world as strangers

Upon the mother earth of different castes and clan

That accepts receives and embraces \*

That accumulates elders and infants

(Jaintia version by Wansalan E.Dhar –Iongpiah)

Another song:

*Ri Jaintia ka ri waem nam:*

Oh, Jaintia the famous country:



*Ka ri waem da'u pood u sam,*  
The country with fences and borders

*Thaw uin s'wariwa ioo bang ioo thiang:*  
The attractive beautiful landscape

*Ia pha wow sah i kynmookyndiang.*  
Will always cherish you  
(Jaintia version by Ki shlem ki sur tynre ,Shangpung)

**C) Love songs or ki sur kyntien maia:**

m . s / m . m . m : . r / m : . s / m . r : d . d . d / d  
*Ha shitein u riat phoo phoo, Latuthiñ wa mar tyrha*  
r . m / r . r : - . l / d : . d / r . d : d / -  
*Her i mynsiem*  
s : m . s / d' . , d' : d' . d' / d' : d' . r' / t . , t : t . l / s  
*Kat wa dang shit ka sngi ha pha, pha kyntea dang tyrha*  
m . s / t . t : - . s , / l . d' : . s / s : -  
*Alea alea syndoi chirrup wa nga*  
S : m . s / d' : s , , s / l . s : m / s . s : m . r / d  
*Pynhun yei mynsem o i wa emhei ni*  
r . m / r . r : - . l , / d . , / r . d / d : -  
*Ham ieh ia nga sa men hoi yoo luti*

Oh ! Rhododendron you cling to a cliff  
My loving heart is after you  
The sun kisses you and brightened the colour  
Come come together with me  
Don't leave me alone ,am longing for you.  
(Jaintia version unknown)

**d) Work songs or ki sur kreh sur khih:**

m / d . d : d . d / r : m . m / d . d : d . d : r .  
*Ka sngi wa tang on bha nga sa men wa lur lyng kha*

In the heat of the sun, alone in the field ploughing.

s / l . s : l . s / s : l . s / s . r : m . r . r : --

*Ki sim wa pah wa par wei masi nga kdoh yu war*

The birds are singing and plough mounted on the cow

m / d . d . d . d / r : m . m / d . d : d . d / r : --

*Tein tein hei tng am hei thliaw, pynjur oh di rwai di siaw*

Sometimes In loneliness i enhanced with songs

s / l . s : l s / m , r d : m , d - , : l : t , d / r . d : d

*Ingiah i khan da wiar men du reih o ha shyng kiar*

Being exhausted i rested on the shade of trees.

(Jaintia version and notation by Syrpai Dkhar)

#### (e) Couplets or ki sur Phawar:

Couplets or *kisur phawar* of the *Jaintias* are always in four or six lines, The tune , the style and the meddling differs from that of the *Khasis* couplets.

r : d . d / r : d . d /

*Sla lamet latang*

*High ranking people and common people*

r : d . r / m . r : d / - :-

*pdiah syngki u dom*

A very lazy man

s : m . r / m . s : m , r / m

*Khana pho mo , yutang pho mo*

You cannot hide anyhow

r . d . d / r . r : d / - :-

*kynniah u wi ha loom .*

one day you have to confess who is that man.

(Jaintia version unknown)

#### (f) Ballads:

Ha me woh kiang Nangbah –

To you great father Kiang Nangbah

Wa e me la ingim –



*Sacrificed your life*

Ka ri wa ioh u im u sah –

Freedom of the country sustain

Waw lait na ram na tim. –

bereft from tains and taunts.

**Devotional or *ki sur nguh sur dem Blai*:**

*Na shwa nalap nyngkong ki sngi;*

*Chi tyllup pyrthai dadep booh mi,*

*I bor mynsiem iong me tre kynrad;*

*I waim ianom ,I wym jooh iap*

In the olden times from the beginning

In this earth you have bestowed

The power of your spirit oh Lord

It lives ,and never dies.

*(Jaintia version by Tingboy Thma ,Panaliar)*

**Folk song of the Garos:**

The Garos or Achick literally means the *hill people*. The word A– chic community is basically an oral community . This oral tradition ia a vehicle for passing on historical accounts, other during festivals and other gatherings.They comprise of a large number of songs most of their folk songs depicts ordinary Garo life,God’s blessings ,beauty of nature ,day to day struggles, romance and human aspirations .The Garos generally sing folk songs relating to birth,marriages ,festivals .love and heroic deedsaccompanied by drums and flutes.Different types of instruments like drums and othersare played at the time of singing.The Garos have group song called Ku-dare sala ,Hoa ring-a, *Ajea ,Doroa ,Nanggorere guserang* and many others but the popular folk songs of the Garos are (a)Dim dim *Dimchong Dadichong* and *Nanggore re goserong*. The young folks during the ritual of Chachat soa (burning of incense )they would sit around the fire and sing songs related to Wangala like *ajea,Danidoka ,Kurama sala ,ohomai,Kore doka ,Doro agana ,gosai ringa* etc.

**Folk songs of the Garos includes many categories of songs;**

Invocational incantation or *Mite tata*.

Social activities and festives songs or *Amua or Krita*.

Lullabies or *mumua*

Ballads or *Katta agana*

Dirges or *Grap mangtata*

**1. Invocational incantation or Mite tata** This type of folk song are connected with jhum cultivation. They are monotonous and utterances chants. There are eight agricultural rotations. The first rotation was to choose the field and to clear the jungle and incantation to drive away during the unclean spirits and diseases and during this first rotation they use to sing the incantation and also when they burnt the jhum they use another incantation calling the mother of hill paddy asking her for a good harvest.

The second followed by broadcasting of various seeds at the same time regular supply of crops is obtained in groups. They have a special ceremony during this period of growth, prayer is held for good growth of crops. At this juncture the Priest grab a handful of earth from the field and while rounding the land he curses and put the earth inside the basket with the lid and finally expelled all the curses and diseases have been locked, after which is follow by a chant imploring that the crops should be protected from diseases and praise for lush and green and healthy growth.

The third rotation is when the crops are in safe growth and it is the time for harvesting, but never eaten but offer to *Misi saljong*. This ceremony is called *Rongchu Gala or Ginde Gala* which is a thanksgiving for the first fruit to *Misi Saljong*, the God who first taught man the technique of cultivation and who gave the first rice seed (*mi bichri*) which is handed down from generation to generation. When they start sowing the seeds and they celebrate this as a great feast with singing accompanied by gongs only.

In the fourth stage or rotation a ceremony is held known as *Ja.megapa or migap ra.rona*. Chanting is as follows:

*"Angna sualgipa, Angna patigipa*

*Salonakengjok, ra.onangnakengjok.*

*Gal.a.jrignok, gal.paksamaignok.*

*Angade janggil itnakengjok,*

*Daode songdongrikaibojok*

My generous one! Am carrying away

The crops you gave to me

I shall abandone the land to fallow.

So that natural growth may come again,

And the used land may come back to life

This land is yours.



When the bundles of paddy have been brought children will follow the carrier and shouts *Ahhoea, Ahhoea*.

The fifth and the final rotation is the mother of the festivals (*Wangala*) which is a Thanksgiving to mother of paddy (*Minimaa kiri rokime*) and *misi saljong* (God of food crops) at a particular ceremony known as "*Kumanchi wal.dukaa*" which means a meeting to reach an agreement between God and man to the effect that to request God to return to the next rotations.

2. Social activities and festives songs or *Amua or Krita*. This types of folk song is sung at anytime and every situation. In this category we find mellow tunes that indicates the moods of the people. This is the song they normally sings:

*Nangorere goserong*

It is so, oh yes it is so!

*O.e nanggo goserong!*

It is truly so!

*Pante : A.baoni jalikko, maina minchichotata,*

Boy: why do you allow the chilly in the jhum field to over ripe?

*Metra : Me gong baljok an.sengjok, a.rak sokjok an.sengjok.*

Girl : Me gong has blossomed, dry season has come and brought cheer,

*Chame nang.ko nikoa, aiao ka.a tim.timjok.*

The moment i beheld you darling, my heart began to flutter.

*Doraa or dorora.a* This type of music can be adapted for any occasions and situations .It can be perform as a solo and a duet. The duet form is a very interesting competition which adds beauty to music. In this case the singer sings extemporaneously, if by chance the singer loose the lyrics the other singer picks up and continue with the song narrating the whole structure without breaking the link .Evening is the suitable time to perform this type of music .Below is the illustration of this type of song:

*Dore seko til.eka, Bengbul ja.chok rokreka,*

*Dore sko chota, Bengbul ja.chok be.a,*

*Mite bi.sarara, Katchi angderara,*

*I.na gesebaongana, I.na dokgrikbaongana.*

Dore was unfaithful to her husband Bengbul.

The feet of fretting with fear ,

Dore was severed off

Bengbul 's leg was snapped.

*Ajea* This song can be perform in a repeated manner by males or females usually lovers or group of men and women in a competitive atmosphere. Below are two forms of songs:

Male : what are you doing so late ,the sun is about to set, why do you have a lover little sister

Female: feeding the pigs and chicks that is why I am late.

Male : Do you understand my feeling for you. I help you carving the pigs trough, please tell and do not let the old lady come to rebuke .

Female : what family and what clan do you belong and what is your name please tell me.

*Ahaoea* This type of folk song is a harvest song perform during the *Ja. megappa* season when paddy from the field is brought to the ganary ,it is also sung during merrymaking.

*Dani Doka* In this type of folk song only the elderly women takes part. A lead singer sings the verse while others join in the chorus saying '*Ho-anga dania* 'or '*Hai-anga dania*' this is perform in the *Nokma*'s place and crowds moves in the courtyard .where dance and feast begins and it lasts for three days.

*Song goes like this:*

*Oh anga radaa*

*Oe anga dania*

*Bima pe.e nina*

*Slon taru rak, uja*

*Amako maneko*

*Ambiko pilteko*

Am playing the Rada.

Also am singing the dania.

To drive away the fever.

of the newborn child

You are sitting on a smooth boat.

Please prepare some bamboo curry today

2) Lullabies *or mumua*. It is a common practise by mother a brother or sister of any young infant to put them to sleep . here is a song ;

*Ranggirani takraka, oe-o*

*Awa angjong teraka, oe-o*

*Chamil gongdang mesenga, oe-o*

*Deba gnang seenga, oe-o (3)*

The yam of Rangira hills

My little brother there is something sweet



Go to sleep my dear plumpy little sister.  
 As i lullaby and rock you my cuty  
 The sourness of Pamelo fruits  
*So a smell of wetness from my little brother*

**4. Ballads or Katta agana.** Ballads are the legendary portrayal of epic and saga .Sometimes these songs are sung or recited more like chant and telling story to people around the hearth by an elderly person of enormous knowledge . The narration is done by the *Katta agangipa* (native poet cum minstrel). This takes place in the night. The *Katta agangipa* narrates about the past .

### 5. Dirges or *Grap mangtata*

During the *Mangona* ceremony (post funeral ceremony ) of the *Atongs, Rugas, Chiboks, Duals, and Matchis* .this is performed when bidding farewell to the departed soul that goes along with prayers for the departed soul to reach their goals without mishap. when all the formalities or religious ceremonies and rites are performed They spend the evening by singing songs relating to this occasion. The older women always sing the Dirges.

*Kabe* is a song of mourning by someone who is heart broken by the passing away of a loved one They sing .The Garos sing *Kabe* to mourn the dead .The singing of *Kabe* is a continuous process , where singer or singers recall the life and deed of the dear departed deceased or loved ones., in the process unravelling the life of the deceased to the hearers .

**The mourning for the dead involves :**

- a) Dirges sung over the dead body of a man at a time when his female relatives approach the house
- b) Lamentation this is sung by the mother , sister and other female relatives of the dead .

**A dirges :**

*Aiha Nangni ba rima ino donga*  
*Kuraganboda nang .mana*  
*Aiha Gana bipake neng. gipani re. baengode*  
*Depante Ku. aganboda*  
 Aiha your siblings are here  
 Open your mouth and hand say something to your mother  
 Aiha when the one who went  
 Through travails to bring you forth has come  
 Open your mouth, son of the house .

(c) *Mangma chu kano kabe ringani* - This is sung when the dead is given a bath by his female relatives with undiluted rice – beer and is offered the same drink for the last time.



(d) This is a dirges when the *tokkari* is split, when the father of the house dies, a receptacle made of bamboo, known as *tokkari*, is placed towards the head of the corpse. A sword and a frond of a variety of cane known as *so .ka* is placed in it. The *tokkari* is split and the string where the dead one used to hang his clothes is snapped with a sword to show that the one who used the sword and the clothes line is not with them anymore and a dirges is sung at this time.

(e) Dirges sung when the dead is taken outside for cremation.

(f) Dirges sung at the time when the bones embodying the spirit of the dead are carried into the house etc.

(h) *Kalee or Mangtatais* a funeral dirges where chanting continues the whole night along with the dance.

The collations with Meghalaya instruments with the borders

There is a correlation and similarities of Khasi with other Jaintia and Garo instruments

#### 1.11. Conclusion:

To wrap up this research work as given in the beginning of this research, 'The Trends and Theme of Folk Arts of Meghalaya' is suffice to say, that the rising trend and popularity of folk songs, during the three decades. We may call it a "renaissance of folk arts of music". This is evident from the various occasions showcasing in spectacular performances of talents, and the genuity of which has enthralled the foreign and home crowd specially in the recently concluded, *terra madre*, and the monolith festival held at Mawphlang village of Hima Mawphlang Lyngdohship, East Khasi hills district.

The presence of various NGOs, for instance the HTCWO, Wahkhenin the making and designing of musical instruments, and imparting the art of folk songs is worth praise worthy. The encouragement of the seven zonal cultural centres, Ministry of culture, Govt of India and the department of Arts and culture, Govt of Meghalaya, and eminent expounded in this field, have exalted this primitive art form to a great modern height which is viable and sustaining art form which will never be erased.

It is heartening to witness that appropriates rich costumes, jewelleryes, adornments, bedecks by stars studied artistes during performances. The art form is amply encouraged by the technique media, Doordarshan, the artistes are always ready to perform on stage, pandals, and other designated places in the country. It is a universal fact, that God in his infinite love has generously bestowed upon men, the talent, the instinct, to appreciate these art forms, and definitely he will not choose to allow these art forms to vanish. In fact, grow with invigorating atmosphere. We can draw a conclusion to the Latin maxim to this claim which aptly says "*Vita brevis, ars longa*" - "life is short but art is long".



## Chapter II

**Folk dances of Meghalaya****2.0. Introduction:**

Meghalaya is the home of Music and dances. Dances that has developed without a choreographer and that reflect the traditional life of the people of a certain region or country. Folk dance is the name given to a dance that has originated with the people of a certain locality. Folk dances of Meghalaya are very complex dances with spontaneous movements. Dances of the Meghalaya tribes are social, religious, agriculture, funeral and mostly recreational. These dances are performed during the celebration in the villages and regions. Meghalaya has variety of folk dances. Its dance forms an integral part of the culture in Meghalaya. Almost in every celebrations in Meghalaya there is the involvement of dance and music. There are religious dance (Shad Niam) and festive dances (Shad Sngewbha).

The course of history in the rugged terrain of Meghalaya has given rise to the emergence of diverse dance forms from various region with variety of beats and rhythm, costumes, purposes and most of the dances are interrelated with ceremonies. The recreational dances are always held during the spring season and others are held according to necessity of the causes. The three major tribes of Meghalaya have distinct costumes and jewellery of gold and silver.

The dances performed on occasions of festivals observed in Meghalaya are explained on the ongoing paragraph

**Origin of festival and dance:**

The inception of dance is traced to the myth of the dance of all creatures called the 'Shad Ki Laiphewmrud' literally the 'dance of the thirty animals'. In this dance festival, even the supernatural beings like the sun, the thunder are part of the dance festival. Khasi festivals and dances was conceived from immemorial. In this legend of *Krem Lamet Latang* this fact is confused. It is said that the *Lakriah* a mediatrix between God and man, in order to please God, they should perform on a fixed day and asked all creatures throughout the night. It so happened that the sun and the moon who were brother and sister also dance which is considered a taboo, and the crowd that gathered there everybody laughed at their expenses and ultimately the sun went to hide at the cave (*krem lamet latang*) and put the world in total darkness. Seeing that *u Lakriah* summoned the Dorbar how to bring back the sun. Everybody and all the animals kingdom tried to persuade the sun to come back to no avail. Someone noticed that the cock known as *lymboit lymbiang* (naked) was absent. *Lakriah* summoned the cock to the *Dorbar* who explain that he could not come as he is naked, and he was immediately provided with dresses and went to search for the sun. Finally he could convinced the sun to reappear and promised to taht no one would abuse her in anyway. In this way it was agreed that the sun would reappear only when he grows thrice. It may be presumes that the dances and festivals resumes of this outcome, resulting in mushrooming of various types of dances which we experience in these days.



## 2.1. The Traditional dance costumes and ornaments of Meghalaya in festivals

There is specific costume for each dance in every festivals in Meghalaya.

1. Dance costumes and ornaments of the Khasis
2. Dance costumes and ornaments of the Jaintias
3. Dance costumes and ornaments of the Garos
4. Dance costumes and ornaments of the Bhois
5. Dance ornaments of the Lyngngams

### 1. Dance costumes and ornaments of the Khasis:

About the costumes and ornaments of the Khasis the pertinent question is, how the Khasi costumes comes into being. The fact is a obscure, but on serious and determination inquest of knowledge, fraction of fact extracted from the writings in 1902 as follows: "Some said that the dancing costumes of the Khasi emerges from the cremation ceremony (Shad Niam Thang-iap) but ostensibly we can infer that the costumes originated from the costumes of the fighters in olden times. There are arrows, quiver, shield and the Sword". Further more, "In this modern age where there is no more Khasi fighters, the dances has become improper as it used to be. Nevertheless, it is a massive wealth for us Khasi Nation (Khasi- Khara) and to pursue in order to preserve for the future the legacy bestowed upon us by our forefathers; because it is by this, a cultural wealth that it can be revive for us who are living in this era that has progressed rapidly, to preserve the customs and usages" (Ka Riam Shad Khasi- by (uba Tip Pateng -1902) Dienjat jong ki Longshwa-J. Bacchiarello SDB-page 50) The Colourful dance attire of the Khasis are of silver and gold. The Khasi have many festivals and dances with their own distinctive dancing costumes and ornaments of silver and gold. The dancers of Khasi and Jaintia do not use footwear while dancing.

#### The Male Dance costumes:

- a) **Ka Jainspong** - This is a turban made of pure silk.
- b) **U Thuia** - This is a plume made from feather of a cock or preferably from the black tail feather of a bird Rynniaw (Racket tailed Drongo) attached to a turban which symbolised the honour, prestige and position of our Khasi males. The length of Thuia from the base of the turban which projects above the turban is about 18 inches long.
- c) **ka Jainboh** - A piece of silk cloth worn around the waist similar to Indian dhoti.
- d) **ka Soptipoh lieh** - A long sleeves shirt of white colour.
- e) **Ka Jymphong** - This is a waist coat decorated with embroidery designs.
- f) **Jainteh syngkai** - A yellow cloth tied by male dancers across the waist.

#### The Male Dance Ornaments:

- a) **Siar shynrang** - The male gold earring known as '*siar shrong*' meaning carved gold or ka '*siar sngab*' meaning gill-shaped gold and ordinary earring '*siar shynrang*'. Male dancers they wear this earrings at the time of dance.



b) **Shanryndang**-Shanryndang kshar literally means a neck resting ornament. It requires about three to five tolas of gold to make it.

c) **U kynjri tabah**- Literally means a shoulder throw silver chains. This is a bunch of silver chains with eight rows to beautify and enhance the dancer. The silver chain has nodular links made in any form or shade, but details should be uniform. The four rows of this ornament on both sides are fastened to four rings attached to silver clasp with uniform square form or four sides on other surface, flowery designs are engraved with red jewels, pink coral studded.

d) **Kynjri syngkai**- This is a silver chain worn around the waist having four rows of chains which comprise of the nodular links made of one uniform, the size and the shape which interlink each other. The four rows of chains ultimately link to four rings which are fixed to a clasp which include on the naval of the front part. This waist clasp has a rectangular shape which on the utter surface adorned the flowery or geometrical designs studded with pink or red coral stones. The clasp has been designed with a device that it can be open or close by inserting silver pins through the two holes. This is a decorative silver waist belt with four rows of chains adorned in the waistband cloth. This ornament is decorated with flowery designs studded with red pink corals.

e) **Ka Ryngkap** - This is a quiver with three arrows. This is made from pure silver of 40 -50 tolas of pure silver. The first arrow stands for self defence. The second for defence of clan and third for defence of his land. It bottom attached with the tail from the bird of *U Sim Rynniaw* (Racket-tailed Drongo)

f) **U Kpieng paila**- A profusion of gold and coral bead necklaces worn by both male and female dancers and often during festivals. It is also worn by different people or the royal clans, myntries, Lyngdoh (Local rulers). It is made by threading the coral that rest on the red velvet cloth, intertwined by appropriate size with golden beads.

g) **U Symphiah** (whisk)- This is a whisk made from white hair of yak's tail. It is used during dancing by the males. During the Shad Symphiah the males hold the whisk on the right hand and during the Mastieh dance the males hold the whisk on their left hand while they hold the sword on the right hand.

h) **Ka Waitlam (Sword)**- The Khasi male dancers sword is about 45 inches length. The base has 8 inches space for holding the sword and a portion 10 inches occupy towards the pointed portion which is blunt having two iron projection on both sides. The end of it to the sword is about 20 inches long and the outer space of this aspect is sharp. The sword is used in dancing by male dancers to the beat of drum *ksing lynti* or *ksing Mastieh*. This sword is held on the right hand side and whisk on the left side.

#### **The Khasi female dance costumes:**

- a) **Ka jaiñpein or a wrap around**- A single piece of cloth worn from the waist downwards upto ankle
- c) **Sopti kti mukmor** - A long sleeve velvet blouse of any colour wear by female dancers.
- d) **Jainsem poh**- It is a piece of cloth of any colour worn below the yellow dhara.
- e) **Ka Dhara**- It is a yellow colour rich silk clothes fastened on the left shoulder with pin and reach below the knee. This is worn by the girl dancers during the dance.



### Female Ornaments:

1. **Ka pangiat:** The silver crown or silver head gear worn by females during the dance. The crown is circular in shape say 2 inches in diameter with intricate designs which differ from one crown to another. A special device is made on the back inside of the crown to enable the dancer (*Pandanus odoratissimus*) to rest. This is the only majestic ornament worn during dance. It is seen that in the annual *Shad Nongkrem* annual religious festival of the *Hima* *Sharia*, the royal maidens adorned in full gold crown. The long ropes or tassels of silver called *saikhyllong* (string to fastened the hair knot) that hangs at the back side of the crown.
2. **Ka Sotshkor ksiar kynthei** – ‘Siar Kynthei or ‘siar kang are golden earrings of the female dancers which differs from that of male dancers. These types of ornaments is not used by all dancers. The fact is that this type of ornament cannot be worn from day to day. However, the ornament shows a craftsmanship in design. The inner part of earlobe has the shape of a fan while the other part is bigger with three droppings which is known as *Iop Iop*. This earring has also component like ‘Langkyrneng’, a wild flower and also shape of *sohkhia khnai* (*Bryonia* *alba*).
3. **U Kynjri Tabah** – *Kynjri Tabah* literally means ‘shoulder throw’ or ‘hang across the shoulder’. This is a chain made from pure silver worn by female dancers. This silvery ornament has four rows of chains fixed to a clasp of 42 inches and ending in a clasp of 2 inches and half inch which falls on the back below the neck of the dancers. The nodular forms of chains interlink with one another these are fastened to a clasp in four separate hooks on two sides of the clasp. The clasp is flat and has ornamental design on it decorated with pink or coral or geometrical designs.
4. **Ka Ksangkti Rupa** – This **Ksangkti Rupa** or in English means silver biceps or silver armlet. Popularly it can be made from silver or gold. It has a circular form as per requirements of size. In the outer part the design is conical in shape resembling a Khasi pine fruit. Other portion of this ornament may be decorated with cement lines or coral stones. This ornament also has a facility to open or close as in the case of Mahu.
5. **Mahu- Rupa** – literally means Silver fore- wristlets. This fore wristlets has a circular shape and towards the end its upper part is broader and narrow towards the wrist. It requires about 10 tolas of silver to make it. The design in the upper surface may be different although forms and shapes is uniform in conical designs and geometrical forms. It has a device to close or open by silver pin.
6. **Khadu syngkha** – This is a bracelet made from pure gold.
7. **Ki kynjri ksiar** – These are golden chains
8. **Saikhyllong** – A silver strand made of 20 (twenty) inches length from its silvery ring ending at the silver triangular clasp at the back of the dancers knot of hair. On the triangular clasp lines are decorated with coral or other stones. The lowest part of the clasp three silvery strands



with intervening spaces are affixed. The rest are the intricate designs with bell shaped forms. This silver strands go in lines with the drooping hairs.

## 2. Dance costumes and ornaments of the Jaintias:

### Female costumes:

- a) **Jainpein/ ryndia/ khyrwang** - This is a wrapped around from the waist till the ankle. It is a striped cloth mostly in black and white which is locally made.
- b) **Jainsem muka** - This is a piece of cloth wearing on top of the khyrwang, it is of muga with a with two red stripes at the bottom border.
- c) **Sopti blouse mukmor** - A velvet of any colour preferable maroon and red colour.
- d) **Thoh saru** - An Eri cloth wrapper of black and white square symmetrical designs.

### Female ornaments:

- a) Golden necklace
- b) Kanapad.
- c) Kynjri ksiar
- e) Pansngiat
- f) Khadu ksiar

### The Male costumes:

- a) **Jaiñboh** - a red or maroon cloth of silk wearing from the waist downwards like a lungi
- b) **Tupia iong** - A black skull cap
- c) **Soptipoh lieh** - white long sleeve shirt
- d) **Putoi iong** - black waistcoat
- e) **Jaiñ spong lieh** - a white turban

f) **Kynjri rupa** - A silver chain

g) **gkpieng paila** - Red and gold beads necklace.

## 2. The Folk /Traditional Dance costumes and ornaments of the Garo:

### Female costumes:

- a) **Ganna dakmandaa** piece of wrapper worn on the waist upto the ankle which is engraved with embroidery designs.
- b) **Ganna kore kinga** petticoat
- c) **Chinania** special shawl with beads design
- d) **Chroko ganna**
- e) **Dadok**
- f) **Pilne** This is a headgear worn by women specially worn by the Nokma's wife during some ceremonies

### The Ornaments The Garos has varieties of traditional ornaments

- a) **Ripok do'katchi**- It is a necklace made of small white beads of corals, the lower part is fixed with many small stones like red dark blue green and pale white arranged in a column worn from the neck. It is worn by both men and women during dances and other festivity occasions.
- b) **Shisha** – This piece of necklace made from bone or horn of animals with six clusters of elongated and flat chips decorated with bright looking pebbles with end in a small copper disc designed with pendicular lines, small circles. These pebbles like was bracketed the chips of element like zinc and glasses.
- c) **Seng'kilt** is made of grains a white bead tightly fixed o running into its entire length followed by fourteen rows and each row with plenty of beads. A thick black cloth attached to two borders with one row of a same patch running length wise in its centre. These rows are so placed that they run in a parallel direction to the beads lined up in an ornament, the ends of the cloth open into small bands made with twisted thread. It is worn as a waist band the length of about half ft and a width of a quater. It is worn during the dance only.
- d) **Sukki** -This is a necklace made of silver coins. The silver coins are those coins issued during the reign of the British ruke in India.
- e) **Jakson** – This is a bangle made of brass. It is used as an earring, the two ends is adjustable and clipped when worn.
- f) **Disc** – This a kind of earrings ornament.
- g) **Rikgitok/rikmatchu** necklace of ten lines made from coral beads.
- h) **Rikgitchak** necklace with gems, ivory and metal bells.
- i) **Kabong /kade** headgear made of shells.
- j) **Asingsok/riksil** necklace with metal bells.
- k) **Bato rengki**
- l) **Siliting** silver chain with designs.
- m) **Konal** tight silver necklace.
- n) **Sisa /narikki or Nadongbi** is an earring worn on the loop of the ears.
- o) **Naderong/ollongga/nakongsi** bunch of brass ring worn on the upper part of the ears.
- p) **Nabal**
- q) **Sangong /jaksan** brass or metal bangles.
- r) **Pilne** headgear with cock's feather.
- s) **Ki'chong**
- t) **Jaksil** -This is a brass metal worn in the elbow ring by rich men on Gana ceremony and it is also worn by the village or the elaka chief while performing a ceremony.
- u) **Penta** - small pieces of ivory struck into the upper part of the ear projecting upwards parallel to the side of the head.

### Male costumes:

- a) **Gantap wrapper** worn above knee
- b) **Genji gisim** black t shirt.



- c) Kotip nokma
- d) kotip kadesil head gear
- e) Pandra cloth worn criss cross over the body.
- f) Do'm- plume of cock's feather
- g) Sa'mil

#### 4. Costumes and ornaments of the sub tribes of the Khasi:

Normally there is no specific dance costumes of the Bhoi. A simple white shirt, white *Jainpein* wrapped around the waist. The dark waistcoat embroidered spot at the front part. a scarf hanging from two sides of the shoulder. The females wear a sort of veil on the head in conical shape. With the head cover round head of the colour of their choice attached with a plume, feather of peacock or cock.

#### 5. Costumes and ornaments of the Lyngngams:

In all types of folk dances females wears red and yellow dresses, baskets feathers of cock or peacock bamboo and umbrella called *knup*. The Lyngngam wear a bracelet kind of ring round the waist. they also wear silver armlets above the elbow and wristlets. necklace of cornelian beads

#### 5. Folk /Dance costumes and ornaments of the Wars:

The costumes of the wars is similar to the Khasis but the different is the way of wearing it.

#### 2.2. Folk /Traditional Dances of the Khasi khynriam.

The Khasi people are fond of dances and music. The two Important festivals of the Khasis are the *Nongkrem dance* or *Pomblang Nongkrem* and the *Shad Suk Mynsiem* or the Thanksgiving. Besides these major festivals, the *Khasi-Jaintias* have a number of festivals and dances connected with harvesting and other ceremonial dances. Almost all the dances of Meghalaya are held at the designated open place. The dancing ground is always properly decorated with coloured papers and festunes and sometimes a prominent tree with decoration is fixed at the centre of the ground so that the dancers are aware of the epicentre. In all the dancing ground a special shed or *Rynsanis* temporary made for the *Duhalia* (Traditional musicians) to sit and perform the appropriate music at an appropriate time. The assimilation of the neighbouring sub-tribes of different ethnic origin with the original inhabitants of the State is another factor for the availability of various folk dance forms. Men and women during the dance are dressed with expensive silk costumes and heavy gold, silver and coral ornaments. During the dance festivals the dancers dress in finery costumes of gold and silver jewellery decorated on their bodies. It is significant to note that the *Khasi* and *Jaintia* people are very fond of gold and silver which they however try to procure gold and silver. This can be seen from the fact that a girl child who one year old will adorn with gold earring. During dancing festival the men and the maiden dancers will adorn with massive jewellery of gold and silver.



### 1 Shad Nongkrem or Shad Pomblang:

*Shad Nongkrem or Pomblang* is a religious dance festival associated with the sacrifice of a goat, which is held annually during the autumn season during October - November at the official residence of the *Khyrim* syiemship at *Smitin* in the vicinity of *ka Ingsad-Ingsunon*. It is a dance to thank God for good harvest, peace and prosperity of the community. It lasted for five days, on the first day first second third and fifth day the *Shad Sohtyngkoh* was performed. On the fourth day, during the first religious dance ceremony early morning the daughter of the queen must perform first, this is called '*ka Nohkjat*' which means the initiate dance sequence to a main celebration of Thanksgiving. Male dancers in their finery, armed with sword (*waitlam*) on the right hand and *Symphiah* -whisk (Yaks tail) on the left hand. They started by bowing down three times at the commencement of the dance. The concept of virginity for the female dancers and their protection by the male counterpart as can be seen from organised event at a designated place where menfolk is in their majestic costumes danced round the maiden dances who concentrated in the middle of the ground is one significant practice prevailing till today. At the *Pomblang* Festival popularly known as the *Nongkrem* Dance festival, The King (Syiem) and the princess initiates a symbolical in the festival, while her mother, the queen is the custodian of all the rituals during the ceremony. Religious rites are performed for five days.

### 2 Shad suk mynsiem or Thanksgiving dance :

The annual dance organised by the *Seng Khasi (seng kmie)* according to my knowledge the name of this type of dance is known as *Shad sukmynsiem* while others term it as *Shad Weiking* as this dance is held at the designated ground called *Madan Weiking*. This thanksgiving dance is also celebrated all over Khasi hills. In Shillong this thanksgiving dance is held somewhere in the month of April. It lasts for three days. It is a dance to thank God for good harvest. On the first day male dancers would congregate at *Seng Khasi* hall where prayers were held and in a procession accompanied by the beating of drums and *tangmuri* they march to *weiking* ground for the initial dance called *shad nohkjat*. In the evening the same procedure is repeated and dances would continue for sometime at the *seng Khasi* hall. The third is the last day and the biggest congregation of people from all the places comes to witness the grand dance. The maiden would wear in the finest traditional attire with gold and silver trinkets and the male dancers with full attire bedecked with gold and silver with majestic plume on the turban and they appear like oriental kings.



The *Shad Sukmynsiem* is a generic term given to this annual spring festival but intersert by the following six different dance forms, accompanied by six different beats of the *Ksing* (drums) and Wind Instrument(Tangmuri)during *Shad suk mynsiemas* indicated below:

1. Shad Nalai
2. Shad Dum Dum
3. Shad Klang
4. Shad Padiah
5. Shad mastieh
6. Shad wait

### 3.Shad Mastieh:

This is a part of the Thanksgiving dance.*Mastieh* is a running dance of two male dancers only ,and the step taken are similar to that of *shad Nohkjat* ,when they strike the centre of the ground and they started to dance briskly and faster .The movement of the sword and the *symphiah*(whisk) will exhibit gestures and postures.This dance is a kind of run-up,chases winding and drawing themselves closer and show signs of bowing three times lowering the sword and reciprocally saluting each otherand swayed to indicate averting dangers .Thesword signifies their bravery and a whisk signifies peace and purity.

### 4.Shad Padiah:

*Padiah* is one of the rhthym .The dancers dance according to this rhytm which is little faster than the beat of *Ka Ksing Lynti*.During this dance the males surrounded the females.The males does not use sword during *Shad Padiah*and only *symphiah* or whisk is used.

There are also other forms of dances of the East Khasi hills some of which is associated with religious rites and others are plainly secular in character.

### 5.Shad shoh kba of East khasi hills:

#### 1. Sowing dance is sometimes performed before but always after sowing time:

As can be collected *shad krud lyngkha* (sowing dance)and*shad Kylla*(hoe dance) found only in *Patharkmah* areas bordering Assam.The dances represent thanksgiving after hard work of ploughing and sowing successfully completed and usually held after coming back from the fields ,and all these go to show Khasi willing- hearted acceptance of God and nature in then sustaining life .In all and as a prelude to the dance appropriate prayers offered to God.

#### 2. Harvest dance or Shad rep:

Harvest dance is normally performed in the field according to folk belief,with casual dresses.In In these dances different stages of cultivation are shown.They generally are not so festive and colourful as every type of dances are.It is said that this type of dance is almost action songs where women participants feign to act like constructing bunds or levelling lines in the paddy fields,and nearby men are ploughing the fields and a mock bullocks with a yoke on their neck.Their friends singing cheerfully to the background of the show .The item of *Krud Kba* indicate men and women at work slowly dropping the hoes to the ground and raising and continue to work. Later on at the stage of *sympat Kba* (threshing of paddy)which is a kind of ceremonial threshing of paddy and ultimately storing of the paddy in the barn



accompanied by songs of merriment about threshing of paddy and storing in the barn which is known as **Rwai shoh Kba**. The *shad Krud kba* is also performed by the *Warmawsaw* and *Patharkmah* village.

Other dances

*Shad phur nongjri- sohbar* This a dance ceremony for the dead.

*Shad thung syiem thang syiem cherrapunjee*.

### 2.3. Folk dances of west khasi hills:

**Ka shad mawniam mawkynroh mairang** ceremonial dance for the dead during bone collection ceremony.

- a. Shad ksing of west khasi hills
- b. Shad kiew ing of west khasi hills
- c. Shad wait of west khasi hills
- d. Shad sohryngkiof west khasi hill
- e. Shad phur of west khasi hill

### 2.4. The Folk dances of the Bhoi:

- a. Shad rah kynthai
- b. Shad lukhmi
- c. Ka Lakympong
- d. Ka sajor Raid Nonglyngdoh:

#### a. Shad rah Kynthai:

The *Shad Rah Kynthai* of *Raij Nongtluhin* the *Bhoi* region is another example of a dance form where male dancers cordon the female as a symbol of protection, while the rhythm is maintained with the musical beats. This dance appears that it is beginning to lose its significance.

There are also other dances like *shadpliang* or plate dance of *Raij Bhoi Lasa* and *shad Dungkhuener* (Pounding of flat rice). Another dance of *Raij Kharpati* during the spring time, the dance includes worshipping and bathing of cows and buffaloes after the ploughing there are specific kinds of ceremonial obeisance, followed by the dance.

#### b. Shad lukhmi:

This dance festival is celebrated by the people of *Raid Marngar* (a region in the eastern part of Bhoi area) before sowing season for God's blessing for a bountiful and wellbeing of the people, and to give thanks to *Lukhmi*, the goddess of wealth and prosperity and also *Lukhmi* is the household Deity (ka Blei ing) or ka Leikba (goddess of rice and agriculture) especially representing paddy and other food crops. In the olden days people are very much attached to the mother earth and most of them depend on agriculture. To avert any plague or pestilence on the cultivation they always turn to God for propitiation before and after the sowing season. The sacrificial part is performed by taking some earth or soil outside the village and also they would ask for a handful of rice from each house of the village and put in the conical basket (khoh). This dance is held in the month of March before the sowing begins. They performed a dance along with the beating of the drums along with pipes. Another form of dance in the *Raij Marngar* is known as *Ka shad nguh meikha*, an obeisance by



children to paternal mother. This is done to secure God's blessing by paying homage to the paternal grandparents.

### C. Ka Lakympong :

This dance festival is celebrated in the *Raij Tyrso* and *Raij Nongtung* of the *Bhoi* areas. It is not a religious dance festival but it is connected with agriculture and cultivation. It is a dance of asking a blessing from God for good harvest. The Lakympong dance is celebrated after harvesting and before sowing of new crops begins. The *Lakympong* dance has types, one is the dance of the youths and unmarried only which is known as *The Shad Lakympong Khynraw* and the other is the *Lakympong Lukhmi* which is celebrated once in every five years.

### D. Ka Shad Sajer Raid Nonglyngdoh:

There are many version given by versatile writers, but I choose to quote the accounts given by Dr(Mrs).MPR Lyngdoh in her booklet "The festivals in the history and culture of the Khasi.(page 72)." "Ka Sajer Festival of the Bhoi area in the northern part of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.. This festival is observed in the months of December, January or February after the harvesting is done and before the sowing of seeds for the coming year. It is a religious celebration of the whole Raid Lyngdoh. It is connected with agriculture and cultivation rites of the people for the prosperity of crops particularly rice which is the staple food of the Khasi. At the same time during this religious performance, the people thank God the creator for all the blessings that he has showered upon them. The places which are under the Raid Nonglyngdoh are Nongthyrlong, Mawiong, Pahambir, Mawryngkang, Umshken, Shakoikuna, Umjong and Umling Lambrang. Other villages which come to participate in the religious festival but do not fall within the Raid Nonglyngdoh are Mawphrew, Umdap, Byrni, Umshong khlieng, Nartap and Korstep from the Raid Myllem, Panikynti from Kamrup, Pahambir on the border of Kamrup district and Umskun from Raid Nongkhrah. Most of the people who live in these places belong to the Raid Nonglyngdoh but left their Raid in search of better lands for cultivation."

This festival undergoes several faces. The initial stage is a long demonstration is a night long festival of playing of flute indicating the coming of the people and preparatory arrangement. Next night is the drum echoing in the village. One part of this festival is the dancing of the shipai or soldiers with the *shad wait* which later culminating in the *shad mastieh* which automatically reduced to four dancing soldiers. In the *Shad Mastieh* two or four dancers with sword and shield demonstrate style of pacing and walking, briskly around the circle waving the sword when crossing each other and at the time when they come very close, with the sword they pose a combat and dual pose turning around and bow each other back to circle.

There are also other dance forms of the *Bhoi* areas *Shad dong dong Shad shut Wait Shad mastieh Shad siej*.



## 2.5. Folk dances of the Lyngngam:

The *Lyngngams*, the sub-tribes of the Khasi resides in the south-west of the Khasi hills at the Bangladesh border, and later some *Lyngngams* moved to *West Khasi hills* and also they were spread to Garo hills and Assam.

The six popular dances of the *lyngngams* are:

- **Ka Chad aideit**-This is one of the most popular dance of the *Lyngngams*. After the males have returned from the war the female would perform this *chad aideit* and offer drinks to the males.
- **Ka chad kut snim**-This is a thanksgiving dance for good harvest performed by the males. The male dancers hold a sword and shield on their hands while performing and walk around the village with shouts and singing to drive away the evil spirit from the village. This dance takes place at the end of the year.
- **Ka chad seinkhynrum**-This is a religious dance performed during the dead ceremony. The dancers that take part in this dance should be males only, two or four numbers and one or two persons should play the *seinkyndoh* a round shaped drum and one person should play the *Tangsohma* or flute.
- **Kachadlynniang**-This dance is performed for blessings of the ancestors to live in peace and harmony. There should be sixteen dancers that take part in the dance, six females and ten males.
- **Ka chad ku ing** performed before entering a new house. Males and females dancers danced around the *nongknia* and he pray to God asking for blessings and to protect the house from evil spirit and danger.
- **Ka Shad Shyngwiang – phur tangiapa** ceremonial ceremony on the occasion of death in the family. This dance is performed from the first day of death and continues till the last rite at the cremation ground. Express sorrow.
- **Chad reinmaw**-Is a dance of pulling the stone pillar (monument) to be erected in remembrance of an honourable man. The dancers are adorned with cock feathers or peacock feathers on their head and a basket.

## 2.6. Folk /traditional dance of the Jaintias :

- a) Chad Lahoo
- b) Chad Rongkhli (tiger dance) of war jaintia
- c) Chad sukra
- d) Chad Pliang or Plate dance

## 2.7 Folk /Traditional dances of the Jaintias:

### a) Lahoo dance:

The *Lahoo* dance is performed by both men and women. The '*Lahoo Dance*' of the Pnar in the Jaintia Hills is connected with the story of creation and origin of the Jaintia people. Originally this dance is known as *Chad Chipiah* Or *Chipiah* dance or *Chad Iong Nikhla*. As mentioned that this dance *Chad Chipiah* is connected with the creation of the world and God being satisfied of providing the requirements he went disappeared. The covenant that he left through one *Lakriah* (a co-between or a mediator between God and man) instructed that God could be reached through *Ka nguh ka dem*, *Ka suit ka Shor* or through prayers and sacrifices,



through intervention of *Lakriah ka Chad Chipiah* Or Lahoo dance was approved by God for performance of his children to express happiness and thankfulness to him. Infact it was told that *Chad Chipiah* almost disappeared for many tears and it was revived by the *Nikhla* clan and for this reason ka *Chad Chipiah* was known as ka *Chad Nikhla* clan. Later on the name of Lahoo dance originated from a singer who rhythmatically *Huh A Huh A Huh...* The male dancers wear bright white turban with a short flap looping then they wear a black waistcoat, and a silk cloth worn around the waist like Indian dhoti. And they wear golden earrings with two or three bands of silver suspended from right shoulder which falls to the opposite hip. The female dancers wear a black and white sheet of cloth (*khyrwang*) is drapped from waist downward and a velvet blouse. The other part of the body is drapped by the Nara (silk cloth) which is tied over the right shoulder and the other end tied beneath the armpit or the opposite side. A waist is wound by the other cloth which is flage looping downwards. They wear golden earring and golden necklaces which lower down from the neck accompanied by many bands of coral beads (*paila*). In this dance two men link hands on either side of the female dancer and dance in rhythm of music recited by the singer.

#### ■ **Chad Rongkhli (Tiger dance) of war jaintia:**

The *Nongtalang* village located at the northern part of *Jaintia hills* in the region of *War Jaintia*. This is a typical village which perform the *Rongkhli* or Tiger dance. In this village there are also other festivals. The meaning of *Rong* means festival and *khli* means tiger. This festival is celebrated when the tiger is accidently killed but always by the organised hunting of the villages. This is not an annual or regular festival but it depends whenever the tiger got killed. It is learnt that in a tiger hunting expedition by the villager, any member of the hunting must be an upright person and he must have a clean conscience before they set up for the tiger hunting. If the set period of time, the tiger is not killed the second expedition sent is entrusted for the job but under the given period with above restrictions.

In whatever circumstances when the tiger is killed prayers are offered to God or else a terrible event may be experience by the people. If any man who belongs to a different clans happen to kill the tiger, the clan of that man has to perform the ceremony. For eg: if the tiger is killed by the *Pohrmen* clan and this clan has to perform the entire ceremony and this festival is known as *ka rong Pohrmen* but it also means that the whole village and the people are involved in this festival. Prior to the dancing the women costumes consist of *Jainsem dhara* and *khasi* dress of many colours tied on both ends of shoulder and also the *Jain Tawah* or small shawl suspended from right shoulder which falls to the opposite hip, accompanied by long sleeves blouse and deck themselves with necklaces of gold and coral beads. A small bouquet of flower is fixed to the hair knot. The males dressed with a long sleeve shirt and a kind of lungi with black borders, on their head they wear a turban and on their they carry a sword and a whisk.

When all the religious ceremony completed the male dancers will dance in front of the elder uncle's house and this particular dance is known as *Ka Niam chai* wat followed by a *mastieh* dance and only the person from organising clan will be eligible to dance first, and the person who killed the tiger will dance with elder uncle, with the *Lyngdoh* or anyone from the *Lyngdoh* clan. Thereafter follows the dance of the Kur or the dance of different clans, here they dance in a ratio of two by two. In all these dances the music are played by drummers and



pipers while the dancers dance with shield and sword. After the completion of the sequence of the dance of clans everybody can participate in the dance.

### C. Chad sukra:

The real meaning of this dance is chad chokra which means dance of the small children with no proper style. Kra means vigorous, healthy, strong, joy, peace and enthusiasm. In 1951 till 1955 this dance has been stopped. In 2006 this dance has been developed again and has become a dance of unity. The Spring time is the time of festivals. Besides numerous types of dance festival Chad Sukra is performed by the Jaintia people. Before sowing and planting is done prayers were offered to God for his blessing for the good harvest agriculture produces. This Chad Sukra is performed during the day time and at night time theatrical performances and other dances are being performed. No formal costumes are used but the costumes used are those new costumes. Sometime back harmonium, clarinet and tabla and others are used but due to changing of time nowadays they performed with the help of electronic devices eg like recorded cd, pendrive etc. People of all walks of life meet their neighbours and compliment each others happiness. This festival is connected with a close relationship of man and nature.

### 3) Chad Pliang or Plate dance:

"Shad" means "dance" and "pliang" means "plate". When put together means "platedance". This dance is performed by young girls to entertain the loyal guest. It is usually dance by women where they display their skill by holding plates each on their hands and sometimes very intricate chad pliang of four plates on each in either hands one in the mouth and one in the head. This chad pliang has undergone changes as it is not connected with any religious event, nowadays this dance can be performed at any event like marriage, village feast or naming ceremony or any joyous occasion. The significance of this dance is a warm embrace. It is a dance of happiness and dance of joy with a full joyful form of music. In the olden days there were no instruments used in the chad pliang or plate dance but leave was used which is known as Put sla where the musician blew the leaf in their mouth and it produced a sweet sound. So, put sla was the first instrument used in chad pliang or plate dance. The dancers will shake, move their bodies intertwine between dancers holding their plates in whatever positions they are. Sometimes a plate will suddenly fall, but quickly retrieves and continue to dance. In the olden days local musical instruments were used, sometimes due to changes, electrical devices used. Duration of the dance differs from time to time according to tempo or encouragement of the audience.

### 2.8. Folk dances of the Garos:

The Garos have always preserved their rich folklore. The Garos or Achik have many dances connecting with agriculture activities accompanying with religious sacrifice. The primary head of any dance form is the Nokma of any village. Denbilsia is a preliminary for sowing, sacrifice held and a feast and dance held. The Agalmaka, sowing of seeds exchange visits and the Nokma house as the apex centre where eating, drinking and dancing took place. The Pongchukala is a joyous occasion where paddy is plucked and dance performed. The Ahaia, the whole scale plucking where household performs sacrifices and dancing which is done in day time. Wangala in fact is performed in every village where a Nokma is the titular head. The following para explains the importance of Wangala.



### **Wangala:**

*Wangala* is the most popular and an important dance of the Garos. This dance is generally performed during harvest festival indicating a yield of good harvest. It is a thanksgiving to the Almighty. It is celebrated in honour of 'Satyong', the God of fertility. Both married men and unmarried women in colourful costumes take part in the dance which begins from the house of Nokma and dancers move from house to house. It is the most colourful, spectacular and convivial for the entire Garo community. This dance festival lasted for a week. Certain rites and rituals are to be performed at every stage of cultivation until all crops are harvested. The only attraction of Wangala dance is the Grikpisa who yells out like *kachallang!* ka goera! repeatedly swung the millam (sword) throwing the eulogies. Some of the dance form in the Wangala shows the usual life style like Jik Seka or elopement.

### **The hundred drums festival:**

This is usually held in the month November at *Asanang*, *rongram* block 19km from Tura. It is christened as 100 drums festival with ten villages of ten drums each. This is purely an organised festival.

### **Mongona or Chugana:**

This is a post funeral ceremony during the last rites for the spirit of the dead person singing and dancing continues whole night till morning next day. This is performed by the *Atongs* who reside at east portion of Garo hills.

### **Grengdik Ba'A a ritual dance:**

#### **Chambil Mesara or the Pamelu dance:**

This is a solo dance form which requires skill. The performer hangs down from a pomelo on a cord tied to his waist and then throws it around without any perceptible movement of the hips.

#### **Doregata dance:**

In this dance the women try to knock off the turbans of their male partner using their head. If women succeed, it is followed by laughter.  
Dru - Sua which means pecking of dove

#### **Messa dance:**

This is a form of sacrificial dance. In this dance the dancers use a sword (Milam and Danil (round shield)). This dance is performed by elderly males in the sacrificial ceremonies of the Gana and Dewbilsia.

#### **Rongchugala dance:**

This dance is being performed before harvesting and it takes place in the night. In this ceremony offerings like fruits, rice and its beer sprinkled over them were done and followed by a dance. This is done for the prosperity of the cultivation.

### **Grika Or war dance**

### **Conclusion :**

Aprising about the folk dances of Meghalaya, language is the dominant factor which is a part and parcel to determine folk dances, or any other folk dance in the division of Meghalaya, i.e. Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills. Further there are wide range of division in a language which comprise of dialects, Sub-dialects: spoken by the people of Sohra. The following sketch amply shows such contentions.

Khasi language – ( Ktien Sohra)-written language spoken by the people of Sohra (Cherrapunjee) .Again dialect spoken by the War region,Maram and Nongstoin dialect,Lyngngam dialect , Ri Bhoi dialect,the Jirang dialect and various dialectsof Nongphlang (hilly region )

The Pnar or Jaintialanguage – Language spoken and understand by the people of different regions with slight variations.Dialect spoken by the War Jaintias, especially Nongtalang ,Darrang elaka are at variations to War Jaintia language.

Garo / Achik language – is spoken by the Garos and there is much homogeneity from region to region. But dialect Atong spoken by the people in the Bagmara region is different and not understood by all.

In the north-west of Garo Hills ,people like the Hajong,Koch,Boro,speak different languages.

Therefore ,as aforesaid ,we can assume that folklore of any form emanates from the language /dialect of the people who speak .Apart from this ,cultural impact ,religion ,usage also form part of this study of olden times. folklore.

Therefore we can deduce that language plays a very intrinsic and valuable part in commutating the ideas of formation of dance costumes and ornaments of the Khasi: both males and females (refer paragraph 2:1.2.3.4) above.

As for the Sub Tribes of Khasi who speak their own dialect, they also improvised and using their ingenuity to weave costumes etc as indicated at 4,5,6 above and so on.

In this connection ,it may be added again ,that the Khasis ,Pnars, are very fond of gold and silver .The gold and silver ornaments they bedeck during dances, ceremonies speaks of their pride as Khasi Pnar races. A Khasi family ,will work hard to earn money to buy gold .This is evident from the fact that a newborn baby girl will be given a golden earring when they attain the age of one year.

To wrap up, folklore ,folklore stic has entered its renaissance stage ,an efforts should be made effectively to study in dept this enchanted area of studies ,**For life is short ,but artis longer.(vita brevis ars alonga).**



## Chapter 111

### Folk Theatre of Meghalaya

Folk theatre according to Chambers 20<sup>th</sup> century dictionary "A structure in the open air for drama or other spectacle – a scene of action etc". In the following paragraph I will only explain only on **folk theatre of Meghalaya**. But as for Meghalaya is concerned, there is no such place call theatre. In olden times, a story teller or grand oldman of the village in the evening would gather the children beneath the tree around the hearth and told stories of brave, great people by enacting, mimicking the supposedly action and dialogue of the hero/heroine.

Meghalaya is bounded by Bangladesh on the south and Assam in the North. Meghalayans used to go to the hats to barter, later on to sell and buy things that one usually those days, during hats, drama, used to be performed towards the evening. Taking chance of this rare occasions the Khasis Jaintias used to watch the performance and on their way back home, they will relate what they have seen. In the meantime somewhere before they close of 19<sup>th</sup> century, Khasi villages organise the festivals like Khasi dancing in the daytime and also performed dramas in the night. A make-shift stage constructed and improvised set up of screens and sides screen fixed. During those period when electricity available only in Shillong for the affluent European people, the villagers used to hire gas lamp (lynten pom) for the stage and the hall. A minimum of say a paisa (12 paisa = 1 anna, 16 anna = Rs 1) is collected as entry fee. Nowadays theatre halls are built in a permanent place with modern amenities. So this is something about folk Theatre.

Folk theatre of Meghalaya In the olden times was in a rudimentary form, as most of the stories connecting with this area were by oral tradition and a story teller expressed the dialogue and the action by words of mouth. This form of oral drama is a challenge to a story teller who has to remember all the dialogues and actions during rehearsals. According to my knowledge there is nothing like drama whether folk or otherwise. After painstaking research I discover flickering knowledge about those days. It was told that on those days according to narrative fables it was given to understand that the type of narrative fables are done under the shade of a tree by a grand oldman of the house or village to all the siblings. This narrative fables told about the famous deeds of the people, the wars and story about love and passion. There are many category and types of love: love of God, filial love, motherly love, brotherly love, Ieid lawbei (puppy love, lovers' love, friendly love, Love for the country, Love for nature and environment.

#### **Folk Drama:**

Every man is born to this world is gifted with original instinct to observe, imitate, observe and to act and he is fully himself when he manifest his ability to the audience in the theatre. He is absorbed in the saying that the world is a theatre because of his human minds comes to life on the stage. So dramatists will explore all his skills to literally bring life to the stage according to tone and message of their scripts and try to bring home the



messages conveyed in the actions .Late Fr.H.Elias in the book Ka Hamsaia explains .  
 "Sawangka (drama)is one of the methods of poetry whereby the events ,the script writer puts the dialogue and actions into the actors in all relevant parts and timings."

According to my knowledge there was no drama or theatrical performances in the olden days .According to sources conveyed ,it was given to understand that in those pre-literate periods,dialogue discources though in a very elementary form are part and parcel of dramatic usages for example:

- A) The traditional engagement and marriages ,the uncles of bride and groom act as the interlocutor of the nieces and nephews is done during these ceremonies.
- B) Neccessary biddings in archery is done by two sides .
- C) The stories /tales relate by the great great grandfather ,elders to their grandchildren around the hearth beneath the huge tree.He will not only tell the stories ,but singing the same by playing the Duitara (harp) .Stories related to love ,bravery ,patriotism etc.
- D) The children will listen with awe admirations to their pin drops silence .They would ask questions and requested to enact what he has narrated and the story teller had to obliged.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century,the drama took the rudent shape from the Yatra party and the (Sawangka)drama and the whole episode of the story was shaped by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.A story of Krishna and his journey from Vridaban to Mathura and also the epic Ramayana and Mahabharata.

The fame of yatra spread far and wide from Ganges to plains of Surma and plains of Brahmaputra .Trade and commerce flourished and the weekly markets (hats)in the plain belts like Chatak ,Sylhet ,Jaintiapur (now Bangladesh)

Those times the Raja or the Zaminders like to invite the yatra to perform in their market places.The yatra party had to travel by bullock carts to the location prepared.The markets of those places and even now started from early morning and in is followed by the performance of the yatra .Theese enclosure built for the performance and those high up at the specially built platform ,while the public squat in the ground.The show will last upto early morning .Our forefathers from adjoining places like Mawsynram ,Lawbah ,Shella and even Mawngap,Mawphlang used to go these markets .They have to arrive in these markets around 2 to 3am ,in these occasion,they had the curiosity to witness these yatras .The outcome is as defined at 'D'ante.

The rendering of drama in its rudimentary writing is from back 1900 or so ,and this period up to the present time,many dramatics have produced volumes of dramas .Some of these dramas were enacted in the stage .But the ingenuity Khasi ,Pnar dramatis excelled in conception and put them in dramas.The most popular clubs of Jaintias,Mawsynram,Marbisu ,Mawngap.have produced many social dramas.



What does the Drama requires :

- 1.Dramatis/director
- 2.Actor and Actresess
- 3.Costumes of the time
- 4.Props .
- 5.Stage .
6. Lightings
- 7.Sound system
- 8.Makeup artist
- 9.3/4 acts is sufficient for the dramas.
- 10.Body movements
- 11.Voice is the main (exercises) or language /dialogue throwing/practises.
- 12.Actions
- 13.Physical exercises
- 14.Expressions

Dramas plays an important part in the field of educational activities and have entered in the schools by introduction of one play competition which were held and giving awards to best classes or schools.This development is due to Christian school based skits on Bible events .Nowadays this development has universal acceptance ,and Khasi cultureal and traditional legends plays exhibited both in urban and rural stages.

The street plays are held on open space near market places where there are large gatherings.The stage is a make-shift with improvisation often times the street plays are held to create awareness programmes in different fields .Ideas had to be conceived and reduced to manuscript.In all the actors and actresess are to rehearse for all these dramas ,plays and skits .Duration of the skits and street plays should not be long ,normally 30 minutes is sufficient to bring home the purpose of the play.In all these facets ,plays shoul convey moral heart.

Drama acting is a very complex job for one has to learn and grasps by hard the dialogue .Drama acting unlike film acting once a mistake in dialogue or acting cannot be corrected

With the advent of Khasi alphabets in 1841 and the sudden rise in Khasi literature,the dramas have become necessary to put the script in black and white and nowadays we see many dramas are printed in a book forms

Theatrical drama expressions and performances have always been the outcome of cultural and social encounter pertaining to agriculture, farming and other traditional occupational activities. The 'Bam Phalar' festival of the Pnar people of Jaintia Hills is one of the most significant practice that prevailed till today. Even as the contemporary social situation changes with time, the folk elements of dialogue delivery, the physical movements, the



prevailing customs is still evident in many of the performances. The evolution of drama from the folk to the modern structure is derived from prevailing social situation, even as the western influence is noticeable after the colonial period. However, with the emergence and rampant incursion of satellite television and information technology, the traditional stage performance is almost becoming obsolete. Therefore, there is a dire necessity to document, retain the folk practice, and preserve in the modern method of theatrical expression. The traditional concept of melodrama is still vibrant in other form of cultural expression, while theatre is said to be dwindling, to overcome this frantic efforts are being made to reinvent and to blend with modern form of theatrical expression.

The modern Khasi writers are alive with the thought to promote dramas by writing old and modern type of drama in the form of books. The dramatists of the time took full advantage of these dramas in book form and started to perform in the stage by local clubs, colleges, schools and other ngos'. Some of the dramatic societies went to compete in the different dramatic competition in and outside Meghalaya and brought laurels to the state.

### **The Achiks or Garo folk theatre**

The Achiks or the Garos are one of the three major indigenous tribes of Meghalaya. The tribe is distributed in the five districts of Garo hills – North, East, south, west and south West – that lie in the West of the state of Meghalaya bordering North Assam and South Bangladesh. In olden days the Achiks or the Garos in the villages had to travel days to reach the weekly markets. They set up temporary sheds, cook and spend the long evenings telling stories. According to Zarrili and others they wrote with reference to "Oral Performance" in Theatre Histories: An Introduction: "Primary oral cultures are "episodic" locations of listening, hearing, and voicing where "Mythic" worlds are created. The hearer does not attempt to analyse, understand or interpret what is heard, but experiences and absorbs the musicality of the voice—its timbre, tone, amplitude, pitch, resonance, vibration, and shape as the voice moves between sounding and silence(s)—the pauses of varying lengths that help mark, set off, and/or accentuate what is voiced. Reception is perception, not "meaning" (21).

It is said that the rich oral tradition of the *Garos* or *Achiks* passed on from generation to generation. Narrations of Myths, legends, songs and secular chanting were done by a select few who used to perform for groups in various informal gatherings.

According to my fact finding I am told that the Achiks or the Garos are not aware of a Theatre is, for them theatre is a structure/ building for staging of the drama. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o said that "Theatre is not a building, people make theatre. Their life is the very stuff of drama". There is also a wise saying that our life is a drama and the world is a theatre. Although Christianity is wide spread in Garo Hills but the age old traditional or



indigenous religion termed as *Songsarek* is practised by nonChristian Garos and they follow the ritual of farming and cultivation of crops therefore the Garo or Achik folk theatre is linked with the traditional religion that is prevailing in Garo Hills.

### **Achik Theatre vis-a-vis narration**

Story narration in Garo or Achik is known as katta Agana and the narrator is called Katta Agangipa. This narrator will narrate in a poetic style of the heroic deeds of goneby heros like Dikki, Bandi and heroines like Gitting and Sore. The narrator when he narrates the story in a different manner which is marked by a specific tone and voice modulation.

Zarrili and others and others quoting the D. Tedlock in the Theatre Histories (2006) "Here speaks the storyteller, telling by voice what learned by ear. Here speaks a poet who did not learn language structure from one teacher and language meaning from another, not plot from one and characterization from another, nor ever an art of story-telling from one and an art of hermeneutics from another, but always heard all these things working together in the stories of other story-teller. And this poet, or mythopoeist, not only narrates what characters do, but speaks when they speak, chant when they chant, and sing when they sing".

A good story-teller or Katta Angana when narrates the story he can visualise and dramatise and to the spectators or listeners in complete visualisation in the mind's eye.

As far as I learnt from the Garo literatures, I found that there are two popular Achik plays which depict romantic stories. The plays are Serejing Aro Waljan and Kalsin Aro Sonatchi. These plays are reduced to script by Julius LR Marak, and the first play is Serejing Aro Waljan, this play was first performed sometimes in 1937-38 in around Dambo-Rongjeng.

Another second play is Kalsin Aro Sonatchi, manuscripted by Julius LR Marak, it was performed in and around 1998. Both the plays Kalsin Aro Sonatchi, and Serejing and Walgan were staged in Garo hills and in Assam till early 1980. However it is learnt that the popularity of the plays diminished, but somehow still performed by a group in Moskali under Noliston K. Marak.

As indicated in the foregoing paragraphs, the Achik have no visible theatre structure. As of now I will touch a little about modern Achik theatre somehow or rather, the generation seem to have lost touch of old lore stories. Of late there was an interest to revive the old practices of folk tales, the result is the emergence of theatrical group. Achik theatre, and a group have produced two popular plays – Achik Asong, and Du kon staged in Garo Hills under the umbrella of National School of drama



## Chapter 1V

### Folk tales of Meghalaya

Folk tales reflect the ethnic structure of a race and possess the cultural and social component of the people. Apart from the myths and legends which comprises of the philosophy and proverbs of the ancestors; the folktales related the cultural milieu of the people. Meghalaya has an enormous treasure trove of traditional and urban folktales that have evolved through the ages. Each and every folktale has a message and a moral lesson to pass on to the next generations. There are substantial number of published folktales in vernacular and foreign languages particularly Hindi and English. The project aims to collect the untold and unpublished tales that can be scripted and analyse upon the content of the stories. There are certain interpretation of the folk knowledge that might be contradictory to the present context; and this provide the dynamism of the story even if the same tale has a paradox. In this regard collection of detail and authentic information is essential to furnish a complete and meaningful manuscript for publication.

Folk tales is different from region to region and from different culture to cultures. For eg in Meghalaya there are different spoken dialects ,and use their imaginations to conceive the tales and impulsively thrown the story by words of mouth .Dr.Desmond Kharmawphlang in his book ,”Ki Matti Byrshem” wrote “ The recounting of story and tales are those which are told by words of mouth and there is no original story – teller who is known by those who hears .Tales are told by one man to another ,and from one generation to another generation .Tales can be found in many differentways,like in songs ,dances ,and in the hearth where there is a story-teller.

It is found that advices ,couplets and sometimes quis on the tales and mostly they tried to impart on mankind about the noble people ,warrior,legitations ,the domain,the way of life .These are abundant amongst the Hynniewtrep(Khasi) and we all like to hear with raft attention.Many Khasi authors from far and wide of the country ,during the last century .Rabon Singh ,Primerose Gatphoh and H Elias.In this century DTLaloo ,I MSimon and others who have contributed immensely to this very important area”.

”Ki Matti Byrshem” –page 24-Desmond.L.Kharmawphlang.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of Khasi literatures ,both prose and poetry.Many of the tales were then reduced to writing by different authors .These Khasi authors have been able to tell /write tales not only on human beings but on animals birds mountains hills rivers treesetc and were successfullin animating these objects with dialogue so eloquent that one may think of those Golden Age (Satya Yuka).



Hereafter I will try to elucidate some of the ancient folk tales in the following paragraph.

**1. The Arecanut ,betel leaves lime and tobacco:** How the Khasi –Pnar came into the habit of eating of arecanut ,betel leaf lime and tobacco.

In the olden days ,there were two people whose friendship was known all over the Rangjyrwit village .One was the merchant (Mahajon) the other a very poorman .However this they did not deter their friendship. The Mahajon name was Nik ,the poor man named Shing and has got a wife name Lak .Whenever Shing went to the Mahajons'house ,he never return empty handed ,and used to feast Shing and several occasions ,he tried to avoid ,but the Mahajon felt peevish and unhappy .After several occasions the poorman ,Shing insisted that his friend should also pay a visit to his house ,and it was agreed on such ,such a day .The Mahajon came ,and Shing asked his wife to prepare food so that they will share the meal together. As ill-luck would have it there was no rice and the wife tried to borrow from the neighbours but was in vain. After a long wait Shing went inside to find out inside to find out if the meal is ready ,but it came like a thunder when he knew of the fact. Desperate groped to a dagger hanging thereby ,and pierced his heart. Seeing this horrible predicament his wife took the same dagger and pierced till death. The Mahajon was waiting patiently and could not comprehend what was going on ,he impulsively went to the kitchen and found that the couple death. He saw the empty rice pot boiling in the fire place he understand about the plight and took the same dagger and stabbed himself .It was about midnight when a thief was chased from one locality and run towards the house where the door lying wide opened ,he entered inside to hide somewhere in the corner ,the dawn came and the thief could not believe his eyes to see the the horror of triple death. Fears crippled him of further and serious involvement when the villages chanced to see him .Desperately he took the dagger from the rich man chest and finished himself. The tragedy of the four, died of a different causes .

When people knew of this horrible incident, they prayed to God to intrigate the simple way to respect the fellowmen, and surely God listened. They found out the way to respect each other by giving to the guest the arecanut ,batel leave stick with a lime .The allegory indicates the richman as the arecanuts batel and lime as husband and wife and the tobacco leave is that of thief while eating this arecanut Khasi women used like to protect their teeth by putting a big pinch of tobacco leave snug between the teeth and wipe it hither just like the thief who runs for shelter.



## 2. How do limestones form in the Southern part of Meghalaya :

Limestones are found in the entire southern portion of Meghalaya adjacent to present Bangladesh. The tale/story is that there was one ravenous person (Rakot ne Ramhah or Rakshana) who live in the vicinity of Khasi Hills (war region) who has a very beautiful one rapturous young girl. One young man he perchance to see her and instantly fell in love with the girl on the pretext to meet her, he told his mother that he would like to buy pigs and goats, but his purpose is to see the damsel. He set forth for the forest and saw the damsel and pretended to ask whether she has any pigs or goats to sell. The damsel instantly felt in love with him and told him that she has no pigs or goats to sell, but requested him to tairy and warmly invited him to come for a piece of bettlenut. Both were so much in love, asked him to stay overnight, and hid him in the corner most of the barn. Night came and her father came back from head-hunting. The moment he entered he muttered "Ak SMA BRU" (AK, I smell a human being) He said he was lucky to eat a human who had come to his abode. The man was horrified for his fate. While sitting down, she cajoled her father and seriously told him, that his threatening for a lone wanderer who happend to come. She told him that she will die an old unmarried woman. The very man she is hiding had come for her hens. The Rakot/Raksha agreed and took him as his son-in-law. One night he told his son-in-law for stag hunting the next day. The man understood the language of the Rakot/Raksha 'stag' means Man eating Rakot. He now tried to run away along with his wife for life from the forest. On their way they were affronted by a tree who knew about their plight and the tree promised to help. So also is the plaintain. The Rakot/Raksha went home to find the house abandoned. He rushed straight to the path they were travelling. In hot pursuit and the plaintain to confirmed their flight. Lastly he saw the monkey who burning lime on top of the banyan tree as he was very very hungry he requested monkey to give them something to eat. The monkey told him to open his mouth wideopen and poured continuously the hot lime and the hot lime took the toll of his life. The banyan trees grow in Khasi Pnar (Khasi -Jaintia) regions and these limestones which are on the Southern slopes of Khasi -Jauintia are the bones of this Rakot/Raksha.

### Mawpunkyrtiang village

In ancient times, the Royalties of Mawsmmai ruled over the vast territories of Hills and War regions and the rulers were upright and there was happiness all over. There is one river between Mawsmmai and Sohra (Cherrapunjee) called Mawlyntang river where fishes were in abundant. Young boys and girls used to go fishing with Khasi twarls to catch fish.



One day during autumn ,young people from Mawsmal village went to fish on the river Mawlyntang.In midday ,one young girl of the Syiem (Royal) scion called Rtyiang came to refresh herself and sat on the stone beside the river .Her friends were excited and challenged the other who were in the other side of the river to sing.In the meantime Rtyiang suddenly felt asleep.In her day dream she saw an exceedingly handsome youngman ,who came to her and said , “look I bought for you money full in this conical drum case,promise to me that you will build one bridge of stone on this river in order that people can cross to the other side .When you completed, you build with stone a house complete in its form of a house .In case this money is not sufficient,I will come with more money .When you have completed the house I will come and stay,and you will become a very famous person in the world ,” and he disappeared to nowhere .On awakening , she found to her surprise the real money as he told .She took the money ,went home and kept to herself what had happened .

After sometimes ,she summoned all her friends ,and the villagers to cut the stone and place the Stonebridge over that river Mawlyntang .She invited all the people for a big feast .When the stone bridge completed she constructed the stone house as directed and left the entire area in shambles.In this hubbub ,she forgot and broke the promise to that strangeman and died.

The fragments of stone left in shambles stage there at a village Saitsohpen,and destroyed the very surroundings for people who came to settle at Saitsohpen.To this day the village that was to have settlement near this Stonebridge is called Mawpunkyrtiang village.During the great earthquake this Stonebridge was broken but one slab of the stone could be seen till today.

### **Ka Ngot bad ka Iew:**

In ancient times ,when the universe was of one accord ,men and animals ,rivers ,hills communicate to one another .There were two sisters ,one named ‘Ka Ngot’ and the other ‘ka Iew’ .when they grew up to be maiden both were very beautiful which were known throughout the world .Happiness and health,fame and glory reigned all over Khasi and Jaintia regions .Ka Iew was older ,but she was vain ,proud ,easily irritated when she could not accomplished what she tried .She was talkative ,and never spare anyone. The character of Ngot is the opposite of her elder sister .She has a very kind personality full of smiles ,hard working and very helpful towards her elder sister.

One day on a clear morning where the weather was congenial Ka Iew invited her sister Ka Ngot to Shillong peak<sup>a</sup> and reached the top of the peak ,they scanned their eyes ,arand saw the spleendown of nature of the Khasi Hills .They saw towards the South plains area which fascinated them .Urged by this sight



of the nature they wanted to set foot on this very places ,the dazzling of the water.All these captivated the sisters.Ka Iew then invited the sister to further explore the perimeters of the country side .Ka Ngot declined the weakness of *Ngot* and Ka Iew then suggested that the easy way to explore the area is by changing themselves into water and will be easy to flow.Ka Ngot accepted the idea and said , “If you boast that much let it be so,”and both the sisters changed to water to make two rivers .

Ka Ngot indentified and flowed to very easy terrains till she reached Shilot (Sylhet)She tried to find out her elder sister,but could not be discernible .She was scared rather ,and thought something might have happened. From *Shilot*<sup>2</sup>,she diverted herself to Shatok<sup>3</sup> (Chatak) and reached Dwara<sup>o</sup>, and again re-diverted to the same directions .This strange curls and curves of Ngot,added with reflection of the bright sunshine when seen from the top ,looks like massive solid silver ,and people called *Rupatylli* ,and very place is known as “*Rupatylli*”.

Ka Iew in her vain glory and exceedingly proud and had a feeling of being stronger than her sister ,she choose the shortcuts and in this manner while flowing crushed discriminately who are obstructed her way .these includes huge trees,stones ,bolders .To her surprise when she reached Shella<sup>aa</sup> ,she was surprised to see that her sister had already reached .She was dumb founded and bewailed cursing herself .“This is too much of my honour in this world than my sister had won .It is better that I die instantly”. So then ,she lamented and wildly dashed herself till she crumbled into five parts ,and became five rivers.1)Dwara 2) Umtang 3)Kumarjani 4)Pasbira 5) Umtarasa .

Since that time ,Umiew river is also known as Umiam,River Ngot had the respect of all,especially the people of Khasi Jaintia has due respect and reverence to this river.

<sup>1</sup>Shillong peak is 8kms far and the capital Shillong and its height is 6449ft.

<sup>2</sup>Shilot(Sylhet) and

<sup>3</sup>Shatok(chattak) These places falls under Sonamganj district at the northern part of Bangladesh

<sup>aa</sup>Shella in the East Khasi Hills ,is one of the oldest village of Meghalaya.

### **Rashai Nongshang**

**“Whatever you do to others ,you do to yourself”.**

In the olden days there were a couple who were very rich .Whatever they plant God favoured them ,and they were very rich .They may be rich in that world ,but very poor in their hearts,because they had only one son whom they named him Rashai Nongshang.

They had plenty of money ,but the parent of Rapshai Nongshang were niggard to a great extent especially to the neighbours and the whole village .They forgot being human,life has an ups and down .So when any poor neighbour went to lent anything from them ,they refused to flatly.



It happened in one year, there was famine in that locality, and the poor among the poorest had nothing to eat, and had no alternative but to go and ask for rice, as the rice from the parents of Rapshai Nongshang, as they were the only people in the village who has plenty of paddy, and they can feed the village for years to come. But they flatly refuse to give. On one such day the poor mothers went to get loan or rice, they pleaded "please loan few grains to feed my small children" they begged with children on the back. "Who told you to get children without rice" shouted wildly Rapshais' mother.

Undauntedly but calmly they pleaded "Oh as human beings, we all experienced the ups and downs. Being poor, hunger was at the door in this famine. Have pity as just when this famine is over will return," they begged. But the couples heart hardened and did not help them. Rapshai's mother then began to throw abuses and curses on the poor women and their siblings and chased them away like dogs. The desperate down to earth downtrodden mother then retorted back and threw venom on them, "Just because the gods have bestowed upon you the wealth and prosperity, you think you have the good fortune, you think you can illtreat and abuse us. Is this righteousness that allows you. So, oh God as she illtreated us like this, let her suffer the same punishments. Let her cloth with these rags this miserable creature who has lost the conscience, will inherit our predicaments. The goddess of creation will strike you with poverty, privations. you will incur our destitutes on your life and left.

The ruling goddess heard from above the ongoing exchanges of words, and after hearing and saw the actual happenings, came to a reasonable conclusion and condemned the parent of Rapshai. Slowly and surely destroyed the cattle and paddy fields and the wealth.

Rapshai now a healthy youngman and the parent expected he would do well in raising back the things became otherwise. So when anything he planted, like 10 sacks and got only one sack, and everything went against him and his parent. Ultimately he decided to leave the parent and the duties entrusted to him. So it came to pass that the parent of Rapshai almost lost everything and also lost their only son.

#### **Queen Jalapang and stone – cattle :**

Shangpung (Shangpung is at the district of west Jaintia Hills) is one of the oldest village in Jaintia Hills. Near this village there was one smaller village called Manar. In this village there are fortress, trenches and the existence of these seemingly was the preparedness, and was due to the fact the distance from Shangpung to Manar is about 2 to 3 miles and these two localities were never in good terms and often times, a petty issue will ensue a war between them. Ultimately there ensued a great war, and at that time these village had their own kings. Shangpung has a large numbers of people and were stronger than Manar who had a strong fortress and trenches and Shangpung found it impossible



to penetrate to their fortress .And found out a ploy ,a strategy to hoodwink them into a false term of peace ,and agreed that they will meet the Manar at a middle place called Thangskei,and Shangpung promised to bring many white goats to offer to god,and also to feast .The Manar also promised to bring white goats to offer to gods of fortress .The Manar have arrived in advance at the place and after they were tired of waiting ,they engaged themselves in games .In the afternoon they saw that Shangpung has brought hundreds of white goats ,and they were so happy ,but on the contrary those were the men who were dressed in white course clothes and crawled like sheeps /goats well armed .Reaching the places , massacared every one ,and marched to Manar village ,killing all males.

One strongman run at full speed to convey the carnage to the queen Jalapang who when heard ,wailed and knew that she could not save her people anymore ,and run towards Tiniang mountain with one arrow and a bow.This Tiniang mountain locates at Mokaiew village .From the top of this hills ,shillong peak,Rapleng and Bahbo Bahkong hills could be seen.Queen Jalapang explored the hills ,she cried and prayed to God to help her find a new abode to wherever the arrow falls,and shot at random towards Barato praying ,”I will track you wherever you fall ,I will establish my kingdom,and people will pay obeisance in that place ,so that my running away like refugee be remembered.”.The arrow fell into on one rock near Barato,and the rock broke into- four pieces ,which is called up to this day ‘so-tno’ or four branches .She then settled along with one of her close friend.××

In the meantime she amassed wealth and had plenty of agricultural products and was living a happy undisturbed life .About three stones throw distant from her house lived a very handsome man ‘Mied Iarynsut’ who was a farmer and had many cattle and ploughing oxen ,where he ploughed in the Latubah paddy field .This man had never seen queen Jalapang although he always passed through her house ,and Jalapang used to observed and fell intensely in love with him .

How to meet him,she and her friend connived a plan .She went near the river near his field for fishing ,when she suddenly pretended to fall sick and fell.Her friend rushed to Mied Iarynsut to help.He believed the woman ,he lifted her on his shoulder along with fishing net and put her in the bed.But Jalapang requested him to stay around as she was scared to stay alone .He fell into her traps and did not allow him to attend to his cattle ,these cattle along with his plough remained there in the field and turned into stone and they are still in the same place .Manar village is no longer there but signs of extinct village are still there.The place of ‘MO-LETNO’ at Barato is still there and some people still used to pay obeisances at this place.

**For life is short ,but art is longer.(vita brevis ars longa).**

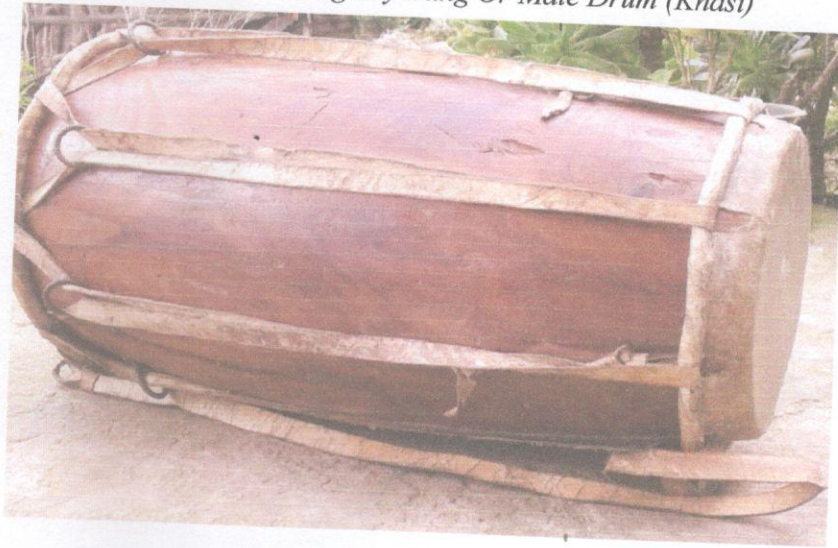


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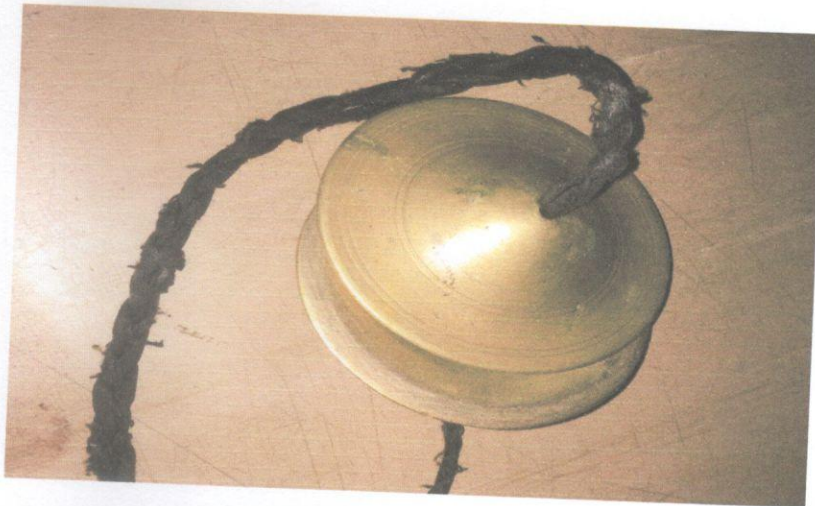
1. Ka riti ki laiphew syiem - G Costa SDB
  2. Phra tylli ki essay – Webster Davies Jyrwa
  3. The khasi and their environment – Dr. Barnes Mawrie SDB
  4. From ritual to stage: The journey of A. chik folk theatre- Barbara Sangma
  5. Music and musical Instruments of the Garo tribe of North –East India- Iris water Thomas
- The Art History of Meghalaya – Dr. Hamlet Bareh
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The khasi Musical Instruments

*Ksing Shynrang Or Male Drum (Khasi)*



*Kynshaw Or Cymbal (KHASI)*



*Ksing Dynphong*





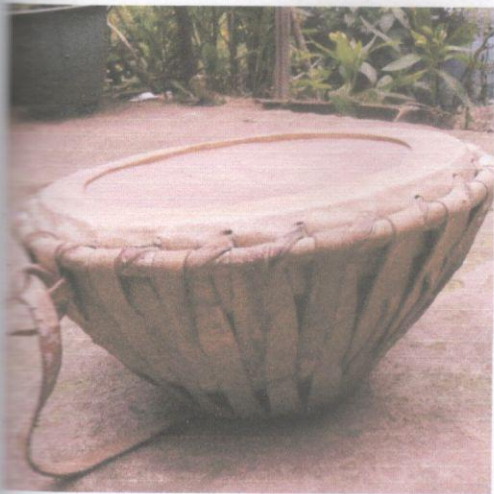
*Ka Duitara*



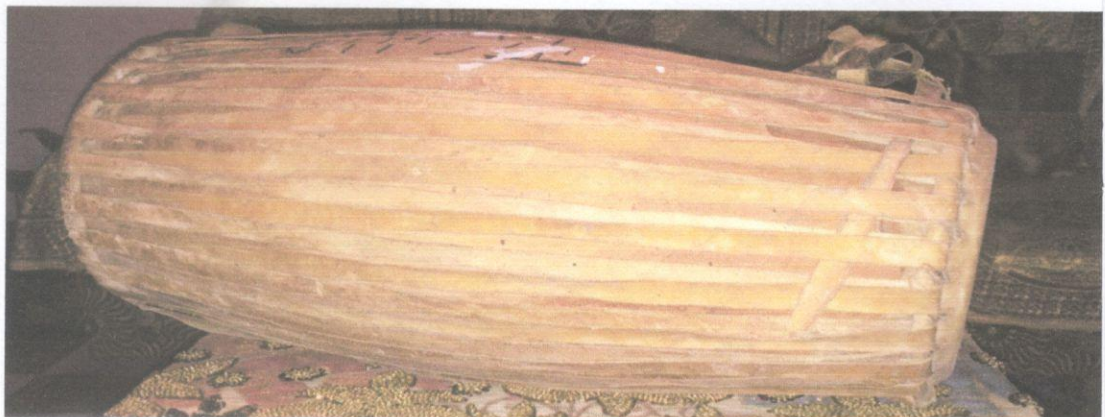
*Ka Bom or Big Drum (Khasi)*



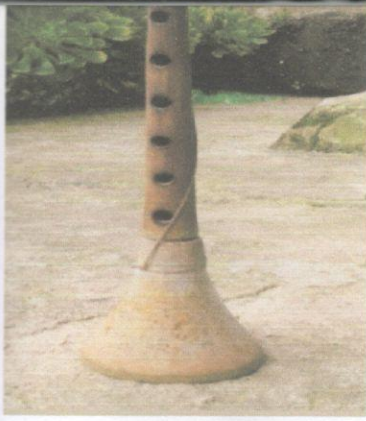
*Ksing Padiah*



*Ksing Kynthei or Female Drum*







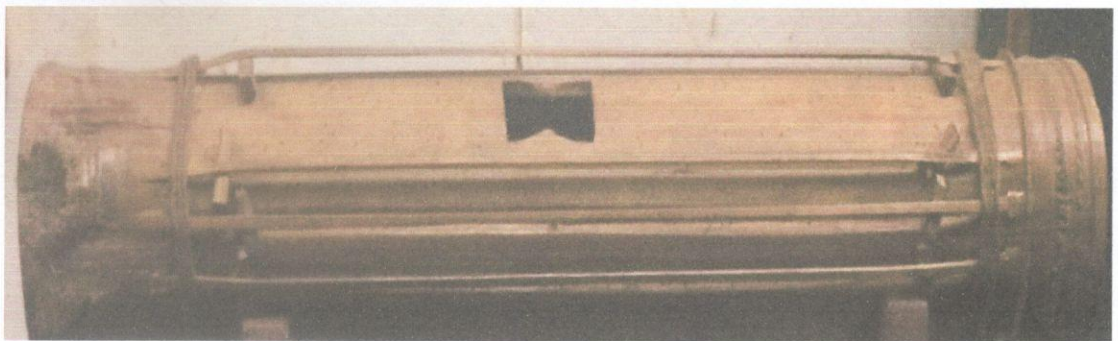
Tangmuri or flageoget



Mieng



Besli or Flute

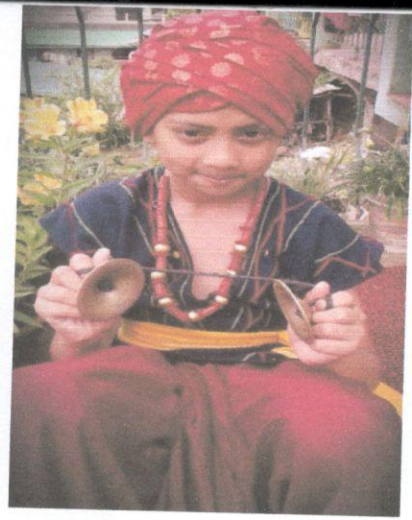


Ksing Dong





Duitara (Khasi)



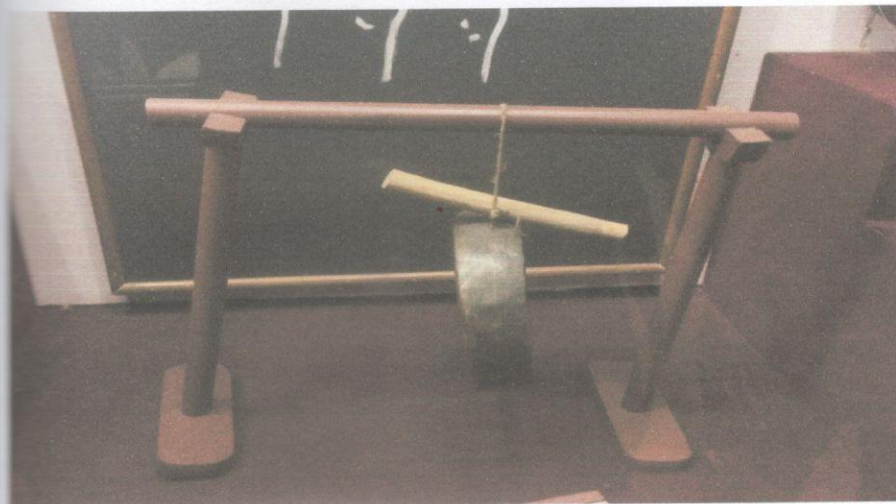
Kynshaw (Khasi)



Maryngod( Khasi)



## GARO MUSICAL INSTRUMENS



Rang

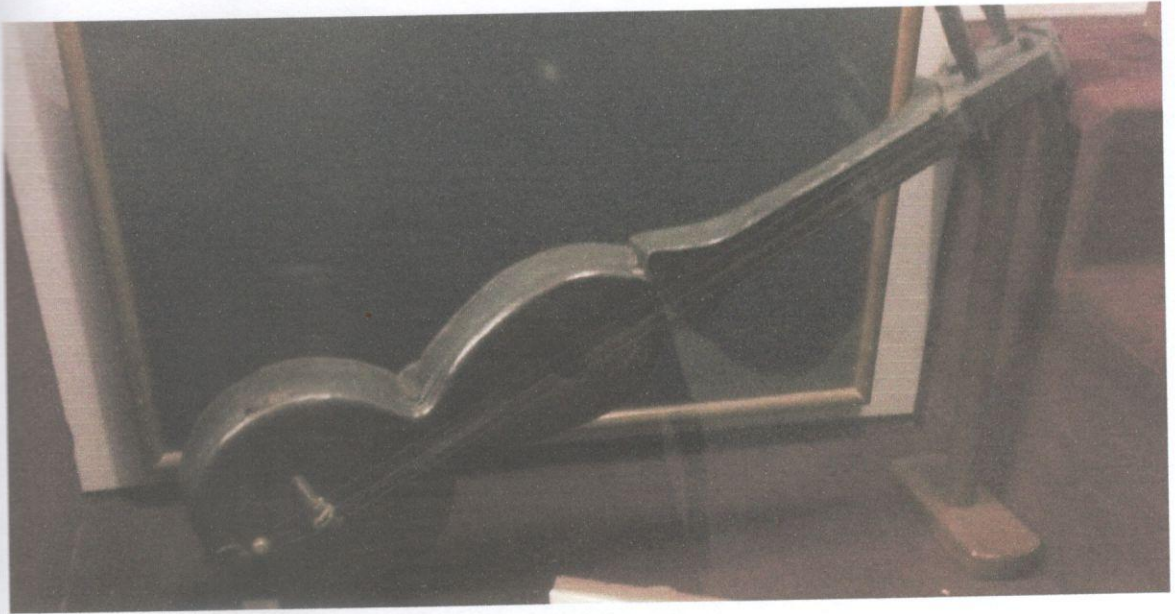


Dohtrong



Dama







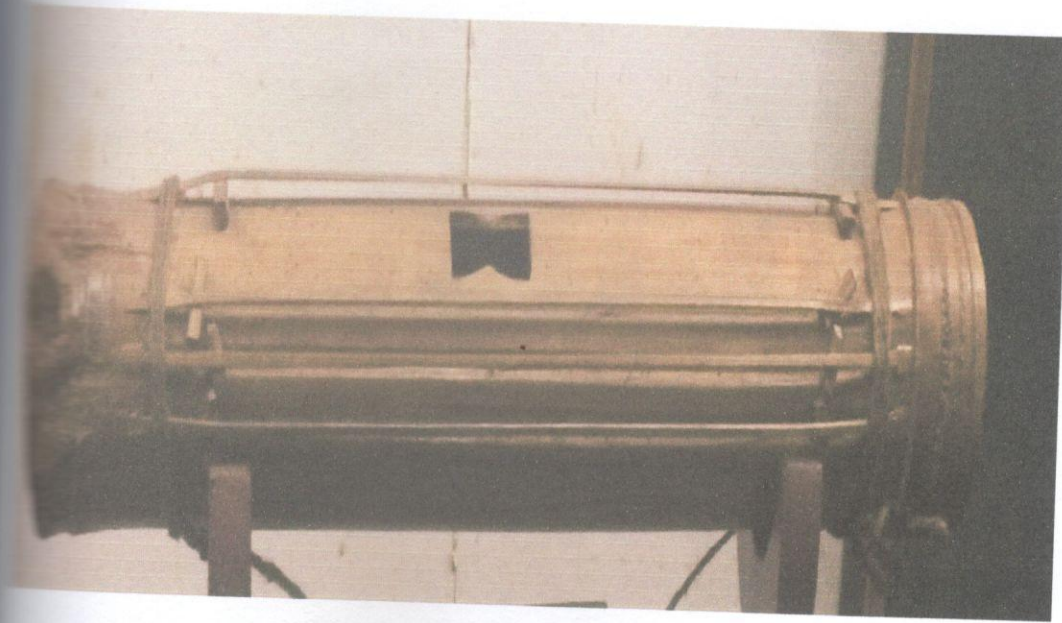
Dama



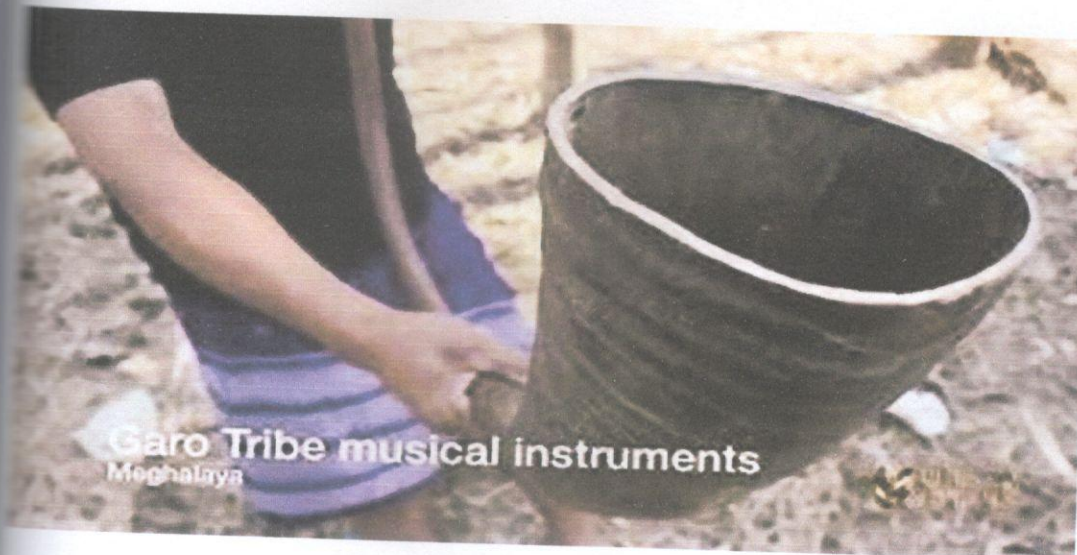
Chigring







Bansi



Garo Tribe musical instruments  
Meghalaya



Dohtrong

Dama





## Jaintia Musical Instruments



*Ramynthein*



*Ksing Kynring*



Duitara



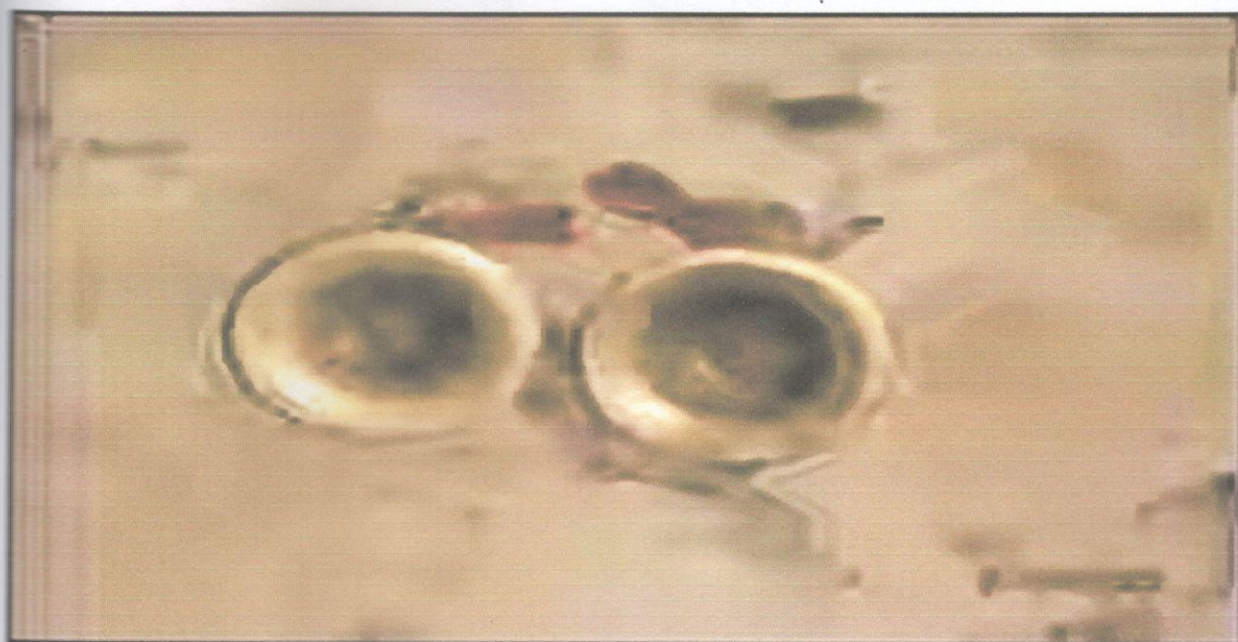
Ksing Thlong







Ksing Kynring and Duitara



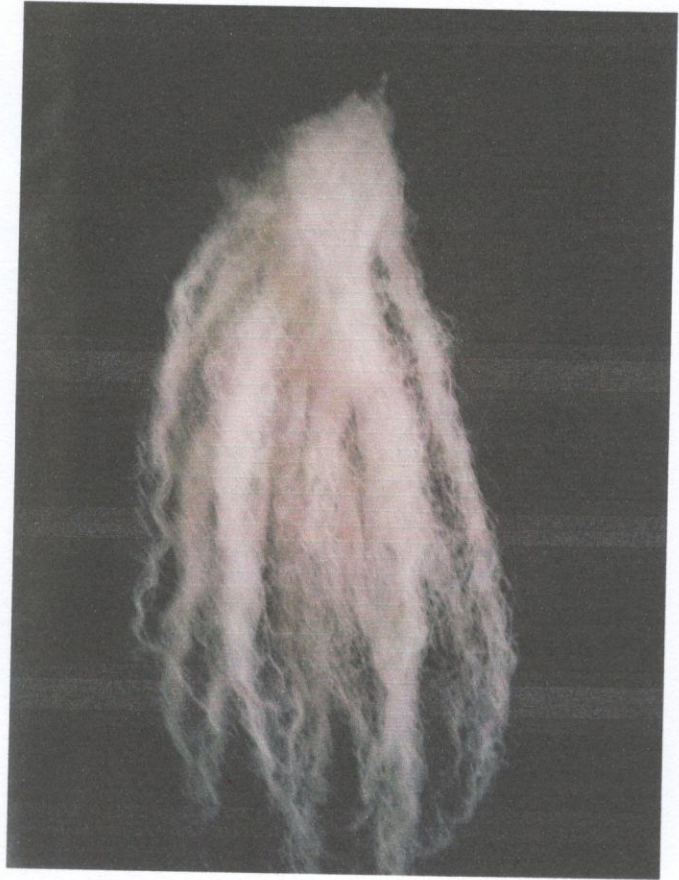
Shalamen



# TRADITIONAL DANCE COSTUMES OF MEGHALAYA



Garo dance attire



Symphiah

Thuia (Khasi)



Garo Headgear







Khasi dance ornaments



Dance Dress ornaments of the Khasi

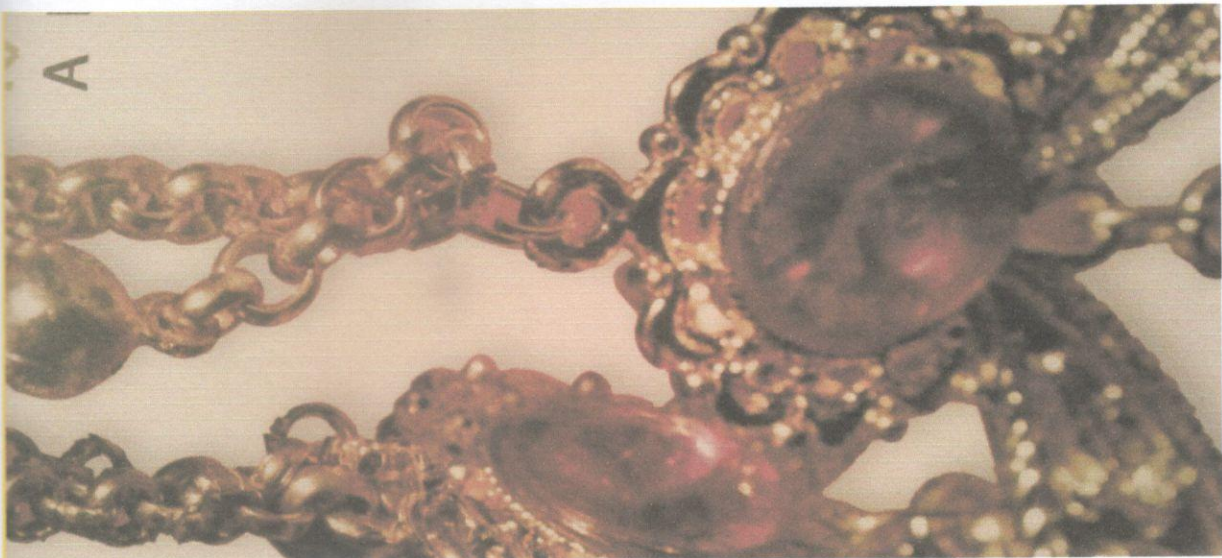




Mahu (Khasi)

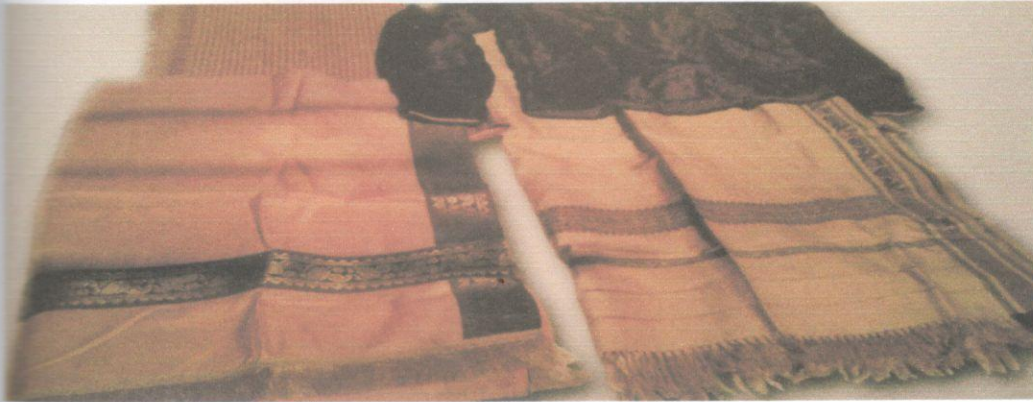


Taj (Khasi)

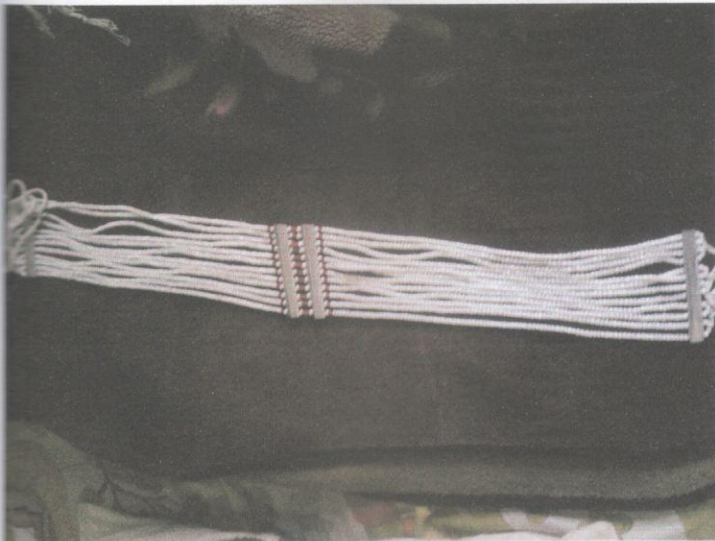


Golden chain (Khasi)





Dhara (Khasi)



Garo Belt

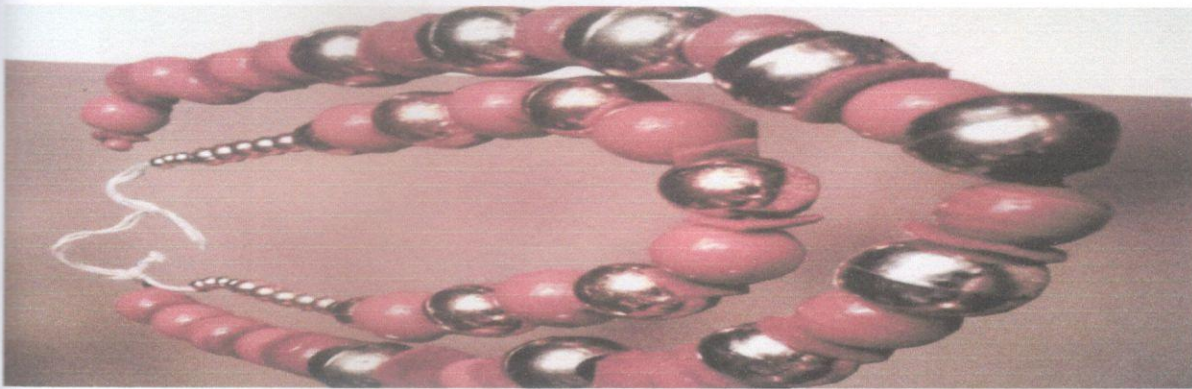


Dakbanda (Garo)



Pansngait or Crown (Khasi)





Paila (Khasi)

## FOLK DANCES OF MEGHALAYA

### Khasi Mastieh Dance





### Garo Wangala Dance



### Khasi Mastieh Dance





**Nongkrem Dance Of The Khasi**



**Bhoi Dance**





**Garó Musicians**



**Khasi Females in Traditional Dance Attire**





**Khasi Harvest Dance**



**Garo Wangala Dance**





**Jaintia Lahoo Dance**



**Jaintia Plate Dance**