

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

The Rites of Passages of the Karbis and the Role of Women: On Seeing Unlike a Feminist

Dr. Kamala Kanta Bori

Associate Professor (HoD), Department of English
North Lakhimpur College (Autonomous), Khelmati, North Lakhimpur, Assam, India

Abstract:

The 'Karbis' (Mikirs) of the Northeast India, are one of the oldest aboriginal ethnic tribes belonging to Mongoloid stock genealogically and Tibeto-Burman linguistically. They possess a vibrant cultural lease of life moulded by myriad rites and rituals bequeathed by a good number of great tradition-bearers of the yesteryears and perpetuated with utmost reverence by their posterity through oral tradition. This has been possible because of the strong collective racial memory, patriotic zeal and consciousness of ethnic identity. It is noteworthy that despite the patriarchal structure of the community, the Karbi women completely dominate the ritualistic domain of the tribe by playing a pivotal role in the entire rites of passages. This would appear crystal clear, if we alter our perspectives towards the status of the Karbi women in the society they belong. Such an attitude is indispensable in understanding and evaluating a particular society because no one is licensed to misrepresent the cultural ethos of a community. Thus, on seeing unlike a feminist, and debunking Beauvre's conviction, we realize that the Karbi women are not marginalized by their male counterparts in the society, rather, are highly deified. The author attempts to explore the rites of passages performed by the Karbis within the narrow gamut of this paper by establishing the prominence of the 'second sex' in performing and sustaining some indispensably important rites and rituals—the life-force of their culture.

Keywords: Ethnic tribes, rites and rituals, tradition-bearers, collective racial memory, rites of passages, 'second sex'.

1. Introduction

The 'Karbis', popularly known as the 'Mikirs' in the government official records and notifications of pre-colonial as well as independent India and the state of Assam till 1976, (vide Govt. of Assam Notification No. TAD/115/74/47 dated 14/10/1976)^[i], and dubbed, willy-nilly, as the 'Vasco de Gama of Assam' by Bishnu Prasad Rabha, one of the prominent cultural maestros of Assam, ethnically are believed to have descended from the Kuki-Chin stock of the greater Indo-Mongoloid race, and linguistically belong to the Tibeto-Burman language family. Depending on the geographical and topographical divergences of their habitats the Karbis are known by various names; such as, 'Inglong āso', 'Doomrā āso', 'Thoi āso', 'Bhoi' and so forth, though they prefer to identify themselves as 'Ārleng'^[ii]. At present they are reported to inhabit in Karbi Anglong, North Cachar Hills^[iii], Golaghat, Sivsagar, Nagaon, Morigaon, Kamrup, Sonitpur, and Lakhimpur districts of Assam; Ri-bhoi district of Meghalaya, Papumpare (Lower Subansiri) district of Arunachal Pradesh; Nagaland; Manipur; and Sylhet district of Bangladesh with disproportionate demographic density or distribution. The hierarchical structure of the community is invariably patriarchal, but by judging the influence the women folks exert upon the society and its culture as evinced through their pivotal role associated with the rites of passages, one is likely to be induced to believe it to be a matrilineal like that of the Khasi tribes of Meghalaya, India, if not, out and out matriarchal one.

Procreation without involving both male and female—metaphorically, active and passive or positive and negative forces or the vice versa, is or can never be possible in reality. All the cosmogonic or origin myths, analytically speaking, are thus metaphors of union of these mutually constructive dichotomous agents of procreation and the consequent results of their union. What can be syllogistically deduced from the major types of cosmogonic myths is that each of these archetypes expounds the worldview of the believers, which invariably relates to the treatment or projection, exaltation or subversion of a particular gender. However, there is a cardinal difference between the creation of the worldview and sustenance of the same in the ever evolving process of civilization, which can be measured through the importance a community or a race attaches upon gender.

2. Discussion

The existence of such a dichotomy, the basic and undeniable truth of all the beings and other myriad cosmic creations, had since time immemorial been recognized and accepted by many a primitive human races of the world, and thus endeavoured to create a congenial social atmosphere and order involving this dichotomy in their prehistoric days. While living in the world without letters the primitive

people used to preserve their wonderful experiences of this indecipherable cosmic forces and designs through many interesting tales and stories, which were stored in the mass memory and perpetuated from generation to generation through mouth. The Karbis, who believe to have originated from a mythical bird, i.e., 'Vo' plākpi^[1], also could not imagine of living without the acceptance of these enigmatic cosmic forces that had taught them to recognize the duality manifested in the cosmic order, rather tried to live peacefully in conformity with that order. Thus, we come across a rich cornucopia of oral narratives in Karbi in which their recognition of and adherence to that cosmic order get vividly manifest. The recognition of this dichotomy must have induced the Karbis to accept and introduce a social hierarchical order in which men and women are proportionately empowered and enjoy equal amount of freedom and liberty. Theirs is a perfect example of an egalitarian society without the existence of male chauvinism and gender discrimination. The women or the weaker sexes of the Karbis enjoyed respectable status and recognition as portrayed in their oral narratives of the yesteryears, which in reality, was the inevitable outcome of the recognition and acceptance of the duality of the biological and elemental forces— their coexistence and compatibility, awareness and adoration that moulded their folk wisdom and worldview. This concept of worldview is inseparably interwoven into the core of their cultural tradition transmitted through mouths ever since the bygone past till the modern age almost without discernible modifications. This observation will become conspicuous, if we analyze the oral or folk narratives of the Karbis, but when we restrict our study only to the 'rites of passages' that form the corpus as well as the psyche of the tribe's traditional culture, we perceive the dominance of the women over their male counterparts almost leaning towards matriarchal social structure.

2.1. Rites of Passage and the Influence of the Karbi Women

The women folk in the Karbi society dominate the entire lifecycle. Right from the rituals associated with the birth of a child (*Klongklo Āthekār*) and marriage (*Ādām Āsār*) to the funerary (*Chomāngkān or Thikārhi*) it is the Karbi women who take the lead.

2.1.1. 'Klongklo Āthekār'—The Purification of the Newborn

The ritual meant for purification of the newborn baby is called 'Klongklo Āthekār'. The name of the very ritual is onomatopoeically derived from the dropping sound the babe produces at the time of delivery on the floor made of chopped bamboo inside the stilted traditional Karbi house. The ritual of 'Klongklo Āthekār' is performed with a view to purifying and protecting the newcomer from any kind of impurity and all kinds of evil ghosts and spirits as well as satanic forces. It is interesting to note that no male being can take part of whatsoever kind in such ritualistic occasion. The ritualistic chant that is recited in unison only by the women gathered for the purpose just after the delivery of the baby runs as under:

Kārbi aso', kārbāk āso,
Hu āso' kāli, bāng āso' kāli.
Rāng ong kehāng, jisi lok kehāng,
Jisi pirthē kāhāche, mindār kāhāché.

(O, God! the baby just delivered is a human child, not animal. It has come to this world to establish relation with that of the human beings and to become human in all respect etc.)

2.1.2. 'Ādām Āsār'—The Traditional Karbi Wedding

The first marriage between human (Karbi) couple, as the folk song called 'Ādām Āporom' states, was performed by *Sumphong* and *Sumphi* known popularly as *Ve-Longbi Ingti* and *Hār-Longbi Timung*. It was, however, Hemphu^[2] who had first solemnized the holy conjugal bond between his sister, Rāsingjā and Longmukrāng, the son of Rāngmukrāng. The marriage between the son of Hār-Longbi and the daughter of Ve-Longbi in conformity with the custom first introduced by Hemphu at Miring Rongsopi town as advised by a wise old woman named Mārōngpi and that customary rite has been prevailing in the Karbi society till today. There are three different systems of marriage observed by the Karbi people, which are (i) *Ādām Āsār*^[3] (ii) *Horhāk Kāngthur*^[iv] and (iii) *Ādām Thonkok*^[v]. However, despite slight ritualistic differences perceived among the three different systems of Karbi marriage the nuptial songs sung during these socio-cultural occasions are almost alike.

Karbi wedding ceremony, 'Ādām Āsār', in generic sense, is actually the result of the system within systems which are arranged and obeyed in orderly phase-wise rituals. The system that enshrines these rituals is known as 'Piso Pāngri', which, however, is only the women's affair. If a family of the groom is desirous of getting a Karbi girl married to a son, then the family has to abide by three-phased rite prescribed by tradition, which demands the groom's family to approach the bride's family, i.e., the house of the maternal uncle, three times taking necessary offerings along with them, and the Karbi women alone conduct the entire processes of negotiation. The rituals can be briefly described as under:

(i) 'Nengpi-Nengso Kāchingki'— The Women's Negotiation:

The mother of the groom is required to go to the house of the would-be bride as a casual guest or visitor along with two or three married women and one bottle of 'Ārāk'^[vi] and she will have to express her desire to have the daughter of the particular house as bride for her son as well as her daughter-in-law, during her conversation with the mother on various stray topics. This initial phase of negotiation is called 'Nengpi-Nengso Kāchingki' i.e., 'the negotiation undertaken by women.'

(ii) 'Kepātini'— The Word of Confirmation:

The negotiation is further resumed with necessary offerings, such as, 'horbong'^[vii] as in the first phase after getting some positive signals from the mother of the bride during the previous negotiation. During this phase of negotiation a tentative date for the prospective marriage is decided and is called 'Kepātini', literally, 'the word of confirmation'.

(iii) 'Ājo-Ārni Kephā'— The Fixation of the Date for the Wedding:

During this third and final phase of negotiation the mother of the groom again would go to the bride's house with requisite offerings and would decide a definite date for the wedding during her negotiation with the mother. This decisive negotiation is called 'Ārjo-Ārni Kephā'. However, it is worth observing that the Karbi nuptial songs called *Thelu Ālun* are mostly sung by the male singers and the offering of admonitions or consolations to the hesitant bride also are usually come from the father and the father-in-law (usually maternal uncle). The Karbi nuptial songs speak proudly of the systematically organized worldview which the community shares alike. These songs are beautiful dialogues of verse full of moral exhortations exchanged between the parents or relatives of the bride and the groom maneuvered through proper ceremonial proceedings, which doubtlessly indicate the inherent and fertile poetic faculty as well as profound worldly wisdom possessed by the community as a whole. The nuptial songs called 'Thelu Ālun' in Karbi abound in poetic imageries, tender feelings and a touch of realism. Some examples of such songs are adduced to justify the veracity of the above observation:

(i) Sung by the bride's parent/party before negotiation:

"Jā sānglin pen klirme'
 Ān, sār ānghāng phuhe',
 Bongsuk pāngphārche'
 Khimā rimreche',
 Dengkindu tokche' (le')
 Thelu ārunme'
 Lo'hūmri nāngle' (ke')
 Piching ālāmthe'?"^[viii]

(O my *Sanglin* and *Klirni* (relation between the parents of both the groom and the bride), where are you leaving for with the support of stick at this old age characterized by weak eyesight and why are you showing such respect by stepping in to our poor hut?)

(ii) After the negotiation:

Non singkreng muntāle'
 Thembleng ārnime',
 Thelu ārunme'
 Dāmsār ālāmthe'
 Lo humri nāngle',
 Nāng, sipong pāt āpe'
 Phung ābi pār-e'
 Nāng jorlāng bongme'
 Rideng nāvonle' (rā)
 Soron nāngtongche',
 Nāng thelu tāngte'
 Sāmpūng pālāmthe'
 Ne jāng kādure'
 Tāng chojāk meme'.^[ix]

(On this auspicious moment/day of this Spring, putting on beautiful silk turban round your head, you have offered us so much respect and devotion by bringing a marriage proposal before us. But, albeit, we are still of the opinion that our daughter is very young (and so is not marriageable). Therefore, please, do not humiliate us anymore (by harping on this issue).)

(iii) On the eve of the final consent:

Sānglin pen klirni
 Ne jāng nāserli (ke')
 Klimme' tāineri,
 Bāng rongro' jui pāmi
 Pi sengjoimeji!
 Bāng-ju pālāmthe' i'
 Hemāi hānsāri
 Thip-theng āno'ki
 Mato pareri(ta)
 Rere anoki
 Chinhāk nāngchili (rā),
 Ruphā āserli
 Etāpli āngdi (te')
 Pū chojāk ūnji!^[x]

(O *Sanglin* and *Klirni*, our daughter is so young that she still beguile away her days by playing with her friends. She has not learnt anything as yet. Under this circumstance, if you send her back to our home after being unable to teach her the requisite art for house-keeping, we shall become the subject for calumny in the society. Then, how shall we cover our face before other people?)

(iv) ‘Oso’ Kāchinem’- the father’s (bride’s) admonition before parting:

O’ serli jāng serme’
Nāng hājong ātumke’
Bāng lo’ māthum lo’ he’,
Nāng hārchī kāme’
Ān sār ānghāng phuhe’
Bongsūk pāngphārche’
Khimā rimreche’
Boi phārān kāve’
Tāng ingjin meme’,
Nāng hājong ārunme’
Lo’ nāngpo’ serme’.^[xi]

(O! Darling! Your in-laws (usually maternal uncle) have come to take your hands, since there is none to take care of them at this old age. Therefore, O! Darling! Please comply with their request by going along with them.)

(v) ‘Mün Chārné’- Welcome song sung by the groom’s father:

Jū rāsūn ri-e’
Jon rāje’ vāngle’ (rā)
Pi ārje’ litke’
Hühū āserme (tā)
Hūmmesi chingbe’,
Nime’ rānike’
Erūn ehumme’
Lo’ ik lo’ nānghe’.^[xii]

(O! Darling, the other women also go to their real home (the house of the in-laws) as they attain maturity. Since you have also grown old enough to do so, let us go to our own home at this opportune moment of this auspicious day.)

(vi) ‘Oso’ Āngjir Chepāré’- Admonition-cum-Blessings offered by the bride’s parents/uncle:

O, serjāng serme’,
Nāng hārchī kāme’ (pen)
Nāng tokli kāme’
Āchārnām keme’
Thirji nāng humme’,
Nāng rindi keme’
Phāndār pālokre’.
Mo’ singkreng muntāle’
Nāng rūn nānghūmme’
Hūmri vāngji ne,
Jorlāng birtike’
Hing āhor keme’
Rideng nāvānre’ (non)
Serjāng serme’.^[xiii]

(O! Darling, may your conjugal life and home fill with wealth as a result of your obedience to your father/mother-in-law’s good advice so that we shall be able to come to your house next year (and can taste ‘jorlāng’, i.e., rice beer, prepared by your own hands.)

2.1.3. ‘Chomāngkān’ or ‘Thikārhi’— The Funerary

a) Kāchārhé- the Karbi dirge:

One of the most important rites of passages in Karbi socio-cultural life, without any demur, is the *Kāchārhé* or the ‘death-wailing’. The wailing or lamentation is intensely pathetic and heart-rending. The tradition of inviting a professional wailer at the event of the death of a person is not uncommon in various cultures of the world and the Karbis also invite such an expert female crier who wails on behalf of the bereaved family. She is known as the ‘*Ūchepi*’ or ‘*Chārhepi*’ in Karbi who in reality leads the dead back to the place whence he had come or had once belonged to, which by metaphorical implication hints at Heaven, the promised land. The genre of this song of lamentation is known in Karbi as ‘*Kāchārhé Ālun*’ through which the *Ūchepi* actually retraces the original homeland (metaphorically called as ‘long-lé ācheté’)^[xiv] with the help of memories for as comprehended by the community death is like a ‘return to his/her ancestor’s village’^[xv]. It takes two or three consecutive hours to complete ‘*Kāchārhé Ālun*’ and there are a few sub-classes of

this genre of song: *Lāng Pānglu*^[xvi]; *Ān Kepi*^[xvii]; *Tovār Kethān*^[xviii]; *Rong Kethān*^[xix]; *Kechām Kāngthi*^[xx] and so on. This particular sub-genre of the '*Kāchārhé Ālun*' can be classified as serious, spiritual or metaphysical songs so far as their thematic implications are concerned. The following are some specimens of such '*Kāchārhé Ālun*':

(i)

Iru chom ārong,
Choki pā' chenglong,
Lo'ti nāngjā pon /
Mukindon āngling lo'ti kephā pon
Borli kebāt jong, iru chom ārong
Ketāng chechār dong // ^[xxi]

(The soul of the deceased will have to cross a very high hill named Mukindon with great difficulties).

(ii)

Nānginchi hāmpur mā
Ārleng āpok long
Nāngching dākong,
Pipot āduk cho ānāt mā
Chun Chunāok tekāng .// ^[xxii]

(You were born as human being at the cost of strenuous religious performances. Why have you gone to an unknown land leaving us alone?)

b) '*Kepā-er Ālun*' of the Chomāngkān:

Chomāngkān is both funerary rituals and a festival full of music, song and dance, which reflects the complete profile of the culture of the Karbis and their worldview, and thus can be considered as the soul of their culture. The '*Kepā-er Ālun*', a sub-genre of the '*Kāchārhé Ālun*' can be designated as frolicsome youthful songs associated with mundane and secular affairs of life like mutual love and attraction and other tender feelings and emotions. These songs are sung usually by unmarried young boys are filled with erotic implications and hence can pertinently be interlinked with that of the archetypal fertility rites. Although the Karbi boys only participate in singing the '*Kepā-er Ālun*' yet the maidens are the epicenter of their heart's restlessness and commotion as well as the centre of attraction. The following stanzas can serve as pertinent examples:

(i)

Nono ibi ālāchā kān
Lāchā kān necheng oilom
Vāi thekos longle' nāngphān. ^[xxiii]

(My mind was disappointed having not seen you at the Chomangan site.)

(ii)

Mongvepi nānglé phārokong pen phārché
Kāngthu chibāté;
Lāsi né sengvé
Ingjārāji mon-é
Seng chiber un-é. ^[xxiv]

(The Spring has arrived. The completion between *Simolu* (Silk cotton tree) and *Modar* (Indian coral tree) in respect of blooming thus has begun. Likewise, due to the impact of the spring season my mind becomes uncontrollable. O, my dear sweetheart, I am unable to resist my mind.)

3. Critical Analysis

In addition to the above-adduced instances of vital freedom and exalted status that the Karbi women enjoy while living in the society, the deification as well as recognition as the custodians of the community life and as the preserver of the ethnic, cultural identity, they also are empowered to exercise sufficient amount of rights in almost every walk of collective social life. If we minutely examine the jurisdiction of the power and functions of the Karbi women in their socio-cultural life vis-à-vis the injustices meted out to them leading consequently to gender discrimination, the balance-sheet of the freedom enjoyed by them comes out conspicuously. In addition to the examples of women empowerment corroborated by the various oral narratives of the community, the Karbi women also enjoy a sufficient amount of empowerment and liberty even in this modern era. A Karbi girl, for example, can dance hand in hand with a boy during *Chomāngkān*^[xxv] and *Sok Keroi*^[xxvi] festivals. She can adorn herself with whatever innovative clothes she likes, never is she compelled to get tattooed on the forehead to mar her feminine beauty today as it was in vogue in the forgotten past. The girl's consent is mandatory in case of arranged marriages; she can elope away with her lover without inviting familial or social stigma. A woman might, in some vulnerable moments and compelling circumstances, commit adultery or even *Lāisenem*^[xxvii] yet they are not looked down upon in the society, provided they perform some rites of purification. The rigidity once associated with the kind of punishment regarding *Lāisenem* has been abolished today. Those erring women as well as the widows can always go for respectful remarriage. Barring few exceptions, the area of trade and commerce in Karbi society are monopolized by women. No ritual chanting while performing any rites of passages and other socio-religious ceremonies is possible without the invocation to the goddesses and female deities of the Karbis, i.e. the name of *pithe*', *pimukrāng*, *pirinjā*^[xxviii] must precede *phute*', *pomukrāng*, and *porinjā*^[xxix] etc. Educational qualification or economic status is no criterion for ensuring respect in the social hierarchy, no matter how illiterate are

they the wives of the *Pinpo*^[xxx], *Hābé*^[xxxii] and *Sārthé*^[xxxiii] etc. enjoy equal respect and share during feasts or festive occasions. A Karbi wife or mother-in-law, according to tradition, must walk ahead of her husband or son-in-law while going off from the house. The restraint imposed upon a Karbi woman's freedom to talk to anyone has become flexible. Lastly, the highest order of liberty that a Karbi woman enjoys is that she is not bound to change her surname even after marriage, nor is she compelled to apply vermilion on her forehead.

Although we notice the supremacy of women over their men in case of the rites of passages in the traditional social structure of the Karbis, yet there are some exceptions in the entire hierarchical ramifications. Examples of gender discrimination abound in some areas of their composite cultural spectrum where the Karbi society assumes a rigid and impregnable mask of patriarchy and male-chauvinism. However, the amount of freedom that the Karbi women enjoy and the importance shown by the male counterparts towards them seem to be greater than the tolerable amount of discrimination they are subjected to. Instances of such discriminatory and unjust treatment toward the Karbi women can be multiplied but before doing it we need to analyze their nature and gravity, and of course, the cultural ethos and background in which they are born and brought up. It is so because when we talk of the primeval phenomenon of the creation of mankind we take into account two biologically different sexes male and female, *Purushā* and *Prakriti*,^[xxxiii] irrespective of cultural and religious worldviews. Ever since the beginning of human civilization, the duties and responsibilities of these two beings have been different and independent in nature in accordance with the cultural milieu and the worldview of the society concerned. Since men and women are interdependent, a society in the absence of the one or the other will turn destabilized and chaotic. Therefore, the contribution of both men and women towards the progress of a society must be proportionate, which cannot be neglected or left unaddressed.

4. Concluding Comments

Like so many communities and races of the vast universe the Karbi community also has a unique society, which is vibrant with typical language, cultural and ethnic identity of their own. The necessity and importance of the role being played by the Karbi women in this traditional social life since time immemorial, therefore, must be observed and analyzed with due attention. In doing so it will be easier for us to bring alive the real picture of the society in the past and the present. If needed be, necessary reformations should be made even by discarding some obstructive customs or by adapting them to suit the present. And in this context the gender discriminations which are supposed to be in vogue, though few in number, must be abolished in keeping with the present cultural scenarios.

The parameters of judging or critiquing the cultural dynamics of a particular community or race must not, however, be imported from alien cultures. Further, the duties and responsibilities either of men or women in any society cannot and should not in all cases be judged with mundane or material logic, for it is not obligatory that they should be mathematically commensurate according to gender or sex. However, the domination of male-chauvinistic attitude and its hegemonic imposition upon the so-called weaker sexes in any culture of the world cannot be overlooked, though the intention behind such a conventional provision or belief-system might not have been misogynistic in the beginning. The women of the Karbi society are found to be tradition-bound and their stoic acceptance of the culture and tradition of the society they belong to can very justifiably be taken as an indication of their happiness and satisfaction with a sense of belongingness.

It becomes pretty conspicuous that the Karbi women in the time of the yore as well as in the present day society enjoy equal status with their men, and play even greater, more formative and dominant role in lending a vibrant cultural lease and an ethnic identity. They enjoy sufficient amount of freedom in social, economic, political and religious spheres, balanced but not absolute. However, that balance or limitation is not imposed or inhibited rather seems to have been devised out of mutual understanding and necessity. That understanding and necessity are born out of their recognition and acceptance of the dichotomy or duality of biological and elemental forces— their inevitable coexistence, fusion, and inter-dependence, and above all, their constant formative influence, which is not possible for the 'One' to realize its meaning without the 'Other'. What is of paramount importance in this context is that the restraints, taboos, limitations, injustices, which are construed as gender discrimination or subversion, are part and parcel of the unique cultural identity of the community, a culture that is nurtured and nourished by customs and traditions, not by written constitutions. Thus, there is ample scope and necessity in bringing reformations in keeping pace with the demands of the time, though simultaneously it is not advisable that we should espouse for complete abolition of the various paraphernalia of our cultural heritage unscrupulously in the name of novelty. Judged from deeper perspective and logical reasoning, the cultural entity that binds the people together since time immemorial, is buttressed upon gender equity which by nature is typical of their unique worldview characterized by a congenial atmosphere to live for both the sexes. With such a congenial social atmosphere inspiring women at all times to express their inherent talent and potential, perhaps, no Karbi woman in the distant future will experience any ineffable psychological trauma born out of gender discrimination in the society. None of them, probably, would lament like Simone de Beauvoire: "*One is not born a woman; rather becomes, a woman;...It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature...Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as an Other.*"^[xxxiv] Let us hope then the male counterparts of the Karbi women should also start relooking at things with more holistic approach so that the mothers— the progenitors of the community as well as the life-force of their culture, never stop consoling their crying infants on their backs or in the cradle with sweet and moving lullabies as quoted below:

“Ālādung lādung
lā neri mādūng,
jonpān the' dūngdūng (te')
lā nerindi māhum,
pirthāk pāngreng klung.”^[xxxv]

(When my daughter will grow and reach her juvenility/youth, she will weave wonderfully and intricately designed clothes for her brothers).

5. References

- i. A mythical peahen.
- ii. Head God of the household, the Sustainer.
- iii. Karbi traditional wedding ceremony.
- iv. A custom of offering a basketful of rice beer as a token of respect for negotiating a marriage deal.
- v. An alternative custom of marriage in cases where a valid traditional wedding ceremony cannot be observed due to some taboos or beliefs regarding the justness or ominous circumstances that might arise in granting social sanctity to the bride-groom.
- vi. A strong spirit distilled at home.
- vii. A traditional container of rice beer made from dry shells of bottle-gourds.
- viii. Kro, Bidorsing. Karbi Kimbadanti Sankalan, 15. (translation mine)
- ix. Ibid, 15.
- x. Ibid, 15.
- xi. Ibid, 15.
- xii. Ibid, 15.
- xiii. Ibid, 15.
- xiv. Literally, the navel of the earth.
- xv. 'Ārong Kāchevoi' in Karbi euphemism.
- xvi. The act of purification by washing the dead body.
- xvii. The act of offering food to the deceased while the dead body is kept in a separate for two –three days before burial.
- xxviii. The showing of the path supposed to lead the deceased to his/her final destination.
- xix. The symbolic act of showing of the 'ancestor's village' by the professional wailer. Metaphorically to 'the place whence he/she came from'.
- xx. The act of purification of the household after the burial of the dead..
- xxi. Sarma, N.C. Oral Songs of Tribal Communities of Assam, AIRTSC on behalf of Jagdish Patgiri, Secy. Assam Sahitya Sabha, First edition, 2006, 186. (Translation mine)
- xxii. Ibid, 186.
- xxiii. Sharma, N.C. op cit. 189.
- xxiv. Ibid.
- xxv. Funerary ritual/festival.
- xxvi. A pre-harvest agro-based festival of the Karbis.
- xxvii. Adultery committed by a boy and a girl belonging to same clan.
- xxviii. Invoking female deities.
- xxix. Invoking male deities.
- xxx. A high-ranking dignitary in a traditional Karbi political administrative system in the past.
- xxxi. A village-head having control over more than one village-heads in a vicinity.
- xxxii. A village-head.
- xxxiii. A Vedic concept of male-female as progenitors leaning on to patriarchy.
- xxxiv. Barry, Peter. Beginning Theory; Second Edition. Manchester University Press: USA. 2007, 130. Print.
- xxxv. Sathi Teronpi. "Mor Dristit Karbi Nari". Vojaru Ahir. Assam Sahitya Sabha (Souvenir), Diphu Session, Diphu: Assam, 1982, 24. Print.
- xxxvi. Barry, Peter. (2007) Beginning Theory. Second Edition. USA: Manchester University Press.
- xxxvii. Das, Sailen. (2003) Karbi Sanskritir Prabah. Diphu, Karbi Anglong: Assam Sahitya Sabha.
- xxxviii. Kro, Bidarsing. (1998). Karbi Kimbadanti Sankalan. In Longkam Teron (Ed.), Ve Longbi, Har Longbi. (pp 12-20) Diphu, Assam: Diphu Sahitya Sabha.
- xxxix. Sarma, N.C. (2006). (1st edition). Oral Songs of Tribal Communities of Assam. Guwahati: Assam Sahitya Sabha.
 - xl. Teron, D. S. (2008). (1st edition). Karbi Studies. New Delhi: AnGik Prakashan.
 - xli. Teronpi, Sathi. (1982). Vojaru Ahir. In Rongbong Terang & Sailen Das (Ed).. Mor Dristit Karbi Naree. (pp 21-26) Diphu, Assam : Assam Sahitya Sabha.