

থুনস্লাই

THUNSLAI

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About Thusnlai

Thusnlai is a literary e-journal of translation from Bodo to English published by the *Sansri* Literary Trust. The literary creativity in the language is helped and strengthened by the spurt of translation activities in which the writers writing in Bodo are engaged. This is but natural that newly developing language would endeavour to enhance its literary production by translating from its neighbouring languages. It is worth mentioning here that besides the translations into Bodo from other languages, there are also the translations from Bodo into other languages. The tendency for this grew among the Bodos very recently. The translation of the Bodo short stories into English by Jaykanta Sarma and the publication of those Bodo short stories by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi are also a remarkable contribution in this field. Bodo Sahitya Sabha has brought a collection of Bodo short stories in English entitled A Collection of Bodo Short Stories published in 2008. This collection has incorporated short stories by the established and accomplished story writers as well as new Bodo short story writers.

However, translation from other languages to Bodo has really proved to be very encouraging and effective for the development of the language. Translated works like these will not only increase the number of Bodo books but will also enable the readers of other language to know a bit about the trends and development in this particular genre which is very necessary in the present context for every literature.

The primary objective of the journal is to translate and publish online the selected pieces from Bodo literature covering the fictional and non-fictional genres, poetry, play, and critical works in the Bodo language to make them available for a broad based global readership. The journal also publishes research articles, creative and critical writing and offers a wide range of literary forms-poetry, short story, novel, play, essay, conversation, book reviews and the like.

Besides presenting the work of established Bodo authors and poets *Thusnlai* will promote new talents and young writers.

Besides the publication of translated literature, the journal also publishes research works in Bodo literature.

Thusnlai invites translated work that meets the broad objectives of the journal from both professionals and amateurs from India and abroad. But the main focus will be on Bodo creative writing in the contemporary times.

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We, on behalf of the Sansri Literary trust and Thunslai, welcome you to the beautiful and enchanting world of Bodo Literature. It is impossible to present whatever is written in Bodo language in last 100 years or so in humble e-Journals like ours.

Anyway, It was our present persistent dream to bring out such a journal in English. Today, with the launching of the first issue of Thunslai, this dream has come true. We are committed to present before the Literary World in Bodo fiction, poetry and other genres through translation. Translation is the only medium through which we can reach out to readers in Indian regional languages. We know pretty well that literary world and readers in other languages almost unaware of the unfamiliar with the best literary walks in Bodo languages. Hence there is an urgent necessity to translate the best walk into English and other national or regional languages. We hope the publication of this will be able to serve this purpose.

In this maiden issue of Thunslai, we have included short stories of Arabinda Uzir and Mina Kherkatary. In poetry section we have included poems by Mwdai Gahai, Dharendra Daimary, Maijli Rani Brahma, Monalisa Basumatary and Rujab Muchahary, Anu Brahma. In Review/Criticism section we have included critical writings by Sonamainao Boro and Dr. Ada Ram Basumatary

Hope the interested readers will encourage us by visiting our website and enjoy the rasa and beauty that is embedded in Bodo literature.

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Fiction

Lost Address of the Heart

Bodo Origin: Arabinda Uzir
Translated by: Dr. Anjali Daimari

As if the words have left me
Why should I worry for that?
If the words wouldn't have left me
Life itself would have left me.

His friend was also a poet. It was he who had written the above poem. As time passed by, circumstances forced him to part with poetry. Words eluded him. But he did not care. Because, now he thinks that he is able to keep abreast with the changing times. Now he has no dearth of anything except service to mankind and poetic gift. He thinks that it is better to change oneself with the changing times than to change the world through the medium of poetry. He now believes it is not through poetic words but with money that one can build one's life.

However, Onaru couldn't leave the attraction of words. He plays with words, considers words to be his life. But, today he reflects - who has made the mistake? Is it he or his friend Dahar, for which reason, today he is left on the shore like a dry leaf.

In the pretext of taking a job he has been staying in Uzaan Bazaar, Gauhati for many years. Here he has become part of poet's circle. He was happy to meet likeminded friends like him.

Without any wink of sleep at night he looked towards the face of the morning. The sun had not yet shed its rays on the sky. He came outside but there was no one waiting for him. Life in the city begins very early in the morning. Not able to tell anyone of his sorrows he once again entered his house.

He looked at his books properly. He was not able to buy these books in one or two years. After considerable efforts his library finally took shape. In between he went to many places. He had the opportunity to go. When he came back he never returned empty handed, that is how these books accumulated. But, now sadly all these books would go to Panbazaar book shops where old books are sold, to fulfill the thirst of an anxious reader. He took the books from the shelf and kept it on the floor. He took out the old books first. Among them were old books from his college and university days. Associated with them were many of his early experiences but he has no intention of reviving them because those memories will give him nothing but sorrow.

After taking out the old books he started taking out his latest collection. His hands stopped at Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. He felt the covers of the book and went back to Russia's Moscow, where he got the scope to go as a poet. At that time there was an environment in Russia to present one's poems, short stories and novels. People used to hold these works with regard. He had met many Russian poets. He was happy to meet those poets and received lot of praise from them. On his departure he was given books by

Tolstoy, Pushkin and Sholokov. Many of the classics available in our country also added to the richness of his library. But now all these will go in order to fulfill someone's want.

In another almira he saw Lorca's and Paz's collection of poems. He saw through the eyes of Lorca Gooseberry country but he never thought that one day he himself will see it with his own eyes. He saw Lorca's balcony and in Spain's earth looked for if he could find traces of Lorca's blood. Besides that, his almira was filled with books by black and white authors. Now he freed the almira from the burden of holding these books.

He was also awarded a prestigious award of the country. He was given a lakh of rupees as prize money together with a citation. He spent major part of the money in the Book Fair in Kolkata.

As he took out the books they piled into a mountain. He did not keep even the books he had written. After looking at the books lying on the ground, he once again felt the books that were on the top of the pile when suddenly he was struck by a state of shock. He sat down on the ground and remained there for a while. After feeling better he went out. Not finding any small truck nearby he went some distance and managed to get a mini truck. The porters carried the books to the truck. He wrote the address of the book shop in Panbazaar and gave it to the driver.

After sometime he reached the book stall. Although he had talked out with them before, the shop opened only when he was there. He went home taking only one fourth of the money that was arranged by selling the books. Hiding the tears that were about to come out, he slowly walked towards Uzaan Bazaar. He was undecided where to go and what to do. He felt as if his mind forsook him. He felt lonely in a city crowded with people. He proceeded towards his home in fear as if he was walking through a forest.

He went to his reading room which was emptied just a while ago and locked the door. Sitting in his reading chair, with eyes half closed he started recalling the bygone days –

At that time he was student of a college. Since that time the birds of poetry nested in his heart. He wrote poems on exile and people with no time. Then his first collection of poem was released from the press. A poet's meet was organized in Calcutta for the budding poets. Among the galaxy of poets he met there was Madhumita. Madhumita was a poet from Assam. Though Madhumita had heard of Onaru they hadn't met each other. This meeting brought about understanding between them which later turned to love. There was a time when even their marriage took place smoothly. They started a family filled with happiness. They never felt complete in each others absence. They felt that without the other half there was no meaning in their existence. But perhaps the longevity of peace and happiness is not long. Time elapsed without caring for anyone. They were blessed with two children. Starvation and trouble quietly entered their house. Their quarrels drove away the harbinger of peace. Last night their quarrels reached its pinnacle. After quarreling for one hour Madhumita told him –

“No good person can have a family with you. Someday, one of us will die. Before something like this happens it is better for us to live separately.”

Then Onaru asked, “Have you given thought to what you are saying?”

“There is nothing more for me to think about. I have spoken after giving much thought to it”, replied Madhumita.

“Bring the divorce form and I will sign it,” said Onaru.

Madhumita went home yesterday by the evening bus. She took his two children along with her. He asked Madhumita to leave the children behind with him but Madhumita did not care. She did not tell him when she would get back. He did not know whether she would be coming back. He failed to comprehend how a house once united in love could now break like a yam tree. It was already evening but Onaru did not know how to get up from his sitting position. He thought how Madhumita came with so much love but left giving him a lot of sorrow. Though he could forget Madhumita it was not easy for him to forget his children. Even though Madhumita might not come and though their divorce was to come through, he still would like to keep his two children with him. But Madhumita snatched them away from him and took them with her. And so there was no way for him to get them back. He could not take any decision. With whom would he live now? The people for whom he had written evergreen poems, even for them other things now took preeminence. On every side there is envy and jealousy. People treat each other like pigs grazing and killing them. On every side there is killing and fear. He felt that life is like the drama by Shakespeare. Life also seemed meaningless to him. He thought –

“Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more; it is a table

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing.”

It is already evening. He got up. He thought of giving the money he got from the books to Madhumita because it was for want of money that he failed to give the peace and happiness they wanted. He went out of the reading room and went to their bedroom. He opened the almirah. He kept the money at the same spot where once stacked Madhumita’s jewelry. He closed the almirah and locked it. He kept the keys under the pillow in the bed that was unkempt and looked on all the sides. He sought the face of his children in their clothes that were hanging in the room. He took consolation in their memory imprinted in those clothes. Feeling their toys which were lying in the room he wondered how they grew in years playing those toys! He had no control over his feelings. His eyes were filled with never ending tears as they were flowing from its very source.

He again entered the reading room. The wall clock showed that it was almost night. He wiped his tears. He opened the hook of the door. He felt as if someone was calling him from outside. He walked up to the road. He walked away towards Panbaazar, Kacharigahat with the city and Brahmaputra in his eyes. For him there was nothing to look back to.

The Creeper

Bodo Origin: Mina Kherkatary

Translated by: Dr. Gargi Saikia

One, two, three,...three hundred rupees in all. Maidang counted twice and tucked it safely in the fold of the *douba*, the knot of her *dokhona*. She quickly adjusted her apparel, the *dokhona*, when all the customers had left. The three hundred rupees that she carefully counted was her income of the day from the vegetables that she brought to the market; five pumpkins, two pairs of coconuts, herbs, chilies, turmeric powder, and other items of daily use. A sense of fulfillment manifested as a smile on her face. "If only I could expand my little trade?" her expectant mind dreamt this dream; a dream of a colourful future dappled with red, blue, and the colours of the rainbow. "This is life", Maidang sighed, an irrepressible sigh full of expectations for the future.

Maidang's tiny shop, a makeshift stall in the market, now has everything that is required to cater to the daily needs of the villagers; from *kochu thari* to dried fish, *dhekia* herb to the *bhedailata* herb, everything. The village market, named after the village, is situated at the remote end of the village and in a small avenue there Maidang sets up her stall every evening by setting up a plastic tarpaulin. As the market is situated in the corner of the Gwranmakha village it is known as the Gwranmakha Chowk. Gwranmakha is a small village but this market caters to the many villages situated adjacent to it and as such this evening chowk has been able to make its mark as a reasonably big market. There is no dearth of meat or fish in the locality. The street that passes through the chowk now houses three or four grocery and stationery stores and tea stalls, and the locality is frequented by a reasonably large crowd, customers and vendors transacting their daily goods. This chowk is the stoic witness to all, those who persevered to earn their livelihood and also those who could not. And Maidang and Santhala are the living examples of both types.

When she began her life as a vegetable vendor, she felt shy to carry the bamboo basket filled with vegetables. A high school graduate Maidang, the only daughter among four sons from a well to do family, cursed her fate. Veiled in the cloud of sorrow and shyness, Maidang felt that everyone in the market stared at her gloomy face. When a customer approaches, the coy Maidang, waiting at a distance away from the basket, would manage to babble a price, without even looking up. Maidang had never been to the market before and consequentially had no idea about the values of the various items. Her aim was just to sell off all the items as quickly as possible, even though at rates much lower than the market price, and

go back home. For doing this she had to listen to the bitter comments of the fellow vendors. But now she is a veteran. Maidang being an educated woman understood the market very soon and could hold the reins of her trade. No one can cheat her now and she too would never sell off the items at prices lower than the market rate. Gradually Maidang could not only cater to the Gwranmakha Chowk but was able to carve a niche in the nearby markets- Singra, Maibra and Kalbari- as a reliable vendor. Customers seek her out in the crowd to buy her items. They feel her absence when she is not able to come to the market. Maidang is now a known face as a woman entrepreneur in the region. She has learnt the art of buying a local item and selling it there itself with a profit. Her stall is always abundant with all the seasonal produce.

“Ma, could you collect the amount that I asked for?”

Maidang looked up as she finished tucking her money in her *douba*. It was her eldest son Jaikhlone, her rainbow.

“Yes, my son, you are lucky. I could sell all the items today. Could earn some profit too. The pumpkins that I bought for twenty, I sold them at thirty rupees”, Maidang answered.

“Let’s go home Ma. It’s dark now and sister and brother would be afraid”, Jaikhlone uttered calmly.

“Jaikhlone take this money and get some fish, else your father would not have his dinner. I’ll try to sell the *lapha megong* in the meantime. This will fetch me the amount that your father takes from me every day”, said Maidang as she packed her stall for the day.

“Yes Ma”, Jaikhlone uttered as he looked at his mother’s face and strode along to get the fish for his father. “Ma really works hard for us. If only father would understand her pains?” Jaikhlone thought painfully.

Maidang watched Jaikhlone and as she waited for the customers her mind wandered off to open the thoughts cloistered somewhere in her mind. Jaikhlone, her rainbow. Alongbar, her star. And, Dodere, her darling daughter. They are her creations, her inspiration to live. They are her hope to conquer the trials of life with a smile. It is her responsibility towards them that gave Maidang the courage to change herself from the coy person to a bold entrepreneur; just as a snake sheds its skin Maidang came out of her old image. She is no longer shy. Nor is she afraid of the market. She is no longer a creeper. Maidang now is a full grown tree with bowers, twigs, leaves. Other creepers take her support to move ahead. She is not only a responsible mother, but a father too.

Maidang's sole responsibility now is to nurture her three children with good education and values. She wishes that her children would never imbibe their father's nature. She prays to God that though his genes run in their veins his devalued nature should not surface in them. Naive at heart, Maidang feels guilty to think so. Yet in her mind she wishes for it. Just as the mother hen keeps her chicks protected under her wings from predators, she too tries to shield her children from the shadows of their father's nature.

"Give me three bundles of *lafa megong* (a leafy vegetable), what are you thinking, sister?" a customer interrupted.

"Oh", Maidang sheds off her thoughts and hands over the *lafa megong*. Packing off the last bundle of the herb left, she cranes her neck to seek Jaikhleng. She thinks of cooking the *lafa megong* with the fish that he brings.

Waiting for her son Maidang goes back to her thoughts again. "Why will a mother think so about her children's father if he is a good soul?" Her mind wanders off to the yesteryears.

Maidang had just passed her tenth grade when she was married off to Santhala from Gwranmakha. Though, Santhala could not pass his tenth grade, yet the picture that was given to Maidang's parents was that he was a businessman and from a very well to do family from Gwranmakha. Fearing that they might not get a better match for their daughter, they waived Maidang's wishes for further studies and gave her hand in marriage to Santhala. Thus, Maidang's wheel of life. It took very little time for her to find out that her husband was a good for nothing. He owns no business and nor has he passed his eighth grade. His daily activities begin in the Chowk with his *adda* with other similar good for nothing characters and end with them; washing his face in the chowk and having his morning tea in the *Bajwi* tea stall, till his evening bout of drinking. His so called business revolves around serving snacks with alcohol and drinks in a stall in the chowk. His share of profit- a free serving of the beverage and snacks. Santhala was an ailing part of the society that whiles away their productive hours in gambling and gossiping. When he comes back home Santhala is always in an inebriated condition. Maidang has to pull his weight from the gate; else she has to bear his wrath.

"A wife's duty is to care for her husband. You look after me and you can reach heaven directly. Your husband is your god", says Santhala.

"To call yourself god you have to have godly qualities too", thought Maidang. "You cannot earn respect with force and anger."

It pained the new bride Maidang to learn that her parents-in-law has to support Santhala's needs; even his debts to satiate his alcoholic nature. Santhala's parents had to pay everyone from whom their son had borrowed. Knowing that his parents are well to do, people come to them to get back their due. They too had to pay fearing that their image would be tarnished. Gradually, their fortune decreased, and they too left this world. With his parents gone, Santhala became a rudderless boat. It took only three years to sell all his valuables that his parents left for him. One by one he sold his entire property. The expensive trees in the garden, the fruits, the paddy fields; all. Only the roof above his head was left. Penniless Santhala, as always he was, would never take care of his wife and children. But he knew that whatever happens, he can always force his wife to get a share of her meager earnings every evening.

Maidang was totally lost. She could see only darkness. No prospects about the future. Yet her motherly instinct to nurture her children made her grope in the darkness. She has to come out of this. But how?

One day carrying her toddling daughter on her back, and with a bamboo basket filled with vegetables from her backyard, laden on her head, Maidang started her new journey. A journey towards a new beginning, filled with hope. It continues till today.

Maidang carefully kept the three hundred that she earned today. Jaikhlong would have to pay his examination fees for his twelfth grade. An extra three hundred was required.

Society dubs women as creepers. They need support to move up. But Maidang thought, "Is it so? If women are creepers then what do we call men like Santhala who cannot give anything to the family and society? Creepers?"

The Midnight Song

Bodo Origin- Mwdai Gahai

Translated by- Dr. Devakanta Ramchiary

You would be awaited for
 Till morning by me
 In the realm of hottest sunlight of the summer
 Or in scrolling rains of rainy season
 Either in the deserted desert
 Or inside the coldest hole of ice
 Let the tempest hit
 Let the earthquake
 Jerk the globe in it's maximum intensity
 Let the avalanche bury
 Let the stand storm blow
 You would be awaited
 With endurance
 You promised to come
 Walking with your bare soft sole
 Over the greenish grasses
 In spiral way
 But the Sun is about to set
 No sweet sound of your rhythmic walk
 With musical sounds of clothes worn by you
 In every slow steps
 Have you forgotten the way
 Or lizard crawling across
 And diverted the way
 Or you could not come out
 From inside your dearest cottage
 But you promised really
 To come over this way
 With sweetest smile
 You would be awaited
 Till the next full morning

Don't Ask My Birthday, Merlin

Bodo Origin- Mwdai Gahai

Translated by- Dr. Devakanta Ramchiary

Merlin

Don't ask my birthday and date

Time, weight etc.

I was not told by my parent

Nor told by my neighbours

Not found inside the old

Half broken rusted tin box

In the layers of torn clothes either

Of my mother

Grew unknowingly, I passed my past

While my admit card

Reached me

I saw my birth date

Judged by my teacher

Celebration hardly in memories

Merlin, not to be asked my birthday

While I am in nervous mood

While I am in deep feeling of sorrow

I try to celebrate my birthday without date

Only alone

With tearful eyes

I don't know how many times

Merlin, don't ask my birthday, again and please again

Melancholy

**Bodo Origin- Dharendra Daimary
Translated By- Dr Sunil Phukan Basumatary**

Within your melancholic heart
I know not what you do search about

Rolling tears you from my eyes
Finding you mom in broken soul

Shrouded with deep sorrow
Like a dumb struck statue of your look
Mom Myself found inflamed
Like that of husk flame

Only to know mom
Reason of your melancholy

Soul Space

**Bodo Origin- Maijli Rani Brahma
Trans. By- Dr. Sunil Phukan Basumatary**

The infinite *Airakhi*
Riding on in the sky of soul
Flashes of unbounded joy
Sparkling all around
In the airy fairy feelings

But...
Shocked...
Facing the sudden failure.

Bother not over bygone
Let bring forth for the future
The destined aspirations
Being stirred constantly to march forwards
In the soul courtyard...

But the failure one lures to snatch away
The deep rooted space.

Success and failure
Both are combating on
For the soul courtyard

Aspiring Peace

Bodo Origin- Monalisa Basumatary
Trans. by- Dr Sunil Phukan Basumatary

Just live a life looking for peace
 But know not from where it happens
 Sad and plight must be there with all souls
 Tears and sweats often encounter with most of the lives of men
 Hide it before blood stained soul mates
 Life river edge gets eroded day by day
 So I do toil the life swimming across the sea of life
 Yes! One day must get peaceful rest at graveyard!!

Festival of the Beasts

Bodo Origin: Rujab Muchahary
Translated by: Author

The freedom grows in the steps of the beasts
 The dream breaths in the eyes of the beasts

Silence of the midnight swallowed by them
 The stars falls itself to the hell
 In the heart of the sunrays too
 Wonderful scenes of beast scratching each other

The character of day and night change into terrible face
 The moment passing on by telling many hidden old and new stories

It is the time for them to make merry
 It is the time to dispose the dead body of humanity
 In the name of funeral of humanity
 There is festival and festival everywhere.

Let the Folk Wakeup

Bodo Origin: Rujab Muchahary

Translated by: Author

For the time being
I have hanged my eyes on the roof of the innocent sky
I have hanged my hands on the same place
I have stitched my mouth with the needle of situation
The two legs devoid of any identity have been tied
On the immortal tree of time

In the days when the folks escape from their home
The eyes of feelings could not see the need of eyes
The mind could not feel the need of hands
The mind could not think the need of words from mouth
The broken heart could not believe the need of legs

Let the folk wakeup and sing the song of human
Let the midnight deliver the rays of light

After all
I will request the time for the freedom of
My eyes hands legs and the mouth

In Search of Self

Bodo Origin: Rujab Muchahary

Translated by: Author

In any season of the feeling
I search myself in your heart
You may also look for yourself in my heart

Likewise in the corners of the heart amongst people
I try to search myself in an invisible look
You may also look for yourself
In any season of the feeling in my dried heart

When I searched for self,
I found one of my eyes with some.
With some, I found one of my hands
With some, I found one of my legs
With some, I found myself as dumb
With some, I found myself as beggar
With some, I found myself as blind
With some, I found my dreams being tied and punished
With some, I found my shadow was hanged
With some, I found myself as I am now
Indeed with some, I found or saw nothing

In the quest of searching self,
I am afraid of some and also fell in love with some

The *Hathasuni Haba*: A Traditional Marriage System among the Bodos

-Sonamainao Boro

Abstract

Marriage is an important social system a human beings. A man becomes social after the marriage in natural sense. The marriage is a socially accepted process of two matured male and female for conjugal life and making a family between the races and communities of the India and the world each religion has related marriage system.

Bodos are also one a civilized races amongst others in the world. They belong to Tibeto-Barman language family. They have very rich in culture, language and literature. In Bodo community, most of the people in Bathou religion have celebrated the marriage system. It is celebrate as socially.

The present paper will highlight the traditional marriage system among the Bodo society. Primary and secondary data were collection for the purpose.

Keywords: Traditional, marriage, society, religion, *bwirathi*, *barlangpha*, ojah

1.1 Introduction

The Bodos are a race of the Mongolian people who are described to be the inhabitants of a country north of the Himalayas and West of China. Ethnically, Bodos are the Mongoloid origin and their language belongs to Bodo-sub section.

Linguistically the Bodos include a large group of people who are the speakers of the Tibeto-barman speeches of the North and East Bengal, Assam and Burma. They are the Bodos or Boros of the Brahmaputra Valley covered by the present Bodoland Territorial Council of Area. A considerable number of them scattered in different parts of Assam and in the areas of Sub-Himalayan region.

Marriage is considered to be sacred. It is one of the ways to unite physically and mentally among two matured man and woman throughout the whole life as accepted under certain religion and customs by the society. Through this way two people have the capacity to recreation or reproduction, socialization of children, keeping their generation alive and earn properties for their livelihood. They can give security to their language culture, rite, rituals, race, religion etc. The people say that the society becomes good if the family shows that “marriage is the institutionalized and legitimate form of man and women relationship based on ones. It is related with procreation of children, their upbringing descent and inhabitation”.

It provides permission for sex relationship between the two particular individuals of opposite sex and grants legitimacy to the offspring born out of this relationship. Like different societies, Bodo people have different rites and ceremonies accompanied with the marriage. Every society has their recognized procedure for creating relationship through marriage. Among Bodos, marriage is called ‘Haba’. In Bodo ‘Ha’ means soil or earth and ‘Ba’ means to bear something on the back. The Bodos believed that by approving marriage a person or the couple has to take great duties and responsibilities in life. The main form of marriage in the Bodo society is monogamy with some exceptional cases of polygamy, however polyandry is totally absent in the Bodo society.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to analyse the traditional marriage system and find its importance in Bodo society as a system of marriage and the representation of this marriage system among the Bodos.

1.3 Methodology

The data is collected mainly from the primary and secondary sources. Primary data is collected directly from the field by observation and questionnaire method. Secondary data is collected from available written record books, journal and magazine.

1.4 Definition of marriage:

Some of the definitions of marriage are given here-

According to Westermarck, marriage can be defined, “as a relation of one or more men and women who is recognized by custom or law, and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of the parties entering the union and in the case of the children of it.” According to Jacobs and Stern, “Marriage is a term for social relationship of husband and wife or plural males; also used for the ceremony of uniting marital partners.” Harry M. Jhonson has defined marriage as “a stable relationship in which a man and woman are socially permitted, without loss of standing in the community, to have childre”. According to Collins Dictionary of Sociology, “Marriage is a socially acknowledged and sometimes legally ratified union between an adult male and adult female”. According to Robert H. Lowie, “Marriage denotes those unequivocally sanctioned unions which persist beyond sexual satisfaction and thus come to underline family life”. According to D.N. Majumdar and T.N. Madan, marriage may be defined by saying, “It involves the social sanction generally in the form of civil or religious ceremony authorizing two persons of opposite sexes to engage in sexual and other consequent and correlated socio-economic relations with one another.”

1.5 Different types of marriage: -

The Boros have as many as six types of marriage. These are -

- (i) *Sangnanoi lainai haba*
- (ii) *Gharjia lakhinai Haba*
- (iii) *Kharsonnai Haba*
- (iv) *Bwnanwi lainai Haba*
- (v) *Dankharlangnai Haba and*
- (vi) *Dongkha habnai haba.*

(i) *Swngnanai lainai haba* (arranged marriage)

This marriage is solemnized according to the standard social customs. According to this system of marriage the bride is selected by the parents of the bridegroom and then marriage is settled after negotiation. This type of marriage is regarded as a regular marriage. Bride price was compulsory in earlier days but it's not compulsory nowadays.

(ii) *Garjia lakhinai Haba* (obtaining girl by service):

It is solemnised at the house of the bride. It is also called as marriage by service, because the bridegroom has to give his service at the house of the bride before the marriage. This type of marriage is regarded as an irregular marriage and it is rare in the present Bodo Society.

(iii) *Kharsonnai Haba* (girls flee away):

In this marriage the bride enters into the house of the bride-groom before the settlement of the marriage. It is possible if there is mutual understanding between the bride-groom and the bride. The consent of the parents of the bride is important here.

(iv) *Bwnanoi lainai Haba* (the Force marriage):

In this marriage the bride is forcefully taken away from the house of the bride to the house of the bridegroom and then the marriage is solemnized. It is not a socially approved system of marriage in the present Bodo society.

(v) *Dwnkharlangnai Haba* (Elopement marriage):

This is the marriage by elopement of both bride and bridegroom. This type of marriage is akin to the *Gandharva* system of marriage of the Aryan. The mutual understanding between the bride and bridegroom is enough for this type of marriage. This is also a kind of irregular marriage system in Bodo society.

(vi) *Dongkha habnai haba* (widow remarriage):

In this marriage the bride is a widow. If a man lives in the house of a widow as her husband then they are recognized as husband and wife by the society. However, they have to regularize their marriage according to the social customs called 'Dongkha Habnai'. This system of marriage is approved and very rare in Bodo society.

1.6 STAGES OF THE BODO MARRIAGE:

The entire proceeding of Boro marriage can be divided into three stages:

- Pre marriage or the selection of bride
- Proper marriage
- Post marriage

1.7 *Hathasuni* Marriage

Among them the traditional system of marriage is known as "Hathasuni Haba" Which is very rare among the Bodos. It is one of the proper marriages celebrated by the Bodos. The word *hathasuni* is a Bodo word. Here, the word *hatha*+ *Su* (verb) + *ni* (Suffixes) = *Hathasuni*. *Hatha* mean a *hatha* (a ladle like tool made with *gamari* wood by the Bodos). 'su' is a word in very meaning stitching washing, making like making flower garland etc. and in means let's do, suffices. Here, the *hathasuni* means entering into the life of two young man women for the whole life to lead a conjugal life forever with the help of *hatha*. So the *hathasuni* is a marriage ceremony where the bride offers meal with the two *hathas* to the bridegroom at the public function.

1.8 Sacrifices of chicken for the *Hathasuni* marriage

The ancient traditional *Bathwu* followers sacrifice animal in *Hathasuni* marriage. The main part of *hathasuni* marriage is the sacrifice of chicken at the *Bathou* altar. At first, the *Bathou* altar is cleaned with mixing soil and water taking in a water pot. This work can be done by the guardian or the *Douri* of the

village under the guidance of the *Oja* or *zanaguru*. Two *alari bathi* (earthen lighted lamp), two besil leaves pasted on the earth and one banana leaf and along with the Prasad cluster of banana (manua) a pair of areca nuts and betel leaves two coins or notes, burned incense sticks are required and offered. *Dwi santhi* (holy water) is taken in a *lotha* (a little vessel) and a bundle of basil branches, *dubri* (carpet) grass and *zathrasi* is taken to sprinkled the holy water. After arranging those things, the bride and groom are stay kneeling down and pray in front of the *Bathou* altar setting the groom toward south and bride towards north facing towards east and their helper are allowed to stay behind them after sprinkling the holy water. During that time, the oja chants incantation or *mantras* relating to their marriage and then the guardian or the *douri* sacrifices two chicken one male or one female in one single blow after sprinklings the holy water on the chicken and kept the heads of the chicken on the offering. After ending his chanting of mantras the *oja* all wood to kneel down in point of the *Bathou* altar.

The meat of the sacrifice chicken is prepared with the broken rice or rice powder known by them *onla* without applying spices and the turmeric. This *onla* curry can prepare by the bride inside the *Isingno* (kitchen). When making the rice powder or broken rice, the person should not kick the *Uwal* (wooden husking apparatus with the leg) should not take to anyone and should not touch at head. The bride has also to cook little rice inside the *ising* (kitchen).

After that, when the bride and the groom reach in front of the *Bathou* altar, the oja allowed them to kneel down. The rice and the curry cooked by the bride are kept in the two different *Hathas* and bring it in front of the *Bathou* altar on the banana leaves. The *hatha* containing rice should keep towards right and the later is kept towards the left the groom known as *songthi* or *lengnai* in Bodo. After that ceremony, *ojah* allow him to kneel down in front of the *bathou* altar. The *ojah* sprinkles the holy water and chants the incantations relating to the occasion. The one of the incantations run as follows:

Ahem de sanni giri sanja

Mwdainigiri Bwrai Bathou Moharaja

Dainigiri dai Khalamwbla

Nimahani giria nwnng

Zwngni moujang gazri

Nidan afwd,rog biyadiniphrai

Phwthangraya nungnw,

Nwi dinwi Biphaguru amwkhaya amwkhiku bihamju labwbai,

Dinnui bininu nwnngnw akhai laru wngkham engkhri hunai jabai

Nazaodw apha nung bipha.bihamju munga amwkhi sanphrambw sukhu sukhu lakhi apha nungnuphaopuja mwnbai thagun,

Dinui hathasuni phaopuja hwdwng nungthanga mini khusi najaonanui,

Bwr asirbad hwdw, Dohai apha bipha guru.

Zwnghalai swr dongbaoyw Nailo jalo nung bipha gurulo

Gole gole khulumw zwng (gugurub khulum)2

English rendering: *Ahemde*, the east is the origin of the sun, the origin of the gods and goddesses is the *Bwrai Bathou Maharaja*. If the offender does the offence, you are the authorities of forgiveness, you are the rescuer of us from any danger, disease, O Father Master (guru), so-and-so (name of the father of the bridegroom) has brought so-and-so (name of the bride) as his daughter-in law on this occasion today you have been offered this pure meal (rice and curry). You will accept this offer, Father Master (guru) the name of the daughter -in- law. Keep her in peace everyday; you will get *puja* or offers regularly. Today the *puja* is held on the occasion of the marriage, *hathaswni khurnai*. You will accept the *puja* and bless her and her husband, please, Father Master. We have none accept you are the only rescuer of us. We salute you respectfully again and again.

After ending the incantations the bride and bridegroom bow down the *Bwrai Bathou* then the *ojah* take them to the *ising* (kitchen) to offer the rice and the curry to the *mainao* (the goddess of wealth).

1.9 The Athmongla

After one week of the marriage the bride with her two girl friends including her assistant or helper and bridegroom with his two boyfriends including his assistant or helper goes to the house of the bride. They have to take two chickens (one cock and one hen), few items of eatable along with tea and sugar, etc. to entertain the friends of the bride in the village .In this period the party should not hold more than two nights at the house of the bride's parents. This is called *athmongla* or *newthw siphainai* or *bisna sara* in Bodo.

1.10 Nirikh Bosonai

This is one of system where the two parties i.e. the brides party and the grooms party along with the parents or guardians of both the parties sits together for discussion for "*phon khonnai*" (meaning receiving body price of the bride). For that purpose se one place facing east towards south west to the bathou altar is cleaned with soil and water. A few uncooked rice, two coins or notes of one rupee, two castor fruits, one pair areca nuts and betel leaves one white cloth having the margin two small bowl full tea with buffed rice incense sticks are taken on banana leaf on the *gambari khamphlai* (it is one kind of tool made by hand) A glass of water or *lotha* which is known as holy water and basil branches with leaves is used to sprinkle the holy water. Here Rs 25 for *Malso* and Rs 5 for *Bali Naga* and if the guardian of the Bride wants, then Rs 51 for *Phonthaka* are offered. Along with the tea and buffed rice, potatoes are also offered to all the participants in the *Nirikh Basonai* (a kind of ceremony of handing over the responsibility of looking after the Bride to the groom by the parents of the bride. Sometimes these types of customs may be done before the arrival of the Bride when the discussion about their marriage took place in the Bride house.

The basic ingredients and materials which are very important in Hathasuni marriage are given below –

- (i) Two *Gambari Khamphlai* (ii) Two *Hatha* (iii) Two Ladle (iv) Two *Gasa* (v) Plantain leaf (vi) Pair of areca nuts and betel leaves (vii) Three *Lothas* (a small vessel) (viii) Two Gaslands (ix) Rice powder (x) Chicken (xi) Alkali (xii) Mustard Oil (xiii) Two *Phali* (xiv) Uncooked Rice (xv) Rice Beer.

Some important and man power that are related to the Hathasuni Haba are –

- (i) Oja/ Douri (ii) Bwirathi (iii) The Helper (iv) Public (v) Guardian and relatives.

1.11 *Bwirathi* and *Barlampha*:

In Bodo traditional marriage, *Bwirathi* plays a very important role. The main function is to cut the areca nuts and distribute to the people of the bride's party. The parents of the bride also select the *Bwirathi jora*, two girls or women during the marriage ceremony.

There are some strict rules for the selection of *Barlangpha* and *Bwirathi*. The *Bwirathi* and *Barlangpha* have performed all the factions till the end of the proper marriage. *Barlangpha* carried the *biban* (which is consisting of areca nuts and betel leaves, milk etc.). No widow or widower is allowed to perform as *bwirathi*.

1.12 The traditional beliefs have some good and bad signs:

Good Signs:

1. If the bride is seen drying or husking paddy at the courtyard at the time the selection party reaches the house of the bride, it is believed that the bride would be fortunate one.
2. If the bride is seen by the members of the selection party cleaning or sweeping the courtyard or busy at combing her hair, it is believed that the bride would be of long life.
3. If the bride is seen entering into the main house (Nomano) by putting her left foot at the door, it is believed that the bride would be of auspicious nature bringing fortune to the family (Lakhi) and loyal to her husband.

Bad Signs:

1. If one of the selected parties meets with an obstruction while setting up, it is believed that that marriage would be unhappy.
2. If the mongoose (*Neolai* in Bodo and *Neol* in Assamese) is seen crossing the road from the right to the left side, it is believed that there may be a separation between husband and wife.
3. It is believed that if any widow or widower takes part in all the activities relating to a marriage, starting from selection of the bride to the end of the marriage ceremony, either the husband or the wife may expire untimely.

1.13 Conclusion

From the above discussion we come to know that as marriage is a social bond among two people. Bodo marriage can be divided into six part i.e. (i) *nainanui lainai haba* (ii) *kharsonnai haba* (iii) *donkharlangnai haba* (iv) *gorjia lakhinai haba* (v) *bonanui lainai haba* (vi) *dongkha habnai haba* and widow re-marriage and court marriage. These marriages are celebrated in accordance with the norms of the society. The earliest traditional marriage system of the Bodos is *Hathasuni Khurnai* or *Hathakhari khurnai*. But nowadays, the Bodo people have accepted the various marriage systems like Brahma methods of marriage, Christian method of marriage etc. And also who accepted the modern Bathouism, they celebrated the *Bathou Haba* which is few difference from the *Hathasuni Haba*. The traditional marriage system is the most respectable and socially recognized marriage in the Bodo society. But, unfortunately, this type of marriage is seen rare in present days due to the influence of other community.

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The Role of Nature as Reflected in the Novels '*Jujaini or*' (Fire of the Husk) and '*Mwihur*' (The hunt)

-Dr. Ada Ram Basumatary

1.1 Introduction: Almost all the speakers of the Bodo language live in the midst of nature. They have deep experiences of the characteristics of nature. Nature do not have fixed characters, its varieties of characters are being observed by many people, but the people who have creativity in mind do observe more closely and deeply and thus try to replicate these varieties of natures' characters in their creations.

Poets like Iswan Chandra Muchahary, Promod Chandra Brahma, Anju Narzary, Brojendra Kr. Brahma, Aurobindo Uzir etc. have many poems having nature as the main theme.

In Bodo short story, Janil Kr. Brahma, Nilkamal Brahma, Ada Ram Basumatary, has taken nature as the plot of their short stories. In the dramatic literature also, we see nature have been taken either as plot, or theme in their creations. Dramatists like Kamal Kr. Brahma, Mangalsing Hazoary and Phoben Pwrwngiri are some example of it.

Likewise, in Bodo novels also there are some novels where nature has been reflected actively like other characters of the novel. Two major novels of the language have been being discussed in the next chapters.

1.2 *Jujaini Or*: *Jujaini Or* is the ever first novel of Bodo written by novelist Chittaranjan Muchahary in the year 1962, but according to the record of the novelist it was written in 1967.

The plot of the novel is the beginning of love of the male protagonist Ajay and the female protagonist Alaishri in the seashore of Swrmanga, (Sorol Bhanga to its upper portion nearby Bhutan hills which flows through Kokrajhar town popularly known as *Gaurang*).

Like other children of the village both Ajay and Alaishri, who are co-villagers, did go to the riverside of the *Swrmanga*, used o taken bath, played there, tried to jump up the trees to fetch fruits of *Gonger thaisib*, used to catch fishes by way of net made from clothes and used to find out eggs of Seabirds like *Thititeo*.

The small boy and girl gradually grew younger, their bodies grew, and their mind has also grown. But their childhood friendship has not been narrowly gapped, but become closure than before.

Ajay, the lone son of Mahidhar and Goshathi is a college student while Alaishri the lone daughter of Madaram and Rupathi is illiterate one. They born together in a village, they grew together, they played together, they made fun together, they dreamt together, they felt in love each other, then separated each other, they suffered and became mad together. And thus the plot of the novel comes to the end with the screaming of both of them.

Now, let me relate the role of nature in their tragic ends of live.

It has already been said that the male and female protagonist Ajay and Alaishri are children of nature. They learnt many things from the nature. They have deep belief in each other. Their love was very genuine and pure. Parents of both of them knew their relationship.

Ajay frequently used to visit to Alaishri's home when he comes home from school hostel. They walked together through the bushy road of the village. It was the cloudy weather of the summer which brought their bodies together for the first time. From that incident both of them felt the attraction of the opposite sexes.

They were quite unknown to such type of emotions and feelings when they were playing together in the riverside of Swrmanga. But the roadside incident of the summer weather was a bit difference to the earlier because of the age..... The age of the roadside was the age period when everybody can feel in a different way. They did not care anybody, who ever come to their way of playful childhood age, friendship and love.

Rupathi, mother of Alaishri gave a finger ring made of silver to Ajay and asked him to put it into Alaishri's finger. Thus, Ajay did, and Rupathi breathed her last breath happily.

But the situation changed completely afterwards. Both the protagonist could not suffer and bear with the flow of the situation which arose afterwards. And, it is only the forces of Swrmanga which changed the situation and condition of the villagers nearby it including Bhutiapara the village of Ajay and Alaishri. Many villagers became homeless within a week by the curse of Swrmanga River. The over flooded water of the river brought many harms to all including Mahidhar and Modaram. Mahidhar have lost all his cultivated land and become landless. This unfortunate and tragic erosion of all land made Mahidhar sick and he suffered a lot, and the resultimate sad news was that he breathed his last breath untimely. His wish to educate his son Ajay has left unfulfilled. He expressed his dream and urged his son Ajay to fulfill the dream by any means. The letter of the father to the son clearly mentions that Pradip, the father of Alaka, of Dwikharguri village have agreed to bear all expenses of Ajay.

The death letter of the death father has stood as a big wall in between Ajay and Alashri relationship. Ajay could not avoid the spirit of the letter because, there is his mother Goshati who always insisted her son to obey the dictates of the letter, otherwise she would die.

In the meantime, Madaram, also died. He was playing Serja at his broken home at the midnight and washed away by the current of river. After this sad news, the orphan Alaishri became a maid-servant at Alaka's home for a period of six years for six hundred which was taken for the treatment of her parents.

Ajay, could not but to agree with his parents' wish and ready to marry Alaka. This news was quite unbearable to Alaishri. It is natural to everybody. No one would be able to bear with such kind of separation. Yes, it is already said that Ajay and Alaishri have come closer both spiritually and physically. Like thousands of girls, Alaishri have gone mad, Ajay have also become mad.

So, the novel ends with the separation of the two innocent souls who born in a village, grew from childhood to adulthood, playing in the open fields of the village, in the roads, in the seashore of the *Swarmanga* River and these two souls came together closer and closer. They stated to dream of living together with the blessings of Alaishri's parents, but it is the sole responsibility of the *Swarmanga* River which stood like the Mac Mohan line. They fail to bring their dream into reality, I think because of the Nature.

Here, the Swrmanga River is a part of the nature. The flood of the river brought many harm to the villagers of the Bhutiapara by way of erosion and over flooded. Like many of the villagers, Modaram and Mahidhar also lost their cultivated land within a week and therefore, Mahidhar, Ajay's father had to bow down in front of Pradip, father of Alaka for his son's future life.

The river gave the two young men to play and dream; on the other hand it destroyed their dream. Firstly, the nature sheltered the two souls; later on it divides the same. Therefore, nature is the cause of tragic ending of the novel.

1.3 *Mwihur (The Hunt)* was published in the year 1980. The novelist Dharanidhar wary has created its plot within the range of Manas wild Life Sanctuary. The plot of the novel is about the means of livelihood. The villagers of Narenguri, Khasibari, Ghilajhar, Barangabary, Khwbsinpara, Golagami, Dindangpara, Ashrabary, Thalitbary, Khagrabary and others.

These villagers have to depend upon directly on the nature. So, in this novel, the nature in the form of forest and pond (bheel) provide both shelter and food. None of these villagers do have permanent patta, they are encroachers to the land of the forest. They may be evicted from their houses at any moment and anytime. They do collect their food directly from the nature. They are not against the law of the land, but sometimes they get it hard to follow the rules and regulations of the country which come against their traditions. And the story of the novel develops in this way.

Golo, the male protagonist meets Dodere, the female protagonist at the midst of the jungle. On that day, Golo was going to the Gandabilw in the forest with a view to hunting. He meets Dodere, who lost her way. Dodere also went to the jungle to catch fishes from the unauthorized bheel. As soon as they saw foresters, they ran away, so Dodere also ran away and meets Golo. Golo gives all kinds of protection to Dodere. Dodere feels overwhelmed by the behavior of Golo whom she knows as a hunter. Golo takes Dodere to his village Narenguri and goes to Khashibary, the village of Dodere to inform about Dodere's safe stay at the relatives house at his village. On the way to his village from the forest Dodere and Golo's eyes and hearts come very closer to each other. Dodere takes advantage to ask Golo to avoid the profession of hunting and to cultivate her 10 bighas of paddy land.

Both Golo and Dodere knew each other since long as the villagers of the nearby villages, but could never talk each other. After the forest incident they become quite familiar to each other, start talking as if they are close friends. The Khasibari villagers hold Dodere responsible for some ill-activities in the jungle with Golo and Mwblaw, the co-villager of Dodere also insulted Golo for having chances with Dodere in the jungle.

So, the complexity in the way of their life starts from that jungle incident. Golo feels ashamed of by Dodere's offer for cultivation of her land and Dodere was being charged by her villagers for her chastity. Golo's profession is strongly opposed by Dodere. It is not easy for Golo to agree with Dodere, because hunting is only the easiest way for earning money for livelihood for Golo. He has been in this profession since 13 years. By this time, Golo has got one opportunity to balance his previous ill-profession. The Range officer, who knows Golo as one of the poachers of the range, asked him to help the Department as well as the nearby villagers from the disturbances of an old tiger. The old tiger has been taking the sleep of the people of the area.

Golo accepts the request of the Ranger and killed the tiger. The Ranger congratulated Golo and gave him the appointment of a forest guard (Saprashi). Golo's decision was in doldrums, Dodere's support help him to join the service. Now, Golo becomes the man of the forest department. Now he wants to think and act for the protection and safety of forest and its inhabitants. Dodere and Hambur, her best friend, go to the quarter of Golo on one day. Hambur, the shrewd one leaves Golo's quarter for her sister's house at Narenguri to give opportunity to Golo and Dodere to express each others' feelings. Yes, as presumed by Hambur, they express their feelings for each other.

The good days are about to come for the villagers. The untiring efforts of Laren and the village committees have come to the fruitful ends. These villagers are going to get permanent patta of their occupied plot of land. The Ranger of the Manas Range has arranged a public meeting to distribute papers to the land holders at the Barangabari Beat office. A big feast for the Minister of Forest and Land and Revenues is arranged. The Ranger has thought of earning good applause from the minister by serving him with some delicious means along with venison. Golo, the most trusted one of the Ranger has given the responsibility of gathering the meat from the forest itself.

Golo and his other two forest guards have gone to the forest with an elephant to bring the same but, returned with the saddest news that Golo is killed by unknown poachers. This news spreads like the fire of the jungle and no sooner does Dodere hears the saddest news of Golo's no more - she faints, fall down on the ground and never stands up, she breathed her last breath. Alas! The two innocent lives who met in the jungle unexpectedly and now end unbearably.....!

From the above description of story of the novel, it is seen that the nature has double role. It is a life giver to many of the nature including human being. Many animal beings have shelter in it, but it is like Golo and Mwblao who bring thier immature death! Golo has also killed many animals in his 13 years of poacher life. And Mwblao is also not lacking behind him.

The forest has given Golo a golden chance to become a polished man or to have bath with the water of tulshi leaves. He tried to save lives of many animals and growing trees of the. But he has also to bear the grudge of his enemies and so he is killed in the midst of the forest which gives him shelter.

1.4 Conclusion: The two novels which are discussed in the above paragraphs are only a few example of Bodo literature where the role of nature is highlighted. There are many more literature which clearly with the role of nature. In some literature the nature is depicted as the spiritual being, in some, it is depicted like a mother and a wife. More or less, the nature is treated like a female character.

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