CHAPTER - IV

Traditional Social Institutions.

Two customary institutions have played a vital role in the Adi social set-up since their inception in the unknown past. One includes the moshup and the rasheng or the bachelors' and maids' dormitories and the other is the institution of marriage. The significance of these two traditional social institutions should be studied together, because one is supplementary to the other in a very intimate way. Neither of these will be complete without the other, since one is, of necessity, followed or preceded by the other. That exactly has been the custom of the Adi society since unknown past. Boys and girls first come into close companionship through their dormitory acquaintance and that intimacy ultimately ripens into marriage-bond through several stages. The whole process has been followed by the Adis in a spirit of strict discipline and sanctity.

It is strange, yet true, that in some societies religious beliefs and myths have played a decisive role in the origin, establishment and evolution of some well-settled social institutions that have a significant bearing on the cultural growth of the people concerned. This fact can be readily verified from a study of the origin, growth and functional purposes of the very vital traditional social institution of dormitories of the Adi tribe of Arunachal, one of the oldest and perhaps culturally
one of the most advanced people of the North-Eastern extremity of the Himalayas. The Adi dormitories for unmarried boys and girls, known respectively as Moshup and Rasheng, have occupied, perhaps the most vital position as social institutions from every conceivable angle, holding an enviable sway over the whole people and moulding the very character of the tribe. Let us see how the matter stands.


The Moshup or the bachelors’ dormitory is not a club for idle gossips nor a gambling den. Its importance can be understood from the following comment of B.S. Guha: ’There are two underlying principles on which the institution is built, namely, the creating of the habit of discipline among children at their formative stage of life and in the developing of a spirit of co-operation and collaboration so that the tribe can act as a unit, and fissiparous tendencies within the body-politic of the tribe may have very little room for growth. In addition, it develops among the young a spirit of responsibility, alertness and habit of taking risks in the face of danger which are essential for the existence of the tribe. Although emphasis is laid on the training for the groups to work together and face a common danger, there is also a provision for showing respect and consideration to the elders of the tribe, specially those who are old and infirm and dependent on the younger members for their living’. (1)
The institution is called by different sections of Adis by different names. The Minyongs call it Dera, Padams term it Moshup, among the Milan and other allied groups it is known as Naaptek, while the Doris and Ashings call it Bange. Parallel institutions may be found in the Bhumkuria of the Oraons of Chhotanagpur, the Hotul of the Murias of Bastar and the Morung of the Nagas. It may be said that these institutions flourished in their full glory in the past and in most cases are now in decaying conditions as a result of the impact of modern civilization. The accounts published, however, by early writers such as Wilcox, Father Krick, Dalton, Hora, Dunbar, Needham, Hutton, Mills and others enable us to form a good idea of the institution and the influence it exerted on the tribal life before the decay commenced.

There are some mythological accounts about the origin of the Moshup, one of which runs like this: Pamong Nane was the daughter of Liming Litung, born of Sadi Malo. She married Idum Bota, a son of Sadi Malo. Among their numerous children were Robo and Doni. A great Kebang was held to bring about peace and order in the world and where the land and wealth of the world were distributed among the children of Sadi Malo. Doni and Robo got the largest and best shares. But gradually rivalry and jealousy grew between them which at last broke into an open hostility. Robo was far too strong than Doni, the man of peace, by the support of all the wicked and evil spirits. Doni's parents grew anxious at this
and in order to save him built a house where he could live under the protection of good spirits and could learn the art of the war and self-defence. After it was completed, the spirit of Nui, the great hunter, and all the gods were called to live there. They were fed with good food and among, the rice beer. Ginger was kept in the house to drive away evil spirits. Poisoned bows and arrows were also gathered there and a large quantity of food was stored to feed the hungry gods. This is how the first moshup was built and the same custom and procedure are observed even to-day.

Another version of the origin of moshup has been narrated by Oshong Ering. Long ago there lived a people called Engo-Takar. Among them there lived a brother and a sister called Karduk and Karpung respectively. Both were very beautiful to look at. In course of time they established sexual relationship. This being a strange and serious thing, they were expelled from the ethereal world. They considered themselves to be sinners and roamed to find out a peaceful place for them, but could not find any. They became aimless and haggard. But the warmth of love and rays of hope remained undiminished. At last, the two poor souls came to the notice of Doying Bote and Kine Nane. Kine Nane, the goddess of peace and plenty, invited the attention of Doying Bote, the god of wisdom and courage, to the deplorable condition of the couple and appealed for their rescue and settlement on earth. Doying Bote ordered the people of Doying Ang to construct a dare. The order was
carried out and the couple were accommodated there. Thus for the first time in the history of man a building appeared on the earth.

The moshupa are usually constructed in the centre of the village from where different approaches to it can be watched and guarded. For the construction of moshupa bamboo, canes, leaves and such trees as tapit, takinaq, tala, taciang and tagmo are used as they are either favourite of the good spirits or repugnant to the evil ones. The structure is almost similar to barrack-like construction without any compartment as a rule. The back side of the moshupa is covered with wooden planks as protection against cold wind while the three other sides are left open. In some villages all four sides of the house are covered, with provisions for numerous exits. The entrances are on the low side whereas on the high side there are rows of pigsties. The walls, the floors, and the partitions, if any, are usually made of rough-hewn planks, and not well-fitted. Logs of notched wood are used as staircases to reach the room. There are a number of fire-places or merums in a moshupa. The number of merums usually corresponds to the number of sections in the village. But in practice everybody is free to choose his merum as he likes and there is no restriction of clan or neighbourhood in that. The merums have occasionally partition walls in between. Each merum has a separate entrance to the moshupa and has a platform or a shelf for keeping the belongings of its members. Over each fire-
place there are suspended trays on which the trophies of animals killed during community hunting are kept.

The moshup is used as a sleeping house by all young men of the village usually from the age of ten till they take wives to their homes. Any man of the village or a stranger can sleep in the moshup. There is no definite age for entry to the moshup. The usual practice is that when a boy is able to sleep away from his parents or take care of himself, he must come to the moshup to sleep there around the merum to which members of his family belong. In the opinion of B.S. Guha, membership of the merum cannot be changed. Even if for some reason a family moves from one section, say from Sango, to the other section, Anglo, this membership to the original merum would still remain binding. In the merums there is no scramble for places, for which there is no special rule or procedure, but once a boy sleeps in a particular spot, his place is not taken by any other, even if he may come late.

The inmates of the moshup are called Moshup-Ka who are divided into distinct age groups, namely Anyang or novices, Randang, and the senior group known as the Abuino. The novices usually come to sleep in the moshup after their evening meals and on completion of their day's work for their household. They are expected to bring firewood and light the fire in the hearth. If there is any neglect, they are taken to task by the
Abuing from among whom one senior member is selected by virtue of his ability to act as the leader of the \textit{merum} and is known as \textit{Abuiyanai}. He is responsible for the maintenance of the discipline of the \textit{merum} and is empowered to punish any defaulter. In case of serious disobedience or negligence of duties, fines are imposed on the offender who cannot be rectified by scoldings alone and the proceeds of the fine are given to the injured \textit{merum} and not to the \textit{moshup} as a whole. The parents of the offender do not and can not interfere as they consider it a just punishment and as the verdict of the \textit{moshup} is the last word in this matter.

There is another group of elderly \textit{moshup} members known as \textit{Moshup Mijing} which is the advisory board consisting of old and experienced people of the village who do no physical labour but are meant to guide and advise the younger folks in all affairs. Side by side with each \textit{merum} there is the supplementary hearth called \textit{romsom} where the old and infirm male members of the families belonging to the \textit{merums} sit together and chat during the day and may even sleep at night if there is not enough room in their own houses. Each \textit{merum} and its attached \textit{romsom} act as a single unit and supplement each other. After hunting expeditions a share of the meat is given to the members of the \textit{romsom} who divide it among themselves. In their turn, they do not remain idle but spend their time in basketry, woodwork and other handicrafts for the community, thus serving it to their utmost ability till their end.
Thus in the moshup old and young, weak and strong, veteran and novice stay side by side in amity and understanding, maintaining the fine community spirit.

The principal function of the moshup life lies in giving young men practical training in the traditional mode of life. Here they are allowed to find their way into the mysteries of life. They start with getting training about the social and communal life and then gradually to the mysteries of sex. The training period of a Moshup-ka falls into two distinct parts - the first may be termed probationary period and the other is the advanced or qualifying period. In the first period, the novices are placed under senior members who act as their tutors and guides. They have to obey and carry out the instructions of the senior members. But gradually as they grow up, they start noticing the conduct of the older members who meet the Rashang girls at night. They begin learning things by simple observation. In this sense the dormitories may be considered as schools of preparation for both matrimony and a future healthy social life.

Moshup has some other functions also. It is used for different types of feasts and festivals. During some festivals, girls, who are not usually allowed to enter the moshup, are permitted to dance inside it. Hunting expeditions are arranged by each merum under the guidance of a senior and experienced member of the training of the younger ones. The ceremonies which
are observed before and after hunting expeditions in order to propitiate the evil spirits are held in the moshup. All matters relating to warfare are discussed in the moshup where the whole village remains present. In addition, the moshup functions as the centre of the village political life. Moshup is the meeting place of the Kebang or the village council where all important matters pertaining to the community, such as clearing of jungles for cultivation, construction of new houses, building up new roads, various community development programmes and many others are discussed. It also serves to be the house where the supreme judiciary of the village has its sitting. It is the duty of the Moshup-Ka to realise the fine or compensation from offenders under the instruction of the Kebang, to inform the villagers of the decisions of the Kebang, to act as messengers on urgent work for the Kebang. Without the moshup the entire village administration by Kebang would collapse.

In short, the moshup embraces all the major facets of tribal life - economical, social, political and religious. In the past it was the institution of knowledge and wisdom where the mythological first man learned the arts and culture, songs and dances from karduk. It was an august house where Tani acquired inspiration for social and political work, gained the thoughts from karduk and the light of truth and justice from good spirits like Gumin Soyin and Idum Note. It was an altar where all sacrifices
were conducted by man for prosperity and success in every walk of life. It was also the meeting place of the unmarried young men of the village where they gathered every night and guarded the village to ensure security. If any calamity was detected, the young men alarmed the villagers from this moshup. The Adis perform ponung and festivals like Delong in moshup. Kabangs are held here to ensure the maintenance of truth and justice. To get good wishes of Gumin Soyin, the Adis collect in moshup before they proceed for hunting. In order to please the spirits the killed animals are brought and kept in moshup and as tokens of offering to the evil spirits, the heads, horns and skull of animals are hung in moshup. Above all, it was a prayer hall, a temple and sacred shrine of Gumin Soyin where he dwelt as the spiritual protector and guardian of man. "But to-day", comments T. Bukbo, "this sacred shrine, this temple and institution of knowledge and wisdom, truth and justice is used as a common rest house for strangers in the Adi village. In some villages, this has been found as completely neglected and abandoned, converting it into a shelter for dogs, goats and pigs." The educated Adis of to-day are becoming increasingly concerned about the preservation and renovation of the moshup. It is quite reasonable to say that if this institution is abolished or neglected to fall upon decay, the whole structure of the Adi society would collapse because it is the moshup which has from times immemorial held the Adi society integrated.
It will not be perhaps off the point to refer to some personal experiences about the Adi moshup and allied matters. During June 1970 and July 1971 I visited several Adi villages in the Siang district like Kabu, Darkang, Pobdi, Fakan, Jumlo-Mopuk, Monkum, Pessing, and Panken. In the first four villages there is no rasheng for girls but only moshup, which are not used as dormitories but rather serve the purpose of the community-hall where outsiders are entertained and council meetings are held. In the last four villages both moshup and rasheng are there but that also in name only. People do not attach so much importance to the proper functioning of the institutions. In all the villages there are respective miris and headmen who are quite expert in the tribal lore and traditions. In all the villages I was accompanied by the headman and entertained by the boys and girls of the community with some charming ponung dance and songs which they performed in honour of the migam. In all the villages the matter was done in more or less the same pattern.

The Ponung-miri first took his place in the centre, surrounded by three groups of girls in a circular form—first the youngest ones, then teen-agers, and then by the elderly ones. The subjects of the songs in all cases were mostly five; it first started with the glorious past of the Adis; then there was another on Adi life in general; next it passed on to a song about Gandhiji and his greatness; after that there was another song about the glory of the Assam Rifles and the last was a song about the conti-
uation of the traditional glory of the people. Even though I could not understand their language, the dances and songs appeared superb in their spontaneity of rhythm and nice refrains. The matter, manner and bodily movements accompanying both songs and dances clearly showed the influence of modernity but in general the whole thing was a fine blending of the old traditions and new influences.

The people were very hospitable and entertained me with chicken curry and apong. The village headman cordially introduced me to the whole gathering and I returned their hospitality by distributing sweets and other gifts. I was requested to address them. Then they followed me for a long distance to bid farewell, requesting me to visit them again and prayed for my safe journey back. The experience was quite unique because though the people showed strong traces of modern influence, it also brought out their desire for the continuation of the traditional past and their fine and unpretentious hospitality towards the guest. Moreover, the fine spirit of co-operation, equality and fraternity struck the eye instantly and made them more lovable.


The women's counterpart of the moshup is called the rasheng, literally, a meeting place or rest house. Actually, it is the dormitory for girls. Parallel institutions for women are
found in the *Pok-erpa* of the Oraons and the *Vampo* of the Nagas. In the Adi hills *rashengs* still exist mostly in the upper region such as at Damroh, Sibbu, Jero, Riga and other villages whereas in the lower regions the institution is absent. Many old-timers consider the absence of *rasheng* in the lower parts as not altogether beneficial to the Adi society for one of the reasons that this institution regulated sexual behaviour within the tribe.

The *Abangs* or the religious myths give the reason for its construction: to meet the need for gaiety, amusement and the art and regulation of love-making. The boys are trained in the *moshup* in the various spheres of men's activities such as hunting, warfare, administration and rituals connected with these. In the case of women, however, the duties chiefly concern household affairs, such as cultivation, weaving, cooking and taking care of children. But amusement, such as dancing, singing and the art of love-making cannot be taught by parents. So Idum Bote or the *Doving feast*, on the completion of the *moshup*, that a similar institution was necessary for women. As however, love-making cannot be carried on under the observation of the spirits, their presence was not invoked. Thus, the *rasheng* is of a purely secular character, and has not sanctity or spiritual significance behind it like the *moshup* which is sacred as abode of the good gods.

In the ancient times before the *rasheng* was
established, there was often indiscriminate sexual intercourse and even incestuous relations took place sometimes, as illustrated in the well-known story of Karduk and Karpung. The rasheng was introduced as a means of stopping indiscriminate sexual union and regulating sexual behaviour so that it could only take place within approved tribal laws and codes of conduct. It cannot be denied that while the rasheng, as an institution of sleeping-place for unmarried persons is abhorrent to the notion of the sanctity and decorum of sexual life, it certainly acted as a deterrent to promiscuous union and, in the regulation and control of sexual behaviour among the free primitive Abors, it played a very significant role.

The rasheng is generally situated in a secluded corner of the village and its location and functions are not publicized to outsiders but are known only to the villagers themselves. Unlike the moshup, it has no central institution but it is made purely on the basis of clan organisation. In all the upper villages there are as many rashengs as there are clans. The rasheng, being confined to a clan, is a small simple structure, having only one square room with a fireplace in the centre. It is constructed by experienced old men of the village along with the girl members who collect the raw materials. The walls are well-protected with wooden planks and so is the only entrance which is secure and strong to prevent forcible entry and undue liberty being taken by young men.
There is no fixed age for entry to the "rasheng." Girls after attaining puberty usually start sleeping in the "rasheng", remaining unoccupied. The inmates come after their night meals and carry on their spinning and weaving until they retire to bed. They return to their respective house early in the morning. Although the rasheng is not so well organised as the moshup, it has its own system which is strictly followed. The girls constituting the members of a rasheng are called "ponung" i.e., bevy of girls organised for music and dancing. Each rasheng is under the supervision of a senior and experienced girl whose duty is to enforce discipline on the members. Any disobedience or neglect of duties is punished with reprimand or fine but the atmosphere is mostly of a free and friendly mixing between girls of different age.

Younger girls pass through a period of novitiate when they bring firewood, light fire and do other work assigned to them. Older rasheng girls usually come late but before that everything is kept ready and in order by the younger members. The younger girls or the novitiates sleep on one side of the hearth and the older on the other where they receive their lovers.

After adolescence, a girl really starts her romantic life and in the rasheng, she starts her courtship which leads her to choose her mate in future life. Young boys from different moshups come and join the girls in the rasheng in the night. A girl is free to entertain any boy of her choice. There are two kinds of rasheng girls, namely, those who have recognised lovers.
with whom they sleep in the rasheng and indulge into regular sex act and those who have no regular boy-friends or lovers but consort with any of the moshup boys they please. Only unmarried girls can have such relationship with boys. In the free life of the rasheng it is not possible to prevent sexual union between the members of the same clan although this is against the exogamous rules of the tribe. This has led many observers to think that while marriage is not allowed between the members of the same clan, there is no bar to sexual union in the rasheng outside the bond of marriage. In reality, however, such action, though it is ignored, is not socially approved and if any child is born out of such union, it is considered a serious offence which is liable to heavy fine and the couple may even be excommunicated. Conception in premarital life is not generally liked and steps are taken to ensure against it. The Adi girls often resort to certain abortifacient practices such as the oral use of the juice and roots of some medicinal plants and trees. This is done in secret without the knowledge of the elders, for destroying the unborn child is a crime according to the Abang. In the event of conception taking place, no social stigma falls on the girls but the lover is expected to marry her, if outside the clan, or pay a heavy fine. When a marriage does not take place although permissible, if the child happens to be a boy, he takes the surname of the father, and if a girl, that of the mother with whom she resides afterwards. Besides this art of love-making which is one of the
principal functions of the rasheng, its other functions are the organization of dances of the Ponung and supply of workers for doing various work in the village or in the houses of others during harvesting and entertainment of distinguished visitors or migams. The Abang says that it was Karpong who showed the girls how to dance, especially the Monam which is done by men and women together in the rasheng in demonstration of love. Other dances for gaiety and amusement are also performed in the rasheng, but those which have bearing on agriculture, such as the solung dance, are performed in the dancing ground in front of the moshup, as this concerns the propitiation of various deities connected with agriculture.

Among the Adis dancing is very well organised and has developed into a fine art with great variety of rhythm and dignity. The majority of the dances are connected with various rituals and the invocation of deities presiding over various phases of agriculture and some again are associated with the welcoming of guests. The dances are all of the folk-dance type which are danced not in solo but in a group with the Miri leading and keeping tune by moving his sword. The Miri is the acknowledged repository of all tribal lore, myths and abange, ritual and rites, and all traditional ideas and practices. As such, he is selected to lead the dances. Generally males are selected as Miris but female Miris are not altogether unknown. For each rasheng there is a ponung or group of dancers. The Miri can not demand any remuneration from
the ponung but at the time of his installation he is given a sword and a semi-circular garland of beads as his special insignia. The relation between the miri and his ponung is not merely that of teacher and pupil but of attachment and love.

The ponung of each rasheng dances separately and does not combine with other groups. Being formed on the clan basis, each is an independent unit with separate organisation and its own miri. There is considerable rivalry between the different ponungs regarding their dancing performances. It is one of the functions of the rasheng to train the girls in the dances with only vocal music sung without any instrumental accompaniment. The miri leading the dance will sing the whole song and ponung sings only the chorus. The seniormost and the ablest girl is selected as the leader of the ponung who supervises the work of the other girls, organises dances and enforces discipline. Most often ponung dances are done in a circle or moving in two converging lines meeting each other but there are some dances where at the end there is a pairing of couples. The money and presents received for the dances organized for visitors are kept in the rasheng fund by the ponung-leader and spent at the time of festivals. Ponung is such an integral part of the rasheng that without it the latter is a virtual impossibility and it is the ponung which has kept the traditional fine art of the Adis alive.

The dormitory system which owes its origin to the hunting stage of the society can not last in its old form with the
changes that the Adi society of old is facing now-a-days. The gradual abandonment of hunting for procurement of food is undermining the basis of its existence. Yet any attempt to stop it either directly or indirectly through moral pressure will be a mistake and is likely to create a vacuum in tribal life. The dormitories have their immense value which no other institution can serve. In the training that they give the young and adolescents, they amply provide for discipline and corporate existence which are the real ingredients of character-building. The comradeship between the youths of both sexes and its gaiety and fun give the inmates the joy of living, help in the fulfilment of the much-needed emotional demands after hard physical labour and provide the outlet for the release of tensions and repressed forces which otherwise would have marred the development of a healthy social life. The personality structure of the Adis grows through the moshp in a manner most suitable for the welfare of the tribe where struggle for existence is very great and where there is very little scope for the weak and inefficient persons of fissionarious nature.

4:3. Marriage.

The institution of marriage plays a vital role in the Adi society and it can hardly be kept separate from the two former institutions of Moshp and Rasheng. The marriage usually follows closely upon the heels of the sexual relationship between the boy and the girl through their dormitory acquaintance which is sanc-
tioned by the society. Marriage thus assumes the appearance of a formal ceremony concerning the two families of the bride and the groom. It is an unavoidable social practice with far-reaching implications in terms of both social status and economic consideration which has to be performed with the sanction of the society - elders as also the parents.

The whole affair right from the beginning of negotiation to the final ceremony is marked by several distinct steps which follow one after another. The idea of getting into a permanent relationship through marriage develops between the boys and girls after their close acquaintance with one another for over a considerable time in the dormitories. Marriage is a state of healthy relationship sanctioned by society into which a man and a woman enter with the approval of their respective families and their own consent, to beget children and start a household of their own. Though the will of the intending partners is supreme and they may unite in matrimony inspite of the opposition from their elders, yet the custom is that the actual negotiation should be done through the parents and if both the parties agree after taking into consideration the social and economic factors involved, the marriage ceremony is allowed to occur.

There are certain unwritten principles followed by the society since long past for guiding this important institution and also for the maintenance of social order and harmony. No man or
woman may enter into wedlock if both of them belong to the same sub-clan and its violation will amount to heavy fine or even excommunication. Again, no free man or woman may establish matrimonial or sexual relations with any one considered as a slave or mipak by the society. Cases of proved and established sexual relations between a free man or woman with a mipak woman or man, may be recognized as a marriage, only with the degradation of the free partner into a slave or mipak category.

After a boy from the rau unw and a girl from the resjong to be his would-be bride, he makes his desire known to his parents. If his parents agree, the mother of the boy goes to the girl's house with some apong, smoked squirrels and ginger paste and makes the formal proposal to the girl as well as to her mother on behalf of her son. If the presents are accepted, it means the proposal is agreed upon and from that day the boy and the girl are regarded as being engaged for marriage. If the proposal comes from the parents of the girl, there is no formal procedure of presentation and the like. They simply make their wishes known to the other party with whose consent the engagement occurs. If the girl agrees to the proposal, she allows the boy to visit her regularly at home and spend the nights with her from the day of engagement. The boy shows his attachment to the girl by presenting apong and meat to his would-be parents-in-law now and then. The formal exchange of presents known as lungkang starts with the Etto festival following the
engagement, during which the girl sends pong, meat and other foods to the boy's parents, while the boy responds by sending a pig to the girl's home. This formality is observed every year as long as the girl continues at her father's. Among the rich Adis with whom the economic aspect of matrimony is very important, the consent of the girl or the boy to be married is not always consulted. The father of a rich girl is naturally against a union with a poor family and so is the rich father of a boy. When both the families are equal in status and wealth, consent is not normally withheld. Again, the liking or disliking of the girl and the boy is not counted for marriages of convenience settled by the parents.

If during the proposal a major girl refuses to marry the boy chosen by her parents, the would-be groom goes on trying to make her agree. So long as he fails to get her consent, he is not allowed by the girl to visit her and she demonstrates her unwillingness by continuing to pass her nights in the rasheng in the company of her own chosen mate. The groom in such cases can neither raise any objection nor claim any compensation. If this second choice culminates in marriage, then only the rejected groom can demand from his successful rival compensation for what he has paid as the price for the girl. If the marriage is settled by the parents during the infancy of the partners, the boy and the girl after coming of age may freely separate if both agree, rendering the would-be marriage null and void and for that no compensation can be claimed by their parents. The boy's objection to such a marriage is valid legally.
inspite of the consent of the girl and the marriage is annulled without any compensation. The girl’s objection, on the other hand, the boy being willing, has no legal value and she can have her own chosen man only if he pays the traditional compensation to the first-selected groom. This brings out the respective position of men and women in Adi society more clearly and shows that the principle of matrimony is based rather more on convenience and economic factors than on anything else.

Since the girl in the Adi family is always considered as a highly valuable economic asset, naturally, depriving a family of a girl by taking her away in marriage has to be compensated by payment, equal to the status of a family and the personal belongings of the girl. Known as **Ara**, this payment is made not in a lumpsome cash or house or land, but it takes the form of a continued supply of meat by the groom and his relatives to the parents of the bride according to the need of a tribal family. The boy’s father-in-law gets the major share of the sacrificed **mitbun** or pig on the **Ara** occasion of various festivals that take place from time to time. In case of a bride from a well-to-do family with valuable personal possessions, especially of beautiful beads, the presentations to be made by the groom are also very high. In the same way, marriage between two poor partners is attended with presents commensurate with the maximum ability and affording capacity of such a groom.

Thus, marriage is a thing rich families or poor ones and as such...
love and other emotions between the boy and the girl is a significantly less important consideration.

Two ceremonies are performed when a man is lucky in marrying a girl from a rich family. The first of these is known as *Maruk* which is performed at any time after the marriage according to the convenience of the groom, but usually at the time of the *Uning* festival. Ten loads of rice, two pigs, ten tubes of *apong*, four loads of cooked rice, three loads of dried meat, and the same quantity of smoked rats and squirrels along with a mithun are arranged by the husband. If such be the fantastic amount of dowry, the marriage between a poor boy and a rich girl will be impossible and therefore the gap between the rich and poor will for ever remains unbridged. All the young men of the clan dressed in gay war dance costumes carry these things to the bride's house in a colourful procession. Half way they are met by the bride's party and a noisy mock-fight takes place between the two. When both the parties get tired, the matter is concluded, the bride's party yielding passage to the processionists. When the party comes near the bride's house, they are received by the women of the family and when the presents are handed over, the groom's party is welcomed with *apong* and some food. Then a mithun and pigs are killed by the bride's parents and all the clan members including both the parties join in a grand hilarious feast. The second ceremony is known as *Minyam*;
in it pigs are offered in place of the mithun.

This is the usual and normal marriage. The procedures are almost the same in cases of both the rich and the poor with the only difference in the degree of pomp and grandeur attending the whole affair. Other forms of marriage also are in practice with due sanction of the society, though they may be less common. One of them may be described as marriage by exchange. In this, a boy intending to marry a girl undertakes to fill the gap in her family by supplying a suitable girl for a marriageable boy in exchange. By this method, the difficulty sometimes felt by the groom in paying the dowry is solved. In case the marriage in exchange does not take place on account of the unwillingness of the girl who may not like her selected groom but runs away with some one else, the bride-price that would have been due had there been no exchange, has to be paid. Side by side with the legal marriage, elopement and marriage by abduction are not unknown. Such irregular affairs in the matter of matrimony are looked upon with some seriousness by the Adi society which does not sanction such practices. But usually those who elope, leave the country and settle in some distant land outside the tribal Jurisdiction. But the customary compensation equivalent to the bride-price is always claimed in such cases. Therefore, whether it is a marriage of convenience, or of exchange or of mutual agreement, it is mainly an economic factors that the whole institution of marriage hinges upon. The partners
bother not very seriously about affairs of the heart or beauty of temperament. As very practical natured people, in the matter of matrimony they are not forgetful of the economic aspect of this vital event of life.

The girl continues to stay with her parents after the marriage if her husband in the mean time has not been able to have a house of his own and still lives with his parents. It is, however, expected that he should try to have a separate establishment of his own as early as possible and take his wife there to lead the life of a full-fledged family man. The maximum period allowed for keeping the wife at her parents' family is generally up to the birth of the third child. After marriage, the boy generally does not sleep in the mashup or get into intimacy with other girls. If the wife for some reason or other refuses to go to her husband's place and prefers to live with her parents, there is no legal compulsion to make her do otherwise. In such a case, the matrimonial relation on the part of the boy continues by staying in his parents' house as well as in father-in-law's alternately.

During the period of the wife's stay at her father's place, the husband is known as magbo and thenceforward he has to perform the Yagling which is the first ceremony in his new status in his wife's family. It is, however, optional and the husband performs it only if he can afford it. In this ceremony a pig is to be sacrificed and the flesh is divided among the members of the
wife's family. In his position as the magbo or dependant son-in-law, the boy has to stay with and render full service to the father-in-law's family as a full-fledged member of it. In such a circumstance, marriage for the boy means rather a servitude to the father-in-law, not as a hired slave of course, but as a dependant son-in-law who is incapable of maintaining an independent and separate family unit of his own. He is relieved of this rather awkward status only when he takes his wife to his own independent dwelling where he opens a new leaf in his life as the proud, self-contained head of a separate full-fledged family of his own.

The social custom of marriage does not say that one has to stay permanently with the conjugal partner even though some marital incompatibility persists for long. The Adi couples, like the many men and women of to-day in other parts of the country, try at first to mend up marital breaches under the guidance of the sensible elders of the society. When the attempts prove futile and better remedy is considered possible through divorce alone, the society, being represented through kebang members, allows the partners to get separated and divorced from marriage-bonds. The couples involved understand the practical utility of the severance of a useless marital bond and separate with the intention of leading another life with the mate of their new choice. Since the Adis appear to be people who are utmost practical by nature and do not seem to bother much for emotional matters, such divorce from one
another is not expected to disturb their sentiments much. There are certain well-adjusted measures followed by the society which are worked with the support of customary laws for the purpose of divorce. These have been discussed in the preceding chapter and need not be repeated here. These unwritten customary laws of divorce have become firmly established in society and the people pay due recognition to them along with the whole custom of marriage itself and the procedures guiding it.
Notes and References to Chapter IV.

3. B. S. Guha : Moshup Abang, pp. 3-5.
7. Talom Gao : Ibid.
8. B. S. Guha : Moshup Abang, p. 29
10. Talom Gao : Ibid.
11. B. S. Guha : Ibid., p. 84.
17. B. S. Guha : Moshup Abang, p. 34.
18. B. S. Guha : Moshup Abang, p. 38 ff.
19. B. S. Guha : Ibid., p. 35.
20. B. S. Guha : Ibid.
22. Oshong Ering : Ibid.
24. B. S. Guha : Ibid.
25. Ibid : the accounts given by Wilcox, Dunbar, Dalton, Nadham, McCoosh, Hora, Veth, Krick and such other British Officers for a fuller discussion on the matter.
27. Oshong Ering : Ibid.
28. C. Ering : Ibid.
30. S. Roy : Ibid.
31. S. Roy : Ibid.
33. S. Roy : Ibid., p. 204.
34. C. Ering : 'Adi Marriage and Divorce.'
35. C. Ering : Ibid.