

FROM BON TO BUDDHISM -

Social and Cultural Changes of the Tamangs

A Thesis submitted to the University of North Bengal

For the Award of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

By

Sudash Lama

Guide

Dr. Anita Bagchi

Department of History

University of North Bengal

Rajammohunpur

Dist. Darjeeling

West Bengal -734013

December, 2013

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “From Bon to Buddhism - Social and Cultural Changes of the Tamangs” has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Anita Bagchi, Associate Professor of Department of History, University of North Bengal. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.



Sudash Lama

Department of History,

University of North Bengal

Rajarammohunpur,

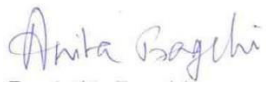
Dist. Darjeeling – 734013

West Bengal

Date: 27/12/2013

CERTIFICATE

I certify that Sudash Lama has prepared the thesis entitled “From Bon to Buddhism - Social and Cultural Changes of the Tamangs”, for the award of Ph.D degree of the University of North Bengal, under my guidance. He has carried out the work at Department of History, University of North Bengal.



Dr. Anita Bagchi

Department of History,

University of North Bengal

Rajarammohunpur,

Dist. Darjeeling – 734013

West Bengal

Date: 27/12/2013

PREFACE

Since the childhood grown up as a member of the Tamang community, the present scholars have had the opportunity to observe the ambience of the Tamang cultural tradition from within. From very tender age being influenced by Tamang culture and religion, folk-tales, songs and especially distinctive lifestyle which stirred enormous imagination as well as a lot of curiosity to explore the primitive culture in total of the same. This led to the formulation of this thesis. The present thesis may, therefore be considered as the inevitable outcome of the very desire which was rooted in the imaginary world of the writer. This burgeon may be considered as an outcome of empirical, exploration and participatory observation of the culture of the Tamangs with a critical point of view.

The Tamangs are a primitive community settled in different parts of Nepal and India. The social-economic and religio-cultural setting has great meaning to this community from time primordial. The wave of transformation due to cultural milieu of Tibet and Nepal and later on Nepal and India is distinctly manifested in their life style and cultural pattern to which they have been newly accustomed. The Sub-Himalayan tracts offered diverse ecology, environment and human settlement of various culture and religion which slowly but steadily made impact on Tamang community. Tamangs are very well known for its kinship affinity, common dialect, distinct cultural system, backward economy, customary laws and conventional social practices. The Tamangs used to solve problems mainly social with the help of the village *Pancha* (*Tamba*, *Ganba*, and *Lama*) which is an influential institution to maintain social order within the community.

Such system helps to maintain geographical as well as social isolation from the rest of the civilized society. It resembles though not wholly the panchayats of rural life.

Furthermore, Tamang society within the community in particular and national in general is facing problems of segmentation in social integration, communal harmony, and cultural intrusion. The present cram of culture is not only important for policy making but also has great academic value. With a view, a comprehensive and honest endeavor has been made in presenting the research findings on the topic 'From Bon to Buddhism, Social and Cultural Changes of the Tamangs' in India and Nepal context.

However, the study of Tamang has been made by many scholars in India, Nepal and abroad in various aspects but so far the study of cultural and religious change is concerned, present study may be an addition with different dimension. The Tamangs have no written script other than Tibetan and devnagri. The major social institutions of the Tamang and impact of other culturs have been discussed in their transformative character. The findings of the study are based on the information gathered from primary and secondary sources and the outcome of previous scholars, government records and other additional secondary available sources have been taken into account as a base line data for the analysis of the cultural changes. For the systematic presentation of research findings the whole thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the problem, the second chapter is about the history of Tamang, the origin stories, the third chapter manifests location and

ethnography, the fourth chapter social and economic structure of Tamang, the fifth chapter is culture and religion, and sixth chapter deals with the transition to Buddhism, transformation in religion and culture and lastly chapter consists of summary and conclusion.

The thesis is certainly a beautiful study of different cultural aspects of Tamang. The analytical examination of transformation in religion and culture as well as some assimilated and acculturated rituals and festivals are points of highlights. The present thesis has been arranged scientifically to make more intelligible with the kind support and direct help of some resource person, friends and departments. My first and foremost thanks go to “Lord Buddha” (*Sangey*), the blessings of whom made possible my study on the Tamang community. My sincere thanks are due to total Tamang populations which constitute the part of my study for supplying real intensive and reliable information relating to my research problem. My huge thanks and heartiest gratitude go to Dr. Anita Bagchi my research supervisor whose thoughts, inspiration and guidance makes it possible to give a complete shape to this thesis. I sincerely like to convey my thanks to Head of Department of History, Dr. Bijoy Kumar Sarkar and my teachers, Prof. Ichchamuddin Sarkar, Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh, Prof. Ratna Roy Sanyal and to my colleagues Dr. Dahlia Bhattacharya, Sankar Kumar Das, Varun Kumar Roy and also to my office staff Mr. Manoj Ray, and Gopal Das.

I also like to extend my heartiest thanks to All India Tamang Buddhist Association and its members, I also like to express my thanks to my brothers Bikash Lama and Suraj Lama, I also like to thank to Dawa Moktan, for his views on Tamang and Buddhism. My student Reshmi Beck

is also claimant of my sincere thanks for her support. My thanks go to Dr. Padam Nepal, North Point College, and Dr. Ramesh Dural, dept. of Political Science, NBU. I also like to thanks all the *Tamba*, *Ganba* and *Lama* who help me in this study and also motivated me a lot. I also like to convey my thanks and appreciation of the co operation of the library staff, of the North Bengal University Central Library, Anthropological Society of India, West Bengal, and Seminar Library, Department of History, North Bengal University and also to founder of the 'Dooars Sangrahalaya', Sri. Kajiman Goley. My thanks also go to staff of Tibetology, Dewrali, Gangtok, monks of Dali Gumpha, Ghom-jorbanglow Gumpha, Salugara Gumpha, and Tamang of Ramechap, Nepal. My sincere most thanks are due to my worshipful parents who told me about the occupations, challenges, life style, folk tales, rituals practices and customs of Tamang from very childhood days.

Last by no means least I extend my sincere love to my wife Mrs. Deepti Lama, for whom I have really no words of appreciation for the cooperation she rendered by taking up all the liabilities of the family and faced smilingly every problem and hardship. I like to share my love and affection to my sons Mr. Norden Lama and Praveen Lama and also to my little daughter Dohna.

CONTENTS

List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x - xi
Glossary	xii - xvi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1 – 19
CHAPTER 2: HISTORY OF THE TAMANG: ITS ORIGIN	20 – 44
2.1. Mongoloids and the Sub-Himalayan History	
2.2. The Nomenclature	
2.3. Debates on the History of Origin, Habitation and Migration	
CHAPTER 3: LOCATION AND ETHNOGRAPHY	45 – 78
3.1. Location	
3.1.1. Tamang Demographics in Nepal	
3.1.2. Tamang Demographics in India	
3.1.2.a. Sikkim	
3.1.2.b. Darjeeling Hills	
3.1.2.c. Other Parts of India	
3.2. Ethnography	
3.2.1. Physical Characteristics	
3.2.2. Language	
3.2. 3. Tamang Tribes and Clans	
3.2.4. Social Rites and Customs	
3.3.4.a. Thapsang Thui: The Birth Ritual	
3.3.4.b. Pasni (Kan Kwaba)	
3.3.4.c. Chhewar or Tonsure ceremony (Tapchey)	

- 3.3.4.d. Syama Pinba (Dress Giving Ceremony)
- 3.3.4.e. Marriage (Biwaha)
- 3.3.4.e.i. Magi Biwaha (Arranged Marriage)
- 3.3.4.e.ii. Prem Biwaha/Chori Biwaha (Love and Elope Marriage)
- 3.3.4.e.iii. Chopwa Biwaha/Balsing Biwaha (Forced Marriage)
- 3.3.4.e.iv. Jari Biwaha (Compensatory marriage)
- 3.3.4.e.v. Bidwa Biwaha (Widow Remarriage)
- 3.3.4.e.vi. Antarjatiya Biwaha (Inter-Caste Marriage)
- 3.3.4.f. Divorce or Parpachuke
- 3.3.4.g. Ghewa: Death Ritual

CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF TAMANG

SOCIETY

79 – 121

- 4.1. Introduction
- 4.2. The Concept of Bara Tamang and Atthara Jat
- 4.3. The Concept of Swangey Bhai (Sagik)
- 4.4. Lifestyle
- 4.5. Dress and Ornamentation
- 4.6. Food Habits
- 4.7. Handicraft and Painting
- 4.8. Folk Dances and Musical Instruments
 - 4.8.1. Folk Dances
 - 4.8.1.a. Damphu Naach
 - 4.8.1.b. Chomlu Naach
 - 4.8.1.c. Mhendomaya
 - 4.8.2. Ritualistic Dance

- 4.8.2.a. Bakcham Naach
- 4.8.2.b. Mhanichepa
- 4.8.2.c. Tormamharsho
- 4.8.2. d. Jungwa naach
- 4.8.3. Folk Musical Instruments
 - 4.8.3.a. Damphu
 - 4.8.3.b. Tungna
 - 4.8.3.c. Murchunga
- 4.8.4. Religious Instruments
 - 4.8.4.a. Dhyangro
 - 4.8.4.b. Ghanta Bajra
 - 4.8.4.c. Damaru
 - 4.8.4.d. Kangling
 - 4.8.4.e. Shankha
 - 4.8.4.f. Jhyamta
 - 4.8.4.g. Ghaling
 - 4.8.4.h. Lafa
 - 4.8.4.i. Ghantimala
- 4.9. Women in Tamang Society

CHAPTER 5: CULTURE AND RELIGION

122 – 170

- 5.1. Introduction
- 5.2. Tamba Culture and the Role of Tamba Kaiten
 - 5.2.1: Introduction
 - 5.2.2: Tamba as Historian
 - 5.2.3: Conveyor of Tamangs Culture

- 5.2.4: Different aspects of Tamba Culture
- 5.2.4.a: Pong (Symbol of Agreement)
- 5.2.4.b: Char (offering to deceased person's house)
- 5.2.4.c: Whai (Song)
- 5.2.4.d: Sangla whai (kindling incense song)
- 5.2.4.e: Sergem la whai (offering to the God)
- 5.2.4.f: Damphu Seba whai (preparing Damphu)
- 5.2.4.g: Sachya Namachya la whai (description of origin)
- 5.2.4.h: Rhuichen Chyapey la whai (origin of clan or Thar)
- 5.2.4.i: Tambala whai (description of Tamba)
- 5.2.4.j: Thim or Riti (Convention)
- 5.2.4.k: Chardam or Saimundri
- 5.2.4.l: Ritbhat (Customary feast)
- 5.2.4.m: Rhui-shyal (Purification of Rhui or Thar)
- 5.3. Bon Culture
- 5.3.1: History of Bon Religion
- 5.3.2: Origin and development of the Bon Religion
- 5.3.3: Transition and downfall of Bonism
- 5.3.4: Bon Religious Texts
- 5.3.5: Dynamics of Tamang Shaman or Jhakri in relation to
Bon
- 5.3.6: Various aspects of Bon culture or tradition
- 5.3.6.a: Brangi (Mandala)
- 5.3.6.b: Syong kyongwa (River worship)
- 5.3.6.c: Bhume puja (Hyulsa)

- 5.3.6.d: Sime Bhume puja (Worship of Rain)
- 5.3.6.e: Sansare puja
- 5.3.6.f: Aitabare puja or Shikari puja (Worship of Hunter God)
- 5.3.6.g: Bhimsen puja (Chore)
- 5.3.6.h: Goth-puja (worship of cowshed)
- 5.3.6.i: Chan (Shikari devta) and Lhu jyambu (snake god and goddess) puja
- 5.3.6.j: Pitri-devta (Khepasung) or Ancestor worship
- 5.3.6.k: Chansung tradition (symbolization of cock as Kuldevta)
- 5.4: Buddhist Culture
- 5.4.1: Introduction of Buddhism
- 5.4.2: Some prevalent Buddhist culture
- 5.4.2.a: Fasting or Upavas (Nyung ney)
- 5.4.2.b: Pran Prathisthan (Rabhney)
- 5.4.2.c: Uposhta (Shojyong)
- 5.4.2.d: Dhenow
- 5.4.2.e: Dhirghayu Avishek (Chey wang)
- 5.4.2.f: Chechyu
- 5.4.2.g: Chyotal Duchen
- 5.4.2.h: Nhergha
- 5.4.2.i: Lah Bakti Duchen and Yang Bum
- 5.5: Death Ritual

CHAPTER 6: BON TO BUDDHISM: TRANSFORMATIONS IN RELIGION

AND CULTURE

171 – 203

- 6.1: Transformation in Religion

6.2:	Theories of Culture Change
6.2.1:	Culture as Adaptive System
6.2.2:	Assimilation and Acculturation
6.2.3:	The Traditional factors of Culture Change
6.2.3.a:	Hinduization
6.2.4:	The Modern Factors
6.2.4.a:	Urbanization and Industrialization
6.3:	Transformation in Culture
6.3.1:	Evolution Process
6.3.2:	Process of Progress
6.3.3:	Adaption
6.3.4:	Development
6.3.5:	Migration
6.3.6:	Urbanization and Modernization
6.3.7:	Westernization
6.3.8:	Sanskritization
6.4:	Acculturated and Assimilated festivals of the Tamangs

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION	204 – 221
Bibliography	222 – 232
List of Figures (Photographs)	233 – 257

List of Tables

3.1: Tamang Population in Nepal, 1991 & 2001

4.1: List of Clans or thars of Tamangs

4.2: List of Swangey Bhai or Clan Brothers

List of Figures

- Figure No.1. *Bombo*, *Kangling* in mouth and *damroo* in left hand wearing garland of beads
- Figure No.2. *Srong-Shan-Gampo*, first Buddhist king of Tibet
- Figure No.3. Tamang and Tamangni with Damphu
- Figure No.4. Tamang Men's Upper Garment
- Figure No.5. Unmarried Tamangnis Dress
- Figure No.6. Married women's Dress
- Figure No.7. Sankha or Councshell
- Figure No.8. Ringa used by Lama (Priest)
- Figure No.9. Ringa used by Lama (Priest)
- Figure No.10. Tamang House
- Figure No.11. Copper Glass
- Figure No.12. Bowl
- Figure No.13. Tamang's traditional weight cup (A cup equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ kg approximately)
- Figure No.14. Tamang's Store bowl (Tasala)
- Figure No.15. Gagro or water pot
- Figure No.16. Lota or kalash for giving water
- Figure No.17. Small pot used for kitchen utensils
- Figure No.18. Mascot for Religious Dance
- Figure No.19. Mascot for Religious Dance
- Figure No.20. Mascot for Religious Dance (Bakcham)
- Figure No.21. *Choi* or Sacred Book
- Figure No.22. *Choi* or Sacred Book
- Figure No.23. *Ghyabok* or *Jhyamta*
- Figure No.24. *Ghyabok* or *Jhyamta*

- Figure No.25. Khorlo or Dharmachakra
- Figure No.26. Dorje or Bajra
- Figure No.27. Dilbu or Bell
- Figure No.28. Religiously important musical instruments, Gyaling, Mascot, Sanai, and Dhyangro (Drum of leather)
- Figure No.29. Kangling , musical instrument of Shaman as well as Lama (Priest)
- Figure No.30. Garland of beads of Tamang Shaman
- Figure No.31. Sacred stone of Bonbo
- Figure No.32. Tamang Locket with medallion
- Figure No.33. Tamang Necklace
- Figure No.34. Murchunga made of Iron
- Figure No.35. Tamang Damphu
- Figure No.36. Madal
- Figure No.37. Tamang Utensils and weight machine (Thala, Lota, Tasala, Chakni, Sherpalla)
- Figure No.38. Tamang Shaman
- Figure No.39. Tamang Ganba and Tamba Meet 2011, at Kalchini, Organized by Cultural and Educational Society of Tamang.
- Figure No.40. Clan head performing puja at *Stan*
- Figure No.41. Clan group giving sacrifice of blood of cock to their Kuldevta
- Figure No.42. A Tamang performing ancestral worship (Khepasang)
- Figure No.43. A Tamang with Plough, Yoke and *Halludo* (a rope for connecting the plough with yoke)
- Figure No.44. Lama performing Thapsai Thui or Nawaran or name giving ceremony

GLOSSARY

<i>Ashyang</i>	Mother's brother or anyone who stands in this relation in a classificatory sense. Also, father's sister's husband or spouse's father.
<i>Bhote</i>	Used by Nepali speakers to refer to many hill-dwelling, Tibeto-Burman speaking groups, in particular, those along the northern border of Nepal with Tibet who are ethnically associated with Tibetan peoples. Use to refer pejoratively to Tamang populations.
<i>Bonbo</i>	One of the major ritual practitioners in Tamang life. Bonbo have unique powers of sight and capture lost shadow-souls, revive life force and reveal the source of distress.
<i>Gurpa</i>	Buddhist specialist who invokes magical power.
<i>Jat</i>	Ethnic group, tribe, caste, or clan. Tamang use the jat for patriclan.
<i>Lama</i>	Buddhist specialist in Tamang society. Also refer to Tamang people.
<i>Lungdar</i>	Prayer flag or luck flag erected by Lamas for the general well being of people.
<i>Mana</i>	Nepalese measure equivalent to roughly a cup and half.
<i>Manjusri</i>	God of Divine Wisdom, whose worship confers mastery of the Dharma. Manjusri is also one of the forms of Bodhisatwas and he symbolizes wisdom. In Nepal, he is

considered as the founder of Nepalese Civilization and the creator of Kathmandu Valley.

- Murmi* Nineteenth-century term for peoples now called Tamang.
- Sibda-Nibda* The worship of Earth or soil, this is the most important god of Bon religion, which is worship by Tamang, this is the male and female form a deity.
- Tamba* The most important social institution of Tamang, who is supposed to be antiquarian of genealogical and ancestral history of the clan.
- Kagatey* Earliest Tamang who were engaged in paper making profession 'Kagaj'.
- Yolmo* The resident of Yolma, a place in Nepal, carried the surname as Yolmo, including some Tamang.
- Thungsa Babsa* Place of origin and name which is worshipped by Tamang.
- Kaiten or Kairan* The sayings of Tamba is called kaiten or kairan.
- Ganba* Elderly person of Tamang Society, who supervised the rituals and ceremony.
- Rhui* In Tamang society, 'Rhui' is an elementary factor of establishing relation between parents and children in a unified social order. The conception of the Tamang community to the Rhui is a bond, which has been since primeval unified the all Tamang into oneness, which help

to preserve their culture and kinsman by directing and controlling the system of pro-creation and re-generation.

- Fola* Kuldevta of Tamang or tutelary deities.
- Dipchyang Pong* Pong means Saggun, or offering given on the day of Nawarn or name giving ceremony.
- Nwaran* After the child birth, on the third day, the purification ceremony or Nwaran (Thap sang Thui) is performed.
- Chi* 'Chi' is religious text related with birth ritual of Buddhism.
- Lho* Year of birth (Lho), as per Tibetan Buddhist Calendar which is after the name of twelve birds and animals.
- Kham* Nature and category (Kham) according to the Tibetan calendar of Buddhism, which is the five elements of universe, like fire, water, wood, earth and iron.
- Guneo choli* Syama pinba, in which parents offer ghaghra (Guneo choli) like womanly dress to their daughter in auspicious day selected by the Lama on odd birth year of child started from nine to eleven.
- Swangey Bhai* The Thar or clan who worship the similar kuldevta considered the 'Swangey Bhai' by the Tamang people. The Tamang community does not marry within the Swangey Bhai Thars or they are considered as brothers from the same ancestor.

<i>Mama-Fupu Chela-Cheli Biwaha padhati</i>	Cross cousin marriage system.
<i>Lami</i>	The initiator of the social talks,
<i>Saagun</i>	Forms of offering, offered on various occasion.
<i>Janti</i>	Marriage procession of bridegroom.
<i>Damphu</i>	One side beating drum of Tamang made of the skin of ghoral (mountain goat) and pierced by 32 bamboo sticks.
<i>Karjel Pong</i>	Saggun or gifts consisting of one hen or fried Chicken, one bottle country liquor etc are sent to the girl's house by the boy's family to fix the date of marriage, which is called Karjel Pong
<i>Bhaka</i>	Rhythm in which Ganba, sings the folk songs at the time of ritual ceremony.
<i>Chardam</i>	The most important ritual of the tamang community, called, Karjel Chol or Chardam (giving away the virgin)is performed, consisting of 1 mana (a pot of bronze to measure grains) of rice, 1 paisa (in early time of Nepal 1 paisa is equal to 4 Dam), drink's like jaad Raksi (Local rice bear, and country liquor) as much as necessary for the Karjel Chol (Kanyadan) ritual.
<i>Dal Bhat Chalnu</i>	To be purified after polluting the clan due to the inter caste marriage.

Panichal Jaat From the hands of people of other caste, water is acceptable or in which marriage can be performed.

Rhimthim Bunch of Convention and Tradition of set by ancestor.

Kipat Earliest homeland or the place of settlement of Tamang ancestors.

CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In studying the developmental process of history and culture of any people group of early India, the main problem that stands on the way is the paucity of primary evidences. This is perhaps more acute in constructing the history of tribal people who are settled in different parts of mountainous region and foothills of the Himalayas. Conventional source materials are very scanty. But history always stands erect with sources as backbone and historians now a days have adopted a new outlook and have been using new kind of primary sources. The sole dependence on lithic materials for early Indian history is now leaving space for alternative kind of sources. This shift in methods has widened the scope of exploration in new areas of history. It includes different perspectives such as geographical, environmental, cultural, religious, economic as well as social. Knowledge of these is entirely dependent on the transmission of information from those living at the time, be it in oral or written form and this information form what is known as the source material for the particular period or topic.

The present researcher in view of the above intends to make a humble attempt to write a dissertation on the history of Tamang people who had been originally follower of Shamanistic religion and later adopted tantric Buddhism.

In the contact of Buddhism the Tamangs had a socio-cultural transformation. By an intensive study and investigation, the present researcher wants to find out the trends of changes and the elements of continuities of their original beliefs and cultural tradition. The cultivated languages of India, very naturally are capable of being treated in historical context but the Kirata or Indo-Mongoloid languages in fact were in a moribund condition and were not preserved even by its speakers. But at the same time Suniti Chatterji observes a peculiar thing. He states, it is easy and perfectly allowable to assume that the Nishada and Kirata peoples, where they were not absorbed in an Aryan speaking Hindu people, did possess a mass of oral literature, as an expression of their cultural and socio-religious life-their communal existence. Songs, religious and secular (the latter relating to love, hunt, war and other matters of fundamental importance to a primitive community) were doubtless there, but these have not survived when the language passed out of existence....¹

Though the civilization of India is the collective creation of diverse culture groups like a ocean absorbing different flows, 'the Mongoloid contribution has not yet been seriously studied as an element in Indian history and civilization' remarked Chatterji in the forward of the Kirata-Jana Kriti in 1950². Only sporadic attempts have been made by a

few scholars in this aspect of history, but micro level study for individual group of people speaking any of the Sino-Tibetan Languages³ or its various dialects is lacking. It may be that due to their late entry into the Indian cultural panorama, they could not play significant role in the making of history of India in its beginning. Besides numerically they were not much significant. But the impact of Hinduism combined with Buddhism gave the Mongoloid people a new kind of social and cultural dynamics. Hence historical investigation is highly needed for each people of the Sub-Himalayan tracts in North Bengal.

The ethnic history of sub-Himalayan range of Greater India⁴ begins roughly from pre-historic period. The people having different racial and cultural backgrounds came to this part of the world and started settling in their interactions with one another. Hence, the continent has a great history of civilization and cultural fusion of more than 3000 years. During this period India was a homeland for the people of different races and cultures like the Negroids, the Proto- Australoids, the Dravidians, the Aryans and the Mongoloids. Negroids were the first food gatherers who came to India in pre historic period and spread over the greater part of the continent, the remnants of whom are still found in the eastern part of Assam, Andaman Islands and also among the few wild tribes of South India. Negroids were followed by the Proto- Australoids, who came from the eastern Mediterranean area with some knowledge of agriculture⁵. The movement continued with the Dravidians and the Aryans entering India through her western gates during this period. The Aryans were of Indo-European stock and spoke the Sanskrit language which was developed in

the land of seven rivers. The Mongoloids made their way to India very lately may be in 10th c BC when Vedas were being almost compiled. However, the Mongoloids could not construct a pan-Indian character like the way the Aryans and the Dravidians have done⁶. They were mostly concentrated in the cultures of North and East Bengal, Assam, North Bihar and in the foothills of India and Nepal. The mongoloids speak the dialect of Tibeto-Burman group of Sino-Tibetan stock.

Tamangs are one of those Mongoloid races who speak Tibeto-Burmese dialect of Sino-Tibetan language group (Grierson, 1909; Glover, 1970; Hegen, 1960; Bhogalin & Bhogalin 1964)⁷. Etymologically, the word 'Tamang' is derived from the Tibetan word *rta-dmag* (Ta- Mag), meaning 'Horse-rider' or Cavalry Force in the army of Tibetan King *Srong-btSan-Gampo*⁸. It is believed that *Srong-btsan-sgam-po* was involved in a war with the kingdom of Nepal in 640 A.D. which eventually ended with a matrimonial alliance⁹. However, even after the war, his cavalry force did not leave the place but settled down, who later turned to be Tamangs. But recent historians and researchers shows that Tamangs are also called '*Murmi*'¹⁰ which means 'inhabitant of borderland' or aborigines of the borderland of this Himalayan region. There are many historians, sociologist and social anthropologist who have tried to explore the history of the Tamang and their socio-cultural behavior. This tribe of the Sub-Himalayan region has its own language, rituals and religious practices. The elementary belief system of the Tamang is very much similar to that of the primitive religion of ancient Tibet i.e. 'Bon'¹¹ which is purely animistic or similar to shamanism. Most of the Tamang are being

influenced by Buddhism and have adopted Lamaist Buddhist tradition in their belief system. Consequently Tamang have assimilated many Buddhist festivals into their own social customs. As Tamangs were the inhabitant of the frontier of Tibet in ancient time, they moved towards foothills of modern Nepal and Indian sub-continent in course of time, and were influenced by Hinduism and acculturated by Sanskritization¹² of the area.

This 'Tamang' tribe of the Tibeto-Mongoloid stock inhabiting the sub-Himalayan region is socially and culturally very primitive. Yet, due to the lack of its own script, we have little written historical evidence and information to reconstruct the history of the Tamang community. Despite the dearth of recorded data and information, the community inherits abundant alternative sources like folklore, folktales, songs, genealogical stories, apart from some Buddhist accounts. The finest example of the alternative sources can be seen in the form of *Tamba* and *Ganba*¹³. While the *Tamba* is the story teller of the Tamang, who is supposed to be a treasure of information about the genealogical history of the tribe; the *Ganba* acts as custodian of the social customs of the Tamang community. These two pillars of the oral history of the tribe show the distinctiveness of their culture. These aspects of the socio-cultural values help us to reconstruct the history of Tamang. Yet, till date we have little or no history of socio-cultural transformations of the community. In this backdrop, the present study is designed to capture the socio-cultural and religious transformations of the community.

There is unanimous consensus about the origin of Tamang that they were the Mongoloid stock of Tibet and later settled in sub-Himalayan region. However, despite bold differences of opinion among researchers on the socio-cultural practices of the community, it is conspicuous to note that there is no academic debate as to the racial background and affinity of the community. Moreover, although the Tamang socio-cultural and religious practices show close affinity to the Tibetan society and culture which owes to its sustained social and cultural intercourse with it in early historical phases, the community's basic ritual and cultural practices yet unequivocally manifest differences with their Tibetan counterparts. Such manifest differences help them to establish their specific 'Tamang culture' in this sub-Himalayan belt. Because of this specific culture, the Tamang community is able to preserve its ethnographic identity amidst threats of assimilation into various dominant cultures. But what stands as Tamang Culture today is in itself a transformed culture through the annals of history in the community's interactions with the other neighbouring (and sometimes dominant) cultures. The Tamang community has a very typical socio-economic structure which reflects the characteristic of very incipient system of society and economy. The society is based on kinship (*Thar* or *septs*) relation and family is extended through cross cousin marriage system. The importance of *Thar* among the Tamangs can be regarded as their clan identity within the community. They have the concept of "twelve Tamangs and Eighteen Caste" (*Barha Tamangs Athara Jaat*)¹⁴ which reflects the sense of 'pure' and 'mixed' caste or *Thar* system. The concept

of *Barha Tamangs* (Twelve Tamangs) means pure clan whose ancestor had occupied a specific territory; and, *Athara Jaat* (eighteen castes) means those clans who either did not have specific territory or grew up with the inter-caste marriage system. The most of the Tamang who dwell in highland of Himalaya their economy depends on cattle rearing and agriculture for their livelihood, whereas others who have adapted with the other communities and cultures have adopted multiple forms of trade and profession including settled agriculture. The origin of Tamang has been accepted by most scholars as belonging to mongoloid stock, but their route of displacement and nature of population distribution across geographies is still largely unresearched. Tamang culture and religion is very complex because most of the features of culture and religion are interrelated and interdependent with those of other communities. The Tamang society is headed by *Tamba* and *Ganba* who are custodian and guardian of the social customs of the community but nevertheless the religious priest (Lama) is not ignored, and hence, also holds equal position in the society. As revealed from the folksongs the Tamang were/are adherents to *Bon* religion (primitive religion of Tibet).

As revealed, the origin stories of the Tamang community lack precision and clarity. Further, the community portrays numerous elements of cultural mix, cultural assimilation and cultural transformations in its continuous coexistence with different cultural groups for generations. Transformations and shifts in belief systems and religious practices like the movement from primitive 'Bon' to Lamaist Buddhism is a unique shift, marking a radical cultural transformation in

the historical evolution of the community. Furthermore, the Tamang society and culture too has been exposed to the effects of globalization ushering in it more pressures of cultural preservation. However, such socio-cultural and economic transformations of the Tamang community have not found proper research by sociologists, anthropologists, ethnographers and historians. Hence, a preliminary reading of the history and culture of the sub-Himalayan tract reveal that Tamang, one of the communities spread over the length and breadth of the tract has remained a largely unstudied community in terms of its socio-cultural shifts and transformations. A comprehensive history of the region, however, requires incorporating histories of such socio-cultural transformations of all constituent communities inhabiting it. Therefore, such a study of the Tamang community is a historically compelling necessity, which constitutes the problem identified for the present study. There are many previous works which supply immense idea on the community, but present thesis is different in its kind. To substantiate the statement researcher has made an overview of existing literature and find out the research gap which shall be filled by the present thesis.

Austine Waddell : - *Buddhism & Lamaism of Tibet*, Heritage Publishers, New Delhi, 1979

In this book we will find the history of Buddhism in Tibet and its encounter with Bon religion. It supplied the information about changing nature of primitive faith and leading to 'Lamaism'. This book also contained the data about introduction of the Buddhism in Tibet and its

different forms of monastic life and doctrinal practices. The special characteristics of this book are its detailed accounts of the external facts and curious symbolism of Buddhism, and its analysis of the internal movements leading to Lamaism and its sects and cults. It provides material culled from hoary Tibetan tradition and explained to the author for elucidating many obscure points in primitive Indian Buddhism and its later symbolism. A clue is supplied to about the development of Tantrik Buddhism. It can be use for detailing down the Buddhistic attitude of Tamangs in their social and ritual customs.

Dor Bahadur Bista:- *Sabai Jat Ko Phulbari*, Sanjha Prakasan 2030 (Vikram Sambat) , the book contained the description of different ethnic groups of the Modern Nepal, where he mention about the Tamangs and their socio-cultural aspects. It also furnishes information about the religion of Tamangs and influence of Hinduism and its impact on cultural tradition of Tamangs tribal group in a very nutshell.

Santabir Lama (Pakhrin) : *Tamba Kaiten whai Rim-Thim*, (ancestral rites and customs and song of Tamang), P.B.Gyabak, Siliguri, Darjeeling, 3rd Edition, 1983

This book is very informative on Tamang customs and rituals, even history of Tamang ancestors. This is somewhat compilation of four primary books of Tamang written in *Sambhota Lipi* or Tibetan such as *Tamba Kaiten* (ancestral rites and customs), *Ruichen chopgey* (genealogy of 18 Tamangs), *Jigten Tamchai* (origin of the nature and tales), *Hyama*

(songs of the marriages). This book vividly portrays the ancestral history of Tamang and also is a collection of folk songs which supplies lot of information on Tamang.

Dor Bahadur Bista : - *The structure of Neplease Society*, CNAS, Tribhuwan University, Kathmandu, 1989

In this book writer has described in detail about the structure of the Neplease Society and its various dimensions such as cultural and social. Bista has brought some historical background of the different Tribal groups, who settled in this sub-Himalayan Region. He again talked about Ethnicity and Regionalism, and social hierarchy system which were prevailing in the modern society. Bista also analyses the Neplease ancient tradition and modern psychological perspective and some cultural assimilation and its impact in the structure of the Neplease Society.

Thomas E. Fircke : - *Himalayan Households : Tamangs Demography and Domestic Process*, Book Faith India, 1993

The book of Fircke titled “Himalayan Households : Tamangs Demography and Domestic Process “ is about the Tamangs community who were dwelling in the north-west part of Kathmandu Valley in Nepal, this book talked about the impact of the cultural ecology on the local Tamangs. Fircke has tried to establish the relationship with cultural ecology to Adaptation process; demography process and House hold process of the Tamangs community. The book is an attempt to

describe and place into context the processes that encourage population expansion in Nepali Mountain community. The author takes a closer look at the adaptive strategies employed by these people and how these strategies intersect with demography and household processes. The study in village adaptation is geared in anthropological fashion towards the intensive description of a particular agro-pastoralist Tamangs.

B.L. Bansal : - *Bon its Encounter with Buddhism in Tibet*, Eastern Book Linkers, Delhi, India, 1994

In this book we will find history of Bon which is the native religion of Tibet. The Bon po regarded the various elements of nature as spirits or Gods to be worshipped for favours or propitiated to avert harm. Tamangs community too follows the native religion of Tibet or bon, this book supplies a bulk of information about the nature of bon religion and different aspects of its customs.

Larry Peters : - *Tamang Shamans , An Ethno Psychiatric Study of Ecstasy and Healing in Nepal*, Nirala Publication, New Delhi, 1998

In this book Larry Peters has gone through extensive research on the Tamangs Shamanism, and its different aspects related with the material life, Spiritual life and other dimensions of the Tamangs Society. This book gives us the information about the nature of the Shamans and their role only, in the society.

Parsuram Tamang : - *Tamang Jati*, Nepal Rajkiya Pragya pratisthan, Kathmandu, 2059 (Vikram Samvat)

'Tamang Jati' this book of historical importance contains the basic information about the Tamangs community. It covers the different aspect of this ethnic group and its social and cultural practices but it does not mention the influence of the different religion like, Buddhism, Hinduism and other. Tamangs ethnic group has assimilated various cultural and social rites because of the contact with other social groups.

Ajitman Tamang : - *The Remnant Oral History of Tamang*, Kondongdong Yetma, Yambu, Kathmandu, Nepal 2002

This book of Ajitman Tamang speaks about the history of Tamangs by analyzing and interpreting the oral tradition of the Tamangs. It contained some information about the Tamangs King and their Kingdom. Author has analyzed the oral tradition of this Mongoloid tribe and reconstruct the history of this group and their clan relationship. The book has great value because it is based on oral tradition and it will help to rewrite the history of Tamangs.

Rudrasing Tamang: *Tamangs Rite and Culture*, Tamangs Society Research and Development Centre, Nepal, 2004.

The book explores the nature of primitive Tamangs customs, values, and norms and also describe about the religion, society. It has detailed information about the Tamangs life style and its various rites and

culture but it missed to carry on the exact nature of transformation from primitive society to modern society.

David H. Holmberg:- *Order in Paradox, Myth, Rituals and Exchange Among Nepal's Tamangs*, Motilal Banarasidas Publishers private Limited, Delhi- 2005

In this book writer has discussed the structure of the complex ritual aspects which is composed of Buddhist, Shamanic and Sacrificial practitioners. Holmberg trace out the social and cultural life of the Tamangs and explores the different aspects of Tamangs society as well as various element of their ritual life. This book supplied the information about ritual and cultural aspects and its differences, and even more about belief system and practices and more emphasis on Shamanic culture.

In this book Holmberg presented a vivid picture of Tamangs ethnographic discourses. But it missed the socio-cultural transformation in due courses. This is valuable book which furnish an extent of information about the Tamangs and their cultural aspects.

The research gap reflected in the light of literature review enhances the curiosity of researcher to move on this thesis. The researcher made an attempt to fill the research gap with some untouched area of the said community in the light of under mentioned objectives. The present thesis is an attempt to explore the ethnographic background and history of Tamangs tribe and their homeland and displacement. The investigation has been made on social and economic structure of the community, both internal and external. The analytical study has been

made to know the nature of culture, religion and some other assimilative forces. The attempt has also been made to find out the causes and impacts of the transformation on socio-cultural and religious life of the Tamangs.

The study has been conducted in the social, cultural, economic and religious aspects of the Tamangs community; the method adopted here is descriptive as well as analytical to trace the history of socio-cultural transformation of this tribal group through the ages. The nature of the present study is thus exploratory, descriptive and analytical in the light of the available sources. It is committed to only objective deliberation and also ensures about ethical neutrality. Moreover, for the purpose of useful and meaningful analysis of the details of social dimensions, myths, beliefs system and ritual practices, the following method has been adopted, based on

- I. empirical-deductive principles,
- II. a multidisciplinary approach incorporating the dependent variables from sociology, economics, geography and social anthropology,
- III. a spatial approach in order to draw the picture of temporal changes,
- IV. information through concrete case histories,
- V. Ethnographic method has also been taken into account.

The data for the research has been collected from primary and secondary sources. There is very few written literature about the Tamangs but whatever is found in the *Sambhota lipi*, has been used in this

dissertation in the light of authentic translation. Due to lack of written literature, oral tradition has been used but with sufficient care. The primary sources include the data acquired from the field studies through interview schedules and observations. The interviews have also been taken from such persons who seem to be well versed about the history of the Tamangs and their culture. The acquired data have again been utilized after cross verification. Experiences, of various persons like Lama (Buddhist), Shaman, Bonbo, priest of tutelary deity and *Tamba* having knowledge on Tamangs genealogy and history have also been inserted in many relevant parts of the dissertation. Apart from primary sources, there are many arguments and analysis in the dissertation which have been corroborated by secondary sources. Lastly, most of the sources have been collected from the National Library, New Delhi, West Bengal State Archive, and many public libraries located in Darjeeling, Sikkim, Jalpaiguri so on. Documents have also been collected from some academic centers and resource institutes of Nepal.

The mention community is the fifth largest ethnic groups of Nepal and in India its concentration are in the Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Assam and other parts of the country. The study poses lot of challenges due to non availability of written sources and transformative element of their culture and economy. However, they were sparsely populated across the Nepal to North east, so it is not possible to trace out in each and every section and pockets of Tamang settlement. But researcher has tried hard in Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and some parts of Nepal to explore the transition of cultural and economic change along with religious transformation from

Bon to Buddhism. However, due to time constraints there may be some ambiguity in the study and the responsibility goes to the researcher only.

Tamang being the largest ethnic mongoloid group of the sub-Himalayan track of Nepal and India, losing its cultural heritage, transforming its elementary beliefs and practices in the wave of assimilation and acculturation and even some time to integrate the forces of state craft. The social, cultural and economic transformation are clearly seen in the life style and practices of Tamang and it also manifests religious inclination towards others religions. Therefore, documentation of their civilization and culture is need of the time. Now-a day many ethnic groups depart from its language, culture, beliefs, and customs in the wake of other cultural groups. However, the intensive study of this community is expected to its moral power and may helps to connect with the trend of mainstream history, culture and civilization of India.

The thesis comprises of seven chapters including introduction and conclusion, the very first chapter is introduction which puts the light on statement of the problem, objective of study, methodology, and significance and limitations of the research. The second chapter portrays the history of Tamang on the basis of historical evidence and simultaneously presented the nomenclature of Tamang in the light of available sources. The chapter also manifests the historicity of Tamang depending on the historical evidences as well as mythical or folk tales. The location and ethnography is dealt in third chapter. This chapter highlighted the concentration of Tamang in Nepal and different parts of India as well. The chapter also throws light on the physical

characteristics, language, and various social customs of the community. The fourth chapter gives the distinctive identity to this community by dealing on clans relations and importance of clans and also discuss on ethnographic life style, apparel and ornamentation along with the ethnically identified handicrafts, painting, musical instruments and songs. The three institutionalized culture of Tamang is subject of discussion in the fifth chapter, where a study has been made on *Tamba* the custodian of Tamang culture, Secondly, the Bon culture which is the primitive belief system of Tamang and Buddhist culture which is the most accepted religion of Tamang instead of being adherents of bon religion. The justification of the thesis title has been highlighted in details in the sixth chapter of the dissertation. The chapter has been prepared with an analytical study of cultural and religious transformation of Tamang. The various factors and reasons have been taken into consideration to trace out the impact of cultural shift. The last chapter happens to be the summary of the research and obviously to fill-up the gaps, if any throughout the dissertation.

¹ The struggle for Empire, Vidya Bhawan Series, Motilal Banrshidas, (p.379)

² Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Kirata Jana Kriti*, Kolkata: Asiatic Society, 1951 (2nd Reprint, 2007).

³ Tamang, Parsuram, *Tamang Jati* (samvat 2051) Nepal Rajkiya Pragya Pratisthan, Kathmandu Nepal (p 104)

⁴ Greater India in this context refers to India in the pre historic period, encompassing Ceylon, Afghanistan, Eastern Iran, Central Asia, Tibet, Mongolia, Burma, Siam, Cambodia, China, Malaya and Indonesia. It was a period when most of the nomadic people assembled in the subcontinent and there was not any sense of modern state; during which all the aforesaid tracks were free for settlement. For a detailed discussion on the idea of *Greater India*, Cf. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Kirata Jana Kriti*, Kolkata: Asiatic Society, 1951 (2nd Reprint, 2007), (p.5.)

⁵ Ibid (p. 5.)

⁶ Ibid (p. 18.)

⁷ Tamang, Parsuram, *Tamang Jati* (samvat 2051) Nepal Rajkiya Pragya Pratisthan, Kathmandu Nepal (p 105-106)

⁸ Lama, Santabir,(Pakrin), *Tamba Kaiten Whai Rimthim*, (3rd Reprint 1983), P.B. Gyabak, Siliguri, Darjeeling, (p.19.)

⁹ Tamang, Parsuram, *Tamang Jati* (samvat 2051) Nepal Rajkiya Pragya Pratisthan, Kathmandu, Nepal, (p. 32.)

¹⁰ Hooker, J.D., *Himalayan Journal*, (Reprint 2005) (p. 130.)

¹¹ B.L. Bansal : - *Bon its Encounter with Buddhism in Tibet*, Eastern Book Linkers, Delhi, India, 1994, (p.1.)

¹² Tamang, Parsuram, *Tamang Jati* (samvat 2051) Nepal Rajkiya Pragya Pratisthan, Kathmandu, Nepal, (p. 15.)

¹³ Tamba means guardian of customs and rituals who supposed to have extensive knowledge on Tamang genealogy and ancestral history, while Ganba stands for elderly person of the community who use to supervised all the rituals of the society.

¹⁴ Tamang, Pratap Bal. *Tamang Thar ko Khoj Charcha*, Tamang Bhasa tatha Sahitya Parisad, Kathmandu, Nepal, 199, (p. 3.)

CHAPTER

2

HISTORY OF THE TAMANG: ITS ORIGIN

2. 1. Mongoloids and the Sub-Himalayan region on historical perspective

The ethnic History of the sub-Himalayan range of Greater India¹ begins roughly from pre-historic period. The people having different racial and cultural backgrounds came to this part of the world and settled, creating a great history of civilization and cultural fusion of more than 3000 years. During this period India was a homeland for settlement for the people of different races and cultures like the Negroids, the Proto- Australoids, the Dravidians, the Aryans and the Mongoloids². Negroids were the first food gatherers who came to India in pre historic period and spread over the greater part of the continent, the remnants of whom are still found in the eastern part of Assam, Andaman Islands and also among the few wild tribes of South India³. Negroids were followed by the Proto- Australoids, who came from the eastern Mediterranean area with some knowledge of agriculture⁴. The movement continued with the Dravidians and the Aryans entering India through her western gates during this period. The Aryans were of Indo-European stock and spoke the Sanskrit language which was developed in the land of seven rivers.

The Mongoloids made their way to India very lately may be in 10th c BC when Vedas were being almost compiled. However, the Mongoloids could not construct the pan-Indian character like the way the Aryans and the Dravidians have done. They were mostly concentrated in the North and East of Bengal, Assam, North Bihar, and broadly in the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas. The mongoloids speak the dialect of Tibeto-Burman group of Sino-Tibetan stock⁵. Tamangs are one of those Mongoloid races who speak Tibeto-Burmese dialect of Sino-Tibetan language group (Grierson 1909, Glovar 1970, Hegen 1960, Bhogalin and Bhogalin 1964)⁶.

2.2. The Nomenclature

The term *Tamang* was not common in general official usage in Nepal until the twentieth century⁷. In Nepal, in 1932 a government decree declared that people formerly known as Bhote, Lama or Murmi were now officially named Tamang. Elder men from a Tamang community northwest of the Kathmandu valley remember that roughly at the same time this government decree was promulgated, an official visited the village requiring all men to recognize a document stating they would no longer be called or call themselves Bhote or Lama, but Tamang. However Lama is still widely used for self-designation in the region. Even though the term *Tamang* can be found in Tibetan texts dating back to the thirteenth century and the Tamang's forefathers shared a "minimal or latent identity, based on common cultural and linguistic criteria and on the awareness of a common, mostly mythically substantiated origin"⁸, the

extent to which the term was applied to, and used by, a particular group of people remains unclear. Thus as both written and oral accounts suggest the term *Tamang* as a label for a defined group, lacks clarity, historical depth and tells little about the groups' ethnic, social, cultural and political identity.

2.3. Tamang: Debates on the History of their Origin, Habitation and Migration

Hegen (1960) attributed the view that the Tamangs were the original inhabitants of Northern Sub-Himalayan range, presently western Nepal. But A. Hofer (1981) has a different opinion regarding the origin or first settlement of the Tamangs. According to him, Tamangs were originally the inhabitants of '*Kerung*', a place in the borderland of the Tibet and Nepal. Hofer further contends that '*Kerung*' was neither of Tibet nor of Nepal, although today *Kerung* has been annexed by Tibet (which itself is under the Peoples' Republic of China) and has become its territory. A.W. Macdonald (1989) in his "*Note on the Language, Literature and Cultural Identity of the Tamang*" (Kailash-15 III-IV), made an extensive study on twelve forms of western Tamangs and eighteen forms of eastern Tamangs, their language, behavior and culture, and came to the conclusion that Tamangs were originally from *Bushang, Khasghar and Samyak* of the Tibet. But the Tibetan sources are silent about the habitation of Tamang in the region. Macdonald has tried to show empirically the route of Tamang's arrival in the eastern sub-Himalaya

through his study of the Tamangs of western and eastern Nepal. His study of the oral history of western Tamang helped him correlate the *Budigandhaki, Sidrang, and Timal* areas of Nepal with Tamang settlement, where they settled with the Gurung and Ghaley. These Tamang regard themselves as *Barha* (Twelve) *Tamang*, and claim to have maintained purity of race and culture. While those who moved forward to eastern side from *Timal* became *Atthara* (Eighteen) Tamang of eastern Nepal, who were assimilated with Indian Hindu (implying to have lost racial and cultural purity) and reached up to Sikkim region of the modern Indian sub-continent.

Nepal is the only region in India, besides Kashmir, which possesses local chronicles, narrating its history from time immemorial. These chronicles, known as *Vamsavalis*, are obtained from both Brahmanical and Buddhist sources, and have been dealt with by several eminent scholars. They profess to give a continuous account of the dynasties with names of kings and their regnal years that ruled the country from the time when god *Manjusri* converted a lake into the fertile valley of Nepal, through the *Treta, Dvapara* and the *Kali Yugas*. Leaving aside the mythical legends which have no historical value, we come to the successive dynasties of *Gopala* (cowherds), *Abhiras* and the *Kirata*. These are probably reminiscent of the period when the country was ruled by groups of pastoral and mountain tribes. The *Kiratas* were followed by a dynasty founded by Nimikha, who belonged to the solar dynasty of Rama or the lunar of this dynasty of Kuru according to different chronicles. The

last king of this dynasty is said to have flourished in the year 123 (or 1239) of the *Kaliyuga*. Then followed a long line of rulers belonging to the Lichchhavi dynasty⁹.

According to the work of Dhanbjra Bajracharya “*Licchavikal Ko Abhilekh*” (Inscription of the *Licchavi*) (BS 2030, Nepal) states that before the rule of *Licchavi* in Nepal, there was a dynasty of Mongoloid origin people because in the inscription of *Licchavi* he found many non-sanskrit words like *Gopala*, *Mahisapala*, the terms used to describe the ruling dynasties of Nepal before the Licchavi. These terms have deeper meaning in Tibeto-Burman speech as well as in the Tamang. In Tamang dialect ‘Go’ means Chief and ‘pala’ means Male, and hence, stands for Chief male person- probably referring to the Clan Headman. The availability of such non-sanskrit terminologies in the period preceding the Licchavi would mean the existence of some people of Mongoloid origin ruling the valley in the early ancient period. Janaklal Sharma (BS 2039:359-364) in his “*Hamro Samaj: Ek Addyayan*” (Our Society: A Study), pointed out that Kathmandu valley in the early ancient time was ruled by the Mongoloid people, but later, due to the in-migration of other people into the valley, they were forced to leave the valley and disperse to the neighbouring areas, including India.

Another source¹⁰ derives the origin and history of Tamang in Nepal from some oral account which speaks about Tibetan King *Srong-*

Shan-Gampo's invasion of Nepal in 640 A.D. capturing many parts of the Himalayan Kingdom, which concluded with a matrimonial alliance between the Tibetan King and Nepali princesses *Bhrikuti*. According to this story, the area which was captured by the Tibetan force (cavalry) was occupied by the members of the said cavalry forces, who finally settled there permanently, even after the ceasefire. According to this source, it locates the origin of 'Tamang' to Tibet with Tamang deriving their nomenclature from Tibetan sources. This is because, the cavalry force (of *Srong-Srang-Gompo* here) in Tibetan terminology is referred to as 'Ta' 'mag' (*rta-dmag*), wherein 'rta'-means horse and 'mag' means a soldier, meaning horse-soldier. Hence, 'Tamang' means a horse-soldier or a cavalry-man, and thus derives its origin from the Tibetan cavalry¹¹. The hypothesis can be true that cavalry force of the Tibetan king had settled down in Nepal and India from 640 AD onwards and the word "Tamag" took the form of "Tamang". However, many ethno-historians, sociologists and anthropologists oppose the view that Tamang traces its origin to the cavalry force of the Tibetan King, and question that if they were cavalry force of *Srong-Sran-Gompo*, then why Tamang's ancestral oral history missed such a great transition of their lineage. Many anthropologists opine that Tamang had settled down in the Sub-Himalayan region before the invasion of Tibetan King, and that the invasion only gave the Tibetan king extra power to bolster his political ambitions, who had already set up a good link with the Chinese Emperor. According to Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, "After 648 A.D. Chinese, making the allied state of Nepal as

their base, invaded India to avenge the insult done to the Chinese representative who came to *Harsa-vardhana's* court after Harsa had died, and they defeated and captured the faithless minister of Harsha who had usurped his master's throne and treated with scant courtesy the envoys from china." This statement of Chatterjee proves that just after the Tibetan invasion in Nepal, China had invaded India and defeated the usurper of Harsha- Vardhana, and china was aided by Bhaskara Varman a king of Kamrupa. Though China and ruler of North-Eastern India had good relation from earlier than 1st C A.D and had explored the central Asia. As they had very good relation from early time, there might have chances of settlement of Himalayan Indo-Mongoloids in the frontier of Sub-Himalayan region. If the hypothesis of Tibetan cavalry holds good in the explanation of the Tibeto-Nepal war and the origin of the Tamang, then the same hypothesis would be valid for explaining the Tibet India relation, particularly during the Vaskara-Barman rule¹².

As S. Norbhu (1981) in his *Migration of the Tamang Tribe from Tibet*¹³ writes that Tamang believes in earlier form of Buddhism along with Yolmo and Sherpa, who had embraced the developed form of Buddhist tradition and creeds. Their migration, if they have done then surely before the development of Lamaist Buddhism, when two pandits of India Guru Padmasamvawa and Santaraksit were preaching the doctrines of Buddhism in Tibet but prior to the origin of new sect of Tibetan Buddhism, because they are adherents of *Nyigmapa* Sect¹⁴ of Buddhism. He again writes the characteristic of Tamang dialect and its nature

reflects that they were settled down in the sub-Himalayan region before 10th century A.D. The great anthropologist Andras Hofer in his “Tamang ritual text-I preliminary study in the folk religion of an ethnic minority in Nepal” (1981) writes that Tamang are not only believer of Buddhism but they also practices Shamanism, Hindu religion and ethnic traditional customs. Tamang offered great respect to Buddhist Lama (priest) but same time they had deep faith in *Tamba* (custodian of social customs) who play important role during funeral and marriage ceremony. The Tamang’s religious ceremony and social customs is totally antagonist of each other, the teachings of Buddhism, social customs and clan rites are very much different but Tamang social group work as synthesis of all these tradition. The speech of Lama (priest), manners of *Tamba* and practices of *Bombo* (Tamang Shaman) do not have meeting point but instead of that they live together in Tamang society from the time of pastoralism. As J.Trayar (1972:22) in his “Ancient paper of Nepal” writes that Tamang were principal convener of Paper Industry in Nepal and their migration in the sub-Himalayan region can not go beyond 10th century. The ‘*Kagatey*’ Tamang were last group who migrated and they were involved in industry of paper making therefore they were called ‘*Kagatey*’. The nomenclature ‘*Kagatey*’ is very indicative. This word may have some connection with ‘*Kagaj*’ meaning paper at present. We also have some knowledge, how and when paper making was introduced into India. Probably this the art of paper making came to India through Nepal which in turn might have obtained the technique of paper production from

China and it happened by about 11th century A.D. Naturally, the inference mentioned above may bear some historical significance¹⁵. Now-a-Days we cannot find separate identity of *Kagatey*, either they were mixed with mainstream Tamang or Yolmo. Tamang and Yolmo are very closely connected, the tribes are adherent of Buddhism and even shared the same ancestral land for the habitation in early times and most of the customs are same, therefore these two clan groups accept the arrangement of marriage between the two. Moreover, there are some Tamang who are known as *Kagatey* and *Yolmo* due to profession in which they were engaged and other by the name of place where they used to live i.e *Yolma*. *Yolmo* had majority followers of Buddhism than the Tamang and Tamang needs Lama (priest) to purify or complete most of the ceremony, and as such they accept matrimonial relation between the caste which resulted mixture of both the clan and developed into vast Tamang Clan group. Therefore we cannot make a precise statement as to when the Tamangs migrated to the sub-Himalayan region but we can say that Tamangs are the primitive inhabitant of the sub-Himalayan region of greater India.

Ajitman Tamang¹⁶ vividly describes the settlement of Tamang and their ancestral place. He follows the Tamang traditional history or Tamang *Vamsavallis*, like *Shyachya-Namchya* and *Thungsa Babsha* or place of origin and name which is worshipped by Tamang. The history of Tamang, written in Tamang Script or Tibetan Script of c.10th A.D, “*Tamba Kayiten, Jigten Tam Chay, Hyuchen Chohey* also mention the

ancestral history of Tamang, their origin and places of settlement. Amongst these “*Thungsa Babsha*” clearly mention that “Tamang people are settled in *Urgeling* (Peshawar) in West, in North-West *Kamarling* (Kabul), and *Khyacholing* in North Kashmir, in this way from *Khamchyoling* in North-East (Lhasa or Kham) to *Yindaling* (Mukti region). And in South *Betaling* (Betiya) to South-West (Lanka) and in South-East *Amarling* (Burma), to East region *Bangaling* (Ancient Bengal) and *Samdenling* in North (Mongol). The settlement of Tamang tribe in ancient India is not known but the pastoral nature of the community and habitation in Himalayan range proves that Tamang was one of the tribal communities of Mongoloid stock. As Manoj Kumar’s Ethno- Archeological¹ work reflects that most of the Himalayan range were occupied by Tibeto-Burmese speech speaker of Mongoloid stock, and Tamang also belong to the same family.

The Tamang were designated by various names in various places, which sometime reflects the human nature of interpreting the inhabitant by their profession. The Tamang were designated as *Bhote*, *Murmi*, *Isyang*, *Tamang*, *Mulmi*, *SeMon*, *Bonpa*, *Kagatey*, *Se*, *Kath-Bhotiya*, *Lama*, and *Jade*¹⁷ etc. Earlier Tamang were designated by *Isyang*, *Se*, *Bhote*, *Murmi* etc. In Tamang society Brother of Mother is called as *Asyang*, and *Asyang* is often used as an honorific within Tamang society, so *Isyang*¹⁸ may be derived from *Asyang* used by some fellow tribesmen with honour to fellow Tamang, *Se* and *Kath-Bhotia* to Tamang is used by Newar, literally the *Se* and *KathBhotia* in Newari

means people who resides near of Kathmandu and *Kathbhotia* means people who lives in Kathmandu, traditional history says that before the rule of Newar in Kathmandu Valley in ancient period, it was the place of Tamang, so Newar call the Tamang as *Kath Bhotia*. Lama is used to give honour to Tamang where *Bhote* is used to call as impure and unclean. *Bhote* is synonyms as people of *Bhod* or Tibet. The above said statement is supported by the writings of Francis B. Hamilton, quoted by David H. Holmberg in his book “Order in Paradox, Myth, Ritual and Exchange among Nepal’s Tamang” (Reprint 2005:22) as “In the more rude and mountainous parts of Nepal proper, the chief population consisted of these Murmis, who are by many considered to be a branch of the Bhotiyas, or people of Thibet; but, although in religion and doctrine they followed the example of that people, and all their priests, called Lamas studied its language and science,....it seems doubtful, whether the two nations had a common origin; but this will be best ascertained by a comparison of the language The doctrine of the Lamas is so obnoxious to the Gorkhalese, that, under pretence of their being thieves, no Murmi is permitted to enter the valley where Kathmandu stands, and by way of ridicule, they are called *Siyena Bhotiyas*, or *Bhotiyas* who eat carrion; for these people have such an appetite for beef, that they cannot abstain from the oxen who die a natural death, as they are not permitted to murder the sacred animal..... They never seem to have had any share in the government, nor to have been addicted to arms, but always followed the profession of agriculture, or carried loads for the Newars, being a people

uncommonly robust. Their buildings are thatched huts, often supported on stages, like those of farther India” (Hamilton 1891:1971:52-53). But assertion of Hamilton can be challenged by quoting the inscription of a King named ‘*Bum-lde mgon*, who reigned from 1253 to 1280 in his fifth and sixth forts, which is as follows:

Ta-mang se-mon kha gnon-dullglo-smad mu-khun srin-rdzong brtsegs/

Dol-po mon-gyi kha gnon-dulldol-po yi-ge drug-ma brtsegs/

This is translated by Alexander W. Macdonald in his “Note on the Language, Literature and Cultural Identity of the Tamang” part, as “In order to suppress the Se-Mon Tamang, in lower Glo, he built the srin fort at Mukktinath, In order to suppress the Mon of Dol-po, he built the Om mani padme hum (fort) in Dol-po”. He again writes that this is certainly seems to be the oldest historical mention of Tamang. The Tamang gave a resistance to the ruling king of 13th century which reflects their settlement in the range of Himalaya from earlier. They were inhabitant of Himalaya is proved by the inscription and this is also established fact that Tamang had fight against the ruling king of medieval Nepal and were very possessive in their culture and freedom. Because of the stiff resistance paid by Tamang to king of Nepal, it became the major reason of skepticism and making them outcast and abstaining their entry into the valley of Katmandu.

According to Alexander W. Macdonald¹⁹ in his “Essays on the ethnology of Nepal and South Asia” Murmi stands for ‘People of the Frontier’. As in Tibetan source the Mur stands for Frontier and mi for

people, making the Murmi. This explanation gives the idea that Tamang were inhabitants of the frontier of ancient greater India. The Tibetan source gives the meaning of Tamang as 'Horse trader or Cavalry' because in Tibetan language 'Ta-Horse and Mag stands for 'Force' or Horsemen. But whatever the designations given by various racial groups in different period, these communities feels comfortable and pride to call themselves as Tamang.

This ethnic group were very much influenced by the modern industry system of India and suppressed by the feudalistic order of the Nepal, which compelled them to engage in tea industry by giving up partly their ancestral pattern of livelihood. In modern times the concentration of Tamang population is greater in North Bengal apart from Nepal. The community has many myths, legends and obscure history which helps to reconstruct the history of Tamang but instead of that there are major problems regarding their original homeland. In this an attempt will be made to link up the Tamang with other Indo-Mongoloid tribes by tracing the process of Tibetan invasion in India for more than two centuries in the post Harsa period²⁰. But due to absence of the exact name of the tribe from earliest period this poses to be greatest challenge to establish the fact. Any way this ethnic community of Modern North Bengal has great history which is still obscure and needs extensive research in future.

Among the Tamangs there are various opinion regarding the origin of Tamang Community. The Tamang did not have written tradition until they embraced Buddha Dharma and learned Sambhata Script or

Tibetan Script. The Tamang had system of oral transmission of their tradition, customs and social rites, from generation to generation with some changes and addition with passing of times. The history and customs of the Tamangs were preserved with some alteration and addition till date through oral tradition. In Tamang community, the person who possesses extensive knowledge on dynastic history and social customs of Tamang is called “*Tamba*” and his Sayings are called “*Kaiten* or *Kairan*²¹”. *Tamba* tells the dynastic history and tradition of Tamang which is later transmitted to the other people by ‘*Ganba*’ who supervised the social ceremony of the Tamang Community. After embracing Buddhism they learnt Tibetan Script and the manuscripts²² discovered so far are very much influenced by the Buddhism. As far Tamang’s written histories have become extinct, so Tamang people deeply believe in oral transmission of their culture and heritage through *Tamba*, *Ganba* and *Lama*²³. Santabir Lama (Pakrin) in his book “*Tamba Kaiten whai Rimthim*²⁴”(Tamang’s traditional customs and Songs) describe the origin of Eighteen Clans or Septs (*Thars*) of Tamangs and their Household God (*Kuldevta*). According to the Santabir Pakrin and his work “When earth and sky was shapeless and formless, a universal Thunderbolt was originated in air, and thunderbolt created the fire and above the fire became the pond of water, the white surf of water transformed into earth, variegated into various sizes created *Sumeru* or *Kailash* Mountain. The mountain divided into four directions East, West, North and South. Nine big and 360 small islands were created; simultaneously Ocean and great forest too came

into being. Heaven (Sky) became the sit of God, Snake Goddess made its sit down into earth and in the Universe Hunter (*Shikari*) God sited in four directions. And *Pancha-Buddha* meditate for Creation of Human to worship these God and Goddess, from these points eighteen clans (*Thars* or *Rhui*) of Tamang were created along with place of clan's settlement and Household God (*Fola* or *Kuldevta*).”Above narration of oral history or *Kaiten* or *Whai* (Song) describe that Tamang had its settlement in Himalayan belt and they had system of clanship along with animistic form of belief and practices. In this content we may recall the *Puranic* information about the Himalayan chain. The oldest designation of the range is *Himavat* which stretches along the north of *Bharata* like the string of a bow²⁵. In the *Nadyadi-Varnana* section of the *Bhuvanakosa* of the *Markandeya Purana* we are told that *Bharata-varsha* is cut up into nine parts which must be known as extending to the ocean, but as being mutually inaccessible.. This reference though a mixture of inaccurate or imaginary details with sober historical statement again induces us to notice a similarity between the mythical story given by Santabir Lama and the *Puranic* description²⁶.

According to the *Tamba Kairan* or *Kaiten* (Dynastic historian), in *Sumeru* or *Kailasha* Mountain there is a beautiful pond which is the place of *Mahaguru Rimpoche*, who is instrumental for the security of the world. He is instructed by the Universal Thunderbolt for the creation of Human being. So *Mahaguru Rimpoche* created three Sages and ordered to create Human. These three Sages were *Chhegu*, *Tulku* and

Lungu. The Sages made the human body but unable to infuse life so they prayed for Universal Thunderbolt, who gave a thunderbolt (*Bazra*) to *Mahaguru* who split the *Bazra* into three pieces from which three girls *Dhasing Dolma*, *Dhasing Taschi* and *Dhasing Tuku* were created. They have to serve the three sages, whenever girls were in jungle to bring water, flower and etc for the sages they were obstructed by very different form of Monkey.

When Sages came to know, they inspected the incident and found very different species of Monkey and decided to get married these girls with the monkey. So, accordingly *Chegu*, Monkey and *Dhasing Dolmo* gave birth to seven clans (*Thars*) of Tamang these are *Ghising*, *Bal*, *Thokar*, *Thing*, *Nyasur*, *Glan* and *Rumba*. *Lungu*, Monkey and *Dhasing Taschi* gave birth to six clans (*Thars*) of Tamang are *Yonzan*, *Bomzan*, *Dong*, *Dyeke*, *Syangbo*, and *Zimba*. *Tulku*, Monkey and *Dhasing Tuku* gave birth to five types of Tamang, are *Pakhrin*, *Moktan*, *Waiba*, *Tuipa*, and *Lungba*. This process of union created eighteen clans (*Thars*) of Tamang²⁷.

The account commonly told by Tamang on their origin which is quoted by David H. Holmberg in his “Order in Paradox, Myth, Rituals, and Exchange among Nepal’s Tamang” (Reprint 1995) under the caste hierarchy, the legend follows “A Tamang, a Brahman, a Blacksmith (untouchable) and a Kshatriya were the four sons of one mother cow. These four later ate the meat of their mother. The mother told them, ‘when I die don’t give my body to the crows and vultures; don’t give it to

the animals. So I am dying now. You four sons must eat my flesh; you must drink my blood. After cleaning and washing my flesh, eat it.'

"They sent the Tamang to wash the intestine, the lungs, and the stomach in the rivers. While he was gone the remaining brothers said, 'How can we eat mother's meat. We cannot eat it.' At this time the other brother was at the river washing the meat and ready to return. While he was on his way back, the others cooked the heart, the liver, and the little and big chunks of meat that did not need washing. The eldest brother (Blacksmith) tasted the broth and said, 'It is still mother's meat. What can we do? We must give it to someone.' The three of them hid their portions behind a tree. When the other brother returned they said, 'Why are you late? We ate our portions. Now eat yours too!' They gave him his portion. The eldest brother called out, 'Have you eaten?' The Tamang answered that he had eaten one chunk. He ate a total of four chunks. After eating them, the others cried out, 'Enough! Enough! You have eaten portions for us all.' The other asked, 'Where is the rest?' and they took it out and showed him. They told him, 'we did not eat our mother's meat. You are a mother-eating man.'

"The other became angry and said, 'Yesterday we were equal today you have done like this to me.' In anger, he grabbed the intestine and with a swat threw them at the cook (Brahman). The Brahman declared, 'I have obtained a sacred thread.' The Tamang then grabbed the stomach and with a swat threw it at the youngest brother Kshatriya. The youngest brother exclaimed, 'Oh! I have a scarf for wiping

my mouth. He has given me this I am now a Kshatriya; I am king.’ The Tamang then thought, ‘What to do?’ The eldest brother (Blacksmith) was examining the head and the hide. The Tamang grabbed these up and started swatting the elder brother, who exclaimed happily, ‘Oh! this head will be an air tube and this leather will be a bellows. I will take these. I have become a Blacksmith.’ After taking these, the elder brother went aside; he took the head and hide on his own and not out of anger. He said, ‘I have my share.’

“This left the brother who had eaten the meat. What did he do? He thought, ‘the honeycombed stomach remains; the meat has been eaten; and the rest I have given to the others.’ He called out the others, ‘Now we four brothers have this honeycombed stomach left. We must divide into sacred texts.’ After saying this, he divides it into four parts and gave one to each of the brothers. Then he said, ‘Now we must perform austerities We together will live righteously; we will not sin; we will not be greedy.’ They then performed austerities. The Kshatriya threw his text in the fire. Later the Brahman lost his sacred text. It fell out of his shirt, they say while he was washing. After ten or twelve years a cow ate it. He searched and searched and could not find it, so he stole the Blacksmith’s. He had left his sacred text on the shelf to keep it from burning while he beat iron. His own brother the Brahman stole his sacred text while he Blacksmith was defecating.

“After twelve years went by, the four brothers decided to meet one time to see what had resulted from their austerities. The mind of

the Blacksmith was burning because he no longer had a sacred text. He thought, 'What can I do? I can't tell them I don't have it.' He sat silently thinking, 'In the age of truth what can I do? Oh! Mother! What can I do now? The others then called out, 'Hey! Why have you not told us how things have gone with your sacred text?' The Blacksmith said, I performed austerities but my sacred text is gone.' The others responded, 'Because you have said you have no sacred text the three times we have asked you must now sit outside, the practice of contemporary untouchables'. We will not drink water from your hand. We will not eat food from your hand." Tamang who had eaten meat of mother's cow became ousted like blacksmith. So this is the social differentiation along with origin of class system in early societies.

There is another legend regarding the origin of Tamang which is mentioned by Vansitart (1906, 1991: 141), Nortey (1928:258-59), and Morris (1933, 1985:120)²⁸. The summary of the origin of Tamang , according to the legend follows: Once three brothers Brahma, Vishnu and *Maheswar* went for hunting. They wondered in the jungle for whole day but empty hand, but lastly they hunted a bison. All three brothers were tired and hungry so decided to cook the prey. They took off the skin of bison and stomach, the younger brother *Maheswar* was instructed to clean the stomach and intestine of the bison in nearby river, and Brahma and Vishnu made the preparation for cooking the meat. Brahma and Vishnu divided the cooked meat into three, while *Maheswar* was cleaning the intestine, two brothers kept the chunk of *Maheswar* aside and about

to eat, suddenly Brahma said to Vishnu: Brother, this is the meat of Cow, how we can eat. So they decided to hide their share. When *Maheswar* returned after cleaning the stomach and intestine, Brahma and Vishnu said: Brother, we were hungry so we ate our share, but your share is kept, eat and become healthy;

Maheswar ate his share of meat in front of brothers, when he finished Brahma and Vishnu shows their share which was kept in hiding somewhere, and condemned *Maheswar* for eating cow meat. *Maheswar* became angry and grabbed the intestine and with a swat threw at the brothers, which wrapped into the shoulders of the brothers, and became the sacred thread for the Brahma and Vishnu. Though, Brahma, Vishnu and *Maheswar* were belonging to the same ancestors but *Maheswar* and his offspring, the Tamang or Murmi became ousted from the mainstream Hindu religion, whereas the generation of Brahma and Vishnu remained the Hindu.

But in reality the *Maheswar* was Non-Aryan, this is unanimously accepted opinion of the scholars. Macdonald A.W²⁹. (1983:164) added the story of Tamang Shamans, according to him the *Maheswar*, the ancestor of Tamang was taken away by forest Shaman (Bonbo), and taught the secret of shamanism. Therefore, only Tamang knows how to propitiate his ancestral Gods and Goddesses. With regard to Siva, a comment of Sukumari Bhattacharji may be quoted here. She says, ‘....., as society moves on with the different cultural needs of different races and ethnic groups, its ritual and spiritual needs also

undergo a transformation, its Gods are metamorphosed and the contour of its entire pantheon is altered³⁰.

Although, origin of the Tamang is purely based on legends and mythical interpretation by *Tamba*, by virtue, who is telling the Oral tradition and culture of the community. Though the legends do not have the historicity but the origin of Tamang has taken place where caste system was already existed and may be that Tamang was the one of the part of caste hierarchy. The legends have influence of Buddhist philosophy as well of Hindu Darshan. In the *Vajasaneyi Samhita*, the *Kiratas* have been described as the people residing in the Himalayan tracks. In the *Mahabharata* we find that the God Siva and his consort Devi appeared before *Arjuna* in the guise of *Kirata* and *Kiratini*, simultaneously we may point out that Devi the supreme goddess is described as '*Kiratini*'. The Buddhist goddess '*Parna shabari*' originally was linked with the goddess of the *Parnasabara* tribes³¹ practically the layers of myths accompanied with sober history now are the only basis of tracing the history of the Tamangs³². But this is certain that Tamang were from time immemorial inhabitant of this Himalayan region and bearing the history of hierarchical social order of the continent. Further it may be observed that abhorrence to beef eating is a point of central importance in the oral tradition and beef eating has been equated even with eating of mother's flesh. Naturally we may take it as a proof of Hindu influence on the Tamangs. Such myths were constructed when beef eating was not accepted in the Caste oriented Hindu Social Structure.

¹ Greater India in this context refers to India in the pre historic period, encompassing Ceylon, Afghanistan, Eastern Iran, Central Asia, Tibet, Mongolia, Burma, Siam, Cambodia, China, Malaya and Indonesia. It was a period when most of the nomadic people assembled in the subcontinent and there was not any sense of modern state; during which all the aforesaid tracks were free for settlement. For a detailed discussion on the idea of *Greater India*, Cf. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Kirata Jana Kriti*, Kolkata: Asiatic Society, 1951 (2nd Reprint, 2007), (p.5.)

² Chatterjee, Suniti Kumar, *Kirata-Jana-Kriti* , Kolkata: Asiatic Society, 1951 (2nd Reprint, 2007),(p. 2.)

³ Ibid, (p .7.)

⁴ Ibid, (p.5)

⁵ Ibid, (p. 24)

⁶ Tamang, Parsuram, *Tamang Jati* (samvat 2051) Nepal Rajkiya Pragya Pratisthan, Kathmandu Nepal (p 20)

⁷ The term *Murmi/Moormi* may have derived from Tibetan *mur* for frontier and *mi* for people. The shift from Murmi to Tamang reflects a transformation from the margins of Tibetan to the margins of Nepalese society of the population designated by the term. See for, Macdonald, 1975: p. 129 for details.

⁸ Höfer 1979 *op cit*, (p. 148).

⁹ Majumdar, R.C. The History and Culture of the Indian People, *The Classical Age*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 1997 (Fifth Edition). (P. 81)

¹⁰ Lama, Santabir, (Pakrin), *Tamba Kaiten Whai Rimthim*, (3rd Reprint 1983), P.B. Gyabak, Siliguri, Darjeeling

¹¹ Ibid (P.19)

¹² Ray Niharranjan: *History of Bengali People (Ancient Period)*, Orient Longman, Calcutta, 1994. (p. 315)

¹³ Norbhu, S. (1981), "Migration of the Tamang Tribe from Tibet", *Tibet Journal*, 6 (1), Dharmasala,

¹⁴ The Tibetan Buddhism was split into four sect, the first of the reformed sects and the one with which Atisa most intimately identified himself was called the Kah-dam-pa or Ge-lug-pa, the rise of the sect soon followed by the semi-reformed movement or tradition of Kar-gyu-pa and Sakya-pa. The residue who remained wholly unreformed and weakened by the loss of their best members were now called the Nin-ma-pa or old one as they adhered to the old practices.

¹⁵ Neogi, P, *Iron in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1914 in Bose, D.M. et. al. (ed). A Concise History of Science in India, Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, 1971, (p. 341)

¹⁶ Tamang, Ajitman, *The Remnant Oral History of Tamang Kingdoms*, Kathmandu: Kondongdong Yothma Yambu, 2002. (p. 53).

¹⁷ See Tamang, Parsuram, *Tamang Jati* (samvat 2051), Nepal Rajkiya Pragya Pratisthan, Kathamandu, Nepal (p 28)

¹⁸ See Holmberg, David H. *Order in Paradox, Myth Ritual and Exchange among Nepal's Tamang*,(Reprint 2005), , Motital Banarasi Das , Delhi (p. 17)

¹⁹ Ibid (p 17)

²⁰ Ray Niharranjan: *History of Bengali People (Ancient Period)*, Orient Longman, Calcutta, 1994. (p. 316)

²¹ Tamang, Parsuram, *Tamang Jati* (samvat 2051), Nepal Rajkiya Pragya Pratisthan, Kathamandu, Nepal (p.17)

²² Ibid (p 17)

²³ Lama is a priest who holds the respectable position in the society, who possesses the knowledge of Dharma-sutta.

²⁴ Lama, Santabir,(Pakrin), *Tamba Kaiten Whai Rimthim*, (3rd Reprint 1983), P.B. Gyabak, Siliguri, Darjeeling

²⁵ Ray, Chaudhury H.C. *Studies in Indian Antiquities*, (revised third edition), University of Calcutta, 1981, (p. 80)

²⁶ Ibid (p 81)

²⁷ Tamang, Parsuram. *Tamang Jati* (samvat 2051), , Nepal Rajkiya Pragya Pratisthan, Kathamandu, Nepal (p 18)

²⁸ Ibid (p 19)

²⁹ Macdonald A.W. *The Tamang is seen by one of themselves, Essays on the ethnology of Nepal and South Asia* (1983),. Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Kathmandu, Nepal (p 164)

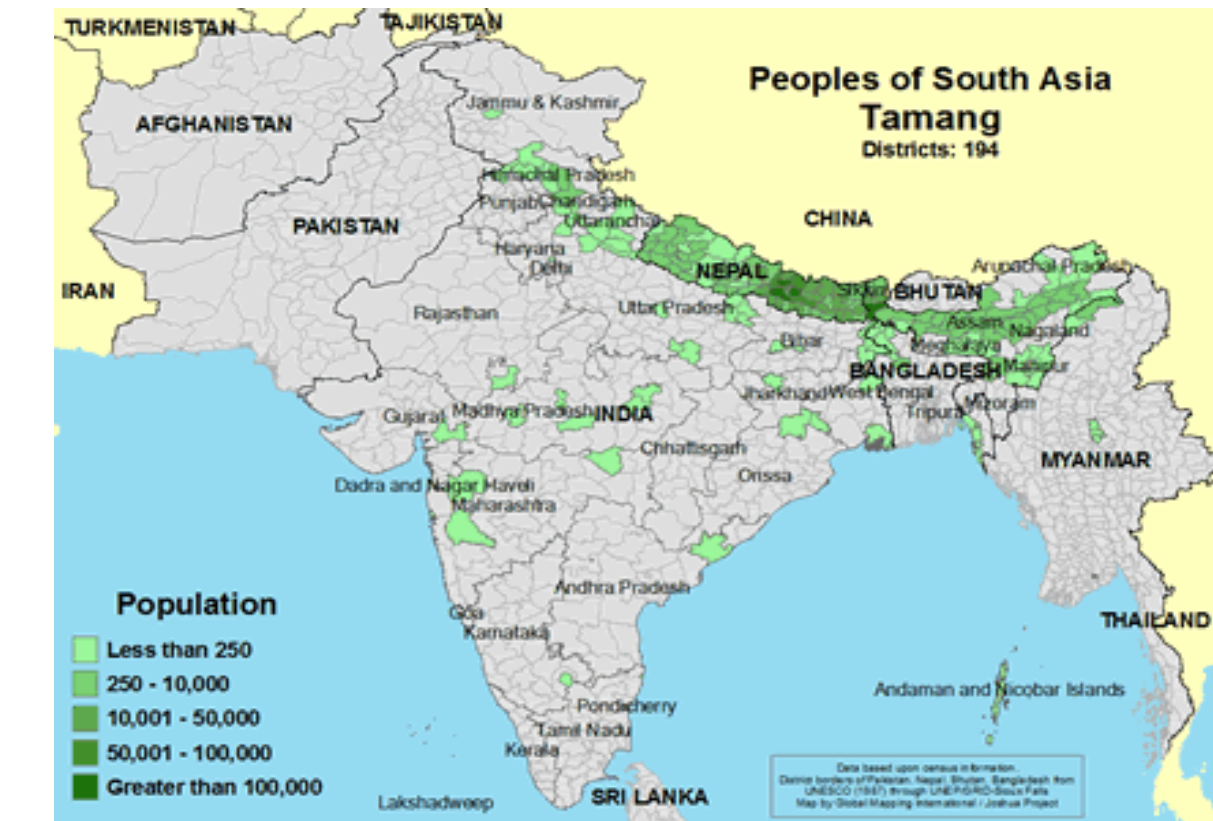
³⁰ Sukumari, Bhattacharji. *The Indian Theogony. A comparative study of Indian mythology from Vedas to the Puranas*, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd. Calcutta, 1978, (p. 203)

³¹ Bhattacharya, N.N. *Dharma O Sanskriti Prachin Bharatiya Prekshapat*, Ananda Pub. Pvt. LTD. Kolkata, 1996, (p. 39-40)

³² Ibid

CHAPTER 3

LOCATION AND ETHNOGEOGRAPHY



Map showing the distribution of Tamang Population in India & Nepal

3.1. Location

As evident from the foregoing discussions (Chapter 2), Tamangs were historically the predominant settlers who settled around the Kathmandu valley and as far as the Tibetan plateau to the North. Towards the west the Buri Gandaki River constituted a natural boundary to Gurung territory and in the east Sherpa and Rai groups bordered

Tamang areas. Besides, when we look at the demographic distribution of the Tamang today, one can locate Tamang in significant numbers to the Terai of Nepal's southern region, and to Sikkim and Darjeeling Hills in India. In the anthropological literature the Tamang are generally perceived as being composed of distinct groups, which moved across the border from Tibet in many successive waves of migration during the Ghorkali state formation¹.

The term Tamang was not common in general official usage in Nepal until the twentieth century². In Nepal, in 1932 a government decree declared that people formerly known as Bhote, Lama or Murmi were now officially named Tamang. As already mentioned that an elderly man from a Tamang community northwest of the Kathmandu valley remember that roughly at the same time this government decree was promulgated, an official visited the village requiring all men to recognize a document stating they would no longer be called or call themselves Bhote or Lama, but Tamang. However Lama is still widely used for self-designation in the region. Even though the term Tamang can be found in Tibetan texts dating back to the thirteenth century and the Tamang's forefathers shared a "minimal or latent identity, based on common cultural and linguistic criteria and on the awareness of a common, mostly mythically substantiated origin"³, the extent to which the term was applied to, and used by, a particular group of people remains unclear. Thus as both written resources and oral accounts suggest the term

Tamang as a label for a defined group, lacks clarity, historical depth and tells little about the groups' ethnic, social, cultural and political identity.

3.1.1. Tamang Demographics in Nepal

As per density of population, Tamang are the fifth largest ethnic group of the Nepal. According to the Census of 2001 the total Tamang population was 1282304 which are the 5.64% of the Nepal's total population. Tamang are scattered in whole of Nepal, they are found in almost 75 districts of the country and lowest population was recorded in Jajarkot, Ardhakhachi and Rukum districts of Nepal. The majority of Tamang population was found in the districts of Makwanpur was 185,874, and Kavrepalanchok 130,261, Nuwakot districts registered 111,112, number of Tamang population.

Table no. 3.1: 'Tamang population in Nepal'

Census of Nepal	Tamang population of Nepal's total population	Tamang language speakers	Tamang who do not speak Tamang language	Percentage of Tamang language speaker	Percentage of Tamang who know Tamang language
1991	1,018,252	904,456	113,796	4.91%	88.8%
2001	1,282,304	1,145,179	137,125	5.22%	92%

Source: Tamang Adivasi Janajati Ko Ethnographic Profile, Ajitmang Tamang, 2010, p.4

3.1.2. Tamang Demographics in India

As per the records of All India Tamang Buddhist Association, the total Tamang population in India is around 15 (fifteen

laks), according to the census of 2001. This may not be the correct figure of the Tamang population, because systematic survey of Tamang population is not yet done. The actual statics of the Tamang population may be greater than that because, they had settled almost all the corners of the India from colonial period to till date. The Tamang in India in respect of language/ mother tongue and bilingualism/trilingualism as per 2001 Census was 17,489.

3.1.2.a. Sikkim

The Tamang of Sikkim is found mainly in the Lower Teesta Valley and Rangit Valley i.e. in the districts of East, South and West. Hill slopes, tops of the outer spur and narrow riverine valley on the resistant rock of the Darjeeling ridge of the Lower Teesta and Rangit Valley are the places inhabited by the Tamang. The Tamang concentration areas are Soreng, Damthang, Melli, Rateypani and Temi-Tarker in South districts; central Pandam, Assam Linzey, Ranka and Gangtok in the East districts of the Sikkim⁴. There are no unanimous records on the number of the Tamang population. Linguistically its number decrease whereas caste wise it has greater figure. But statistics shown by Subba (2011) can accept with some limitation. As per Subba, the population of Tamang was 2867 person in the State of Sikkim in 1891 (Census 1891). On the basis of voter's list of 2004, the population of Tamang is about 35,194 people constituting about 5.88% of the total population in Sikkim⁵. The total population cannot be traced out merely on the basis of Voter's list,

because it has age limit. The actual number of Tamang population in the State of Sikkim may be greater than this.

3.1.2.b. Darjeeling Hills

In the district of Darjeeling only, according to the Darjeeling District Gazetteer, 1947, the total population of the Tamangs was 43,114⁶. The total Tamang population in Darjeeling district is around 1,86,000 in persons.

3.1.2.c. Other Parts of India

The many parts of India are inhabited by Tamang community. The Jalpaiguri district is populated around 72,00, Assam is 41,000, Arunachal Pradesh has 1500, Manipur 400, Meghalaya 300, Himachal Pradesh 2200, Uttar Pradesh 500, Uttarakhand 300, and Madhya Pradesh is around 200 Tamang are settled down.

3.2. Ethnography

The term ethnography has come to be equated with virtually any qualitative research project where the intent is to provide a detailed, in-depth description of everyday life and practice of a community. Ethnography is sometimes referred to as a 'thick description' - a term attributed to the anthropologist Clifford Geertz writing on the

idea of an interpretive theory of culture in the early 1970s⁷. The Dictionary of anthropology explains ethnography as the systematic description of the single contemporary culture⁸. In a simple sense, therefore, ethnography may be understood as a descriptive study of a particular human society or the process of making such a study. In the following sections we have presented a brief ethnographic account of the Tamang community. Bista (BS 2034), Haimendorf (1956), Frank (1974), Hoefler (1981), Fricke(1986), Holmberg (1979), Lama (BS 2048), Tamang (BS 2051), Tamang (BS 2055), Sharma (BS 2052) are the most important sources of the ethnographic details of the Tamang. In the following sections, based on these studies and others, we shall briefly dwell with the ethnographic account of the Tamang so as to facilitate our discussion on their society and culture, and their transformations.

3.2.1. Physical Characteristics

Tamang are of mongoloid stock as can be clearly seen from their facial features and physique⁹. They were heavily built with short medium height, straight and thick black hair in texture. They have slanted almond shaped eyes with typical mongoloid fold, and have wheat brown and dark complexions. They generally have little facial hair, wide faces, high cheekbones and flat noses with wide mouths, thick lips and round jaws. The physical features of Tamang are similar to the 'Kirata'¹⁰. According to Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, "When the Mahabharata and the Ramayana were taking shape, between 500 B.C to 400 A.D, particularly

in the pre-Christian centuries, they (Kiratas) had occupied the southern tracks of the Himalaya and the whole of North-eastern India, North Bihar contiguous to Nepal and to the north of the Ganges, the greater part of the Bengal, and Assam. Eastern Nepal and the Lauhitya or the Brahmaputra valley was the lands specially connected with them”¹¹. He further holds that Tamangs were one of these Kirata tribes, in close proximity ethnographically and linguistically with Newar. J.D. Hooker, however, has presented a very elaborate and comprehensive analysis of the location, locale and ethnographic analysis of the Tamang inhabiting the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas. To summarise Hooker’s account of the Tamang, “the Moormis are the only other native tribe remaining in any numbers in Sikkim, except the Tibetans of the loftier mountains and the Mechis of the pestilential Terai, the forests of which they never leave. The Moormis are a scattered people, of Tibetan origin They are now most numerous in central and eastern Nepal, and are a pastoral and agricultural people, inhabiting elevations of 4000 to 6000 feet, and living in stone houses, thatched with grass. They are a large, powerful and active race, grave, very plain in features with little hair on the face. Both their language and religion are purely Tibetan”¹². The Hooker’s observation makes it clear that Tamang are a primitive tribe of the sub-continent.

3.2.2. Language

Talking about Tamang language becomes a futile discussion without properly contextualising it to a given space and time. Noonan (2011)¹³, taking a cue from the other past studies on language and linguistic communities in Nepal, categorizes Tamang, Gurung, Thakali, Manangpa, Nar-Phu, Chantyal, and Tangbe as —the Tamangic languages which form a subgroup within the Tibetic branch of the Tibeto-Burman family. According to him, the Tamangic languages are Sino-Tibetan languages which belong to the Tibeto-Burman family, Bodic section, Bodish subgroup, and Tibetic branch. Similarly, in case of India, George A. Grierson in his *Linguistic Survey of India* (1909)¹⁴ has clearly mentioned the origin and classification of Tibeto-Burmes language group. Himalayan Tibeto-Burmese speech is one division, spoken by Gurung, Murmi (Tamang) Sunuwar, Magar, Newar, Pahari, Lepcha, and Toto. Therefore, broadly put, Tamang is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken by over a million people in central Nepal and in Sikkim and Darjeeling Hills in India. The two major varieties of Tamang are Eastern Tamang with approximately 759,000 speakers and Western Tamang with approximately 323,000 speakers, which are mutually unintelligible languages. Eastern Tamang is divided into two dialects, Outer-Eastern Tamang and Central-Eastern Tamang¹⁵. The dialect described here is Central-Eastern Tamang which is spoken in the Kabhre District of Nepal. This language classification wherein the speakers of the Tamang Language have been characterised by Grierson as having a Tibeto-Burman lineage on the one hand; and, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee's view of the Tamang as an Indo-

Mongoloid tribe sharing ethnographic proximity to Newar establishes the idea of Tamang being one of the primitive Indo-Mongoloid tribe of Himalayan range of Greater India.

3.2.3. Tamang Tribes and Clans

Tamang Community is divided into twelve Tamang (tribes) and eighteen *jats* (sects). There is no actual difference between the sects and tribes. The community is divided into several *thars* (sub-groups or clans) and these clans are exogamous and patrilineal. They have a custom of marrying only outside one's own clan. The clans are all socially and ritually equal. Some Tamangs *thars* include the following : *Dong, Bomzane, Yonzone, Lopchan, Gyamdan, Goley, Domdan, Bal, Dartang, Titung, Gangtang, Gongbo, Moktan, Ghising, Thing, Nyasur, Gyaba, Glan, Zyngio, Dumzun, Thokar, Rumba, Pakhrin, Waiba, Marpa, Gongba, Lo, Toisang, Shyangbo, Dheke, Tupa, Blon, Mikchan, Lungba, Zimba, Singar, Bajyu, Nharden, Chyumi, Gomden* etc. This division of the community points to a significant characteristics of the Tamangs that inspite of parallel existence of different groups, the Tamang society is not hierarchically stratified. They have evolved their own unique social and historical process.

3.2.4. Social Rites and Customs

Many social anthropologist, sociologist and eminent ethnic writer like parsuram Tamang (samvat 2041), Macdonald (1987), David Holmberg

(reprint 2005), Santbir Lama (1983), Rudrasing Tamang (2004) have extensively discussed the social rites and customs of Tamang. The whole human life has been divided into three categories according to the rituals and practice related from birth to death. The Tamang social rites in this respect are as follows:

3.3.4.a. *Thapsang Thui*: The Birth Ritual

In Indian society we find that the life of every man is bound by performance of some rituals from birth to death. Here the similar manifestation is noticeable among the Tamang society.

The Tamang society, despite being patriarchal in its social structure, is very liberal towards women, and their position in the society is highly esteemed. The act of conceiving is called '*Fo Puiba*' in Tamang language. From the day of pregnancy women get extreme care from the members of the family. They are given ample rest and healthy foods but they have certain restriction as precautionary measures to follow for the security and good health of the unborn. Such restrictions include, among others, restriction to hard work, climbing of trees and steep staircases, and others which may hamper the health of the child in the womb of the mother. After child birth, on the third day, the purification ceremony or *Nwaran (Thap sang Thui)* is performed. However, there is flexibility in terms of the performance of this ceremony¹⁶. This is the socio-religious ceremony of Tamang, which is usually done by Lama on the invitation from the householder by offering Shagun which is called "*Dipchyang*

Pong". The purification ceremony is followed by the *Namkaran* or giving of name to the infant as a symbol of acceptance in the Kula or clan of father.

The priest Lama uttering the mantra out of '*Chi*' (religious text related with birth ritual) use to give the 'Name' to the infant after observing the year of birth (*Lho*), nature and category (*Kham*) according to the Tibetan calendar of Buddhism. In some places father of the infant use to give the name to his child but it needs Lama to do puja in the house for purification of all the family members including new child and mother. The role of Bon po also not negligible because some Tamang still use to performed the *Nwaran* or purification ceremony by inviting Bon po. Sometime, the father of new born child gives the name to his baby, and Bon po do the purification of *kula* and family members while Lama performed the puja according to the Buddhist tradition. This reflects the amalgamation of different social institution having difference in opinion and ideology comes in one point to preserve and to continue the rite and customs of the community.

3.3.4.b. *Pasni (Kan Kwaba):-*

The ceremony of birth ritual (*Nwaran* or *Thapsang Thui*) is the process of socialization through personal identity, and nationality in general. According to the religious tradition and belief nobody gets the name and clan from the day of birth but only with the purification and name giving ceremony after certain day's child is welcome in the family and society as well. The birth ritual is followed by the process of

habituating the child into the environment of self survival by taking the staple food, which is called *Pasni* or '*Kan kwaba*' in Tamang dialect. This ceremony generally observed on five months for girl child and six months for male child. The social institution like Tamba, Bon po and Lama is not necessary in this ceremony it can be observed by the parents of child with the presence of maternal uncle and elderly person of the family.

The *Kan kwaba* is followed by the offering of rice to the infant by the father with the help of beak of starling bird; if it is not available then rice is offered by the spoon of silver. This is the belief that such ceremony will make the child sweet spoken like starling bird. The rest of the family member offer *Tika* and bless the child by giving gifts and ceremony is ended with the serving of food, liquor, and local rice bears '*Jar*' to the relatives and guest. The rituals ceremonies in fact reminds us of the 'Ten Sacraments' of the Hindus.

3.3.4.c. *Chhewar* or Tonsure ceremony (*Tapchey*):-

The *Chhewar* is another karma sanskar prevalent in Tamang community, which is observed on very uneven of three, five or seven birth year of male child. This ceremony is being observed as the hair cutting ceremony of the son child. The *Chhewar* has social as well as religious significance in Tamang community, if the ceremony is performed by the Lama according to the Buddhist tradition, then it will be called the Tapchey means formal introduction into the Buddhist monasticism, which followed by the teaching and preaching of Buddhist philosophy and

doctrine to the child. But most of the Tamang prefer to observed the ceremony socially rather than the religiously, where role of maternal uncle is indispensable, and Tamba supervised the ceremony and Bon po chants the mantra to pleased the *devi devta* of the family and surroundings.

Chhewar being a part of the Tamang social rites and customs, it includes many people from either social or religious ambience to conclude it as grant success according to the tradition. This karma sanskar is the process of socialization by making responsible and liable to the norms, values, ethics and customs of the society. The ceremony leads to the participation of greater number of people from the society having various moral duties are; maternal uncle, Tamba, Lama, sisters, and in-laws.

The role of maternal uncle or *Aaseng* in hair cutting ceremony is essential, because traditionally uncle will cut the hair of nephew for the first time, and *Aaseng* is also responsible to bring the necessary item of the ceremony along with special gifts. Maternal uncle in Tamang society is highly respected and *Chhewar* will not being performed if he is unavailable.

Generally, the *Chhewar* is conducted by the maternal uncle and family members but role of Tamba is also important, because most of the *Aaseng* do not know the rites and rituals so Tamba use to direct and supervise the uncle in the ceremony. This is also a mechanism to

continue the *Chhewar* according to the rites and customs of Tamang prevailing from time immemorial.

The role of Lama is according to the religious point view is necessary, because the ceremony is performed by the uncle and Tamba on the auspicious date selected by the Lama according to the Tibetan calendar. However, there are identical ceremony called *Tap chey* which is also a hair cutting ceremony but according to the law of Buddhism. This is the symbol of entry into the Buddhist monasticism by following the norms and principle of the religion. Apart from the role of *Aaseng*, Tamba and Lama there are sisters and in-laws who also played important role in the ceremony. The sisters collect the hair before falling in the ground and wrapped into white cloth while in-laws takes the charge of internal management of convenience to the guests and relatives.

3.3.4.d. Syama Pinba (Dress giving ceremony):-

The Tamang observed the *Chhewar* of son child to make conscious about his social responsibility and liabilities of the society. The another ceremony called *Syama pinba*, in which parents offer ghaghra (*Guneo choli*) like womanly dress to their daughter in auspicious day selected by the Lama on odd birth year of child started from nine to eleven. Earlier Tamang use to weave the cloth themselves for their family, and by observing the *Syama pinba*, offer the dress to their daughter symbolizing the marital age, just like *chhewar* where boy child has

attained the age, to bear the social responsibility, and *syama pinba* is also a symbolic ceremony that reflects marriageable stage of girl child. However this *guneo choli* ceremony is not popularly prevalent among the Tamang.

2.2.4.e. Marriage (*Biwaha*):-

The most important aspect of Tamang rites and customs is the marriage ceremony; it is social recognition of men and women as husband and wife. This is the basis of social life and relation into the framework of society making, leading to the right of sexual inter personal relation in order to continue clan lineage. Marriage is a social knot, which brings the two person of different *Rhui* (Bone) or clan into one and gives the hope of new beginning. The marriage system represents the exchange and unity among the families and also a stepping stone for making a nucleus family. Marriage practices are very diverse across the culture, may take many forms, and are often formalized by a wedding. Actually, the inter-personal relation of couples in their family gives stability to the society, and society represents to the state.

According to the David H.Holmberg¹⁷ “the Tamang society is formed on the basis of cross cousin marriage, which results for the most part not in extensive alliances across a large population but in intensive alliances among a small set of patrilans residing in neighboring village”. According to the Tamang tradition they are in favor of knotting the couples among the people whom they know, and there is also a system of

exchange, among the clan group for the marriage. The marriage ceremony is a reciprocal exchange system of women rather than the casteless independent union of two souls. Holmberg has stated the theoretical explanation of exchange of women as “to describe a social system as a system of exchange (Levi-strauss:1969) implies nothing directly about the status of men or women as actors. The reduction of a structural theory of restricted exchange, though into a strategic theory of alliance usually relegated women to the role of valued objects. This shift from a structural overview to a strategic model of social action neglects the powers and resources of women (van Baal:1975) readily observable among the Tamang on the one hand and the theoretical implications of gender and kinship on the other hand. Women are often accorded special possibilities for action in systems of cross-cousin marriage because they have wide ranging and embedded ties in two groups and are strategically central. Concretely put, a women’s father-in-law is likely to be her mother’s brother”. Such kind of ritual polarities of inter exchange of women within the segments of patrilineals retained the cultural virginity of Tamang. Generally, marriages took place within the limited geographical area, and most of the time within the same village. According to the Santabir Lama (pakrin) in his “Tamba Kaiten Whai Rimthim” (1983:44) mention about 49 types of Tamang clan or *Thar*, and a Tamang clan has maximum seven bone brothers (ancestral relation or *Swangey Bhai*) with whom they can not marry but rest of the clans are marriageable, which ties the bond of clan relation on the basis of ancestral relation of divinity. As Thomas E.

Fricke in his “Himalayan Households, Tamang demography and domestic process” (1993:134) stated that “the Tamang may marry anytime after the first legar (puberty) has passed although there is clearly tension between the conflicting desires to retain women in the household when they reach their full labor potential and the usefulness of marriage for extending reciprocity with other household”. This also reflects the marriage in Tamang community is not only solemn union of the patrilans segments but sometime this is more than this like imposition of the certain regulation on favour of male’s desire and superiority in the society. But instead of many peculiarity and complexity, the affiliation of two people as husband and wife is celebrated as community festival among the Tamang. There are some important social institution which regularizes and supervised the rite and customs of marriage ceremony of this ethnic group. These are Tamba (ancestral historian and preserver of Tamang rite and ritual), Ganba (Elder person of the village), and Lama (Priest of Tibetan Buddhism), who play significant role to make this event as the reflector of Tamang rite and ritual.

Present scholar already mentioned that basis of Tamang society is cross-cousin marriage or *Mama-Fupu Chela-Cheli Biwaha padhati* which directed the whole ritual and its process. Tamang insist the marriage within the marriageable clan group and much emphasis is given to the cross cousin marriage system. The marriage outside this system is not restricted, but marriage within the same clan (*Thar*) is totally prohibited. Widow Remarriage is socially recognized, but she can not

marry to the elder brother of her husband. Sometime society itself insists to marry the widow sister-in-law of his deceased brother, in such cases to look after the property and siblings of the dead brother lies on the younger brother. However the immoral relation between husband's brother and sister in law is socially condemnable which may lead to ostracize from the clan group and even from the village. This social institution of solemnization of two people into one segments of society has great moral and divine value. As Tamang were follower of Tibetan Buddhism, and according to the Buddhist norms every people are characterized by certain nature and category, which makes the suitable partner for divinely union i.e. marriage.

The Buddhist text "*Chi*" (Tibetan book of birth and death ritual), extensively discussed the nature and character of every human kind. This decides the *Lho* and *Kham* of particular person by following the Tibetan calendar. According to the calendar there are twelve *Lho* and five *Kham*, which match and mismatch the coeval for the marriage. These twelve *Lho* and five *Kham* are ;



(1). *Myung* or *Chiwa* (Mouse), (2). *Mey* or *Lang* (Ox), (3). *Chyan* (Tiger), (4). *Tawar* (Hare/Cat), (5). *Drug* (Dragon), (6). *Pukhi* (Serpent), (7). *Ta* (Horse), (8). *Gyu* or *Luk* (Sheep), (9). *Makar* (Monkey), (10). *Jiwa* or *Namyang* (Bird), (11). *Nagi* or *Khi* (Dog), (12). *Fak* (Pig). This calendar of year is revolves around the animals which determine the age of a person with certain formula. The list of animals obviously reminds the reader about totemism of the clan. Here we can specially mention the ritual worship of the people of Crete. The totem worship was much popular among them. They worshipped Ox, Snake, birds etc. The naming of the *Lho* after the animals is a proof of totem worship by the Tamangs. Perhaps such proneness to relating animal or animal worship came out from beliefs in totemism¹⁸. The five elements which makes a human body called *Kham* are; (1). *Mey* (fire : male and female), (2). *Sha* (Earth : male and female), (3). *Cha* (Iron : male and female), (4). *Kui* (Water : male and female), (5). *Shi* (Wood : male and female). The concept of five elements at the same time it seems had been in some or other way related to Hindu concept of

Panchabhuta. *Bhuta* means the state of existence, the word being derived from the root 'bhu' i.e. to be.¹⁹ A careful study of the Vaishesika Darsana will show that the five states of existence or Panchabhuta – Prithivi, Ap, Tejas, Vayu and Akasha has a striking similarity excepting a few alternative elements. The mentioned elements are the mechanism to count year, by evaluating all the elements e.g. Female-Wood-Bird-Year-2005. This is the cardinal properties of a particular person which have to match before going into the ties of marriage. There are various ways of solemn union prevalent among the Tamang community from time immemorial. These are;

Different forms of Marriage:

2.2.4.e.i. Magi Biwaha (Arranged marriage):-

The marriage system where consent of parents of bride and bridegroom is more important than the Boy and girl, is called arrange marriage or *Whiva*²⁰ (in Tamang dialect). This type of marriage is a traditional one. In magi *biwaha* there is the custom of the *lami*²¹ or matchmaker, representing the boy's family, going to the girl's house. The Tamba is the person who functions as the *lami*, because he is knowledgeable in matters of ancient rituals and the family genealogy. Once the talks are over and the finalization is made by the *lami*, Saagun or gifts consisting of one hen or fried Chicken, one bottle country liquor etc are sent to the girl's house by the boy's family, which is called *Karjel Pong*²². It is at this time that the actual date of the marriage is fixed.

The *janti* (procession of the bridegroom) leaves for the girl's house on the scheduled date, as per their custom. While the *Janti* makes its way towards the girl's house, exotic rhythms are beaten on their *Damphu* (Tamang's most important musical instrument) or large one side open hand beating drums.

The marriage starts with the *Tambas* of both side beginning to praise the ancestors and ancestry of their respective sides, narrating exploits and incidents, adventures and deeds of valour, and such. This is followed by a duet where the *Damphu* beaters of each side ask their counter parts questions in a certain tune or *bhaka* and these questions are answered by the other side in the same *bhaka* (rythem).

The next part of the marriage is the *Ratri bhoj* or night feast, where the bride, groom and all relatives eat and drink together. After the feasting is over, the solemn ceremony which is the most important ritual of the tamang community, called, *Karjel Chol* or *Chardam* (giving away the virgin) is performed, consisting of 1 *mana* (a pot of bronze to measure grains) of rice, 1 *paisa* (in early time of Nepal 1 *paisa* is equal to 4 *Dam*), drink's like *jaad Raksi* (Local rice beer, and country liquor) as much as they can afford which is necessary for the *Karjel Chol* (*Kanyadan*) ritual. As like of the other community, Tamang does not handover his daughter whole heartedly because in the tamang custom, *Rhui* (*Gotra*) remained in paternal group. As well in Tamang social custom, the husband of deceased women does not have funeral right, which is in the hands of brother of deceased women. Therefore in Tamang society after marriage

women will not change her surname. After the *Chardam* is presented to the groom's party, the Kanyadan ritual, in Tamang society is considered concluded.

The next morning, prior to the departure of the Janti, groom and *Samdhi bhoj* (in laws) is given. This to celebrate the occasion where in laws of both sides here met and had *dhog-bhet* (bowing down to each other) i.e, introductions have been completed and relationships have been acknowledged.

At this point of the wedding, the Tamba, in the presence of the gathering, makes the parents of the groom promise never to let the bride suffer in the future and the groom is made to vow in a similar way also, by the Tamba. The rituals that follow are first the couple's heads are gently banged by thrice then feeding each other with what they have eaten (Polluted food) or *Jutho Khuaune* and changing their seats. The final ritual is the placing of the *Tika* (made of rice and curd) on their foreheads and bestowing blessings from the elders, this concludes the marriage.

2.2.4.e.ii. Prem Bhivah/ Chori Bhivah (Love/Elope Marriage):-

This type of marriage is called "*Hyo lava or Rang Tangba*" in Tamang language. Basically, arrange marriage is very expensive and had to undergo a long process of rituals and formalities. Therefore most of the Tamang youth having love affair used to tied the knot of marriage by eloping from the houses to avoid the bulk of expenses in marriage.

However, there are some clans or *Thar* in Tamang community, whom arrange marriage is inauspicious, so they encourage elope marriage.

The Tamangs community socially acknowledges this type of marriage after certain formalities, they were not neglected. The couples who get marriage by eloping have to send pong to bride's house within three or five days to confirm her safety, with request to accept their love affair. If relatives of bride are happy with the newly established relation then accepts the pong and acknowledge their love affair. This formality is followed by *Chardam* or *Karjel Chol* means social affiliation of their union.

2.2.4.e.iii. Chopwa Bhivah or Balsing Bhivah (Forced Marriage):-

According to the Parsuram Tamang (Samvat 2051:146) in his 'Tamang Jati' this is the very typical form of marriage prevalent in Tamang community. According to this type of marriage if a Tamang boy, likes to a Tamang girl, it is not necessary to that girl too like boy. The Tamang boy to avoid the long process of arrange marriage and even the expenses of social marriage, forcefully captured or abducted the girl from *mela, jatra* or certain social gathering for marriage. The girl is kept in the house for three days with all the garments and ornaments of marriage. Consequently if girl accepts the proposal then formalities will begin to tie the knot of marriage, if not then girl is returned to her family. In such cases the girl is not neglected rather she enjoys the social status as of earlier.

2.2.4.e.iv. *Jari Bhivah* (Compensatory Marriage):-

Such type of marriage is very prevalent in Tamang society. If a woman elopes with another man leaving behind her husband is called *Jari Bhivah*. In such marriage the later married couple had to pay the amount ask by the former husband according to the law. Until and unless the later husband paid the compensation to the former husband, the later will not get social recognition. The amount of the compensation may be the half of marriage of former husband or it will be finalized by the society heads like, *Cho* (village headmen), *Tamba*, *Ganba* etc, and after compensating the amount to the former husband the later get the knot of marriage socially.

2.2.4.e.v. *Bidwa Bhivah* (Widow Remarriage):-

The Widow Remarriage in Tamang society is equally recognized as like others. Tamang women can marry more than once and such activities will not hamper her social, religious and cultural status in the society. However, the widows can marry younger brother of her deceased husband and not to the elder brother, in order to give protection to the property and kids. If widow do not want to marry in same family then she is free to marry to any other person with the consent of her in-laws. Widows in Tamang society are not neglected, neither their social status were degraded.

2.2.4.e.vi. *Antarjatiya Bhivah* (Inter-caste Marriage):-

The *Antarjatiya Bhivah* is socially acknowledged in Tamang society with some reservation. The Tamang men are free to marry with non-Tamang women but have to fulfil certain criteria. The system of “*Dal Bhat Chalnu*²³” is a social ritual which recognized the women of non-Tamangs community as of Tamang. Such activities lead to the birth ritual or name giving ceremony of non-Tamang women by the Lama in presence of Tamba according to the religious ritual and she gets the new clan and family within the Tamangs society, now she can marry to Tamangs men if all the society members participate in the feast of *Dal Bhat*. They arranged the feast of *Kalo Dal* and *Dhedro* (porridge) or *Bhat* (rice) and whoever participate the feast means their acknowledgement of their relation. The name giving ceremony is religious confirmation of non-Tamang women’s conversion into Tamang, and *Dal Bhat Chalnu* is a social rite which acknowledges the relation of Tamang and non-Tamang couple. This type of inter-caste marriage created new clan system in Tamang community. The offspring of this type of marriage are regarded by various names and nomenclature, these are; *Chiri*, *Chuhi* and *Jhari*.

Chiri:- If a Tamang men married to the women of higher caste of Hindu caste system like Chettri, Bahun then socially they are not acceptable in the society neither their Childs is accepted in the clan system of the Tamang. These childes are called Chiri and they are subject to purify themselves automatically after three consecutive generation. This forms of cohabitation is also called as Gothar.

Chuhi:- the offspring of Tamang men and Newar women are called *Nharba* in Tamang society. They are regarded impure for three generation, and after they are accepted in the domain of Tamang clan system.

Jhari:- The Tamang are totally against of marriage within same clan or *Thar*, this system is called *Jhari* in Tamang society. The children out of such marriage are regarded as Shangri and they can not be included into the Tamang clan system.

2.2.4.f. Divorce or *Parpachuke*:-

The practice of divorce or *Parpachuke* exists in Tamangs society. The divorce is conducted in very simple way with the couple's wish to separate. The *parpachuke* usually occurs when husband is attracted to another women or wife wants to go with another man. The divorce is performed in very easiest way, they are together tied up by thread around their waist and thread is severed, and divorce is complete. However the presence of Ganba, Tamba, Mulmi and village Pancha along with relatives of the couple is essential. The Pancha have to compensate by the couple with a very nominal fees as formality. The *Parpachuke* couple can remarry and society does not look upon them with hate. If they have kids it will be the responsibility of husband to take care of their subsistence.

The marriage in Tamang community is a compulsory rite like other social community of the world. However there is some fundamental difference in the marriage rite of Tamang and of the others. They give

much importance to cross cousin marriage system. The Tamang use to marry within the marriageable clan of their community and some time within inter village boundary. This reflects that they prefer to marry either daughter of maternal uncle or daughter of paternal aunty, but they can not marry if clan or *Thar* of mother's are same. This type of cross cousin marriage also can be regarded as 'Sister exchange Marriage' of Tamang ethnic group. Considering all these elements, Tamang society seems as closed society in respect of marriage. The Tamang has great respect for clan of same ancestor which is called "*Swangey Bhai*". They regarded them as blood brothers, and believe that they all are from same ancestors, so marriage with '*Swangey Bhai*' is prohibited. Moreover, to avoid such kind of mistake, Tamangs use to ask not only the genealogy of paternal group but also of the maternal uncle.

Tamangs are followers of Lamaist form of Buddhism, and they have in their lives deep rooted influence of the Buddhism and its tradition. In Buddhism the *Lho* and *Kham* have great value and it is mandatory to match the *Lho* and *Kham* of the both the boy and girl before marriage. If there is any contradiction either in *lho* and *kham* then marriage can not be finalized. If we observe the ritual of other community, we can find that bride's family use to give customary gifts to the family of groom, while in Tamang community the customary gifts to be paid by the family of bridegroom to the brothers of the bride and not to the father. The Tamang community is closely related with the maternal uncle and he has great role in almost all of the ceremonies. In marriage ceremony too

the necessary items of decoration and dress is the responsibility of maternal uncle. The system of using vermillion in the part of the hair is not the custom of the Tamang women but due to the influence of Hindu culture some Tamang prefer this custom. Considering the marriage system of Tamang, the Tamba use to conclude the marriage by witnessing all the elements of nature, as well as Tamba also explains the various aspects of life to the newly married couple. Tamang have very different forms of rite and customs totally different from other communities, there are some rites which reflect the close relation between the giver of the bride and receiver of the same. The rite of 'kanyadan' does not prevail among Tamang people. According to their 'sacred promising mantra' of marriage it is clear that they are giving only body, and soul of their daughter to the son-in-laws but not the *Rhui* (father's bone and mother's blood) which is identity of particular Tamang people. Therefore in Tamang community, it is not necessary to change her surname after marriage, moreover the son-in-laws also promise to return the *Rhui* or bone of her wife after death to her brothers. The Tamang social behavior reflects the true nature of liberal society. They use to give equal respect and social legitimacy to all types of marriage either it is widow marriage, elope/love marriage or compensatory marriage.

The marriage ceremony is one of the most important rituals of Tamangs and it connects one group of Tamang to other group as well. This is very long and complex ritual, and to conclude the marriage it needs various social institution of the community. The involvement of

Tamba, Lama, and maternal uncle and brothers of bride is very important. The Tamba is the integral part of the Tamang culture, he is the repository of social rite and customs and also knowledgeable person of ancestors, place of origin along with tutelary deity. He supervises the marriage rite from match making to last day of marriage. The Lama works as religious priest, he matches the signs of boy and girl according to the Tibetan calendar and also suggest the auspicious day for the marriage ceremony. Interestingly the final ceremony of marriage is *Chardam* or *Karjel Chol* in which brothers of bride played important role. So this marriage ritual of Tamang community has greater acceptance and divine validity, which is the dawn of the new family and new kinship relation.

2.2.4.g. Death Ritual:-

Tamangs are practically multi-religious, but their religious ceremony reflects the belief in Tibetan Lamaist Buddhism. The essence of Bon religion is very much present in the rite and customs of Tamang along with the Buddhism. Moreover, the role of Bon-po is essential from birth to death, he played important role in purifying the houses in various ceremony as well as in death ritual. But due to the influence of Buddhism on Tamang, they use to perform the death ritual according to the tradition of Tibetan Lamaist Buddhism. The death ritual is only rite of Tamang which reflects the firm believes on Buddhist tradition and also this is the religious-identity of Tamang. The death ritual also involves the other social institution of this community but as a whole this ritual is observe as per Himalayan Buddhist tradition.

The death ritual is different from other ritual of Tamangs community, when a person is falls sick, the relatives called Bon-po or *Jhakri* to cure him by averting the evil spirits same time Lama also do prayer for the recovery of that sick person. If he does not recover then everyone believes that he is on verge of death. Immediately after the death of a person an oil lamp is lighted beside on his head, and rituals related with this begin. The Tamangs community gives much importance to Lama and Mama (maternal uncle). If dead person is a man then Lama will begin the ritual of death ceremony, but if dead person is married women then her brothers are to be informed first. Until and unless the brothers of women are not reached, the ritual cannot be started. Unfortunately, if woman does not have own brothers then, a brother have to selected from the same clan or Thar of the women. The Lama starts the death ritual with the rite of *Fowa*²⁴.

The *Fowa* is a very important ritual of Tibetan Lamaist Buddhism, which is performed after the death of a person. According to this tradition the subtle body or consciousness remain in the body for some time even after the death; hence this is the ritual which releases the subtle body or consciousness from the body of dead one. This Buddhist philosophical ritual is related with salvation of soul after death, according to this tradition if subtle body or consciousness is released from the *Brahmaduar* (crown of head), then it will be free from the cycle of rebirth. Buddhist philosophy says about ten types of *duar* (way out) through which subtle body of a dead person can be liberated but Lama Priest

helps the liberation from the *Brahmaduar*, because it only gives salvation to soul of dead person. Buddhist tradition also emphasis on *Bardo*²⁵ which helps free passage to dead soul means free from desire, attachment, etc. Tamangs as being adherents of Buddhism has the system of making arrangement for preaching on *Bardo* by Lama Priest on and after the death of their relatives.

When Lama finished their initial ritual, preparation are made for funeral procession, the corpse is placed (Dhyanasana or Padmasana Mudra) into a container, which is lifted by bamboo bed like structure. This structure is called in Tamang dialect as '*Kho-Dom*'. According to the tradition the corpse is decorated and placed the *Ringa* (Thangka of Panchbuddha) into the head and Dom is deck out with red, yellow, and white *dhuvas* (pennants or banners). The funeral procession starts with the move of Lama, and playing instruments like the *ghyangling* (a clarinet-like instrument used in Buddhist religious ceremonies), *dhyangro* (drum), *jhyamta* (cymbals), *Sankha* (conch shell) etc, the head Lama walks in front of the corpse who rings the bell and recited the Mantra. The Lama walking in rhythmic steps rings the bell in one hand and other hand hold the *Dhuva* which is attached with the container of corpse or Dom.

¹ Kukuczka, Anne, “*Negotiating Ethnic Identity in the Himalaya - The Tamang in Nepal*”, *South Asia-Chronicle*, 1/2011, pp. 393-437.

² The term *Murmi/Moormi* may have derived from Tibetan *mur* for frontier and *mi* for people. The shift from Murmi to Tamang reflects a transformation from the margins of Tibetan to the margins of Nepalese society of the population designated by the term. See. Macdonald, 1975: p. 129 for details.

³ Höfer 1979 *op cit*, p. 148.

⁴ Subba, J.R. *History, Culture and Customs of Sikkim*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, reprint, 2011

⁵ Ibid (p. 355-366)

⁶ Bomjan, M.S. *A Long Struggle of Tamangs for Tribal Status*, All India Tamang Buddhist Association, Darjeeling, 2009.

⁷ Geertz, Clifford *The Interpretation of Cultures*, first published as a collection in 1973.

⁸ Barfield, Thomas (Ed), *The Dictionary of Anthropology*, London: Blackwell, 2001 for a detailed discussion on the concept of ethnography.

⁹ Gautam ,Rajesh and Thapa- Magar, Asoke K. *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal*, Vol II, Book Faith India, Delhi, 1994, p. 259.

¹⁰ Chatterjee, Suniti Kumar, proposed Tamang to be an equivalent of Indo- Mongoloid, who speaks the speech of Sino-Tibetan group. See for details, Chaterjee, Suniti Kumar *Kirata-Jana-Kriti*, The Asiatic Society, Kolkata, 1951 (Reprint 2007), p. 37.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 3

¹² Hooker, J.D., *Himalayan Journal* , (Reprint 2005) p. 130.

¹³ Noonan, Michael “Aspects of the Historical Development of Nominalizers in the Tamangic languages”, in Foong Ha Yap, Karen Grunow-Hårsta, and Janick Wrona (eds.) *Nominalization in Asian Languages: Diachronic and Typological Perspectives*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins pp. 195-214.

¹⁴ Grierson, George A. *Linguistic Survey of India*, 1909, Vol III, Part 1.

¹⁵ Varenkamp, 1996, p. 45.

¹⁶ For the sake of convenience, based on the health of the mother, and/or the child, and for other social and economic reasons, this ceremony may also be performed either on eleventh or on the thirteenth day of child birth.

¹⁷ Holmberg, David H. (reprint 2005), ‘Order in paradox, myth, ritual and exchange among Nepal’s Tamang’ Motilal banarasidas publishers, New Delhi (p 30-31)

¹⁸ Sen, S. (2000), *Bharater Sabhyeta O Samajbikashe Dharma Shreni O Jatibhed*, National Book Agency, Pvt. Ltd. Kolkata, (p. 62-63)

¹⁹ Varma, Ravi L.A., (1975), *Rituals of worship in Bhattacharya (ed). The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. IV. The Religions. The Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta.*

²⁰ Tamang, Parsuram(sambat 2051) *Tamang Jati* , Nepal Rajkiya pragya pratisthan Nepal (p135)

²¹ In Tamang society *lami* do not have social obligation but as they think they know some tradition and clan groups, for matchmaking *lami* will get nothing other than respect in both house. This is purely a social understanding of *Tamba* a Tamang oral historian who works as *lami* to protect the purity of clan and race.

²² This is called *Mangni pong* or Begging Gifts because in arrange marriage system first have to sent *karjel pong*, if parents of girl accept the gift than followed by second pong or gifts which is called *Hyoṭpa pong* which needs traditional *Saleroti* (a kind of circular Nepalese loaf of rice flour cooked in ghee or oil) a cock, 2/4 bottle country liquor, in this *pong* they fixed the date of marriage

²³ It is system when a Tamang men wants to marry to non-Tamang women, then women have to bestow a clan or *Thar* and brothers of marriageable clan and in social and religious ceremony that have to be accepted by the other members of the society. To confirm the acknowledgement from the society members they arranged the feast of Black Dal, and Porridge (millet) , whoever participate the feast means acknowledgement of their relation in the society.

²⁴ This is religious ceremony of Tibetan Buddhism which finally releases the soul or consciousness from the body of dead person by uttering the sacred mantra. Buddhist believes that consciousness remain in body for some time ever after the death of human being and it can be released from the body only with the help of very specialist person as *Lama* by the medium of *Fowa*. Tamang Rudrasing (2004:182), *Tamang Sanskar r sanskriti* Tamang Society Research and Development Centre, Nepal

²⁵ Bardo means gap or interval of suspension after our death. According to the Buddhist philosophy this is the stage of after death and before the dissolution into supreme one. *The Tibetan book of the dead* (2000:01)

CHAPTER

4

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE TAMANG SOCIETY

4.1. Introduction

The society is the repository of human behavior through the ages. It also reflects the ideology and various cultural dimensions of the mankind. The society is also a representative of civilization, and social structure is the indicator of organized human behavior. The folk songs of the Tamang tribe start with “*Amailey Hoi Amaily*”¹, which praised the Motherhood, as Parsuram Tamang in his book “Tamang Jati” (2051 sambat) has presented a speculation on the basis of folk song that ancient Tamang society must be Matriarchal. Still today the position of the women in the social activities is equivalent of men and sometime the decision of women is more influential than men. The unification of Nepal by the great king Prithivinarayan Shah² brought the idea of Hinduization. This process led to passing of the Act of 1854, which categorize the Tamang community as ‘Bhote’³ and brought into the lowest category of *Panichal Jaat*⁴ or Shudras of Hindu caste hierarchy. In its formation, the order that took form in Nepal followed patterns presaged in the greater social history of South Asia. As Dumont recounts, those who became Shudras in Indic Varna ideology were originally conceived of as servants⁵. The inclusion of the Tamang

in the Hindu caste hierarchy especially in Nepal, also reflect the significant state ideology to bring this beef eater into the order of the Hindu cultural domain. But such inclusion by the state, with the identification as carrion-beef eater gave boost to the development of Tamang's regional ethnic identity. The elevation of Tamang from unclean and unrecognized caste to the level of Shudras of *Panichal Jaat* makes them socially uplifted and somewhat identified in the society of Hindu social order. Because of the inclusion into Hindu hierarchical order, the Tamang's primordial society was drastically changed into the patriarchal. The primitive society of Tamangs, is now going through the transitional changes in its economy, culture and even in political. They were in the north influenced by Tibetan culture and in south were highly infused by the Hindu culture. According to the Parsuram Tamang in his 'Tamang jati' (samvat 2051), the nature of the Tamang society depends on two elements; one is internal elements which, organized and gives continuity to the society, and another is external, which is the good conductor, coordinator and controller of the social elements. But David H. Holmberg writes as "Tamang society is formed on the basis of cross-cousin marriage, which results for the most part not in extensive alliances across a large population but in intensive alliances among a small set of patrilines residing in neighboring villages". Basically, the Tamang society revolves around clan relation, kinship and marriage which is, according to them is a bond of blood and bond of mutual understanding.

The first and basic internal element of the Tamang society is called '*Rhui*⁶' or clan. In Tamang society, '*Rhui*' is an elementary factor of establishing relation between parents and children in a unified social order. The conception of the Tamang community to the *Rhui* is a bond, which has been since primeval unified the all Tamang into oneness, which help to preserve their culture and kinsman by directing and controlling the system of pro-creation and re-generation. Some sociologist has understood the meaning of *Rhui* as '*Jaat*' or caste, but it is also impossible to interpret it as caste according to the Hindu social hierarchy. According to the Hindu Varna system, there are only four castes and these are Brahman, Kshtriya, Vaisa, Sudra and a gotra also can be divide into various castes, whereas such classification is totally absent in Tamang social order. The *Rhui* can be called 'clan', tribe, patrileanage, family genealogy, paternal relative, Bone relative and bone. As parsuram Tamang has mention in his book that Nancy E.Levin has given three meaning of *Rhui*, (1) Bone, (2) Clan and (3) Social Stratum (samvat 2051:47, 1981:56). The Tamang society is also has similar connotation of the *Rhui*. This element plays significant role in reproduction and to carry on paternal lineage in the Tamang societal structure. According to the Tamang belief system, the bone of men is passed on genetically to the children through the process of intimacy with his partner and constructs the bones of the infant in the womb while blood and flesh is the contribution of mother. Since, the bone of children is made out of fathers whereas other parts constitute from the element of mother's

body. Considering this, the bone is genetically inherited from father, and such patri-leanage classification of 'Bone' or *Rhui* makes the lineage of Tamang patriarchal society. The one clan group of Tamang, who resides anywhere of the world called the one bone people. However, *Rhui* is the identification of Tamang in the society. This is as well determining factor of their ancestor, relatives and social status.

The Tamang tribe differentiates the one people from another through the *Rhui*, which had inherited genetically by the father. This term is also called as 'clan' or *Thar*. Many clan means, many *Rhui*. How many clan or *Rhui* is in Tamang society? This is not yet solved but many Tamang researcher has collected and compiled the names of clan and their tutelary deity along with the place of origin. The Santabir Lama (pakhrin)⁷ in his work classified the 49 clans and out of which 32 clans with their origin and *kuldevta* and 17 other clans without mentioning *kuldevta* and place of origin. This account is also supported by Macdonald in his book "The Tamang is seen by one of themselves" (1987:138). The classification of clan or *Rhui*, according to the Santabir Lama in his "*Tamba Kaiten Whai Rhimthim*" under the section of '*Rhuichen Chyopey Lha Whai*' is follows:-

Table no. 4.1: List of Clans or thars of Tamangs

Sl No	<i>Babsa (place of origin)</i>	<i>Rhui / Thar or Clan</i>	<i>Fola or Kuldevta</i>
1	<i>Dongyal</i>	<i>Dong</i>	<i>Murgulen</i>
2	<i>Nakpo Chyagi Gombo</i>	<i>Yonzone</i>	<i>Lama Konzo Mahakal</i>
3	<i>Kdhili Brakhar</i>	<i>Bomzane</i>	<i>Dongmarchan</i>

4	<i>Shyargi Gombo</i>	<i>Lopchan</i>	<i>Apinal Lama Konzo Nal Jyormu</i>
5		<i>Gyamdan</i>	<i>Gyalbo Lhahi Bu Nanghsari Mamu</i>
6		<i>Goley</i>	<i>- Do-</i>
7		<i>Domdan</i>	<i>-Do-</i>
8		<i>Bal</i>	<i>-Do-</i>
9		<i>Dartang</i>	<i>-Do-</i>
10		<i>Titung</i>	<i>-Do-</i>
11		<i>Gangtang</i>	<i>-Do-</i>
12		<i>Gongbo</i>	<i>-Do-</i>
13	<i>Muku</i>	<i>Moktan</i>	<i>Yapjey Lahi Gyalbo, Khdili Cheyman Gyalbo</i>
14	<i>Sergong</i>	<i>Ghising</i>	<i>Lugu Chang Marten</i>
15	<i>Yalung Sho</i>	<i>Thing</i>	<i>Nhima Mewa Changri</i>
16	<i>Changkong</i>	<i>Nyasur</i>	<i>Chan</i>
17	<i>Gyanak</i>	<i>Gyaba</i>	<i>Gyalgi Dhurla Manggi</i>
18	<i>Selmondal</i>	<i>Glan</i>	<i>Pekar Gyalbo</i>
19	<i>Jyanggangi</i>	<i>Zyngio</i>	<i>Silakarpo</i>
20	<i>Duma</i>	<i>Dumzun</i>	<i>Jambal Shengyan Lama Konzyo</i>
21	<i>Thotho Ring</i>	<i>Thokar</i>	<i>Thoichan Karpo dak marchan Karpo</i>
22	<i>Sharuthothari</i>	<i>Rumba</i>	<i>Karpo</i>
23	<i>Purang Chya</i>	<i>Pakhrin</i>	<i>Changrila Guru Chanchan Shyargi Jyo</i>
24	<i>Shermi Marandal</i>	<i>Waiba</i>	<i>Karpojyo Choman Gyalbo Yablkarpo</i>
25	<i>Chita</i>	<i>Marpa</i>	<i>Boila Gyalbo</i>
26	<i>Goma</i>	<i>Gongba</i>	<i>Lama Konzyo</i>

27	<i>Lo Gyalsari</i>	<i>Lo</i>	<i>Jyamal SinseLama Konzyo</i>
28	<i>Syanchey</i>	<i>Toisang</i>	<i>Uigi Gyalbo Yhinchey Lahi</i>
29	<i>Shyang</i>	<i>Shyangbo</i>	<i>Gungthang Jyoha Yabjey Jhoha</i>
30	<i>Sinka</i>	<i>Dheke</i>	<i>Nhima Hoisar</i>
31	<i>Tuku</i>	<i>Tupa</i>	<i>Yhan Chan Mamu Dui Choi</i>
32	<i>Lobo Gonbo</i>	<i>Blon</i>	<i>Chan</i>
33	<i>Goma Siwang</i>	<i>Gomden</i>	<i>Jyamal Furba Thilen Gyagamela, Dotinajyewe Bande Gyalbo</i>
34	<i>Changpey</i>	<i>Mikchan</i>	<i>Changrila</i>
35	<i>Lungi Khorlo</i>	<i>Lungba</i>	<i>Khyungchen Sinhi Laden</i>
36	<i>Palgi Sammey</i>	<i>Zimba</i>	<i>Bal Thoi Chan</i>
37	<i>Brokhar Gombo</i>	<i>Singar</i>	<i>Chanten</i>
38	<i>Supa gyal</i>	<i>Bajyu</i>	<i>Sharma Bon</i>
39		<i>Nharden</i>	
40		<i>Chyumi</i>	
41		<i>Jhumi</i>	
42		<i>Lama Khor</i>	
43		<i>Samden</i>	
44		<i>Hopden</i>	
45		<i>Negi</i>	
46		<i>Singdan</i>	
47		<i>Khani Khor</i>	
48		<i>Jhongdan</i>	
49		<i>Kolden</i>	

The Parsuram Tamang also been accepted the above said *Thar* in his 'Tamang Jati' (Samvat 2051:49) as the principal *Rhui* of this

ethnic community. This is also an important element of Tamang social structure which regulate and controlled the almost all the ceremony of the community. This is neither can be changed nor can be adopt, but this clan or *Thar* be awarded to a person, who gets birth in the same kula or family. Since, Tamangs *Thar* is related with a person by birth, so it can not be changed by the ritual or by any means.

4.2. The Concept of *Barha Tamang* and *Athara Jaat* (Twelve Tamang & Eighteen Caste):-

The Tamangs society is based on convention and tradition. The concept of caste (according to the hindu caste hierarchy) is totally absent. This community is traditionally divided into broad category of 12 Tamang and 18 Tamang. The system of 12 *panthi* and 18 *panthi* is also prevalent among the Magar of sub-Himalaya. This Tamang or Lama or Murmi is categorized into two sections “12 Tamang & 18 *Jaat* or Tamang”. The twelve Tamang is believed to be pure descendant of Lord ‘Maheswar’ (Vansitart 1909:141). These Tamangs are socially higher than the ‘*Eighteen Jaat*’ (Vansitart 1909:142). Many anthropologist, sociologist, and historian have stated the same view of division. The concept of ‘12 Tamang and 18 *Jaat*’ is interpreted by many writer as “12 *Jaat* and 18 *Jaat*”, this reflects the notion of caste hierarchy in Tamang like Hindu social order. But this classification of caste hierarchy in Tamang like Hindu social structure does not prove the existence of caste system in Tamang. There are absent of higher

and lower caste. This classification is not based on caste system, but it is classified according to the *Thar (Rhui)* which is based on patrilineage and marriage kinship relation. According to the Vansitart in his book 'Gorkhas' (1909), the Tamang are primarily divided into 12 tribal groups, who had occupied the certain territory, which became the line of identification of these Tamangs. These Tamangs are as follows:- (1) *Bojyu* (2) *Bal (Dong)* (3) *Dumzan* (4) *Ghising* (5) *Gyaba* (6) *Goley* (7) *Mikchan* (8) *Moktan* (9) *Pakhrin* (10) *Syangdan* (11) *Thing* and (12) *Yonzan*. They were inhabited in their ancestral area (*Kipat*) which made them pure 12 Tamangs.

According to Vansitart (1909), 'Eighteen *Jaat* Tamang' is broadly divided into three groups. These are (1) *Gothar*, (2) *Nharba*, (3) *Shangri*. These Tamangs do not have sub clan. In traditional tamang society, the marriage with other caste is not permitted, if anyone one do so, and then have to face consequence of ostracized from the Tamang clan system and get the new clan or *Thar* by the offspring of such marriage. Such marriage makes the eighteen *Jaat* Tamang who is below than the pure 12 Tamangs, and have to purify them for three generation to get the earlier place in pure Tamangs. If a Tamang man marries to woman of Brahman, Chettri or Thakuri of Khas caste then his child bear the clan of *Gothar*. This is neither pure Tamang nor ostracized Tamang but this is the clan which is subject to purify. The child of Tamang men and Newar women become the *Nharba*. This *Nharba* clan or *Thar* is not easily acceptable in the social structure of

Tamang community, whereas this is the system of punishment and to get the earlier place in the society, they have to purify themselves for three generation. And child from the intimacy with Magar, Limbu, Gurung, Rai and Sunuwar woman, will get the *Thar* of Shangri. The concept of 12 Tamang and 18 *Jaat* Tamang shows that the 12 Tamangs are pure and who had occupied the settled in particular place hereditary and 18 *Jaat* Tamang are those who gets birth from the union of Tamang men and women of Newar, Gurung, Magar etc. The *Thar* of 12 Tamang is same as of the 18 *Jaat* Tamang, but 12 Tamangs believes themselves higher than the clan or *Thar* of 18 *Jaat* Tamangs who are the offspring of mixed marriage system. So, according to the Hemendorf (1955-56) in his “Ethnographic notes on the Tamang of Nepal” vol-9 states that classification of 12 and 18 Tamang is not based on caste but it is based on the ‘pure Tamang and mixed blood Tamang’.

The eminent Tamang writer Buddhiman Moktan in his book “*Jikten Tamchai*” or Tamang chronology there is a section named “*Rhuichen Chopela Thungrap*” or ‘description and origin of 18 clans or *Thar*’ and another writer Santabir Lama (pakhrin) also mention “*Rhuichen Chohey*” means description of 18 clans or *thar*, this proves that most of writer has mention about 18 clans and its origin and description. The concept of 12 Tamang and 18 *Jaat* Tamang is very vague term, moreover it carries social identity of a group but according to the Tamang writer, that there were 18 clans or *Thar* among the Tamang of 12 ancestral areas (*Kipat*). So this 18 *Thar* of 12 *Kipat*’s

Tamang have to face amalgamation with various new sects and in this process grew up many sub clans. Parsuram Tamang in his book “Tamang Jati” recorded the 134 clans or Thars of Tamang.

4.3. The concept of “Swangey Bhai”(Sagik) or Thar Brotherhood:-

Tamang social structure is very traditional and one of the instances of this system is *Thar* Brotherhood. The *Thar* or clan who worship the similar kuldevta considered the ‘*Swangey Bhai*’ by the Tamang people. The Tamang community does not marry within the *Swangey Bhai* Thars or they are considered as brothers from the same ancestor. As Parsuram Tamang in his book have given names of *Swangey Bhai* of 18 *Thars* of Tamang. They are follows:-

Table no 4.2: List of Swangey Bhai or Clan Brothers

1.	<i>Dong</i>	<i>Grangdan, Goley, Titung, Bal, Dimdong, Gongba, Gyamden, Dartang, Gangtang</i>
2	<i>Yonzon</i>	<i>Bonzan, Dumzan, Lopchan, Mikchan</i>
3	<i>Ghising</i>	<i>Lo, Glan, Yhesur</i>
4	<i>Moktan</i>	<i>Syangdan, Pakhrin, Syangbo, Thokar</i>
5	<i>Rumba</i>	<i>Zimba, Gyaba, Waiba, Gongba</i>
6	<i>Lopchan</i>	<i>Chothen, Blenden, Shyongsun, Nharten, Galden</i>
7	<i>Thing</i>	<i>Marpa, Toisang</i>
8	<i>Nyasur</i>	<i>Singar, Blon</i>
9	<i>Lo</i>	<i>Loba, Ghising, Glan</i>
10	<i>Marpa</i>	<i>Thing, Toisang</i>
11	<i>Tupa</i>	

12	<i>Blon</i>	<i>Syangbo, Syangdan</i>
13	<i>Singar</i>	<i>Yhesur, Thing, Toisang, Blon</i>
14	<i>Bajyu</i>	
15	<i>. Lungpa</i>	
16	<i>Gyapa</i>	<i>Rumba, Zimba, Waiba, Gongba</i>
17	<i>Thokar</i>	<i>Moktan, Syangdan, Pakhrin, Syangbo</i>
18	<i>Pakhrin</i>	<i>Syangdan, Moktan, Syangbo, Thokar</i>

The tradition, social customs and moral values of Tamang are still alive in the form of oral tradition. These tradition and customs are made by the ancestors to tackle with the contemporary economy and production which is encircled by the *Rhui* to organized the society, according to the prevalent social and political situation. The codification and formalization of Tamang customs and tradition is absent but such norms and moral values are transmitted to new generation through oral culture by ancestors which enabled the Tamang people to follows such values of high morality with enthusiastically. Considering the Tamang tradition, they are very rigid in the case of bone-related marriage system. Moreover they ostracized the clan member from the social system who does not follow bone-relation of Tamang, they do not ostracize the couple but even their children too not accept by the society.

The external elements are related with the religion and socio-political aspects of the society in which some specialist plays its inevitable role to protect the sanctity of religion, and norms and

customs of the society and political system. In Tamang society research found four types of specialist namely, Lama, *Tamba*, *Ganba* and Bonbo. The Lama (Priest) who considered to acquired the knowledge of from the Lamaist Buddhism and from its texts, while *Tamba* are called antiquarian of Tamang ancestral history, and *Ganba* helps to complete the any of the ceremony with his knowledge of rites and customs of the community. The Bonbo is called witch-priest, acquire the magical power from god and goddess of Jungle and protects the Tamang people from distress, illness, and any form of evil power. Together, these four aspects of the Tamang society, continues the flow of Tamang tradition.

4.4. Life Style:-

Initially, Tamang's life style were directly influenced by the Tibetan culture and practices, they were following the Tibetan mode of habitation, but later transformed themselves into the style of local habitation and became localized by following the life style, convenient to the climate and environment for them. Tamang were inheriting the Tibetan culture and carried on this social and cultural behavior of Tibet, in the area wherever they settled. But, Tamang makes effort to preserve their ethnographic life style and culture, according to the environment, climate, culture and habitation. The life-style of human being portrayed the original nature of that species; all the members of the society are inter-related with the various aspects of that environment where they live. In Tamang culture equal importance

is given to social rites as well to the material culture, which is called life-style. The human culture is directly and indirectly affected by life-style, every human race has adopted religion, culture according to the country and society in various angles and their needs of the time, but formation of cultural heritage, modification, adaptation and assimilation is directly influenced by the life-style. The determining factor of human culture is life-style, which exhibits the image of a race, behavior and their nature.

Tamang ethnic group inhabit many parts of the sub-Himalaya particularly Nepal, India (Darjeeling, Sikkim, Assam, Manipur etc), Burma and many more. Their settlement is effected by geographical environment; we find Tamang habitation especially in hilly region. Tamang are of mongoloid stock, is reflected in their physical structure and appearances. They possess stocky and well built physic, with medium short stature. This hilly tribe is of very unique bodily structure with slanted almond shaped eyes and flat noses with thick straight black hair. They have little facial hair but there are some rare cases of profuse growth. The Tamang has wide faces with big cheek bones with thick lips and their jaws are round and their complexions vary from the fair to the wheat brown and sometime dark. The bodily structure of the Tamang and their habitation in hilly tracks makes them different from other cultural group, they have to construct the houses according to the region and climate, and their dresses are too very much influenced by their habitation. Tamang has very simple living style and much is dependent on nature, their food habits are

greatly centered on the field of their own and to some extent wild cereals. Their style of house construction reflects the pastoralist and tribal nature of livelihood. Their houses are constructed of stone and roofs are made of splitshake, though marginalized families will make the houses of cane matting or some combination of stone, wood and bamboo. Tamang houses are clustered into one place for making a dense village. There are cobble-stone path at every corner of the village of their easy movement. They used stone plates for making the houses of the walls, thatch or wooden planked roofs held down by stones. The door and window of the Tamang house are too small, and here reflects their belief on astronomy because they always make the entrance door towards east and window are opening to either north or south, the direction where they finds slopes. The single storied houses are common among the Tamang but double and triple storied house are also not rare; it depends on their financial status. Normally, their houses accommodate all their belonging within the house, where we find the bedding is rolled up in one side and livestock like the goats, chickens, sheep etc are in another side. The common feature of all the tamang is that they have at least one cowshed, either near of the house or in the field of their cultivation. The life of the day-today life centered around the hearth, which is located at the centre of the floor, and beside hearth they have alter of the tutelary deity (*kul devta*) which they keep sacred and untouched from any stranger. Although the ideal social life is that a son must move away from his father's home when he claims his inheritance, and build his own house, but

some poorer families' lives under single roof. In double storied houses upper storied are used as bed room but generally they kept all their belonging of their daily use from foodstuff to nails and ropes. The double house has roofed verandah whereas single storied houses open verandah outside the main door and it is called *piddi*, since the interior of the house is very dark, this verandah is used as a sort of open living room, where guests are seated and discussions are held. The *piddi* is made of earth and it is like plinth but in Tamang houses it is well decorated by lying mats, and *piddi* is used to for weaving gossiping and idling for all the section of family either male or group of female or within family groups. So this *piddi* of Tamang house becomes the living room as well and centre of social interaction. The Tamang has great belief in animism, and they make the highland or heap as the place of their local guardian, the place or heap is called *stan* or *devistan* where they do give puja in every occasion. The area which has great influence of Buddhism particularly, *nyingmapa* sect, they put images of *Ratilila* (symbolic image of Bajrayana Buddhism) at the top of Village, that the entire trespasser can see it. This is image of belief among Tamangs that this will ward off the evil from the village and protect the same from various natural calamities; even this will ensure that women folk of the family may not remain barren.

Normally, most of the Tamangs practice the ritual of animistic form of belief, and they are doing puja in their respective villages according to the animism. But instead of that, we know that they are adherents of *nyingmapa* sect of Tibetan Buddhism, so the village where

we find traces of this sect greatly, we find whole village is surrounded by the typical religious flag, containing Mantra on it, for warding off evil spirits and wishing for boom in their day to-day life. In such village we find common worshipping centre for all the villagers, called *Gumpha (ghyang)*, as they are follower of *nyigmapa* sect of Tibetan Buddhism so their *gumpha* is of the white color. The *gumpha* has altar where statue of *Gurupadmasamvawa (gururimpoche)* been placed at the centre, *Guru Dakpo* (malevolent form of *gurupadmasamvawa*) and *Singdongma, Choikyong* are placed in both the sides of the altar. As the follower of *nyingmapa* sect believe that *Gurupadmasamvawa* is the reincarnation of Gautama Buddha, so they don't place the statue of Buddha at the altar but they used to keep the statue of Buddha beside the other statue. Tamangs use to build a rest shed at every corner of the village that the tired traveler can get the rest. In such public places Buddhist Tamang used to inscribe the mantra of Buddhism in stone slate, in the name of deceased person, which is called "*Om Thass?*" by cleaning the place, lights the lamp (*nanghsal*). Another very important religious thing in the name of deceased person is *rab-ney* (establishment of *pancha-buddha*). The Tamang used to construct the hemispherical dome shaped stupa in the memory of deceased relatives called *Mhaney* or *Chorten* and follower of the Buddhist sect used to move around the stupa in clockwise manner. In the *Mahaparinibbana Suttanta* Buddha enjoins Ananda to erect at the crossing of four highways (*Chatummahapathe*) a stupa over the remains of his body, after it has been burnt on the funeral pyre, in the same manner as the

stupa of a universal monarch. It is, therefore, clear that the custom of rearing stupas was pre-Buddhist. The Jains also erected this form of memorial in early times, but it is the Buddhists who particularly selected and adapted it to their own use. In course of time it acquired a special Buddhist association as containing a relic (*Dhatu*) of the Master or of his chief disciples, and as making a spot associated with some important event in the life of the Buddha or in the history of Buddhism. As enshrining a relic symbolizing the Master himself, a devotional aspect was also implicit from the very beginning, and stupas were set up as votive objects in sanctuaries, known as Chaitya halls. They were also erected on sacred Buddhist sites as pious works, the gift of a stupa being reckoned as meritorious as that of an image, even when the latter came to be in prolific use. Apart from objects for which they raised, there is, however, no other indication by which they can be distinguished from one another, and architecturally all these classes must be treated as one. The origin of the stupa has given rise to many theories. The most probable view seems to be that this hemispherical structure emerged out of the earthen funeral mounds (*smasanas*), under which, according to the Vedic rituals, the ashes of the dead were buried⁸.

Generally, the village of Tamang does not need any center of worshipping, because they have to propitiate various forms of deity of animistic belief. Since it does not need any common centre of worshipping but they prefer either heap of earth, root of tree or at the

big stone corner. This place is called *Bhume-sthan* or place of worship where they do give puja to *Sibda-Nibda* (worship of soil), *nag-nagini* (worship of snake god and goddess) and *Chan* (worship of hunter). The Tamang never cut down the trees planted around the *Bhumesthan* and neither have they ever dumped over the area. The practices obviously express their love for nature. Literary, in Tamang village there may not be the single *gumpha* but it is sure that there will be *Bhumesthan* in every locality. They are very cautious in choosing the place of habitation; they take care of the climate, water sources, field for grazing their animals and forests. Tamang gives much importance to places of worship for propitiating their tribal deity as well as for their Buddhist belief. Here lies the co existence of tribal belief system and Buddhist thought among the Tamang people.

4.5. Dresses and Ornamentation:-

The ethnographic identity of Tamang in particular and of all the races is reflected in their fundamental dresses. The dresses of an ethnic group carried on their ancestral tradition and behavioral approach. The dress of Tamang ethnic group has been passed from many changes and alteration, but still they are able to preserve their ancestral dress system. If we observed the dresses and apparel of ancient Tamang, we find uniformity in the dresses. The most of highland Tamang use to wear primitive form of dress, which is called *gado (gya)*. Such type of apparel was vague in the community of central Himalayan Mongol, where people wrapped a long cloth, making

a knot over the shoulder, so tamang too has same dress style. This *gado* is also popular among the other tribal groups of sub-Himalayan region like gurung, magar etc.

The women folk of the Tamang society have more choice in apparel than the men folk. In this globalize world, the dresses of the Tamang too has occur revolutionary changes, it is little impossible to get uniformity in the wearing of tamang. They had adopted or imitated the dress style of their neighbors along with other customs. But if we observed the apparel design of highland dwelling Tamang, then we find uniformity with little adoption of other cultural group. The men folk of Tamang community prefer to wear *Banktey Bhoto* (a kind of sleeveless vest), *Kacchhar* (loin-cloth), waist coat, *Daura-Surwal* (traditional dress of Nepalese), cap (traditional cap of Nepalese), and they use to tied the waist by wrapping a cloth to hold the *Khukri* (ethnic identified weapon of Gurkhas). The Tamang usually like the black colour *Daura-surwal* and waist wrapping cloth is of the white colour. The aged person use to wrap a homespun white cloth round the head like turban called *Pheta* is an alternative of the cap. While womenfolk of the Tamang community like decorated skirt like cloth called '*Faria*' (*Shyama*) of various colours such as maroon, red, and velvety or *makmali*. They also use hand made waist cloth (*mujetro*) to cover their upper part of the body. The highland cold region womenfolk prefer *Bakkhu* and lower altitude they wear *shyama* and *Choubandi cholo*(a kind of shirt) with *pachyora* (*chunri*). In highland Himalayan region women use to wear

Ghagra (Dorma) and *Bakkhu (Chua)* in winter and sometime handmade coat (*Surki*). Tamang women has a typical dress code, particularly a small cloth which is worn either in the back of heaps or in front, is called *pangden*, this can be worn by both married and unmarried women, so it is difficult to identify a married women out of the mass. The above mentioned Tamang's dress has great transition. Now it comes to a uniformity by the efforts of Nepal Tamang Ghedung Sangha (Association for Nepal Tamang Ghedung), and All India Tamang Buddhist Association. They made deep thought and officially declared the uniform dress code for the Tamang. According to the new dress code the married women should wear a *pangden* which is to be put on the front of the waist portion of the body and unmarried should put on the same the backside and in their cap they have symbol of Cross *Bajra* called *Dorje Gyadam* and symbol of 'Totola' (oroxyalum Indicum) flower (pic--).

Tamang are very much fond of ornaments. The womenfolk wear many ornaments comparatively than the men folk as is the case of many other tribes of the world. The Tamang men folk wear only earring (*Kundal*) and Bangles, apart from this they do not have more ornament to wear. But for the women they have in their ornaments *Cheptey Sun* (gold plates for ear), *Dhungri* (roll of the gold for ear), *Bhutil* and gold and silver bangles called *singikarmu mugga* (semi-precious stone) and gold ornaments called *gahu* etc. The gold or silver *jantar* (square amulets hung on the chest on a string or necklace) are also worn by both the sexes depending on financial capacity. They also

use nose ring (*nak-phuli*) made of gold, *marmika* or *sirphul* on their hair and *ringa* or *sirbandi* (stripes of gold) on their forehead. Tamang women also wear a kind of necklace and ring made of various gold and silver coins. When Tamang came into the influence of Hindu culture, the Tamangnis (women folk of Tamang) use to wear *pote* and *pote* with *Tilhari* (a kind of necklace made of small pieces of glass with a decorated gold ornaments). Generally, there are no such traditions that woman folk of Tamang have to pierce their nose or ear but to wear ornaments they do so. This activity of Tamangs proves their fond for ornaments. This means that it is not explicitly state that Tamang wear some particular ornaments, their ornaments too very much depend on habitation, environment and their neighbors.

4.6. Food Habits:-

As Tamang are highland dweller of sub-Himalaya region, and their food habits are very much influenced by the climate, and fertility of the hilly area. They have to live on the foodstuff grown around the area. Generally, in the hill region, the cultivation of maize, millets, wheat and barley are interestingly high. The Tamang lives on the products, cultivated on their field; they rarely use rice as their favorite food because the cultivation of paddy in the highland is not possible. The rice is the secondary food of the Tamang. They cultivate three types of millet or *kodo* (*sangai* in tamang) these are white, red, white and black or *chamre* and *kalo kodo* (*tar sanga, ola sanga, chup*

sanga), and two kinds of maize, white and yellow (*tar makai*, *ur makai*). Tamang also produced potato (*teme*), squash (*parsi*), Taro (*pindalu*) and pepper. The favorite food among them is the porridge (*Dhindo*) like meal of the maize and millets. As because they live in the cold region so, they prepare liquor (*airak*) of the millets and sometime of the rice, they also makes rice bear of the maize, wheat, millets and barley to keep their body warm-up. They use rice of the paddy in various festivals and in marriages they prepare *selroti* (a kind of circular loaf of rice-flour cooked in ghee or oil), and in *lhochar* (Tamang's New Year) they cooked *khapsey* (traditional food). Apart from liquor and rice beer, they eat meat very fondly; the beef is not banned among them. But some clans or septs, according to their tradition do not cooked the meat of buffalo and pork. For example the western Nepal's Tamang do not eat pork whereas eastern Nepal's like to eat pork. Though *Negi* (clan group of Tamang) and *Lopchan* (clan group of Tamang) eastern tamang prohibited eating pork and *Blon* (clan group of Tamang) do not eat meat of buffalo. The chicken is common meat for all the Tamangs, they celebrate all the occasion or festivals with the feast of chicken.

Although, Tamangs are by nature habituated to take tea, liquor, milk, curd and other liquid food. They make the tea by mixing salt, ghee and sometime to make it staple they mixed flour of steamed maize and etc. Tamang are very good agriculturist and they used the every chunk of land to produce vegetable, the favorite among them are leafy vegetable of various forms of plants like mustard, squash, *Rayo*

(*cole*, a kind of vegetable leaf). They also make the provision for the winter, when they would not find vegetable. They damp the leaf of 'Raya' or *cole* in a pit underground by pressing and after month, opened in sun and dried up as straw, which is stored as vegetable for the winter, is called "*Gundruk*" or '*Sinki*'(fermented traditional food of Tamangs). This is an evidence of their knowledge of preserving vegetables for future and adoptability to the environment.

4.7. Handicraft and Painting:-

"Thangu Shengwa Whai"⁹

Sailung Gangla Shyogo Dong

Thasi Shyug Sisi Nak !

Bala Mhalangai Chon Sosi

Thing pingai Chon Sosi !

Tamba Kaiten Whai Khelsi

Thangu Shengwa Whai Gosi !!

Tungna Rapsi Shyamami

Thangu Shengsi Chamami !!

Robang Gangla Dongbi Ghik

Purang Chyola Mhendo Ghik !!

Lahi Yulla Thaw Dong !

Jambulingla Jyang Chungpodong

Thangu Nangri Chya Khamu !

Thangu Chyama Sem Kyolamu !!

(Tamba Kaiten Whai Rimthim)



Figure showing the handmade *Thangka*

As like other tribes of the globe, Tamang also greatly influenced by the religion and culture, which bestow them own style of art and sculpture. The most creative handicraft and painting of the Tamang is “*Thangka*” culture. As like Tamang, there are other cultural groups too, who make the *Thangka*, but Tamang has occupied an important place in this art. They are adherents of *nyingmapa* sect of Himalayan Lamaist Buddhism, where *Thangka* has occupied an important place as centre of belief. *Thangka* may be derived from the

Tibetan word 'Thanku' and it is the object of religious inspiration and sentiments. The central theme of the *Thangka* is to portray the images of *Gururimpoche* (*Gurupadmasamvawa*), *Guruchengreshi* (*awalokiteshara*), Sakyamuni Buddha, and *Shivakhorlo* (cycle of emotions). The Tamangs use to worship the *Thangka* as a preacher of Lord Buddha and as his religious representative in this material world. They believe that if object of religious representative is worshipped, then it will lead them to the salvation by accruing merit. There is no consensus among the historians, about when the Tamangs embrace Buddhism but there is no doubt that they became the follower of the creed with its arrival into the Himalayan region. Though this is established fact that Tamang accepted the Tibetan Buddhism after the 8th century A.D, when *Guru Padmasavawa* established the sect. Since they embrace the Tibetan Buddhism and their form of belief, it is obvious that their life style has been influenced by the creed. Therefore, the *Thangka* prepared by the Tamangs has been greatly influenced by the Tibetan culture. In Tamangs society 'Lama' (Priest) has great respect, they were esteemed as 'Tamang guru' and all the religious ceremony is incomplete without 'Lama'. The Lama artist who makes statue, idol, *Thangka* according to the religion is called "*khaiba Lama*" they possess great skill of preparing such things and transmitted to the generation as education. They not only maks statue, and *Thangka* but also skilled in making stupa. Their skill in art makes them important in the Tamang society along with Lama (priest).

The *Thangka* which is prepared in very fine cloth and decorated in and around of the sanctum in Buddhist houses, depicted the picture of Buddha, *Padmasamvawa*, *Mandala*, and other deities of Tantrik Buddhism is a “Scroll Painting”. This culture of making *Thangka* in the Himalayan region is popular from time immemorial. According to the Dhanbajra Bajracharya in his “*Licchavikal Ko Avilekh* (inscriptions of Licchavi)”, Kirtipur Nepal, writes that the art of making *Thangka* is a very ancient art of Himalayan region which does not contained time, date and name of any ruling king. As *Thangka* is prepared in perishable material, so it is not possible to calculate, from which period this culture is started in the region, but according to the Bajracharya, the culture is conceived in the Himalayan states and later adopted by the Tibetan, when Buddhism made its entry into the Tibet. The scroll painting of the Himalayan region of Licchavi rule became *Thangka* in Tibet. Initially it is influenced the Tibetan *Thangka* culture but later all the *Thangka* follows the style of Tibet in their making style. In 11th century we find full fledge development of *Thangka* and also establishment of tradition or school of *Thangka* making. In this way upto 17th century there is at least six schools or tradition of *Thangka* making in Tibet. These are (1) Kadam Tradition of *Thangka* making, (2) Valri Tradition, (3) Menri Tradition, (4) Khenri Tradition, (5) Karma Ghardi Tradition, and (6) Dopal Tradition. We find two types of *Thangka* making style among the Tamang community; these are Dithang style, where a special cloth is prepared for *Thangka* and in

which background colour is cautiously selected. Secondly, Gothang style of *Thangka* making is written in silky cloth.

Tamang were artisan by nature and development of tantrik Buddhism infused aesthetic creativity to this community. They were adept not only to make *Thangka* out of religious attachment but they also sculptured various forms of bronze and metal statue of their deity. It is generally held that the Nepalese sculpture both in stone and metal stylistically belong to the Pala-Sena tradition of Eastern India. From about 13th and Fourteenth centuries with increasing stabilization of Lamaistic Buddhism which Nepal came to share with Tibet a hieratic stylization of artistic form set-in. But the isolation and conservation of the hills helped to store up to a large extent the accumulated experience of centuries and that resulted in creation of highly meritorious metal images. But recent studies have further unveiled the unique features of the Tamang art and pointed out that the Tamang art should not be considered as expression of typical of Tibeto-Nepalese tradition. It has its own distinctiveness. According to the M.A Lichtenberg-Van Mierlo in his "Tamang Art: A Parallel Style in the Tantrik Buddhist art of Nepal" writes, "Its style characteristics show a marked differences from what is generally acknowledge as being typical for Nepalese and Tibetan Metal sculpture. When occasionally a Tamang statue is discussed, it has been classified as being Nepalese without further differentiation or has been wrongly quoted as being Tibetan. Stylistically the Tamang bronzes differ considerably from other Nepalese productions, whether Buddhist or Hindu. Considering

their specific art idiom and particular atmosphere they deserve to be regarded as distinctive style". Lichtenberg again compares the Tamang art and describe its characteristics as "The Tamang bronze are not heavily decorated. The majority of them are not gold plated. The ornamentation on garments is kept very sparse. The forms are generally sober; there is an economy of line. The torso is elongated. In general the volumes and curves of the body of Nepalese statue are fuller and round than those of Tamang bronze. Compared to Nepalese bronzes they look dispassionate In their bronzes the Tamang have a preference for portraying the historical Buddha, Padmasambhava, Vajrasatta, Avalokitesvara and Tara, while in their paintings they depict wrathful deities. Tamang bronzes display a stylization of devotional features. They possess a mystical intensity and are sometime endowed with a fascinating numinosity". "The Tamang bronze show compositional and stylistic similarities to Buddhist metal sculpture found in Bihar and Bengal, datable from the eight to the twelve centuries A.D., which do not show any stylistic relationship with the pala-sena art of the same period". The Tamang bronzes has independent characteristic of art, which exhibit no outer influence but reflect the aesthetic belief of Tamang on Tantrik Buddhism and their skills of metal artisanship.

The Tamang of lower altitude are engaged in preparing 'hand-made paper' from time of their ancestor, due to which they were called '*kagatey*'. This profession of paper making was concentrated in Tamang community but globalizations of small sectors too influence

the paper making industry. The most of the artisan were of Tamang community and this industrial revolution, brought the industry into the hands of other racial groups. Tamang were not only making *Thangka* and bronze metal but they were equally interested in painting. The walls and interior of the *Gumpha*, the common worshipping centre of the Tamang, are decorated by exotic paintings of various deity of the Tantrik Buddhism. Their knowledge of art, colour and perfect execution made them popular among the community. The Tamang were very much skilled in making 'carpet'. The description of Kautilya in his arthasastra (2:11:97-106) mention that woolen blankets and carpets were imported from twelve villages of Nepala. According to the Tamang chronology that Tamang are divided into twelve '*Kipat*' or *grama*. The description of Kautilya and Tamang chronology has some meeting point that 'twelve *grama* of Nepala' which proves the artisan quality of the Tamang. The carpets prepared by the Tamang have great demand because they use furs of sheep, goat and yak.

The Tamangs are agro-pastoralist, and their habitations are from high altitude to the foothills of the Himalaya. Their economy system is mostly based on barter system, because their habitation area is sparsely populated, while most of the families are clan members of the same ancestor. As they are dependent on agriculture, and skilled enough to make the artifact to cultivate the land and to store the commodities along with day-today necessary article or weapons. To till the land they prepared plough (*halo*)(Fig-43), Yoke (*jua*) (Fig-43) by

wood carving technique and *Halludo* (a rope for connecting the plough with yoke). (Fig-43) The Tamang of the highland Himalaya, use to make the article of their everyday life these are; *dalo* (a kind of bamboo basket), *Doko* (a big eyed bamboo basket which carried on the back, *Thunse* (Bamboo or cane-band basket, without pores), *Vhakari* (a large basket for storing grain: a coarse matting made of split bamboo), *Mandro* (cane mate), *Chakati* (a small cushion or seat made of outer leaf of maize, *Namlo* (a rope with a band for carrying a load), and *Dori* (string or rope). They are also adept in making cloths of their use and weapon for cutting, digging, and even for hunting. Tamang villages are always in the fringes of the settlement and marketing system is based on traditional system of exchange, which most of the tribal do in their respective region. The surplus article of daily use is exchanged with the commodities which artisans do not have, which is called 'Barter System'.

4.8. Ethnographically identified folk dances and musical instrument:-

The ethnic identity is reflected in the folk culture and literature. The folk culture is one of the integral parts of the community. The folk dances are one of primary essence of the folk culture. Basically, folk dances represent the ethnic community and it displays the whole life-style of the group. The Tamang community is an assimilation of Bon, Buddhism and its primitive social customs. As it has variedness in culture, every culture directed the folk dances

according to their tradition. The Tamang are jolly by nature, and their only medium of entertainment is folk dances and songs at the *mela-jatra*. The *mela-jatra* is like festival, where most of the tamang youth use to dance with their partner, which reflects the importance of folk dance to them. The socially influenced folk dances are most important to deal with a community, these are;

4.8.1. Folk Dances:-

4.8.1.a. *Damphu Naach*'

In Tamang society, there are varieties of dances but one of the most important and ethnographically identified folk dances is *Damphu Naach*. According to the Santabir Lama Pakhrin in his “*Tamba Kaiten whai Rimthim*” the Tamangs use to portray all the occasion of their life through songs, and with the songs they dance with the beating of *Damphu*. Usually, *Damphu Naach* is performed in marriage and hair cutting ceremony and other festivals.

4.8.1.b. '*Chomlu Naach*'

This is a group dance, girls and boys make the two rows and expressing their love, nuttiness, through song is called *Chomlu Naach*. This dance is similar with the *Syabru* dance of the Sherpa and *Yolmo* of Himalaya.

4.8.1.c. '*Mhendomaya*'

Mhendomaya is another important ethnic dance of the Tamang community. This is reciprocal kind of song and dance system. In some places this form of dance has taken the top place of their entertainment. Generally, in marriages, and festivals they use to dance with song.

4.8.2. Ritualistic Dance:-

The Tamangs are adherents of Tantrik Buddhism, while their social structure is based on *Tamba* culture and their customs also pervaded by this system, but considering their belief, which has penetrated significant influence on the their social life. In this belief system (Tantrik Buddhism), the role of the Lama (priest) is highly esteemed and important. The Lama supervises, all the religious ceremony of Tamang community even funeral too comes under the ritual periphery of a Lama. These Lamas, use to invoke the spirits for propitiating them in various occasions by chanting mantras and peculiar dance forms of religiously important. In tantrik Buddhism dance by priest Lama is an important aspect of ritual. These dance forms are:

4.8.2.a. 'Bakcham Naach' is the dance form collectively performed by the Lama. This is an important dance ritual of Lama, according to the Tibetan Buddhism which is prevailed in Tamang community. To perform this dance, it needs a typical religious dress and certain decoration to be fitted in religious ceremony. This dance is the

symbolic representation of Buddha's victory over the demonic elements.

4.8.2.b. 'Mhanichepa'

This dance is influenced by the Sherpa ethnic community of Himalaya region. Generally, the follower of *nyingmapa* sect of Tibetan Buddhism use to perform this forms of dance in their various religious ceremony. This dance is performed around alter of fire with necessary item of oblation. For this religious dance men and women stands in row and *Mhanichepa* song is sung by the Lama priest and villagers danced making the circle of fire pit by uttering the Om *Mha Ni Pad Me hu* mantra in sequence one by one.

4.8.2.c. 'Tormamharsho' is a dance form performed by the Lama priest during funeral ceremony of deceased person. This is the *jhangter* tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. The *Tormamharsho* dance is performed to complete the funeral ceremony and to bless the family of deceased person all happiness with free of all obstacle from the spirits of dead one.

4.8.2. d. 'Jungwa naach' is a ritual dance which is also performed in funeral ceremony. According to the Tibetan Buddhism, to complete the funeral, Lama Priest makes the effigy (*Ghur*) of dead person by clay and placed as a symbol of deceased one in funeral *Mandapa (Dajeng)*. The

ritualistic dance performed during the time of bringing the *Ghur* (ashes of deceased person) into the *Mandapa* is called *Jungwa* dance.

The Tamangs are identified as tribal ethnic community by virtue of various types of art, painting, and article. This assigned them an 'Identity' as cultural group. And in this context folk musical instrument is integral part of the Tamang identity. The Tamang tribe also not untouched by the wave of modernization and assimilation, but still they use to beat the ethnographically identified musical instrument, which has been used by their ancestor. As Tamang are very much fond of music, their every occasion is finished with *whai* or song and dance in the beats of *Damphu* (one side beating drum).

4.8.3. Folk Musical Instruments:-

4.8.3.a. The '*Damphu*'(Fig-35) is considered to be the ethnic identity of the Tamang. The *Damphu* is used only by this community, especially during marriages, hair-cutting and in other ceremony *Damphu* is essential, as the symbol of racial identity. As in most of the cultural ceremony the beating of *Damphu* is an integral part, which makes it the 'cultural symbolism' of the Tamang community. Besides the cultural ceremony, the Tamang actively participate in festivals like *mela-jatra* with dancing in the beat of *Damphu*. They are by religion follows the path of Tantrik Buddhism, but their social customs are headed by *Tamba*; literally 'speaker, talker, mouthpiece (custodian of the rite and ritual) and in his description the *Damphu* is a principal

instrument to express his knowledge of rite and rituals through song or *Whai*. Therefore, the *Damphu* is a one of the most important pillar of Tamang ethnic culture.



This is original *Damphu*'s photo where we find the replica of Bird from whose dance *Damphu* dance is influenced.

The preparation of *Damphu* has a certain style, whereas it does not have any established theoretical conception of its making but there are many vague mythology of its existence. As Dr. Rajesh Gautam and Asoke K Thapa-Magar in their "Tribal Ethnography of Nepal Vol-II" (1994:279) has recorded the origin of *Damphu*. According to the Tamang belief, the story begins in ancient times, when a man called Lama Pemdorje, went to the jungle to hunt. He is supposed to have killed a ghoral (wild mountain goat) and skinned off. After this, it is believed Pemdorje desired to make a musical instrument and so he felt the need for a piece of wood. Thus

he cut a branch of a *koiralo* (*Ambursing*) tree and made a ring with the wood. Then he stretched the *ghoral's* skin over this wooden frame and fastened it at the edges with bamboo nails. Then he beat on this skin and heard the emergence of a soft sound. Just at that time, he saw a pair of *Danphe* and *Munal* (pigeon like Himalayan bird) birds, one of which perhaps male one was trying to impress the other by making circle of the bird and sometime flying and sitting regularly. Pemdorje, being impressed by the act of *Danphe* to *Munal*, imitate the act and he enjoyed it. So he made a replica of *Danphe* Bird and pasted at the top of *Damphu* with the split of bamboo. While beating the *Damphu*, he played the split of bamboo, so accordingly replica of *Danphe* spring with the beats of *Damphu*. In this way Pemdorje spread the news of his invention by dancing like *Danphe* and *Munal* and popularized this instrument. Thus the *Damphu*, which is said to have been invented by Lama Pemdorje can be seen playing by the majority of Tamang people.

4.8.3.b. 'Tungna' another important musical instrument played by most of the Tamang. This instrument is in totality the older version of modern Guitar and Violin. *Tungna* is made of wood, has the string to play same as in above mentioned instrument. Generally, to play the *tungana*, left hand holds the instrument and played the string by right hand like Guitar. The most of the Himalayan dweller use to play this, while for the Tamang, this is the supporting instrument, during dancing and singing in the beats of *Damphu*.

4.8.3.c. 'Murchunga' (Fig-34)(like wedge) is another most favorite folk musical instrument of the hill tribes of Himalaya along with Tamangs. The tribal people of the Himalaya use to play the leaf of plant and make the sound favorite to ear as medium of avoiding loneliness and enjoy it as entertainment. *Murchunga* is a reformed version of playing leaf of plant and it is made of iron plat, which is gripping into the lips and played by the fingers. This is used by both the men and women folk of the Tamang community. They play the *Murchunga*, when they were in field or in jungle or in grazing their animals. This is the easiest medium of entertainment used by most of the villagers in their respective working area. This is also used as a subordinate instrument with *Damphu* and *tungna* during concerts.

4.8.4. Religious Instruments:-

The Tamangs are adherents of both Bon and Tantrik Buddhism, so their musical instruments too mixture of two religion apart from ethnographically identified musical instruments. The Tamangs has greater influence of Tantrik Buddhism so they use mostly religiously sanctioned instruments during their religious ceremony. But instruments used by the *jhakri* or shaman are also not neglected because majority of Tamang has deep belief on shaman particularly in warding off evil spirits and curing of the diseases.

4.8.4.a. 'Dhyangro' (*daha*) (Fig-28) is one of the instruments used by the Tamang shaman. This is a flat drum made of the bark of *koirala*

(*Ambursing*) and struck with the cane stick on both sides during warding off the evil spirits or to propitiating the demons. Usually, the *Dhangro* is one side beating drum but due to influence of Buddhism it is transformed into both side beating drum. The Lama (priest) also uses *Dhangro* as principal instrument of their religious ceremony, whereas the *Dhangro* of Lama is both sides beating *drum* with a stick made of skin of ox.

4.8.4.b. 'Ghanta Bajra' or *Dilbu Dorje*, (Fig-27) a small bell with sign of *bajra* used by the Lama (priest) during religious ceremony.

4.8.4.c. 'Damaru' a kind of small drum, played by waving the hands. This is used by both hindu and Buddhist to complete their religious accomplishment. According to the Buddhist philosophy the sound of two sides of *Damaru*, symbolize the masculine and feminine creator of the universe and propitiate them. In Hindu pantheon *Damaru* is one of the implements in the hands of Siva or Maheswar.

4.8.4.d. 'Kangling' (Fig-29) made of shin of dead person. According to the tradition of Tantrik Buddhism, bone from below the knee of dead person, is used as blowing instrument after propitiating the spirits of that dead person by chanting the Tantrik mantra. During funeral ceremony it is blow from the hole of knee joint, it is actually to propitiate the soul of deceased person which is called *Rab-ney*.

4.8.4.e. 'Shankha' (*Dhung*) a conch shell. This is used by the Lama to invoke the God and Goddess during religious ceremony. Conch is sacred to the Hindus too.

4.8.4.f. 'Jhyamta' (*Bubchhal*) (Fig-24) is made of brass and bronze. According to the Tibetan Buddhism, a pair of *Jhyamta* is compulsory. It will give the rhythm to other instrument during chanting of mantra.

4.8.4.g. 'Ghaling' a kind of clarinet but made of brass,

4.8.4.h. 'Lafa' is a wind instrument but it is fitted into three pieces, during blowing it has to stand on ground or it needs a carrier in walking motion.

4.8.4.i. 'Ghantimala'; a garland of small bells wear by *jhakri* or shaman. During the propitiating ceremony the *jhakri* use to wear *ghantimala* in his body. When *jhakri* trembles during invoking ceremony these *ghantimala* gives the sound. The Bon or *jhakri* wear this *ghantimala* to make his role much influential among the public

4.9. Women in Tamang Society:-

The Tamang society is a closed and isolated society but it gives ample freedom to womenfolk. As like of the other tribal societies Tamang gives high respect to women. The nature of Tamang family is patriarchal but the role of women been never neglected. The women

holds respectable position in Tamang society, they can participate in political, religious, social gathering with the permission of her husband. There is no any social bondage to Tamangnis¹⁰. The roles of Tamangnis are open and more independent than the women of other society. Women are feeling free to dance and to crack jokes with other man in presence of her husband. Some time the bride is older than bridegroom, so the responsibility of maintaining house is also of the women which is the sharp contrast with Brahmanical social ideology. The role and responsibility of women in household work is higher, therefore social bandage is less. There are various forms of marriage system, a man and woman tied up their knots of marriage following any form of marriage, but they will get the status of just like of arrange marriage system, they are never been neglected, even women are respected highly. There are no bondages on the movement of Tamangnis, they can participate in marriage procession (*Janti*) and even in funeral ceremony.

The brothers are always caretaker of Tamang women has been discussed above. The Tamangnis occupies dual right in the property. The Tamangnis enjoys equal share in the paternal property. And she holds the sole right on the property and gifts given to her at the time of marriage by her relatives. This right reminds of the Hindu concept of *Stridhana* on which women had exclusive control as approved by Jimutavahana. The divorcee women are allowed to claim her right on property given by her brothers same time she is entitle to claim a share in her husband's property.

¹ See Amailey Hoi Amailey, Amailey Hoi Amaily, Rapsi chiwa Chu Dampfu, Khalse Shemba Bilawa, means “Praising the Mother, and admiring the Mother, saying that the instrument that I am beating, who is the its maker” Santabir Lama Pakhrin’s Tamba Kaiten Whai Rimthim (Samvat 2064), Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Kathmandu, Nepal,(p 08)

² See ‘Tamang Jati’ (Samvat 2051), Parsuram Tamang, Nepal Rajkiya Pragya Pratisthan, Kathmandu, Nepa (p 46)

³ It derived from people of Bhotdesa , The Tibet was known as Bhot, and Tamang as they believe are of Tibetan origin, who eats beef and dwells in high altitude of Himalaya, Though Tamang were not hindu by religion neither they come within hindu caste system. But King Prithvinarayan Shah to make the unified Hindu Nepal, brought all the non-Hindu into the purview of Hindu caste hierarchy by every means.

⁴ See ‘Order in Paradox, Myth, Ritual and Exchange among Nepal’s Tamang (1996), David H. Holmberg, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, (p 26) writes as “The Murmi-Bhote, though, did not become “untouchable” as one might expect in the Brahmanical encounter and incorporation of subjugated non-Hindu populations, even though they had several attributes usually associated with untouchable, notably beef eating. The legal codes of 1854 and other nineteenth –century codes classified the Bhote including Tamang as pure (Chokkho) (HMG 1966:see Hofer 1979) or panichalney (those caste from water can be accepted). Although they were thus set off from untouchables – the Pani nachalney Jaat or those castes from whom water is not acceptable- they were drinkers (matwali) and subject to enslavement (masinya). These attribute placed them below other alcohol drinkers like the Magar and Gurung who were not enslavable, and the high-caste Hindus, who wore sacred threads, did not consume alcohol, and could not be enslaved. Although, the codes do not specifically relegate particular groups to specific varna (Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudra) or the encompassing caste

groupings of Indic theory (Hofer 1979:118), the Bhote or Tamang by these criteria emerge somewhat ambiguously like Shudras”.

⁵ Ibid (p. 26)

⁶ Means ‘Gotra’ or “Bone relative”

⁷ The Rhuichen Chyopey La Whai section of Santabir Lama (pakhrin) is the collection of folklore which narrates the history of clan or Rhui and their place of origin with ancestral deity. The folklore goes like this;

Amailey Hoi Amailey, Amailey Hoi Amailey

Dogni Dopta thi Khatpa, Yulgi Cho Ho Rimporche,

Gyagar Dunla Sarita Bon, Boylu Nanghla Naru Bon,

Rong Shum Namla Mhi Chyen Bon, Mhi chyon nurabu shyal karmo,

Ganba gan shum fyafulla, Jigten Tamchai Shekhalma,

Rhuichen chyopey Shekhalma, Kukpa kha choi thol khamla,

Bhrasing-bulwa ful khamala, Bi-si chiwa aaingam,

Dhyansi bori ri durga, Rhuichen chyopey pangla dhyam

Dong- Dongla sala Dongla bab

Rhuigo fola murgu len

Yonzon- Nakpo chyapi gombola bab

Rhuigi fola yonzonla

Lama konzyo mahakaletc

⁸ Majumdar, R.C. (Edited), The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol-II, The Age of Imperial Unity, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 2001 (7th Edn), p.487-488

⁹ The song says about various colour that can be used for making different tools and pictures, the song can be translated freely like this ; By cutting the kakati wood of sailing

forests they make paper, prepared the colour of red, while, yellow, green, and blue. Remembering the song of Tamba (poet & historian), sung the song of writing picture, playing Tungna singing song. Making picture flawlessly, Kalpa vriksha of Heave, Pipal vriksha of this world, tree of Himalaya, flower of north foothills, automatically comes into picture. Picture is so lovely but love of this material world is more loveable. (Tamba Kaiten whai Rimthim, By Santabir Lama (pakhrin) samvat 2064, Ratna pustak Bhandar, Kathmandu. P 41)

¹⁰Tamangnis means Womenfolk of Tamang Society

CHAPTER

5

CULTURE AND RELIGION

5.1: Introduction

The values of various beliefs, folktales, traditions, religious traditions are the principal elements of non-material culture of human civilization. These non material cultures are literally preserving the whole ethnic identity of the Tamangs. The chapter has dealt about various non-material institutions which are directly or indirectly existed in Tamang society.

5.2. *Tamba Culture and the Role of Tamba Kaiten:-*

5.2.1: Introduction:-

Generally Tamang people are follower of Buddhism. However, before embracing *Nyingmapa* sect of Buddhism they were adherents of primitive religion of Tibet i.e. Bon. As a matter of fact, the Tamang culture is very much influenced by the mixture of these two religions. The structure of Tamang social culture is made of Bon elements from interior and from the exterior it is full of Buddhist customs. Consequently, the influence of two religion and assimilation with Nepali culture and society gave birth to

'Tamang culture', which is also called as *Tamba* culture. The Tamang ethnic culture is represented by the *Tamba* culture.

The prevalent traditional rite and customs, behaviors, life style, prose and poetry, folktales, folklores and oral tradition and oral statements are called *Kairan* or *Kaiten*. The men who possess the extensive knowledge about Tamang ancestors is called *Tamba* and whatever said by him in any form is known as *Tamba Kaiten*. This system of *Tamba Kaiten* is very much instrumental in preserving and giving continuity to the traditions of Tamang. '*Tamba*' of Tamang society is such post for which it does not need meditation like Lama or Shaman but this can be acquired through the self trained practical knowledge of ancestors and social customs. Unlike Lama and Bonbo it do not require any position or place of worship, neither this is hierarchically institutionalized nor does it have any importance of particular *Thar* or family. This is office of self acquired status based on social customs.

Considering the Buddhist philosophy, Bon elements and history in the *Tamba Kaiten*, it can be assumed that the existence of *Tamba* in Tamang society may be the phenomena of post Buddhist period of Tibet. Moreover the spread of Buddhism in Tibet also influenced the Tamang society, whereas being adherents of Bon religion; Tamang can not assimilate the whole aspects of Buddhism into their social and cultural behavior. Subsequently, due to various differences in Bon and Buddhist ritual, there can be seen major religious contradictions in the Tamang

society. Therefore, such process of assimilation and amalgamation gives birth to dualistic socio-cultural environment into the Tamang community. Hence, they were adherents of Bon religion from time immemorial which they could not give up totally in the sake of new religion and neither they can embrace the Buddhism whole heartedly, this process of dilemma created cultural diversity among the Tamangs. So, there was crisis of a common social customs which can give continuity to various elements of social framework and also preserve the separate ethnic cultural identity. This crisis of common social customs paved the way for a unique institution of *Tamba* culture, which is different from the rituals of Bon and Buddhist religion particularly but a synthesis of both the philosophy. If we accept the influence of *Nyingmapa* sect of Buddhism on Tamang in and about 10th Century A.D, then development of this institution for preserver and conveyor of Tamang tradition can be traced after the 10th century A.D. Subsequently, this *Tamba* became the repository of ancestral history and customs, and henceforth this institution became the synonyms of Tamang culture.

The fundamental basis of Tamang culture is the '*Tambaised*' rites and customs which is the developed form of amalgamated Bon and Buddhist elements. To understand the *Tamba* culture, *Tamba* himself is only resource person to clarify various points of this institution. There is debate among the writers over the origin of *Tamba* culture but this is established fact that *Tamba* is as old as the development of rites and

culture of Tamang. *Tamba* played an important role to organize and preserve the Tamangs culture, when there was cultural contradiction due to the influence of Buddhism with the adherents of Bon. This institution assembled the major elements of both the religion and established the *Tamba* culture a 'synthesis' of the problem. The every ceremony of Tamang ethnic group is incomplete without presence of *Tamba*, so this institution became the essential part of the Tamang rites and customs.

The '*Tamba*' is considered to be antiquarian of Tamang's ancestral history and culture of the community. Therefore, *Tamba* plays an integral role in most of the ceremony of the Tamang people. He is the custodian and guardian of Tamang culture which is purely based on oral traditions. Considering the role of *Tamba* in various socio-cultural aspects, can be regarded as Historian and conveyor of *Tamba* culture.

5.2.2: *Tamba* as Historian:-

Tamba is the antiquarian of extensive ancestral history, who possess the all the aspects of Tamang genealogy and chronology. Since the knowledge of *Tamba* is not written and based on literature of oral tradition and passing through the method of hear-say from generation to generation, this sometime mixed the mythology and legends regarding the origin and culture of the Tamangs. The *Tamba*, usually have the knowledge of origin of the tribe and various clans, sub-clans and its division and also description of ancestors, genealogy, and culture. *Tamba*

in his description of Tamang tribe mention about many myth and legends but this will certainly help to construct the history of Tamangs.

5.2.3: Conveyor of Tamangs Culture:-

Generally, *Tamba* is the accepted cultural specialist of the Tamang community. We find from many sources that *Tamba* has preserved the Tamang cultural tradition in the form prose and poetry. *Tamba* has become the storehouse of all traditional customs, values and norms without any basis of philosophy and religion and transmitting this valuable tradition through the songs and story. *Tamba* played an important role in the social and ritual ceremony of Tamangs. He is not only an integral part of socio-religious ceremony of Tamang community, but he is also instrumental in organizing the various elements of society which has social and religious values. *Tamba* as whole an institution, who mediate the conflict arises in the field of rites and customs, tradition, religious ceremony and gives the final solution through his extensive knowledge of ancestral history and culture. *Tamba* of the Tamang society has the very esteem position, the man who is not only transmits the ancestral history in the form of songs and story but he also inspired the common people to observe the rites and rituals in their ceremony from birth to death.

5.2.4: Different aspects of *Tamba* Culture:-

The position of *Tamba* in Tamang society is not only an antiquarian of ancestral history and culture, but being a conveyor of tradition he is the representative of whole cultural aspects of Tamang people. His 'Sayings' will give the continuity to the tradition of this group. The statements of the *Tamba* become the guide of the culture. Since, *Tamba* culture is assimilation of different aspects of culture. So this is a humble attempt to make micro study of *Tamba* culture;

5.2.4.a: *Pong* (Symbol of Agreement):-

Generally, the meaning of *Pong*¹ is an earthen pot or bottle which is filled of local rice beer or liquor. It has great significance in Tamang society. *Pong* is also regarded as the symbol of Agreement between the two people or group. The offering of *pong* is practiced during the finalization of talk for marriage, and it is also offered by the family during the tonsure ceremony and new birth. This is also use as symbol of understanding between the quarreling people. *Pong* is also offered with great respect for welcome the guests and relatives. After offering the *pong*, in any situation it have to accept and can not give the second thought to the agreement. So, this seems that *pong* is a kind of strong agreement. However, the offering *pong* has various literally meaning in different places but everyone of the Tamang community practiced the system of *pong*.

5.2.4.b: Char (offering made by fellow villager to the home of deceased person):-

The offering in the form of liquor and local rice bear in funeral rite by kinsmen and clan member is called Char. The Tamang community being highland dweller, they are agriculturalist and pastoralist of very different environment, which hardly enable them for subsistence. This habituated them to live in the system of mutual assistance during any kind of crisis. The article included in the Char is 1 *mana* (traditional tool of weighting rice) rice, potato, one egg and vegetables along with a pong local rice bear. Tamang has very complicated and expensive funeral rite and sometime the family members were indebt to incur expense of such ceremony, so in order to assist the fellow clans' men other members of the society extends the helping hand by offering such articles. Now-a day, there are some changes in this form of assistance, now people use to donate cash money instead of liquor and rice bear.

5.2.4.c: Whai (Song) :-

In various ceremonies and during meeting of friends like *jatra*, *mela*, Tamang people use to sing a song, which is called *Whai*. In this system people requested the person to sing the song, according to the traditional socio-cultural structure by offering *Shagun* and kindling incense stick. The singer first gives homage to deity by singing the song of praising God and Goddesses. The song goes like this

Shango Shango Shangthano

Hyulla Neda Sibdamo

Chanman Poimase Sang Thanla

Kewa Sibda Dipdami

Daling Poimase Sang Thanla!!

The meaning of the song is 'kindling the incense to the deity of valley, and also offering to the death and impure place of birth'. After the formal submission to the deity, singer starts the song with praising the mother

"Amailey ho Amailey" and end the song by saying

"Mannala hai Dannala

Krasya Nangri Yunala !!"

The cinders of gold are called '*mannala*' and '*Dannala*' is three wild fruits (*Harra, Barra, and Amala*). In Tamang dialect brain is called '*krasya*' and inside is called '*nangri*'. The meaning of the song is 'put these cinders of gold and fruit inside of brain'. Their belief is that if someone consumes these things then he will be intelligent and healthy. The *Tamba* still tries to keep alive the ancient tradition and culture of Tamangs through the *Whai*.

5.2.4.d: Sangla Whai (kindling incense song) :-

During the rites ceremony of Tamang, *Tamba* use to kindle the incense to local deity of village through song. It is followed by the description of incense through song by *Tamba* and offered to God and

Goddesses. The song being sung during kindle of incense is called ‘*Sangla Whai*’.

5.2.4.e: *Sergem la Whai* (offering to the God):-

After the act of kindling the incense to the deity, *Tamba* made the offering to the God and Goddesses of all direction and also to the *Kuldevta* of the clan. This process is called ‘*Sergem*’. It is followed by the offering of rice to all learned person, sages, seer, and shaman, *Tamba*, *Ganba* of all corner of the universe. The whole account is heard from the *Tamba* in the form of song which is called ‘*Sergem la Whai*’.

5.2.4.f: *Damphu Seba Whai* (preparing *Damphu*):-

The Tamangs statement, regarding who prepared the *Damphu* (one side beating drum) is expressed through the song which is called ‘*Damphu Seba Whai*’. The song is like this

“*Amailey hoi Amailey*

Amailey hoi Amailey

Rapsi Chiwa Chu Damphu

Khalse Sengwa Bilawa”

(Santabir Lama (Pakhrin) “*Tamba Kaiten Whai Rimthim*”)

The song says ‘who prepared this *Damphu*, that I am beating’, and there also whole history of this traditional ethnic instrument of Tamang community. *Tamba* through this *Whai* use to describe the how

this instrument is made by hunter named Pemdorje by killing *Ghoral* (hill goat). This type of songs bear clear testimony to the technical knowledge of the Tamang people as also to their music loving nature which is normal for the people who grow up amongst the natural environment of the earth.

5.2.4.g: *Sachya Namachya la Whai* (description of origin):-

Tamba use to describe the origin of this earth through the songs. Subsequently, it also describe that after the origin of earth, it is ruled by the *panchabuddhas* in different direction. Such mythological description of Gods and their rule is the theme of this song.

Apart from these songs, there are also related theme of *Tamba* like, *Nela Whai* (Pilgrim song), *Nela Jinbal Whai* (fruits of pilgrimage), and also *Gandhi Chyala Whai* (origin of Ganga) all these songs are sung by the *Tamba* to gives the continuity and also instrumental to preserve the ancestral tradition of the community.

5.2.4.h: *Rhuichen Chyapey la Whai* (origin of clan or *Thar*):-

The Santabir Lama (Pakhrin) in his book “*Tamba Kaiten Whai Rimthim*” has collected the song of origin of *Thar* of Tamang people. The song is the vivid description of how *Thar* or clan came into being and what is their ancestral place and *kuldevta*. According to this *Whai*, there are 49 *Thars* in Tamang community along with *kuldevta* and place of origin. The writer thinks that the use of this “*Rhuichen chyapey la Whai*” to make

aware the new generation about their blood brothers and *Thar* brothers whom they can not get marry. So in order to impart the information about the ancestor and to avoid the marriage within the same *Thar*, this song of origin of *Thar* is practiced.

The Lama has many more collection of *Tamba* songs. One of them is *Dangbo la Whai* (Song of kali yuga) which talks about at the end of kali yuga there will be seven sun in the sky and but God will come again to regenerate the life in the earth. Another *Whai* is *Thenga la Whai* (beads of Bodhicitta), the *Tamba* through the song says, how this plant of Boddhichitta beads is planted in and only in Timal of Nepal.

5.2.4.i: *Tambala Whai* (description of *Tamba*):-

It can be said that *Tambala Whai* is the single form of entire *Whai*. But self analysis and self-description of a *Tamba* is called *Tambala Whai*. The organization of society, culture and rites and rituals is reflected in the form of song, and through this song *Tamba* trying to preserve the Tamang culture. Moreover, the earlier form of Tamang *Whai* is the *Tambala Whai*.

Another aspect of *Tamba* is *Hyama*. Any description made by the *Tamba* in Tamang dialect is called *Hyama*. Hence, most of such description has cultural values.

The statement of a *Tamba* is called *Kairan* or *Kaiten*. The *Tamba* tells the story from the origin of universe to social behavior and cultural customs of the Tamang and same time it keep alive the cultural

structure of the society. The *Tamba* not only work as bridge during the marriage ceremony between the wife giver and wife taker but also play significant role in the funeral ceremony of Tamangs. *Tamba* still firmly lead the society with customs and rites of high moral values and norms, with the help of this *Kairan* or *Kaiten*.

5.2.4.j: *Thim* or *Riti* (Convention):-

The Tamang society has generally accepted convention according to the social and cultural norms which is guiding force of every ceremonial rites and rituals is called *Thim* or *Riti*. According to the Tamang tradition and history, *Tamba* at the outset of every ceremony, use to deliberate the prevalent convention of each and every clan. As *Tamba* being a conveyor and guardian of social customs, *Tamba* tries to aware the every clan men, the importance of ancestral tradition and culture.

5.2.4.k: *Chardam* or *Saimundri* :-

This is focal point of marriage system prevalent among Tamang community. The word *Chardam* is not from Tamang dialect, but instead of that this is very popular in Tamang. This is a process through which wife giver handover the virgin to bridegroom, and *Tamba* in presence of all witness ties the knot of husband and wife by uttering the word of swearing ceremony for the couple. The use of *Saimundri* has and its meaning is varied from place to place and men to men, but according to the Pratap

Bal Tamang in his book 'Description of *Tamba's* of Darjeeling' (2005:19) *saimundri* is a gift or blessing of the King of the state of which Tamang is the subject.

5.2.4.1: *Ritbhat* (Customary feast):-

During the marriage ceremony bridegroom had to take some customary gift to the house of bride is called *Ritbhat*. This is the prevalent custom from time immemorial, whenever new relations are going to establish there are some customs which have to follow. Since this is the according to the *Rit* or convention, of the ancestral tradition and later became the *Ritbhat*.

5.2.4.m: *Rhui-shyal* (Purification of *Rhui* or *Thar*):-

Rhui in Tamang means *Thar* or clan, and *Shyal* means to make purify. If Tamang men marry the women of other caste of *panichal jaat* then after purification of women in presence of villager and *Tamba*, *Ganba* will be accepted in the *kula*. This process can be implemented if bridegroom is able to convince his clan men and relatives. In this purification activity a new marriageable clan or *Thar* is given to the bride and accepted by the community, this process is called *Rhui-shyal*.

5.3. Bon Culture:-

5.3.1: History of Bon Religion:-

According to the B.L.Bansal in his book “Bon its encounter with Buddhism in Tibet” (1994:1) ‘Bon is the primitive native religion of Tibet, and it has in spite of the influence of Buddhism, preserved itself till the present day, albeit not in its original form.....Bon was originally a cult of nature worship. It is said to have been widespread in inner Asia, China, East and West Turkestan, Manchuria, Mongolia, and the Tibetan plateau.’ Bansal also commented that ‘the origins of the word “Bon” are as yet not clear. Some western scholars understand Bon as referring primarily to certain pre-Buddhist Tibetan religious practices, vaguely described as animistic or Shamanistic – as for instance, the conjuring up of gods by means of magic formulae.’ S.C Das in his ‘A Tibetan-English Dictionary’³ writes that “Bon is the ancient religion of Tibet which was fetishism, demon worship and propitiation by means of incantation. The word *Chos* which ordinarily means religion is used as antithesis to Bon. Bon signifies the kind of Shamanism which was followed by Tibetans before the introduction of Buddhism and in certain parts still extant”.

Recent study of Bon religion reflected the meaning of word ‘Bon’, the term means to invoke, and its follower called ‘Bod pa or Bon pa’ means invoker or to invite. The single meaning of the term is ‘to invoke the some super natural being by mantra, by priests or specialist called as ‘Bon po’. According to Professor Namkhair Norbhu⁴ “Bon is an ancient Tibetan

term and is identical in meaning with “*bzla*” which is to recite mantras or magic formulae (*sNgag*). In ancient records the word is sometimes replaced by the word ‘*gyer*’. The term ‘Bon’ owes its origin to the recitation of mantras by the ancient Bon po to ward off the cause of obstacle (illness etc) and to obtain the capacity for fierce action”

The religious belief of the Bon pos (follower of Bon) is centered on the nature, surrounded by various good and evil spirits of the region. These spirits became gods if propitiated properly to avert harm and worshipped to seek help. There are Shaman or *Jhakri* or specialist priests who is supposed to be adept in taming the nature through their deep knowledge of the propitiating the spirits. Bansal writes that “it would seem that the teaching of Bon began to take on a literary form almost at the same time that Buddhism started penetrating into Tibet. The original Bon rites were aimed essentially at assuring protection and assistance to the person of the king who was considered to be of divine origin, as well as to the tribal chieftain and certain privileged families against evil, in situations of crisis and in the face of danger to life. The ancient Tibetan customs provided the basis for the doctrinal superstructure that was gradually constructed.”

The origin and character of the Bon religion is still obscure due to lack of authentic documents. According the literary tradition of Bon religion it was spread from the Shang Shung of west Tibet, although we can not trace the early history of Bon religion, but after the seventh

century Tibet was blessed by the development of literary language and literature. According to the B.L. Bansal the literary works of the Tibetan Buddhism and Bon po are belong to the twelfth century or after. These literary documents provide only partial information with general ideas and belief system. According to ancient Tibetan Bon belief system, the world is divided into three sections- heaven, air and earth or heaven, earth and the underworld. They (Bonpo) believe that underworld is inhabited by various kinds of spirits like *klu* which can take the form of snake at will. The *klu* is the protector of hidden treasure of rivers and lakes. Secondly, rock and trees are populated by the *gNyan* which can be easily annoyed and spread plague, sickness and even death as in way of revenge and on earth is the area of rule of *Sabdag*, or masters of the earth, and vampires known as *Sri* which prey on small children. Thirdly, the air is the place of the *bTsan* which appear as savage huntsmen; if a man happens to cross their path in the loneliness of mountains, they pierce him with their arrows or he is overtake by a deadly disease⁵.

According to the belief system of Bon religion the Bonpo try to propitiate the various god and spirits of Heaven, gods of everyday life, guardian angels to ward off evil influence, spirit traps in form of insect. The propitiation is followed by the large number of animal sacrifices to obtain the help of good spirits and to ward of evil spirits other than this the Bon po has extensive death rites. Thus, it appeared that the spirits assist the Tibetan in their difficulties, when properly propitiated and

seems the guard in their conflict to protect themselves against obstacle and dangers and in either secret or open opponent. These opponents threatened their life, property and even their good fortune. Their life is always full of fear of such pervasive powers which may be the cause of misfortune. Thus, the world of Tibetan life style and their belief system is encircled by the various forms of divine and supernatural powers.

5.3.2: Origin and development of the Bon Religion:-

According to Bon religious literature *gShen rab mi bo*⁶ was the founder of the Bon religion though it is uncertain about his historicity and historical evidence. However there is also absence of fact which can connect the historicity of his origin and large number of literature attributed on him. As per Bon literary tradition the 26th successor of *gShen rab mi bo* was the contemporary of Tibetan king *Srong brtsan sgampo* (620-649 A.D), considering this fact, it can be assume that the period of religious preaching *gShen rab mi bo* was before the Christian era. As Bon religion is related with shamanistic belief which proves that Tibet was the centre of Bon religion from time immemorial. The according to the Bon tradition *gShen rab mi bo* was the first preacher who reformed the primordial religion and developed it as institutionalized cult of Tibet. The life of the *gShen rab* is based on three version of rediscovered text i.e. *gter ma*. The discovery of first version took place in tenth century A.D which is called *mDo dus* it contains twenty one chapters which is supposed to be

the translated from language of *Shang Shung*. Another most important scripture set of *gter ma* was discovered in and about eleventh century A.D. which was known as *gZer myig*, divided into two volumes, each of eight chapters. The third account of *gShen rab*'s life, which is the longest of the three, is divided into twelve volumes, known as *gZibrjid*. This version contains the extensive information about ancient religion of Tibet and elaborate discussion on customs, rites, and stories of birds and beasts.

The account in *gter ma* about whole life of *gShen rab* has followed such framework which is very much similar with the life of Buddha. The most of the activities and philosophical thought of *gShen rab* is compared to the Buddha is identical. It is thus clear that influence of Buddhism in the account of *gShen rab* has in greater extent. Since, the advent of Buddhism in Tibet was coincided with the adoption of writing skill in Tibet for first time then thus keeping of records was too followed. The tradition of Bon religion to impart the convention and principles were very much oral, which was challenge by the documented institutionalized developed form of foreign religion. There is very scattered information regarding the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet as they do not know writing skill at that time. The belief and practice of Bon religion has undergone extensive change due to the wake of documented religion. However the Bon religion was not unified system and it started unifying and organizing its principles and practice, following the similar method as of Buddhism and even they documented their scripture as like of the Buddhism. Though, this process

of organizing and documenting the doctrine of Bon religion lead to the rift within the follower of this native religion. The earlier form of Bon religion is called *rDola Bon* or Revealed Bon (Black Bon). The Bonpos of this age were skilled in performing magical rites and suppressing evil spirits and even in witchcraft, and they also try to appease the malignant spirits ensuring that they may not pollute the earth.

The second form of Bon religion is *Khyar Bon* or Deviant Bon, which is the stage of development and acculturation with the foreign religion. The stage when *gShen rab* preached the theory of accomplishment and appeasement by being disciplined and monastic by virtue of meditation. He also shows the nine ways or vehicles of Bon religion to understand the whole of universe. The third Bon is *bsGyur Bon* or Reformed Bon (*gTer ma Bon*). The most of the Bon tradition and literary works were very much influenced by the doctrine and teaching of Mahayana Buddhism.

According to the secret oral tradition and its chronology of Bon religion, the 26th successor of *gShen rab* named *gRechen gNangjher Lodpo*⁷ and king of *Shang Shung* was the contemporary of *Srong brtsan sgam po*, king of Tibet. This reflect the teaching of Bon religion had become the one of principal cult of Tibet in early seventh century A.D. which also authenticate this as the contemporary belief system Tibet with Buddhism. Bon religion was patronized by the kings as state religion of Tibet till the seventh century but frequent ups and down in the religion

due to encounter with Buddhism and even inclination of kingship towards the new religion, while Bon suffered a stunt blow in its development but inherent belief of Bonpas in their religion make them able to reorganize in later centuries.

5.3.3: Transition and downfall of Bonism :-

According the Bon literature *Mu-Cho*⁸ of '*Ol-mo i-glin*' has assembled the number of translator (*lochwa*) into their own country that has attained the level of wisdom in this field. In order to propagate the teaching of Guru of Bon religion and to make it the belief of all corner they started translation of many sacred scripture into the language of *bsGrags-byang*. The account says that the group of translator marched towards every corner of the country like *sTa-gZig* of Iran, India, China, Kashmir, Sumpa, and they reached to the *Shang shung* the birth place *gShen rab*⁹. They preached and interpreted the secret convention of the Bon religion to the various parts of the south Asian country.

The advent of Buddhism in Tibet gives the severe blow to Bonism and its journey of development was stopped when Tibetan kings shows their patronage towards the new religion of Buddha. From the time of Tibetan king *Srong brtsan sgam po* (620-650 A.D), Buddhism got official entry into 'Land of Snow'¹⁰. And with the gradual spread of Buddhism makes it more popular and influential while Bonism lost its ground in Tibet. Moreover, the development of script in Tibet strengthen the doctrine

of Buddhism by translating the more scientific and practical principles of religion into Tibetan. Bon religions really face the challenge of existence because this was unorganized, and their secret conventions were imparted orally. They lost their influence and popularity among the people who were more inclined towards sophisticated, scientific and practical religion than the religion of Shamanism and immaterialism. As in early seventh century during the reign of *Srong brtsan sgam po* Bon religion did not had any direct encounter with Buddhism because king accepted the Buddhism not because of belief but to increase his political influence by embracing the religion of foreign countries. But in subsequent centuries Bon religion had to face dire consequences due to popularity and deeper influence of Buddhism into the men and king of Tibet.

In later half of the eight century A.D during the kingship of *Khri-sron-lde-btsan* Buddhism got immense patronization from the monarch for its development and spread of the doctrine through translation of Buddhist text into the language of Tibet. 'As Petech observe "His reign is doubly important because it marks the zenith of Tibetan power and the affirmation of Buddhism as the chief religion of the state"¹¹'. Hence, the king was follower of Buddhism but his group of ministerial was adherents of Bon religion. The noble men and clergy group supporting the Bonpo for its revival and reorganization secretly which created dissention between royal group of Buddhism follower and the adherents of Bon. This is proved by the sayings of Tucci in his book Tibet, the land of Snow which

is quoted by Dr. Anukul Chandra Banerjee (1984:8) as “the Bon po priestly class could not set back while its prerogatives and prestige were being curtailed, and they were soon joined as allies on the pretext of defending the old traditions by those aristocrats who resented the power of the king and of the noble families supporting him. Their resistance shouldered for a long time before it exploded a little more than half a century after *Thrisong detsen*’s edict which proclaimed Buddhism the state religion”. When large number of Buddhist scripture was translated into Tibetan under the patronage of King meanwhile the translator (*lochwa*) from *Shang Shung* and *Tag zig* were translated and codified the secret convention and principle of Bonism according to the Buddhistic form of representation. The principal role was played by *Guru Padmasambhava* in establishing Dharma in Tibet. He was invited by Tibetan king *Khri-sron-lde-btsan* to overthrow the demon worshiper from the country and as well to stop them from usurpation against the king. The *Guru Padmashambhava* not only dethrone the Bonpa from soil of Tibet but after “initiating them, he entrusted to them the guardianship of the doctrine¹²”. He also establishes a new form of Buddhism which is called Lamaism¹³, a blend of Bon rituals and mantra in the form Mahayana Buddhism. Waddell (1979:31) also stated that “the Bon pa were now prohibited making human and other bloody sacrifice as was their wont; and hence is said to have arisen the practice of offering images of men and animals made of dough”. The teaching of Guru was pervasive to such extent that

many of Bon po became the follower of the Lamaism and those who do not embraced Buddhism were either sent to the frontier or executed by the royal order. Although all these persecutions and exile do not vanish totally the adherent of Bon religion, and during the Kingship of *gLan-Dar-ma* a believer of Bon again reinstalled the religion in Tibet by assassinating the Buddhist King *Ral pa can* and rule the country according to the Bon tradition. But rule of *gLan-Dar-ma* was very short lived and again Buddhism was revived as state religion and Bon religion became extinct.

The struggle for existence between Buddhism and Bon religion in Tibet was started from the advent of Buddhism and till the downfall of Bon, hence Bon religion remained active in the frontier of Nepal, India, Bhutan many more countries, during the time of persecution and suppression of Bon po. The cult of Shamanistic popular belief which had deeper influence of various primitive religions remained the belief system of people till later time. Consequently, the Bon religion revived till date in the form of *gter ma* or Rediscovered text Bon, which was hiding during persecution of Bon po, and rediscovered later and preached again.

5.3.4: Bon Religious Texts:-

The process of documentation of Bon religious texts was started with the development of *Thon-mi Sambhota* script in Tibet. The Bon do not had written religious texts before the *Sambhota script*, the secret convention of Bon was transmitted through the means of oral tradition. So

Tamang people may have been migrated in sub-Himalaya before the development of script in Tibet because, among the Tamang Bon po the oral convention is still prevalent. Moreover, Tamang were adherents of earlier Revealed Bon or Black Bon so system of writing among them is totally absent. It can be assume that Tamang settled in the region before early seventh century A.D. Initially the convention of Bon religion was based on oral tradition but with the wake of development of script in Tibet and translation of Buddhist texts into Tibetan made the Bon pa to need of writing their sacred convention into the language of common people. However, most of the historian stated that the Bon literature were mere imitations of Buddhist scripture by slightly changing its method and names into the names of Bon. But “tibetologists like Tucci, Snellgrove, Hoffman and others about the relation between the *Nying ma pa* and Bon of *gShen rab*. Some hold that there are many aspects of the *Nying ma pa* doctrine which, it seems, might have come from Bon or the Bon influenced the *Nying ma pa* doctrine¹⁴”. As a matter of fact the *Nying ma pa* sect of Lamaism is the assimilation of Bon, Mahayana Buddhism and Tantra, so Bonism is not totally ousted by the Buddhism in Tibet but in order to draw the bon po into the new sect blended the most of the Bon deity and its doctrine into the new sect of Buddhism in Tibet. Hence, Buddhist, Bon po canon is also written and divided into two collections *bKa’ gyur* and the *bsTan gyur* which is based on the Rediscovered text or *gTer ma*. The *bKa gyur* is compilation of hundred and forty volumes and contained the

teaching of *gShen rab*. While *bsTan gyur* contained the official explanatory and expository notes and collected into hundred and sixty volumes.

5.3.5: Dynamics of Tamang Shaman or *Jhakri* in relation to Bon:-

The dynamics of Tamang Bon po in respect of Bon religion is very perplexing, while Tamang Bonpo or Shaman believes that the Tamang Shaman are the follower of the original Bon or Black bon in which sorcery and sacrifices are indispensable part. But influenced of sect preached by *gShen rab* has also deep rooted among the Tamang (Lama Bon Po) Shaman. Originally, Tamang Shaman follows the creed of animism and shamanism. However Tamang Bon po were neither organized nor institutionalized like other creed of Bonism and Buddhism. As Tamang Bon po are follower of shamanistic form of religion which reflect that they are adherent of original primitive Bon religion of Tibet. Considering the believes of Tamang Bon po on Shamanistic form of Bon religion, they assume that mountain, forests, trees, caves, source of water, ponds and lakes are the place of invisible god and goddesses. The various supernatural powers and place of worship (*sThan*) are determined on the basis of Tamang belief and Bon po tradition. Whereas most of the deity of Tamang Shamanism are related with agriculture and pastoralism, and most of the propitiation are centered round the well being of family, production and cattle's. The place of worship is called *Bhumesthan* is always made in nearby agricultural field beneath of tree or in under the

big stones. This ritual is called *Sibda Nibda* in Tamang dialect. The *Sibda Nibda* is principal deity of Bon po and this is also lord of field according to the Tamang belief system. Whereas *Sibda* in Bon po pantheon symbolize as deity of white bon while *Nibda* is a popular deity of sacrifice, sorcery of Black Bon which is malignant in its nature. This is the popular belief among the Tamangs that proper propitiation will bring the greater production and good fortune in family and agriculture. The other deities of Bon po other than principal tutelary deity they also worshiped of good spirits, evil spirits, warriors and god of hunter or animals. Among the Tamang shaman the most powerful and belief worthy god is forest Shaman¹⁵ (*Vanjhakri*) who teach the magic to some selected person and bestow with the power (*Shakti*) of healing and controlling the spirits.

According to the Larry Peters (1998:65) “The Tamang believe that spirits are a principle part of the organization and meaning of the mundane world. They participate in the ordinary world, affecting the lives of men for good and evil. Further, they are the means by which the Tamang articulate to themselves the reasons for misfortune. The Tamang medical system revolves around spirits as they relate to illness and misfortune”. Tamang Shamans are directly related to the practice of healing, therefore they were also called witch priest or healer in the community. Peters again writes “Shamanism is the unwritten religion of Tamang. It is an animistic religion that postulates numerous categories of spirit beings”. According to the Tamang belief system that gods and deities

if properly not propitiated then it may cause from severe illness to physical problem. Further many spirits which has not received proper funeral also brings misfortune and diseases. So in order to propitiate in proper way to the deities and ward off the evil spirits needs religious specialist who can effectively handle the spirits. Chan is the most important deity of Highland Hunter worshiped by the Tamang. This is sometime protector of particular clan but may also cause severe misfortune. The Larry Peters (1998:69) in his 'Tamang Shaman' has mentioned various types of spirits which may cause illness and misfortune "*Khorwa lha* 'gods of the atmosphere and earth' are different from evil spirits (*lagu*). While the *khorwa* spirits can strike out cause illness, they can also protect and bestow favors when worshipped regularly. *Lagu* on the other hand are totally evil.... Some of the various kinds of *lagu* are called *bayu*, *bhut*, *prêt*, *pichas*, *massan*, *nag* and *moch*. There is little agreement as to how each of these different types came into existence. Yet each possesses certain characteristics distinguishing it from the others. For example, a *massan* looks like a skeleton and hangs around graveyard. *Nag* takes the form of serpent. *moch* attack children". However such supernatural being are subject of proper propitiation and diagnose which only a specialist can perform. The Tamang as being the adherents of Bon religion in which animism and shamanism has great space makes them to propitiate the spirits either of protector or of evil. Such rituals of propitiating various forms of spirits in certain place (*Bhumesthan*) either by sacrificing or by offering of produce is

related with the belief of warding off evil spirits and bestowing the good fortune.

Generally, Tamang belief system is related with nature and immaterial elements, in which the role of Bon po is regarded as protector and healer of these aspects. The tutelary deity of Tamang Bonpo tradition like *Sibda Nibda* and Nag (*lhu*) are worshipped with great esteem and belief. This is the common belief that if various kinds of spirits were properly propitiated by the Bon po then it can bring good fortune in the society. As because of the prevalent clans (*Thar*) system among the Tamang, the Bonpo use to utter the names of deities and ancestral genealogy of particular clan during the propitiation of tutelary deity. Consequently, Tamang ritual structure is directly influenced by the original bon tradition of Tibet. Because alike of black bon, the Tamang bonpo neither has monastery (*Gumpha*) nor the religious text. The role of Tamang Shaman or Bon po in the society makes the culture of Bon tradition.

5.3.6: Various aspects of Bon culture or tradition:-

Bon religion is very closely related with Shamanism, therefore it has deep influenced on the culture and tradition of Bon po or *Jhakri* prevalent among the Tamang community. Moreover the different cultural aspects of Bon religion have deeply rooted in the rite and rituals of Tamang people which gave rise to very peculiar culture. The rituals of the

Tamangs are mostly borrowed from the ancient animism and shamanism. They usually try to protect their agricultural produce and animals by worshipping the supernatural powers. These rituals are as follows;

5.3.6.a: *Brangi (Mandala)*:-

Mandala, a circle of effigy of deities in which Bon po offer worshipped is called *Brangi*. In middle of *mandala* placed the bon of dough (*torma*) and surrounded by *Jyoho*, *vayu*, *kuldevta*, *mahadev*, *devi*, *nag* made of dough of rice flour. In such *mandala* placed at the centre the Bon (*Guruchan*), and they also make the abode of 4 *lhadang* (god), 4 *mhemedang* (ancestral), *gyodannng* (god). In *mandala* of Bon, put the effigy of Bon of origin called as *Singbon* (Forest Shaman), and *Guruchan*, and at the east *Karjebon*, in west *pawbon*, in north *Irubon*, and to south make the abode of *Norubon*. The deities of dough of rice flour in the *mandala* must be 26. To complete the process of offering by *mandala* also needs *Chyangdey* (wood table), *Bumba* (kalasha), *Chene* (rice), Candle (*nangshal*), Coin, *Lha mendo* (flower of *orixylam indicum*).

5.3.6.b: *Syong kyongwa (River worship)*:-

The Tamang being the follower of animistic form of Bonism, it has great value of nature and various elements of environment. Tamangs as being the agriculturist and pastoralist they worshipped the elements which supply the means of survival, in this regard worship the river or

Syong kyongwa. This form of worshipped is done by collectively on either Tuesday or Sunday of the *Magh* or *falgun* month of calendar (Nepali). River in Tamang language is called *Syong*, so it's worshipped at source of water is followed by sacrifice of cock, and goat by chanting certain form of mantra by Tamang shaman, begging for the well being of society. They have belief that if *syong* is propitiated then fertility of agricultural field in increase and as well it will protect the village during natural calamities like flood.

5.3.6.c: *Bhume puja (Hyulsa)*:-

Hyulsa puja is the worshipped of Soil. Soil as source of important aspects of livelihood which gives life to the community, therefore it is symbolize as the god. This is also homage to the land where community lived and to save the habitation from natural calamities. *Bhume puja* is performed by the Tamang community where Buddhism has less impact and it is observed on day of *Baishak purnima* at the *Bhumesthan* (something highland prepared for worshipped of deity) by sacrificing cock or hen. This puja has deep belief among Tamang that it may increase the fertility of soil and also gives the good production. There are also other similar puja prevalent among the Tamang community is called *Sibda Nibda* which is also related with the worship of soil according to the both the ritual of black bon and white bon.

5.3.6.d: *Sime Bhume puja* (Worship of Rain):-

Sime Bhume Puja is another form of propitiation related with naturalism, Tamang community equally respects the soil and rain, so this is the worshipped of supernatural power of rain. This is performed on either Monday or Thursday of *Jyestha* month of every calendar year, in which clan *jhakri* will preside the ceremony of whole community together. This ceremony is actually related with the belief that during the harvesting season they may get sufficient rain water and which makes their production good and fertile. According to the Tamang tradition *Sime* (Rain), and *Bhume* (soil) are the indispensable part of the nature which supplies them means of livelihood, it their duty to give respect by performing puja to these elements.

5.3.6.e: *Sansare puja*:-

The most of puja of Tamang community is revolves around the nature and its various forms of aspects. This *Sansare puja* is performed by Tamang community in together by hiring clan shaman to observe the rituals twice in a year, once in *Asar* and another is in *Mangsir*. The puja is related with the belief of protection of animals, agricultural production, and also from various kinds of viral decease. All these ceremony are observed to propitiate the nature and to get the blessing from it. So this is the pure form of naturalism and animism prevalent among Tamang community.

5.3.6.f: Aitabare puja or (Worship of Hunter God) Shikari puja :-

This puja is observed on Sunday of every year's *Sawan* and *Asauj*. Religiously it is related with the well being and protection of animals and from their disease.

5.3.6.g: Bhimsen puja (Chore):-

This is related the concept of valour, and power by worshipping the god of *Bhimsen*, which is followed by the sacrifice of cock, and goat. This ceremony is to get the power to the family and community as well as to ward off the evil and disease from the clans.

5.3.6.h: Goth-puja (worship of cowshed):-

This is another form of worship prevalent among the Tamang community which is totally related with cattle rearing and pastoralism. This is observing every year in the month of *jyestha* and *Mangshir*, at the cowshed or Goth. This is purely belief that by propitiating the god of cowshed than cattle shall not suffer from any kind of disease and also give more milk to the family. Whatever the theories regarding this form of worship but for the Tamang this a traditional culture of pastoralism related with protection and guardian of cattle, observing which they will be benefited.

5.3.6.i: Chan (Shikari devta) and Lhu jyambu (snake god and goddess)

puja:-

The *Chankhor* Tamang observes the *Chan (shikari devta)* as their tutelary deity. Tamang also do worship of snake god and goddesses. The both the puja are performed in the month of Baisakh and *Bhadau* on the day of Monday and Thursday. The ceremony is performed by religious specialist shaman by offering the egg, milk etc of religious value to the *Nag devta*, and cock is sacrificed for the *Chan* or *Shikari devta*. This ritual also related with the hope of getting blessing from these gods in the form of good production etc, and may protect them from viral diseases.

5.3.6.j: Pitri-devta (Khepasung) or Ancestor worship:-

As Edwar Clodd¹⁶ (2007:91) has written “Ancestor worship, which may be said to be well-nigh universal, thus maintains intimate relations between the dead and living; between this world and a spirit-world. It falls into two groups: worship of the departed members of the family, sacrifice to whom become paramount duty, and who rank as friendly household gods, easily placated; and worship of great or holy men, culture heroes, braves, athletes, chiefs and others rulers, who in many cases rank with, and sometime above, the powerful nature-gods of the earlier animism, with whose attributes they become credited”. The Tamang community jointly with same clan (*Thar*) members performed ancestor worship on the month of *Asauj Sukla Nawami* on Monday, Thursday or

Saturday. This worship is performed on the house of elder among the clan and in the room of ritually sacred. Their belief is that if their ancestor is properly propitiated then they could have prosperity and peace at the household affairs.

5.3.6.k: Chansung tradition (symbolization of cock as *Kuldevta*):-

The *Chankhor* Tamang or Tamang of this clan has tradition of symbolizing the cock of house as the *kuldevta* is called *Chansung* tradition. The symbolize cock is keep as very sacred and even can not think of cooking it. This cock is sacrificed at the time of worshipping of *Kuldevta*.

According to the Edward Clodd (2007:99) “there are in rituals no inventions, only survivals; and all the material apparatus of the religion of the world has its origin in the lower culture, from bells, whose primitive purpose was to drive away evil spirits, to sacraments, which had their beginnings in sympathetic magic. The craving after, and dependence upon, symbols is universal; the lower the intelligence the more does it derive help from the tangible”. However, the bon influenced culture and rituals of Tamang are more centered in material benefits from the immaterial form of belief.

5.4: Buddhist Culture:-

5.4.1: Introduction of Buddhism:-

To interpret and to understand the influence of Lamaism on Tamang community it is necessary to have brief introduction of primitive Buddhism for which Waddell has rightly pointed out that “to understand the origin of Lamaism and its place in the Buddhist system, we must recall the leading features of primitive Buddhism, and glance at its growth, to see the points at which the strange creeds and cults crept in, and the gradual crystallization of these into a religion differently widely from the parent system, and opposed in so many ways to the teaching of Buddha¹⁷”. Waddell again writes about authenticity of Buddha and gradual changes in his teaching, he writes “no one now doubts the historic character of Siddharta Gautama or Sakya Muni, the founder of Buddhism; though it is clear the canonical accounts regarding him are overlaid with legend, the fabulous addition of after days. Divested of its embellishment, the simple narrative of the Buddha’s life is strikingly noble and human¹⁸”.

The Gautama Buddha, preacher and founder of the new sect in 6th century B.C. was born in Lumbini (Kapilavastu) of modern Nepal, and he was original teacher and thinker of C. five century before the Christ. The prince Siddharta being deeply upset by the Vedic ritual system and caste hierarchy prevalent at that time and as well as by the stages of human life like: disease, old age, death and saint¹⁹, left the home at the age of 29 in search of truth leaving behind his wife, son, parents, and also pleasure of

life in palace. After the 6year rigorous meditation in search of eternal truth under the *pipal* tree of grove at Bodhgaya (India) attained the 'Nirvana' or supreme enlightenment. The Buddha preached the doctrine of eternal truth and way out of escaping from it '*Marga*' for rest of his life in whole Northern India until he attained '*Mahaparinirvana*²⁰'. After the death of Buddha, instead of many ups and down in the creed preached by him, it remained as one of the widely accepted religion of that time. However, with the passing of time, there emerged many new sect within the Buddhism like Hinayana, Mahayana, Bajrayana etc and original teaching of Buddha also transform into new dimension in subsequent years. Consequently in 8th Century A.D *Gurupadmasambhava* preached new sect of Buddhism in Tibet called 'Lamaism' by assimilating the doctrine of Mahayana and Bajrayana sect of Buddhism.

The development of Lamaist tradition in Tibet gave rise to further 'schism' in this sect of Buddhism. Subsequently, the creed founded by *Gurupadmasambhava*, was reformed by many *pandits* and developed into various sect of Lamaism. These sects are *Nin-ma-pa*, *Ge-lug-pa*, *Kar-gyu-pa*, and *Sa-kya-pa*. Firstly, the *Nin-ma-pa* sect according to the Waddell (1979:72) "the wholly unreformed section of the Lamas was, as we have seen named Nin-ma-pa, or "the old school". It is more freely than any other tinged with the native Bon or pre-Buddhist practices; and celibacy and abstinence are rarely practiced. This is the real "red hat" sect of Lamas, and not the Dug-pa as is stated in European books. It regards the

metaphysical Buddha Samanta-bhadra as its primordial deity or Adi-Buddha". It is original sect founded by *Gurupadmasambhava* for which he is worshipped in Lamaism in either in divine or demoniacal forms of expression. Secondly, *Ge-lug-pa* is the first reformed sect of Lamaism. Wadell (1979:54) writes about it as "the first of the reformed sects and the one with which Atisa most intimately identified himself was called the *Kah-dam-pa*, or 'those bound by the orders (commandments)'; and it ultimately, three and a half centuries later, in *Tson k'apa's* hands, became less ascetic and more highly ritualistic under the title of 'the virtuous style', *Ge-lug-pa*, now the dominant sect in Tibet and the established church of Lamaism". This sect has great numbers of follower all over the world as well as it is one of the most important sects of Lamaism, but most of Tribal is following the *Nin-ma-pa* sect of Buddhism particularly in Sub-Himalayan region. Thirdly, Another reformed sect of Lamaism is *Kar-gyu-pa*, which was founded by the Lama Marpa of *Lha-brag* in latter half of 11th century A.D. Marpa has seek instruction from Atisa the Indian *pandit* and he was also disciple of Naro, the janitor of Nalanda University²¹. After the *Mila-re-pa* the chief disciple of Mar-pa, the sect which was based on hermit, unable to attract the people and soon appeared many sub-sects like *Kar-ma-pa*, *Di-kung-pa*, *Ta-lung-pa* and *Duk-pa*. Fourthly, the sect system in Lamaism was ended with the genesis of *Sa-kya-pa* or Sakya, founded by *Kon-dkon-mchog rgyal-po*²² and became so powerful that they achieved the temporal sovereignty over the greater part of the Tibet.

The reformation in the original Lamaism paved the way for varieties of sects and this became the point of exposing their magical powers either to win over the enemy or to get the supremacy among the people. These developments in the Lamaism not only influenced the people across the country but Tamang people also deeply influenced by the Nin-ma-pa sect of Buddhism. According to the Buddhist belief the Tamangs were inhabitants of Sub-Himalayan region prior to the development of Nin-ma-pa sect, and they were influenced by the religion after the cordial relation was established among Tibet, Nepal and India in the post 6th century A.D. This cultural transformation in the Tamangs, developed the cultural variety out of amalgamation of primitive Bon religion and reformed sect of Buddhism. Buddhist culture can be interpreted as the assimilation of religion and philosophy, however many countries of the world have embraced Buddhism but still we find the differences of culture and ritual among the fellow countries of Buddhism. Interestingly, the development of culture and ritual of Buddhism and its philosophy are also determined by the social and geographical environment of the country. Because, the Newars of Nepal, Tamangs of Sub-Himalayan range and people of the Bhutan are followers of Vajrayana sect of Buddhism but still there are differences in their culture, rituals and behavior. Hence, among the Tamangs it is more substantial to say that 'culture of Tamang is influenced by Buddhism' than the Buddhist culture of Tamang. The Tamangs were not

only influenced by Buddhism but in its culture we can trace the essence of other religion also.

The Tamangs by religion are followers of Buddhism, but according to the analytical study of their belief system, they embraced Buddhism very lately may be only after the development of Nin-ma-pa sect of Lamaism, because Tamangs has still preserved the essence of Bon culture as their core belief system which makes the Buddhism as the secondary religion of these ethnic group. The Buddhist culture among Tamang has many social contradictions because *Tamba* and Bonpo still play a significant role even in the rites and culture of Tamang people. The Nin-ma-pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism has significant influenced on Tamang albeit we unable to find the whole culture of Tamang is being influence by it. Though, Tamang has been following the Buddhism from more than millennium, so we can not ignore the elements and essence of its impact on Tamang culture. Apart from the incredible aspect of Buddhism in Tamang we also find the influence of *Tamba* and Bonpo in its rites and customs. Tamang people observed very little rites and ritual related with Buddhism, whereas most of the rites are performed by the *Tamba* and role of Lama and Bonpo are very nominal in rites and rituals. To perform the rites and rituals of Tamangs from birth to death, Buddhism has principle and method but out of which funeral ceremony is most important, for which Tamang people use to follow the system of Buddhism. The role of Lama (Buddhist priest) in ceremony related with funeral of

dead person is indispensable whereas rest of the rite and rituals are done by *Tamba* and Bonpo. Therefore, the funeral ceremony is most important event of rites and rituals of Buddhist Tamang.

The Buddhist culture does not promote sacrifices, but use of meat and fish is not banned. There are also no prohibition on using country alcohol like local rice beer and local made liquor. Considering all these it can be said as pure Buddhist culture of Tamang. The adherents of Buddhism use to keep religious identity by erecting religious flag (*Dharju*), *lungdar* and *lungta*, these all are either to ward off evil or to welcome good fortune in the family. The area influenced by the Buddhism, uses to construct a common place of worship, called *Gumpha*, and due to such influence people also like to perform the most of religious rites and rituals by the Lama (Buddhist priest) than the *Tamba* and Bonpo of ancestral tradition.

5.4:2: Some prevalent Buddhist culture:-

Buddhist culture is reflected by the means of implementation and assimilation of religion and its philosophy in certain framework that became of integral aspects of tradition. According to the Buddhist philosophy, showing of righteous path or way to its follower develops the culture. Generally, all the followers of Buddhism tried to attract the people into the fold of creed by various means either by constructing *Gumpha* or making the painting of deities of Buddhist cult into the walls of *Gumpha*.

They are also conscious about preservation and conservation of Holy Scripture; they even build up shelter of monks and schools of Lamaism, and also shed for attaining meditational knowledge, all these structures are to preserve the various material culture of Buddhism. There are prevalence of cultural traits of the Tamangs intermingled related with Buddhism.

5.4:2.a: Fasting or Upavas (*Nyung ney*):-

Baishak purnima is very auspicious for the Buddhist and in Buddhism. It is believed that Gautama Buddha had got birth on that day and his Nirvana and *Mahaparinirva* also fall in the same day of *Baisak purnima*. Considering it very auspicious follower of Buddhism use to observe the *Nyung ney* ceremony. During the ceremony they take the meal once in a day and without uttering a single word, they follow the *Sil* (rules) as preached by the Lord Buddha.

5.4:2.b: *Pran Prathisthan (Rabhney)*:-

This ceremony is performed to give salvation to the soul of deceased person. Among the Tamang, following the Buddhist tradition soul or spirit of dead person is installed in some effigy or idol by chanting the magical formulae. Generally, this religious ceremony is performed during the installation of idol by following the certain religious rules is

called *Rabh ney*. During the time of *Rabh ney* Lama (priest) performed various forms of religious dance (Cham).

5.4:2.c: Uposhta (*Shojyong*):-

This is related with the behavior and discipline of the monks, if some trainee monks' commits mistake to follow the discipline (*Sil*), then he has to confess to the teacher monk for its compensation. Such kind of ceremony is observed on certain auspicious day of every month. This is purely preventive measure of religion that every trainee of religious discipline or would by monk, must follow and observed the *Asthasil* of *Vinaya*.

5.4:2.d: Dhenow:-

This ceremony is also closely related with the *Asthasil* of Buddhism. This is basically for the householder Buddhist follower, which is observed on *purnima* and *Amawasya* of either *Asar* or *Sawan* month of year. Ceremony is to facilitate even the householder the benefit or *Dhamma* of *Asthasil*.

5.4:2.e: Dhirghayu Avishek (*Chey wang*):-

The *puja* is performed to recovered from nightmare, and suffering from psychos, or continuous illness. The Lama offers a kind of

Thui, mixture of many vegetation as medicine, and also performed the puja for the long life of the victim.

5.4:2.f: *Chechyu*:-

This ceremony is observed by the follower of Nin-ma-pa sect of Buddhism on *Dasami* of every month as they believe that on that day *Gurupadmasambhava* will return from the country of demon. And they also observed the birth anniversary of *Gurupadmasambhava* as *Teldai Chechyu* which is followed by the chanting of mantras in memory of Guru.

5.4:2.g: *Chyotal Duchen*:-

This ceremony is observed by the religious preaching, sermon, and worship on the *Sukla paksa pratipada* of *Falgun* month of calendar year. The ceremony is celebrated as victory when Gautam Buddha has win over six non Buddhist by his intellect in Srabasti. On this day every Buddhist follower clean their sanctum and erect new prayer flags at the some highland of the village.

5.4:2.h: *Nhergha*:-

This is the birth ceremony of Buddhist goddess (Dakini). In Tibetan *Nhergha* means Krishna *paksadasami* of the month and on that day *Nin-ma-pa* Lama worshipped the goddess *Dakini Yeshe Chogyal*.

5.4:2.i: Lah Bakti Duchan and Yang Bum:-

Lah Bakti Duchan is being observed on *saptami* of *Kartika krisna paksa* every year to commemorate the day of return of Buddha after preaching the eternal truth to her mother in heaven.

Yang Bum is worship of purification of house. During any kind of inauspicious sign is felt in house, then to bring the good luck back in house Lama performed the puja of good luck. On same day they also worshipped the god of wealth (*Yang Lha*).

There are many rites prevalent among the Tamang community, but funeral ceremony is most important commonly observed rites of Tamang related with Buddhism. As there are rites related from birth to death but use to give much importance to funeral ceremony than the others. According to the Buddhist principle a Lama can perform all kinds of ceremony. The Lama can do the new birth ceremony (*Namkaran*), *Chhewar* or cutting of hair. But importance of Lama in *Chhewar* or hair cutting ceremony is less important because according to the Tamang tradition this ceremony must be performed by the maternal uncle. But *chhewar* done by Lama is called *tapchey* which is religious swearing ceremony of Buddhist to follow the doctrine of monk hood even for one day. As *Chhewar* performed by the Lama is very good but instead of that Tamang prefer to go for maternal uncle. These are cultural and ritual

contradiction developed in Tamang society due to assimilation of two cultures.

5.5: Death Ritual:-

This is one of the most important Buddhist rituals prevalent among the Tamang as basic essence of religion. The death ritual by following the Buddhist philosophical idealism is such a culture which reflects the identity of Tamang as Buddhist. According to the tradition of Lamaism, *Gurupadmasambhava* has hid some of his basic religious scripture in various caves in order to transmit to the coming generation in form of *gTerma*. The *gTerma* or rediscovered text of death rituals of eastern side is called *Kunjyo Chenjyo*, and death ritual text (*gTerma*) of Northern side is regarded as *bYag-gter*²³.

The death ritual is a commonly accepted element of Buddhism by all Tamang of the globe and subsequently we find the uniformity among the follower of *Nin-ma-pa* sect of Lamaism particularly among the sub-Himalayan region. This is very extensive form of Buddhist philosophy which helps the soul to get the salvation from the recycle of rebirth by following certain formulae.

¹ The literally meaning of *Pong* is vary from place to place but Santabir Lama (pakhrin)(1983:27) in his “*Tamba Kaiten Whai Rimthim*” has describe the prevalent meaning of word *Pong*;

- (a) *Karjel Pong* = At the time of finalizing the talk for marriage of a virgin
- (b) *Pong* = During finalizing any agreement
- (c) *Shagun* = Offering during an auspicious ceremony
- (d) *Syalgar* = Offering by being very humble
- (e) *Korchyang* = Offering to be made to the wonderer
- (f) *Rochyang* = Drink during the meeting of friends
- (g) *Sochyang* = Offering made by the householder during funeral ceremony
- (h) *Dipchyang* = Pong to be offered by the family of new born (Nwaran)

² Lama (pakhrin) Santabir (3rd edition 1983: 34), “*Tamba Kaiten Whai Rimthim*” P.B. Gyabak, Siliguri, Darjeeling

³ Banerjee, Anukul Chandra (1984.01) “*Aspects of Buddhist culture from Tibetan sources*” , firma KLM private Limited , Calcutta

⁴ Namkhari, Norbhu, “Bon and Bonpos” *Tibetan Review* (New Delhi) 1980 (p 8).

⁵ Bansal, B.L.: - *Bon its Encounter with Buddhism in Tibet*, Eastern Book Linkers, Delhi, India, 1994 (p.38)

⁶ The followers of the Bon religion agree that gShen rab was born in Ol-mo-lung-ring valley of Zhang-Zhung or Shang shung country which is identified as with Guge, one of the three districts of Nga-ri province of Tibet. It lies on the other side of the Indo-Tibetan border. (A. C Das 1984:3)

⁷ See Tamang, Rudra Shing (2004), “*Tamang Sanskar O Sanskriti*”, Tamang Society Research and Development Centre, Nepal (p 75)

⁸ See Karmey, G. Samten (ed & translated) (2001:16) ‘*The treasury of good sayings*’ A *Tibetan history of Bon*, Motilal Banarasidas Publishers, New Delhi

⁹ “Three translator of sTag-gZig, dMu-tsa Tra-he, Khri-thog sPa-thsa, and Hu-Lu sPa-legs expounded their translations to Sad sPung-dun, Gyer-sangs gTsug-phud, dMu-tsha Ting-rim, dMu-bon brTan, dMu-mkha’ lDing-nam, and dMu-rje sPal-pa dGu-‘byung of sTag-gZig. They interpreted them to the Bon-po Mu-khod of Zhang-zhung, the gShen- po Li-sha of India, the gShen –po Bra-ba Me-ru can of Kashmir, the gShen –po Pa-va Shang shung of Tho-gar and the gShen-po Ge lTe-ne Lo-rgya of Gilgit” . *ibid* (p:17)

¹⁰ According to the Dr. Anukul Chandra Banerjee (1984:1) in his “*Aspects of Buddhist culture from Tibetan sources*” “The land of snows is marked off by encircling great sky-scraping snowy mountains and the rugged rocky ranges always covered with snow high and perilous’.

¹¹ Chattopadhyaya, Alaka (1967:217), ‘*Atisa and Tibet, life and works of Dipankara Srijnana*’ Calcutta.

¹² *Ibid* (p. 236)

¹³ Primitive Lamaism may therefore be defined as a priestly mixture of Sivaite mysticism , magic, and Indo-Tibetan demonolatry, overlaid by a thin varnish of Mahayana Buddhism.

Waddell Austine (1979:30), *Buddhism and Lamaism of Tibet*, Heritage publisher, New Delhi, India

¹⁴ Chattopadhyaya, Alaka (1967:217), '*Atisa and Tibet, life and works of Dipankara Srijnana*' Calcutta. (p.7)

¹⁵ See Peters, Larry (1998:80), *Tamang Shamans, An ethno psychiatric study of ecstasy and healing in Nepal*, Nirala Publications, New Delhi

¹⁶ Clodd, Edwar (2007), *Animism, the seed of religion*, Cosmo publications, New Delhi.

¹⁷ Waddell, Austine (1979:5), *Buddhism & Lamaism of Tibet*, Heritage publishers, New Delhi

¹⁸ Ibid (p.5)

¹⁹ These are four great signs of Buddhism according to the Buddhist tradition , which changed the life of Prince Siddharta, from Prince to the Mendication after attaining the supreme knowledge of eternal truth.

²⁰ The great decease of Gautama Buddha.(ibid:162)

²¹ Waddell Austine (1979:64), *Buddhism & Lamaism of Tibet*, Heritage publishers, New Delhi

²² Ibid (p 69)

²³ Tamang, Rudrasing (2004:69) *Tamang Sanskar r sanskriti*, Tamang Society Research and Development Centre , Nepal

CHAPTER

6

BON TO BUDDHISM: TRANSFORMATION OF RELIGION AND CULTURE

6.1: Transformation in Religion

The micro study of Tamangs religion and its customs reveals that they had undergone religious transformation from the inception of Buddhism in Tibet or particularly with the foundation of Lama Buddhism or Lamaism by Guru Padmasamvawa. The Tamangs calls them as ‘they are by birth Buddhist’ but their rituals and beliefs are totally antithesis of what they actually are. The religious initiation and ritual practices of Tamangs exhibit ritual differentiation like the religious system of Himalayas mostly of the South and South East Asia. Tamangs religion is essentially comprised of two distinct yet coexisting systems, Buddhism and Bonism (Shaminsm). These are traditionally recognized dimensions. Hinduism also had deep rooted influence among Tamangs. Tamang consider them Buddhist, as opposed to Hindu, but the distinction is not absolute in Sub-Himalaya, like wise Bon religion. The characteristics of the rituals and practices of Tamangs which is very much animistic¹, but still affiliation with this is obscure. Larry Peters (1998) observes Tamangs are adherents of ancient Tibetan religion i.e. Bon, because the core theme

of this religion is 'Shamanism'. Shamanism is thought to be mankind's earliest religion, possibly dating back 100,000 years or more; it may well have been the religion of Neanderthal man (Furst, 1972; viii-ix). Shamanism originated in association with the hunting and gathering way of life (LaBarre, 1972: 162-163) and many researchers believe that the shaman's role is portrayed in the Upper Paleolithic cave art of southern France (Campbell, 1959: 299ff; Furst, 1974; Lommel, 1967:105ff). Moerman (1979:59) indicates that the first profession was that of shaman-curer. The term shaman comes to us through Russian, from the Siberian Tungusic term saman meaning "one who is excited, moved, raised." This is descriptive of the most salient aspect of the shaman's trance: shaking (Casanowicz, 1924:419). According to Professor Sir Harold Bailey, shaman ultimately derives from vedic sram meaning "to heat oneself or practice austerities," and sramana meaning monk or ascetic. This term made its way from India through central Asia to China (sha-men) and Japan (shaman) (Blaker, 1975: 317-318), entering Siberia via the dissemination of Tantric Buddhism (Mironov and Shirokogoroff 1924) (Peters, 1998:7). The Tamangs have great faith as well as profound respect for shaman, who is identify as religious specialist of the community like of other tribal religion. Belief in the existence of superhuman or supernatural powers is almost universal. Experiences of certain day to day sudden happening of diseases, death and the explainable, have led tribal people into believing in other than the material visible world i.e. in the invisible spirit-world or supernatural powers. They have established a kind of close relationship between

themselves and this power by adjusting themselves to it in two ways, first by controlling or overpowering the spirit by enchanting or practicing some techniques and canalizing the power, for good or bad, and secondly, by offering puja or worship to propitiate the superhuman power for acquisition of the thing or object desired. We call the former magic and latter religion. In the tribals magic is actually an integral part of their religion and magical practices may be included as a method of propitiation². The general account of the tribal religion of the Sub-Himalaya can be traced out in various forms of beliefs, faiths and ism prevailing among the tribal including Tamang of the India and Nepal. They use to propitiate the effects produced by superhuman or supernatural powers. The sacred place and symbolic articles or objects representing the different powers constitute the sacred geography. Sacred specialist like Shaman or individuals who propitiate the so called God of the group concerned and finally the sacred performance reflect the method of propitiation, rituals, worship, offering sacrifice etc adopted by the people. Vidyarthi and Rai (1985:239-240) made an outline of the nature or characteristics of tribal religion in the area concerned. The Animism, Bongaism, Naturalism, Toemism, Taboo, Magic, Polytheism and Ancestor worship are the nature of belief in supernatural powers which makes them different from the main stream religion like Hindu and Buddhism. In same way tribal do propitiate number of spirits like protective spirits, benevolent spirits, evil or malevolent spirits and ancestral worship and for reverence to these elements they select particular place as sacred are, sacred centers by sacred specialist. All

these characteristics are distinctly seen in Tamangs' beliefs and practices in the form of ancestral worship, *devi stan*, *jhakri* or shaman with their sacred performance. Tamangs from ancient times are followers of Bon religion, which was the religion of Tibet before the advent of Buddhism. Bon is the primitive native religion of Tibet, and it has, in spite of the influence of Buddhism, preserved itself till the present day. Bon was originally a cult of nature worship. It is said to have been widespread in inner Asia, China, East and West Turkestan, Manchuria, Mongolia and the Tibetan plateau. Tibetans of the early days were apparently completely subject to their formidable natural surroundings. Their religious ideas, which were rooted in and dominated by nature, revolved round the various good and evil spirits with which they peopled their wild, highland landscape. These spirits in time became gods who had to be propitiated to avert harm and worshiped to secure help. The belief in the spirits developed into a cult with its own elaborate ritual. There were Shamans or specialist priests who professed to be experts in controlling nature through their knowledge of the ways of propitiating the spirits. These practices varied from place to place and from clan to clan as Tibet in those days were not a unified state and were divided into a number of regions controlled by different tribes³. The Tamang tribe of the Sub-Himalaya also inherits same characteristics as of the Bon religion, which is evidence of its adherents of Bon religion, because they deified the forces of nature as Gods. Mountains and rivers, rocks and springs, land and sky and trees and bushes became the dwelling place of those gods. The helpful ones were worshipped, and the harmful ones propitiated. Among the Tamang beliefs and practices main

ingredients of worship or propitiatory rites were offerings in the form of food, drink, clothing and even sacrifices of cock, goat etc. From dawn to dusk of everyday life and from birth to death of Tamang, the rituals and practices of this animistic cult makes them firm believer of Tribal religion which is best known as Bon.

The advent of Buddhism in Tibet has changed the course of belief system of the peoples of the place. There is no denying that fact that Buddhism is one of the most dynamic religions of the world. It is only religion which made a notable contribution to the culture not only of India but also of other foreign lands. It is due chiefly to its catholicity that it could make an appeal to all, both Indians and foreigners, alike. King Asoka's contribution in this regard is highly noteworthy. He dispatched his missionaries to various countries in India and abroad to propagate Buddhism. But we know nothing of his mission in Tibet nor in fact do know of any activities of Indian for the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet. Before the 7th Century A.D. Buddhism was unknown in Tibet. Till then it was steeped in "barbaric darkness". Towards the early part of the 7th Century A.D. it first received Buddhism and through it some beginnings of the civilization among its people. Undoubtedly Tibet received the largest contribution to its culture in respect of religion, literature, art and the like from India⁴. This was the stage of transformation of religion among the hill tribes of Tibet and Himalayan ranges. The introduction of Buddhism in Tibet totally changed the outlook of the Himalayan tribes and gave birth to a mixed religion which was neither pure Buddhism nor pure Animism or Bonism but it was culture oriented religious system

particularly for the Tamangs. Here we must know about the how Buddhism makes its way towards Tibet? The transition of Bonism and Buddhism in Himalayan region was best elaborated by Dr. A.C. Banerjee who has given an account of Buddhism in Tibet in early part of the 7th Century A.D. It is generally believed that Buddhism entered Tibet during the reign of King Naradeva (*Mihi lha*) who ascended the throne at the age of thirteen only. *Bu-ston*, the greatest Tibetan historian, also writes that “thirteen years of age he ascended the throne and brought under his power all the petty chieftains of the border land who offered him presents and sent their messengers of submission”. Owing to his meritorious deeds he was later on better known as *Srong-tsan-gam-po* in Tibet. *Bu-ston* states that the original name of the king was *Khri-lda-srong-btsan* and he provides us with an interesting account of how the king came to be known as *Srong-btsan-gam-po*. It is to be noted here that “this original name of the king is practically forgotten in Tibetan history and his honorific name *Srong-btsan-gam-po* became firmly fixed”. He was the son of King *Gnam-btsan-tri-srong-bstan* who was a warlike king and held supreme authority over Tibet. King *Srong-bstan-gam-po* bred martial spirit of his father and took delight in bloody wars and campaigns. On his ascension to the throne he increased his military powers manifold and laid an expedition against king *Amsuvarman* of Nepal in the south. Fearing defeat at his hands king *Amsuvarman* of Nepal thought it wise to establish a matrimonial alliance with the king of Tibet. He offered his daughter in marriage to him. The king gladly accepted the princess as his queen. King *Srong-btsn-sgam-po* was only sixteen years old when he married the

Nepalese princess who was aged eighteen years. Tibet became a very powerful nation then because of king *Srong-btsn-sgam-po*'s military power. Some two years later king *Srong-btsn-sgam-po* laid a military campaign against *Sen-ge-bstan-po* (*Tai-tsung*), the powerful emperor of China in the north. The emperor also evaded the war by giving his daughter in marriage to the king of Tibet. Many romantic tales are still current in Tibet about the marriage of the king with the Chinese princess. Thus *Srong-bstan-sgam-po* had two queen one of them was "*Thi-btsun*" said to be the corrupt form of Bhr-kuti, the daughter of king Amsuvarman of Nepal, while the other was called *Wen-ch'eng* the daughter of *Tai-tsung* the emperor of China. S. Levi opines that the marriage of the king with two princesses was planned for the consolidation of the political power of Tibet. Both these wives were pious. The princess of Nepal was a devout Buddhist. As part of her dowry, she brought with her the image of Aksobhya Buddha, Maitreya and Tara. To shrine the images *Srong-btsn-sgam-po* built a great temple which stands today in the middle of Lhasa. It is popularly called the Jo-Khang (House of the Lord). Its original name meant House of wisdom, perhaps, this change was a concession to the fact that Bon-pos were already becoming a little restive at this foreign influence. Nepalese architects and builders and the entire necessary craftsman were sent from Nepal for the work on the temple, the first to be built in Tibet. The princess of China was also a worshipper of Buddha. She brought to Tibet arts and crafts as well as an image of Sakyamuni which "is said to have been taken from Magadha by the Chinese about 1st century B.C." This was also installed in a great temple built by the king in

Lhasa through the initiative of his Nepalese wife. It still survives there and it is the chief temple of Lhasa. Both the wives were further “canonized as incarnations of Avalokita’s consort, Tara savouress or goddess of Mercy, and the fact that they bore no children is pointed to as evidence of their divine nature”. The Chinese princess was glorified as the white Tara and Nepalese princess as the green Tara which is still very much venerated in Nepal. The king was a man of culture. He was deeply interested in cultural development, social reforms and the like. By the persuasion of these two queens, the king was soon converted to Buddhism. He felt the necessity of introducing Buddhism into his own country and henceforth devoted his attention to its propagation in Tibet⁵. (Banerje, 1984:20-21). Thus, Buddhism spread out in Tibet under the patronization of king *Srong-btsn-sgam-po*. The indigenous religion which has been deeply rooted in Tibetan culture became antagonistic against of this foreign religion. The regular ups and down makes it difficult to establish Buddhist church in Tibet in spite of strong support from the Tibetan monarch. During the rule of king *khri-srong-lde-btsan* (740-786A.D) marks the zenith of Tibetan power and the affirmation of Buddhism as the chief religion of the state. It was during his reign that Santaraksita, Padmasambhava and Kamalasila were brought to Tibet. He was great admirer of Buddhism and to propagate Buddhism in Tibet he invited Santaraksita, the famous Indian Buddhist teacher to Tibet. But due to some reason he was unable to give permanency to this new faith in Tibet and had to left for Nepal. Santaraksita was called back by the king. “Santaraksita advised the king to invite the celebrated Tantric teacher and *Yogi Padmasavbhava* for the

thought that the people of Tibet being so attached to the local gods and magical practices would require a very powerful teacher". (Banerjee,1984:27). *Padmasabhava* on his part arriving in Tibet in 747 A.D, he vanquished all the chief devils of the land, sparing most of them on their consenting to become defenders of his religion, while he on his part guaranteed that in return for such services they would be duly worshipped and fed. (Waddell, 1979:26-27). Now, onwards Buddhism firmly footed in the land of snow and propagating the Dhamma in new form in the Himalayan region which is known as "Lamaism" which was best suited for all the people of the region who earlier used to be adherents of Bon. The Lamaism which was introduced by Padmasambhava had the esteem space for deities of Bon religion as well as it was based on Tantra, which has been central point of beliefs of the Hill tribes.

The Tamangs idea of religion contains a number of elements which combine to produce a representation of tribal cult of belief system inspite of being followers of *Nyingmapa* Sect of Lamaism or Lamaist Buddhism. The ecology determines the shape and form of the tribal culture, but their religious activities and beliefs leads to an environment of supernatural beliefs and rituals modifies and influence the tribal culture. To explain the religion of Tamang tribe it is necessary to have a holistic approach: their religious life plays an important role in the configuration of their culture. In the formulatory stage of Indian anthropology a number of studies were presented to explain the culture focusing the "Nature" and the activities of "Man". But as studies advanced

in the analytical phase of anthropology in India it became more and more clear (Vidyarthi, 1963) that Nature –man relationship was not only confined to the ecological or subsistence level alone. The invisible spirit-world is there at every stage of the life of the Tamangs which gives them a means to explain certain sudden happening and unexplainable experiences. Thus it is clear that Nature-Man-Spirit⁶ is useful for depiction of the Tamang culture. “Spirit World” of the Tamang explains many things as well as paved the way for understanding its beliefs and practices. The Tamangs nature of primary beliefs is animism later they are Buddhist. The myths and legends provide them with sanctions. They worship all types of sprits whether benevolent or malevolent. Their huts, villages and fields and forests are all full of sacred places. The head of the family has the responsibility to propitiate the gods and deities at family level. The village priest takes the responsibility at community level. The shamans are to protect the Tamangs from *Bhut prēt*. In sacred performances objects form eggs to buffaloes are offered to the gods and deities. The religious festivals are eagerly awaited by the people. The ancestral spirits find a favour and appreciation from their new generation and the people consider the ancestors their family and household deity (*Khyapa*) who helps them in every walk of life. It is observed that the Tamangs have blended their beliefs and rituals with Buddhism predominantly Lamaist Buddhism.

6.2: Theories of Culture Change:

Culture is a unique human reality. It emanates from the unity of humankind in nature, but it situates itself as meta-natural reality. It is manifested in the technological, metal, moral, social, aesthetic and spiritual achievements of humankind. Culture gives meaning to our relationship with the other, as it also forms our subjective identity. Culture, therefore, enters into the process of social change in many forms as its indicator. By selective adaptations to outside cultural forces, it has a large measure of resilience. With all its institutional pervasiveness, it has a core which acts as a filter or a moderator to the outside forces of cultural contact and change. This also explains why in each mainstream culture one may find existence of sub-cultures and counter-cultures (Singh, 2000:25)⁷. There are many theories explaining the process of culture change which may be fit in context of research;

6.2.1: Culture as Adaptive System⁸:

Culture is all those means whose forms are not under direct genetic control..... which serve to adjust individual and groups within their ecological communities.(Binford,1968:23)⁹.The cultural transformation of the Tamang community can be best assessed in the light of evolutionary/ ecological¹⁰ approaches to culture as adaptive systems. The Tamang has undergone through rough and hilly as well as plains of Sub-Himalayan ranges of India-Tibet and Nepal and became best adaptive with this ecological environment. They also have been long term contact with other tribal and non-tribal communities of the area. This

kind of co-habitation made them adaptive of culture. Cultures are systems (of socially transmitted behavior patterns) that serve to relate human communities to their ecological settings. These ways-of-life-of communities include technologies and modes of economic organization, settlement patterns, modes of social grouping and political organization, religious beliefs and practices, and so on. When cultures are viewed broadly as behavior systems characteristic of population, extending and permuting somatic givens, whether we consider them to be patterns of or patterns for behavior is a secondary question¹¹.

6.2.2: Assimilation and Acculturation

Assimilation is always treated as a process. Gumpłowicz (1883), one of the pioneering scholars of Assimilation considers it as a dynamic force in society. Park and Burgess, writing on “Assimilation” in their “Introduction to the Science of Sociology” identify it as “a process of interpretation and fusion in which persons and groups acquire memories, sentiments and attitudes of other persons or groups; and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life”(1924:735)¹². Tamang has been for long time remains in contact with other communities, in Nepal and in India, it is indeed display assimilative feature in their cultural behavior.

Acculturation is a process of adaption to new conditions of life¹³, but others opines that those processes whereby the culture of society modified as the result of contact with other culture of one or more other societies¹⁴. The assimilation and acculturation, one is dynamic force

and other is dynamic process, but in both the case a cultural group must have a contact with other cultural groups. Social Science Research Council Committee (1935) applied the term “Acculturation” and stated that, “Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individual having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups”. Thus, the processes of acculturation ultimately accelerate the process of cultural transformation by changing the forms of the original cultural patterns of a given social group due to the cultural contact with another cultural group. In this process the two different cultural groups, in the state of culture contact follow the cultural traits of one another either by imitation or by the pressure. But in every respect the cultural patterns of the either cultural groups or the both transmit from one to another vice-versa and consequently develops the process of cultural transformation¹⁵. In the case of Tamang, they had cohabited with Ghaley, Gurung, Mangar, Thakali etc in Nepal and after the unification of Nepal, they were compelled to acculturates with Hindu caste community. The result is that there has been revival of culture movement by forming ethnic cultural association in India and Nepal.

The tribal communities are guided by the different spheres of their life. The tribals are not living alone. Contacts are there between them and their neighbours. Modern forces have been actively moulding their life. As culture is dynamic, the tribals have faced and are facing changes. Nevertheless the tribes have retained the principal elements of their ways of life, though these are modified to a greater or lesser extent.

The factors responsible for the transformation are broadly of two types: Traditional and Modern.

The Traditional process, characterized by the impact of certain traditions of the major neighbouring communities on the tribal group, has long been in operation and has led to the resultant concepts like Hinduization, Sanskritization, Tribe cast continuum, tribal-rajput continuum, revitalization, Bhagat movements etc.

The Modern process includes such factors like Christianity, Buddhism for Tamangs, urbanization and industrialization. Tribal development, community development schemes, democratic set-up of the nation, modernization in education, communication and administration and the like are of recent origin, and are directly or indirectly external factors which do not emerge as a result of normal contacts of the tribal people with the non-tribal people of the areas¹⁶. The culture of tribal communities is penetrating from outer world with the above said factors and compelled the tribal people to make changes in their inherent culture. (Vidyarthi & Rai, 1985: 554), examine the culture change of tribal communities under the following points;

6.2.3: The Traditional factors of Culture Change

6.2.3.a: Hinduization: The Tribals in India have been influenced by certain traditions of the communities around them. The major neighbouring community in all the areas has always been Hindu. As a result, from the very early periods there have been several points of contact between the Hindus of the area and the tribal communities living

within it. The nature and extent of contact, the pattern of mutual participation and the characteristics of revitalization movements have been different parts of India. Our ethnographic records establish that the contact varied from semi-isolation to complete assimilation. The numerous castes among the Hindus have emerged out of the tribal stratum. The recent studies of the ethnographers especially of the tribes of Himalayan, western and middle India have left the least doubt to establish that some of the tribes are Hinduized to the extent that they have been assimilated with the different castes, at different levels, in the caste system (Ghurye, 1959). The study of Tamangs of the Sub-Himalayan tracts disclose that they continue to practice certain distinctive tribal ethnic culture but same time they became adherents of Buddhism from Tibetan plateau and deeply acculturate with Hinduism in Nepal and in India. The Tamangs had adopted many rituals and customs of Hinduized caste communities and practices in their daily routine. This process of cultural and religious change was initiated with the unification of Nepal during the reign of King Prithivi Narayan Saha, who declared Nepal as Hindu kingdom, and most of the tribal communities are compelled to follow rites and customs of Hinduism¹⁷. In the words of Anne Kukuczka (2011:402), at the end of the eighteenth century Prithvi Narayan Shah provided a source defining Nepal as a Hindu kingdom and consequently legitimized Hindu kingship in his Divya Upadesh: “[...] this will be a true Hindusthan of the four varna and thirty-six jat” (Stiller 1968: 44). By this formulation he included all people living in the conquered territory irrespective of their religion, caste or ethnic affiliation

within the framework of Hinduism. Although the Hindu framework introduced by Prithvi Narayan Shah aimed to subsume the various groups, it was the introduction of the legal code Muluki Ain (MA) in 1854 by Jang Bahadur Rana which codified and fixed the status of all castes and ethnic communities within a legally binding national Hindu social hierarchy¹⁸. But Tamangs are able to give continuity to their ethnographic culture along with the assimilated Hindu and Buddhist customs. The capacity of old and new cultures and structures to exist without conflict and even with mutual adaptations is a frequent phenomenon of social change; the old is not necessarily replaced by the new. The acceptance of a new product, a religion, customs, a new mode of decision – making does not necessarily lead to the disappearance of the older one. New forms may only increase the range of alternatives. Both magic and medicine can exist side by side, used alternatively by the same people¹⁹.

6.2.4: The Modern Factors

The conversion of Tribal communities to other religious sect is one of the factors of cultural changes of the Tribal of the globe. In this category foremost is Christianity (Vidyarthi & Rai, 1985:458, Fricke, 2008). The case of Timling of Nepal, Tom Fricke narrates the story of Tamang conversion into this religion in the name of development, better subsistence and very new way of life²⁰.

6.2.4.a: Urbanization and Industrialization

The process of urbanization and industrialization has brought drastic change in culture of tribal people. Tom Fricke during his field study²¹ in Timling found that process of connecting Nepal through roads into the interior destroyed the isolation of Tamang as well other tribal communities. This process brought these people outside of their ecological, social and economic domain, which adapt them into the new world of urbanization. The industrialization of the Kathmandu valley mostly affects the Tamangs who dwells surrounding of the valley and they supplied largest number of labour to the industry. This gives them cross-cultural and multi-dimensional features of the multi-ethnic community, which lead to the disintegration of social and cultural values of a particular ethnic group like, Tamangs. The unification of Nepal, Indo-Nepal war and conclusion by Sugauli treaty (1816), opens the era of trans-migration to other countries. Colonial India was importing labour with the introduction of Tea plantation, especially in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts of West Bengal. Among the labours, Tamangs were in majority to be settled in the area. They were prey of social and economic exclusion in Nepal by the upper castes Hindu and even by the Government of Nepal by not allowing them into royal services. Such displacement from the ancestral land and non-attachment with mother cultural groups brings transformation in their livelihood as well as cultural processes.

6.3: Transformation in Culture of Tamang

The case of “Culture” this has proven to be surprisingly, even notoriously, difficult. According to one expert, Raymond Williams “culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language..... because it has now come to be use for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct systems of thought” (1976:76-7). An illustration of this diversity is the fact that, writing way back in the 1950s, Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1952) were already able to assemble an astonishing number of definitions of culture from popular and academic source. Tracing these diverse understanding provides an important way to delimit the scope of our inquiry.

In its early uses in English, culture was associated with the “cultivation” of animals and crops and with religious worship (hence the word “cult”). From the sixteenth century until the nineteenth the term began to be widely applied to the improvement of the individual human mind and personal manners through learning²². Culture or civilization ... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, laws, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Tylor, 1871:43). Historical definitions wrote by Park and Burgess as “The culture of a group is the sum total and organization of the social heritages which have acquired a social meaning because of racial temperament and of the historical life of the group” (ibid: 3). On the light of above definition we can assume that culture is a dynamic force which depends on the moods, behavior and intellect of the society and its

member. Kluckhohn has espoused some different viewpoints rather than, culture may be defined as, all those historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit, relational and non-relational which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behavior of men. Kluckhohn has described the culture as a way of thinking, acting and feeling of a man in a given time. This view point indicates to the dynamic nature of culture that eventually change or modify its own nature by itself with the change of time and place²³. Kroeber has termed the culture as, “the mass of learned and transmitted motor reactions, habits techniques, ideas, values and the behavior they induce.(ibid:45). Herskovits has delineated that, “Culture is the man made part of environment..... Culture includes all the elements in man’s nature and endowment that he has acquired from his group by conscious learning or by conditioning process techniques of various kinds, social and other institutions, beliefs and patterned modes of conduct. Herskovits says that culture is more than biological phenomena. He has also presented various series of paradoxes to comprehend the essential nature of culture, these are as follows. 1). Culture is universal in man’s experience, yet each local or regional manifestation of it is unique. 2). Culture is stable, yet is also dynamic and manifests continuous and constant changes. 3). Culture fills and largely determines the course of our lives, yet rarely intrudes into conscious thought.

The above mentioned paradoxes in regard to the nature of culture denote its essential attributes that the culture is a universal, stable concept which largely determines the course of human living yet

there is a particular culture-area of every culture, culture is dynamic in nature and it never intrudes into the conscious thought of man.²⁴ Contemporary Tamang are usually thought to be a group of people who descended from Tibet in time immemorial or to be an indigenous population of the central Himalayas (Macdonald, 1975:133). The use of the term Tamang has a complicated history. The Tamang as a named category of people –like many other groups found throughout highland Nepal–emerged not out of time immemorial from hidden Himalayan valleys but with the formation of the state of Nepal. There has been a tendency in the ethnography of Nepal to look at groups like the Tamang in isolation and to envision their cultures as presence in unchanging continuity with those of ancient residents of the Himalayas or neighboring regions but transforming and sometimes disintegrating in historical contacts with ascendant Hindu and Tibetan Buddhist peoples. Tamang culture, though, was as much created as undermined in the genesis of contemporary Nepal. Tamang cannot be considered outside this reality. In particular, what we can tentatively characterize as an insular or “tribal” character of Tamang culture emerged in response to the evolvement of socio-polities in the greater Himalayas where local sectors of Tamang turned in upon themselves in a process of involution²⁵. Tamang has portrayed their tribal culture from the primordial age and some time due to the political pressure and some time social obligation transformed their behavioral culture. The study of society and culture of Tamang people, reflect some changes. As Tamang culture is an insular “Tribal” in nature but in the process of social development it is indeed exposed to the greater society

and transformation and changes occurred. There are many factors in their cultural change but one of the most interesting is geographic or ecological environment. There are many factors and processes of cultural change of Tamangs.

6.3.1: Evolution Process:

To, explain the cultural evolution of Tamang, the study of their ancestral homeland is very necessary. It is not certain but there is consensus among the sociologist, anthropologist and ethnologist that they were branch of Mongolian tribe and speaker of Tibto-Burmese language (Hudson, 1828, Grierson, 1909, Bhogalin & Bhogalin, 1964, Glover, 1970, and Hegen 1960). It is also accepted that some time Tamang were settled in Nepal through Tibet. The pastoralist life style and adherents of Bon religion of Tibet came to Nepal, due to this new culture for long period Tamang remain insular or isolated from other cultural groups. One of the tribe from Tibetan plateau came to Nepal and Known as Tamngng. This group develops the Tamang culture with the ecology and hospitable environment of Nepal²⁶. They had transformed the Mongolian culture inherent with them into the culture of Nepal. Although, peeping through their ancestral history they were originally followers of Bon religion. Because of this Bon rite and culture, Tamang use to propitiate ancestral spirit. The assimilation of Tibetan Bon religion and *Nyingmapa* sect of Lamaism with permanency in Nepal gave birth to Tamang culture.

6.3.2: Process of Progress:

The Tamang settlement in Nepal witnessed many ups and down in the process of their cultural development. The adherents of Tibetan animism and ward of Mongolian culture living around the Kathmandu valley for centuries, without allowing any cultural intruders even they maintained isolation from the contemporary Kirat of the area and other tribal groups of the Tarai. But such separation was not long lasting the changes in culture was inevitable. The increasing influence of Buddhism in Tibet and the rise of Nyigma-pa sect with the development Sambhota Lipi (Tibetan Script) directly influenced the Tamang in their cultural outlook. This makes a slow but steady impact on Tamang culture and with the passing of time the cultural transformation became visible. In the process of cultural development the Bon and Tamba culture of the Tamang becoming extinct in the hands of Buddhistization. The rise of Lamaism, particularly, Nyingma-pa sect, which assimilates tribal culture in the religion, alluring the tribals of Himalaya, who actually believes in spirit, tantra and magic became the victim of religious conversion into Buddhism. The conveyor of Tamang culture, “Tamba” and ritual priest “Bonbo” losing their importance in the society, as the integral pillars of the Tamang culture.

6.3.3: Adaption:

The inherited Tibetan culture of the Tamang became localized with the life style and environment to the Nepal. The process of adapting with the local socio-cultural and ecological settings needs changes in their

behavioral culture. The Tamangs had assumed the demographically closed and continuous culture into their fold, which had never been of their. All the norms and values and customs which infused any influence had made them convenient for their culture. The balanced development or adaption among the Buddhism, Bonism and Tamba to dress, language and even lifestyle is clearly visible.

6.3.4: Development:

The process of adaption in Nepal and its socio-cultural and ecological settings brought some changes in the culture of Tamang. The influence of Buddhism also cannot ignore. Originally, adherents of Bon and worshipper of animism creates commotion in the cultural process of Tamang with the deep rooted impact of Buddhism. The religious paradox makes the Tamang neither Bonist nor fully Buddhist. To, gives continuity to their culture in realm of paradox of two religions, a new social institution developed. The adjustment between Bon religion and Buddhism brought by the Tamba culture, which became conveyor of rites and customs as per demography and local settings. This institution acts as bridge between Bon and Buddhism and provide equal importance in Tamangs society. The Bon or Bonpo is essential during the lifetime of a Tamang and Lama or Buddhist priest is integral part of the death ritual. The presence of Tamba in all the ceremony and ritual of a Tamang is very important. This gives an unique ethnographic identity to Tamang Culture, and became the one of the important pillar of Tamang culture.

6.3.5: Migration:

The process of migration has brought a lot of changes in the culture of Tamang. The history of civilization explore that there was continuous migration of nomadic people throughout the globe. The Asia and all its neighbouring countries were inhabited by the early migratory people. The historian speaks about rise of new culture or assimilative culture with the mixture of different race. The Mongoliad origin of Tamang has history of migration in different phases of history. Such impact of migration reflects in their apparel, food habits and rites and rituals due to the cohabitation with various racial groups of different culture. The continuous change in their habitation due to some reason differentiates the people within the same group. In the context of Nepal, there are basic differences in language, customs, religious practices way of life style with the Tamang of western Nepal to the Tamang of eastern Nepal and also Tamang of Nepal and of India has also vast differences in their cultural practice. The migration of the Tamang to India and other countries are mainly started with the unification and Hinduization of Nepal by the King Prithvi Narayan Saha. In the early part of 19th century, East India Company opened up Northern Himalaya for habitation which accelerates the migration of this ethnic group to India in large extent. There are number of Tamang villages in Darjeeling, Sikkim, Jalpaiguri, Assam and many other parts of the India. Such migration has surely influence the cultural settings of the Tamang by the local culture and ecology but fundamental cultural theme has been remain alive in all the Tamang of the globe. The centuries old migration of Tamang has reflect many

differences among them due to the cultural diffusion (Kroeber: 1940) of the area but modern migration and displacement make least impact on the cultural transformation. Though, the impact of such migration of modern society and civilization has been vanishing out the traditional culture of the society. The fundamental culture of Tamang has direct impact of migration whereas influence of culture has been decreasing among the migratory Tamang of other places. The differences in culture of the Tamang of Nepal and of India were caused by the centuries old separation from cultural centre.

According to the sociologist, due to migration, people distancing from cultural centre the grip of the culture also decreased. If we accept the cultural centre as 'Circle', then whoever goes outside of this circle, influence of culture will be least. As long people remain disconnect from the central origin of culture, more inclined to adapt the others cultural traits. The groups of Tamang who are away from the cultural centre are experiencing disparity in life style, dresses and even in language with the Tamang of centre of culture. By observing the cultural diffusion of Tamang, it is found that Eastern Tamang of Nepal has horizontal diffusion, whereas Westerners has vertical diffusion. Eastern Tamang moves forward to east upto India whereas westerns have their movement towards south by crossing Kathmandu valley.

6.3.6: Urbanization and Modernization:

The transformation in the culture of Tamang is mainly because of the urbanization and modernization. The modernization process due to the

urbanization of the society changed the settings of values and norms of Tamangs. The ethnographic identified musical instrument which was integral element of the Tamang marriage and so on now, became the one of the item of cultural programme. This process totally modernizes the outlook of Tamang's food habits, dresses and also various folk ethnographic cultures. Though, this phenomenon developed cultural revivalism, among the Tamang people particularly to the youths who became more preservative towards the traditional ethnic language and culture. Extinct culture of the community is reviving, now they feel pride to be Tamang, earlier who were neglected in the cast hierarchy of Nepal. The modernization process has conferred both positive and negative impact on the Tamang society, while culture of this ethnic tribe is transforming in sake of modernization, same time this has infused a cultural consciousness in this community.

With the process of modernization Tamang society has accepted the some innovation in culture. The traditional rites and customs have been modified with convenient of the modern society. Some changes are approved by the society itself as the need of time. The conventional forms of marriage, tonsure ceremony and ever death ritual hah witnessed changes. Earlier alcohol was necessary in Tamang ceremony but conscious people has been condemning it and slowly giving up use of alcohol in ceremony. The education playing vital role in accepting some innovative changes in the society, and this was the impact of assimilation with other advanced cultural groups. Instead of all these factors Tamang are able to give continuity to its culture. A significant

quality of social change which relates to structures and process in societies is that of continuity and resilience of the traditional institutions and values²⁷.

6.3.7: Westernization:

The factors of westernization have been influencing each and every society directly and indirectly. This is expediting the process of transformation in the fields of social and cultural element of the society. Every aspects of the social and culture is influenced by this westernization. The impact of westernization and globalization compelled the most of the tribes to transform their ethnographic culture. The westernization has influenced the most of the cultural society in its taste, behavior, life style and even more in languages. The youths of almost of each and every social group are more inclined towards western life style. Though, this factor indirectly helped the people of certain ethnic values to be preservative towards their culture. Indeed it is the need of time to protect culture, the groups had to modify with convenient to the modern society. But transformation or changes should not be by killing the basic features of culture, but it must transform the society by accepting the positive aspects of modern world by assimilating within it. The Tamang of Nepal and India are well adapted in assimilating the modern factors side by side continuing the traditional norms and values in the outlook of culture.

6.3.8: Sanskritization:

The unification of Nepal by King Prithivi Narayan Shah and his decree on Hinduization, brings all the people of Nepal in the fold of Hindu society. The process of Hinduization in Nepal has been rightly said by M.N. Srinivas as the process of Sanskritization, which had influenced almost all the ethnic groups of Nepal, but it has least undeviating persuade to the Tamangs. Still, there is extent of impact of Sanskritization on Tamang has been reflected in their ritual customs and languages. Ethnically, Tamang speaks of their language which is the branch of Tibeto-Burmese group, but due to this they had to adapt with new linguistic culture of Nepal particularly who live around the Kathmandu valley. The Sanskritization or Hinduization forced the Tamang to acculturate with the customs and Hindu religion. There are many festivals and rites which has been assimilated in their culture like, Vijaya Dasami, Navratra, even more Tamang bride-groom are now putting Sindur into the vermilion of bride on the occasion of marriage, whereas this totally absent in Tamang, and it is the impact of Hinduization. The Tamang society is a closed society, where no system of high and low caste, but due to influence of Sanskritization, sense of pure and impure Tamang developed, which lead to the formation of hierarchy society.

The development of the society and diversity created by the transformation is the main focal point of the cultural changes. Without disgracing the central culture, adoption of modern cultural values as suitable to own traditional culture is a development but compliant with the others culture in totality by ignoring central cultural norms is a

transformation. The study of society and culture of Tamang exposes the process of Tibetization as central culture and subsequent upliftment of importance of Lama or Priest whereas diminishing role of Tamba, Bombo and Ganba. The cultural transformation is continued, then Tamang culture will be Tibetized and role of Tamba, Ganba and Bonbo will be secondary. The modern trend in Tamang society is that it is declaring itself as Buddhist, due to the influence of some Buddhism. Consequently Tamba culture of the Tamang society losing its ground to the tradition of Buddhism or Lamaism. Therefore, the some assimilative forces of others culture, accepted in the sake of changing society, is primarily reason of cultural transformation.

6.4: Acculturated and Assimilated festivals of the Tamangs:

The Tamangs has more festivals and rituals of others racial groups than of their own, due to direct and indirect influence out of cohabitation with these communities. The Tamangs dwells in the surroundings of Kathmandu valley in Nepal where Newar culture is predominant and other than Nepal, in India they settled with much other ethic community who follow Hindu culture and encompasses Tamang with their rite and customs.

The revival of Tibetan culture of Tamang is became distinct, but cultural pressure due to long span of cohabitation lead them to assimilates many rituals of this religion and many more culture has been adopted by this tribe because of social proximity with other ethnic groups. The globalization brought tremendous change in culture of many tribal

communities and Tamang is one of them. Here is many festivals and culture of Tamang which has been adopted from other community.

Lhochar: This is one of the important festivals of Tamangs, which they had assimilated from Buddhism. Lho stands for Year, and Char meaning is New, in Tamang language, which means New Year. Lhochar is a new year in Tamang and as well as in Tibetan, which Tamang celebrate as great festival. The historicity of Lhochar is not clear but there is number of myth related with it. This is taken into account that with the advent of Buddhism in Tibet, Lhochar came into practice. This is greatly related with Buddhism, it is supposed to be started by Buddha with twelve animals of the earth. The Lhochar may be celebrated by Tibetan King Srong-sang-gampo, as to commemorate the defeat of Chinese astrologers and brought back of the books of astrology into Tibet. But the reference of Lhochar is not present in early Buddhist religious text.

Lho is the named after the 12 birds and animals. A *Lhokar* is the round of 12 *Lho* (year). Though the 12 circle of *lho* makes the starting of new *Lhokar*. *Jiwa* (mouse) is the beginning of *Lhokar*, and *Fak* (pig) is the end of *Lhokar*.

However, the Lhochar is accepted by Tamang as one their festival, whereas this has in deep relation with Buddhism. This will clearly manifests the acculturation of festivals and rituals of other cultural group on the Tamangs. Other than above mentioned assimilated festivals there are numerous rituals and customs and festivals, which has been celebrated and observed by the Tamangs.

The researcher intends to explore the transition of Tamang from primitive belief system to new religion that is Buddhism. Here attempts also been made to highlight the cultural changes which manifested due to the Industrialization, Sanskritization, migration and many more. But cultural revivalism insists the Tamang also for the preservation of their ancestral primitive culture in this modern mixed cultural canvas. This move of the Tamang created new paradigm of synthesizes culture, where elements of Tamba, Bon, and Buddhism are very much present.

-
- ¹ Radin, Paul “*Primitive Religion Its Nature and Origin*” Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 2010, pp 99-100.
- ² Vidyarthi, L.P., Rai,,Binay Kumar “*The Tribal culture of India*”, Concept Publishing company, New Delhi, 1985, (p. 236)
- ³ Bansal, B.L.: - *Bon its Encounter with Buddhism in Tibet*, Eastern Book Linkers, Delhi, India, 1994 (p. 2)
- ⁴ Banerjee, A.C.: *Aspects of Buddhist Culture from Tibetan Sources*; Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd, Calcutta, 1984. (p.19)
- ⁵ Ibid (p. 20-21)
- ⁶ Vidyarthi, L.P., Rai,,Binay Kumar “*The Tribal culture of India*”, Concept Publishing company, New Delhi, 1985, (p. 269-270)
- ⁷ Singh, Yogendra “*Culture Change in India*”, Rawat Publications, New Delhi, rp 2006. P. 25.
- ⁸ Keesing, Roger M. “*Theories of Culture*” , Annual Review, Anthropology, 1974.3:73-97.
- ⁹ Binford, L.R.,. “*Post-Pleistocene adaptations. In New Perspectives in Arechaelogy*, ed. L.R. Bindford, S.R. Binford, 31-42. Chicago, 1968: Aldine. 373.
- ¹⁰ Keesing, Roger M. “*Theories of Culture*” , Annual Review, Anthropology, 1974.3:73-97 p. 75.
- ¹¹ Ibid (p. 75)
- ¹² Raymond H.C. Teske. Jr. , Bardin H. Nelson “*Acculturation and Assimilation: A Clarification*”, American Ethnologist, Vol. 1, No. 2. (May, 1974), pp. 351-367
- ¹³ Thurnwald, Richard, “*The Psychology of Acculturation*”. American Anthropologist, 1931, 34:557-567.
- ¹⁴ Gillin, John and Raimy, Victor, “*Acculturation and Personality*”. American Sociological Review, 1940. 5:371-375.

¹⁵ Bisht, B.S., “*Tribes of India, Nepal, Tibet Borderland, A Study of Cultural Transformation*”. Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, Reprint 2013.

¹⁶ Vidyarthi, L.P., Rai,,Binay Kumar “*The Tribal culture of India*”, Concept Publishing company, New Delhi, 1985, (p. 450)

¹⁷ Tamang, Parsuram “*Tamang Jati*”, Nepal Rajkiya Pragya Pratisthan, Bikram Samvat 2051, p 15.

¹⁸ Kukuczka, Anne “*Negotiating Ethnic Identity in the Himalaya – The Tamang in Nepal*”, South Asian Chronicle 1/2011, S. 393-437.

¹⁹ Gusfield, Joseph R.. “*Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change*”, American Journal of Sociology, Volume 72, Issue 4 (Jan, 1967), 351-362

²⁰ Fricke, Tom, “*Tamang Conversions: Culture, Politics, and the Christian Conversion Narrative in Nepal*”, 2008, Contribution to Nepalese Studies, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu.

²¹ Ibid

²² Smith, Philip, “*Cultural Theory, An Introduction*”, Blackwell Publishers, 2000, p. 1-21.

²³ Bisht, B.S., “*Tribes of India, Nepal, Tibet Borderland, A Study of Cultural Transformation*”. Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, Reprint 2013, (p 44.)

²⁴ Ibid (p 45-46.)

²⁵ Holmberg, David H., “*Order in Paradox, Myth, Ritual and Exchange Among Nepal’s Tamang*”, Motilal Banarsidass Publication, Delhi, 1996, p.12.

²⁶ Tamang, Rudrasing “*Tamang Sanskar ra Sansnkriti*”, Tamang Society Research and Development Centre, Nepal, 2004, p.10.

²⁷ Singh, Yogendra “*Culture Change in India*”, Rawat Publications, New Delhi, rp. 2006. P. 108.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

The thesis entitled “From Bon to Buddhism, Social and Cultural Changes of the Tamangs” may be taken as a first of its kind in terms of writing a history of social and cultural transformation of the Tamangs. The study has been focussed in seven chapters. Some important issues have been highlighted in all the chapters to present a comprehensive history of the Tamang community. It is a fact that there are debates and controversies as to the origin and history of this community. This dissertation is thus a product of a careful analysis of the available sources which have either been not consulted so far or deserve to be consulted afresh to present an authentic history of the community under consideration. The greater Indian history is full of diverse cultural communities and their manners, belief system along with religious practices. These customs of various ethnic groups have passed through conflicts, period of changes, assimilation and acculturation. The sub-Himalayan region of Indian sub-continent from ancient period is largely populated by many ethnic and linguistic tribal communities including Tamangs, these groups have their own heritage of religious practices, social rites and rituals which make them culturally different from the rest of other tribal groups. But at the same-time the interplay with the other

traditions and cultural trends functioned as catalyst which process led to assimilation and acculturation and transformed the long lineages of cultural and historical values of many ethnic tribal communities. Simultaneously it cannot be ignored that there is continuity of cultural traits, social rites, religious practices and belief system among many of the ethnic people. Tamangs are such a tribe. Even adopting Buddhism, they are not detached from their own cultural roots.

In absence of scripts, much reliance had to be put on oral sources to interpret and reveal the history of Tamang from ancient past in India and Nepal. The chapter highlighted the history of greater India when most of the ethnic and linguistic communities settled in India, including Mongoloids. The relation between Nepal and India in ancient past was not clearly demarcated particularly political. But socially there was no boundary as such; there was evidence of free movement in both the countries by its inhabitants.

The term Tamang was first time unearthed in the inscription of Nepal which was dated back to 13th Century, which was translated by Macdonald as to protect from the Tamang, *srin* fort was constructed. This reveals the existence of Tamang in Nepal and many other researchers make the statement that Tamangs were inhabitant of Nepal from early Christian era. But officially were recognized as 'Tamang' only by decree of 1932 by Government of Nepal.

The relation of India with Tibet in early or middle of 7th Century proves the association of Tibetan people in the country. According to Nihar Ranjan Roy, Tibetan and Chinese had 300 years influence in the

country particularly after 7th Century. This happened only after the association of Nepal and China as the allied states of Tibet through matrimonial alliance. So it cannot be denied that the Tamangs were inhabited India during that 300 year's Chinese infiltration in India. But, they were not known as Tamang at that time.

The Tamang being tribal in nature they were more inclined towards Tibetan Buddhism than the Hindu religion but this do not prove the Tibetan origin of Tamang. This can be said that Tamang were inhabitant of borderland of Tibet, Nepal and India. But Tamang folk tales and oral tradition do not support the Tibetan origin of Tamangs. They usually speak of as independent tribal groups who has similar life style with Tibetan later with the unification of Nepal, they merged into the fold of Nepalese.

Coming to the question of location and demography, it may be said that the Tamangs were historically the predominant around Kathmandu Valley and as far as the Tibetan Plateau in the North and upto the Buri Gandaki River in the west. One can locate Tamang in significant numbers to the terai of Nepal's southern region and to Sikkim and Darjeeling Hills in India. Anthropologically, Tamangs composed of distinct groups which moved across the border from Tibet during the Gorkhali State Formation. In Nepal according to "Tamang Advasi Janajati ko ethnographic Profile" it states that as per the density of population, Tamangs are the 5th (Fifth) largest ethnic group of Nepal and as per 2001 census it constitutes 5.64% of Nepal's total population. Whereas in India

as per All India Tamang Buddhist Association it has a total population of about 15 lakhs.

The dictionary of anthropology explains ethnography as the systematic descriptive study of a particular human society. Regarding their physical characteristics it has been stated that Tamang basically belonged to the Mongoloid stock with the common physical features. According to Suniti Kumar Chatterjee the physical features of Tamang are similar to “Kirata” and ethnographically and linguistically they bear similarity with Newar. J.D. Hooker describes them as pastoral and agricultural people inhabiting the foothills of the Eastern Himalaya. Grierson also mentioned that Himalayan Tibeto-Burmese speech is one of the divisions spoken by Gurung, Murmi (Tamang), Sunuwar, Magar, Newar, Pahari, Lepcha, and Toto and over a million of people both in Nepal and in other parts of India. The Tamang community is divided into twelve Tamang (Tribe) and Eighteen *jats* (Sects) there are still sub-groups already mentioned. But significant characteristics of the Tamang is that in spite of parallel existence of different groups, the Tamangs society is not hierarchically stratified. We find that the life of every man of the Tamang society is bound by performance of some rituals from birth to death. Despite being patriarchal in its social structure it is very liberal towards women and their position in the society is highly esteemed. The brothers are always the care taker of the Tamang women who have and enjoy equal share in the paternal property. Even in case of divorce woman is allowed to claim her right on property given by her brothers, as well as entitle to claim a share in her husband’s property. The ritual ceremonies in fact

reminds us of the ten Sacraments of the Hindus. The marriage system represents the exchange and unity among the families and also a stepping stone for making a nucleus family. The Tamangs have the practice of cross-cousin marriage. According to the Tamang tradition they are in favour of knotting the couples among the clan group whom they know for the marriage. Further, different forms of marriage of the Tamang Society have been highlighted. The marriage ceremony is one of the most important rituals of Tamangs and it connects one groups of Tamang to other groups as well as very long and complex ritual and to conclude the marriage it needs various social institution and community. In this way the whole social rituals are completed from birth till death, and this imbibe the elements of bon culture to Buddhist culture in their rituals and it also distinguishes them from the other cultures of the Indian society.

The primitive society of Tamangs, is now going through the transitional changes in its economy, culture and even in political sphere. They were in the north influenced by Tibetan culture and in south were highly infused by the Hindu culture. The nature of the Tamang society depends on two elements: one is internal elements i.e. *Rhui*, which organised and gives continuity to the society and another is external i.e. Lama, *Tamba*, *Ganba* and *Bonbo*, which is the good conductor, coordinator and controller of the social elements.

Now while talking about the Tamang life style they were directly influenced by the Tibetan culture and practices and even followed the same mode of habitation but later transformed themselves into the

style of local habitation, convenient to the climate and environment but still they make effort to preserve their ethnographic life style and culture according to the changing environment, climate, culture and habitation. Basically Tamang are simple living people and much is dependent on nature, their food habits are generally centred on the field of their own and to some extent wild cereals. Their style of house construction reflects the pastoralist and tribal nature of livelihood, as it is constructed of stone and roofs are made of splitshake, and it is also made of wood and bamboo. Tamangs also give much important to places of worship for propitiating their tribal deity as well as for their Buddhist belief. Here lies the co-existence of Tribal belief system and Buddhist thought among the Tamang people. When coming to their dresses and armaments ethnographic identity of Tamang is reflected. Most of the highland Tamang use to wear primitive form of dress which is called *gado (gya)*. The women folk of the Tamang society have more choice in apparel than the men folk but in this globalized world the dresses of the Tamang have undergone revolutionary changes. As per the ornaments the Tamangs are very fond of. The womenfolk wear many ornaments comparatively than the men folk as is the case of many other tribes of the world. The men folk wear only earring (*kundal*) and bangles where as women wear *chepty sun* (gold plates for ear) *dhungiri* (roll of the gold for ear). *Bhutil* and gold and silver bangles called *singikarmu mugga* and gold ornaments called *gahu* etc. they also wear nose ring made of gold and even *sirphul* on their hair and *sirbandi* on their forehead. They also use necklace made of gold and silver coins. These activities of Tamangs prove their fondness for

ornaments. Regarding their food habits, it is very much influenced by the climate and fertility of the hilly area. They basically cultivate maize, millets, wheat, barley, potato, squash, taro and pepper. Their favourite food among them is the porridge (*dhindo*) like meal of the maize and millets. By nature Tamangs are habituated to take tea, liquor, milk, curd and other liquid food. They also make provision to save vegetable for winter, by dumping the leaf of *raya* or Cole in a pit underground by pressing and after month, opened in sun and dried up as a straw, which is called “*gundruk*” or “*sinkt*”. This is an evidence of their knowledge of preserving vegetable for future and adaptability to the environment. As taking note of their handicraft and paintings, Tamang also are greatly influenced by the religion and culture, which bestow them own style of art and sculpture and among them “*Thanka*” culture is the most creative handicraft and paintings of the Tamangs, whose central theme is the image of *Gururimpoche*, Sakyamuni, Buddha and *Shivakhorlo*, and which has its own distinctiveness. In respect of Tamang folk dances and musical instrument their ethnic identity is reflected in the folk culture and literature which is the integral parts of the community and each considered as an assimilation of Bon, Buddhism and its primitive social customs. The Tamang are jolly by nature and their only medium of entertainment is folk dances and songs at the *mela jatra* where most of the youth dance with their partners and it displays the whole life style of the Tamangs and the importance of folk dance to them. Some of the famous folk dances are *Damphu Naach*, *Chomlu Naach* and *Mhendomaya Naach*. The Tamangs also perform ritualistic dances as they are

adherents Tantrick Buddhism, where the role of the Lama is highly esteemed and important. Some of the dance forms are: (i) *Bakcham Naach* (ii) *Mhanichepa* (iii) *Tormamharsha* (iv) *Jungwa Naach*. When coming to their folk musical instrument the *Damphu* is consider to be the ethnic identity of the Tamang, which is used only by this community, especially during marriages, hair cutting and in other ceremony *damphu* is essential as the symbol of both racial identity and cultural symbolism of the Tamang community. *Tungna* and *Murchunga* are other important musical instrument which played by most Tamangs. Even there are religious instruments which are used during their religious ceremony such as *Dhyangro (daha)*, *Ghanta Bajra* or *Dilbu Dorje*, *Damaru*, *Kangling*, *Shankha (Dhung)*, *Jhyanta (Bubchhal)*, *Ghaling*, *Lafa* and *Ghantimala* which helps during chanting of mantra and has much influence among public.

At the end of this chapter focus has been given to the position of women in Tamang society. Even though Tamang society is closed and isolated it provides ample freedom to the women folk despite being patriarchal in nature the role of women never been neglected and gives high respect to them. The women can participate in political, religious, social gatherings with the permission of her husband and as such there are no social bondages to Tamangins. They are free to dance and crack jokes with other man in presence of her husband. The role and responsibility of women in household work is higher, still social bondage is less. If the women tie knot and follow any type of marriage still then she receives the same status just like the arranged marriage and thus they

are never neglected which is in sharp contrast with Brahmanical social ideology. The brothers are always the care taker of the Tamang women who have and enjoy equal share in the paternal property. Even in case of divorce woman is allowed to claim her right on property given by her brothers, as well as entitled to claim a share in her husband's property. In this way this right reminds of the Hindu concept of *Streedhana* on which women had exclusive control as approved by Jimutavahana. In this way it can be stated that all these socio-cultural and economic ideologies play a significant part in the life of every Tamang and the Tamang society at large and which is very much helpful for the upcoming generation.

The thesis primarily manifests the non material value of the cultural and religious institution existed in Tamang society. The principal cultural institution of Tamang is Tamba. Tamba is a custodian and conveyor of rites and customs as well as customary laws of Tamang ethnic community. The traditions, folktales, folklores are continued by the Tamba. As the Tamang culture exhibit the composite nature of Bon and Buddhism and to bridge the two cultures this institution were developed. In one sentence it can be said that Tamba is synonym of Tamang culture. The Tamba usually an antiquarian of Tamang believes traditions, conventions, folklores and ancestral history. So his sayings are called "*Kairan* or *Kaiten*" which has great value in Tamang society. The fundamental basis of Tamang culture is the 'Tambaised' rites and customs which is the developed form of amalgamated Bon and Buddhist elements. To understand the Tamba culture, Tamba himself is only

resource person to clarify various points of this institution. He played an integral role in the almost all the ritual of Tamang ethnic community. The role of Tamba is reflected in various forms such as historian and ancestral genealogy, conveyor of Tamang culture. Apart from this, Tamba gives continuity to the tradition of Tamang culture through various ways such as acting as mediator as well as by carrying the custom of Tamang like Pong (symbol of argument). Char, (offering the home of deceased by fellow village): beside these Tamba tells the ancestral history as well as Buddhism and social ritual through song or folk song which is called “*Whai*” in which we find variety of information like “*Sangla Whai*” (candling incense song), *Sergemla Whai* (offering to the God), *Damphu Seba Whai* (preparing *Damphu*), *Sachya Namachyala Whai* (description of origin), *Ruichen chyapay la Whai* (origin of clan or *thar*), *Tambala Whai* (description of *Tamba*). The Tamba also a custodian of convention which is called ‘*thim*’ or *Riti* in which we find marriage related ceremony called ‘*Chardam*’ or *Saimundri* and as well as ‘*Rhuishal*’ or purification of *Rhui* or *thar*.

The detailed analysis has been made on the culture of Bon religion as well as influence on Tamang ethnic community. The research highlighted the history of Bon religion in detail its rise and down fall in Tibet specifically and in inner Asia in general. The Bon which was the Primitive native religion of Tibet and later with the advent of Buddhism it lost its importance but not in total and its some principle and elements were adopted in Buddhism. This chapter also further deals about the origin and the development of Bon religion. According to the Bon religious

literature *gShen rab mi bo* was the founder of the Bon religion even though there is uncertainty about his historicity and historical evidence. According to the secret oral tradition and chronology of Bon religion, the 26th successor of *gShen rab* named *gRechen gNangjher Lodpo* and king of *Shang Shung* was the contemporary of *Srong brtsan sgam po*, king of Tibet. This reflect the teaching of Bon religion had become the one of principal cult of Tibet in early seventh century A.D. which also authenticate this as the contemporary belief system of Tibet with Buddhism. It is also assumed that he was the first preacher who reformed the primordial religion and develops it as institutionalized cult of Tibet. *gShen rab* life is based on the three versions of rediscovered text i.e *gTer ma*, and which consist of 21 chapters. Another important set of *gTer ma* was discovered in and about 11th C.A.D. which is known as *gZer myig* and third account of *gShen rab's* life is known as *gZib* are *gZbrjid* which provides extensive information about ancient religion of Tibet and elaborate discussion on custom, rites and story of birds and beasts. The chapter also further highlight upon the second form of Bon religion that is *Khyar Bon* and or Deviant Bon which is the stage of development and acculturation with the foreign religion, but as a whole it can be stated that most of the Bon tradition and literacy works were very much influenced by the doctrine and teaching of Mahayana Buddhism, which was patronised by the kings as state religion of Tibet till the 7th C. but unfortunately frequent ups and down in the religion due to encounter with Buddhism and even inclination of kingship towards the new religion which suffered a stunt below in its development as a matter of fact but

despite all these, inherent belief of Bonpas in their religion makes them able to recognise in later centuries.

This chapter also further discusses upon the transition and the downfall of Bonism and the struggle which existed between Buddhism and Bon religion during the time of persecution and suppression of Bon po. While talking about the Bon religious texts it started with the development Thon-mi Sambhota script in Tibet and translation of Buddhist texts into Tibetan made the Bon Po need of writing their sacred convention *bKa gyur* and the *bsTan gyur* which is based on the rediscovered text or *gter ma*. It also brings the dynamics of Tamang Shaman or *Jhakri* in relation to Bon as Tamang Shaman follows the creed of animism and shamanism and the deity are related with agriculture and pastoralism and most of the propitiations are centred round the well being of family, production and cattle's. According to the Larry Peters states that the Tamang medical system revolves around spirits as they relate to illness and misfortune and it is an animistic religion that postulates numerous categories of spirit beings. Thus in the way the role of Tamang Shaman or Bon Po in the society makes the culture or Bon tradition. It also talks about the various aspects of Bon culture or tradition which deeply rooted in the rite and rituals of Tamangs which gave rise to very peculiar culture. Some of these rituals are (i) *Brangi (Mandala)* where Bon Po offers worship to deities (ii) *Syong Kyongwa (River Worship)* which they worship to product the village during natural calamities like flood. *Bhume puja (hyulsa)* where soil is being worshipped as God. (iv) *Sime bhume puja (worship of rain)* where

supernatural power of rain is worshipped. (v) *Sansare puja*, it is related with the belief of protection of animals, agricultural production from various kinds of viral disease. (vi) *Aitabare puja* or *Shikari puja* (worship of hunter God). (vii) *Bhimsen puja (Chore)* which is followed by the sacrifice of cock and goat. (viii) *Goth puja* (worship of cowshed). (ix) *Chan* (shikari devta) and *Lhee Jyambu* (snake God and Goddess) puja. (x) *Pitri-Devta (Khepasung)* or Ancestor worship. (xi) *Chansung* tradition (symbolization of cock as *Kuldevta*) in this way the Bon influenced culture and rituals of Tamang are more centred in material benefits from the immaterial form of belief.

Thus, the whole chapter brings about the uniqueness of the Tamang culture and religion which acts as the principal elements of non-material of human civilization as well as synthesis of Bon and Buddhism that exhibits the non-depart of Tamang from primitive religion to new but it shows the collaboration of two religion.

This part of the thesis reflects upon what type of transformation did take place in Religion. As per the study it is taken that the Tamangs religion had undergone religious transformation from the inception of Buddhism in Tibet or particularly with the foundation of lama Buddhism or Lamaism by *Guru Padmasamvawa*. Tamangs religion is essentially comprised of two distinct yet co-existing system Buddhism and Bonism (Shamanism). However these are traditionally recognised dimensions as Hinduism had also deep rootedly influenced the Tamangs. The characteristics of the rituals and practices of Tamangs which is very much animistic, but still affiliation with this is obscure. The Tamangs too

have great faith as well as profound respect for Shaman, who is identify as religious specialist of the community like of other tribal religion. Among the tribal, magic is actually an integral part of their religion and magical practices may be included as method of propitiation. The Animism, Bongaism, Naturalism, Toemism, Taboo, Magic, Polytheism and Ancestor worship are the nature of belief in supernatural power which makes different from the main stream religion like Hindu and Buddhism. Therefore the Tamangs idea of religion contains a number of elements which combine to produce a representation of tribal cult of belief system inspite being adherents of Nyingmapa sect of Lamaism or Lamaist Buddhism. The ecology too determines the shape and form of the tribal culture, but their religious activities and belief leads to an environment of supernatural beliefs and rituals that modifies and influences the tribal culture. Thus it is observe that the Tamags have blended their beliefs and rituals with Buddhism predominantly Lamaist Buddhism.

It also talks about how modern forces have being actively moulding the culture of tribal communities, which the tribals have faced and are facing changes despite all these changes the tribes have retained the principal elements of their way of life. The acceptance of new product, a religion, customs, and a new mode of decision-making does not necessarily lead to the disappearance of the older ones. Whereas, in the prospects of the modern factors it was Urbanization and Industrialization which brought about a drastic change in culture of tribal people. As this process brought these people outside of their ecological, social and economic domain which adapt them into the new world of urbanization

and era of industrialization mostly affects the Tamangs who dwelled in the surrounding of the valley and supplied largest number of the labour to the industry, and especially during the colonial India majority of the Tamangs had to settle in tea plantation areas, around the areas of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts of West Bengal and Assam. Therefore such displacement from the ancestral land and non-attachment with mother culture groups brings in transformation in their livelihood as well as cultural processes. Thus, culture is regarded adaptive system whose forms are not under direct genetic control but serves to adjust individual in group within their ecological communities. Assimilation and Acculturation are also regarded as dynamic forces in which persons and groups acquire memories, sentiments and attitudes of other persons or groups and by sharing their experience and history are incorporated with them in a common cultural life and adapt to new conditions of life. Naturally, the culture transformation took place by changing the forms of the original culture pattern of a given social group due to the culture contact with another culture groups.

It is focuses upon from what to what, how and why culture transformation took place and if it happened what were its consequences. The thesis indicates to the dynamic nature of culture that eventually changes or modifies its own nature by itself with the change time and place. Therefore, culture is that complex whole & which includes knowledge, belief, art, laws, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits required by man as a member of society. Culture is universal in man's experience yet each local or regional manifestation of it is unique

and culture is stable, yet is also dynamic which manifests continuous and constant changes and it also fill and largely determines the course of our lives, yet rarely intrudes into conscious thought. In the same way the study of society and culture of Tamang people, reflect some changes as Tamang culture is an insular “Tribal” in nature but in the process of social development it is indeed exposed to the greater society and transformation and thus changes occurred. Regarding the Tamang culture the study of the cultural evolution of Tamang is required and the study of their ancestral homeland is very necessary. The Pastoralist life style and adherents of Bon religion of Tibet came to Nepal, due to this new culture for long period Tamang remain insular or isolated from other culture groups. One of the tribe of Tibetan plateau came to Nepal and known as Tamang. This group develops the Tamang culture with ecology and hospitable environment of Nepal. Because of this Bon rite and culture, Tamang use to propitiate ancestral spirit. However, during the process of progress it witnessed many difficulties in the process of their cultural development. The increasing influence of Buddhism in Tibet and the rise of *Nyigma -pa* sects with the development of *Sambhota Lipi* (Tibetan script) directly influence the Tamang in their cultural outlook this makes a slow but steady impact on Tamang culture and with passing of time the culture transformation became visible. The process of adaption with the local socio-culture and ecological setting needs changes in their behavioural culture which Tamang had assumed to the demographical closed and continuous culture into their fold, which had never been of theirs. Therefore to give continuity to their culture in realm of paradox of

two or three religions, a new social institution developed, thus the adjustment between Bon religion and Buddhism brought by the Tamba culture, which became conveyor of rites and customs as per demography and local settings. This institution indeed acts as bridge between Bon and Buddhism and provides equal importance in Tamang society, which gives a unique ethnographic identity to Tamang culture and became one of the most important pillars of Tamang culture. Even the process of migration has brought a lot of changes in the culture of Tamang, such impact of migration reflects in their Apparel, Food habits and rites and rituals due to the co-habitation with various cultural groups of different zones. According to the sociologist, due to the migration, people distancing from cultural centre the grip of the culture also decreased. By observing the cultural diffusion of Tamang, it is found that Eastern Tamang of Nepal has horizontal diffusion, whereas, Western has vertical diffusion. The urbanization and modernization also helped in bringing about transformation in the culture of Tamang. As with the process of modernization Tamang society has accepted same innovation in culture for example education played a vital role in this phase. Whereas, the impact of modernization and globalization compelled the most of the tribes to transform their ethnographic culture and has greatly influenced the cultural groups in its taste, behaviours, life style and even more in languages. According to M.N Srinivas states that the process of Sanskritization which had influenced almost all the ethnic group of Nepal, but it has least undeviating pursued to the Tamangs., and the extent of its impact is seen on the Tamangs which has been reflected in there

ritual, custom and languages. The Tamang society is a closed where no system of high and low castes, but due to the influence of Sanskritization sense of pure and impure Tamang developed, which thus lead to the formation of hierarchied society.

Thus in this way various transformations took place in Tamang Religion and Culture due to the assimilation and acculturation with other cultural community and therefore it is appropriate to say Bon to Buddhism.

Bibliography

Primary Sources:

- *Arya –Manjusri-Mulakalpa* (Tibetan text): Ed. By Ganapati Sastri, TSS, 1925
- *Atharvaveda Samhita*; Eng. translation by W.D. Whitney, HOS. (ed by C.R. Lanman), Cambridge, 1905, 2nd Indian reprint, Delhi, 1971
- Atkinson, Edwin T.: *Himalayan Gazetteer*, II Vol- I, India, Cosmo Publication, 1973
- *Census of India 1891*, Vol-V: Lower Provinces of Bengal and their Feudatories, The Caste Tables; C.J.O Donnell, Superintendent of Census Operation in Bengal, Bengal Secretariat Press, 1893.
- *Census of India*, 1911, Vol-V (Part-I): Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Sikkim, Report; L.S.S.O' Malley of the Indian Civil Services Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society, Superintendent of Census operation in Bengal, Calcutta, Bengal Secretariat Book Dept. Calcutta, 1993
- *Census of West Bengal*, 1951, (Land and Land Revenue Dept.): The Tribes and Caste of West Bengal; A.Mitra, Indian Civil Service Superintendent of Census operation and Joint Development Commissioner, West Bengal, 1953
- Ghosh, S.N. (Director of Census Operation, West Bengal): *Census of India 1981, District Census Handbook, Jalpaiguri District, Series – 23 West Bengal*, Calcutta, 1987

- Grierson, G. A. - *Linguistic Survey of India* 3- (1), 1909
- His Majesty's Government of Nepal. 1966. *Shri panch surendra vikram shahadevaka shasan kalma baneko muluki ain* (The law of the land of the reign of His Majesty Surendra Vikram Shajh Deva). Kathmandaun: *Shri panch ko Sarkar Kanun Tatha Nyay Mantralaya*.
- O'Malley, L.S.S - *Darjeeling District Gazetteer*; Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 1907
- *Population Census of Nepal*, 1971, Kathmandu, Central Bureau of Statistics. 1975
- *Population Census-1981*, Volume-I, Part-III: Social Characteristics Tables. Kathmandu, Central Bureau of Statistics, 1984
- *Sathapatha Brahmana of the Sukla or White Yajurveda in the Madhyandina recension*, (Complete Vol.) Ed. By Pt. A. Chinnaswami Sastri, Pt. P.Sastri and Pt. R.N.Daksita, 2nd edn, Varanasi, 1984
- *The Mahabharata*: Translation by P.C. Roy Calcutta, 1884-96
- *Valmiki-Ramayana*: Ed.by D.R. Mankad Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1965
- *West Bengal District Gazetteers, Jalpaiguri*, by- Abani Mohan Kusari, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, Bimal Ranjan Chakraborty, Barun De, Kiran Sanker Sengupta, Pranabanjan Ray, Sankrarananda Mukerji, Satyaranjan Sengupta, Government of West Bengal, July, 1981
- *The Gazetteer of Sikkim*, Introduced by H.H.Risley, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 2001

Unpublished Monographs:

- *Jigten Tamchai*
- *Jigten Tamghi Lhogui Chyag Rapdang Chepa Syugso Gyeso.*
- *Jigten Tensyang Dang! Kugpa Khatchoi Duichi Thigpa Syugso.*
- *Kugpa Khatchoi Mrasing Par Chese Jyawa Shukso Gye Yo*

Magazines, Papers (English)

- Bapat, P.V.: “*Twenty Five Hundred Years of Buddhism*”, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting , New Delhi, India, 1997
- Furer - Hemendrof, C. Bon : *Ethnographic Notes on the Tamangs of Nepal*, Eastern Anthropologist, Bholam 9 , Aug/ March. 1956
- Harischandra, Lal Singh (1997/ 1998) : “*The Origin of Tamang*”, The Himalayan Voice No.17, Bholam 5, Kathmandu
- Norbhu, S. : “*Migration of the Tamang Tribe from Tibet*” Tibet Journal 6(1), Dharmsala, India

Magazines, Papers (Nepali):

- *Buletine*, Tamang Bhasa Sanskriti Vikas Samiti, Kathmandu 2040 (Vikram Samvat)
- *Char-Mhendo: Part-II Nepal Tamang Ghedung*, Kathmandu , 2048 (Vikram Samvat)
- *Fulbari*: Kathmandu, 2041(Vikram Samvat)

- *Fyafula*: Akhil Bharatiya Tamang Boudha Sangha, Darjeeling, 1982
- *Rimthim*, Tamang Bhasa Sanskriti Vikas Samiti, Kathmandu, 2041 (Vikram Samvat)
- *Shyo-Mhendo*,: Part-12, Shyo-Mhendo Yetma, Kathmandu, 2047 (Vikram Sambat)

Published Monographs

- Blon, Dil Bahadur: *Tamang Whai*, Kathmandu, 2044(Vikram Sambat)
- Bomzan, Harka Vir & Pakrin, Harka Bahadur: *Tamang Song*, Kathmandu, 1963
- Hofer, Andras: “*Tamang Riruals*” *Text-I Preliminary Study in the Folk religion of an Ethnic Minority in Nepal*, Kathmandu
- Lama, G. D.: *Tamang Chungnila Thimten Tamchai*, Darjeeling, 2040(Vikram Sambat)
- Lama, Santabir: *Tamba Kaiten Whai Rimthim*, Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Kathmandu, 2040 (Vikram Sambat).
- *Mechi Dekhi Mahakali Samma*, Vol-2, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Nepal
- Moktan, Dup Wagel: *Prangwola Lhai Charthim*, Kathmandu, 1992
- Nath, Promod: *Tamang* (Bangla), Lokasanskriti O Adivasi Sanskriti Kendra, Tathya O Sanskriti Bhivag, West Bengal Government, 2011.

Journals and Periodicals:

- *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 13, No. 4. (Oct. 1998) pp. 522-533
- *American Journal of Sociology*, Volume 72, Issue 4 (Jan. 1967), 351-362
- *Bulletin of Tibetology*, Vol-III No.2: Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, Sikkim, 1966
- *Eastern Anthropologist*, Vol-9, No. 3 Part-4, 1955-56
- *Economic & Political weekly*, Vol. 4. No. 24 9 (Jun. 12-18, 1999), pp.1519-124
- *Essays on the Ethnology of Nepal and South Asia*, Vol-2, Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Kathmandu, 1987
- *Human Ecology*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Dec. 1994) pp. 467-494
- *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol-1, No.1, Calcutta, 1832
- *Kailash*, Vol-11, No.1-2, Journal of Himalayan Studies, Kathmandu, 1984
- *Kailash*, Vol-3, No.2, Journal of Himalayan Studies, Kathmandu, 1978
- *Regmi Research Series*, Year-7, 1975

Secondary Sources:

Books in English

- Antelar, C. : *Tamang Settlement and Subsistence Economy*, Contribution to Neplease Studies , CNAS, Kathmandu, 1984

- Atal, Yogesh,: *Changing Indian Society*, Rewat Publications, Jaipur, 2006
- Banerjee, A.C.: *Aspects of Buddhist Culture from Tibetan Sources*; Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd, Calcutta, 1984.
- Bansal, B.L.: - *Bon its Encounter with Buddhism in Tibet*, Eastern Book Linkers, Delhi, India, 1994
- Barfield, Thomas (Ed), *The Dictionary of Anthropology*, London: Blackwell, 2001
- Beal, S.: *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*, Low Price Publication, Delhi, 2001
- Behera, M. C. : *Tribal Religion, Change and Continuity*, Commonwealth Publishers, New Delhi, 2000
- Bell, Sir Charles: "*The Religion of Tibet*" Oxford University Press, 1970
- Bhadra, R.K. & Bhadra, Mita : *Ethnicity, Movement and Social Structure, Contested Cultural Identity*, Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 2007
- Bhattacharyya, Benoytosh,: *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, Firma KLM Private Limited, Calcutta, 1987
- Bisht, B.S., "*Tribes of India, Nepal, Tibet Borderland, A Study of Cultural Transformation*". Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, Reprint 2013
- Bista, D. B.: *Peoples of Nepal*, Ministry of Information and Brodcasting, Kathmandu, 1967
- Bomjan, M. S. *A Long Struggle of Tamangs for Tribal Status*, All India Tamang Buddhist Association, Darjeeling, 2009.
- Chatterjee, R.: *Religion in Bengal*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1985
- Chatterjee, S. K.: *Kirata-Jana-Kriti*, The Asiatic Society, Kolkata, 2007
- Chatterji, Suniti Kumar (Reprint 2007), *Kirata-Jana-Kriti, The Indo-Mongoloids*, Their Contribution to the history and culture of India, The Asiatic Society, 1 Park Street, Kolkata 700016
- Chattopadhyay, A.: *Atisa and Tibet*, Published by Alaka Chattopadhaya, Calcutta, 1967
- Chopel, G.: "*The White Annals*" Dharmsala, India, 1977

- Clarke, G.: *Lama and Tamang in Yolmo*, in Micheal Aris and Aang Isyuki, Tibetan Studies in Honour of Richardson, Warminster, 1980
- Das, R. K.: *Tribalism and Beyond*; Punthi Pustak, Kolkatta, 2004
- Das, S. C.: *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow*; Firma KLM Mudhopadhaya, Calcutta, 1965.
- Debnath, Dr. Debasis : *Ecology and Rituals in Tribal Areas*, Sarup & Sons, New Delhi, 2003
- Debnath, Sailen: *The Dooars in Historical Transition*, N.L. Publishers, Shivmandir, West Bengal, 2010
- Fricke, Thomas E. *Himalayan Household: Tamang Demography and Domestic Process*, Book Faith India, Delhi, 1993.
- Gautam, Rajesh Dr. Magar-Thapa, Asoke K.: *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal*, Vol-II, Book Faith India, Delhi, 1994,
- Geertz, Clifford *The Interpretation of Cultures*, first published as a collection in 1973.
- Gordon, K. Antoinette: *The Iconography of Tibetan Lamaism*; Tokyo, Rutland, 1959
- Grierson, G. A.: *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol-3, 1909
- Guha R.C. (Ed) : *Social Ecology*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1998
- Gupta, Ranajit Das : *Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal: Jalpaiguri 1869-1947*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992
- Hall, Gary and Birchall, Clare (Ed) : *New Cultural Studies, Adventures in Theory*, Orient BlackSwan Private Limited, Hyderabad, 2009
- Hasrat, B. J.: *History of Nepal*, V.V. Research Institute Press, 1970
- Hofer, A.: “*Tamang Rituals*” text-1 Preliminary study in the folk religion of in ethnic minority in Nepal, Kathmandu, 1989.
- Holmberg David H.: *Order in Paradox, Myth, Ritual, and Exchange Among Nepal’s Tamang*, Motilal Banarsidas Publishers (p) Ltd. Delhi, (Reprint 2005),
- Jaschke, H. A.: *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*; London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1881.

- Karkpatrik, W.: “*An account of Kingdom of Nepal*”, Manjushree Publishing House, New Delhi, 1998.
- Karmay, S. G. (ed) : *The Treasury of Good Sayings, A Tibetan History of Bon*, Motilal Banarsidass, 2001
- Kumar Manoj: *Neolithic And Tribal Cultures of Himalayan Region, An Ethno-Archaeological Approach*, B.R. Publishing Corporation New Delhi , 2010,
- Macdonald, W. Alexzendar: “*Creative Dismemberment among the Tamang and Sherpas of Nepal*” Essays on the ethnology of Nepal and South Asia, Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Kathmandu 1987.
- Majumdar, Dharendra Narayan,: *Cultural Change in two Garo Village*, Anthropological Survey of India, Government of India, Calcutta,1978
- Majumdar, R. C. (ed): *The History of Bengal, Vol-I (Hindu Period)*, The University of Dacca, 1963
- Mujumdar, R.C. (Edited): *The Age of Imperial Unity*, The History and Culture of the Indian People Volume II, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 2001
- Mujumdar, R.C. (Edited): *The Classical Age*, The History and Culture of the Indian People Volume II, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 1997
- Maria, H.: *A Guide to Tamang*, S.I.L, Tribhuwan University, Kathmandu, 1970
- Miyarlo, M. A.Van: *Tamang Art: A Parallel Style in the Tantrik Buddhist Art of Nepal*, Kailash-11 (1-2), Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Kathmandu, 1984
- Norbeck, E.: *Religion in Primitive Society*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York and Evanson,1961
- Pande, G. C.: *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*, MotilalBanrsidas, Delhi,1983
- Peters, Larry.: *Tamang Shaman*, Nirala Publication, New Delhi,1998
- Pradhan, Kumar. : *Pahilo Pahar*, Shyam Prakasan, Darjeeling 1982

- Pramanik, S.K. : *Sociology of G.S. Ghurye*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 2001
- Radin, Paul “*Primitive Religion Its Nature and Origin*” Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 2010
- Ray, N. R.: *History of Bengali People (Ancient Period)*, Orient Longman, Calcutta, 1994
- Regmi, D. R.: *Ancient Nepal*, 3rd edn Calcutta, 1967
- Regmi, D. R.: *Inscriptions of Ancient Nepal*, 3 Vols. Delhi, 1983
- Riskey, H. H.: *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Vol-I & II P.Mukherjee, Calcutta, 1891.
- Roerich, G.: *Tibetan Paintings*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 1997
- Sanyal, C. C.: *The Meches & The Totos, Two Sub-Himalayan Tribes of North Bengal*, The University of North Bengal, 1973
- Sharma, Ram Sharan: *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India*, Motilal Banarshidas, 4th revised edition, Delhi, 1996.
- Singer, Milton and Cohn, Bernard S.: *Structure and Change in Indian Society*, Aldine Transaction, New Brunswick (U.S. A.), 2007
- Singh, G.P.: *Kiratas in Ancient India*, Gian Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990
- Singh, Yogendra : *Culture Change in India*, Rawat Publications, New Delhi, rp 2006.
- Smith, Philip, : “*Cultural Theory, An Introduction*”, Blackwell Publishers, 2000,
- Snelgrove, D.: *Buddhist Himalaya*, Himalayan Book Sellers, Kathmandu, 1995
- Somayaji, Sakarama and Somayaji, Ganesha (Ed): *Sociology of Globalisation, perspectives from India*, Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 2006
- Subba, J.R. :*History, Culture and Customs of Sikkim*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, reprint, 2011

- Tamang, P. R.: *Migration of Tamang Tribe from Tibet*, Journal 6 (1) Dharmasala.
- Vidyarthi, L.P., Rai, Binay Kumar :“*The Tribal culture of India*”, Concept Publishing company, New Delhi, 1985
- Vintage, W.Y. Evans: “*The Tibetan Book of Dead*”, Oxford University Press, Newyork, 1960
- Waddell, L. Austine : *Buddhism & Lamaism of Tibet*, Heritage Publishers, New Delhi 1997
- Wangyel, S. B.: *Footprints in the Himalaya*, Published by Sonam B. Wangyel, 2006

Books in Nepali

- Bhikhu, Amritanand:- “*Buddha Sasanko Itihas*”, Dharmakriti Boudh Adhyayan Gosthi, Kathmandu, 2032 (Vikram Samvata)
- Kalden, H.K.: *Tamang Sabdakosh (Chikdep)*, Gama Prakashan, 2011
- Lama, Khempo Dyang Woser,: *Himali Kshetrako Nepali Boudha Parampara*, Nepal r Asiali Anusandhan Kendra, Tribhuwan Vishwavidyala, Kathmandu, B. S. 2063
- *Tamang Char parva r Puja haru*”, Tamang Samaj Anusandhan tatha Vikas Kendra, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2056 (Vikram Samvata)
- Tamang, Ajitman:- “*Tamang Jatiko Moukhik Itihaska Abaseshharu*”, Nepal Tamang Ghedung , Kathmandu, Nepal, 2059(Vikram Samvata).
- Tamang, Parsuram. : “ *Tamang Healing in Himalaya*”, Milijuli Nepal,Kathmandu, 2001.
- Tamang, Parsuram. : “*Tamang Sanskar*” Nepal Gedung, Kathmandu,2055 (Vikram Samvata)
- Tamang, Parsuram. : “*Tamba Kaiten*” Durga Bahadur Smriti Pratisthan, Kathmandu, 2057 (Vikram Samvata)
- Tamang, Parsuram:- “*Tamang Jati R Lhochar Parampara*”, Nepal Ghedung, Kathmandu, 2054 (Vikram Samvata)

- Tamang, Parsuram:- “*Tamang Jati*”, Nepal Rajkiya Pragya Pratisthan, Kathmandu, 2051 (Vikram Samvata)
- Tamang, Pratap Bal:- “*Tamang Thar Ko Khoj Charcha*”, Tamang Bhasa tatha Sahitya Parisad, Kathmandu, 2050 (Vikram Samvata)
- Tamang, Pratap Bal: *Dorjelingla Tambadugula Kaiten*, Tamang Bhasa tatha Sahitya Parishad, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2005
- Tamang, Pratap Bal: *Dorjelingla Tambadugula Kaiten-2*, Tamang Bhasa tatha Sahitya Parishad, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2005
- Tamang, Rabindra & Tamang, Soni: *Tamang Lok Kathaharu*, Rudra Singh Tamang , Nuwakot 2060 (Vikram Samvat)
- Tamang, Rabindra. : “*Timal Yatra*”, Lasso Yetma Yambu, Kathmandu, 2055,(Vikram Samvata)
- Tamang, Rabindra:- “*Tamang Rimthim*”, Prativa Samuha, Kathmandu, 2054 (Vikram Samvata)
- Tschring, Pasang: “*Padmasamvaw*”, Himalayan Buddhist Foundation, Darjeeling, 2000

Photographs



Figure: 1. *Bombo* with *Kangling* in mouth and *damroo* in left hand wearing garland of beads, (photo collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini by researcher)

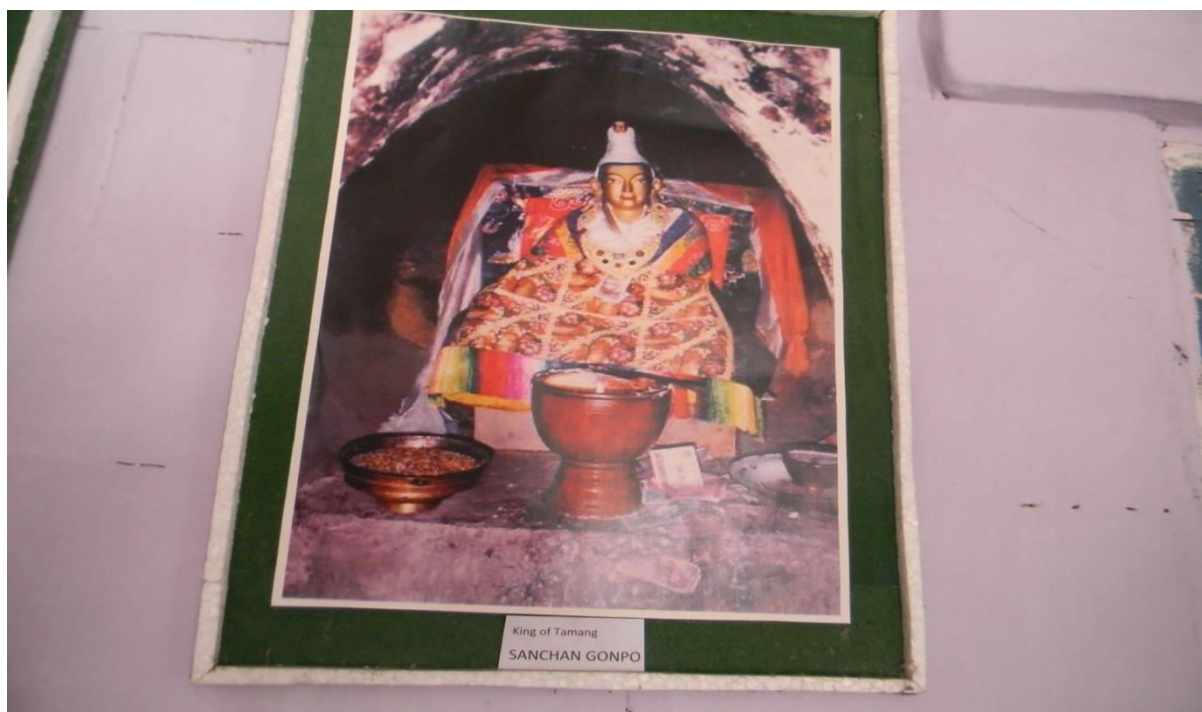


Figure: 2. *Srong-Shan-Gampo*, first Buddhist king of Tibet (photo collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini by researcher)



Figure: 3. Tamang and Tamangni with Damphu (photo collected by researcher from Kathmandu)



Figure: 4. Tamang Men's Upper Garment (Photo collected by researcher from *Lochhar* Ceremony & Exhibition at Gangutia Tea Estate)



Figure: 5. Unmarried Tamangnis Dress (Photo collected by researcher from *Lochhar* Ceremony & Exhibition at Gangutia Tea Estate)



Figure: 6. Married women's Dress (Photo collected by researcher from *Lochhar* Ceremony & Exhibition at Gangutia Tea Estate)



Figure: 7. *Sankha* or Conch-shell (photo taken from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini by researcher)



Figure: 8. Ringa used by Lama (Priest) (photo collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini by researcher)



Figure: 9. Ringa used by Lama (Priest) (photo collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini by researcher)



Figure: 10. Tamang House (surveyed by researcher in Nepal)



Figure: 11. Copper Glass (photo collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini by researcher)



Figure: 12. Bowl (collected by researcher from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 13. Tamang's traditional weight cup (A cup equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ kg approximately) collected by researcher from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini



Figure: 14. Tamang's Store bowl (*Tasala*) (Photo collected by researcher *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 15. *Gagro* or water pot (Photo collected by researcher *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 16. *Lota* or *Kalash* for giving water (Photo collected by researcher *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 17. Small pot used for kitchen utensils (Photo collected by researcher from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 18. Mascot for Religious Dance (photo collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini by researcher)



Figure: 19. Mascot for Religious Dance (photo collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini by researcher)



Figure: 20. Mascot for Religious Dance (*Bakcham*) (photo collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini by researcher)

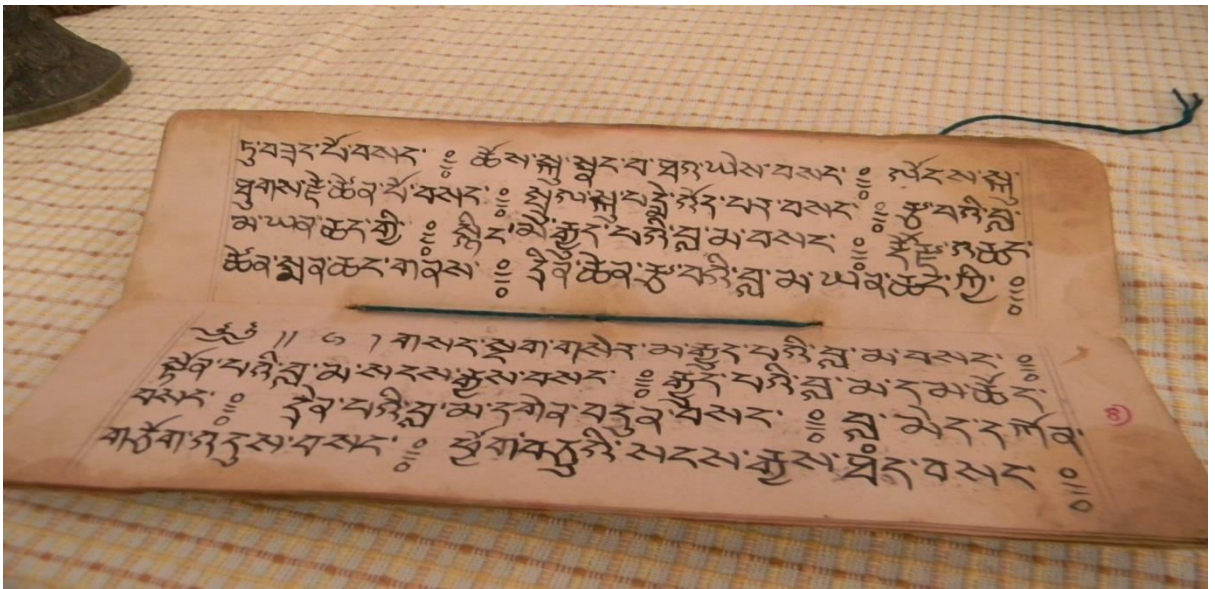


Figure: 21. *Choi* or Sacred Book (Collected by researcher from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 22. *Choi* or Sacred Book (Collected by researcher from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 23. *Ghyabok* or *Jhyamta* (photo collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini by researcher)



Figure: 24. *Ghyabok* or *Jhyamta* (photo collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini by researcher)



Figure: 25. *Khorlo* or *Dharmachakra* (photo collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini by researcher)



Figure: 26. *Dorje* or *Bajra* (photo collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya* by researcher)



Figure: 27. *Dilbu* or *Bell* (collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, *Kalchini* by researcher)



Figure: 28. Religiously important musical instruments, *Gyaling*, *Mascot*, *Sanai*, and *Dhyangro* (Drum of leather) collected by researcher from *Lochhar* Exhibition at *Gangutia Tea Estate*)



Figure: 29. *Kangling* , musical instrument of Shaman as well as Lama (Priest) (collected from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, *Kalchini* by researcher)



Figure: 30. Garland of beads of Tamang Shaman (collected by the researcher from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 31. Sacred stone of *Bonbo* (collected by the researcher from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 32. Tamang Locket with medallion (collected by the researcher from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 33. Tamang Necklace (collected by the researcher from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 34. Murchunga made of iron (collected by the researcher from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 35. Tamang Damphu (collected by the researcher from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 36. Madal (surveyed by researcher from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 37. Tamang Utensils and weight machine (*Thala, Lota, Tasala, Chakni, Sherpalla, Lochhar* Ceremony & Exhibition at Gangutia Tea Estate)

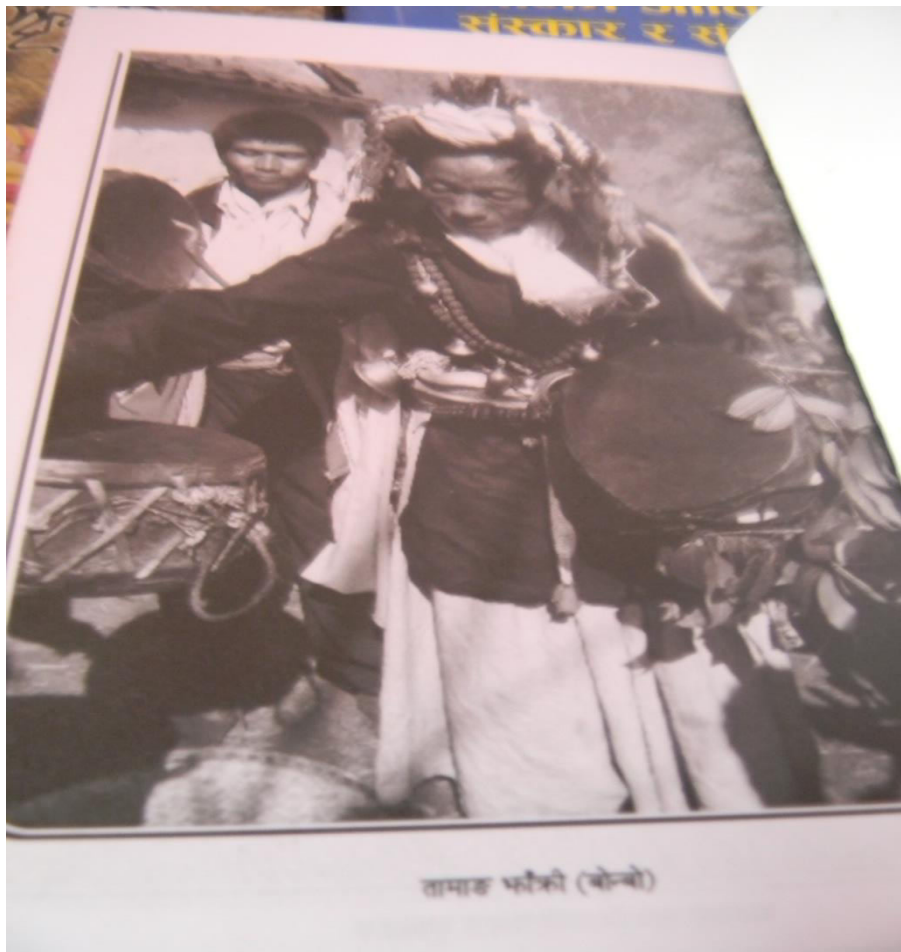


Figure: 38. Tamang Shaman (collected by the researcher from *Duars Sangrahalaya*, Kalchini)



Figure: 39. Tamang Ganba and Tamba Meet 2011, at Kalchini, Organized by Cultural and Educational Society of Tamang. (Surveyed by researcher)



Figure: 40. Clan head performing puja at *Stan* (surveyed by researcher at Gangutia Tea Estate)



Figure: 41. Clan group giving sacrifice of blood of cock to their *Kuldevta* (surveyed by researcher at Gangutia Tea Estate)



Figure: 42. A Tamang performing ancestral worship (*Khepasang*) (surveyed by researcher at Dawa Lama's (Moktan) House at Gangutia Tea Estate)



Figure: 43. A Tamang with Plough, Yoke and *Halludo* (a rope for connecting the plough with yoke) (surveyed by researcher at *Lochhar* Ceremony & Exhibition, Gangutia Tea Estate)



Figure: 44. Lama performing Thapsai Thui or Nawaran or name giving ceremony (surveyed by researcher in Siliguri at a Tamang House)