# TRANSLATING CHILDREN'S STORIES: TRANSLATION OF THIRTY-ONE ASSAMESE STORIES BY LAKSHMINATH BEZBARUA INTO ENGLISH 

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## CERTIFICATE

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## Introduction

Lakshminath Bezbarua was the pioneer of the literary movement that began in the late 19th century. This movement took place because of two reasons. One was that the Assamese had become aware of their own cultural heritage and secondly there was a growing resistance to the imposition of the Bengali in Assam by the British who were under the impression that Assamese was merely a variant of Bengali. Such being the state of affairs, Lakshminath and his contemporaries were all educated in the Bengali medium. It was towards the end of the 19th century when a group of Assamese students in Calcutta decided to launch an Assamese magazine called 'Jonaki' with Lakshminath Bezbarua, as its editor that things began to change a little. Thus, "A new modern age in Assamese literature was heralded in 1889, with the famous literary magazine, 'Jonaki'. Through it, there entered into Assamese life and literature new ideas about the life and world and also new literary forms and modes such as the lyrical poem, the short story, the novel, the epic episode and many others. The first few Assamese short stories were published in the pages of this magazine. Their writer was Lakshminath Bezbarua, the father of the modern short story in Assamese. Humour and satire were his forte. Satire aims at social reforms and the desire for social reforms was in Bezbarua's blood, as it were, born as he was at a time when one age was passing, and a new one was taking shape. He used his satire to expose sham, and the followers of certain social customs and practices. He held up to ridicule superstition, foppery, blind imitation of the west and other evils that permeated the society of his times. With the superb ease of a master he created in his stories humourous situations in which the shows his characters fumbling and faltering, creating laughter at their expense. He has rightly been called the "Rasa Raja," king of humourists. Bezbarua had
intimate knowledge of the typical characters of the middle class and the rural folk. Through them he wished to depict the dignity and levity, vices and virtues, joys and sorrow, hopes and fears of their lives. The execution in his stories may not always be perfect, but they portray contemporary life and society in a realistic and colourful style. This has invested his stories with lasting interest."
(From the introduction by the author in Assamese short stories, an anthology, edited by Nirmal Prabha Bordoli, 1982 : Authors Guild of India Cooperative Society, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi)

During this period, when Lakshminath and his contempories were reviving Assamese literature, there was a paralleled literary movement on the national scene. This was the nationalist period. Indian scholars during this period became aware of their own roots (be it from the writings of the very people from whom they wanted to seek freedom). and wanted to be free both politically and culturally. India was suddenly awaking from centuries of slumber and had to find her own roots and identity. Folklore was to a great extent instrumental in stimulating the spirit of nationalism. Scholars for the first time valued their oral traditions and began studying and collecting them. Nationalism in India had to be made manifest in the national languages, national epics, food, dress, ancient thought, wisdom, value system, folklore and literature. Bezbarua's "Buriair's Hadhu", a collection of folk tales for children, published in 1912, can be seen in this light. In the prologue of this book he had addressed his young readers on the need to inculcate the right values and habits as a child. This book, he said, is a small contribution to eradicate the growing indiscipline that is seen among students.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, folklore has been the collective name applied to the traditional verbal materials and social rituals. "It is the lore of cultures having no written language and is by definition, transmitted by word of mouth. It consists as does written literature, of both prose and verse narratives, poems and songs, myths, dramas rituals, proverbs, riddles and the like. The most obvious characteristic of folk literature is the fact that it is oral. It normally stands in direct contrast with written literature. The latter exists in manuscripts and books and may be preserved exactly as the author or authors have left it centuries or even millennia ago. With oral literature this is not possible. It is concerned only with a speaking and singing and with a listening, thus depending upon the existence of a living creature to carry on a tradition. If any item of folk literature ceases to exist in the memory of man it is completely lost.

The whole material is fluid and refuses to be stabilised in a definite form. The teller is likely to see places where he can make improvements, and he may well begin a new tradition that will live as long as it appeal to other letters.

Of special importance is the relation of all kinds of folk literature to mythology. This is especially true of the highly developed mythologies of India and the Greek, Irish and Germanic pantheons. All are a result of an indefinitely long past of growth and outside influences, of religions cult and practices and of glorification of heroes.

In many preliterate cultures, folktales are hardly to be distinguished from myths since especially in tales of tricksters and heroes, they presuppose a background of belief about tribal origin and the relation of man and god. Animals abound here whether in their natural form or anthropomorphized so that they seem sometimes men and sometimes beasts. Adventure stories, exaggerations, marvels of all kinds such as other
world journeys and narratives of marriage or sexual adventure, usually between human beings and animals, are common.

A major division of this classification of tales deals with jests and anecdotes. Examples are the many stories of numskulls, of clever rascals, and tall tales filled with aggregations or lies. Finally comes formula tales like "The house that Jack built". (From Britannica Encyclopedia, Folk Arts: pages 313-316.)

## Choice of this book: Why select children's stories.

That this book has been my favourite as a child is beyond doubt. These were the stories I had heard and reheard as a child and have told and re-told them to the many young cousins and now, the nieces and nephews that I have. These were the stories that had first filled my dream world and imagination before. I could read the fairy tales and the Enid Blytons independently. When I was looking for a book to translate during M. Phil, this was but a natural choice.
'Buri air Hadhu' is a set of folk tales which Lakshminath Bezharua has laboriously collected from various people. In the preface he has mentioned that being folk tales he had heard different versions of these stories, out of which he selected and then re-wrote them all in his own language. He has said that folk tales are very reflective of the society they belong to. The growth, progress, the beliefs, the values, the morals, the hopes and the fears of the people of a community are all woven into the folktales They are valuable assets of a community. The value of these folktales came to light only after the publication of Grimm's fairy tales between 1811-1835, when the two German brothers collected these stories from grand mothers and published them.

Human hopes, fears, desires and wants all being similar, Bezbarua says, many of the stories are similar. It is only that the forms may change.

Thus we may read a Cinderella in 'Tejimola', or in Teja', on find a frog that turns into a handsome prince in Champabati's python husband and Kanchaan's dog-husband. When the Hingora fish procures the gold ring for his master which turns everything in the house golden there is the element of Midas touch. The kite-mother in the tale of a kite lovingly looks after her daughter and later on instructs her how to deal with the various situations she is faced with after her marriage. The animals also assume human nature when they interact among themselves as in the story of the monkey and the fox. They planned to trick the men and got hold of the food. Later the monkey fooled the fox and the fox then took his revenge again. The tiger and the crab decide to live together and cultivate. They thus grow rice, vegetables and the like, yet the friendship falls apart after the success of the cultivation. There is a Classic example in the Gangetope where the fishes decide to organise a campaign against all fish eaters and mostly man. We have several examples of the trickster in 'Lotkon' where first he fools the sweetmeat seller's son, then the owner and finally, in the house where he remained as a guest. The fortune-teller or Sarabjan both by his wit and luck was able to impress the king. The two clever men in their bid to fool the world, fools each other and then gets fooled themselves There is a lot of magic too. In Kanchani, the young man is turned into a dog by his sister-in-law. In Tula Teja, first Tula's mother Lagi turned Teja's mother Alagi into a tortoise. Later Alagi turned Teja into a common mynah and sent her own daughter Tula to the palace as the queen.

Folk tales also have behavioural functions which are : the justifying function, the pedagogic function and the controlling function Folktales justify and provide support for the institutions and behaviour patterns of a culture. Thus in 'O-princess' when the prince enters the Ruh-ghar, and in Panoikhi when the young man enters the Ruh-Ghar. it signifies that there
is a demand on their part, usually when they fall in love and express their demand. In Tula and Teja when Teja leaves her father's home with her husband the king, after being married, all the wealth in her father's house follows her, which is why her father asks her to look back once so that some wealth remains with them. This is a custom which is practised even today, the belief being that daughter is the Lakshmi of the house and takes with her everything.

Many folktales serve to instruct and remind members of society of wise codes of conduct. The proverb and the tale many teach the same lesson; for example pride goes before a fall' illustrated in Gangatope who literally must with pride. 'Gangatope' has therefore become a metaphor in Assamese to refer to anybody who is proud or arrogant. The story of the clever fox who had bullied tiger cubs and terrorised the tigress meets his end illustrates that 'As one sows, so does he reap. 'The story of the son-inlaw suffering from night-blindness proves that 'Honesty is the best policy'.

Besides suggesting rules for conduct, folktales also drive home the need for proper social behaviour by holding up to scorn those who depart from socially accepted norms and by eulogising those who follow them. The young man in 'Tawai's story' gets good results for listening to his uncle without questioning his wisdom, although the suggestions were very unusual. When Tula's flesh is sent to her mother, it serves to remind the readers that the wicked, though they succeed temporaly, cannot reach far.

## Translation: Analysis and Discussion

Translation as a known practice dates back to as far as about 3000 BC. Since then there has been a spate of translations all over the world, each of them being carried out for different reasons; from translation as an enriching factor, to translation as appropriation and expropriation, to
translation as a literary exercise purely for its literary merit. And through the ages different theories have been established on the basis of different parameters and dimensions, and today we have an established branch dealing with the scientific study of translation called Translatology.

A brief survey of the history of translation will show that the main discussion has always been in terms of the conflict between free and literal translation. In the 'early period' it were the Roman translations and later on the translations of the Bible that spurred on initial literary translation theory. Cicero's sensitivity to translation can be ganged from one of his remarks, "If I render word for word the result will sound uncouth, and if compelled by necessity, I alter anything in the order or wording, I shall seem to have departed from the function of a translator. 'Horace too advices a translator to avoid being a slave. The aim of the Romans being enrichment of their literary tradition, allowed free translations consisting of new words, expressions, etc. Alongwith Bible translations saw the rise of vernaculars all over Europe. These translations being used as a weapon against the dogmatic beliefs prevalent in church practises, as well as for the emergence of new nation states, the chief aims of the Bible translations were both intelligibility and a gratifying style.

Creative Appropriation was the translation style during the Renaissance, examples of which abound in Matthiesson's study of English translators.

Rationalism and induction began to dominate literary criticism during the mid-seventeenth century. John Dryden distinguished between metaphrase, imitation and paraphrase. Dryden's view on translation was echoed by Alexander Pope who too wanted the spirit of the original text to be captured in the translated text.

By the end of the 18th C. Alexander Fraser Tytler published 'The Principles of Translation' (1791) where he mentioned three basic principles.
a) the translation must retain the complete idea of the original;
b) the style and manner of writing must be of same manner and type of the original;
c) the translation should have the ease of the source language text.

By the time the Romantics arrived on the scene in the early 19th century, the emphasis had shifted to the crucial 'role of imagination'. Colderidge in his 'Biographia Literaria' distinguished between Fancy and Imagination, giving the latter sole powers of creativity. Thus, translation too was viewed in terms of imagination i.e. as a higher creative activity.

The Victorians added a new dimension to the art of translation i.e. of archaism. Mathew Arnold delivered a series of lectures entitled, "On Translating Homer" (1862). According to Arnold the translation must serve the original text and the target text reader must be brought to the source language text through translation. This view appears close to the neo-classical perspective, though unlike them the Victorians did not see translations as a means of enriching their own culture.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, around the same time, propagated a literal perspective to translation. While discussing his own translation of 'Divine Comdey' he considered rhyme to be a mere trimming. Thus stylistic features were for him distinct from the spirit of the work.

Contrastingly, Edward Fitzgerald demonstrated in his "Rubbait of Omar Khayyam" that instead of leading the TT reader to the ST, it was possible to bring a version of the ST into the TT culture as a 'living entity,' for he preferred to have a live sparrow than a stuffed eagle.

Thus, till the twentieth century and well into it, translators either favoured literal translations or translations with some latitude or
translations with most latitude. Such preoccupations can be seen in a recent book by Hatim and Mason (1990) who treat translators as passive mediators between the SL text and the TL text.

The most for reaching impacts in translation were those from the field of linguistics. In this century most linguistic theories developed in isolation from the main literary traditions. As long as linguistics excluded semantics and emphasized that grammar preceeded meaning in importance, there could not be any contribution to literary thinking. Various theories like American structuralism, Chomskyan 'transformational' theory and Halliday's systemic grammar were all divorced from literary interactions. It was in the 80 's that some attempts were made to combine both linguistic and literary theories of translation in a perspective that views all language as forms of a communication act. Language and literary texts are now seen to be rooted in the cultural matrices of a speech community. Thus the view is gaining ground that, "Each society will interpret a message in terms of its own culture. The receptor audience will decode the translation in terms of its own culture and experience, not in terms of the culture and experience of the author and audience of the original document." (Larson 1984 :431)

The goal of translation being communication, contextualization of the event is not only necessary but a prerequisite. It is only the context that will give us an insight into the secondary, figurative and aesthetic meaning besides the primary meanings. Among the linguistic functions of language Jakobson (1960) poetic function is now being invoked by translators such as Larson (1984), Snell - Hornby (1988) and Callow (1990), etc. There has been considerable gain in literary translation from insights provided by linguistics in terms of identification of formal stylistic features of texts and co-relating them with literary significations.

Yet the debate still continues. What are the principles behind a good translation? A general consensus has been that the translation has to be both readable and acceptable. The readability criterion is fulfilled so long as the translated text is read and enjoyed by the reader as a text in his language (rather the receptor language). The acceptability criterion requires that the reader's expectation from the particular type of writing or genre to which it belongs to is met with, for example a poem, a play, a novel etc. For the reader the Translated Text (henceforth TT) is first and foremost a text, a discourse, a verbal artefact. It does not matter to him that the work is translated. The reader must get his joy and thrill from the translated work.

The focus of the present translated work has also been on the readability criterion. The methodology adopted here has been that I read the story in Assamese, kept the story in front of me and then proceeded to translate it into English, the source text (henceforth ST) in front to help me with the details of the story. After each story I found a reader who would read them like any other story and give an opinion on any awkward part. This was done to make to sure that there was an easy flow in the stories, alongwith intelligibility. Since the readership of this translation would be young readers the language used has been simple. And like Bezbarua. I have tried to retain the rhyme like sequences within the stories, though the effectiveness of my translations is doubtful since it was not always possible to find the rhyme.

The argument put forth is that a work that meets the readability and acceptability criterion represents a 'high and noble kind of creativity'. Every time a work is reproduced, be it in the language of the source text or the target language, some element of the author is represented. This element of the author gives the work a sense of identity and creativity.

The requirements of a translator are tall. A good translator has to be a good reader as well as a good writer. If the communication at the first stage i.e. reading, understanding the source text is faulty, there will be a serious communication breakdown in conveying the message of the source text. For example after the watergate scandal the word 'plumber' developed the meanings of 'spy', 'secret agents' for utterly non-linguistic reasons. The men who planted the bugging devices were disguised as plumbers. Since the Bulgarian translator was not aware of this he rendered the word by its dictionary equivalence 'vodoprovoditcik', which did not correspond in any way to anything taking place on the screen (From Palara Zlatena's article Text and Pre-text; published in Translation, History and culture, edited by Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere).

Another example from 'Buriair Hadhu' is the last story entitled 'Bhusung pohu' which is literally translated as 'Obnoxious Deer', is a metaphor in Assamese. This means an odd person who may be dressed unusually, or who may be trying to show off by means of some exotic manner, but which is not appreciated by society. In this story however the word has been placed in a tricky situation. In order to get the better of his minister, the king orders him to find a 'Bhusung pohu' which leaves the minister in a state of predicament. His intelligent daughter-in-law, however, finds a way and asks him to pretend to go hunting for a 'Bhusung pohu' in the forest every day. In the meantime she makes a fool of the king and establishes him as the 'Bhusung pohu'. Now this is the sense that it is normally used in the language. However, the fact that the king ordered the minister to look for one as a tall order and, the fact that the minister also went to the forest to hunt for the deer, gives the metaphor a different meaning which makes the translation of the term a difficult task. However, it could be speculated that this term was first used
in this story and after establishing the king as being ridiculous, the connotation of the meaning stuck on and came to be in vogue.

Alongwith being a good reader and writer the translator has to be seasitive to the naunces of the source text and give a.faithful translation in the target language. The problems faced by the translator are many. In fact the translator lands up with a job he had not initially bargained for. First of all the ST is an individual's creation. One cannot expect a word to word translation or an equivalence in the TL. There are two reasons for this. One that the ST being a creative work is almost impossible to re-create. Secondly being a work done in a different language, the equivalence may not always exist or else be inadequate. The equivalence has to be 'newmade'.

This brings in the creativity of the translator which was more than what he had bargained for. For example there are many rhymes in the story which are merely supplements to the mood of the story; since these are basically folk tales for children these rhymes are inserted only to sustain the children's interest. Many of these rhymes which have many meaningless words and phrases are not easily translatable. Yet I have tired to translate quite a few of them, and rhymed them as much as possible.

What a translator is expected to translate is not words, rather feelings experiences and things involved. That is why the translator has to look for the accurate expression. In looking for an accurate expression the translator has to bear two things in mind a) that he responds to the language of the original b) find the authentic articulation in the target language for the experience so gained. Therefore a successful fusion of these two will give a good translation. I feel I am uniquely placed as far as this point goes. My mother tongue is Assamese and my $\mathrm{L}_{2}$ is English since I have been educated in the English medium. Comprehension and expression therefore was much easier.

There is a related issue. Language being a part of culture, the translation also faces the cultural barrier. But being uniquely placed as an Assamese I have been familiar with the culture. And expressing this in English did not pose a barrier as we have our Indian English. Thus in Panokhi, 'Dhua Chang' represents a shelf above the fireplace, 'Ruh-ghar' is the special chamber, 'Ikora' which means reed have all been used as they are in order to retain the Assamese flavour. 'Buriair Hadhu' is a set of folktales consisting of simple children's stories, mostly with a rural setting. It is important to capture the simplicity in these stories. For example in Tejimola when she asks her step mother for 'riha' and 'mekha', I have chosen to use the Assamese words for it, instead of the English equivalent for it which is a kind of skirt and wrapper which would not be in keeping with the Assamese spirit of the original text.

## The tale of the cat's daughter

There once lived a family who had a pet cat. Both the cat and the mistress became pregnant at the same time. The cat expressed a great desire to have fish. So her owners replied, if you can get the fish for us, we can cook it for you." The cat started to look around for fish. Every evening by hook or crook she would get some fish home. But each day she would only get the bones. The fish of course went to her owners. The cat was very hurt with this attitude. She cursed her mistress, "Let what is in your womb come to mine and mine go to yours." Truly when they delivered, the cat was blessed with two baby girls and her mistress was blessed with two kittens.

The cat raised the girls with great love and care. Every day she would leave the girls at home and go out to the village in search of food. When the girls grew up they asked the mother one day, "what if something happens to you in the village how can we come to know?" The mother then gave them a tulsi plant and a pot of milk and told them. "When this tulsi plant withers and when the colour of the milk becomes black, you will know something has happened. Then come to the vilage in search of me."

One day as the tulsi plant withered and the colour of milk turned blackish the two girls became frantic and tearfully set off towards the village to look for their mother. They had gone quite some way when the younger sister became thirsty. So the elder sister left the younger on the bank of the river and went into the river to fetch water. She quenched her thirst and just as she was about to take the water for her sister all the water dried and the water-prince called out, "if you drop the ring from your finger you can take water". The sister thinking that the ring could not be a bigger issue than her sister, dropped it and fetched the water. After her
thirst was quenched the younger sister sent the elder once again to fetch the ring. This time when the girl went to the water the water-prince kidnapped her. When the younger sister realised what had happned, she cried bitterly beating her head and breast. Just then a merchant who was on a business tour came that way. Seeing the lonely beautiful girl he took her with him and married her. Soon the beautiful young girl became his favourite wife. This made the other two wives very jealous of her. They planned to make her fall in their husband's esteem. So when the young wife delivered a baby boy the two elder ones tricked her and put a pounding $\log$ instead. Similarly when she delivered a second baby boy they tricked her again and put a pumpkin instead. The merchant of course became very angry with his young wife anddrove her out of the house. He made a house near the garbage dump and set her up there. The poor wife began to lead a lonely and miserable life.

Meanwhile, the two baby boys who had been on the river were being brought up by her elder sister. One day when the merchant set sail on a business tour, he found his boat suddenly stuck in the river. Try as he will he could not disentangle the boat. Then from the river, the water prince called out, " promise me that you will hold a grand public feast. Give me the exact day as to when you will hold the feast and leave your beettle nut case and walking stick with me." The helpless merchant made the promise and also set the day for the feast. All of a sudden the boat became free and the merchant set homeward. Meanwhile, the elder sister had informed the two boys about everything from the time when the two sisters came to be born of the cat. These boys were told to reveal everything on the day of the grand feast. So on the day of the feast the two boys, armed with their father's nut case and walking stick, set off to their father's house. First they went to their mother living near the garbage dump. And addressing her as 'mother' they asked for water. She asked
them miserabley not to make fun of her. The two boys then told her everything from the beginning. Meanwhile, the news had spread in the feast that two young men present in the feast had visited the ostracised woman living near the garbage dump. The public called upon the two men to make their presence known. As soon as this was announced the two brothers identified themsevles. They told the people their story right from the beginning and produced the nut case and the walking stick as their evidence. The crestfallen merchant recognised his belongings. The two wives were summoned and questioned about this. When they could not reply the public came to know about the mischief which had been played. The public had the feast and left. After the feast the merchant cut off the nose and ears of his two elder wives and banished them from his house. He went out to fetch his former beloved wife and the two sons, along with their parents, led a happy life thereafter.

## The tale of a monkey and a fox

Once upon a time there lived a monkey and a fox who happened to be friends. One day they decided to come out of the jungle onto the main road in order to find something to eat. Just then they found some men carrying food, milk-jaggery, banana - sugarcane etc. passing by. Seeing this, the fox suggested to the monkey, 'Friend we have to eat the food these men are carrying. So let us find a way. You go a little way from here and stand behind the tree. When the men approach, cry out 'Khua' I will hide behind some bush here and cry 'Hua' you will see that the man on hearing our 'Hua....Khua' will at once drop the food and run away".

According to the plan the two friends made a noisy scene with their 'Hua' and 'Khua'. The men thinking it was either some tiger or bear dropped their load of food and ran away. The fox and the monkey came out of their hiding place. They were thrilled at the success of their plan. They pulled the food into the jungle. The monkey told he fox 'Friend, if we eat our food here, the men might come back, beat us up and take away the food. So I suggest that I go up this tree with the food. Since you cannot climb I shall drop your share of the food. The fox agreed and helped the monkey carry the food up the tree. When all the food was finally up, the monkey happily sat down to eat. He almost entirely forgot about the fox till he called out 'Friend, what about my share?' The monkey responded "Watch out! Here is your banana" So saying he threw down the peel after eating the banana. Then he threw down the empty pot after having milk and cried "Friend, heres comes your milk." He threw down the dried sugarcane after sucking the juice and cried "Here comes your sugarcane". In this way the monkey cheated the fox of his share of food. The frustrated fox could do nothing but kick and bite the trunk of the tree. He left the place feeling very sad and angry.

One day the monkey found the fox sitting near a hornet's nest. The monkey came near the fox and asked "Friend ! What are you doing?" The fox replied "Oh, it's nothing. I have been asked by the king to look after his royal drum." The monkey asked, "Can I please beat it once and see?" The fox replied "No absolutely not. If the king comes to know about it I shall be cut into two pieces. Can you not hear the royal drum resounding even without beating it?" By now the monkey had become desperate and pleaded with the fox. The fox reluctantly let the monkey have a try at the drum saying, "All right have a try but do it very softly". So saying the fox sneaked away quietly from the scene. As soon as the monkey touched the beehive he was swarmed by them and stung all over. The monkey cried out to his friend for help but the fox replied, "I am giving you in kind for giving me the peel after eating the banana. The monkey cried again "Help! Help! save me! I am dying." The fox only replied "Remember the empty pot you threw down after having the milk." "The monkey cried once again "Come on friend, help! help! save me! I am dying." The fox replied again "Remember the dry sugar cane straw you threw at me. It is my turn to get back at you." The fox turned his back and left the monkey to his fate.

Quite sometime later the monkey found the fox sitting near a plot of poisonous arum plants. The monkey approached his friend. He had entirely forgotten the previous encounter. He asked the fox, "Friend, what are you doing? What is that?" The fox smiled at the monkey and told him "This is a sugarcane plantation. This belongs to the royal household. I have been ordered by the king to look after his plantation." Even at the mention of sugarcane the monkey's mouth began watering. He told the fox "Friend, can you let me have one sugarcane please?' The fox replied, "How could you suggest such an outrageous thing. If the king hears about this he will not only butcher me but my little ones too." But the
greedy monkey pleaded on "Oh please friend, just one small sugarcane, please" The fox shrugged, "Very well, if you badly want to, you may choose a very small one. We shall see what happens later. ${ }^{\prime} \sim$ As soon as the fox permitted the monkey he chose the biggest of the lot and greedily dug his teeth into it. No sooner had he done so he yelped out in pain and irritation. The arum known for its irritable qualities made the monkey very uncomfortable. He yelled out to the fox for help. The fox replied "Remember the banana peel you threw. Now enjoy the irritation". The monkey pleaded again, "Friend, help! please!" Again the fox replied, "this is the outcome of the dry sugarcane straw you threw down for me". The monkey cried, "Friend, help me." The fox replied, "I'm getting back at you for sending me the empty pot after having the jaggery." Once again the fox left the monkey to his fate and came away.

A long time after this incident the monkey came upon the fox sitting near a well covered by a fine cobweb. The monkey being a monkey forgot all his earlier afflictions and approached the fox again. The fox pretended to look away and concentrate on his job of waiting on the well. The monkey greeted the fox again. "Hello friend what are you doing?" The fox replied rather irritated, "Oh can't you see I am looking after this palanquin which the queen had got at her wedding from her parents house." The stupid monkey unable to contain himself asked the fox whether he could sit on the royal palanquin. Of course the fox refused and of course, the monkey pleaded again and again till he was allowed to sit on the palanquin. The monkey gleefully stepped on the palanquin only to fall deep down into the well and that was the end of the foolish monkey.

## The 0 - princess.

Long ago in a certain kingdom there lived a king who had two queens. Both the queens were expectant mothers at the same time. The elder queen gave birth to a baby boy and the younger queen gave birth to an O fruit. The younger queen was very hurt when she saw only the fruit and, therefore threw it away in the dumping pit. But she noticed that everyday during sleeping time and feeding time the $O$ fruit will roll itself towards the queen. And everyday the queen threw it away.

One day in the afternoon during the siesta period, the O-fruit rolled itself towards the river and there on the river bank from within the fruit emerged a beautiful young girl. She took a bath, dried her hair in the sun and then went into the $O$ fruit again. This scene was witnessed by a young prince from a neighbouring kingdom who was quietly fishing behind a tree. He fell in love with the girl in the O fruit. On returning home in his kingdom, the prince locked himself up and refused to emerge till his desire was fulfilled. When he expressed his desire to marry the Oprincess his parents thought he was joking. But when the prince continued to be stubborn the king and the queen gave in and approached the O Princess` parents. The O princess' mother cried bitterly on hearing the proposal and said "Pray, why don't you leave me in peace? You know I am unhappy about my unearthly child. You don't have to rub salt in my wound." But when the lovelorn prince's parents still insisted, the sad mother brought the $O$ fruit, bathed it and then gave it in marriage to the prince.

The prince and the O-Princess were given a room to themselves. Everyday the prince's mother would serve him food in the room, of which he would eat one share and leave the other for the O-Princess. Every night the O-Princess would emerge from the $O$ fruit and eat the food left for her
and each morning the food would disappear. The prince became very upset at this phenomenon. One day a beggar woman came to ask for alms and found the prince to be sad. She asked "My son, why are you sad? We have heard that you are married but where is our daughter-in-law ?" The prince sadly related his story to the beggar woman. The beggar woman then gave him a suggestion. She told him that one night he should pretend to be sleeping and when the O-Princess comes out of the fruit to eat the meal he should snatch the O-Fruit and burn it in a potful of burning embers which should be kept ready. When he burns her fruit the OPrincess will fall to the ground and become unconscious. Then from the mixture of milk and banana, which again should be kept ready, he should pour it on the O-Princess's head which will revive her.

That night the prince followed the beggar woman's suggestion and after he revived the princess she became human. The prince thus became very happy. News spread throughout the palace about the princess gaining human form. News was also sent to O-Princess`s parents. They could not believe what was being told. They came to confirm the truth and were so happy they took the princess home and performed the marriage rites again with a lot of pomp and splendour and everybody lived happily ever after.

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## The tale of a dhura crow and a little wren

Once upon a time there was a Dhura crow and a little wren. They became good friends. One day when they were sitting on the tree they saw an old woman spread out some boiled paddy grains in the sun to dry. The crow told the wren, "Friend, see, the old woman has put the grains in the sun to dry. Let's go and snatch a beakful." The wren said, "Yes, let's get some." The crow then said, "But friend, if you are not able to bring as much grain in your beak as mine then I shall eat you and if I am not able to bring as much grain in my beak as you, you shall eat me." The wren thought, "I won't be able to bring more than him. That is a trick to eat me. Anyway let's see how he gets to eat me." Thus thinking he replied, "All right friend, let it be." The crow then said, "In that case you first go and snatch some."

The wren said, "No friend, you go first." The crow said, "I ought to go after you." The wren then came to be the first. He flew down and with his small beak snatched only a small quantity. The crow followed but came back with many times more than the wren. The crow then wanted to eat the wren. "Certainly you can eat me up but you see, you eat all kinds of dead things and your beak has an awful smell. Pray first go and wash your beak in the sea and then come to eat me. And the crow flew to the sea and called out, "Brother sea, Brother sea." The sea replied, "what is it?" The crow said, "Please give me some water to wash my beak. I want to eat the wren." The sea replied, "How can I give it to you if you don't have a vessel?"

The crow went to the potter to get a jar. He called out to the potter, "Brother potter, Brother potter, are you at home?" The potter called back,
"Yes, What can I do for you? The crow asked for a jar, "Give me a jar so that I can get some water from the sea to wash my beak and eat the little wren." The potter said, "I don't have any jars ready now. If you fetch some clay for me I can make you one."

The crow went to the earth and asked for some clay. "Give me some clay so that I can give it to the potter to make a jar with which I shall bring some water and wash my beak and then eat the little wren. "The earth replied, "If you can manage to dig some earth you are welcome."

The crow then flew to a buffallo and asked for his horns. "Lend me you horns brother buffallo so that I can dig some earth and give it to the potter to make a jar with which I shall bring some water to wash my beak and then eat the little wren."

The buffallo replied, "How can I give you the horns. If you can take it yourself, please do." The crow then went to a dog and said, "Please kill the buffallo, I need his horns to dig the earth and give the clay to the potter to make a jar for me with which I shall bring some sea water to wash my beak and then eat the little wren."

The dog replied that he has not had milk for a long time. "If you can get me some milk I shall be strong enough to kill the buffallo."

The crow next went to the cow and asked for some milk. The cow replied "I have grown old now and have not had a good feed for a long time. If you can get me some grass I shall give you as much milk as you want."

The crow went to the grass. The grass replied "If you can cut some yourself, please do." The crow had no choice but to go to the blacksmith and asked, "Give me a sickle brother blacksmith to cut grass. The cow will give me milk to make the dog stronger who will kill the buffallo and give me his horns to dig the earth and take some clay so that the potter makes a
jar for me with which to fetch water from the sea to wash my beak and eat the little wren".

The blacksmith's fire had gone out. He said, "If you get me some fire I shall gladly make a sickle for you."

The crow looked around and saw some smoke on the other side of the river. He went across and found an old woman boiling some paddy. He asked the old woman for some fire. The old woman asked "Well, how will you carry it?" The crow said, "Well, tie it to my wings." The old woman did so. The crow happily flew across at last his job being over. However when he was flying the breeze fanned the fire, The crow caught fire and drowned in the river below.

The wren had however been following the crow quietly. On seeing the end of the crow the wren too flew away delighted and perched himself on the branch of a tree.

I too returned home as my clothes had to be washed.
"The fern has opened out its ear
and my tale has come to an end,
the areca-nut has opened its flower.
Who will go where?
The black cat's white ears and say Ram Ram!"1

[^0]
## The tale of a gardener <br> and a flower tree

Once upon a time there lived a 'malinee' or a female gardener. She planted a flower tree and tended it with great love and care But inspite of her best efforts the tree never bloomed. So she asked the tree one day.
"Flower, dear Flower why don't you bloom?"
The tree then replied,
"That I should bloom, why then does the cow eat my shoot?"
Then this 'malinee went to the cow. The cow then replied,
"If the cowherd does not look after me.
why should I not eat the shoots?"
Malinee-"O cowherd, dear cowherd
why don't you look after the cow?"
Cowherd- "That I should look after the cow
why then does the cook not give me food?"
Malinee- "O cook, dear cook
why don't you give food?"
Cook- "Why should I give food
when the woodcutter does not give wood?"
Malinee- "O dear wood cutter why don't you give wood?"
Woodcutter - "Why should I give wood
when the blacksmith
does not give me an axe?"
Malinee -"O blacksmith, dear balcksmith
why don't you give an axe?"

Blacksmith -"Why should I give an axe when the charcoal seller does not give me charcoal?"
Malinee - "O coal seller, dear coal seller why don't you give coal?
Charcoal seller-"Why should 1 give coal when the clouds give rain?"
Malinee - " O clouds, dear clouḍ, why do you give rain?"

Clouds - "Because the toad croaks that why we rain."

Malinee - "O frog, dear frog, why do you croaks?"
Frog -" That which has been a generational practice why should I stop? !"

Once upon a time there lived a fox who was very hungry. One night when he roamed around the village for food, near the granary of one houshold he found some pancakes. These pancakes were being offered to goddess Lakshmi. They were kept in a brass vessel with a broken bottom. This greedy fox not only gobbled the pancakes but went on to lick the crumbs from the banana leaf placed at the bottom of broken vessel. In the process he stuck his neck in the brass vessel. Try as he might, he could not get the neck out, it only served to make it worse. Now the fox began to have a very tough time. He could not go out hunting. Every time he went to find some game, the clanging of the brass vessel round his neck gave him away. He was thus rendered helpless. He was almost starving when one day he came upon some tiger cubs. Their parents had kept aside some meat for them to feed. He made up his mind to have that meat.

He approached the cubs with a great sense of authority and demanded "where are you parents? Don't they know I've come?" The frightened cubs replied, "Our parents have gone out hunting." The fox replied, All right, it can't be helped if they have gone out. But see this vessel round very neck? Your father had borrowed. a vesselful of paddy from me long time ago. He has not returned his due. I cannot wait for long today. Tell him about this when he comes back. And now, I am hungry. Is there anything for me to eat?" So saying he picked up the meat meant for the cubs and ate it up himself.

This mischief came to be committed everyday. As a result the tiger cubs became very weak. One day the worried mother observed this and told her husband "can you figure out what is happening to our children? I am sure that during our absence somebody tricks them out of their share. You need not go out hunting today. I shall go on my own. You hide here
and find out whether somebody comes in our absence. "Saying this the tigress left.

That day too the fox came to bully the tiger cubs. When the tiger realised what was happening everyday he sprang out of the hiding place and chased the fox. But the fox had already thought of a contigency plan. He raced into the forest through a tree with a two-pronged trunk. The fox but got through, but the tiger got stuck in the pronged trunk. The more he wriggled the more he got stuck. At last he started growling. His ferocious growls made all the animals in the forest run helter.skelter. The tigress came running as well. The fox who had been cooly watching this happening, stepped up to the tigress and said "See what happens when you borrow this vesselful of paddy and refuse to return my due. You too shall suffer this fate. Either you return the due paddy or you be my subordinate. Otherwise I shall not spare you. Not even your cubs. Do you hear me?"

Just then the tiger who had been struglling all along died. The tigeress had no choice but to accept subordination. And that day onwards the fox began to have the time of his life. He would sit in all his royal splendour while the poor tigres went out to hunt. The fox never felt even a twing of guilt.

A little while later, the time came for the tigress to change her lion. When she set off, the fox followed the tigress. On the way the tigress had to cross a river. She and her cubs swam across with ease. The fox, not to be outdone, followed the same. But he could not cope with the flowing water. The tigress, watching the fox drown, pulled him ashore. But the cunning fox on reaching the shore snapped at the tigress. "Where have you dragged me to? whoever asked you to pull me here. If only you women had some sense. Did you know that the water prince had borrowed several vesselfuls of paddy from me. The scoundrel is always on the run
whenever he sees me. Today I decided to settle scores with him. That is why both of us were wrestling. Oh dear! If only you had not come in between us!"

In this way the fox stayed on with the tigeress's family. The two cubs grew up and started to go out to hunt. Whenever it was the fox's turn to go hunting he would always find one excuse or another. One day he could no longer disentangle himself and so he had to set off with the tigress. The fox said, "you chase the deer this way. I shall trap him here." The tigress chased, the dear that day according to the fox's instrunction, but the deer rammed hard into the fox and jumped over him. When the tigress demanded an explaination for his shabby behaviour. He huffed and puffed and told her, "When the deer came this way I could not hold my laughter. seeing the size of the deer and fell down on the ground laughing".

This time too the fox won the day with his tricks. In the meantime the tiger's cubs who had grown up were getting more and more suspicious of the fox's identity. One night when the other foxes were howling, this one too could not contain himself. He slinked off quickly into the jungle and howled to his heart's content. The tiger cubs who had been quietly following the fox, were now sure that this was but an ordinary fox who was tricking them. Thus, without hesitation they picked him up and smashed him to the ground.

## The tale of a tiger and a crab

Long long ago there lived a tiger. Once when he was changing his den, he came across a crab. The crab smiled sweetly at the tiger and asked, "Brother, where are you going?" The tiger taking an instant liking to the smiling crab replied. "I am changing my den and am going to a different forest. But where are you going?" The crab replied, "I am not going anywhere. I live nearby. I am a lonely soul. I do not have anybody to call my own." The tiger replied, "It is indeed the same for me. I do not have anybody to call my own". And gradually talking both the animals became very friendly and decided to live in the same forest near each other.

In this way both the friends started living together happily. The tiger would hunt down deer and the friends would happily eat together. The other animals also did not dare to trouble the crab because of his friendship with the tiger. One day the crab told the tiger, "Friend, I am tired of eating meat. Frankly speaking I have become a little sick of eating meat. So every now and then, we should be eating vegetarian food. Let us do a bit of cultivation. What do you say?" The tiger replied, "what is there in a little bit of cultivation. I am ready for it if you want to". So the crab suggested, "Well, if you are willing as well, why don't you go to the village and bring some paddy saplings? I shall look out for a nice plot in the meantime. "And thus both of them started paddy cultivation.

A little while later the paddy began to mature and ripen. The crab then suggested to his friend, "Friend, now that the paddy has begun to mature it has occured to me that we cannot simply eat rice. It will be very boring. That is why I suggest that you go to the village again and bring various seeds of herbs - `Lai',* `Lofha',*`Suka',* `palak',* `memedhu',*
'babori" etc. Yes and do not forget to bring brinjal seeds". And the tiger set off when from behind the crab called out again, "And yes, friend do not forget to bring some chilli plant. Without chilli, rice with any of these herbs will not have any flavour. "The tiger grunted in response and continued towards the village.

In this way both were amicably cultivating and growing vegetables. Time went by and came the time for harvesting. The crab told the tiger, "friend, I shall take the top end" and the crab took the paddy and the tiger got the straw at the end of the paddy. Similarly when the time came to pick brinjal the tiger asked the crab, "friend, what do you want? The fruit or the plant?" The crab obviously settled for the fruit and the tiger was left with the plant and the leaves. One day after the harvesting was done the tiger decided to hold "Na-Khowa" i.e. the 1st time after harvesting when the new harvest is eaten with a lot of ceremony. So he invited the crab for dinner. The tiger was preparing the feast with great gusto, cooking the paddy straw and the brinjal leaves as curry to go with the paddy-straw. And the crab even after this dinner would think nothing of having dinner with the tiger of meat curry and rice. The tiger waited in vain for the crab to invite him. So he invited himself one day, "Friend, you have never asked me to your place. Why don't you hold a 'Na-Khowa' so that I can also have a taste of the cooking in your house." The crab replied, "friend, why would I not invite you to my place? Everyday it occurs to me but I keep wondering where would I ask you to sit, how would I offer you food. Mine is a small place, you see. But anyway why don't you come for lunch tomorrow? It would be 'Na-Khowa' in name only. After all this humble one would feel blessed by your very presence in his poor household." The

[^1]tiger replied, 'Sure, sure I shall come for 'No-Khowa' tomorrow afternoon.

The next morning the crab cooked 'Mani ki madhur Joha'2 rice, and brinjal with soda for the occasion. The tiger came for lunch. The crab told him, "Friend, you sit near my hole. Since you cannot come inside my house. I shall get you the food. The crab then started getting the food to the surface and the tiger began to gulp his food down. The crab's cooking utensils being small the tiger finished all the food within two helpings. The crab began to fear. The thought, "It is not easy to read the tiger's mind. If his hunger is not satisfied he will forget friendship and turn around and eat me up. That is why I better think of a plan to save my life." So he told the tiger "Friend, I am tired of coming out of the hole again and again and fetching you food. Why don't you let your tail down the hole. I shall tie whatever food you need and send them up. The tiger not realising the vicious workings of the crab's mind, dropped his tail down the hole. The crab pinched the tail hard when it came down. The tiger yelped out in pain but the crab only pinched it harder and harder. The more the tiger resisted the harder the hold of the crab became. At last the tiger saw a man digging in the fields. But the man on hearing the tigers's screams ran away. The tiger called out to the man and pleaded, "O brother, I am dying because of the crab's pinchers. Please help me." The man replied, "How can I trust you? You are a tiger. You will eat me if I set you free". The tiger cried out again, "O father, please do come and help me. I swear three times that I shall not harm you. I also promise that I shall get you a deer everyday if you get me out of this hell". When the man heard this he came to the tiger and with the spade cut the tail into two pieces and set him free. Before going away the tiger came to the man and whispered in his ear, "I shall keep my word and bring a deer for you

2 A very fine quality of rice.
every day but you must not talk about this to anybody. If you do, I shall come and take you away from wherever you may be."

And everyday the tiger would come and give a deer to the man. One day the young man fell ill. His mother went to the fortune - telling woman and asked about his health. This man told his mother that if the young man was to recover she should hold a feast. The mother came back and told her son about this. The young man asked the tiger to bring two deers for the feast and the tiger accordingly complied.

The day of the feast dawned. Everybody sat down for the feast. But they were short of one banana leaf ${ }^{1}$. So this man went to the end of the backyard to cut a banana leaf for himself. He was amazed to find that behind the courtyard there was a huge mountain of bones. The man did not cut the banana leaf and coming back to the feast announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, we cannot continue with this feast. This man is not to be trusted. He eats something. Come and look at this mountain of bones behind the backyard". Everybody went to have a look and found the mountain of bones. They came back and asked the young man, "Tell us what those bones are of. Otherwise we refuse to have any feast in your house." The young man replied, "Those bones belong only to edible animal. You need not fear. I request you to continue with the feast. Please do not ask me to explain as I am bound by a promise. If I proceed to tell you anything the tiger will come and take me away." But all the guests persisted, "No, you have to tell us. You shall come to no harm. All of us will surround you with spears and swords. No tiger can reach you." So the poor young man had no choice but to explain everything. And no sooner had he finished explaining the tiger appeared from the midst of nowhere and right from the centre of the circle picked him up and took

[^2]him away. All the people chased the tiger and looked around for a while but soon gave up and went their own way.

Meanwhile the tiger had taken the young man away into a very dense jungle. Fortunately for the young man his stomach began to rumble. The tiger asked him, "What was the noise in your stomach?" The young man's quick wit came to his rescue. He said "When I was a small boy my mother fed me one hundred and twenty crabs out of which three scores have come out. And the rest are about to come out now. The tiger thought, "If one crab can cause so much pain, I can imagine the state so many crabs together would cause. I am sure my death bell is ringing". And the tiger dropped the man where he was and fled for his dear life.

Having thus saved himself from the clutches of the tiger, the young man then looked around for shelter for the night. He found a huge tree near the river and he took shelter for the night. In the morning he found that under the tree was the home of a herd of buffaloes. But none of them were around at that time. So the young man climbed down the tree and drank the milk that was left behind. He then swept and cleaned the place, climbed the tree and settled himself for the night.

When the herd of buffaloes came in the evening they were surprised to find the place kept neat and tidy. The looked around everywhere and not finding anything, discussed it amongst themselves and went off to sleep. The next morning, this young man climbed down the tree again after the buffaloes had gone out to graze. Like the previous day he drank the milk that had fallen on the ground while the calves were drinking. He swept and cleaned the place and climbed the tree again. That evening also the buffaloes came back and found the place neat and tidy again. They conferred among themselves and decided that the old buffalo will stay behind the next day and find out the mysterious visitor. But the next day when in the heat of the afternoon the old buffalo fell asleep, this
young man climbed down and went through the same motions. When the herd returned in the evening, the old buffalo could not report anything because he was nicely sleeping in the afternoon. The herd then asked a blind rather a one-eyed buffalo to wait on the next day. But when this buffalo was also sleeping with the good eye down. and the bad eye up. The man climbed down, drank the milk, cleaned the place and climbed up again. So the herd came to know nothing. The herd then decided that the leader of the herd will stay on the next day to find out the mystery. The next day too when this leader was dozing off, the young man climbed down, drank the milk cleaned the place and was about to climb the tree when the leader suddenly woke up. She approached the man quickly and told him," Tell me, are you human or a devta? But whoever you are please come down." The young man replied, "I am not a devta, I am only human. I shall not climb down this tree because if I do you will crush me with your horns". The buffallo replied, "No, I will not crush you. Now please come down." So the young man came down and told this leader everything about him from the beginning. She liked him and felt sorry for him. She told him, "From now on you can stay with us without fear. You shall be our owner and we will give you one buffallo to provide you with milk". In the evening when the rest of the herd came the leader told them everything. They were very happy to accept him as their owner. Then they killed the one eyed old buffallo, took her horns and gave them to the young man. They told him "One horn is the joy-horn and the other horn is the angry-horn. When we are grazing and hear the joy-horn blowing we shall know you are happy and go on grazing happily. But if we happen to hear the angry -horn we shall know that you are in danger and we shall rush to your rescue. You stay back and clean our place like you have been doing before."

Many days passed in this manner. One day when the young man was combing his hair one strand fell down. This strand fell in the river and floated downstream. A huge fish, a "raghborali" happened to eat this strand. When a fisherman trapped this fish, he found it very big and oily. He thus decided to take this fish to the palace and sell it to the king.

The king had a lovely grown-up daughter. When the king's servants were cleaning and cutting the fish the princess was watching them. As she watched she found the long strand of hair in the fish. She picked up the strand, kept it in a small box, and in her mind accepted the owner of the hair as her husband. She then entered the 'Roh ghar'. ${ }^{1}$ When the princess was asked what her demand was, she said that she had given her heart to the person to whom the long strand of hair belonged. The king was bewildered when he heard her, 'how could she make such a demand, who would know to whom the hair belongs, where would the person be.' All these questions raced through his mind. He tried to reason with the princess but she was adamant and declared that she would eat and drink nothing till her lover was found. The king found himself in a fix and did not know what to do. The princess had a pet 'Dhura crow'. Seeing the king so sad she consoled him, "Swargadeo, please do not worry. I shall find out the owner of the hair. You only have to give me a ripe mango". The king was relieved to hear the crow's suggestion and quickly got a ripe mango and gave it to the crow. Taking the mango the crow flew to the forest to where the young man was hiding. He then called out, ${ }^{1}$
" Who blows Joy-horn and danger-horn?
Who would like to have a ripe mango?"

[^3]When the young man heard about the ripe mango his mouth started watering. He answered back.
"I blow joy-horn, danger-horn,
I want to eat a ripe mango."
When the young man responded thus, the crow came over, gave him the ripe mango and before he could realise, quickly snatched the danger-horn from him. It is said that "the crow and the man are clever. Did you realise how the man was fooled? Without the danger-horn the young man was left defenceless. He could get no help. The more he blew the joy-horn, the more the buffalloes were contented thinking that their owner was happy.

The crow in the meanwhile presented the danger-horn to the king and said, "This danger-horn belongs to the one whose hair we have.Now all you have to do is send some soldiers with me and you shall have your man" So the crow set off with the soldiers. The young man could now be easily captured because he had lost all his strength when he lost his danger-horn.

The king's soldiers captured the young man and took him before the king. The young man had on the way dropped pieces of clothes he was wearing. In the evening when the buffaloes came home and found the young man missing, they set off in search of him. They soon caught his trail with the help of his clothes which they found on the way. In this way they reached the royal palace. They danced with joy when they found their owner. The terrified king enquired what it was all about and the young man explained his story. The king then asked him whether he could climb from one buffallo to the other in order to prove his claim. The young man climbed from buffallo to buffallo and vindicated himself. The king was very happy. He then got the princess married to the young man. After the wedding he gave up the throne and crowned the son-in-law. The
young man then became the king and lived hapily ever after. After this we also came back home and our clothes became dirty and soiled.

## Tejimola

Once upon a time there lived a merchant who had two wives. The elder wife had a daughter named Tejimola and the younger wife did not have any children. Tejimola's mother died when she was a baby and so she was raised by her stepmother. Tejimola's step mother resented her, but fearing her husband she dared not ill-treat her. Being the only child in the house Tejimola was the apple of her father's eye.

Soon Tejimola grew to be a little girl. Her father introduced her to another little girl from a good family in the village with whom she became very friendly.

Now Tejimola's father being a merchant had to be on business tours often. Once he had to make a long tour for about six or seven months. Before leaving he entrusted Tejimola to her stepmother and asked her to look after his little darling with love.

For the stepmother, this was a long waited for opportunity to remove the thorn in her side. She thought that now she could ill-treat her step-daughter to her heart's content. But she also thought of her husband.....and fearing his wrath for Tejimola's ill treatment, she decided it was a better idea to do away with Tejimola altogether. After all Tejimola was only her step-daughter and at the time of her marriage she would be given a large chunk of the wealth which could otherwise be better utilised for her own purposes.

In the meantime the time had come for Tejimola's friend's wedding. Tejimola was very excited at the prospect of going to her friend's house and spending three or four days at the fun filled wedding. Her stepmother also pretended to be excited about the affair and took a great interest in getting her prepared. She gave Tejimola one reha mekhala and a fine gold embroidered silk 'Khonia' wrapper. But she put a mouse in
between the reha and mekhala and some embers in the khonia. She made a neat parcel of it, gave it to Tejimola and said, "My dear, wear these when you are at your friend's place. If you wear them now they will get soiled with mud and will not be worth wearing at the wedding."

As suggested by her step mother Tejimola opened the parcel just before reaching her friend's place. She found to her consternation that the mouse had made large holes and the ember had burnt into the khonia. She started trembling and began to sob. The other people in the wedding party consoled her and managed to get a pair of reha mekhala for her.

After returning home from the wedding when her stepmother learnt of the fate of her clothes, she feigned anger and beat up Tejimola. Not happy with that she made Tejimola to help her with the paddy pounding. While she stepped on the $\log$ and pounded the rice Tejimola was asked to place the paddy under the pounding log. As they were working the log suddenly fell on Tejimola's hand and crushed it. When she cried in pain, her stepmother rudely told to stop crying and carry on with the left hand. Poor Teji did so until that was crushed too.

Then she was asked to use her right leg. Then her left leg and finally her head. Thus the step mother's desire was fulfilled and she threw Teji behind the paddy pounding shed.

There in the place where she was buried grew a lovely pumpkin creeper which bore very tempting pumpkins. On the other hand when the neighbours enquired about Tejimola the step-mother replied that she hadn't returned from her friend's wedding yet.

One day a beggar woman asked the merchant's wife whether she could pluck one pumpkin from her creeper. The merchant's wife had not been towards the pounding shed ever since Tejimola's death. So she replied "How can I give you a pumpkin when I have myself not had a pumpkin in many days." The beggar woman then said "Why do you say
like that? There are so many of them on your pumpkin shed." On hearing this, the merchant's wife said "I have not seen any; if you have you may have as many as you want." When the old woman went to pluck the pumpkin the creeper spoke to her thus,
"Stretch not thy hand you, pluck not thy fruit
Along with the Pat-mekhla been pounded
I am non but Tejimola."
On hearing the pumpkin creeper speak the beggar woman was very scared. She ran back to the merchant's wife and reported to her, "I do not want any more pumpkin, I am going." The merchant's wife realised that the creeper was none other than Tejimola. So she went to the shed, cut the creeper and threw it away in her backyard.

Soon the place where the creeper was thrown a fruit tree grew. The shrub was so laden with fruits that it's branches touched the ground with its weight. One day a couple of cowherds came that way and seeing the tree laden with so many fruits went to the merchant's wife and asked for permission to pluck some. She replied "How can I give you the fruit which I have never seen? They replied "But we have seen it at the end of your backyard." The merchant's wife replied "if you have seen the fruits, take what you want."

When the cowherds went to pluck the fruit the shrub sang out once again.
"Dear brothers, O Cowherds of the village,
Stretch not thy hand, pluck not thy fruit,
Alongwith the "pat-mekhala" being pounded,
I am none but Tejimola."
The shocked cowherds reported this to the merchant's wife and she in turn, once again armed with the same knife cut off the shrub and threw it among into the river. And in the river where the shrub was thrown,
grew a lotus plant where a beautiful lotus blossomed. The merchant meanwhile happened to be returning from his business tour. The beautiful lotus reminded him of his flower-like daughter and so he wanted to take the lotus for her. Just when he was about to pluck the flower, he heard the plant sing out.

Stretch not thy hand, pluck not thy flower,
Along with the 'Pat-mekhala have been pounded,
I'm none but Tejimola".
The startled merchant, knowing his wife nature, thought "This is none but my own Tejimola." He decided to test his assumption. He put a little bit of the beatle nut that he was chewing into his left hand and a 'coconut laddu' in his right hand. He cried aloud to the plant and said "If you are my Tejimola you shall become a mynah and eat the beatle nut on the left hand. But if happen to be somebody else you will eat the coconut laddu on the right." No sooner had he finished his words than a mynah emerged from the lotus and ate the beatle nut from his left hand. The merchant then caught the mynah put it in a cage. He took it home and confronted his wife about Tejimola's whereabouts. Obviously she lied, but he managed to bulldoze the truth out of her. After she had confessed the merchant drove her out of the house. He then threw his 'gamocha' ${ }^{1}$ over the mynah and said "If you be my Tejimola then you shall turn human again". On hearing this Tejimola assumed human form and was happily reunited with her father.

[^4]
## The tale of the old man, the old woman and the fox.

Once upon a time there lived an old man and his wife. One day when the old man was about to plant some arum tubers a couple of foxes came and asked, "Grandfather, are you planting the arum raw or cooked?" The old man replied, "My sons I am planting them raw" They said again, "Grandfather we are afraid that you have not followed the right method. You should boil them first and then dig holes where you will plant them and then cover the arum. You will find that overnight the arum plants will shoot up and be very tall." The old man replied, "All right my sons, I shall plant them according to your advice."

He boiled the arum in the evening and planted them according to their advice. At night the foxes sneaked into the old man's garden and had a merry time feasting on the arum. In the morning when the old man rushed to see his tall arum plants, he was only faced by empty holes. He became ashamed of himself that he had let the foxes take him for a ride.

A couple of days after this incident the old man asked the old woman to rub some treacle on him. He said, "As soon as the flies come hovering over me to feed on the treacle you start wailing loudly that I was dead. When the foxes come to enquire about the matter tell them that since I was dead they can take me out and eat me. But keep a sturdy stick with you. As soon as they come inside to carry me shut the door quickly. I shall get up immediately and beat them to death with the stick." The old woman having followed the old man's advice. The foxes came to find out what had happened. She replied weeping, "My sons, my old man is dead. If you can manage, take him out and eat him". On hearing this, the foxes entered the house gleefully. No sooner had they entered, the old woman
shut the door and the old man rose quickly and beat them to death. All except four managed to escape.

Sometime after this the old woman told her husband, "I have remained indoors for a long time fearing the foxes. I want to go and see my daughter. I have been feeling sad for sometime." The old man advised her not to venture out as finding her alone they would trouble her. She was however adamant. On the way the foxes obviously caught hold of her. They danced around her singing "Now old woman, we shall not let you go. We shall eat you up". The old woman replied, "if you want to eat me, you will. But I have not seen my daughter for a long time and I want to see her once before I die. Let me come back. You can eat me up then". They asked" What if you don't come back?" She replied "How can I leave my husband and not come back my sons. I swear I will come back this same way and then you can do whatever you wish."

They let her go the old woman stayed some days with her daughter and decided to return. She told her daughter about her encounter with the foxes. Whereupon she suggested that her mother could easily fit into a big pumpkin-shell she had and roll along all the way to her village. The foxes would be fooled. So the old woman sat inside the shell and started rolling homewards. The foxes however were attracted by this curious object rolling by itself. They started kicking and playing with it suspecting that the old woman would be inside. After a while the pumpkin broke, and out fell the old woman. The foxes were thrilled that they had managed to outsmart her. They asked her "Well, old woman you tried to trick us, but we have foiled your plans. What are we going to do with you? We are going to eat you now." The old woman replied, "What can I do sons? If you want to eat me then you must. But you see I have learnt a new dance at my daughter's house. I have a great desire to demonstrate it. After I am finished you are quite welcome to eat me." The foxies were sure of their
victim and not being able to resist the temptation of a new dance they agreed to her proposal. The old woman told them, "When I shall sing you all sing too 'Hai Hai' after each line. Only then I shall feel pepped up." It must be mentioned here that the foxes had discovered this old woman a short distance from her house. The old woman had two dogs named ‘Ronga’ (Reddie) and Kola (Blackie). As she sang she called out her dogs’ names and the foxes, 'Hai Hai' served to draw the dogs' attention. The dogs soon came to the spot hearing them being hailed. No sooner the dogs made their appearance the foxes took to their heels and the old woman reached home safely.

Our clothes became sooty and we came home to send them for washing. ${ }^{1}$

[^5]
## The long legged one

There once lived a poor old woman who made a living by selling the milk which her cows gave. Her small house had a roof which leaked. So one cloudy night before retiring to the bed she prayed to the Lord, "O Lord Almighty, do not let the long-legged one get me," obviously referring to the rain.

Now in the cowshed a thief and a tiger were hiding that night. Both of them intended to steal a cow and both of them heard the prayer. Neither understood what it meant and both took it to be some strange creature. Both waited for the old woman to go to sleep. As soon as she drifted off to sleep the thief started on his job. He decided that the best way to judge the sprightliest cow was to feel their arse. The one who jumped the most wold be the one he would take. So he started feeling the cows' arse. The tiger was also hiding amongst the cows. As soon as he felt the thief's hand on his arse the tiger gave a jump. The thief thought that this was a very sprightly cow so he twisted its tail and drove him away. The tiger meanwhile thought that the one who felt his arse and twisted his tail was none other than the long-legged one about whom the old woman had prayed. He thus fled towards the forest with all his might.

As the tiger fled with all his speed the thief thought "This is quite a cow. If I do not sit on his back I shall not be able to keep pace." But as the tiger began to enter the forest the thief realised that it was not a cow but rather the long legged one about whom the old woman had prayed.

So he hung on to the neck and tried to choke the tiger. When still the pace did not lessen, the thief climbed down to the tail and clung for his dear life. The tiger thought, "This is not the long legged one, rather the neck twister". So he ran harder. Suddenly the tail came off and the thief
tumbled on the ground with the tail in his hand; yet the tiger ran on deep into the forest with all his might. Freed at last he thought that it was not the neck twister rather the tail-snatcher that had got him. Then thanking his stars that he at least got away alive he went into the jungle to look for his brethren.

The thief had been left with the tail in his hand. He looked at it. He looked at the tail and realised that it was not the long legged one but a tiger. He turned cold with fear. It was pitch dark and in the middle of the night. So he climbed up a mango tree nearby and waited for dawn.

The tigers meanwhile held a meeting. It was a serious matter. They were the kings of the jungle. How could some other creature infringe on their supremacy and snatch the tail of one of their brethren. If this was allowed, soon their supremacy would be challenged and they will be reduced to water-drawers and wood - hewers. Thus they decided to look for the tail snatcher. The entire pack of tigers set out for the task. They found on one. Then at last one of the tigers spotted the thief sitting on the mango tree. He hailed the others towards the sight. They all conferred on the issue and decided that he must be the tail snatcher and that they better get him as early as possible. So they formed an animal, rather tiger ladder by sitting one on top of the other. The thief began to fret. He began to think quickly and hit upon an idea. He yelled out to his earlier friend, the tiger without the tail, "Watch out' you tailless one, watch out!" The Tailless tiger thought that the tail snatcher had some other devious ideas in mind and it was aimed towards him. He thus fled the scene. As soon as he moved the entire ladder of tigers toppled down. The others not knowing what had happened, thought that the tail-snatcher had come after them as well. They too fled the scene.

The thief spent the night on the tree and at dawn he climbed down and went home. He swore never to steal again.

## The Globefish or Gangatope

One afternoon all the fish in the river gathered in order to discuss a campaign against all fish-eaters. All kinds of fish gathered for the meeting, amongst whom were also the common 'Row', 'Borali', 'Sole', 'Kaw-oi', 'Goroi' and even the 'Phool Dharikana'. After the members had assembled they elected the cool-headed old 'Goroi' as the president and the 'sprightly 'Chengeli' as the master of ceremonies. The 'Chengeli' fish then requested the Gangatope or the Globefish to explain the objectives of the meeting. Gantatope greeted the assembly with folded hands and began his address. "Ladies and Gentlemen, first of all expressing my gratitude at your effort to attend this meeting I shall undertake to address our objectives, as our master of ceremonies, Brother Chengili has desired of me. I also hope that any omission or commissions seen on my part will be overlooked by our wise public attributing them to my tender age and inexperience".

The Gangatope continued, "of all the animals who are our enemies the animal that goes by the name 'Man' is the worst. He catches us with fishing nets and other dangerous implements, then he fries us in oil or roasts us in the fire. The various processes by which he eats us are known as frying, boiling, grilling and in various other ways known to him alone. But gentlemen, consider this for a moment, these animals who have been sent by the God Almighty to serve all other animals, instead torture us and then eat us. Go and have a look at this animal's house. You would see how much pain they are taking to serve animals like the cow, goat, buffalo. They supply grass to the cows and horses, they find straws for them to sleep in, they build houses for them and even clean the dung of these animals."
"Fellow-subjects, if you consider the matter you will come to the conclusion that they must have been calves in their early stages of
evolution, for they seem to be very fond of milk. It is seen among all animals and it is well known that they thrive on mother's milk. When you consider these things you cannot help but come to the conclusion that they sadly lack in intelligence and are in no may better than cows. Therefore in my opinion we can finish such an animal as man merely by snapping our fingers.

Fellow-subjects, being just a youth I lack the necessary intelligence and the insight to discuss all the points covering the subject of discussion today. I am not aware of the reason as to why my aunty 'Gedgedi' is not present today in this meeting. If she were present she could have enlightened us more on the subject and told us in detail how to do away with the most wretched animal - Man. The reason why I say she could enlighten us more on the point is because she has a wider mouth. In days gone by it is said my aunt 'Gedgedi' with this same mouth swallowed one hundred crore of soldiers out of one hundred and eighty crore at the time of Kurukshetra. Let us therefore send for her at once so that she may verify what I have said.

And the worthy president of the meeting the bald headed Goroi ordered the master of ceremonies the sprightly 'Chengeli' to go and fetch Mrs. Gedgedi forthwith. He sent a little Goraoi to Mrs. Gedgedis's residence. Without a moments delay the goroi went to her residence as ordered and called out, "Sister Gedgedi, Sister Gedgedi, Are you going to the meeting or not?"

Hearing the Goroi's enquiring, Gedgedi's anger knew no bounds. She snapped back, "You slave, you who eat you own offspring. Go, tell them, I won't go." The Goroi had no choice but to go back and report his failure. The Gangatope then volunteered to be the messenger to his Aunty Gedgedi's house and then escort her to the meeting. Sister Gedgedi aware of her rude behaviour was nevertheless also aware that she could not
disregard the assembly's wishes. She was thus getting ready to go and was applying 'Sindur' when Gangatope appeared on the scene. "Kanchanmati Aai, Kanchanmati Aai, are you coming to the meeting?" The way Gangatope addressed her had a smoothing effect on Gedgedi Ao and She replied delightedly, "Is it our Master Gangadhar? Come along let us go." Gangatope was thrilled when his bad-tempered aunt spoke so sweetly to him. He was quite proud to have achieved this result. And the more he pondered the more be began to swell with pride. Just as they were about to reach the meeting he felt so proud that there came a curious noise from his stomach as if he had been shot, and it burst. The noise that this bursting created seemed like a gun shot and all the fishes gathered there, were frightened out of their wits and fled in all directions.

## The little son

Once upon a time there lived an old couple who were blessed with a baby boy. Being blessed with a child at so late a stage in life the old couple was very thrilled. The old man therefore went to the astrologer in order to select a name for the child. The astrologer suggested the child be named 'Numal' since the child was very young. [Numal means the little one.]

The old man thanked the astrologer and offered him water and a 'gamocha' and a coin, and set off homewards. And lest he forget the name he repeated the it to himself on his way. But gradually as he as repeating he never realised that 'Numal' changed to 'Nemel'. Now Nemel had a different meaning altogether. It meant 'not to let go'. And thus repeating 'Nemel' the old man happened to pass by a river. A merchant after a prolonged business tour had just ordered his boat to take sail, when suddenly this old man's continuous chanting of the word 'Nemel' came floating through the air. Taken aback because the content of the word was inauspicious for his new beginning the merchant asked his sailors to hold sail. When the old man came close to the merchant's boat he asked the man as to why he forbade them to set sail when he had waited long for that auspicious moment. And instead of replying the old man kept repeating the name lest he forget it. The merchant and his troup became very angry and the merchant ordered the old man be beaten up thoroughly. Thus after being thrashed the old man forgot 'Nemel' and began chanting 'Nohobor hol' which meant 'not meant to be' and lest he forgot, he again chanted the name.

Now this time he came across a smartly dressed man who, on hearing 'Nohobor hol', took the chant as a slight meant towards his fine attire. He thus gave another thrashing to the old man. As a result the old
man again changed his chant from 'Nohobor hor' to "Itot ke hito sora" the meaning of which is 'one worse than the other'. Two men with goiterous neck were passing by. They obviously took the old man's mutterings to be intended for them and gave him another sound thrashing.

At last the old man reached home. He related his tale of woe to his wife who expressed great anguish for his bad luck. Then she enquired about the child's name. Then he realised that he had forgotten the name. She good naturedly waved it off and asked him to plough the land at the back of the garden and get tender rice plants. The adjective being used was 'Numolia'. On hearing the word numolia, the old man remembered the original name given by the astrologer which was 'Numol'. Then remembering all the thrashings that he received on the way he took it out on his wife and told her, "If you knew his name why did you bother to send me to the astrologer."

Anyway they named the child 'Nomol' and then lived happily ever after.

## The fortune-teller

Once upon a time in a certain village there lived a man called 'foring ${ }^{11} \mathrm{He}$ had a wife who was very selfish by nature. They did not have any children. It was sometime in January. It was cold and drizzling. Foring woke up this particular morning and expressed his desire to have 'pithas'. He asked his wife, "I have a great desire to have pithas. Would you please make some for me?" The wife replied "But where is the Bordhan ${ }^{3}$ to make pithas. We do not have any more in the granary. Foring was dismayed. "That means I do not get to eat pithas" said he. His wife then suggested, "Why don't you go to somebody's house and ask for a little bit of bordhan". Foring was pensive for a while. He did not like his wife's idea. Then suddenly an idea occured to him and he brightened. He picked up an ‘endi shawl' and made off towards the village.

A determined Foring soon came upon a neighbour who was getting his paddy trodden by the cattle to get the grain. He invited himself into their house and made himself comfortable by making banal conversations about the food, weather, etc. By then the grain had been removed from the chaff. 'Foring' suddenly complained of an acute stomach-ache. He rolled on the grain and writhed in pain. And the endi shawl was all along wrapped around him. `Foring' was careful to roll several times so that the wrapper becomes thickly stuck with grain. When he finally went home and shook the wrap, at least five seers of grain could be measured. The excited wife first took out the rice from the paddy and then started making the preparations for the pithas. That evening after she had prepared the dinner, she started on the `pithas'. `Foring' went to bed after dinner. After

[^6]she finished making, one by one she started eating the pithas and finished most of it. Finally she managed to keep away only a few in a small bowl and called out to her husband 'Foring', "I have finished making the pithas. They are here in a small bowl. But there is one condition. Tomorrow morning whoever gets up later than the other gets to eat two-thirds of the pitha and the other who gets up early eats one-third of the pithas". $\sim$ Foring' sleepily agreed to this condition and both of them went off to sleep.

The next day both of them pretended to be fast asleep. Neither wanted to wake up lest he be the first and get less pithas. Both waited for the other to get up. It was almost noon when `Foring' decided that he could no longer afford to go on sleeping. Who would plough his fields and look after them? Let it be his wife who gets to eat two-thirds of pithas, he did not care anymore. When ‘Foring' woke up his wife called out, "You have woken up earlier than me, you lose the condition and will eat only one-third. `Foring' nonchalantly replied,"So be it."
`Foring' picked the bowl to have his share of ‘pithas’ and found only a handful. Surprised at the small quantity he asked her, "where are the rest of the pithas?" She called back. "All the pitha that I prepared are in the bowl. There is no more. ‘Foring' was very surpirsed at this. He just could not believe that five seers of bordhan had given only that much pithas. Just then his eye happened to stray on the 'dola' \({ }^{1}\) which was simply hung on the wall. On the 'dola' were the traces of the pithas which she had prepared and kept before eating them and putting the rest in the bowl. `Foring' counted them and found at least three scores. He did not tell his wife anything but kept quiet and went outside. She came out to see him off with the pan and bettle - nut, when `Foring' gently sang out.

[^7]When 'Foring' thus sang out, this woman understood that Foring knew the actual number of pithas being cooked and her mischief involved. Embarassed at being found out she said nothing but merely picked up her pitcher and went to the river to fetch water. At the river bank she met other women and began gossiping. 'Foring's wife proudly announced to the other women that her husband was a fortune-teller i.e. a 'Sarabjan'. And very quickly the news spread and it came to the known that 'Foring' was a fortune - teller.

In the meantime a man in the village had lost his black cow. After searching for her everywhere he gave up hope and went to 'Foring' to enquire whether he could help. It so happend that Foring had seen the black cow that morning behind his back yard. So when the owner of the cow enquired about it, Foring simply told him to go behind his house and look for the cow. The excited man quickly found his cow and soon the news spead that 'Foring' was quite an astute sarabjan. The news spread fast and even came to the King's ears. Around that time the king had lost a necklace worth about a lakh of rupees. He made considerable effort to find it but it was simply untraceable. Finally the king sent his soldiers to fetch 'Foring'. Poor Foring was now in the soup. If he did not turn up the king would kill him, if he did turn up the king would still kill him if he revealed that he was not a sarabjan. He could not think of a way out. Eventualy leaving everything in the hands of god, Foring set off for his royal venture. The king gave him a royal reception and invited him into the inner chambers where he was offered snacks and savories, curd-milk, `Kumal rice1, and jaggery, etc.

The king had two queens. One was named Hadoi and the other was named Madoi. Hadoi was the one who had taken the king's necklace and

[^8]kept it for herself. When she heard of this man her fears became double fold. She tried to talk to him on the sly. She was peeping through the walls of the room where he was being entertained and tried to catch his eye. 'Foring' too was cold with fear. He wondered what the next course of action should be. So he told him, "Ha! Doi", eat well today for you know not what happens to you tomorrow". Hadoi, who with her guilty conscience did not know the real meaning, at the mention of her name and misread the entire meaning of the sentence. She ran out from her hiding place, fell at his feet and pleaded, "O sarabjan, please do not tell about me. I beg you. I shall give you whatever you want." The sarabjan did not require any more explaination to know that she was the culprit. He told her sternly "My lady, I shall not tell about you. But you must return the necklace and keep it in the King's casket. According to the `sarabjan' the queen kept the necklace in the King's casket.

The next day `sarabjan' was summoned to the king's presence where the king enquired who the culprit was, the 'sarabjan' replied, "swargadeo, this servant of yours does not find any culprit in his calculations. My feeling is that you check your casket again. The necklace should be there". The king ordered the casket to be brought into the darbar and after going through the contents found his necklace. The king was very happy and pleased. He rewarded the sarabjan with lots of riches and made him a courtier in his palace.

One day the king held a foring (a dragon fly)in his hand and asked him, "Can you tell me what is here in my hand?" The sarabjan thought now he would be exposed as a fraud, so sadly he sang out :
"Said I one on counting,
said I one on seeing,
Said I hai doi and out came the necklace,

But now has come the time for Foring to die."
The king did not know that the sarabjan's name was Foring. So on hearing the name foring in the last sentences the king thought that he had guessed the insect in his hand. The king was very pleased and rewarded him by putting his own garment around Foring.

On another day the king took a snail in his hand and asked the sarabjan to guess what it was. Now snail in Assamese is 'holuk'which sounds very close to another Assamese word holu ku which means to slip out. So when the sarabjan was thus asked, he though it was better to confess. So he replied, "Swargadeo, each time I have managed to slip out viz `holuku'. The king mistook holuku to be 'holuk' and before he could continue, the king expressed his pleasure and rewarded the sarabjan again with lots of riches.

After this our clothes became dirty and we too had to return home.

## The tale of a hingora fish

One day a poor man went fishing. After a long laborious day he caught only one Hingora fish. He took it home and just as he was about to kill the fish, the Hingora fish cried out, "Brother, please do not kill me. I am the king of Hingora fish. I shall graze your cow everyday." Hearing this, the man did not kill the fish, fed him properly and sent him to graze his cow. The Hingora fish sat on the cow's rear and drove him by periodically stinging him. Everyday he drove the cow in the same manner. One day they strayed deep into the forest and came upon a monstrous demon. This demon seeing such a good catch gleefully greeted them. The minuscule Hingora fish challenged the demon "O demon, wait ! If you are able to settle scores with me then you can lay your hands on this cow". The demon burst out laughing on hearing this challenge. He picked up the fish with the intention of crushing it when suddenly he yelled in pain. The demon begged and pleaded for mercy. So the Hingora fish asked "What will you give me in return ?" "Anything, that you ask for", replied the demon. The Hingora fish then let the demon go. The demon then vomitted a gold ring from his stomach and gave it to the Hingora fish and said, "If you keep this ring on a bannana leaf and tend it properly then your house will soon be filled with gold." The Hingora fish took the ring and returned home. He gave the ring to his master and conveyed the instructions carefully and soon the house was overflowing with gold. They became very rich. In order to show their gratitude the daughter of the house was married to the Hingora fish.

One day the Hingora fish slipped out of the house to bathe in the river. He shed his fish form and assumed the form of a human. Just then his wife came upon the scene and saw the entire process. She quickly picked up the costume of the Hingora fish and burnt it. When the costume
was burnt the Hingora fish became a handsome young man. Everybody became very happy and the young couple lived happily ever after.

## The tale of a strong man

A certain kingdom was facing a crisis. There lived a very ferocious lion and an atrocious elephant. Both of them were causing havoc in the kingdom. The king sent out his royal messengers that whoever would sucessfully kill these bloodthirsty animals would be rewarded handsomely. Many people tried but failed. There happened to be a man who wanted to die because he was very unhappy. With that in mind he mixed some poison in some rice powder and set off towards that kingdom. On the way he left the rice powder under a tree and went to a river nearby to have some water. At that time the rouge of an elephant came and ate the rice powder and died! This message was conveyed to the king. The delighted king heaped rewards on the man. When he asked him as to how he killed the elephant, the man replied "With just one box."

The king then asked the man whether he could kill the tiger too. The man replied "Swargadeo, I can kill the tiger too." The king then said, "you have to kill him by the day after tommorow." The man went back to his place and started thinking how to kill the tiger. When the day dawned by which the tiger was to be killed the man fearfully entered the forest with some ropes and a pounding log. After this he climbed a huge tree in the forest and started singing aimlessly 'ka,ka,' and 'ko,ko'. The birds in the trees were also twittering. The tiger came to the man and asked him "What are you doing". The man replied "Brother, I'am teaching them to sing," Then the tiger asked "Brother, will you teach me such songs too? The man replied, "How can I teach you? You are a tiger and I am human. Are you not going to eat me?" The tiger swore three times that he would not eat him. Then he pleaded, "please teach me songs like that now," The man, thus convinced, climbed down the tree. He bound the tiger's legs tightly with the ropes and started hitting him hard with the pounding log.

The tiger cried out in pain, "Brother. I do not want to learn singing anymore. Please leave me. The man replied "Come on, learn it properly." In this way while he was hitting the tiger died. The king was very pleased with him and gave him more rewards. The king then proposed, "Today I shall bring another strong man to wrestle with you. If you win I shall heap more rewards on you."

That night both the wrestlers were sharing the room. This man told the other, "Brother I have killed an elephant and a tiger with one box. How can you hope to win against me ? Why do you want to fight me at so late an age?" This frightened the man considerably. During the night the man fled. In the morning the king looked in vain for the wrestler. He then rewarded this man again. After that the kingdom became free from the atrocities of the elephant and the tiger.
"The jackfruit wiped out"
I came back".

## The tale of the kite's daughter

In a certain kingdom there lived a blacksmith. He was very wealthy but he was always sad because he did not have a son. Every time his wife gave birth to a baby girl. But once again she was pregnant. This time the blacksmith told her, "If you happen to give me another daughter I shall sell you off somewhere." The poor frightened woman went to her mother's place for her delivery. But when the baby came she found that it was a baby girl again. Not knowing what to do, she packed her in a vessel, covered it with a cloth, put another vessel on top of it and sailed it into the river.

The vessel sailed downstream and came to be spotted by a washerman who was washing clothes on the river bank. Curious about the floating object the washerman swam towards it. He lifted the vessel to find what it was. And Lo behold! there was a new-born baby girl. No doubt somebody had put her in the vessel and sailed her off! Gently he picked the baby from the vessel when a kite appeared from nowhere and snatched the baby girl away from his hands. She took the baby far away to a banyan tree where she had made her nest. All her maternal instincts were aroused when she saw the lovely helpless baby girl. She decided to keep the baby and raise it.

The kite would fly out everyday and snatch any good food that she saw from the people and feed the baby girl. In this way she raised the baby and slowly she grew up. Now she needed clothes. The kite again started going out and snatching clothes, ornaments, jewellery, trinkets etc. If she saw a nice 'reha-mekhla she would swoop down snatch it and take off even before anybody realised what was happening. One day a princess happened to be bathing in the river. She had hept all her jewelery on the banks. The kite swooped and flew away with that as well. In this way she
made away with combs, looking glasses,'sindur', hair oil and whatever cosmetics that a young girl could desire.

Slowly the girl grew up and became a lovely young woman. One day her kite-mother told her "Aai, now that you have grown up I am always worried. What if something happens while I am away. Hence I will teach you a song. Whenever you need me sing it to me like that and I shall come back from wherever I am,
"O the breeze that shakes the leaves of this banyan tree
Bring my kite mother
At once before me."
One afternoon the kite's daughter was combing her hair when a strand of her hair fell down. Beneath the tree happened to be a merchant who was sitting. The heat of the afternoon had tired him and he happened to be resting. When this strand fell on him he was very surprised. He looked around to see to whom it belonged. He could find no one when suddenly his eyes strayed to the tree top where he found this girl sitting. The merchant called out to her, "Who are you? Are you a heavenly being or human? or are you an 'Apsara" Or are you a witch? Why are you sitting on the tree-top this after noon? This girl had never seen or met any human being before. So she was feeling awkward and did not know how or what to respond. She decided to fetch her mother and sang out the song.
"O the breeze that shakes the
leaves of this banyan tree,
Bring my kite-mother
At once before me."
The moment she sang out like that the kite came flying and landed in front of her. "Aai, why did you call me? The daughter pointed out to the man below and explained the situation. When the kite saw the handsome young merchant she thought it would be very nice if she could marry her
daughter to this man. With this in mind, she came down from the tree and explained to the merchant about the girl right from the beginning and asked whether he would like to marry her. The merchant told the kite, "I am a very wealthy man. I also live in luxury. But I have seven wives. If you think you still want me to marry your daughter I promise that I shall always keep her happy and never give her any cause to complain." The kite thought about this situation for a long time and finally she decided to accept him. She explained everything carefully to her daughter, brought her down and married her to this man. Tearfully she bade them farewell and told the merchant to take good care of her. She also told her daughter that she could still sing the song whenever she needed her and she would be right there.

The merchant looked after his youngest wife with a lot of love and care. The other wives started getting jealous. The kite's daughter being so beautiful would make the merchant disregard them, they thought. Thus they became antagonistic towards her and created as much problems for her as possible.

One day all the wives got together and planned to put her in trouble. They told her, "You have come here like a delicate darling. All this while we have been cooking and washing for you. Go and do the cooking today." But the kite's daughter had never cooked in her life. So she went to the end of the banana cultivation at the back and started singing and calling her mother tearfully,
"O the breeze that shakes the
leaves, of this banana tree,
Bring my kite mother
At once before me."
When she thus sang out, the kite flew down in front of her and asked, "What is the matter? Why have you called me? The daughter
replied, "Aai, my co-wives have asked me to cook food. I do not know how to cook. If I do not cook they will tell our husband and then I don't know what would happen". After listening to this the kite-mother replied, "Aai do not worry at all. Listen to me. I shall tell you how to cook. In a vesselful of water drop a grain of rice and in another vesselful of water drop a stem of herb. Underneath both the vessel put a piece of firewood and then sit outside. You will find that in the vessel would be cooking unlimited rice and curry." When her co-wives sat down for the meal, they placed the banana leaves in front of them. But underneath their banana leaves they had dug holes and covered it with their banana leaves. When the kite's daughter started serving food, they also began their mischief.

As soon as they were served they would tilt the banana leaf and throw everything in the hole underneath and say,"My rice is over, give me some more." They kept doing this again and again. Yet the food cooked was not over. Finally these co-wives gave up and, embarassed, left the dining place.

One day the kite's daughter's co,-wives asked her to clean the cowshed. She went inside the shed and cried out to her mother,
"O the breeze that shakes the leaves
of this banana tree,
Bring my kite-mother
At once before me."
The kite-mother appeared before her and asked her. "Why have . you called me?" The daughter replied" I have been asked to clean the cowshed and I know not how." The kite replied "Do not worry. Take a strand out of the broom stick and sweep it gently from one end of the cowshed to the other you will find that the shed will be swept clean. The kite flew away and the daughter followed the instructions. That day the shed looked even cleaner than usual. When the merchant came back, he
was very pleased to see the sparkling shed. This endeared to him his youngest wife all the more.

The Assamese new year, Bohag Bihu (ie April) was approaching. The merchant gave about five seers of cotton to each wife and asked them to weave shirts, vest, gamocha and other clothes for him. He also said, " I shall see who weaves the finest for me." No sooner had he said when all the wives got busy with their task. Only the kite's daughter was not getting ready for the task. She did not know how to. The co-wives were very happy. They thought, "Where will she go this time? How will she prove herself? She is trapped." Again she went to the end of the backyard and tearfully sang out for her mother. And once again she appeared and asked her what was matter. When the daughter told her about her task her mother consoled her and told her how to proceed. "Get four bamboo caskets and fill them with some cotton. After you have done that plug them up. Don't do anything else. When your husband asks for his clothes on Bihu, hand him the caskets. He will find his clothes ready." So after her kite mother left, she went about following the instructions and waited for the D-day to dawn.In the meanwhile her co-wives toiled hard over their task. They were glad to see the youngest one being idle after stuffing the bamboos. "Now shall come the time for her to be exposed. Let's wait for the fun to begin." They said and waited.

When Bihu finally came one by one the wives stepped forward with their woven clothes and presented the husband. When the youngest one finally stepped up to present her work, the other started giggling. Seeing only the bamboo caskets, the merchant also became enraged and demanded, "What are you giving me? Where are your woven clothes?" She could only reply. "Open the caskets and see." When the merchant did open the caskets, he was surprised to find beautiful woven clothes. They were so finely woven that the work of the other wives looked very shabby
in comparison. The merchant cut into pieces the other sets of clothes and adorned the beautifully woven set of his youngest wife.

Slowly the kite's daughter's co-wives came to know that a kite comes and teaches their youngest co-wife all the tricks. So one day one of them spied on her and learnt the song by. which to call the kite. She then entered the cow's shed and sang out for the kite-mother. When the kitemother came in the cow's shed she banged her with the broom-stick, killed her and buried her under the cow dung. Poor little kite's daughter had no idea about her mother's fate. She sang out again and again for her mother. But how could the kite-mother respond to her daughter when she was no longer alive? Then the kite's daughter came to understand that her cowive's must be responsible for her kite mother's disappearance. Poor woman now had nobody to turn to and she started weeping quietly.

A little while later the merchant set off on his busines tour. Before going he told his seven wives repeatedly not to harm or cause any hurt to their youngest co-wife.

One day a trader came with lots of trinkets and moored his boat near the merchant's house. The merchant's wives crowded exitedly around his boat. They then hit upon an idea.They persuaded the trader to sell his goods to them in return for a beautiful young girl who they'd give him. The trader agreed to their proposal. They then went to the house and persuaded the youngest wife to join them and see the trader's wares. She refused saying that the merchant had forbidden her to leave the house. However trying their best persuasive skills they managed to lure her out of the house into the trader's boat. And as planned earlier as soon as she set off foot on the boat, the trader sailed away with her

The trader took her to his house and made her wait on his dry fish. The trader's house was on the river bank. The kite's daughter had no
choice but to follow the trader's orders. As she waited on the dry fish she sang out,
"The potter's wife who was my mother
Let me drift along the river
The kite, who was my mother brought me up,
A merchant prince did marry me
My seven co-wives did sell me
to a fisherman,
Who has made me the custodian
of his dried fish."
But in the meanwhile the merchant was returning home from the other side. He soon heard the melancholy song of the kite's daughter. On hearing her song he manevoured the boat onto the riverside to where the song came from. When he saw his youngest wife there, he asked her what had happened. After everything was related he was very angry.

He then revealed his identity to her and then took her away with him. She was bathed and given a new set of reha-mekhala. The merchant then put her in one of the boxes. He made several holes in the boxes. for her to breathe. When he arrived home he kept that box in his room along with the other boxes. On seeing his wives he asked,." I can see all of you, but where is the kite's daughter? They replied, "She went to her mother's house several days ago and has not come yet." The merchant then said, "I have a feeling that you have done something to her. I shall soon test you to see whether you are telling the truth or not. He got a deep hole dug and filled it up with thorns and thorny bushes. Then he put a string from one end of the hole to the other and told his wives, "Whoever can cross this thread from end to end without falling down is innocent." One by one eachwife was made to cross the thread and each of them fell down into the thorny hole; only the seventh wife was able to cross the hole over the
thread. This seventh wife was actually innocent. She did not know anything about this kite's daughter being sold to the trader became she was cooking in the kitchen at that time.

After this the merchant and his two wives lived happily ever after. As our clothes became dirty we also came back.

## Tula and Teja

Once upon a time there lived a propserous farmer who had two wives. The elder wife was called Alagi and the younger was called Lagi. Alagi had a duaghter named Teja and a son named Kanai. Lagi had a daughter named Tula. Tula was elder to Teja. Lagi used to ill-treat Alagi and her children and the husband being hen pecked dominated by Lagi used to be just a silent spectator to everything. Alagi and her children would eat and dress very poorly while Lagi and her daughter had a luxurious life. Every morning Teja and her borther would eat only dried stale 'poita' rice and go to herd the cows. Jula and her mother would have a spread at home. In the afternoon when the farmer comes back from work Tagi would prepare delicious and rich fod. But sometimes when Alagi would plead the farmer tovisit iher in her run-down house she could offer only 'poita' rice and roasted fish which he would in great fear. But liking Alagi's hospitality much better the farmer increased the frequency of his visits to her. Seeing this Lagi became jealous and decided to get rid of Alagi.

One day Lagi invited Alagi to go fishing Lagi's net fished snali, crab, eel and such liker of things while Alagi's net caught 'Kuri', 'Sani', 'Bhaung', and the like. Lagi became very angry when she could't fish any good variety. She took out her anger on Alagi. On the way home they went to the big pond to take a bath. Lagi suggested, "Sister, why don't you scrub by back. It is full of mud and dirty. After I am finished I shall scrub yours". So after Lagi's back was done, Alagi put her back to be scrubed. But while Lagi was sacrubing she pushed Alagi intothe pond land chanting some magic told her to become a tortoise. After this she stamped and destoryed Alagi's net and threw it away into the jungle and came back home. Nobody had seen what had happened. At house when Alagi's
children did not find theiri mother they asked Lagi, "Aunty, did you see our mother?" Lagi snapped at them, "How can I say where your mother has gone? Does she ever ask me before going out anywhere?" The husband too fearing Lagi, did not bother very much about looking out for Alagi thinking she must have died somewhere. The children too, not finding their mother, could do little else but cry and hope for her to come. The next day too the children went to herd the cows because if they did not go they would only be beaten up by Lagi.

The poor children bore the sadness in their heart and carried on with their life. One day in the blistering heat of the afternoon both the children felt very thirsty. They went to the pond to drink water, when they heard their mother call out. Their mother, the tortoise came up to the shallow water and said, "My dear children, Teja and Kanai, your aunty pushed me into the water and made me a tortoise. Both of you look thin, you haven't been eating, I suppose. I have brought some 'Poromun' from the water-princess. Here bring some arum leaves and take this. Eat it up quickly and let nobody know about this. Come here everyday around this time. I shall always fetch some for you. Be careful that your step-mother does not have any idea about this, otherwise she will come here and kill me." After this the children would go to their mother everyday and have the 'poromun'. Gradually they became healthy and even started glowing. Their complexion became a lovely golden brown. Meanwhile their step mother was getting jealous about their looks and suspicious about them. She thought, "How can these children look so nice? Their complexion is glowing and has become a rich golden brown when in fact I starve them. And look at my poor Tula. Inspite of feeding her all the nice things she hasn't become lovely. I am sure these children eat something somewhere when they go to graze the cows." Thus thinking she sent Tula to graze cows with them the next day. She also told Tula to keep a keen look-out as
to what Teja and Kanai ate in the course of the day. That day Teja, Kanai and their mother were in a fix as to how to have the 'poromun' when Tula was around. Teja sent Tula to fetch a cow which had strayed away, and seizing this opportunity the brother and sister pair quickly went to their mother and had their share of 'poromun' that day. Tula however had seen her step-brother and sister eat something from a distance. So she asked them what they were eating. At first they were reluctant and kept denying. But then Tula begged and pleaded, "What have you eaten? I beg and plead you, please tell me and let me have a share too". Finally both the children decided that Tula was innocent enough and not to be blamed. So they made her promise and told her, "If you ever tell your mother we shall not share it with you anymore. You have to promise not to tell your mother." So Tula then promised not to say anything about it to her mother. The children then pointed out to where they had thrown the arum leaves and told her to lick the rest off. Thrilled that she was at least allowed to have a share of their mysterious food she jumped at the offer and licked the leaves clean. That day when the children returned home Tula was looking rosy cheeked as well. At once her mother gathered that Tula had eaten the same thing with Teja and Kanai. So she asked Tula about it which Tula promptly denied. She had promised the other two children about it. But when when her mother pestered and finally threatened to put chilli powder in her eyes Tula relented and told her everything. Lagi then understood the story behind the whole thing. She realised that it was Alagi who after becoming a tortoise fed the children something. And she planned to kill the tortoise.

The next day Lagi put her plan to action. She lay in her bed and put some broken pieces of pot under the matress. Then as she tossed and turned, the cracking of the earthen pieces sounded like the cracking of her bones. So when she moaned in pain "Oooh! Aaah!" her husband
concerned at her discomfort, asked, "What is it my dear?" His wife replied, "Oh dear, what can I say; I have severe pain in my hones. Can you not hear the cracking of the breaking bones. If something is not done immediately I shall die. ' ' The sincere husband thinking that his wife was dying rushed, to the fortune teller to enquire about the matter. Lagi had already bribed the women with two silver coins. So when the husband enquired about Lagi 's illness he told her that she would be cured only when she was fed with the meat of the big tortoise from the village pond. The husband told about this to the villagers. Before the villagers could go and catch the tortoise the children went to the pond and warned their mother about everything. Seeing the tears in her childre's eyes the tortoise told her children'. "I shall not be caught by anybody's. When everybody gives up, both of you come with a broken jakoi. I shall climb into your jakoi. But when they cook my meat and give you to eat refuse it. Have your food that day with a little bit of oil and chutney. And when I am being killed and prepared to be cooked, ask the butcher for my two front paws. Then take those paws and bury them near the pond. There I shall become a hibiscus tree and shall be there for you whenever you need me."

The day dawned and everybody in the village went to catch the tortoise. But try as much they couldn't catch. Finally when everybody had given up, Teja and Kanai stepped forward with a broken jakoi and announced to the gathering, "We shall be able to catch the tortoise with this broken jakoi. Everybody laughed sarcastically, "You little rascals, how do you think you are going to net the tortoise in that." said everybody pointing to the broken jakoi. After this Teja dipped the jakoi only for about three or four times when the tortoise climbed into the jakoi. All the people standing there were surprised at this.

Meanwhile when Lagi heard about the tortoise being netted she forgot her pretence and happily jumped from her bed when the tortoise
was being butchered for the grand feast. The two children sat near the butcher quietly and asked for the two front paws and buried them near the pond. Everybody had a grand feast of tortoise curry and rice. Teja and Kanai pretended to eat with them, but actually kept throwing the meat and had their food with chutney.

The place where they had buried the front paws of their tortoisemother grew into a lovely hibiscus shrub and shaddock tree. The hibiscus tree became a very colourful sight and the shaddock tree became heavy with the weight of the fruit. Teja and Kanai would rest underneath these trees every afternoon, talk to their mother and generally spend a lot of time together.

One day the king came that way. Seeing the beautiful hibiscus tree and the shaddock shrub he wanted to wear the hibiscus flower and have some of the shaddock fruit. So he sent his minister to fetch some flowers and fruits. The children, seeing the minister approaching, stood up and told him, "This hibiscus shrub and the shaddock tree belongs to us. If the king wants anything, ask him to come here personally." The Minister took the message back to the king. When he saw the two sweet children he at once felt an affection for them and came to them. Meanwhile Alagi had coached her son how to behave and what to say when the king came to them. So when the king came, Kanai kneeled in front of the king and said "Swargadeo, are you willing to marry my sister Teja ? If you are, then you can take my flower and fruit. ' Seeing the young blooming Teja the king felt attracted towards her and said, ' All right, that is fine. I shall marry her. But she is as yet young. when she grows up I shall definetly marry her. ' 'Teja had a pet 'mynah' bird. Everyday when she would be grazing the cows she would feed the mynah with little insects and other things. Kanai gave a little pomegranate plant and this mynah and said, "Swaragdeo, we being poor people you may forget us. So I am giving you
this plant and the mynah bird. When the plant will flower and bear fruit and the mynah starts to sing, you will know that my sister Teja, has grown up. Then Swargadeo will come and marry her." The king agreed and after taking some flowers and fruits set off towards the city. When he reached his palace, he planted the pomegranate plant near his window and kept the mynah in a golden cage in his bedroom.

Many days passed. The plant began to bear fruit and the mynah started cooing as well. Teja had been growing meanwhile. The mynah then began talking as well. But the king still did not remember about Teja. One day during his siesta when the king was resting, the mynah called out,
"The time trickles by,
As the pomegranate becomes ripe,
The mynah begins to sing,
How has the king forgotton,
That Teja bai has grown up".
The king looked around and not seeing anybody, continued his siesta. So the mynah called out again,
"The pomegranate falls down ripe,
As Teja bai becomes a woman,
But even then the king does not remember."
Now in a flash the king remembered everything. He went to check the pomegranate plant and saw that it had borne the furit and the fruit was about to fall down. So the king ordered his entourage, changed into his royal gear, ordered the minimum preparations for the wedding and set off to marry Teja.Unfortunately the king had forgotton to inform his queen about this. So after the king set off the worried queen sent for her old maid and asked, "Do you have any idea as to where the king has left for?". The old maid replied, "Of course 1 do. It is only you who are ignorant of all these things. Your king has gone to marry another queen. I believe she is
the daughter of a rich farmer and her name is Teja". The queen started crying loudly on hearing the news from her old maid. Then the maid consoled her saying, :Do not cry my lady. Everything will be all right if you listen to me. When Teja arrives here with the king donot allow her to disembark from the boat. Which ever place she chooses to disembark find a suitable excuse for not allowing her. But then keep a contigency plan lest she still disembarks. At the doorstep where Teja will be welcomed in, see that the banana trees planted there are cut at the bottom. Then keep them standing so finely that nobody can realise the mischief and when Teja steps in it will fall down even at her breath. Then cut the frame of the door in such a way that it strips out just as her clothes touch by. Similarly in the bedroom cut the legs of the bed in such a manner that as oon as Teja and the king sleep on it the bed collapses. When all this will happen the king will send away Teja thinking she is an inauspicious woman."

The queen accordingly followed her old maid's instructions. The king had meanwhile arrived at Teja's house and married her. At the time of leaving her father's house, Teja sang and pleaded with her father to give her share of dowry. In her song she asked her father to give her half the number of caskets, utensils, cows and buffallos. But her step-mother came forward and rudely refused to part with anything; not even a piece of straw. Teja was very sad when she heard her mother. She quietly lef home with the king and merely pleaded for her brother.
"My one and only brother, must come with me forever".
Teja then left her father's house without even turning to look back once. The moment she left the house, all the wealth and the livestock went afer Teja. So then her father pleaded with her to look back at least once.
"O my dear Teja
Look back at least once,
O my Lakshmi Teja

Look back at least once."
Hearing her father Teja turned her face back ever so slightly. When a quarter of the things that had gone after her went back to her father. That is why to this day when a girl leaves her father's house after her marriage she looks back towards her house, so that she does not take away the wealth rather 'the Lakshmi' alongwith her.

The queen had in the meantime gone to the river bank at the behest of her maid and was siting at the place where the hoat would dock. As soon as the boat bearing Teja came to the main dock the queen obstructed the way and cried out loudly.
"Do not land this way Teja,
The king bathes here."
Poor Teja went off to a different dock but the queen obstructed her there also.
" Do not land this way Teja,
The king's rice is washed here".
In this way whichever dock Teja went to land, the queen obstructed her. But fortunately for Teja the king arrived on the scene. When Teja saw the king she told him helplessly.
"Hear, hear O powerful king,
The queen here calls me an outsider."
The king replied,
"O pray let her say dear Teja,
I shall be the king and you my queen."
Thus saying the king helped Teja from the boat through the dock where he bathed. The queen meanwhile hurried back to the palace and waited for the newly weds to arrive. When Teja reached at the gate where the banana plant was placed to welcome her home, her dress accidently
touched the banana plant. This caused the plant to fall off whereon the queen promptly remarked.
"Where have you come from, inauspicious woman
You have come and pulled down the banana trees."
Then as Teja steeped inside, the hinges of the door which was already turned loose came off and fell down. The queen did not fail to pass he remark again,
"Where have you come from, you inauspicious woman, You have stepped in this house and the door has come off".

Then when Teja went to sit on the royal chair, the chair gave way and once again the co-wife climed irritatingly.
"You inauspicious Teja,
You have come and broken this royal chair".
Finally as Teja climbed into the royal bed and the led too collapsed, her patrince gave way and she called out to her king husband.
"Hear, O hear, you powerful king,
The queen here calls me an outsider."
The king called back to Teja and consoled her once again.
"O pray let her say dear Teja,
I shall be the king, and you my queen".
After than incident Teja began to live in the palace as the queen. Meanwhile Teja's stepmother was writhing in jealously. How could Teja become the queen while her poor Jula languished at home! So she thought of a plan. A few darp later she set off towards the royal palace where she enacted a scene of great sorrow for, being parted from Teja. "Nobody at home is happy ever since Teja has got married. I am sure the poor thing here too must be dying to go home for a while. I have herefore come to take her home with me for a while." Everybody taking her at her word did not see any evil in Teja going home. At home the step-mother
petended to pamper her looking after all her needs. But she kept looking for an opportunity to execute her plan.

One day at the behest of her mother, Tula came up to Teja and started admiring her jewellery. "Teja dear, how lovely are the ornaments given by the king. Do you think I could try them on once?" Teja not seeing any harm in it, let her sister wear her jewellery. No sooner had Teja given her jewellery her step mother called her aside and said she wanted to take a look at her hair for lice. As she went through the hair she quickly pushed a small piece of iron, cast a spell on it and told her to become a little common mynah. Teja thus became a mynah and flew to the rooftop.

The next day the king sent the entourage with the palanquin to fetch Teja. Her step mother dressed Tula up like Teja and sent to the palace replacing her step - daughter. Tula resembled Teja a lot, the king did not suspect anything. Whatever little differences remained he thought that the relaxed holiday which she had at her mother's home must have given her a different look. In the meantime the mynah had followed the king's entourage and made a nest on top of the king's roof.

When Teja had gone home she had started weaving a silk mekhala. Tula however was not good at weaving. When she tried weaving she made knots and made a mess of the mekhala. The mynah who was watching this told Tula,
"Do not touch or ruin my loom.
You better put it back".
The king who had been hearing this looked around and not seeing anything, brushed it aside. A couple of days later the king was playing dice with Tula when the mynah flew down and sang out.
"Don't you realise, O king
That you are playing with your sister-in-law.

The king at first did not pay attention, when the maynah sang out again. This time the king could not ignore the words of the mynah. He stood up and quietly went inside. He took two laddus and said, "If you eat the one on the right you are closely related to me. And if you eat the one on the left then you are not related to me at all." As soon as the king said this the mynah flew down and ate the laddu on the right hand. The king picked up the bird and ran his hand over the bird. He felt something rough near the head and then saw a piece of iron, so he pulled it out. And at once in front of him the bird transformed into Teja. The king was astounded.

The king then asked Teja about everything. When he heard her relate the story he summoned the Saudang ${ }^{1}$ and told him to execute Tula at once. After that he asked him to bring Jula's limbs and head in one casket, her flesh in another and her blood in a third.

When this was done, he sent two men to Tula's house instructing them to deliver the casket containing Tula's flesh as deer meat. The other two caskets must be kept with them and after the feast was over at night, to leave the other two caskets and come away early dawn.

When the king's men delivered the meat, Teja's step mother brimming with happiness broke out, "My daughter has already sent me a parcel and the other one had never sent me anything".

That night there was a big feast at home. Everybody had a grand meal but the king 's two men refused to eat anything on the pretext that they had high fever. At night they started singing about the meat that the meat which they had eaten was none else than their own flesh and blood. When the step mother came out and asked the men what they were singing, they dismissed it as nothing but that due to high fever they were not aware of what was happening.

[^9]After this everybody slept, except these two men. Early at dawn they left the two other caskets near the doorstep and went away. In the morning the step-mother looked around for the men. Not finding them she came back and as she was about to go back inside the house she found the caskets. Wondering curiously what it was, she opened it only to find the remenants of Tula. The step-mother than understood everything and started crying her heart out.

## Rubbing salt into the wounded nose

A certain king had seven princess each of whom had married a princess. Every day all the princesses would sit together till late in the evening and weave. In the course of their conversation they would talk about everything in their life beginning from what they had for meals that day.

It was the month of Soit ${ }^{1}$. Bohag ${ }^{2}$ Bihur was fast approaching. As was the custom these princesses were frantically weaving trying to finish finely woven gamucha, a kurta or a challenge ${ }^{3}$ so that they could adorn their husband and sons when they met together in the courtyard to greet each other.

Now all the seven princesses were sitting at their loom. Bihu was almost round the corner. The eldest princess called out to the middle one, "Rukunir's mother, when are you going to your mother's house this time? I shall be able to go only the day before Uruka 4 . Before then I will not be able to finish off my duties and obligation. More than that I do not feel comfortable staying for long in my mother's house along with all the children. You all go three four days prior to Bihu. Before I had children I used to go ten to twelve days before Bihu. We cannot take such liberties now. Our days are over." Rukunir's mother replied, "Well sister, I am also in the same boat. Still I would go a couple of days prior to Bihu. How many days prior to Bihu are you going Gonai's mother?" The one called Gonai's mother replied; I shall go four days prior to Bihu and come back only after my delivery. I hope God takes me safely through this period. If only my Hinamua, were here. He would have had such pleasure being at

[^10]his uncle's house for Bihu. the blind God could find only me to cast his eye." Just then Dhanjoy's mother called out, '`I shall go five days prior to Bihu." The younger middle one quipped, "I too shall go five days earlier and come back after I have performed my Chandra's `Annaprashan ${ }^{1 \times}$

All the six were thus discussing their Bihu plans except the youngest. She bent her head and pretended to be weaving, sighing every now and then. Seeing her, the middle princess told her affectionately, -'Our youngest sister-in-law will come with me to my mother's house. "The youngest one replied." Let it be sister. I shall stay here and have whatever our mother-in-law feeds me, whether it is good or bad. "The elder one interrupted hearing this, "Why won't you go dear sister? You don't have a mother, or father, an elder brother or a younger brother. You don't even have anybody to call your own. We are all going to our parents` house for Bihu. Are you going to stay here alone? When god has placed you so unfavourably what else can be done? We won't feel happy leaving you behind like this."

Tomorrow is Bohag Bihu Today Uruka. Everywhere people are happy and there is a sprightliness in everybody's step. All the married women are getting ready to go to their mother's house. Just then in the evening, a man came to the king's palace and addressed the queen, "Mother I have come to take our little one." The queen was surprised and asked him with raised eyebrows, "who" ? The man replied, "Your youngest daughter-in-law." The queen replied, "She has no relatives. Where have you come from?" The man continued, "No mother, when I was very small I went to my uncle's house and have been raised there. After my parents expired I took possession of all the property and went to my uncle's village and settled there now I have married and established in that village. Since tomorrow is Bihu. I have come to take my small sister
with me. Where is she?" The queen replied, "she is inside. She will come now. If it is true I am very glad. The other daughters-in-law have gone home. I have been feeling troubled that she has no place to go to."

When the youngest princess came out she was very surprised to hear what the man had said. She was not prepared to accept that she had a brother and refused to go with him. The young man however managed to convince the queen by telling her many stories; so finally when the queen told the princess to go she left the palace very reluctantly.

Both of them went and reached a forest after a long time. He took her to a small hut and said, "This is my house. Tomorrow I shall marry you. Now you rest here." Then he called an old woman, "Aai, look after her. I shall go and get the things for our wedding. "So saying he left. The princess then realised that she had fallen in the hands of a thief. She started sweating profusely and, not being able to hold herself, she sat down just then an old woman called out, "Get up my daughter, do not be afraid, do not be sad. You shall have more happiness with my son than at the palace. Come and have some food, that I have cooked." Hearing the old woman the princess felt better and asked "Old mother who are you?" The woman replied, "I am his mother, He is my son. We are good and stylish people. From the towns and cities he has brought gold and silver by hook or crook and has filled up the house. But he has not married as yet. That day he went to the palace to steal. There he had poked his nose and was listening to your conversation. Then you had apparently said that you had no relatives and were crying. That is why he has brought you here. He will marry you. Today he has gone to the village to bring things for the wedding. He will come back tomorrow. Aai, do not feel sad. You will be very happy here." So saying the old woman brought some food for the princess. But she did not even touch the food. She spent the night with the old woman. But in the morning she woke up early and tied the woman
to her bed. Then she took a good speedy horse from the stable and fled. When the princess was fleeing she saw the young man sitting under a tree. Seeing the princess he thought the king had sent his royal soldiers and fled into the jungle. The princess found that underneath the tree were some jewellery and precious stones which he had left behind when he fled. When the princess reached the palace on the horseback with the jewellery everyone was very surprised. Then she explained everything right from the beginning, which amazed everyone.

The thief, on reaching his house, realised that the princess had fled. He released his mother and set off towards the palace. In the evening when the youngest daughter-in-law was talking to her mother-in-law, the thief like before poked his nose through the wall and was listening to their conversation. The clever daughter-in-law sneaked and brought a sharp knife and some "Kharoni". She quickly cut the thief's nose into two and applied some "Kharoni" and sang out.
'The cut nose is covered by Kharoni'.
When the thief started yelping in pain the king's soldiers quickly came and captured him. When the princess identified him as the trickster, the king impaled him.

[^11]
## Tikhor and Chuti-Bai

Once upon a time in a village far away there lived a girl and a boy. The boy was called Tikhor by villagers because he was very clever and since the girl was of short stature, the villagers called her 'Chuti bai'. Being orphans they grew up amongst the villagers by living in different houses.

One day Tikhor told his sister, "Sister dear, everybody is having 'pithas' (Assamese pancakes made of rice flour, jaggery, oil and black sesame). $\sim$ I would like to have some too. Would you make some for me? ‘ - The Sister replied. "How could we, orphans, hope for such a luxury? Where would we in our hand - to - mouth existence find rice flour, jaggery and oil?" Tikhor listened carefully to what his sister said and then asked "Choti bai, would you please give me your endi (a type of material which is very warm yet soft and which has a sticky surface) shawl. I shall get you the rice. " So saying he set off to the village till he reached a house where he found them engaged in the process of separating the chaff from the grain. He wrapped the shawl around him and approached them. He perched himself nearby, and started making jokes. Soon he made himself comfortable with the people and asked for a glass of water. When the man went to fetch water, Tikhor with the shawl on rolled on the rice grain pretending to have a stomach ache. The man came with the water and found Tikhor rolling in pain. Tikhor cried that he had a terrible ache. So the man went in to fetch some oil to apply on the stomach. Tikhor seized the chance and ran away to his sister. He shook the shawl in front of his sister and there was the rice to make the rice flour. Happy though she was, there was still no jaggery and oil. Tikhor asked for a pot and set off again, this time in search of oil. He reached the oil mill where he found them squeezing oil. He asked politely whether he too could stand on the
pump and help them in squeezing oil. The men agreed. Tikhor started singing as well.

Tikhor's sweet voice pleased the millers. After the song was over Tikhor asked the miller for a pan and beatle nut. When the miller went to fetch it Tikhor dipped his pot into the oil vessel and scooted off. Chuti-Bai was very pleased. She said "Very well, but then where is the Jaggery?" Tikhor assured her of that as well. He set off towards the sugarcane fields. There a little distance away from where the men were making jaggery out of the sugar-cane juice, Tikhor set fire to the forest. Then he came running to the men and yelled "Fire! Fire! brothers there is a fire in the forest, soon it will reach your houses as well". The men left the mill and ran towards their homes. Tikhor seized the chance and came home with a lump of jaggery.

Chuta-Bai started preparations for the pancake. It suddenly occurred to her that there was no firewood. Once again she sent out Tikhor for the firewood. He ventured deep into the forest and was cutting down a tree for wood when a tiger came up and said "Halt! who dares cut wood from my forest". Tikhor with his ever ready wit replied "Oh, its you brother dear, I thought being your younger brother I had the liberty to take some firewood from your forest. We are having a feast of pancakes in my house; why don't you join us?" Tikhor obviously struck the right chord with the tiger who replied. "Very well, you may take the wood and yes, I shall come for the feast. But how should I know when to come?" "Oh the day you see smoke rising from our house" replied Tikhor pointing towards his house.

Thus armed with the firewood Tikhor set off home. Both of them had pancakes to their heart's content. Then he set a huge fire of wet hay which gives a lot of smoke. He asked his sister to make pancakes. He kept the first one made of rice flour near the gate, the second one made of
wild yam near the doorway, the third made of soda near the pounding shed. Then Tikhor and his sister climbed the loft and waited for the tiger to come. On seeing the smoke the tiger came to Tikhor's house for the pancake feast. He found the first pancake very tasty. The second one itched and irritated his throat so much that he ate the third one hoping to quell the itching. But the soda only made his throat more sore, so much so that he was not able to bear the throbbing throat and died.

## Champabati

Once upon a time there lived a very rich man. He had two wives. The elder one was Lagi and the younger one Alagi. Both Lagi and Alagi had a doughter each. Lagi managed to poison her husband's ears about Alagi and her daughter. So her husband sent Alagi and her daughter Champabati out of the house and built a house for them in the garbage dump. Both mother and daughter began to lead a miserable life. They had to make a living by begging. Everday Champabati would go to the fields and wait on the paddy. She would drive away the birds that would come to eat the matured, ripe paddy. One day when she was waiting on the raised platform in the fields, she called out,
"Hur, Hur fly away birds do not eat my grain
I shall give you pop corn. "
When she thus called out to the birds she heard a voice call out from the forest,
"Grain shall I have
Rice too shall I have, marry shall I champabati and take her away with me"

Champabati was very surprised when she heard this. She looked around to see who it was, but there was nobody. She went home and told her mother about it. The next day her mother came with her to see what it was about. She asked champabati to repeat what she had sung to the birds.
"Hur, Hur fly away birds,
Do not eat my grains
I shall give you popcorn".
And once again from the forest, the same voice called out.

> "Grain shall I eat,
> Rice too shall I eat.
> Marry shall I Champabati
> And take her away with me"

The astonished mother asked Champa to call out once more and, on receiving the same answer, both mother and daughter went to her father's house. They told about the incident to her husband. The next day her husband and some neighbours went into the forest with Alagi and her daughter. And in front of everyone the same scene was replayed. Champa sang to the birds and the voice called back from the forest in the same manner. Since there was nobody to be found, Champa's father stepped towards the voice in the forest and said, "If you really want to marry Champa, come out and, reveal your identity. I swear 'Truth' three times that if you do I shall hand over Champa to you." When this was announced a huge python came out of the jungle. Everybody ran away on seeing the python but, on Champa's father persuasion, came back. He then invited the python to his house. Alagi and Champabati cried biterly and begged the father not to marry her to the python. But the father instigated by Lagi was determined and, offering a pan and beetle nut, married her off to the python. That night Lagi was very delighted She was sure that Champa would be swallowed up by the python. Champa her mother and the python were put in the run down house. That night Champa and the python were made to sleep in the same room. In the morning Alagi thinking that her daughter had been eaten up went sadly to see her. To her surprise she found Champa was adorned with beautiful new golden jewellery, her, body had a golden glow but the python was nowhere to be found. Lagi and Champa's father came early in the morning to see whether Champa had been swallowed by the python. Both were astounded instead when they saw her all decked up. Now Lagi's greed
and jealousy was aroused all the more and she insisted that her daughter be married to a python as well. So her husband went into the deep forest and brought a python. And in the same manner as in Champa's case, he maried off Lagi's daughter by offering a 'pan' and beetle nut. That night Lagi's joy knew no bounds. She thought that like Champabati her daughter too would be adorned in beautiful golden jevellery.

The daughter and the python were made to sleep in the same room that night. The overjoyed Lagi could not sleep that night. and came to spend the night near her daughter's bedroom. Meanwhile the python was swallowing up her daughter from the leg. The daughter called out, "Aail my legs tickle"

The Mother responded from outside.
"Aai, my son-in-law adorns yours feet with
'Napur pial" ${ }^{2}$.
Slowly the python reached up to her waist. The daughter cried,
"Aai my waist tickles"
The mother responded,
"Aai my son-in-law adorns
you with mekhala."
Then as the python reached the breast, she called away,
"Aai my breast tickles."
The mother called back
"Aai my son-in-law adorns
you with reha."
Then as the python reached the neck, She cried, "Aai, my neck tickles, upto the neck."

[^12]The mother called out,
"Aai my son-in-law adorns you
with beads."
And finally, when the python reached the head Lagi could no longer hear her daughter's voice. She thought that her daughter must he contentedly sleeping now that she had been adorned with beautiful things. Thus thinking, she excitedly opened the door in the morning only to find her daughter missing and the over stuffed python lazily sprawled across. She screamed loudly as she realised what had happend the previous night. When all this was explained to the husband he fell down to the ground and became unconscious. The neighbours all came, criticized the couple and did the next wise thing. They cut open the python took out the daughter and burnt the python's body. After this the husband and Lagi came to hate Alagi and Champabati all the more. They started thinking of ways to get rid of them. Finally, one night both of them went to kill ALagi and Champa with swords in their hands. Suddenly on the way. the python to whom Champa was married, appeared and swallowed the husband and Lagi. Then he carried the sleeping and ignorant ALagi and Champa to a grand house in the midst of the jungle. In the morning, seeing these strange surroundings, the mother and the daughter began to cry. But the snake appeared and said "There is nothing to fear. I have brought you here. And he explained everything that had happened that night. They believed him and both of them settled down to a life there. One day suddenly the mother had fever and she died. Both the python and Champa cried but they reconciled to her death. A few days later when the python had gone out for a walk an old woman came to their house. Since she had not seen a human being for a long time Champa welcomed the old woman, made her comfortable and enquired about her. The old woman replied" Aai, the python whom you think to be your
husband is actually a 'Devta'. Every night when you are sleeping he pinches you to make sure you are unaware and then he comes out from his python guise. He becomes a devta and ascends heaven where he keeps talking with the other devtas. Aai if you desire to have your husband in the guise of a Devta, then tonight you pretend to be fast asleep even when he pinches you to find out. When he thinks that you to are fast asleep he will change into his "Devta" form and ascend heaven. Then you burn his python guise in some burning embers. When you do that he will feel so scorched that he will descend from heaven in that form. When he comes down fan him gently and put him to sleep. In the morning when he wakes up, put a garland on him and accept him as your husband". Champabati gave the old woman a huge vesselful of gold and silver coins and bid her farewell. She did as she was told and found a handsome man standing in front of her. She fell at his feet and accepted him as her husband. From then on both the husband and the wife began to lead a very happy life.

Many days later the old woman came to Champabati's house again during her husbands absence. She asked the old woman to sit down and enquired why she had come again,' The old woman replied, "Aai I have come to tell you a couple of things for your welfare. Tomorrow afternoon when your husband has his lunch insist that you share his plate. And when he agrees do not hesitate one little bit and share the plate. In this way he will love you all the more and will not be able to stay away from you. After the meal, tell him that while eating you had seen several villages in his mouth. Then tell him that you wish to see the universe. He will be very angry when he hears this. He will then jump into the water and ask you whether you want him or want to see the universe. You must say that you want to see the universe. When you say that he will show you the universe and jump into the water and say 'You will see me after six
years. 'But do not be afraid. You sit on the river bank and you will find that he will come back to you after a while".

This delighted Champabati and, being very pleased, she gave the old woman another huge vesselful of gold and silver. The old woman went away very pleased that her mission was completed. Champabati, according to the woman's instruction, asked the husband that she wanted to eat from his plate. Her husband said "I do not like your behaviour" but proceeded to share his plate with her. After the food, Champa asked her husband "I have seen several villages in your mouth while you were eating. "I want to see the universe." Then the husband said," If you want to see the universe, you will not get me." When she was still stubborn he went to the river and said,
"O dear Champa!
Think right and tell me,
You want me or want to see
the universe,"
Champa replied back,
"I fall at your feet and
I plead with you
you I want and see the universe too."

The husband opened the mouth, showed her the universe. He then gave her a golden ring and said," Dear Champa, the old woman according to whose ideas you acted this way was actually my mother. My mother is a Rakshashni. She wanted me to marry another girl but I defied her and married you. She wants to separate you from me so that she can take you to some place and eat you up. If she manages to do that I shall be bound to marry the other girl. But let's forget what has already happened. This golden ring will protect you from not only my mother but everything else
as well. Nothing can touch you as long as this ring is with you. Do not lose this ring otherwise you shall find me again in my mother's house. Now according to my promise, I have to bid you farewell, but remember to take good care of the golden ring." After saying this Champa's husband took a dive into the water. Champa then came to understand everything and began to weep. She left the house and went roaming from one forest to another crying. Meanwhile her so-called mother-in-law devised various means to trap and eat her but the power of the golden ring kept her away. In this manner Champa managed to pass five years and as she entered the sixth year one day suddenly she came upon her husband. She ran and fell at his feet and wept tears of joy and relief. Her husband also wept tears of joy. Both of them started living together and for a long time lived happily.

In the meantime seeing Champabati alongwith her husband made the mother-in-law very angry. She tried various means to get close to Champa. Champa had lost the golden ring as soon as she was reunited with her husband. But still because of her husband's presence no harm could come to her. One day during her son's absence she called Champa and asked her to deliver a letter to a family without her husband's knowledge.

In the letter was written, "she is my sworn enemy; kill her and eat her. Send me a share of her flesh as well." Champa, unaware of the contents of the letter, rushed to deliver it. Just then Champa's husband came and realised the mischief in the entire arrangement, He called out,

> "O dear Champa

Run not so fast.
O wait a while, dear."
Hearing her husband call out, Champabati waited for him. He snatched the letter from her and after reading the contents became so mad
with anger that he beat-up Champa and then he went to his house. Without asking any question he picked up a sword and cut his mother into two pieces. Then Champa and her husband left that village which was full of Rakshashs, and went away to find a new kingdom where they lived happily ever after.

## The tale of a king

Once upon a time there lived a pandit who along with his disciple embarked on a journey to see places. They came to a kingdom where the prices of 'Joha' rice was two paise per seer, ukho ${ }^{2}$ rice was two anna per seer, ghee one anna per seer and oil was one rupee per seer. The pandit and the disciple thought it was a good place to settle down for a while. They thus found a good family to stay with.

One day a thief entered a household near the palace. Unfortunately the thief was caught and produced before the King. The king called the darbar and after a lot of deliberation came to the conclusion that because the tunnel he had was very big therefore the thief was able to crawl through into the house. He thus asked the thief, "Tell me O thief, why did you dig such a big tunnel?" The thief replied,' 'Your majesty, I do not know whether you will cut me or whip me but the fact is that the crowbar was very big. The result is that I dug a big tunnel. "On hearing this response the king announced "Yes that 's true, it isn't this man's fault. Why did the iron smith make such a big crowbar. Go fetch him. It is my order. "The iron smith was summoned. The king asked him. 'O, blacksmith, why did you make such a big crowbar which enabled the thief to dig such a big tunnel into the house?" The iron smith replied, "If I am given a chance to explain I will be vindicated otherwise not." The king replied "All right I am giving you a chance to explain yourself" otherwise you shall be impaled. So the blacksmith continued, 'Swargadeo when I was making the crowbar your mai strayed by that way. While I looked up to see her I hammered an unnecessary time on the crowbar. As a result the crowbar became big." The king decided. "It is indeed true. It is not your

[^13]fault. Let the maid be summoned." The maid responded with folded hands, "Father I do not know whether I shall be whipped or cut into pieces but the fact is that mother (the queen) was about to deliver your baby. That is why I was on my way to call the mid-wife" The king realised that what she said was also true. The king declared, "It is my son's fault. Why did he have to be born at that time. Bring him to the court immediately" The little son was produced before the court. The king asked the small son, "Why did you want to be born at that moment? Obviously the small boy had no answer to that. The king then decided, "It is my son that shall be impaled. He may be my son but I am supposed to be the guardian of truth. I thus cannot let kingship stand in the way of judgement. The minister however realised that this was a big blunder. He sought to find a way out. Then he told the king "Swargadeo, this child is too small to be impaled. We need a big fat man for the grill." The king then ordered, "Find a healthy-wealthy man. He shall be put impaled instead of my son.

In the meantime the pandit and his disciple eating 'joha' rice and ghee had put on a lot of weight. When the pandit had gone out, the king's soldiers spotted this healthy disciple and decided he was just right to be impaled. When the pandit came back to the house and realised what had happened, he proceeded to the royal household. There he blessed the king and when the king enquired about him, the pandit replied, "I am a pandit. I can read palms and make calculations and predict the future." When the king asked his and the queen's palm to be read, the pandit told them a lot of flattering things. This pleased the king who then said, "Tomorrow a man is going to be put on the impaled. Can you tell me something about him? ' ‘ The pandit pretended to calculate for a long time and then he said, "Oh maharaja, this man is very lucky. Tomorrow, the time at which he is supposed to be impaled is a very favourable time. Whoever gets impaled at that time will go straight to heaven and rule
there. "The pompous king's instant reaction was that, "How can a comman man go to heaven and rule when I exist. Let it be declared that I shall be impaleded instead of him." Following the royal command, the poor disciple was released the next day and the king was impaled instead.

## Panoikhi

There lived an old woman in a certain village. She had a son who was very dear to her. One day when her son was digging in the backyard he found two duck-eggs. He brought them and gave them to his mother. His mother kept them on the "Dhua Chang" A few days later the egg hatched and a beautiful girl came out of it. Whenever the old lady went out the girl would climb down from the shelf and eat the 'poita rice'2 After which she would cook some fresh rice and climb back onto the shelf. One day it occured to the old lady. "Everyday I leave poita rice, who is it that eats the poita rice and cooks fresh rice for me." Thus thinking she thought of a plan. She called out her neighbours loudly and told them that she was going out somewhere far and asked them to keep an eye on her house.

After this she hid herself behind the door and waited to see what happened. The girl climbed down the shelf as usual, ate the 'poita' rice and cooked some fresh rice. Then just as she was climbing up the shelf the old woman caught her her feet and asked her who she was and why she was there. The girl explained everything from the beginning after which the old woman started keeping the girl with her. Whenever people asked who she was the old woman would introduce her as her daughter, she named the girl Panoikhi.

The old woman's son was growing up. He liked Panoikhi and wanted to marry her. But he was embarrassed to disclose this in front of his mother. So he went inside the 'Ruh-Ghar' and sat on a high place. His mother looked everywhere for him but could not find him. When she went to clean the Ruh-Ghar she found some 'paan' and 'beatle nut'. On looking up she found her son and asked him what was it that he wanted.

[^14]He then told his mother about his desire to marry Panoikhi. Not being able to go back on her word the old woman arranged for the wedding date without informing Panoikhi. On the day of the wedding Panoikhi was grinding 'mah' and 'haldi' on the riverside when a beggarwoman came to her and said, "Give me some 'mah haldi' ${ }^{1}$ dear" and sat down beside her. Panoikhi replied, "Go away you unknown woman. I am grinding 'mahhaldi' for my brother's wedding. Why should I give you any?" The beggar woman said, "All right dear, but do you know to whom your brother is getting married ?" "No" replied Panoikhi, ' please do tell me to whom." The beggar woman replied "to whom else but you". Panoikhi asked the beggar woman what to do. The beggar woman advised her. ' 'Take a boat and oar of 'Ikora'. Then keep paddling in the pond behind your house. Do not come when anybody calls you and at night go and take shelter in the trunk of the big tree near the pond. ' 'So when Panoikhi was paddling on the pond she wouldn't come even though her mother called her repeatedly. So her mother sang out to her :
"Panoikhi, Panoikhi, my dear Panoikhi,
Come to my shore
Twice by two fist I shall give you
And adorn you with necklace"
Panoikhi replied back,
"Twice by two fist I do not want by four fists
I shall not come by your shore."
Her brother came and called out to her too.
But Panoikhi again replied back the same way. In this way Panoikhi did not listen to anybody and kept paddling on the pond. Finally, the mother and the son went back home with a heavy heart. So Panoikhi

[^15]started living like that. In the day she would paddle on the pond and at night she would live inside the tree trunk.

One day her brother was sitting on the tree and fishing. Since he could hook only a few 'kani puthis' Panoikhi who had been watching this called out.
"Only kani puthis does my brother hook
Come stand on this tree and watch for fish".
When Panoikhi called out several times, the brother thinking that there must be something there, took an axe and cut down the tree. Just at that moment the beggar woman came and asked for some firewood. The brother snapped at her, "How dare you ask for firewood now? Weren't you the one who ruined my wedding?" The woman therefore took a piece of wood that had scattered far away and went home. The beggar woman washed the piece and kept it on her 'Dhua-Chang'. Panoikhi had hidden in that piece of wood. When the beggar woman would go out, Panoikhi, like before, would climb down, eat the Poita rice, cook some fresh rice and climb back. One day the beggar woman discovered her. So during the day she would be a duck and at night become a girl and sleep with the beggar woman. One day her brother was playing with his friends in the old woman's courtyard. Panoikhi, being a duck, was watching them play. When her brother hit, the duck promptly caught it. Her brother thought. "I am surprised at this duck. I am sure it is something else and not a duck."

Thus thinking the brother went into the 'Ruh-Ghar'. After eliciting the desire from him the mother managed to buy the duck from the old woman. The son kept the duck with great love and care and at night would take the duck to bed with him. One day a beggar woman came and told him. "Son that is not a duck. It is your Panoikhi. Tonight you pretend to sleep. Do not move when she will peck you to see whether you
are asleep. Then she will change her form from the duck and become a girl. When she leaves the room and goes out take her duck form and put in some burning embers. You will find that she will immediately fall down unconscious. But do not panic pour some oil, water and lime juice on her head, and fan her gently. She will revive very soon". The beggar woman went away saying this. At night when the boy followed the beggar woman's instruction he found a beautiful girl from the bird. That was his Panoikhi. After this they married and lived happily forever.

## The tale of a son-in-law

One day a man invited his son-in-law to his house for Bihu. Bihu is the state festival of the Assamese. He asked him to come alone. The son-inlaw set off in the afternoon being very careful not to take anybody with him. But on looking back he found his shadow following him. The man thought "If I take my shadow with me, my father-in-law would scold me. So he asked the shadow "What do you want? Why are you following me?" When the shadow did not reply the man asked him "Do you want my seleng ${ }^{1}$ ?" So saying when he nodded his head, the shadow too nodded. Thus thinking that the shadow wanted his seleng he remove it and dropped it for the shadow. But the shadow kept on following him. So one by one he gave the shadow his churia ${ }^{2}$, gamocha ${ }^{3}$, and everything else. It was slowly getting dark and the man thought that he had finally got rid of the shadow. But alas! he was left without any clothes when he reached his father-in-law's house. Being embarassed he hid himself under the yam bushes near the garbage dump. When he did not turn up after dinner, his father in law threw away the left overs and the dirty water into the garbage dump. All this fell on the hiding man. He let out a cry. The scared father-in-law ran inside for his dear life. After a while he came out with a lamp to investigate and found his son-in-law hiding there. He took him in and after bathing and clothing him offered him food. The father-in-law gave him some jaggery. Since the son-in-law had never had any in his life he asked what it was. The father-in-law told him that the liquid stuff was gur, and if it was very tasty he should have more of it. The son-in-law tasted it and found it very nice. He asked "where have you kept it?" The

[^16]father-in-law replied, "On the rooftop, in a pot. " After this they rested for the night. But the son-in-law could not sleep because his mind was set on the gur. He waited to make sure that the old man was fast asleep and then sneaked on to where the gur was kept. He took a long stick and poked at the bottom of the pot. The pot broke and the gur began to pour out. The son-in-law placed his mouth under the pot and began to have the gur and continue till he was satisfied. But in the process he smeared his entire body with gur and became sticky. Not knowing what to do he rolled over some cotton that was kept nearby to make a quilt. What happened as a consequence was that the man became covered with feathers all over. The confused man then went on to spend the night amongst the goats.

That night some thieves had come to steal a goat. They thought that the best way to steal a goat was to pull some hair and whichever's came off the easiest was the best because such goats were supposed to be fatty or oily. They came and first tried the man and found that his hair came off very easily; so they tied him up and carried him thinking him to be a goat. On the way they had to cross a river. When they were in the middle of the river the son-in-law's bums became wet. He called out,
"Lift, lift O thief,
My bums have become wet".
The thieves thinking that the goat had called out, got scared and fled. Because the river was shallow he did not drown but gently floated towards the bank. In the meantime the day dawned. Just then his father-in-law who was searching frantically for him, reached the place. He then took him home, cleaned him up, gave him food and then sent him to his home.

## The man who suffered from night - blindness.

Once upon a time in a certain village there lived a man who had two daughters. One was called Rupeshwari (Rupeshwar means beautiful) and the other was called Guneshwari (Gun is virtue, thus Guneshwari is virturous). The time had come for his elder daughter, Rupeshwari to be married. Her father looked for a groom everywhere in the village but none was fit for his daughter. So he decided to go to other villages and look for a groom there. Just then, Rupeshwari's mother called out, "Please do not go to other villages to look for a groom. Why don't you find a groom here itself so that I can keep seeing my daugther. It will not be possible if you marry her in another village". The husband was unable to dissuade his wife and so settled for a suitable boy within their village.

Now this boy was suffering from night blindness which he had not revealed to anybody. Consequently his father-in-law, as well as, other villagers were ignorant of this fact.

This son-in-law had borrowed a bull from his father-in- law to plough his fields. After a while his father-in-law asked him to return the bull. When he was on his way to his in-law's house it started becoming dark and slowly he was unable to see things. For a long while he thought what to do. Then he hit upon an idea. He decided to send the bull homewards. The bull was sure to find his way back to his old shed. And he would hold this bull's tail and follow him to his in-laws place. In this may he reached their place and the bull went straight to the cowshed. Just then his father-in-law spotted him in the cowshed and asked, "Is that our son-in-law?" The son-in-law replied, "I have brought the bull you had asked for. I am only tying him to the shed." Then after a while the father-in-law called again since he did not come out, "why haven't you come out
yet? Wash yourself and come and eat something. Don't go away without eating anything." The son-in-law replied, "Indeed, I was only looking and counting the cows in your shed. "Eh what is there to look at these skinny starving cows. The good ones. Said the father-in-law, and went inside. He went to his younger daughter and told her, "Dear go outside with a pot of water, call your brother-in-law and ask him to wash and come inside."

In the meantime her brother-in-law had emerged from the cowshed and was groping in the dark hoping to find his way home when she called out, "Is it my bhindeo" ? Come wash your self. I have got water for you. "Hearing her he replied back, "Oh, are you the dear little one? Come and greet me inside. Otherwise I won't come in. After all where would you find a bhindeo like me?" The simple girl took his words to heart and holding his hands greeted him inside affectionately. She then gave him the pot of water to wash himself. But he spoke to her again, "I have come here after a long time. These days you have stopped respecting me I have noticed. Now please do wash my feet". The girl thinking that he was joking washed his feet, took him to where he was to be seated and asking him to sit went in.

In this way some time passed. His father-in-law sat down for dinner. The mother-in-law too started serving. But he kept on sitting. When he did not get up they asked him to come for the food. Yet he did nto budge. Finally he answered, "I am feeling very tired today. If at all you have any affection for me, please bring the food here." When she heard this the mother-in-law obliged him by bringing the food there. The food was now in front of him. Yet he did not venture to eat. The sister-inlaw then told him, "Eat bhindeo, eat. Why aren't you having your food?" The bhindeo then replied "I shall have the food only if you put my hand on the plate. After all you are to be married. Let me extract all the service I

[^17]can from you these last few days." Guneshwari in all her simplicity obliged him and he started eating. After this she went in to have her food as well. When the mother-in-law came out after a while, she found that a cat was eating from the same plate. At once, agitated, she said, "Son don't you see this cat eating from your plate? Why aren't you chasing him away?" He replied back, "Aai, I can very well see him eating. I have let him eat. Everybody should be allowed to eat. Man, animals and everything else." But his mother-in-law persisted, "No, no chase the cat away. Don't you feel dirty letting the cat eat from you?" And she shooed him away handing him a stick and telling him to hit the cat next time she came to pester him. After a while she came out to give him fried fish and fish curry. This time the son-in-law thought that the cat had come again, so he hit her with the stick. The mother-in-law fell down with the force of the blow. She moaned out, "Well done my son, how have you managed to hit me on my hand?" It was only then he realised what had happened. He fell at her feet and pleaded, "Mother, I fell asleep while eating food. And I dreamt that the cat had come again and was eating from my food. That is why I struck with the stick. I fall at your feet mother, please forgive me and do not tell about this to anyone." The mother-in-law felt sorry for him, forgave him and told him to forget about the entire incident. The son-inlaw felt very embarassed after this. He decided to go home before anymore embarassing incidents occured. He groped his way out towards his home. But unknowhingly there was a thick cluster of wild yam into which he walked. Thinking that it was some deep forest, he decided to spend the night in that forest as it would have been impossible for him to find his way back. In the morning before anybody was up, he'd find his way back so he settled himself for the night. In the meantime his in-laws not finding him in the house thought that he must have gone home. After a while the mother-in-law after washing the dirty dishes threw away the
dirty water into the cluster of yam bushes where her son-in-law was hiding. When the dirty dish water fell on him he thought it was raining so he called out, "O lord of rain, take pity on this one who suffers from night blindess. Please do not rain. I have suffered enough tonight. Do not give me any more trouble." The mother-in-law quickly came out with a small lamp to find out what she had heard. She found her son-in-law sitting in the midst of the yam bushes and wet to his skin. Truth then dawned on her that her son-in-law was suffering from night blindness. She went inside to call her husband and her daugther. After explaining everything to them, they helped him inside, bathed him and gave him a fresh change and put him to bed.

## The tale of a toad

Once upon a time there lived an old man and an old woman. They did not have any children. One day when all the villagers were going for fishing, this old couple also decided to join them. So the old man went to look for his old worn out net and the old woman took out her broken jakoi' ${ }^{11}$ and joined the others. but as it turned out, everybody netted a lot of fish except this old couple. At the end of the day the old man was very angry. He picked up a fight with the old woman and scolded here unnecessarily. The poor old woman felt very hurt. She went out again with her jakoi. this time she picked up a frog. This made the old man all the more angry. He flew into a rage and took the frog home intending to take his anger out on the frog.

At home the old man took a hefty firewood and was about to smash it on the frog when he called out, "O grandpa, do not kill me. I shall remain your subordinate and do whatever you ask of me." The old man replied, "sarcastically, "O yes, Are you going to be my subordinate and get me a golden

Are you going to go to my fields, plough them and look after them?" The frog replied, "Of course, I will plough your fields; why don't you give me a chance?" The old man gave up reluctantly, "Let me see what this frog can do. He appears to be a little too big for his boots." The next day the old man sent the frog with his cows to plough the fields." Let me see whether you can live upto your word," thought the old man. The frog took the cows and ploughed the fields. After he finished ploughing he raised the land all around the fields to mark the boundary as well as to serve as a road.

[^18]Just as he had finished this task a king came that may. The king along with the rest of his entourage trampled on the road and undid all the frog's work. The furious frog, not caring that it was the king started abusing. When he heard the abuses the bewildered king looked around again and again but could see no one. The frog continued to abuse the King from the hole. At last the angry king seeing no one, took away the two unguarded cows to get back at whoever was abusing him.

When the king left, the frog emerged from his hole quietly and went to the old couple. He explained everything to them which madet hem very sad. The frog told the old woman, "Aai, donot be sad. give me a bagful of popcorns. I shall go and get the cows." The old woman asked, "Why do you want popcorns? What will you do with them?" The frog replied," It doesn't matter what I do as long as you give me the popcorn. There is no cause to be worried." You don't have to go my son. You will not be able to fight the king. They will only hurt you. I shall borrow some cows and do my ploughing." But since nothing could dissuade him the old woman at last made about a bagful of popcorns and the frog set off. The frog hung his corns from a sack, ate handful and sang out on the way, "Popcorns do we eat,

Together we go,
whoever joins me
also gets to a share of it".
Hearing the forg's song all the animals-lions, tigers, hares, even bees, wasps and hornets etc joined him. The frog gave a handful to all of them and won them.

He then explained his story from the beginning. The animals pledged their support and urged the frog to go to the king and challenge him. And the army of animals set off towards the palace roaring and grunting and creating a great deal of noise. On reaching the palace. the
frog sent a message to the king "Would he return the cows or would he prefer to fight it out? "The king wanted a war and so the king's army and the frog's army clashed in a pitched battle. The king's army was throughly routed. many soldiers including twp of the king's sons died. At last the king fell at the frog's feet and offered to make peace. "If this frog forgives me this time then I shall give him half my kingdom as well as my daughter for his wife." When the frog heard him, he forgave the king, married the princess and remained in the palace. He brought the old couple to the palace as well and everybody lived happily ever after.

## The tale of a tawai ${ }^{1}$

Once upon a time there lived two friends. On his death-bed one of the friends handed his son to the other friend and said, "Friend, I entrust my son to your care. Guide and protect him according to what you think is right. And to the son he said, "I have entrusted you to my friend. Do whatever my friend asks of you. Follow each and every word. Do not stray from any of his instructions. Always inform him of every thing that you do."

The father passed away. A little while later this young man was blessed with a son. He went to inform his Tawai. The Tawai gave a strange instruction, "Go and bury your son in the pond behind your house." The bewildered man could not help but follow the instructions. One year later he was blessed with another son. When he went to inform his Tawai, once again he was told to bury his son. The man was very sad but remembering his father's last words, he did according to the Tawai's instructions. A year and a half later this man was blessed with a baby girl. Hoping fervently that this time at least he wouldn't ask to bury his baby girl, the man went to inform the Tawai. But once again he received the same instruction. With a heavy heart the man went to bury his third child. About two years later he was blessed with another baby-boy. This time he made up his mind to disregard the Tawai's instruction if he was asked to bury the baby. But the Tawai surprised him by asking him to keep this baby. At the same time he asked this man to make a shaft near the place where he had buried his earlier children and wait on it at night. Following the Tawai's instruction he man spent the night in the shaft. At midnight the eldest son called out from his burial place to his younger brother, "Brother, it is a pity I did not

[^19]live; had I lived I would have roasted him alive. O what an escape he had." The second son also called out "Dear brother, neither could I live. If I would have been alive I would have put the noose round his neck. This Tawai ended our lives." Then the third child called out. "Dear brother, what can I say? Had I been alive I would have eaten him alive."

After hearing this conversation the young man became conviced of the wisdom of his Tawai. His faith in his Tawai became firmer.

A little while later. When the time came to sell off the paddy, the man went to ask his Tawai. His Tawai asked. "What is the price of paddy now? The man replied "In one rupee 12 puras". The Tawai replied, "do not sell now".

A little while later he went to his Tawai's house and said, "Tawai. the price of paddy has come down. What should I do now? "The Tawai asked "What is the price?" The man replied "20 puras per rupee". The Tawai asked him to sell the paddy now. He sold the paddy and came back. The Tawai said, "Good, now with this money buy some gold and get a golden ladder made. After this was done the Tawai instructed again "Now throw this ladder into the river. Though he was sad, he abided by the instructions.

A month later a fisherman came to sell fish to this man's house. The man bought a huge 'Rahu" fish from the fisherman. When he cut the fish he found his golden ladder. When he showed the ladder to his Tawai, the Tawai said, "Now this ladder belongs to you. Go keep it. you may have earlier thought of me as your enemy. Now after guiding you over in these two matters I can appeal to the Lord. Go my son,have faith in God and righteousness. Do your work in the right faith. Do not worry. Live in peace and God will bless you!"

## Lotkon

In a certain kingdom there lived a brahmin named Lotkon. The brahmin's wife was an ill-tempered woman who always scolded him for not having enough money. One day the Brahmin got very frustrated and thinking that enough was enough he left the house. He promised himself that if he would not return home till he was a rich man.

It became late afternoon. The Brahmin had not eaten anything. He was loking around for food when he came upon a sweets shop. Just then the shopkeeper was retiring to take his afternoon nap and was asking his 8 year old son to keep an eye on the shop. The Brahmin came to stand near the shop. The small boy asked him, "Who are you? What is your name? What do you want?" The Brahmin replied, "My name is fly. I have come to eat sweets" and then he popped a sweet into his mouth. The boy called out to his father, "Father, father, the fly is eating sweets," The father responded, "let the fly eat whatever he wants. Do not disturb me for small things". On hearing this the Brahmin told the boy, "Did you hear that? Your father himself told me to have sweets" The Brahmin started finishing the sweets. The boy called out to his father again, "Father the fly is finishing our sweets." This time the father snapped back", Let him finish if he has to, Why don't you shut your mouth?" The boy decided that this was enough and that he had to go and explain things to his father. When the boy went inside the Brahmin saw the money box, quickly took 20 silver coins and fled. By this time the shopkeeper came out to check what was happening. When he found that all the sweets were eaten up he got very angry and shouted at the boy. The boy replied: "I kept on telling you about him but you were the one to allow him to eat." The father said, "But you kept saying the fly. Why didn't you say it was a man?" "The man said
it was his name" retorted the boy. After asking the directions in which the Brahmin had fled, the shopkeeper galloped off in that direction.

Having fled the scene the tired Brahmin was resting under a tree when a boar came rushing that way towards him. The brahmin started running around the tree and the boar chased him around it. In this way, as they were running around the tree, the brahmin suddenly caught the boar's tail and hung onto him. While the brahmin clung onto the boar the silver coins which were tied to his waist began to fall off one by one. The brahmin was not even able to leave the boar's tail because if he did, the boar would kill him.

* Meanwhile, the shopkeeper on his horseback arrived on this scene. He was amazed at this sight. He enquired, "Brother, what are you doing? Why are you hanging on the boar's tail and moving round this tree." The brahmin replied, "I do not have the time to answer your question. But do you not see the silver coins? The shopkeeper said, "Yes I do see" The brahmin continued, "if I hang on to the boar in this way, he gives me a silver coin on each round." The shopekeeper thought about his theft that day, and thinking that this was a good way of earning a compensation for his theft the shopkeeper asked him, "Brother will you let me have a couple of rounds? I am also in trouble. I have been looted by a conman today." And he told the tale. The brahmin expressed his sympathy and said. "It is my duty to help you since you are a man in trouble. All right, take your rounds." So saying the brahmin and the shopkeeper exchanged places. He quickly collected his silver coins and climbing onto the horse made away from the scene as quickly as possible.

The brahmin rode on for a while and spent that night in somebody's house as a guest. That night before daybreak he made off to where the horse was tied. He buried two silver coins in the grass in front of the horse. In the morning when the entire household was awake the
brahmin deliberately went through the grass in front of the horse and fished out the two silver coins. The host was amazed and he enquired about the matter. The brahmin replied, "every morning from the left over grass my horse produces about to $8-10$ pieces of silver coins for me. This is how I have been able to sustain myself. "The greed of the host was aroused and he proposed to buy the horse. Of course the brahmin refused to part with his magical horse. Finally he agreed to part with it for 650 pieces of silver, along with the host's horse. On his way back the brahmin found the shopkeeper still going round the tree with the boar. The shopkeeper called out, "Haven't you cheated me well enough? There is no siver, nor can I leave this tail because he will kill me? The brahmin had noticed that the boar had by now become weak with fatigue. So he told the shopkeepr, "Brother I have not fooled you. If you listen to me and keep a careful note and make make 100 rounds I am sure the boar will give you many coins." So saying he went away. True to the brahmin's observation the boar had indeed become fatigued and finally collapsed. The shopkeeper thinking he had a lucky escape made homeward. The brahmin reached his house and gave all the silver to his wife, "Here this is all your wealth." Seeing the silver the wife became very happy and she never nagged him about being poor anymore.

## The lucky woman

In the good old days when truth prevailed, there lived an old couple. They had seven sons. One by one all of them got married. The eldest son was soon blessed with a son. But out of all the daughters-in-law the youngest one was the wisest. The old couple thus instructed all in the family that they follow the youngest daughter-in-law's orders.

The youngest daugther-in-law always insisted that they never come home empty-handed. This exasperated everybody. One day one of them found a dead and rotten snake. He thought "Our sister-in-law always scolds when we come home empty handed. Let me take this home and see what she says". When he reached home he hung the rotten snake outside and told the youngest sister-in-law. "Please see I have brought something outside. I am going for my bath". She went out and saw the rotten snake and found a fly laying eggs over it. She went inside and told him. "You have shown me a rotten snake. That is fine by me". So saying she went out once again. This time instead of the rotten snake she found a bagful of jewels hanging there and from the bag were pouring out golden earrings, precious stone-studded necklaces, rings, anklets etc. She picked up the bundle and ran inside to show everybody the contents "You brought a rotten snake home. Now look where have all these ornaments come from? You find me exasperating when I ask you never to come home empty handed". A rich girl had been bathing in the river leaving all her clothes and ornaments on the banks. A crow attracted by the glittering jewellery picked up the bagful and flew away. However it was not edible. So when the crow saw the rotten snake hanging outside it quickly swapped the bag for the snake. Thus the jewels came to be hanging there.

After this, on another occasion, another brother-in-law brought a bundle of dried cow dung. She put it in a hollow bamboo and put it away.

Five years elapsed. The king was in search of some cow-dung which was about five years old. The princess was very ill and a medicine made of five year old cow dung could heal the princess. An announcement was made to the effect that whoever gets him some cow dung which is about five years old would be rewarded with two basketful of ornaments and jewellery. When the youngest daughter-in-law heard this announcement she promptly fished out the cow dung she had kept away some five years ago.

One day a beggar came and hypnotised the youngest daugther-inlaw and took her away. After sh left the house, the household began to lose its prosperity and gradually disintegrated till they were reduced to paupers. One by one all the household members perished. Only the grandson remained. He wandered about by himself all over the place. One day when he wandered into the dense jungle he found his aunt on the river bank. As soon as they saw each other they recognised. The nephew told her the sad tale of the household. She wept and told him that the fakir would not let her go. Even if she ran away he had the power to get her back. She also said that she had heard the fakir saying that his life lay with the mynah that is in Lord Brahma's possession which makes him immortal. When the nephew heard about this he prayed and implored Brahma to give him audience. At last Brahma appeared. He appeared before the nephew and gave his daughter in marriage to the nephew. Lord Brahma also gave a lot of other things along with his daughter. But the nephew asked for the mynah. Brahma granted him that as well. As soon as he got the mynah, he choked him to death. Immediately the fakir dropped dead. After this the nephew, his wife and aunt began a new life and soon they prospered and attained even better heights than before.

## Two clever men

One day a young man found a basketful of yam and he decided to sell it in the weekly market as ginger. Simultaneously, another young man found a basketful of some seeds and decided to sell it in the same weekly market as pepper. On the way to the market the gingerman and the pepperman came face to face with each other. Both asked the other what they were selling. Then the pepperman told the gingerman 'Brother, this season I have reaped a rich haul of pepper. I am going to give this basketful at half the price if I find somebody who'll buy the whole basket. After all who would want to wait through the heat of the afternoon and sell little bits of pepper". When the gingerman heard this he thought it will be a good idea. If I can exchange my basketful of ginger with his pepper." So he told the pepper seller "Dear brother, it is exactly the same with me. I too have reaped a rich ginger harvest. That is why I have brought this basketful. I too am willing to give it for half the price if I find somebody. After all who would want to sit through the afternoon?" The pépperman thought, ' 'If I can exchange my seeds for his ginger it will be very nice?" So he said, "I don't have ginger in my house. I would anyway have to buy some from the market." The gingerman also said, "I do not have pepper in my house. I too would have to buy some from the market." After thus speaking to each other, the pepperman said "Brother since you are also giving the ginger basket for half the price and I too am giving mine, why don't we both exchange our baskets. "The gingerman was thrilled. "That's a good idea" he aid. So they both exchanged the baskets. As soon as they were out of each other's sight they fled with all their might, both of them thinking they had fooled the other.

When both of them reached home to check their goods they realised that they themselves had been fooled as well. One day after this incident
both the cleaver men came upon each other. The pepper man asked the gingerman, "How was the pepper you bought that day?" The gingerman responded, "The same as you found the ginger". Both of them became friendly and they acknowledged the other's cleverness and decided to join hands so that they could fool others. They set off together with this in mind. They reached the house of a Brahmin and enquired whether he was in need of any help. The Brahmin employed the two friends. The pepperman was given the task of looking after his "Kapili Cow" and the gingerman was given the task of watering the "Tulsi plant". But the Brahmin's "Kapili Cow" was very mischievous. The moment she was let out of sight she would stray into the neighbour 's fields and eat their crops. And the "Tulsi" plant was also so strange that it consumed as much water as was poured on it. Both were driven up the wall with their respective tasks. Throughout the day they found time for little else. Both of them started thinking that it would be a good idea to exchange their jobs. So thinking they approached each other. The cowherd asked the 'tulsi' plant tender, 'Friend how do you find your job? I find my job very easy going. I drive her into the forest and sleep for the whole day and in the evening I drive her home. ' " The plant tender responded, "I have practically nothing to do. I pour a bucket of water or so on the plant and then I can do whatever I wish "Both mind 's started working on the same lines and both wished to exchanged their jobs. The next evening when they met after they had exchanged their jobs, the cowherd asked the plant tender as to how the day was. The plant tender replied, "the same as you found to tending the plant". Both of them then discussed that since the 'tulsi' plant required so much water they must investigate the matter. Thus thinking, when the Brahmin was sleeping at night they dug the 'tulsi' plant and found that there were about five deep holes under the plant. The gingerman told the pepperman, "Friend you go down the hole

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and have a look inside". The pepperman went down and found that there were several pots of silver. When he told the gingerman about it, both took off the loose cloth hung round him and made two huge bags out of them. The gingerman once again sent the pepperman down the holes and asked him to send the silver in the bags one by one. Thus when the lazy pepperman sent up one bagful the gingerman sent the other bag to be filled and sent up as well. But the pepperman shrewdly thought, 'what if the gingerman after getting the second bagful fills up the hole to suffocate me and runs away with the silver. So the pepperman put a little bit of silver in the second bad and climbed into it and called out to his friend, the gingerman, "Friend, pull this bag up, this is very heavy. I cannot pull it up along. ' So the gingerman not knowing the contents of the bag pulled up the pepperman out of the hole in the bag. And with the intention of burying his friend he quickly filled up the hole and ran away with the bagfuls of silver. On the way he stopped under a tree to rest. Being thirsty he went to the pond to drink some water leaving the bags under the tree. Seizing this opportunity the pepperman climbed out of the bag and fled with the silver. When the gingerman came back and found the bags missing he understood that it was his friend, the pepperman who had fooled him. And shaking his head with regret both for his loss and folly, the gingerman turned homewards.

A long time later, both the friends came upon each other. The pepperman told the gingerman, 'Friend, you did bury me in the hole, didn't you?" The gingerman replied, "Oh come on, you have not only ran away with the silver you also had a ride on my shoulder" So saying they began to have another conversation and soon they became friendly again. But the gingerman could never forget the fact that he had carried the pepperman and he wished to settle scores on this issue. So one day he hit upon a plan and told his wife that he would pretend to he dead. She
should cover him with a cloth and start howling that he was dead. Then send somebody to his friend, the pepperman with the news and when he comes, tell him that before dying I expressed my desire to be carried to the cremation ground only by him and nobody else. When the wife carried out her part of the plan, and conveyed her husband's desire to the pepperman, he at once realised that this was a trick. He pretended to be very sad and shedding a few crocodile tears he beat his chest and cried out "There seems to be nothing left in life now that my friend is gone. These blasted trees, this house, they are worthless. They only serve to remind me of my friend and cause sorrow. So saying he picked up a knife and started chopping all the trees in sight. Then he came to the weeping widow and told her, "I shall not be able to carry my friend also. I suggest that I cut him into two pieces and carry piece by piece." So saying he picked up the sword and in an elaborate swing was about to come down on the body when his dead friend the gingerman jumped up and said, 'Friend, that is enough. I am not fortunate enough to be able to have a ride on your shoulder. I have instead lost my precious trees. I admit that you are cleverer than I".

## Kanchani

Once upon a time there lived an old couple who had seven sons. The old man died a sad man, before he could see any of his sons settle down. The old woman was lucky enough to get six of her sons married, after which she died as well. Her youngest son, the seventh was a good looking lad with equally charming manners. He was thus a favourite with everybody, so much so that his brothers entrusted everything in the house to him. This made his sisters-in-law very jealous of him but they could never complain or ill-treat him because they were scared of their husbands.

In this way many days passed. One day a beggar woman came to their house and asked for some rice. "They told the old lady, since their youngest brother-in-law has not at home they did not have access to anything in the house. So they told the beggar, woman, "Old lady, our dear brother-in-law is not at home. He has gone out for some work unless is back we shall not he able to give you anything because he is the one who is in charge of everything in this house. "The beggar woman taunted them, "Goodness gracious, I have never heard or seen such an arrangements before. What are you six daughters-in-law doing? Why does that male have to be incharge of running this household when you six women are here?" The sisters-in-law honoured, "Yes, if you do not see what goes on here you would find it had to believe that such things do happen. What can we say when the brothers are so keen on handing charge to him." The beggar woman could read their desire to get rid of him, so she suggested, "What kind of stupid women are you? Why don't you get rid of him and become the owner of everything in this house? "They eagerly asked, "How can we get rid of him, old lady? "The beggar woman said, "If you listen to me you can get rid of him today". When they
showed their eagerness to listen to her plan, she got a "Kutkura." She cast some black magic on it and said, "Today when he returns home, one of you call him to your side and on the pretext of looking for lice, push this through his ear lobe and tell him to become a dog. You will then be the mistresses in this house and live in peace". The beggar woman went away after saying this. When their young brother-in-law came, one of them according to the beggar woman's instruction called him to her side and pretended to look for lice and suddenly pricked that thorn into his ears and made him a common street dog. Feeling very sad and betrayed this dog left his brothers house. In the evening the brothers came back and enquired about their brother. The wives said "We do not know. he went out a long time ago and has not come yet." The brothers set out frantically looking for him and when they did not find him they came back sadly, hoping he would turn up himself.

This young brother roamed around from place to place through many kingdoms. Finally he reached a house in one city. This house had only a lonely couple. They had no children and no relatives. Being a lonely couple they lived a quiet life. Every morning the husband would go to find work and come back only in the evening. The wife would sit at the loom and weave. When the dog came to this household, the good wife seeing a lost dog gave him food and afterwards when he came to lie down at her feet in the loom she let him be. Gradually this dog inched his way into this family and the family too being lonely began to accept his company.

The mistress would weave throughout the day and the dog would sit beside her. One day when her weaving reel fell down she looked at the dog and told him indulgently, "Can't you pick up the reel for me? This blasted thing keeps falling down repeatedly. I can't pick it up again and again. Please pick up the reel for me. If you do I shall wed my daughter to
you." Hearing all that the woman said, the dog suddenly pounced on the reel and picked it up and gave it to his mistress. His mistress thought, "My goodness this is quite a dog. He is more intelligent than a human. How else did he understand what I said? It is only that I don't have a daughter. If I did have one I would not mind marrying her to such a dog."

A couple of months after this incident, this woman surprisingly gave birth to a baby girl. Her father lovingly called her Kanchani. She grew up to be a beautiful and charming young lady. Meanwhile the dog too by this good natured grew to be very close the family. The time came for Kanchani to be married. One day the mistress called the husband aside and told him about the incident of the weaving reel. "If I have a daughter I told him I would marry her to him. That is why perhaps I have been blessed with this daughter or why else would I who did not have a child for so long be blessed with one. So because of what I said I wish to marry my daughter to him? What is your opinion?" The husband being a virtuous man replied, "If you have promised our daughter to him I think you should keep it otherwise it would be sinful on our part. Besides, to say the truth, we have not seen such a talented dog. he is even better than a human. So it is only right that we marry Kanchani to him. "The husband then called Kanchani to him and told her about the decision. she responded, "If is my duty to follow you decision. If my mother had promised to marry me to the dog I shall definitely marry him." Hearing the daughter, the parents were pleased with her and they married her and lived happily in the house together.

Kanchani looked after her husband with a lot of love and care. Never did she ever have any hard feelings that she was married to a dog. Even though Kanchani would clean and brush her husband properly the next moment she would find him rolling in the dust and mud and undoing all her hard work. One day her mother told Kanchani, "See your
husband is so dirty. why don't you take him down to the river and wash him properly". So she took her husband down to the river and bathed him properly, washing his ear-lobes, nose, skin and all over. While she was washing the dog, suddenly her hand felt something rough near the ear. she looked at it closely and found that it was a thorn gone deep into the ear-lobe. She pulled the thorn out and suddenly in front of her stood a young handsome man with a golden brown complexion. Seeing this the girl became happy beyond words. Her husband then explained everything from the beginning. After hearing her husband Kanchani told him, "If I take you home in this form everybody would think that I have killed the dog and got some strange man with me. If I tell the truth also nobody would believe me. I would then get a bad name. So I suggest that I put this back in the same place and make you a dog. when I reach home I shall pretend to oil and massage you and as though suddenly find the thorn and pull it out from you; then in front of everybody you shall become a man and then nobody will question us. "So she put the through back in place and making him a dog took him home. On reaching home she called out to her mother, "Aai, I have cleaned and washed him. Now do you think I should oil and massage him as well? "When her mother told her to do so she pretended to oil and called out to her mother, "Aai aai, please look at this thorn poking from his ears." Her mother said, "He may have poked himself with the thorn. He keeps roaming and lying everywhere. Think nothing of it and pull out the thorn. "when her mother said this, Kanchani pulled out the thorn and suddenly in the place of the dog stood a handsome young man. Seeing this, her parents and all the neighbours thought it was a miracle. They asked what actually had happened and the young man again explained everything from the beginning. Everybody was very happy and Kanchani and her parents, along with her husband lived together in great happiness.

The fact that a dog had become human was indeed big news. The news travelled all over the place and finally reached the king. The king was keen to meet this person. So he sent for Kanchani's husband and when he came he asked him about everything. The king was very pleased to hear the story and asked him to stay on in his court and made him the incharge of horses.

The news also travelled from person to person that the man in charge of horses had a beautiful and charming wife. Finally it came to the king's ears as well. When the king heard this he thought that such a charming woman was fit for a king. He thus summoned the horse`s in charge and told him to send his wife to his harem. But the man would not comply. The king told him repeatedly and tried various means but he just would not concede to the king's desire. Finally the king had him arrested and thrown in the jail. After the husband was put in jail the king went to Kanchani, everyday trying to persuade her but to no avail. The king then thought that as long as her husband was alive Kanchani would never agree to become his queen. The best way would thus be to kill the husband and remove the hurdle. So the king ordered Kanchani's husband to be executed.

And according to the king's instructions, Kanchani's husband was being impaled. But Kanchani did not yet understand the matter. She was still happily weaving at her loom at home. Just then a crow came and sat near Kanchani. Her beak was red with the blood which she had pocked from Kanchani`s husband`s body. The crow called out to her.
"'Kanchani, Kanchani, do not sit Kanchani,
Leave the weaving loom now".
Hearing this Kanchani looked at the crow and seeing the blood stained red beak, she felt goose pimples all over. She asked the crow.
"Crow, Crow, you unknown crow,

With what have you stained your beak?"
The crow then replied,
"Dear sister Kanchani, I stain my beak with the blood of your husband, being impaled by the king."

When she heard this, Kanchani left the weaving loom right there. she applied `sindur' on her head, adorned her best 'reha-mekhala' and all her ornaments and headed towards the royal palace through the fields. In the meantime the husband had been squeezed from the feet. Seeing Kanchani from a distance the husband called out to her,
"Paddy, Paddy, do not come
Kanchani,
The Paddy will make cuts
(on you).
Let whatever happens to me.
You go home."
Hearing her husband Kanchani call back,
"Cut may the paddy leaves,
bother not, I
with you shall I die,
live not this poor soul."
Thus saying, Kanchani fell down at her husband's feet and put her head along with her husband, to be impaled. Nobody dared to stop her. A little while later both the souls left their bodies and went up to god.

When the king heard about this he sang out sadly.
"Had I known Kanchani was going,
I would have sent six scores of maids with her.
Had I known Kanchani was going,
I would have sent her with horses and palanquin.

Had I known Kanchani was going,
I would not have impaled her husband."
After his grief had lessened the king ordered both Kanchani and her husband to be cremated on the banks of the river and said, "On one bank cremate Kanchani and on the other side her husband. Put chandan, lotus, aggarbathi, pan, ghee and fragrances on Kanchani's pyre and put dirty leaves etc. on her husband's pyre."

The minister followed the king's order. Both the pyres became huge flames and moved towards the center of the river where the flames merged and spiralled upwards. Everybody was surprised when they heard this. The king then ordered a peepal tree to be planted rear Kanchani's pyre and a banyan tree near her husband's pyre.

A little white later it was found that both tree grew towards the river and then merged and started growing as one.

## The obnoxious deer

Once upon a time in a certain kingdom there lived a king. This king had a minister. One day he told the minister, "There are two fishes in front of you. Can you tell me the male from the female. If you cannot tell me I shall throw you into the dungeons." The minister was just not able to decide between the male and the female. The minister was then thrown into the dungeons. The minister's son was very hurt at this. He promised himself that he would set his father free. He thus left the house with just an umbrella and a pair of wooden sandals. On the way he met a man with whom he travelled together. At nightfall they reached the man's house. The minister's son rested near the gate way and the man went inside. The man had been puzzled by the behaviour of the minister's son. He would use the wooden sandals only when he had to cross some puddle of water and the umbrella only when under a tree. When he reached home his daughter enquired, "Father, was there anything interesting on the journey?" The father replied, "Yes, I had met a curious man who would wear his sandals only when crossing puddle and use the umbrella only under the tree.' The daughter was very enthusiastic when she heard that. She asked "Where is the man? Who is he? Do you know that he is a very wise man?" The father replied "If you want to meet him he is sitting in front of the house." The daughter asked the father to fetch him and he began to stay with them. Gradually the daughter developed a desire to marry him. When she expressed her desire he said he would do so only on one condition. The girl's father mocked that it would be difficult to fulfil his condition since he had strange ways. The daughter then elucidated his curious manners "He uses the sandals in water so that it would protect him from unseen thorns, stones etc: which he wouldn't see underneath. And he opens the umbrella under the tree to protect himself from bird
pickings. You would think that to be wise, won't you? I am going to marry him and none else. "The father asked the young man what his condition was. He then told how the king had asked his father to identify the male and female after holding two fishes in front of him. And when he was not able to do he was thrown in the dungeons. Since then he had been on the trail trying to find a way to release his father.

If the daughter could think of a way to release his father only then was he wiling to marry her otherwise not. As soon as she heard this she said, "That is very simple. Do not worry". After this they were married. They stayed together for a while and then the husband reminded her of the condition. She told him to go to the king and tell him "Swargadeo, you have thrown my father in the dungeons because he has not been able to identify the male and the female of the fish. Now if Swargadeo is able to identify the male and female of humans then I too shall identify the male and female fish. If Swargadeo is not able to identify the male and female human and I am able to identify the male and female human then you shall release my father" And then his wife explained to him what needed to be done. Accordingly the man asked some men and women to dress like a male and cover their head with a cloth. After this they were asked to jump over a trench and a gold coin was promised to anybody who crossed the trench. This incentive made even the women to cross the trench easily. Consequently the king was not able to differentiate amongst the males and females. On the other hand the young man was able to do that. The king asked the young man as to how he was able to differentiate the sex. The young man replied, "Those who have put their right leg forward are males and the ones who have put their left foot forward are females." The king was satisfied with the explanation and released his father.

The king's barber was very mischievous he said,'Swargadeo, this was not the young man's idea but his wife's. Such a wife is rather worthy of becoming the queen". The king replied, "Yes very true, but what do you suggest", The next day the king summoned the minister and asked him to get a 'Bhusung pohu' or an obnoxious deer otherwise he would be put to death. The poor man did not know what to do and was very worried, when his daughter-in-law came to know about it she brushed it aside 'That is hardly something to worry about. You go to the king and ask him for a month's time, " After this everyday, the minister and his son would go out hunting pretending to look for the obnoxious deer. During this time she tried to find out what the king actually had in mind. In the meantime one day, the king came to their house and asked her to accept him. Everyday on some pretext or other she would send him away. Meanwhile the last day had dawned; so when the king asked her when she would finally become his, she said that she would become his the next day. And the next day if she did not go with him. she would never be his. The next day she instructed her husband and father-in-law to come earlier than usual. So when the king came to claim her on the last and final day, the minister and his son appeared.

The king began to panic, so this woman hid him in a casket of 'Lali1' I that was nearby. When the minister came he asked his daughter-in-law for some 'Lali'. She pointed to the casket and said," there it is." When the minister was approaching the casket, the daughter-in-law quickly took the king from the casket and hid him in a huge basket of cotton nearby. The king then became covered with cotton all over. Suddenly the minister spotted the king covered with cotton He asked, ‘What is this?'. The daughter-in-law replied,‘That is the bhusung pohu. Now catch him and take him to the king." The happy went to fetch a net
to catch the "Bhusung Pohu" ${ }^{1}$. The king seizing this chance fled to his palace. The minister and his son chased the Bhusung Pohu and reached the king's palace. The king went inside, washed and cleaned himself and came outside. He told the minister, ' ${ }^{\prime}$ I have seen the bhusung Pohu. Now you can go. From today you can come and sit in the darbar." The minister and his son returned home after getting this order. And our clothes became dirty and so we came back home as well.

1 Obnoxious Deer.


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 यूमीव अठ्न চालि काউनीत्र कलन,—"थाई, बেाय घलभ छूश मिय









 आश゙शো ।
 जোब क्राব भीविन जब ।। अমোেে মননিরন ডাবি। কোন কढৈৈ यাবি।। द'ना वেকू योব বগা কাণ। ডাকি বোনা बান বাম ।।

## এজনী মানিनী आক এজ্োপা ফুল







"स' গए, ब' गाए, झूनগছ जागt सर किए?"

गालिनी—"'ख' গৰ




 बानिनो-" ब' ब्याद, च' ब्याद, छटटाद निमिं्र दिग्र ?"


 गानिनो-" "ब' बख, घ" बसय, बबसूণ फिश fित्र ?"




## बूधिय़क শिय्गाल







































 हिकार करियोन भो’न।



































बाष जाए ब"ँखाना




















 こॅছिन !"


 ষया পেजাবटৈ ठान्मितन। बमिन याতि निनগত चान निय्रालে





 পেলানে।

## বাম আক কেঁচোবা



















 ज. Ј. $\because$ ?




 ब








२৬

























## বু चাইব সাখু




















































## बूषो थाइँ गाूू































































 निर्डत्र बाक, ड़ायाक खायि, वानान গयानी भाजितना घाक जूमि









## ब़ी जाইय मा४ू．：


 সमात्य जंजाई थारिया I＂，




 ぶजन




















犭
 Eख्य fिएन，－




























 काश़नकन्नि व'ना र'ज, कि खारित्जा।
$\qquad$










 यक्काई मिनে ।

 भ 1









































 जो कवि जৌীমनाय शতত मिटन ।





































搏! "



















 なচ 『itina।











 কাষটল \গ জবাটেঙা পাবিব খেজজোত্তই গছ্রোপাই বিনাই না丁 নगালে，一














 বটন शাত बেনनাত়েই পদूदে বিনাই গানन；－



 হাত बেলোত ফুনে বিनাই মাতিলে，－





















कहीज

## 













 बिरि मारि नाएप्ण ड़नन-बदोक बरिन।





## वूढी धाইव भाू




 नाएॅて







 आাिি।











84

桹 न :



































## मীषल ठठडोश़ा





 ऐठि साष्नि।























 उग्रज उअभ बनिन्न।















































চোবে বাতিটো তাতে थাকি বাতি পুরাতে গছ্ন প্৷ নামি
 बুणि অপ্র থানে।

## গল্গাটোপ













 ঢুতি1＂




















 ば・•：







 てেগাত্ত মতাই जানি নোন ক্মাব প্রমাণ নওক।＂



 नগानन，－

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { मंराइ्रॉन याय़ान वनयात्र ?" }
\end{aligned}
$$






 বুলিছিন，তর্থাপি বাইজব इক্ম পেলাব ণেপায্য বুলি ভাবি কাছি－পাবি

## बूमी जाইব गাখু

 গান্যালে : অাত্ত নগালে,--

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { "काæनक्ती जाই, কাঞनमতी जाई। }
\end{aligned}
$$



" $: \pi$, जान大रश बान大 डानब बमान $1:$
आানা গন্গাষব <োপা बन কোন ?"









 मिजन 1

## नूমलীয়ा ตx|




 मिनि न'वाד नािं निोमन मिलে।














































## সबব्জাन






 मिय Cनाबाबतन ? च।





 बनाई ज'न।





























 फूडाগ।"











"'गडनाত্ত मडन, এছাবিए丁 पেও।




 जानूश्य कथा, रेबनो 'मिख्रनीन काषज भवि रेन टर গ'न; बायु























"इ पॉ याखिय़िই थाই ल.














 পোত टब मिट्न।






 यानित्न 1




$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { बव . बतना लिश, }
\end{aligned}
$$

 बडिओाटर भविन यविएन बबवष बान।"


 সাজ-बाপো লোনোळা fि बो भित्षाटि।




 ॠ'ना इ'न, घबटनल উততি थारिजना।

## এটl लिएवा মो巨ब কथा



































 क্রিনে।

> बোব সাধूळथ निश ।
> דाबোन वननिपन ডाবি।
> बোन बढन यावि।


बढा बधी मानूহ














 डूसू बেi याविलन ।"



































 शूচि। गई बाईित्वा धठि।












 डहों लिटन









 बविरोन बऩण हिक बनित्न।















 উণি আたি তোব অাবতে গৰিন－
 চिलनी बाई व्या刀 जाओডে পट大 ॥＂
















## ＂बাঁহড পাত नए কি চরে। <br> 























 शभिन !





 गानक नाजिलেi. +

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { "च্যগলি কলপাত नহী কি চবে। }
\end{aligned}
$$








 जाত চাউন बौः পেनाई मियि 凶ाए बान जচङ পাनीত এডान
 उई बा४नयनय পना उनाई याशित्ड यशि थारियि; लिशिবি চক্ত

## 











 चाতিजে-
"चाগनि अनभाত नतब कि চतে।






























 निब 1 品














$$
\because \Leftrightarrow
$$












 वानि बोन अबितन।



















 विनि मि চिननोर बोटान干




 Бिननो बात्य व्वान पाडि अरितन ।
 गাত গভিনীয়ে নোক ডোমত ব্বিিনে।


 बই बिननि नि गमागत्य मुইबिनित्ड नाও याधि চिननोर जोत्रिक्व




























## דুলা আক তেজা






 वनाबाशिएिन। निरेंट ज्ञान च्वाष किषिषटन नाभाग। यागिभूया
















We re re


 な

















 गাব यাবई नাগিব









































































 लिथि धाচतित यानिदल 1 :











 জিনাই गাকतে সৈত্ড ক凶া পাতি পাকে।



























 ₹＇ग। जनित्न सूब भरितन ；कनि পেबातन बार बतिए－कानिटि



 नीान्न－

 न市があり नす！ बিढো बश जোন গ＇न । उেश वाश आাভ इंन।


．．＂ड़ानिन भीक गति গ’न

































```
<<\त又 फ्ञितब शकबि cেख।,
\sigmaाब जिनिकृबि \ই\\ পাও`।
```






## 





 याতি नগত तन बसशिन।

तिও बোব नগढ़ड या ！＂



 गाणितन，－
बব্बি পाइढन চा।

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { जबেनि পাছそन ঢा।" }
\end{aligned}
$$







 বাপীয় নাত নभান্－

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { বজাই का बयान बাb।" }
\end{aligned}
$$

 गाबে）गাত नগा丁न，—
＂ब乡পিনन नूî́ি শা氏িनী ডেহ，
বसाব চাউन बোঁা ষান।＂

 বिनाई 干नে，－
＂धुना＂चना নृপতি रज़，

बखांश कान，－

पूलि ₹या अाटृप्，वशः इस यफ।！＂



 बंयदती बाड नभानि，－
＂ब＇बनव बाशिनि याधिनो তেश，
खाशित्रেই जांडिनि बनপুनि पूछ।＂

 नभाबन，

आरिद्राई जाधिनि मूळेंनब वमाना।＂
 भविनउ，सूँवगौत्र याত नগानि，－

थारित्रां जाधिनि य्रপोबार शूदा।＂

 गमाEण，－
 खारिब जाडिनि চानপीवा ए।
 सिनाई र्याब क्बत，





जूनि ₹या जाॅम, नरे शब रश ।"










































 ঢানে ঢান্न जूनि ष।"
 ढ़ाबে कि क्य बूनि दि बर大ा डाबि नाभाई मतन नटে थाबिन।

 भवि वाडियटे भरिपन,-

 सड्धिन, -















 বबाख पिব नाগে।



























## "कढा यোরা नाक शাবীী দি চাক"





 रबाई खना भत।







 সूত কাটে, মষ্ता खनाয়।




















 वোন চ্্র্রে মুন্ত তাত দিম।"







 नाई, बकात्बत नाई; उात्यে बाई, नाईজে नाई बোनোv नाई;






















































 दहिती









 गकरना बयाक इंन!

ASM mow








"बठ) बোm নাब
याबनी मि छाब ॥"


 त্রাব শুন সিয়ানে।

## তীষ্ব অাক पूটিবাই







 オ'ग। नि बात्रिक्ष कान, -

## 

विडो थाद又 वन बात्र।"








 बन গाउ बन खनाई গ'न ।























" $এ$ সীতা শাत্ঠি এ, তোক মই नোবোরো ভান ।










 थरिटन ।









को चारे बाू :

 वरितে।








 नूरिश खं







णोअ्यन वथा णिन खा
















 Бबिय ननाबা氏ি মিि बाকिन।

## চम्लाबতী










 एभ
 बোন धান নাখািি তোক দিয গোটোক্বাই।＂

＂＂याटना भान চाউटना यान।





 ४नितन－



＂xाटना गम ठाউजেा याम।













































"बाई बোন जবি कুটেমুৗাः।"



बीत्राज करन,-

गारक कहन, -

 बগानে,-

भाब्ये উब्य मिजन,-





































































 पেभ পাबा" बूनि बब ; निस्छ लৌ बबाड पूसि जनch निफिएनि












 बयान हणाद इन्तन,-

 চप्थावरोज़ उ'बि-



























 धरितन।












## "वरम大 हल्भा ब 1










## জबদগব बজাব ঊপাষ্যান






 थाबिबटन ठोई लढ़ 1














 य































 টে大েনা পাঠিয়াই मिনে।





















 বজाক মूনত fिय्या হ'न।

## পान्नोג




















































 बেঢ̆त্রে 氏বিব जान।'








पूरात पूशूঠि यि यन চাবি মूঠि,
डिडिजো পिক্চান शब।

बেौীয়ে צবিि जान।"

 जোন घাटট नচপাঁ गাও।

डिड़ता fिभिस्का शान।
यার্টিপীমাতে বशি जাতে নাধাত,


जडित्रा रनाईि ख्वायो ।"


 লোমাই भাকে।






































## জে゙





 तোক दোনে। মাनूহক नগত निनिবخৈ কৈছে, यमि মई এजिय্যা






 मেभ্টি । मि এইবাब চোলাটো ছাঁটোব দিতन 1 बইपबে তাব
























 Cাব গাটে গোঢটই বগা নোনান হ'ন। ওচনতে গোটাচেবেক ছাগনী বন্ধা जাছিল, তাকে দেণি তেতিয্৷া সি মনে ননে ছাগনীব মাজ্রতে









＂听 माः চota ；
টিকা তিতিন बোব।＂







## কুকুবীকণ
























































 बেরে উত্তব भिपन, -"
























































## ভেকুলীব সাधू














ষय পাই বু












 नाগिन ।



 গानि পারিছে, গম्श
 रानरु दन बि গ'न।














याढे याढ匕 याऊ，
बোব नগত बেख্রে बाऱ，
তादिा जগাन 仰：＂：＂


















## তার্রেয়েকব সাধू







 करियि।"





















































 बनত পেনাই मिजनtগ।











## बऐऐकन






































 व्यि जोन।








 गत बनिय।



































 नथढ゙







## यूळी जाश़ गাयू
















## লখিমী তিকুতা








 बि भार्य जान साउड ति थाटर। बमिं जबतन याहतে जहा जেना



















## 

 भেबiई जায় fिरে।






























 शंन 1

## पই বুধिষ्धक















 अरितन आयामूलोयाटक जा डाव fि अठ यान दूनि डारिश्श।"











 किरिएতি डগা斤斤 जाগিन।






























































 পूसूती এढा丁 পानो भौबतन नागिन। fि बिह পूषूयोड नायिन,




 करि गि fिषद थर भानৌগ।































## কাঞ্চनौ























































 बरिजन 1





## पूঢ़ী जाইব সাষু












 का







































 थादिए।




















 बशितन।
























 बाউनीक स्री४नि，－









 जश लिष किताई खनि，一




```
                                    षবढन উ"्ञा亍 या |"
```


উত্তব मितन, -






 काषणी बাबç




















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[^0]:    1 Most stories end with a meaningless rhyme just because they are children's song and to create the impression that the teller was part of the story characters.

[^1]:    1 These are all the names of Assamese herbs.
    Na - Ist ; Khowa - Food.

[^2]:    1 In rural Assam banana leaves are usually used instead of plates.

[^3]:    1 This is a chamber in the royal palace which has a special significance whenever any body in the royal house hold wants something stubbornly. 'Rohghar' is the chamber to go in and sulk.

[^4]:    1 Ga - body, mocha - with which to wipe oneself. Thus gamocha is cloth with which one wipes oneself.

[^5]:    1 Most Assamese narrators of tales end up this way or some such words to give a touch of authenticity as thought the narrator was a witness to the events of the story.

[^6]:    1 'foring' is a dragonfly in Assamese.
    2 Assamese pancakes.
    3 Sticky rice.

[^7]:    1 A flat round tray-like thing made of fine bamboo in order to keep eatables like snacks and vegetables.

[^8]:    1 Kumal rice is a special kind of rice which is soft and eaten by just soaking it in water.

[^9]:    1 designation of the man in charge of execution.

[^10]:    1 The last month of the Assamese calendar i.e. the month of March.
    2 Bohag is the 1st month of the Assamese calendar Thus this Bihu is celebrated to welcome the New Year.

[^11]:    1 Kharoni is a kind of chutney made of mustard seeds. It has a stinging quality when applied to open wounds.

[^12]:    1 "Aai", "Ma" etc used to address mother is used synonymously as an endearment to girls as well. Hence the mother calls her 'Ma' as well.
    2 Anklet.

[^13]:    1 Joha is a quaity of Assamese rice, very fine and very good smelling.
    2 Coarse Varriety of rice.

[^14]:    1 Dhua is smoke : Chang is shelf. Therefore it means that above the fireplace a shelf is made so that the smoke would serve as an insecticide/pesticide.
    2 Ruh-Ghar is the room into which one enters to express one's desires or wish.

[^15]:    1 Mah is rad dal, Haldi is turmeric; a paste of both is made for bride and groom with which they bathe as part of the wedding customs.

[^16]:    1 Body wrapper.
    2 Kurta.
    3 Face Towel.

[^17]:    1 Term for borther-in-law.

[^18]:    1 A triangular fishing item made of thin bamboo strips and is used to trap fishes.

[^19]:    1 Tawai is the best man at the father's wedding.

