

**THE
IDUS OF MATHUN
AND
DRI VALLEY**

TARUN KUMAR BHATTACHARJEE



Tarun Bhattacharjee joined the erstwhile N E F A Administration in early 1952. Since then he has been serving in the territory as a Member of the Civil Service.

He has made special studies on some of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh and published a few books on the Land and People. He has made a special study on Idus of Mathun and Dri Valley and this book as a result of his detailed observation on the tribe.

Other publications by the Author
Myths of the Shimongs of Upper Siang.
The Tangams of Northern Siang.

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IDUS OF MATHUN
AND
DRI VALLEY

IDUS OF MATHUN and DRI VALLEY

BY

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SHILLONG

1983

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* Published by :
Dr. P. C. Dutta,
Director of Research,
for and on behalf of the
Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

* Cover Design by
U. P. Chakraborty

* Sketches by
M. Kalita

* Photographs
From the collection of Author

Price : Rs. 27-55

* Printed by
The Tribune Press
Guwahati-781003.

PREFACE

Twenty years back during a winter month I came on a visit to Sissar Valley village of Mori from Padam settlement of Damro in Eastern Siang where I was posted as an Administrative Officer. Crossing the 7000 ft. Baisha pass my first reaction was full of surprise. From bustling, humming activities of Damro-Mori an Idu village appeared almost devoid of life. I remember the note written in my diary—'No bird whistled, not a dog barked nor a child cried—what a strange country I have landed'. A few houses were hidden behind the thick foliage of ever green forest and a twisting path narrow even for foothold led to the front entrance of the house of the headman where I was ushered in.

My party was treated with jugs full of brew-called 'U' and sumptuous meal with boiled eggs, meat and we were all overwhelmed by hospitality.

That was my first impression of Idu—who were noted to be unreliable, unpredictable and bent on vengeance on trifling matters.

A few years after I had a further opportunity of study the tribe from close proximity at Singa on upper reaches of Yangsang Chu river near the foot of Abroka mountains in north Eastern Siang. I saw the 'RHE' festival involving fantastic expenditure, slaughter of mithuns, pigs, awe inspiring dress of Igu, rhythmic dance which aroused curiosity to know the tribe as to why they were considered as individualistic. At the time I was collecting materials for my book on Tangam-Adis and had occasion to visit the high ranges of ABORKA. From 14,000 ft. 'KANGRI KARPOLA' my guide pointed to mysterious MIPI in Upper MATHUN. I

did not imagine at the moment that in some years ahead I would be visiting the place.

A decade later I was posted to DRI--MATHUN valleys in the land of the IDUS.

My job combined with Administration and Development had enabled me to frequently move around the area thus giving the opportunity of visiting the numerous Idu Settlements and study their way of living. The materials presented in this book were collected during my stay among the people for nearly four years.

I gratefully acknowledge the help and assistance received from many of my Idu friends during the preparation of the manuscript. Amongst them are S/Sri Rajesh Tacho, Chinguchi, Tayu, Patu Mithi, Laitu Miu of Anini, Akru Mihu, Kino Melo, Takode Tayu of Alinye, Choma Mihu of Gipulin, Rano Mihu, Malage Mihu of Mihindu, Gane Tacho, Tapa Tacho of Etabe, Abachi Mipi of Brango, Neta Emiri of Elembro.

I also mention the help received from Sri Tupidhar Gogoi, Village Level Worker of Mihindu who actually inspired me to write and offered valuable assistance, as well also to Dr. G. N. Gogoi, Sub-Divisional Medical Officer, Anini for rendering help in many ways.

My thanks are due also to Sri U. P. Chakraborty, Artist, Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Arunachal Pradesh for cover drawing and to Sri M. Kalita, Teacher, Anini High School for the sketches.

I am greatly indebted to Sri I. M. Simon, the then Director of Research, Arunachal Pradesh, who has offered valuable suggestion for the improvement of the manuscript.

I convey my grateful thanks to Dr. P. C. Dutta, Director of Research, Arunachal Pradesh who has seen the manuscript going to the press and expediting its publication.

I also acknowledge the help received from Sri John Cherian, Om Bahadur Gurung, Hira Das, Manab Chakravarty for typing out the manuscript.

SHILLONG
September, 1983.

TARUN BHATTACHARJEE.

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ORIGIN AND MIGRATION :

The *Idus* or *Chulikata Mishmi* lives in the wild mountainous tract of Dibang Valley in Lohit District of Arunachal Pradesh.

The term *Chulikata* is given by the plains people because of their cropped hair. It is however, not known how '*Mishmi*' has been added to this as there is no reference in the Myths of the tribe suggesting even remote resemblance to this name. It is fair to know this tribe as *Idu* by which they designate themselves without resorting to vague term which has no historical basis.

The origin of the tribe is still shrouded in mystery. It is however believed that they must have come from the triangle of Burma where innumerable tribal groups of similar culture used to live in widely dispersed area between Salween Mekong and Yangtze. All of them were Mongoloid tribes who are characterized by a close similarity in physical feature and mode of life. Their material culture is based on bamboo. They live in bamboo houses. Most of their house-hold articles and implements are made of bamboo. They practise shifting method of cultivation, brew beer, dress themselves in scanty clothes the barest minimum.

The tribes must have been dispersed due to various factors-pressure exerted by population explosion and consequent movement of tribes, one pushing the other out from their habitats, inter tribal feuds, natural calamities and quest for better land, change in subsistence occupations eg ; from food gathering to Agriculture.

APPENDIX—A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ash	Egole
Arum	Sona
Ail	Ameya
Arrow	Ipita
Aconite	Mra
Bridge	Sa
Bird	Pra-a
Bow	Ilipra
Bamboo	Abrato
Bamboo torch	Ithumpo
Big tree	Asimbo Kachi
Bear	Ahu (Ng)
Bone	Rombo
Blood	E-yu
Bad	Hele
Birth	A a
Bachelor	Ya-anga
Basket	Agra
Bath	Hanto
Banana	Ajibru
Chest	Ithrumgu
Cultivation	Paku
Council	Abala
Cane	Aruto
Clan	Eba
Gold	Jishi
Comb	Ethre
Crab	Chipa
Cloth	Androho
Corpse	Ithu

Cloud	Thompra
Deer	Aqopra
Day	Akoeshannu (Right hand)
Dance	Ako-lakennu (Left hand)
Dog	O (Ng)
Dao	Anji
Dark	Toe
Dream	Heta
Deer	Eye
Death	Apotolo
Ear	Machi
Earth warm	Machi in ya
East	Kechi
Evening	Enobru
Footprint	Apona
Frog	Angesha Echanu
Foxtail millet	(Right leg)
Fire	Angesha Lakennu
Fowl	(Left leg) worra
Food (rice)	Dopire (Ng)
Food	Lama
Fish	Apuli
Fine	Achita
Firewood (dry)	Apopra
Firewood (wet)	Kapo
Finger	Anayama
Farewell greeting	Ame
Forest	Akra
Gourd	Ala
Granary	Ela
Gun powder	Ambo
Fun	Tampre
Ginger	Sa
Good	Alaro
Grave	Sa Ape
Guilt	Ela

Mato	Hair
Manjo	Heart
Ini	Hand
Na	
Iku	House
Era	Hunting
Amboto	Heat
Em-o	Headman
Majo	Hill
Shiba	Hat
Ekona	Knife
Anjiprombra	Lake
Inilota	Leopard
Injata	Lips
Nate-po	Lang
Paho	Leg
Enapu	
Amru-hu	
Eto	
Kiri	Log bridge
Ata	Loam cloth
Anga	Lightning
Pra	Loam
Athocha	Liver
Athotiya	Leech
Athochu	Morning
Thandochipe	Monkey
Kamba	Mountain goat
Ao(Ng) opu	Musk deer
Aka	Month
Mije	Maize
Laipho	Meat
Anjita	Mitten
Pra	Mountain
Bro(Ng)	Mitten fencing
Elaha	Moon

Hair	Mato	Thombra	Cloud
Heart	Manjo	Apobra	Deer
Hand	Na	Akoechanu (Right hand)	Deer
	Na	Ako-lakenu (Left hand)	Dog
House	Iku	O (Ng)	Dog
Hunting	Ets	Anji	Deer
Heat	Ambo	Tee	Dark
Headman	Em-o	Heta	Dream
Hill	Majo	Eye	Deer
Hat	Shida	Apotolo	Death
Knife	Ekona	Machi	Ear
Lake	Anjiprombra	Machi iu ya	Earth warm
Leopard	Inlota	Kechi	East
Lips	Injata	Enobru	Evening
Lung	Nate-po	Apona	Footprint
Leg	Paho	Angesha Echanu	Frog
	Enapu	(Right leg)	Forest
	Amu-hu	Angesha Lakenu	Fire
	Eto	(Left leg)	Fowl
Log bridge	Kiri	Dophre (Ng)	Food (rice)
Loin cloth	Ata	Lama	Food
Lightning	Anga	Abruli	Fish
Loam	Pra	Achita	Fine
Liver	Athocha	Apobra	Firewood (dry)
Leech	Athotiya	Kape	Firewood (wet)
Morning	Athochu	Anayama	Finger
Monkey	Tandochipe	Ame	Forewell greeting
Mountain goat	Kampa	Akru	Forest
Musk deer	Am(Ng)	Ala	Gourd
Month	Aka	Ela	Granary
Maize	Mije	Ambo	Gun powder
Meat	Laiho	Tambre	Fun
Mithun	Anjia	Sa	Ginger
Mountain	Pra	Alaro	Good
Mithun fencing	Bro(Ng)	Sa Ape	Grave
Moon	Ela	Ela	Guilt

Marriage	Na	Iabiaga	Suspension bridge
Nose	Ashe	Enambu	Song
Neck	Amukhu	Shembra	Smoke
Navel	Ada	Ichibe	Squirrel
Net (fishing)	Machicheya	Etho	Stream
Name	Ini	Amu	Sun
Name of month	Imbu	Ela Amu	Sky
Noosetrap	Adikru	Aku	Star
Night	Eto Ye	Ambato	Shift (Male)
Nail	Thane (Ng)	Ahuko	Skin
Nacklace (Smaller)	Amre	Ane	Sword
Necklace (Big)	Alapra	Lekiapu	Stone
Old man	Khinu	Michi Pramera	Spit
Old woman	Igu	Michi Pra Yaku	Shaman
Otter	Po(Ng)	A Ro	Snow
Paddy	Tichi	Ke	Sweet
Python	Emre	Bro-ro	Sickness
Propitiation (To spirit)	In	Iguchi	Sun Moon God
Pig	Amre	Ili	Sun light
Poisoned arrow	Ilkhi	Mra	Soil
Path	Tapu	Alochi	Snake
Peach fruit	Tatu	Amuto	Story
Pincer	Adolon	Atapra	Soybean
Plank	Amre	Achpra	Tiger
Prize	Akrip	Anjiha	Takin
Fig fencing	Ilina	Ili Ape	Tongue
Quarrel	Anjupa	Aprega	Tigh
Quiver	Kaji	Ela A	Time
River	Betoo	Machu Gu	Thunder
Rat	Da (Ng)	Achingo	Tobacco
Rain	Asimbo	Aya-o	Tree
Rainbow	Tamro	Ahi	Tooth
Salt	Angi	Pra	Tsboo
Shoulder	Thopra	Ilipa	Urine
Stomach	Thopra	Kheapu	Vein/Artery
Staircase	Echapa	Dophe	

Mother's Younger Sister
 Mother's Elder Sister
 Mother's Elder Brother's wife
 Mother's Younger Brother's Wife
 Brother
 Elder Brother
 Younger Brother
 Sister
 Elder Sister
 Younger Sister
 Elder Brother's wife
 Elder Sister's Husband
 Younger Sister's Husband
 Wife
 Husband
 Wife's Elder Brother
 Husband's Elder Brother's Wife
 Husband's Elder Brother
 Wife's Elder Sister
 Wife Elder Sister's Husband
 Husband's Elder Sister
 Husband's Elder Sister's Husband
 Wife's Father
 Wife's Mother
 Husband's Father
 Husband's Mother
 Son
 Daughter
 Son's Wife
 Daughter's Husband
 Son's Son
 Sons Daughter
 Daughter's Daughter
 Daughter's Son
 First Wife
 Second Wife
 Third Wife
 Last Wife

Nanialiya
 Nani Apiya
 Nau Apiya Yaku
 Nau Aliya Yaku
 Aromro
 Apiya
 Aliya
 Athi
 Athi Apiya
 Athi Aliya
 Api YaKu
 Emo (Athi Apiya Ichi)
 Emo (Athi Aliyaichi)
 Yaku
 Ichi
 Ena Apiya
 Ena Apiya
 Eyu Apiya
 Ena Apiya
 Ena Apiya Ichi
 Ena Apiya
 Ena Apiya Ichi
 Ebra
 Ayu
 Ebra
 Ayu
 Ameya
 Amiya
 Ameya Yaku (Me-A)
 Amiya Ichi (Emo)
 Ayi-A-Ameya
 Ayi-a-amiya
 Aya-amiya
 Aya-Ameya
 Ia Apiya
 Ia Aliya
 Ia Kasho
 Ia Ali Tayindo



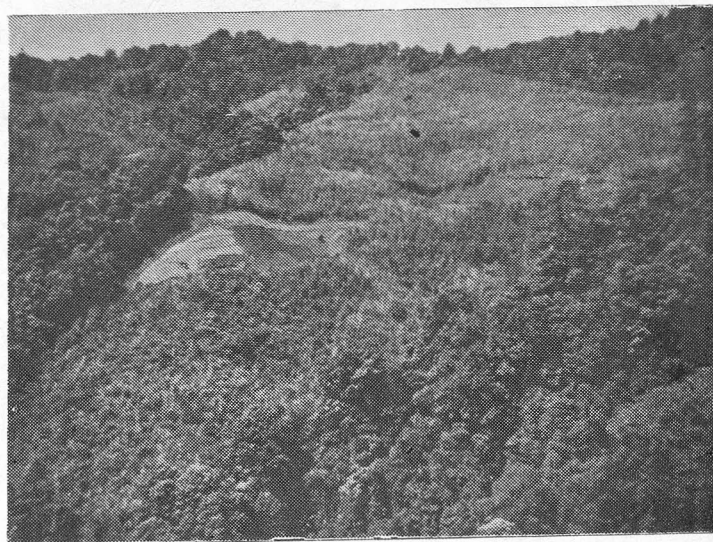
A boy with a gun against the back drop of snow capped mountain.



An Idu girl.



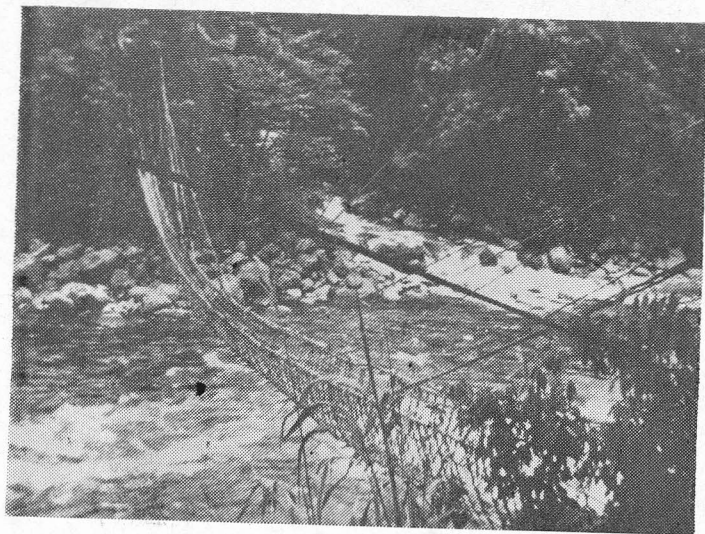
A view of dense forest-Dri valley



Rolling landscape-Mathun valley.



A pig being slaughtered.



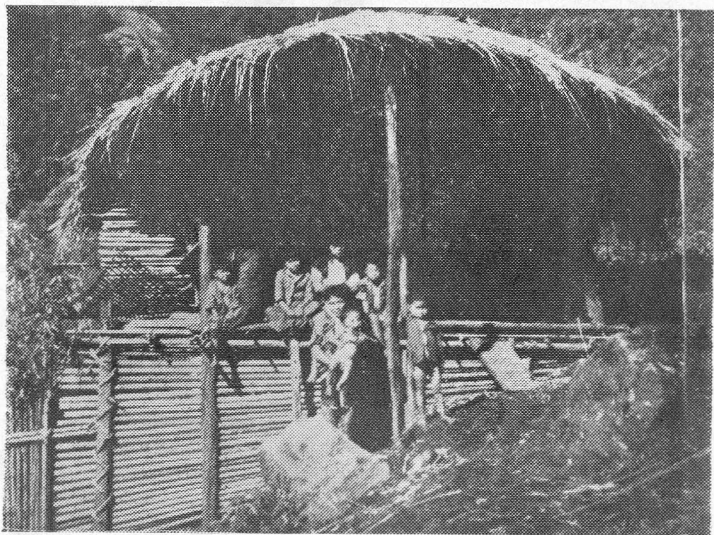
A suspension bridge over Mathun River.



An Igu dance.



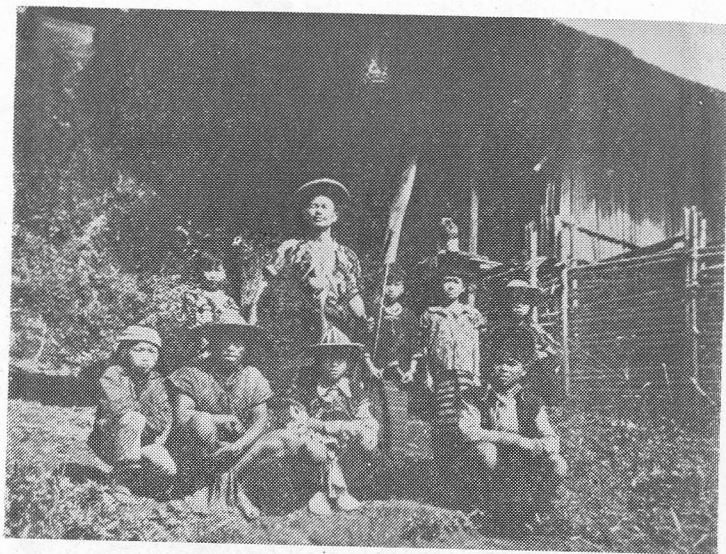
Grand old man of Mipido.



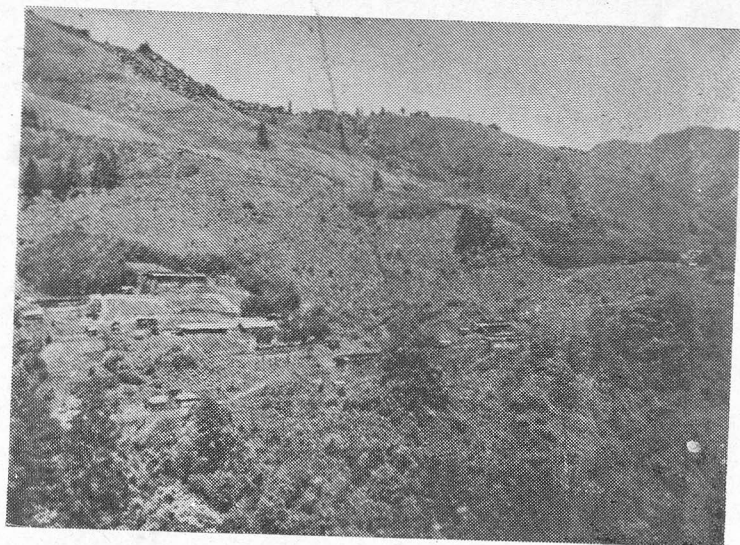
An Idu mother with her children relaxing in the sun.



Mithun—A semi domesticated animal.



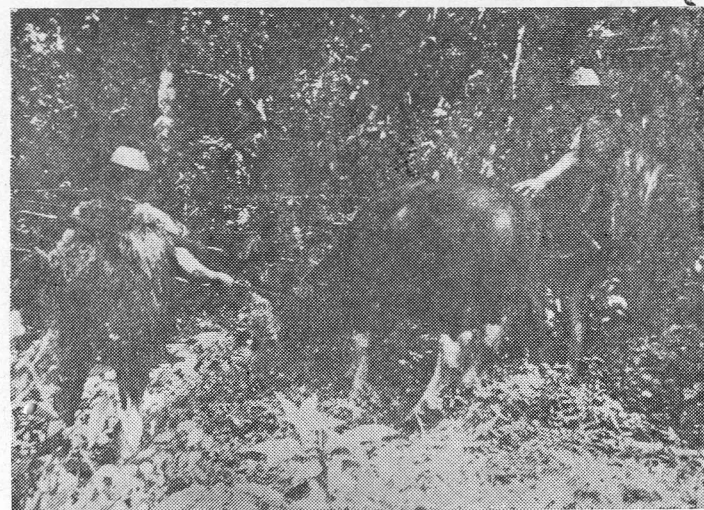
An Idu family in Emuli village in Mathun valley. In the back ground a typical Idu house can be seen.



A view of Brango village in Mathun valley.



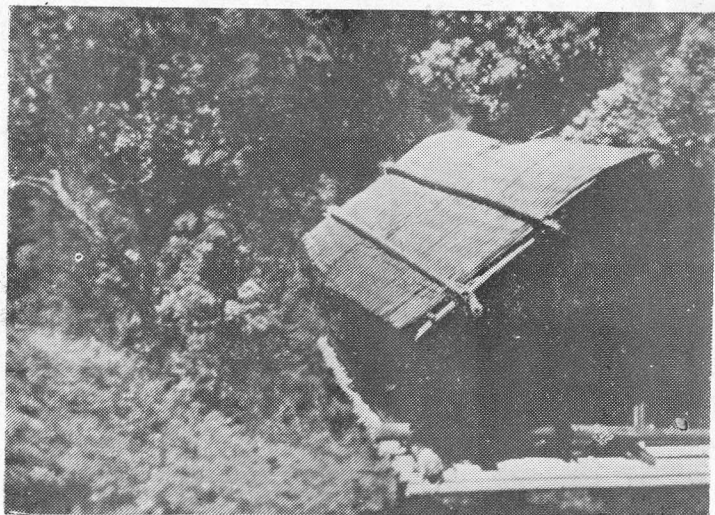
An Idu Youngman in full attire



Dragging Mithun through the Forest.



A view of river Mathun flowing across the ever green forest.



An Idu Grannary.



Water cascading down the rocks—A scene in Mathun valley.



A Child carried in a Basket



A twine bridge

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