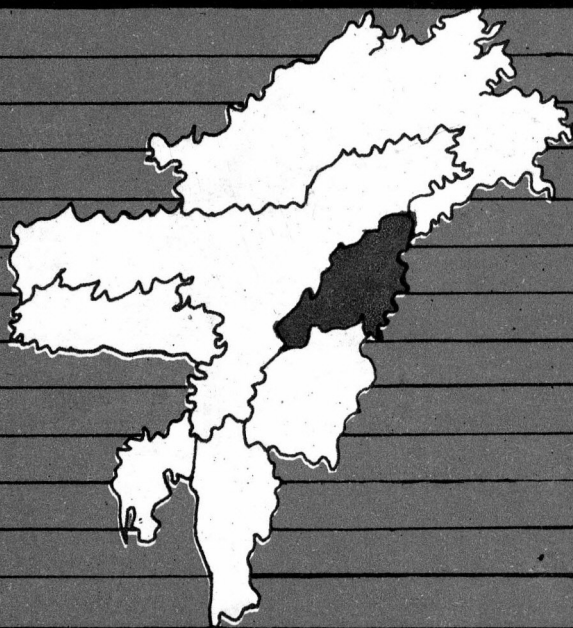


G. K. GHOSH  
SHUKLA GHOSH

# FABLES AND FOLK TALES OF NAGALAND



NE  
398-2354165  
GHO:1



KLM PRIVATE LIMITED

Folk tales are the father of literature. This is true irrespective of geographical region. But these tales give vivid picture of various aspects of society and may help in planning process too. Unfortunately many of folk tales were not preserved hence were lost. Here attempt has been made to preserve folk tales of various tribes of Nagaland. In all 188 folk tales are compiled here. Though many others were not recorded, it may be considered as a humble attempt. These folk tales not only give pleasure to many, irrespective of age, but also be a material for research scientists, social scientists and planners. The book is written by two authors who spent a number of years in North Eastern India.

**Rs. 250.00**

**G. K. GHOSH**, a graduate in Chemical Engineering is a prolific writer who wrote over 15 books on environment, anthropology, women development, literature, beekeeping and so on. He had presented over 20 papers in the section of anthropology and archeology in Indian Science Congress. He had also written articles, poems etc., in Oriya, Bengali and English published in various periodicals. He was posted for over four years in North Eastern India therefor he could collect a number of folk tales of the region.

**SHUKLA GHOSH**, a graduate from University of Calcutta and a graduate in Music from Prayag Sangit Samaj, is a prolific writer who presented four papers in the section of anthropology and archeology in Indian Science Congress. A book on Indian textile jointly written by her published recently. She was in North Eastern India for over four years and collected a number of folk tales which she proposes to publish in series.

# FABLES AND FOLK-TALES OF NAGALAND

G. K. GHOSH  
SHUKLA GHOSH



FIRMA KLM PRIVATE LIMITED  
CALCUTTA      ☆ ☆ ☆      1997

Gen

Published by :  
Firma KLM Private Limited  
257B, Bipin Behari Ganguly Street,  
Calcutta-700 012.  
INDIA

First Edition : 1997, Calcutta

© Shukla Ghosh

NE  
398.2354165  
GHO;1

Jacket Designed by : Sribas Kanti Sen

ISBN 81-7102-076-3

NEHU LIBRARY  
Acc. N<sup>o</sup> 212813  
Acc. N<sup>o</sup> 140  
Date 12/7/02  
Class No.  
Sub. Heading by  
Enter by  
Transcribed by

COMPUTERISED

Printed by :  
Radical Impression  
43 Beniatala Lane,  
Calcutta-700 009.

F237  
945

*Dedicated to*  
CHALIE KEVICHUSHA

WHO  
*Sacrificed his life for  
love, humanity and peace.*

## CONTENTS

	Page No
Introduction.....	1
1. The Plantain and the Hairbrush tree(Sema).....	3
2. The Sambhar and fish poison vine (Sema) .....	3
3. The Squirrel and the quail (Sema) .....	3
4. The Leopard Cat and the Squirrel (Sema).....	4
5. The Leopard-Cat and the Nightjar (Sema).....	4
6. The Otter and the Leopard-Cat (Sema) .....	5
7. The Battle of birds and creeping things (Sema).....	5
8. The Dispersion of Crabs (Sema).....	6
9. Three brothers (Sema) .....	7
10. Iki and the tiger (Sema) .....	7
11. The fairy wife (Sema) .....	10
12. The fairy husband (Sema) .....	11
13. The witches daughter (Sema).....	11
14. Woodpecker's Corner (Sema) .....	12
15. The Dog's share (Sema).....	12
16. The Yepothomi (Sema).....	14
17. The Yepothomi and The Ayemi (Sema).....	15
18. The naming of the clans (Sema) .....	16
19. The Origin of tribes (Sema) .....	17
20. Arkha Sings (Sema) .....	18
21. Muchupile (Sema).....	18
22. The twins hunting (Sema) .....	19
23. The Origin of Semas (Sema).....	19
24. Che and his grandfather (Rengma).....	20
25. How Che was paid for a charm (Rengma).....	21
26. How Che operated on the Children (Rengma).....	21
27. Che and his friend (Rengma) .....	22
28. Che hunts with the tiger (Rengma).....	23
29. Che fishes with the tiger (Rengma) .....	23
30. Che and the widow (Rengma) .....	24
31. The villagers try to kill Che (Rengma) .....	24
32. Che's revenge (Rengma) .....	25
33. Ichu's revenge (Rengma) .....	26
34. Iki's mithan sacrifice (Rengma).....	27
35. Iki and the pork (Rengma) .....	27

36. Ichu and the pork (Rengma).....	28
37. Iki and his friend's wife (Rengma).....	28
38. Ichu, his brother and dispute over wives (Rengma)...	28
39. End of Ichu (Rengma).....	29
40. The hungry tiger (Rengma).....	29
41. The invention of fire (Rengma).....	30
42. The tiger and the wild boar (Rengma).....	31
43. The tiger and the cow (Rengma).....	31
44. The tiger and the monkey (Rengma).....	32
45. The spirit, the tiger and the man (Rengma).....	32
46. The Wagtail and his tail (Rengma).....	34
47. Why the crab is small (Rengma).....	35
48. The ant and the green pigeon (Rengma).....	35
49. The dove and his legs (Rengma).....	36
50. Why dogs can not talk (Rengma).....	36
51. The pied Cuckoo (Rengma).....	36
52. The weasel and the night Cuckoo (Rengma).....	37
53. The banana tree and the Sago palm (Rengma).....	37
✓54. The finding of rice (Rengma).....	37
55. Why the sunbird is small (Rengma).....	38
56. The separation of the dead (Rengma).....	38
✓57. The first rice (Rengma).....	38
58. The finding of chillies (Rengma).....	39
59. The idle man and chillies (Rengma).....	39
60. The finding of cotton (Rengma).....	39
61. Japuu's raid (Rengma).....	40
62. The Kachari King (Rengma).....	40
✓63. The magic rice (Rengma).....	41
64. The confusing tongues (Rengma).....	41
65. The origin of the Tselanyu clan (Rengma).....	42
66. The Lizard spirit (Rengma).....	42
67. The Orphan girl (Rengma).....	43
68. Pyembvi's daughter (Rengma).....	44
69. The bird woman (Rengma).....	45
70. The tale of Pyembvi (Rengma and Lotha).....	46
71. The story of Ndu (Rengma).....	47
72. The origin of the term Rengma (Rengma).....	48
73. The rubber tree (Chang).....	49
74. Origin of the tribes (Zeliangrong).....	49
75. The myth of Erunyi (Chakesang).....	49
76. The story of Tanhai (Konyak).....	50
77. The legend of Sohemi (Angami).....	50

78. The origin of the tribes (Angami) .....	51
79. The Angami prophecy (Angami) .....	51
80. Khonoma and Maram (Angami) .....	52
81. A Naga judith (Angami) .....	53
82. Kohima (Angami) .....	54
83. Kezabama (Angami) .....	55
84. Therocheswema (Angami) .....	55
85. Yasabama (Angami) .....	55
86. The universe (Angami) .....	56
87. The Naga and the Plainsman (Angami) .....	57
88. Population of the Nagas and the Plainsmen (Angami & Lotha) .....	57
89. Tigers (Angami) .....	58
90. The double-skinned (Angami) .....	59
91. Amazons (Angami) .....	59
92. Koppelburg (Angami) .....	60
93. Tower of Babel (Angami) .....	60
94. A ladder to heaven (Angami) .....	60
95. Chikeo's gift (Angami) .....	61
96. The Fig tree (Angami) .....	61
97. Battles of the birds and snakes (Angami) .....	62
98. Snakes (Angami) .....	63
99. The Shrew mouse (Angami) .....	63
100. A Terhoma wife (Angami) .....	64
101. The mouse (Angami) .....	64
102. The dog (Angami) .....	65
103. The wild dog (Zellangrong) .....	65
104. The Bear (Angami) .....	65
105. Boiled crab (Angami) .....	66
106. The travelling companions and the grateful doe (Angami) .....	66
107. The rat princess and the greedy man (Angami) .....	67
108. Matsuo (Angami) .....	68
109. The ingenious orphan (Angami) .....	69
110. The man who turned ashes to rupees (Angami) .....	71
111. The man and his cattles (Angami) .....	71
112. Revenge of villagers (Angami) .....	72
113. The monkey and the jackel (Angami) .....	72
114. The deaf and the blind (Angami) .....	74
115. How Jesu got a goddess for his wife (Angami) .....	74
116. The Ogress (Zellangrong) .....	75
117. Hunchibili (Lotha) .....	76
118. Future of human being (Angami) .....	77
119. The man and the tiger (Konyak) .....	78

120. Origin of man (Konyak) .....	78
121. Wanching and Wakching (Konyak) .....	79
122. Tribe originating from stones (Phom) .....	79
123. Tribe originating from six stones (Ao) .....	80
124. Origin of Wozukamr clan (Ao) .....	81
125. Origin of Anichar clan (Ao) .....	81
126. Origin of Mozur clan(Ao) .....	82
127. Origin of Shomisensenzyar Clan(Ao) .....	82
128. Origin of Azukamr clan (Ao) .....	82
129. The men with noses upside down (Ao) .....	83
130. Escape from Cannibals (Ao).....	83
131. The Leopard-Cat and the fowls (Ao) .....	84
132. The Ao Naga and the Assamese (Mongsen) .....	84
133. The three brothers (Chongli) .....	85
134. Why wild pigs eat the crops (Ao).....	85
135. Why rats eat the rice (Ao).....	86
136. The origin of the catfish (Ao).....	86
137. Why the crow is black (Ao) .....	86
138. The Sun and the cock (Ao).....	87
139. The sacred stone of Chanchanglung (Ao) .....	87
140. How Koio got its name (Ao) .....	88
141. The story of Salunaru (Ao).....	89
142. The girl who had a tree for her lover (Ao) .....	90
143. The story of Nokpoliba (Ao) .....	91
144. The story of the Yadenr clan (Ao) .....	92
145. Origin of Yaternr clan (Ao).....	93
146. Origin of Tsitir clan (Ao).....	93
147. The story of Chinasanba and Itiven (Ao).....	94
148. The story of Aviachukla (Ao).....	96
149. Discover of water (Ao).....	97
150. The Golden era of the Ao Nagas (Ao) .....	98
151. The story of Champichanglengba (Ao) .....	99
152. Story of rains (Ao).....	103
153. The origin of the cricket (Ao) .....	104
154. Marks on the moons surface (Ao) .....	104
155. The divine ancestors (Dimasa) .....	104
156. Origin of the Kacharis (Dimasa) .....	106
157. Tale of queen Hidimba (Dimasa) .....	106
158. Origin of fish (Dimasa).....	107

159. Tale of Ranachandi (Dimasa) .....	107
160. Emerging of the tribe (Yimchunger) .....	108
161. The Killer Lover (Yimchunger) .....	108
162. Recalling the Sun (Thado Kuki).....	109
163. The story of Doikampu (Thado Kuki).....	109
164. Thinianga (Thado Kuki) .....	110
165. How the mushroom started (Thado kuki) .....	111
166. The Widow's son (Thado kuki).....	112
167. Monkey and bear (Thado kuki) .....	113
168. Origin of tribe from Earth (Thado Kuki) .....	114
169. Separation of tribes (Thado kuki).....	115
170. Journey of three brothers (Thado kuki) .....	116
171. The Sun and the moon (Sema) .....	116
172. The star princesses (Sema).....	117
173. The belt of Orion (Sema).....	117
174. The seven brothers (Thado Kuki).....	117
175. The great snake (Thado kuki) .....	118
176. Origin of the tribe and the clans (Sema) .....	118
177. Tales of Anilar (Ao).....	120
178. The great flood (Chang).....	120
179. Romance of Tlingi and Nagma (Thado kuki) .....	121
180. Ancestors from Earth (Angami).....	121
181. Zudio's pipe (Angami) .....	122
182. The morning star (Angami).....	122
183. Eclipses (Angami).....	123
184. The wonder cave (Lotha).....	123
185. Origin of Tsoboi (Lotha) .....	123
186. Zuthekroko (Angami) .....	124
187. The peko (Angami) .....	124
188. The spirits of war (Angami) .....	124
Concluding analysis .....	125
Selected Bibliography .....	129

## INTRODUCTION

Fables and folk-tales are perhaps the beginning creative literature amongst any group of human beings. They were created by many of our unknown ancestors out of their imaginations, experience or may be many other factors. These stories were so beautiful that they keep both young and old alike dipped upto their neck. Those master creations were told and retold orally before recorded but seldom their creators were named. These stories not only give us moral teachings but also entertain us.

Nagaland, a land of Valient Nagas is a land of sixteen recognised tribes. Like many other groups of Homo Sapiens Nagas also had their fables and folk-tales created by their talented ancestors. But unlike others they could not record them in absence of their script. Some were recorded in English by British Civil Servants like Hutton, Mills etc., Indian anthropologists and educated Nagas while many of them were lost or getting lost due to effect of modernisation, Christianity and erosion of traditional habits and culture. In this book a humble attempt is made to collect them from various sources and compiled at one place with the hope that they will be source of joy for children, old and adult.

25th December 1994

Christmas day

P.136, Lake Town

Block-B

Calcutta-700 089.

G. K. Ghosh

Shukla Ghosh

so much of blood shed before, that is perhaps the reason a folk story was born.

It is said, those who died in the said bloody war were converted into spirits and continue to enact the war even today. It is largely believed that every year during June people hear War Cry, marching sound around the said tennis Court which is now the famous War memorial Cemetery. Many living around claim that they have actually seen the war scenes enacted by the spirits.

### CONCLUDING ANALYSIS

Origin of literature of any country begins with the folk tales or folk lores carried-forward orally and are recorded much later when scripts are invented. Subsequent literary creations however depended heavily on the original folk tales, myths and folklores. Infact all classical literatures were created through this route as we notice influence of Indian folk tales on Kalidasa, Sudrak even on modern writers, Greek myths and folk tales on European literature or Persian myths on Iran, Iraq and so on. Therefore folktales can not be neglected just because classical literatures were created later, since folk tales shall remain as father of literature even after subsequent evolutions.

Various human races have different origin and there is no reasons to believe that they had the link at least during recent past. It is only after colonial rule that East could meet West so intimately though for the purpose of West exploiting East Question of connection between Asia, Africa and Latin America does not arise. Yet it is rather matter of surprise that many of the folk tales and myths created in different parts of the world has similitaries to considerable extent. For example construction of Tower of Babal by Angami Nagas has strong similarity with similar folk story believed by the Santhals of Central India, some of the African tribes, tribes of Fiji islands besides ofcourse Mayans and Incas of Latin America. The story of great flood as believed by the Chang Nagas similarity has similarity with biblical story of Noah's arc or Indian story of Manu.

It is therefore difficult to asses whether various groups of human settlements had any link or contact with each other or the folk tales grew independently and similarly thus found are only coincidence. If it is coincidence, how can similar stories

be created by a number of civilisations separated by large oceans? Either way it is a mystery.

More than international, these folk tales have stronger link with Indian mythology and folk literature. The legend of Lord Bhima, the second Pandava brother of Mahabharata married Hidimba, the princess from Dimapur. Both Dimasas and Angami Nagas feel that King Bhima is still alive and shall liberate them from foreign yoke. The story of rat princess has strong similarity with a similar story in Jataka tales or the tales narrated by legendary Vishnu Sharma. It is not known whether the story was originally created by one and adopted by others or whether they sprang up independently. If it is the second one must admit that we had identical talent all over India, since ancient days just opposite to what we normally conceive. The Thado Kuki story of a great snake coiling the earth is nothing but similar to Indian belief of the snake called "Basuki" holding the earth. Bengal have privilege of knowing many of its folk tales which were collected first by Rev. Lalabehary Dey and then by Upendra Kishore Roychowdhury and then Dakshina Ranjan Mitra Mazumder. Authors, therefore had advantage to read a number of such folk tales since childhood. Upendra Kishore in his "Tun tunir boi" described about fool who married the daughter of king and had miseries thereafter. This folk tale is almost similar to the story of the widows son taken from Thado Kuki tradition. Influence of one story on other or the stories created independently is a mystery.

Creation of human being has been described in various legends and folk tales. Brothers emerging from a cave or from bowel of earth is almost an universal belief in Orient particularly in Chin hills and Aracan hills of Mynamar (Burma), Indonesia and so on. Infact tribes of Nagaland have similarities with people of Far Eastern region except perhaps Dimasas. Dyaks of Borneo are believed to be the causins of a number of Naga tribes while the Kuki group came of India from Chin hills. This fact has reflected well in their legends too besides ofcourse rituals observed before the wave of Christianity took over. Creation of human begins from stone like "Longterok" amongst Ao Nagas again have similarity with various legends in Indian subcontinent too.

Division of clan system again is universal particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Degree of clan exogamy various from place to place depending on the origin of the group of people

under reference. It is strongest among Austric group of people found in South East Asia, North Eastern India, Eastern India and Central India. Exogamy is fairly strong among the Tibeto-Burman tribes of North Eastern India. In some cases dual clan system is followed particularly in respect of Bodo group of tribes like Garo, Dimasa, Bodo, Mech, Rabha etc., who consider the clan of both mother and father while deciding marriage match. This has influenced their neighbours too. Hence exogamy has influenced the folk tales to greater extent.

Creation of various clans again has various legends. The clans were created as there was expansion of population. Each clan had one ancestor who came out from original group to form a new group which subsequently became clan. There are various folk stories connected with the formation of various clans. Since all the members of clans had single ancestor, they are believed to be brothers and sisters which ultimately led to clan exogamy.

Clan system is nothing new in India. This system is followed irrespective of caste, creed or geographical situation. It is generally believed that Austric tribes influenced clan system amongst Indian population hence largely they were of totemic origin. All original clans had respective totems. But as days passed by the totems were ignored and names of some imaginary saints replaced the totems with slight modification of pronunciation. For example Kachhap or Kachhu (tortoise) could become Kashyap or Sal tree becoming Sandilya and so on. But clan names in respect of Naga tribes are not generally totemic in nature except few exceptions. For example a girl impregnated by horn bill feather as in case of Tsoboi clan (Lotha Naga), Wozukamr clan (Ao Naga) etc. and the boy thus born created a new clan. Obviously this clan is totemic in nature with hornbill being the clan totem. These totemic clan might have been created either due to Austric influence or perhaps to hide the fact that their ancestor was born without his known father. Birth of the ancestor of Anichar Clan (Ao Naga) with Sun God as father resembles story of birth of Karna in Mahabharata. The stories might have been created independently but resemblance may be noted. Birth of human beings from divine birds like Youhg-Wem-Ou-niu (Konyak Naga) or Arikhidima (Dimasa) are also interesting stories which has resemblance with many of the Indian mythologies.

There are also folk tales describing man marrying fairies like story of bird woman (Rengma Naga) or a man marrying daughter

of a god like story of Chankichanglanba (Ao Naga) are almost universal. The stories resemble Indian mythological stories like Viswamitra marrying Menoka or Pururaba marrying Urvashi. They also resemble stories of Greek mythology or various fairy tales all over the globe. These stories however grew independently but their similarity only identifies oneness in human imagination that human race is one race and people irrespective of geographical situation thinks in similar way. It is a rather a tragedy that, though this fact has been accepted by all, we think ourselves superior than others and try to exploit others, the way third world being exploited today by Western lobby, through various multinationals.

Romantic tales like that of Itivan (Ao Naga), remance of Tlingi and Ngama (Thado Kuki) or tales of Anilar (Ao Naga) are beautiful tales of joy and pathoes are almost universal found almost all over India and world. The stories are not only similar to folk stories like Heer-Ranjha of Punjab or Romeo-Juliet of Europeon Origin, but has strong similarity with even modern tales. Similarly, animal tales are also similar to various tales described in Easops fables, Jataka tales and so on.

Folk tales not only gives us beautiful stories that gives up joy but it gives us clear idea about the society, productivity and various background of the tribes. It is because the folk tales were created by various persons out of social experience. Therefore folk tales may give a way for social scientists, economists or persons dealing with appropriate technology for drawing action plan of development of these tribes. Therefore, these tales are not simply meant for children also for adults giving path for planning process.

Besides traditional fables and folk tales the last story about spirits of the war has been added which is of recent origin linked with the World War II. It has been added just to give an idea how a legend or folk tale takes shape out of beliefs.

Folk tales of Nagaland, as every where else gives us joy, preaches universal brother hood, leads us for appropriate social planning and gives us holistic idea about a society. These tales were the ancestor of modern literature while every where else, Literature was allowed to flourish with proper patronage, it was not so in Nagaland. It is not too late with such beautiful folk tradition, Nagaland may lead our literary horizon if proper support is given.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- (1) Alemchiba, M. (1968) "The Arts and Crafts of Nagaland".  
(Naga Institute of Culture, Govt. of Nagaland, Kohima)
- (2) Borodoloi, B.N. (1984) "The Dimasa Kacharis of Assam".  
(Tribal Research Institute, Assam)
- (3) Ghosh, G.K. (1992) "Tribals and their culture". Vol-3  
(Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi)
- (4) Haimendorf, Christoph. V.F. (1968) "The Naked Nagas".  
(Thacker Spink & Co. Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta)
- (5) Hutton, J.H. (1969) "The Angami Nagas"  
(Oxford University Press)
- (6) Hutton, J.H. (1967) "The Sema Nagas"  
(Oxford University Press)
- (7) Mills, J.P. (1973) "The Ao Nagas"  
(Oxford University Press)
- (8) Mills, J.P. (1982) "The Rengma Nagas"  
(Directoriate of Art and Culture, Government of  
Nagaland, Kohima)
- (9) Carey, Bertram S., and Tuck, H.N. "The Chin Hills" Vol-1
- (10) McCall, Major A.G. (1977) "Lushai Chrisalis"  
(Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta)
- (11) Yonuo, Asoso-(1982) "Nagas struggle Against British Rule  
under Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu 1925-1947"  
(Joseph Jasokie, Kohima)
- (12) Festivals of Nagaland  
(Directorate of Information and Publicity, Nagaland,  
Kohima)
- (13) Ghosh, G.K. (1987) "Impact of Social Changes on high  
landers of Mizoram".  
(74th Science Congress, Bangalore)
- (14) Shaw, Williams "The Thadou Kukies"
- (15) Thong, Riga "The Rengma Nagas of Nagaland"  
(A paper published in the journal of Social Research  
Vol. XXVII, No. 1, March 84')
- (16) Ghosh, G.K. "Impact of Development on Highlanders in  
Nagaland".  
(Current Anthropological and Archeological,  
Perspectives Vol-IV, High Altitude, Anthropology

Ed—Dr. K.L. Bhowmik. Inter-India Publications, New Delhi)

- (17) Ghosh, G.K. (1992) "Tribals and their Culture" Vol-1  
(Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi)

### Reference of discussions

Authors collected, verified and rechecked various folktales of Nagaland by discussing with following persons of eminence

- (1) Late Chalie Kevichusha
- (2) Sri Daniel Rengma
- (3) Sri Louto Angami
- (4) Sri Akang Ao
- (5) Sri Govinda Paira
- (6) Sri Ovung
- (7) Sri K.Peshye
- (8) Sri Manik Bhattacharyya
- (9) Sri Mhao Lotha
- (10) Sri Athuba Aonok.

**NEHU LIBRARY**  
 Acc. No. 212813  
 Acc. by. K.P. 12/7/02  
 Date. 12/7/02  
 Class by.....  
 Sub. Heading by.....  
 Ent. by.....  
 Trans. by.....

## ALSO PUBLISHED

<i>G. K. Ghosh &amp; Shukla Ghosh</i>	
Fables and Folk Tales of Assam	200.00
<i>P. Bandyopadhyay</i>	
Bauls of Bengal	90.00
<i>S. K. Bhattacharyya</i>	
Folk Heritage of India	300.00
Folk Literature of the World	250.00
<i>Buddhadev Roy</i>	
Folk Songs of Bengal	20.00
Marriage Rituals & Songs of Bengal	50.00
<i>Pradyot Ghosh</i>	
Kalighat Pats : Annals & Appraisals	30.00
<i>S. K. Sen Gupta</i>	
Social Profiles of the Mahalis	40.00
<i>Paul Manansala</i>	
The Naga Race	200.00
<i>Ashutosh Bhattacharya</i>	
The Sun & the Serpent Lore of Bengal	80.00
<i>A. B. Karchoudhury</i>	
Tribal Songs of North-East India with special reference to Arunachal Pradesh	50.00