

Chethuang

A Folktale

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Once upon a time, the Tripuri people (one of the nineteen tribes of Tripura) worshipped the “Chethuang” tree. At present, in some of the places of Tripura the worshipping of ‘Chethuang’ is observed. There is a hidden story about this tree. In Ancient times, the Tripuri, lived in a deep forest. Their main occupation was ‘Shifting Cultivation’. To do their works, they had to migrate from one place to another. Group of peoples were indulged in this cultivation. In this forest, a person named Takhirai lived. For cultivation, along with his family he also migrates from one place to another. Not only Takhirai, every people of that forest spend their lives like this. Takhirai had one son and a daughter namely Bablung and Maitungti. One day, there was a ‘Ker Puja’ in their village. Takhirai and his wife went to the ‘puja’ and the children had to go to the field that day. When the children were set to go to the field, Takhirai’s mother forbade Bablung and Maitungti not to go to the left side of the road, because she predicted a danger may happen. But Bablung disobeyed the prediction of his grandmother and went through the left side of the road. When they reached the field suddenly a changes occurred in the atmosphere and they faced the stormy weather. Then they took shelter under the ‘gairing’(a tree house). Bablung was ogling at his sister Maitungti by seeing her physical beauty. On their way of returning home, Maitungti told him to go but Bablung was in his own world of obsession. As Bablung was mesmerized by seeing his sister’s beauty he was stirred on that place which leads Maitungti to run off quickly towards home and fetched her parents and villagers to that place. The villagers took him home and asked what had happened to him. But Bablung was in a ‘dilemma’ as what to say or not to say because he likes his own sister.

After a few days, his grandmother asked him “Is there anything wrong? Or what was the reason which leads Bablung behave like that?” In reply, he had mentioned that he loves someone i.e. his own sister, Maitungti and wants to marry her or else he will quit his life. Soon, the grandmother took that proposal and went to his parents and they also, to save their son’s life, agreed to that proposal. As a ‘Chowdhury’ (a sarpanch of the village), Takhirai arranged everything for the

marriage and summoned the members of the village. Maitungti was unaware of the fact that she was going to tie a knot with her own brother. Before the day of the nuptial ceremony, Maitungti heard about their marriage. She was upset and praying to the god to save her. At midnight an angel came in the form of a savior who then guided her what to do. The angel advised her to go to the forest where she will find a 'Chethuang' tree. And the angel also added that if she pours water on Chethuang then it will grow up and it will act as a medium for her to reach to the heaven. She worked accordingly. While pouring water on Chethuang, she whistled a song---

“ Chethuang, Chethuang lok Chethuang lok, Chethuang, Chethuang tor Chethuang tor...”

(Chethuang, Chethuang grow up, Chethuang grow up)

The tree has grown up. As it was growing up, Maitungti stood on the top of it and raise her towards Heaven. At that time, villagers saw her and informed about it to her parents. As Chethuang is a sacred tree, when they were trying to cut the tree off, in order to bring her back, some of them were maimed and injured. Maitungti's parents requested her to come back but she denied. Later on, she prohibited everyone not to cut the tree, as it is a sacred one. Since then Chethuang is worshipped everywhere.