

CHAPTER-5

THE USE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN FESTIVALS

The *Bwisagu*, the *Domasi*, the *Kherai*, etc. festivals of the Bodos are full of rejoicing and merry-making to all age groups and economic classes of the Bodo people. Every corner of the village and town becomes regular phenomenon with full of singing, dancing, merry-making along with tunes of various musical instruments in festivals like the *Bwisagu*, the *Domasi*, etc. The uses of musical instruments in festivals like the *Kham* (madal or drum), the *Siphung* (Flute), the *Serza* (popularly known by Bodo violin), the *Bingi* (a kind of single string musical instrument like violin), the *Gongona* (Jews harp), the *Zotha* (Cymbal), the *Thorkha* (Bamboo clapper), the *Zaphkhring* (Tambourine), the *Hermonium*, etc. are incredible.

5.1 Myth Relating to Origin of Various Musical Instruments of the Bodos:

According to W. R. Boscom and quoted by Anil Boro in his book '*The Flute and the Harp Essays on Bodo Literature and Culture*' (2004) 'Myth is a story presented as having occurred in a previous age explaining the cosmological and supernatural traditional of a people, their gods, heroes, cultural traits, religious beliefs, etc.'¹ Anil Boro quoted again that 'Myths are prose narratives which in the societies, in which they are told, are considered to be truthful account of what happened in the remote past. He writes they are accepted on faith: they are taught to being believed; and they can be cited as authority in answer to ignorance, doubt or disbelief. Myths are embodiment of dogma; they are usually sacred'.²

Any traditional story consisting of events that are apparently historical in nature, belief to be true, with prose narratives having supernatural characters, explaining the origins or existence of life, nature, etc. art, culture, tales of gods or goddesses or divine, narratives, etc. or natural events is called myth. It is belief to be true, dogma and sacred. The word "myth" is derived from the Greek word 'mythos' meaning simply the 'story'. The Mythology means study of myths or collection of myths.

Myths are mostly related to the ritual and religion. They tell us about the origin of the world, man and nature. There are some mythical tales in the Bodo which narrates the origin of the various musical instruments. One of the mythical tales narrating the origin of the musical instruments in the Bodo is given bellow:

According to this tale the *Bura Bathou Maharaza* descended from heaven through the golden ladder. He brought a *Khobai* (a kind of bamboo basket for keeping fish), a *Zekhai* (fishing instrument made of bamboo) and a hole along with him. He started raising an embankment across the sea and began drying up its water. At that time *Rama* came down from heaven and became surprised to see the old man in a bid to dry up the water of the sea. He said to *Lakshmana* “see how the old foolish trying to dry up the vast sea.” To their utter astonishment the old man was successful in drying up the sea. Fishes of various types, crocodiles, and dolphin could be seen on the surface. After a while 26 damsels came down from heaven and began catching fishes. They danced and sang songs while they caught fishes. 126 young male dancers and singers came down from heaven to catch fish along with them. *Rama* and *Lakshmana* joined them in singing and dancing. The old man brought a cloth of clay from the surface of the sea (now dry) and raised a pedestal there. Five plants of *enchor* (reed) and *khangkhla* were planted round the pedestal. The old man asked the damsels and young male dancers and singers to play on the *drum* (made of bamboo) and *bibung* (made of harps). A thin bamboo was brought and flute was made out of it with five holes on it. The heavenly damsels began dancing round the pedestal of the *Bathou*. It is believed that from that day onward the musical instruments like the *Siphung*, the *Bingi*, the *Gongona*, the *Serza*, and the *Kham* came to be used as the musical instruments of the Bodos. The old man is believed to be the *Bwrai Bathou*, the father of the Bodos. It is also believed that *Rama* gave divine permission to the Bodos to worship all the deities including the trees, stones, rivers, fire, etc.³

This mythical tale relating to different musical instruments of the Bodos does not describe in detail how the musical instruments were originated, but contains clue as to how the instruments were first used by the Bodos. It is seen from the tale that the arrivals of damsels, youths and *Rama* and utterance of the *Rama* had divine

sanctioned and events with supernatural. What is interesting is the holy connection that is brought about in the above tale between the great tradition of Indian mythological and religious scriptures and the little and oral tradition current among the Bodos.

5.1.1 The Myth Relating to Origin of the *Siphung* (Flute):

Every day, as usual, a group of the cowherds went for grazing the cattle. While grazing the cattle in the field, they enjoyed themselves by playing various games. After playing, they also used to worship the God of sacrificing a grass-hopper each day and placing it at the altar. The grass-hopper was sacrificed to the god by the leader of the cowherds (*Laokhar Gahai*). One day unfortunately one cowherd could not catch the grass-hopper and appeared with empty hands. The leader of the cowherds became angry with the cowherd who failed to produce a grass-hopper. He ordered jokingly to sacrifice the unfortunate cowherd, who had failed to catch a grass-hopper for the God. Other fellow cowherds carried out the order of their leader. They collected a piece of *birna bilai*, (a sharp leaf of a kind of grass called *birna* or *birina*) to cut the neck of the unfortunate cowherd in the same manner in which they usually cut the neck of the grass-hopper. The neck of the unfortunate cowherd was actually cut and he died on the spot. All the rest cried hurrah in the name of the God and they dance together around the altar.

Suddenly, an old man appeared at the site before the cowherds. He also joined in their dance. Then he asked the cowherds to fetch a piece of reed (*nwlw*) and a crab (*khangkhrai*) from a nearby stream. They brought the reed and the crab and produced these before the old man. Then the old man made a small hole on one side of the reed and on the other side he placed the crab. The crab with its claws imprinted some marks on the piece of the reed. Five holes were made on the marks left by the claws of the crab. The old man asked the leader of the cowherds to blow with his mouth on the first single hole of the reed. While he blows a sweet and melodious sound came out of it. Then the old man disappeared from the site. Thus the piece of the reed turned into *siphung* (flute) in course of time. In this way, as the Bodos believe, the flute was created. The old man who taught the cowherds the technique of making a flute (*Siphung*) was none other than the 'Bathou Bwrai

Maharaza or 'Kharia Bwrai', the God-in-chief of the Bodos'.⁴ From that day onwards flute was played instead of whistling. *The Kham (madal)* was used instead of striking on the hip. *The Zotha (Cymbal)* came to be used in place of clapping of hands.

5.1.2 The Myth Relating to Origin of the *Serza*:

Once upon a time, there was an old man named the *Khoria-bwrai*. He had two sons. The name of the elder son was *Dhonsing* and the name of younger son was *Monsing*. One day, he got up early in the morning and got ready himself to go to field for ploughing. At that time he heard the cock crowing in a strange sound. The cock said as it went on crowing repeatedly for three times —“*One who eats my head will be the king*”. The old man was surprised to hear it. He wanted to prove it whether what the cock said was true or not. So he killed the cock, cut into pieces and toasted its flesh in the fire. Then he left for the paddy field to plough. He instructed his wife to keep the toasted head, two wings and two legs meat preserved until he returned from ploughing. His two sons came back hungry after playing searched for food and consumed all the meat keep for the old man without even bothering to ask their mother. The old woman coming from the nearby stream with the water discovered it; she became alarmed that the angry old man would kill the two innocent sons for this fault of theirs. So she instructed them to flee away before their father arrived. Accordingly, they ran away to a far off place crossing the jungles and rivers. They were continuously running for seven days and seven nights. The younger brother *Monsing* was tired and thirsty. So, *Dhonsing* search water everywhere. By searching water he left his younger brother in a spot and go by searching. But he could not come back with water to his brother. As he went near a pond to bring water he was instructed by the heron king to mount on his back. As soon as he mounted on his back, the heron king flew swiftly fast to the capital of a king who died the last night. The ministers and courtiers who were searching of a king crowned *Dhonsing* as their new king of the country. In this way what the cock said proved to be true. The elder brother was consumed the head of the cock. But the younger brother remained there in the jungle in the midst of wilderness. After some days he saw in his dream that his brother had become a king. So, he went in search of his brother. But his brother (now a king) could not

recognize him. So, he had to lead a miserable life as a cowherd of the king. He recalled his days of fast and began to weep as he tended the cattle in the field. He dreamt a dream one day. A *Sizou* (*Euphorbia splendens*) tree appeared before him and told him to do one thing to get rid of his sorrows and sufferings. He was instructed in his dream that he should fell the tree and make a *Serza* out of it. He dreamt the same dream for three consecutive days. He did according to the dream. He was instructed by the *Sizou* tree in the dream how to make the musical instrument (*Serza*). He learned how to play the *Serza* and tuned melodious tunes. He became famous as a musician. People came to know about his supernatural power to create miracles with the help of the *Serza*. He could usher in rain and thunder, river to earth and new leaves in the branches of the trees. The king somehow came to know about his power and invited him. *Monsing* went to the king's court and played on the *Serza*. He narrated the tragic story of his own life to the accompaniment of the tune of the *Serza*. The king was highly impressed by his recital. He came to know that the performer was no other than his own younger brother. He donated a half of his own kingdom to him and married him to a beautiful maiden. They lived happily together'.⁵ In the tale of Shri Khagendra Nath Brahma Age-85 years Khagrabari, Kokrajhar an informant to Kameswar Brahma; *Monsing* the younger brother of *Dhonsing* was led with the symbol of clothes of his brother *Dhonsing* while going to meet with *Dhonsing* as informed by the King of heron. *Dhonsing* was not flown by the heron on its back but the elephant on its back took him in the land of *Haphao Raza*. The other is the same. 'The mythical tale narrates the myth of origin of the *Serza*, a musical instrument of the Boros. The mythical tale contains elaborate description how the *Sizou* tree was felled and cut by the axe. There are elaborate descriptions how the necessary elements required for furnishing the instrument have to be collected. These mythical tales like the origin of the *Kherai* worship are accepted by the Bodos on faiths. The myth contains superhuman beings as its characters, but these are dignified with human attributes. The myth explained the details of ceremonial paraphernalia associated with the musical instrument (*Cerza*)'.⁶

There are lots of myths relating the origin of the various musical instruments of the Bodos. It is to be noted that most of the musical instruments of the Bodos are

related with the origin of the *Kherai* worship. The musical instruments uses in the various festivals are same with the instruments which are used in the *Kherai* worship. The only difference is that some of the instruments uses in other festivals are not used in the *Kherai* festival. In the *Kherai* festival only the three instruments namely *Kham*, Flute and Cymbal are used at present.

5.2 The *Kham*:

It is known as madal or big drum. It is also called black faced (*Mwkhang Gwswm*) in the *Kherai* incantations. It is made with the trunk of trees like *Sama*, *Odlá*, *Jackfruit*, *Mango*, *Serfang*, *Ghugra*, *Sizou*, etc. The *Kham* is made with making the hole of a piece of raw trunk of any one of those trees. The two sides are covered with the skin of goat or deer while the braces are made of buffalo skin. It is bigger and longer than the drum use by Assamese and the *Garo* people. The standard size of the *Kham* is given bellow –

Length	— varies from 34” to 38” or 42” to 48”
Circumference	— varies from 42’ to 41” to the right side. — vary from 48” to 46” in the middle. — vary from 49” to 48” to the left end.

The left end is somehow wider than the right side and so the left end directly bears a proportion with that of right. The making of the *Kham* is started either Tuesday or Saturday. It takes 7 to 15 days. ‘The *Kham* is played on ceremonial occasions like the *Kherai Puja* and *Garja*’.⁷ It is seen using in various festival like the *Gwthar Bathou San Phalinai*, *the Marriage*, *the Saraswati*, *the Bwisagu* including in the *Kherai* and the *Garja puja*. Without the *Kham*, *the Kherai* festival does not have meaning. It is said that the tune of the *Kham* motivate the Bodo people to dance in the nature. The *Doudini* in the *Kherai* dances with the rhythm of the *Kham* and others follow her. At present it is widely using in stage shows along with the various national dances of the Bodos like - the *Bagurumba*, *the Daosridelai*, *the Mwsaglangnai*, *the Bardwisikhla*, etc. and songs of the Bodos. It also use in welcoming the guest in public functions. It is one of the symbols of the Bodo culture. (See Picture No: 27)

The *Bwll* and the Tune of the *Kham* are five- *phrio*, *da*, *gwm*, *phwt* and *dou*.

Bwll and the Tune of the *Kham*'.⁸

Sl. No.	Right hand side	Sl. No.	Left hand side
1	<i>Phriu</i> = Open		
2	<i>Dou</i> =Open	1	<i>Gwm</i> = Open
3	<i>Da</i> =Close	2	<i>Mwn</i> = Close
4	<i>Tha</i> =Close	3	<i>Phwd</i> = Close
5	<i>Dab</i> = Close		

Source: Thaneswar Boro: *Boroni Mwsanai*, (2006, p.- 41)

TableNo: 5:6

It is said that *Phriu* comes with the addition of two tunes *Gwm* and *Dou*. Example- *Gwm* + *Dou* = *Phriu*. Likewise *Gwm* + *Phwd* = *Mwn*, *Da* and *Dou* produces *Tha* and *Dab*. *One of the Exercises is –*

Phriu gwm tha gwm dou gwm da gwm

Phriu tha gwm dou gwm da

Phriu tha gwm dou gwm

Phriu tha gwm dou

Phriu tha gwms

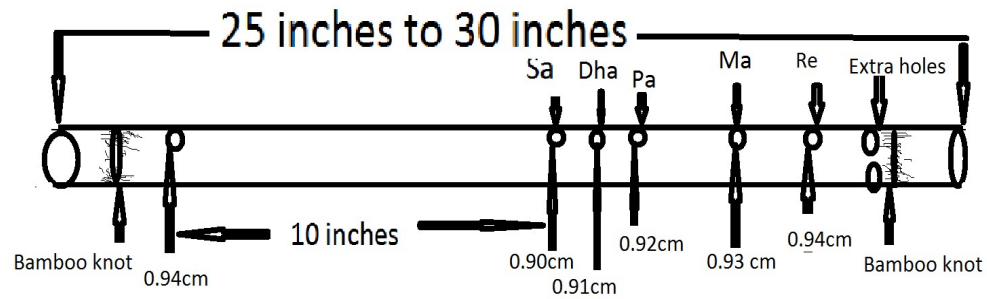
Phriu tha

Phriu'.⁹

5.3 The *Siphung* (Flute):

The *Siphung* means the long size Bodo flute having five holes for playing and one hole for blowing. The length of the Bodo flute may vary from 25 to 30 inches. The average circumference of a Bodo flute hole through its whole length is 3 inches. The circumference may differ in different parts of the same flute, but must not be in wider sense. Generally it is made of a species of bamboo called *Owazlao* or *Owa hathai* in the Bodo. The hole of blowing is known as the road of Soul by the Bodos. When the air is blown through the hole, than the flute get life or says. It is said that the tune of the flute has magical power like- it can spoils the eggs of snacks, motivates the young damsels and lads for dances and sings. The five holes of the Bodo people relates with the five philosophies of the Bodos as given bellow:

The holes of the Bodo flute and the size are shown in the symbol of picture below:



The Bodo Flute of kherai festival

Picture No: 5:28

The distance from bamboo knot to blow hole is 1.5 inches from blow hole to first hole is 10 inches, from first hole to second hole is 1.5 inches from second hole to third hole is 1.5 inches from third hole to fourth hole is 2.5 inches and lastly from fourth hole to fifth hole is 2.5 inches. The size of the blow hole is same with that of last or fifth hole. The first hole is 0.90 cm big, second is 0.91 cm. third hole is 0.92 cm. fourth hole is 0.93 cm and the fifth hole is 0.94 cm. It is also seen that the size and the length of the Bodo flute varies place to place. “There are five notes like *Sa, Dha, Pa, Ma* and *Re* in the Bodo flute. The *Sa* sound comes from first hole and *Re* in the last hole. But in the Indian music the serial sound is *Sa Re Ma Pa dha*. There are three sounds in the Bodo. First is Lower note. They are = *Ma, Pa, Dha*. Second is Middle note. They are five – *Sa Re Ma Pa Dha*. Third is the higher note. They are three – *Sang, Reng, Gong*. N.B. How the Bodo flute produces *Gong*, the answer is that if the flute is played in higher tune in place of *Mong* the sound *Gong* comes. The Sound *Mong* never comes. The *Ma* also comes when it is tried very hard”.¹⁰

One of the fingers playing formula is given bellow:

Sa re ma pa dha sang

Sa re ma pa dha

Sa re ma pa

Sa re ma

Sa re

No particular day is necessary for making the flute. 'The playing of flute in the time of meal is considered inauspicious to hear. It is believed that the blowers teeth's will rip open when it is played during meal. It is ceremonially played on the first day of the *Bwisagu* festival with the belief that this playing spoils the eggs of snakes'.¹² The flute of the Bodos is used in the *Kherai*, *the Garza*, *the Bwisagu*, *the Domasi*, in welcoming the guests in social functions, marriage, etc. However, during the *Bwisagu*, marriages and other festivals and ceremonies the flute belonging to other communities which are generally available in the market are also used largely. It is also used in the other festivals like – the *Saraswati*, and almost all dances of the Bodos and music. The *Kherai Puja* of the Bodos cannot be performed without the *Siphung* (Flute). It is a special kind of cultural identity to the Bodo people. (See Picture No:27)

5.4 The Zotha (Cymbal):

The *Zotha* is called cymbal in English. It is a kind of basin like musical instrument beaten together in pairs. In comparison it is equal in size and shape with those used by the musicians of authentic Indian music. It is one of the important musical instruments to accumulate with sounds of the *Kham* and the Flute in different religious, agricultural, life cycle and rites and rituals of the Bodo people. It is procured from the market. It is said that the playing of Cymbal is one of the way to call the deity. And it is also said that the deities comes with the sound of cymbal. It helps the *Oza* tremendously during the chanting of the *Bathou Bisar Solo* in the *Kherai* festival. It is used to keep time with the music played on the occasion of the *Bwisagu*, *the Domasi*, *the Kherai*, *the Garza puja*. Sometime it is also used in the marriage and other ceremonies. (See in Picture No:27)

4.5 The Serza:

It is a harp like instrument. The Body of the *Serza* is made with the trunk of *Chithonaa* or Jackfruit or *Sizou* tree. It is said that the *Sizou* log is the best log for making the *Serza*. 'The lower part of the *Serza* is hollow and a part of it is covered with the skin of Iguana (*Mwphou*) or of sea goat'.¹³ The middle part is like the

human heart having hollow and kept open. It is a kind of violin used by the Bodos and has four strings and traditionally played by a small bow made of bamboo strip. The bow string is tied with hairs of horse tail. The technique of its playing is somehow opposite to that of modern violin. The apex of the *Serza* is in the upward side while the bottom to the lower during playing. The time require for making of a *Serza* is 3 to 7 days. This instrument is decorated with the various beautiful designs resembling the heads of birds or animals. (See in Picture No:27)

There are fourth strings in a *Serza*. The name of these strings and the original tunes of it are as follows as described by *Kamini Kr. Narzary*:

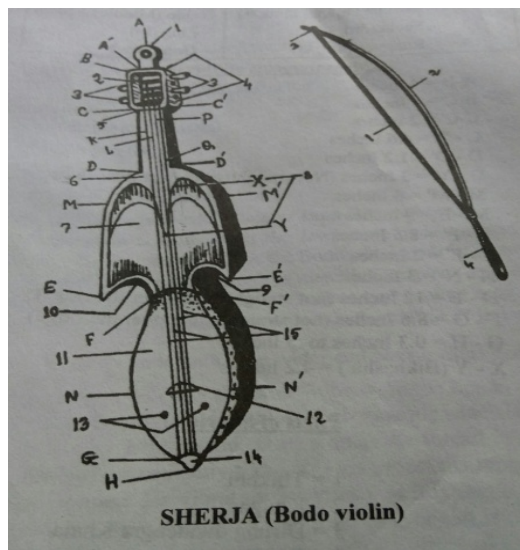
Four Stringe of Serza:

Name of strings	Original Tunes
1. <i>Roda</i> (1 st , K)	<i>Goo</i> (high)
2. <i>Mwcha Orjanai</i> (2 nd , P)	<i>Goo</i> (Middle)
3. <i>Saola</i> (3 rd , L)	<i>Ling</i>
4. <i>Rangyee</i> (4 th , Q)	<i>Goo</i> (Low)

Source: Liladhar Brahma: *Religion and Dances of the Bodos*, (2003, p.-34).

Table No: 5:7

Symbol picture of the *Serza* or *Sherja* is given bellow:



Source: Liladhar Brahma: *Religion and Dances of the Bodos*, (2003, p.-33).

Picture No: 5:29

‘Measurement of the *Serza* from the pictures given above

A-B = Inches

B-C = 4 Inches

C-C' = 2 Inches

C-D = 4.6 Inches

D-D' = 1.2 Inches

D-M = 3 Inches (not straightly but over the ridge)

M-M' = 6 Inches

M-E = 9 Inches.

E-E' = 8.8 Inches

F-F' = 2 Inches

N-N' = 3 Inches

D-E = 12 Inches (Not straightly but over the ridge)

F-G = 8.6 Inches (Not straightly but over the ridge)

G-H = 0.3 Inches to .5 inches

X-Y (*Bikhasu*) = 4.2 Inches

Parts of the *Serza*

1 = *Thikhni* (Top)

2 = *Khuga* (Mouth)

3 = *Dhirung Dwidengra Khala* (The key for rope)

4 = *Khoro* (Head)

5 = *Gwdwna* (Neck)

6 = *Bikha* (Heart)

7 = *Cha Udwi (Dondra)* (Upper belly)

8 = *Bikhasa* (Upper heart)

9 = *Janjai* (Waist)

10 = *Aheb* (Front waist)

11 = *Sing Udwi* (Lower belly)

12 = *Gorai* (Horse means stand for keeping strings straight)

13 = *Gudung* (Hole)

14. = *Khithu* (Lower)

15 = *Serza Dirung* (string of *Serza*).

Bow of the *Serza*

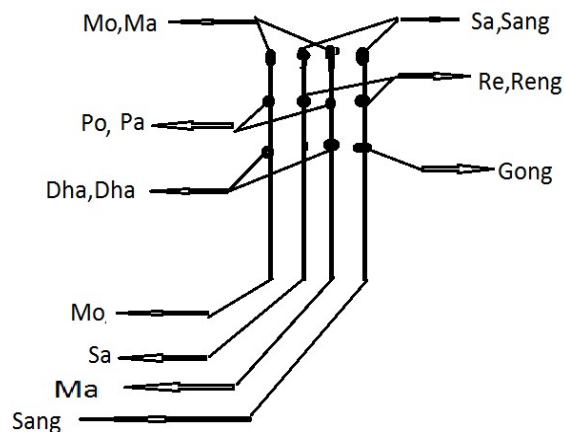
1 = *Bwrla dirung* (Bow string)

2 = *Bwrla gon* (Bow)

3 = *Bwrla bizou* (Apex of the Bow)

4 = *Bwrla gudi* (Root of the Bow)¹⁴

It is seen that length and breadth may be changed in different places. On the other hand, more practicable producing different sounds are given by Thanesar Boro in his book *Boroni Mwsanai* as given below¹⁵.



Source: Thanesar Boro: *Boroni Mwsanai*, (2006, p.- 26).

Sounds of *Serza* **Picture No: 5:30**

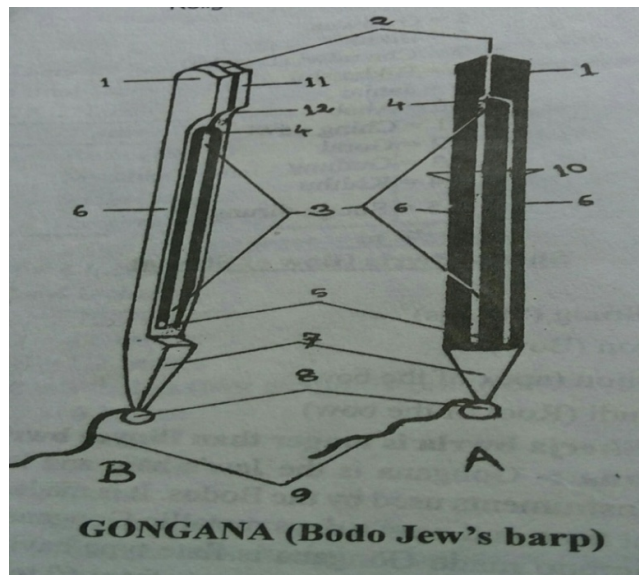
It is found that the importance of this instrument has been decreasing. It is said that the person who plays in this instrument become poorer than the poor. It is said that the tune of the *Serza* can give new buds to the plants, can re-flows the dried rivers or streams, falls rains during drought. It is used in the *Bwisagu* and the *Domasi* festivals, various performances of folk songs, dances in different social arena and occasionally it is also used in marriage. It is considered as one of the symbols of the Bodo musical instruments.

5.6 The *Gongana* or *Gongwna*:

The *Gongana* is the Jew's harp and is a kind of small wind instruments use by the Bodos. It is made of bamboo till the recent time and nowadays metallic *Gongana* is available. The bamboo made *Gongana* is flat type having only one internodes and

the same instrument varies from 6 to 7 inches in length, while $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in breath. The wider end has a ridge hook in the interior side to catch the same in between the lips in a balanced state. The opposite end is somehow tapering which is tightened by a very firm thread. During playing the threads is drawn exteriorly and immediately loose it. This process is repeated in lightning moment for vibration frequently as it is required with the tempo of music. As soon as the process is begun, the lips are moved by closing and opening to play it.

The Parts of the *Gongona* as given by Liladhar Brahma with picture is given below:



Source: Liladhar Brahma: *Religion and dances of the Bodos*, (2003, p.-36).

Picture No: 5:31

Parts of the *Gongona*

- 1= *Gongona Khoro* (*Gongona* Head)
- 2 = *Gongona Khuga* (Mouth)
- 3 = *Gongona Salai* (*Gongona* Tounge)
- 4 = *Gongona Salai bizou* (*Gogona* tounge apex)
- 5 = *Gongona Salai Gudi* (*Gongona* tounge root)
- 6 = *Gongona fari* (Lateral side)
- 7 = *Gongona Thakhri*

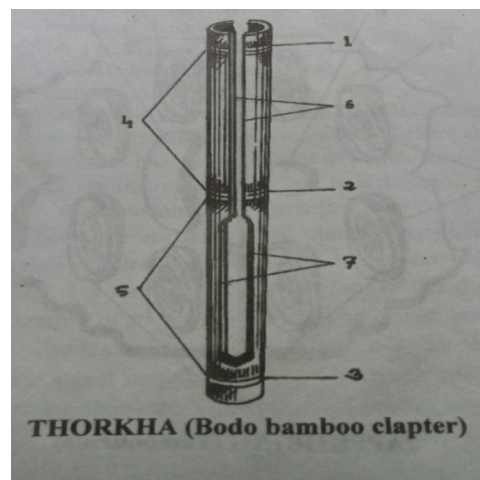
- 8 = *Gongona Khithu*
- 9 = *Gongona Dirung (Gongona rope)*
- 10 = *Gongona bikhung (Dorsal side)*
- 11 = *Gongona Mwkhang (Gongona face)*
- 12 = *Gongona Khob*
- A = Dorsal view of *Gongona*
- B = Lateral View of *Gongona*.¹⁶

It is also procured from the market usually from the traders of the *Bhutia*. It is mostly played by the women and girls in the *Bwisagu* and the *Domasi* festival. Nowadays it is seen rarely in the hands of the Bodo women and girls.

5.7 The *Thorkha*:

It is called bamboo clapper in English and the size is varying from 2-1/2 feet to 3 feet in length. ‘The clapper has two internodes and three nodes—the nodes are in the upper, middle and lower respectively. The lower nodes save the clapper from being complete split away’.¹⁷ Sometimes only two internodes containing *Thorkha* is also seen in some areas in the hands of the *Bwisagu* dancers. In such *Thorkha* the hole is made in the lower portion of the first node. Specially such *Thorkha* is varying short and rare. (See in Picture No: 27)

The following is the symbol picture of the *Thorkha*:



Source: Liladhar Brahma, *Religion and Dances of the Bodos*, (2003, p.-37).

Picture No: 5:32

‘Parts of the *Thorkha*

1 = *Khoro Ganthi* (Upper node)

2 = *Gezer ganthi* (Middle node)

3 –*Sing ganthi* (Lower node)

4 = *Sa fabw* (Upper internode)

5 – *Sing fabw* (Lower internode)

6 = *Swdwb ringkhang hwgra zing* (The sound making edge)

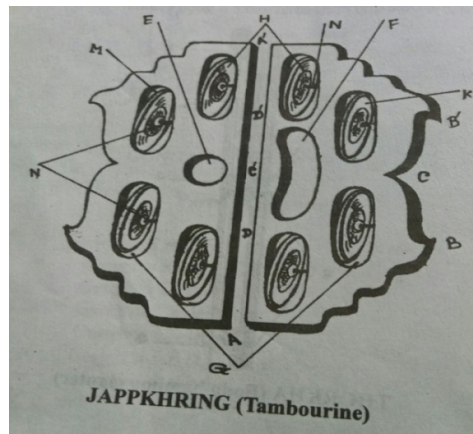
7 = *Homgra jing* (Catcher edge)¹⁸

It is largely used to keep time with the music and dancing on the occasion of the *Bwisagu* and *Domasi* festivals. It is largely used by the women. It is rarely use by the Bodos in other festivals. The importance of the *Thorkha* is tremendous in rural areas.

5.8 The *Zabkhring*:

It may be called tambourine. It is made of wood in crescent shape having some oval holes penetrating completely on its body to adjust the metallic discs coins like by pins. These produce harmonious musical sound during the playing. More than one disc is adjusted in each hole because of which sound is produced as a result of friction made by each other. It is used by the girls and women during the *Bwisagu*, *the Domasi* and other festivals. (See in Picture No: 27)

The picture and the parts of the *Zabkhring* or *Jappkhring* are given bellow:



Source: Liladhar Brahma: *Religion and dances of the Bodos*, (2003,p.-38).

Picture No: 5:33

‘Length of the *Zabkhring*

A-A = 8.2 Inches

B –B = 4 Inches

Breath

B-D = 2,9 Inches

C-C = 2.2 Inches

Thickness ½ Inches to 0.6 Inches

Parts of *Zabkhring*

E = *Asibima swnai gudung* (Hole for thumb)

F = *Asi fisa swnai gudung* (hole for fingers)

G = *Chwkhri gudung* (holes for discs)

H = *Chwkhri* (Discs)

K = *Chani chwkhri* (Upper discs)

M = *Chingni chwkhri* (Lower discs)

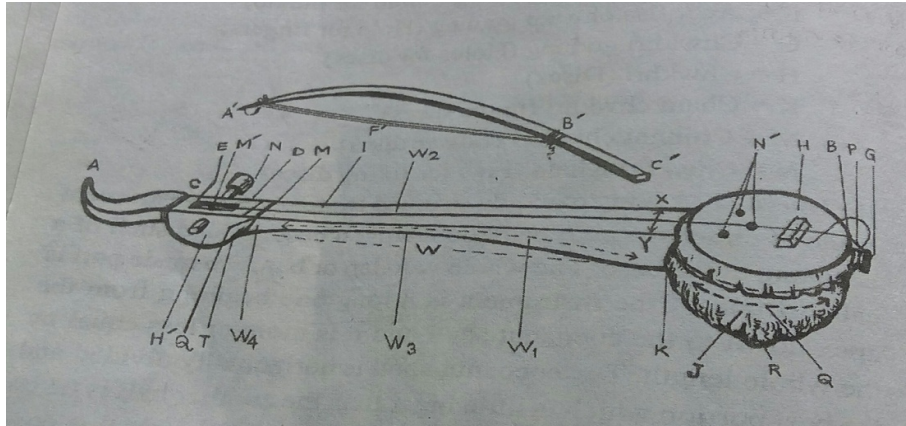
N = *Chwkhri Khala* (Pins for fixing discs)¹⁹

5.9 The *Bingi*:

‘A kind of single stringed musical instrument made of either wood or bamboo having a best divided shell of a cocoanut at the base. The whole wooden or bamboo made part is called trunk of the instrument is a long one beginning from the apex down to the cocoanut shell and it is more or less equal by the length. The cocoanut shell is horizontally divided and the best portion which is little bigger than the half is taken for connecting it at the base. The whole face of the shell is covered by the leather of an iguana or goat. The iguana leather is the best known. The leather to make it correct is tightened with the shell by some small and flat leather. The trunk pierces out the shell through its diameter. The string of course does not pass through the hole caused but pierce by over the surface of the shell and therefore the trunk should not be made it pass through too below from the surface. The trunk therefore passes in such a way that it seems almost equal to the surface of the circumference of the shell. There is a small bridge on the leather below the string and this string is made of *Muga* threads wrapped each other firmly giving rise to a single thread like. The bridge is applied to make the string correct and comfortable during playing. The play is carried out by a bow of which the

small bunched string is of horse's tail. These kinds of string are not wrapped but keep in free by firmness'.²⁰ It is rarely used by the Bodo people in the *Bwisagu*, the *Domasi* and other festivals at present. It can be said that it has no importance at present day.

The picture symbol and various parts of the *Bingi* are given bellow:



Source:.. Liladhar Brahma: *Religion and Dances of the Bodos*, (2003, p.- 40).

Picture No: 5:34

Measurement of the *Bingi* or *Bingyee*

'A-B = 21 Inches

C-B = 18.5 Inches

C-D = 2 Inches or 2.1 Inches

E-D = 1.5 Inches

C-E = .5 Inches

C-F = 14-5 Inches

F-B = 3.5 Inches

A-C = 2.5 Inches

X - Y = 1.1 Inches

M -Q = 9/10 Inches

L-K = 1.5 Inches

S-T = 1 Inches

Bow of *Binyee*

A - B' = 13 Inches to 15 Inches

B' -C' = 4 to 5 Inches

F' = *Binyee's* Bow strings

Parts of *Binyee*

J = *Narengkhoh Khothra*

W = *Binyee deha* (Trunk of *Binyee*)

H' = *Binyee Khoro*

H = *Gorai*

I = *Binyee Dirung* (*Bingi* rope)

Q¹ = *Bingi mwkhangni barga bigur* (Extra skin of *Bingi* face)

N = *Binyee dirung dwidengra Khala* (Pin for leading the rope of *Bingyee*)

P = *Binyee dirung khaphthagra douleng*.

R = *Khorkha thakhri*

G = *Binyee dehani zwbtha bahagw*

W₁ = *Binyee dehani farse* (Lateral view)

W₂ = *Binyee bikha farse* (Ventralview)

W₃ = *Binyee bikhung farse* (Dorsal view)

W₄ = *Binyee gwdwna*

M' = *Binyee khuga*

N' = *Gudung* (Hole)'.²¹

It is said that all the measurement is not rigid. It may vary from place to place.

Conclusion:

The Bodos have some myths relating the origin of musical instruments. The *Kham*, *Flute*, *Cybal*, *Serza*, *Zabkhring*, *Thorkha*, *Gongona* and *Bingi* are the unique traditional musical instruments of Bodos. The musical instruments of the Bodos are played in various festivals of the Bodos along with various songs, dances and social arena. The musical instruments of the Bodos are identity of the Bodo culture. The musical instruments like Harmonium, Violin, Tabla, Guiter, etc. are also used by the Bodos in their festivals at present. At present the Bodos are also played and used tape recorder, CD, DVD, mike, mobile, readymade songs, etc. provided by modern electronic devices from various sources, etc. in their festivals and ceremonies.

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