**Religious practices of an unusual tribe, the *Troiniti***

**Amrin Khondokar**

There is a small tribe named *Troiniti* that lives in the eastern part of Bangladesh. This tribe has a large population, but isn’t talked about much, because they live in a small part of the world. They live beside the Santals and other tribes. The *Troiniti* tribe was not discovered until recently, in 2013. They are a very unusual kind of tribe in terms of behaviour and culture. Because of their shyness and aloofness, they do not show much hospitality to people from other parts of Bangladesh. But they tend to be friendly toward foreigners when they arrive at their space. There might be many people from the tribe scattered around the world despite their reservations.

The people live in rural and urban settings, depending on their economic conditions. This group has a religious practice that is relatively uncommon; it is unusually long but is a daily requirement. The name of their religion is *Shokkho,* but its origin was unknown to them and even to us. However, they say that this religion came from the 1800s. From birth until a certain age, they must practice the ritual daily. They are deeply religious, so they mostly do not go beyond or against their beliefs. Religious practice is done in many ways, but the most common practice is relatively straightforward and rigorous.

People of *Troiniti* believe that this practice can elevate you to a high place- morally, spiritually, and economically, known as *Follo*. They believe the harder you work for *Follo*, the easier it will be for you to reach that place. It is an essential part of their life, so after the children are born, they start practising their religion. Most of the time, children believe in their elders and develop a strong passion and desire to achieve high positions. Many children only reach that place by their mid-20s, with some reaching it in their late 20s. The children are often obligated and forced to practice this ritual, which occupies most of their time. Everyone believes in this religion; some older people also practice the rituals if they are firm believers, but it is not necessary.

Children start their day with their religious practice. They sometimes have to turn to their books to gain more faith. They do not have any individual shrines because there are prominent shrines where they can practice their religion with other children. Many days, the children must wake up early to attend their spiritual clinics and practice their faith. They don’t have to go daily; instead, they practice this every other day at home. This practice is mandatory work for the children, and they cannot falter on any day, even if they are sick. Upon further investigation, it was found that the work is arduous, requiring them to work 4 to 9 hours before going to sleep. There are very few days off from this practice. When there is a big feast or event, they get the day off. It is said that children learn many things about the real world, but some of these lessons could be more practical. There is an option to gain higher spirituality if one wants to, for which you might have to leave the tribe temporarily. Once one achieves their desired spirituality, they have other customs to fulfill, including helping with living, marriage, and other traditions. While you reach *Follo,* the elders teach their children the importance of it.

The children do not do any other practices or rituals because gaining their spirituality is the primary goal of their lives. It makes the entire family and community happy. The children may go to great lengths to pursue their spirituality, and sometimes they would behave in a way unusual to the tribe just because of it. Society often pressures children to practice day and night. *Troiniti’*s children end up taking drastic measures to complete their road to spirituality. Many tend to seek help from other monks beyond their home to gain stronger faith. No one thinks it is wrong for children to do so. They eagerly wait for the day of Khorop, as it would mean that they have finished the level of Shokkho and will only rise higher.

One can understand if one has gained higher spirituality by the way the children stand, walk, eat, and speak, among many other things. It changes once one has gained spirituality.

There is a specific day known as the final day or *Khorop*. On that day, they are tested on their abilities through another ritual to assess their spirituality level. They sometimes have to point out the correct ways to do things on this day if it is hard to understand through the habit change. One might have to chant a phrase for a long time so that the elders understand their spirituality. This spirituality is marked, and after a few years, they gain permission to live independently, while they were previously fully supported and controlled by their elders. After the Khorop ends, there will be another annual Khorop the following year, with a more difficult level for the children. They will have to keep practising until they are 30 or so.

There is a way to measure if you are spiritually rich or whether there is still time to reach spirituality. In many unique cases, children become very spiritual at an early age. Many may be spiritually poorer or more affluent, and even economically, depending on their faith throughout the year. Many times, the younger generation does not pass the *Khorop*, and they end up being punished severely by the people of the tribe; they might also be ousted from society. Apparently, at the end of *Khorop,* there are a few choices you can make to live life, meaning there are options to live afterwards. But many people end up tired of all the practices throughout their lives. The most prominent example is that one can take care of many people and live from the wealth they gain; a concept known as the *shotchi*. However, there are certain spirituals one should not attain; if they do, they are likely to be abandoned by their family.

From our viewpoint, this religious practice may sound irrelevant and illogical, but it helps the tribe grow bigger. Neither *Shokkho* nor *Khorop* is physically violent; even the tribe is not very violent. This part of their culture is essential for these people because the spiritual entity is their sole focus. As a significant part of everyday life, the people of *Troiniti* can not give up on their culture and religion. As the tribe has grown a bit richer economically, they tend to believe that their ritual and practices have helped them gain an unusual kind of success.

**\*Troiniti is a made-up word for satire purposes. They are actual Bangladeshi people**

**\*Khorop is পরখ (Exam) in Bangla.**

**\*Follo - success**

**\*Chitsho- Doctors**