

Questionnaire (put reference #:page # after each entry)

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:

Society: Dimasa, also called the Dimasa Kachari or Hills Kachari. Language: Dimasa. Language Family: Sino-Tibetan [1]

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): dis [1]

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

In India in Assam, North Cachar district and Cachar hills, Karbi Anglong and Nagaon districts; Nagaland, Haflong district; Meghalaya, Mizoram [1].

The North Cachar Hills district is the main location discussed by Danda. It covers an area of 5,883 square miles between 24 degrees 54' and 26 degrees 41' N and longitudes 92 degrees 8' and 93 degrees 53' E [2:10].

1.4 Brief history:

The Dimasa are one of the Kachari tribes of Assam, but there is no real evidence as to where they migrated to Assam from. The area was ruled by a succession of Kachari kings from around 1000 AD through 18th century. There was a Burmese invasion at the beginning of the 19th century and the British Government later brought the region under their own authority in August of 1832, ending the long reign of a Kachari kingdom. This happened a bit differently for the hill Kachari who maintained their own leadership until 1854. Until 1961, the Dimasa were treated as a sub-tribe of the Kachari, but are now considered a separate tribe [2: 5-10]. Over the past decade, there has been increasing conflict over land ownership in the region resulting in turmoil and warfare [3].

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

The Dimasa had been living in the interior forests for a long time, so they were less affected by other cultures. However, "in recent years, with the spread of urban influence and market economy the Dimasa of the hills are also coming in greater contact with alien people and this in turn is moulding their culture to a considerable extent. The main alien groups and agencies that are influencing the Dimasa culture these days are the neighbouring tribal and non-tribal people, markets, and the district council office" [2:138].

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

The whole area is studded with many small hills with gentle inclines, which facilitates slash-and-burn cultivation (jhum) that the Dimasa practice. Some lower hills have luxurious lush forests and wet cultivation can be practiced in flat narrow valleys. The forests produce bamboo, cane, and a variety of trees used mainly for constructional purposes [2:10-211].

Annual mean temperature maximum is 29.5 degrees centigrade and minimum 18.11 degrees centigrade in Lumding while it ranges from 36.4 to 8.8 degrees centigrade in the Haflong district. The area is described as having high humidity throughout the year and having annual rainfall between 1302.25 mm and 2525.97 mm. Monsoon season is relatively early in this area compared to other parts of India and occurs between May and September [2:10-11]. Overall, the area is quite wet.

The altitude is moderate. This and its placement outside of tropical regions make for a climate described as 'pleasant' [2:11].

Dimasa will choose to situate their villages in interior forests surrounded by hills with a river nearby [2:12]

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density:

As of the 2001 census, the total Dimasa population is 112,000 [1]. This is down from the 1961 census in which the total Dimasa population was 210,705 [2:10].

The area studied by Danda included four villages which together had a population of 455, 230 males and 255 females. Of the four villages, populations of each were 205, 110, 34, and 106 respectively. Overall, village size is not very large and if the population grows quickly, people migrate to establish a new settlement to avoid overpopulation [2:12]

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

Rice is their carbohydrate staple, but it cannot be reliably grown so it is bought from the market [2:90].

Paddy, mustard seed, and sesame. Cereals, many vegetables, and watermelon are also grown, although fruits and vegetables are more commonly sold for profit than eaten by the Dimasa [2:82-85].

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

Beans and gourds are grown [2:85]

Fishing and hunting is practiced but is not the most substantial portion of the Dimasa diet. The most common hunted game include deer, wild pigs, wild fowls, and other birds as well as fish [2:89-90].

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

Traditional hunting weapons are spears and pellet bows, but guns have become more popular weapons used in hunting [2:89].

2.4 Food storage:

Not found

2.5 Sexual division of production:

Yes, there is a clear-cut division of labor. The men and their adult sons are responsible for the heavy work relating to agriculture like cutting big trees and clearing jungles. Females do the lighter tasks like sowing seeds, weeding, and harvesting crops. Additionally, the women visit the market to sell small quantities of items while the males are responsible for larger transactions. The wife will also weave clothes for the family [2: 65].

Men plow the jhum and wet fields, while women may help with activities on the mustard seed fields which require less effort to harvest [2:88].

2.6 Land tenure:

“According to need and choice, every head of the households of the village select different plots of land for cultivation. Ordinarily they do not select virgin forests for agricultural purposes as it requires a huge amount of labor for cleaning jungles and making fields arable” [2: 80]. They choose unclassified state forests where trees have already been cleared by the State of Assam.

There are three types of land: jhum land, dry land, and wet land. Slash and burn methods of cultivation are practiced on jhum land, and cannot be used for more than a few years so different plots must be selected for over time. Dry fields are situated on small hills and can be cultivated for consecutive years nearly permanently. Typically mustard seeds are cultivated here. Wet lands are used permanently for the cultivation of paddy. Unfortunately, wet land is scarce and is taxable, while jhum and dry lands are not taxed [2:80-81].

Agricultural activities correspond to the different seasons of winter, summer, and rain [2:82].

2.7 Ceramics:

The Dimasa have pots made from small gourds which are used mainly in ritual, rather than in daily life [2:119].

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

Not found

2.9 Food taboos:

“Fish without scale and meat of tortoise are strictly prohibited to a pregnant woman” [2: 22]. Other food taboos not found.

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

Not stated. The Dimasa typically live near rivers [2:12], so it is possible that they have some way of navigating the water.

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

Not found

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

Not found

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

Not found

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

Not found

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

Dimasa families are typically small. There is variation, but the average size is 4.5 people [2: 59].

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

Not stated, but it is probably relatively long due to a small completed family size.

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

Childhood marriage is not permitted because the male should be economically stable before being able to marry, and he is not able to work until age 15 and is still not financially established for a few years. The usual marriageable age range for males is 21 to 28 for males and 15 to 20 for females [2:30]

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

Divorce is permissible but very rare and occurs on the grounds of adultery, torture, lunacy, impotency, and/or barrenness [2:57].

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

Polygyny is never practiced: there is strict monogamy. Sequential polygyny is permitted and occurs occasionally, however [2:51].

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

Yes, the bride price is called khalti and is paid by the bridegroom's father to the bride's parents. If the bride has no parents, the mother's sister of the bride receives khalti [2:54].

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

There is double descent in the Dimasa that applies to inheritance. "Theoretically property moves from father to son along the male line. The property of a woman goes to her daughter and never to her son or son's wife. But in most of the cases the Dimasa have hardly any property that their children would be either to inherit" [2:57].

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

The parent-child relationship is described as very affectionate and deep emotional attachment is involved. Girls usually remain attached to their mother when they grow up while boys will become more detached, still respecting their father's authority [2:61].

The members of a family are a very strong structural and functional unit in society and are generally very cooperative with one another.

Older and typically married daughters are often the one who take care of their parents in old age or if they are widowed or widowers.

Men are usually more involved in helping their mothers-in-law rather than their own mothers [2:57].

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

Not stated

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

Clan exogamy is the rule. "A man cannot marry a girl of his father's patriclan and mother's matriclan. A girl also cannot marry a man who belongs to her father's patriclan. This suggests that clan exogamy is observed in both the cases of primary and secondary clan affiliation"[2:45]. A breach of clan exogamy often results in excommunication from the society.

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?

The Dimasa definitely recognize the role of the father in procreation. They know that both male and female 'seeds' are required for a woman to become pregnant [2:21]. It does not appear that there is the concept of partible paternity present here.

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows")

The Dimasa consider equal responsibility of men and women in conception. They use a simile for comparing the woman with the earth, and the seeds of the male sewn in the female body take the shape of a new baby [2:21].

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

It is not stated if the Dimasa hold this belief. One interesting aspect of conception, though, is their own rhythm theory of birth. They believe that young girls will get pregnant if they copulate between the third and seventh day after menstruation and that elderly women will get pregnant if they have sex between the third and fourteenth day [2:21].

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

Not stated

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

Cross cousin marriage is not prohibited but it is not preferred. Marriage with a person of children's generation is prohibited [2:54]. Otherwise it appears that there is no preference for a marriage partner so long as clan exogamy is kept [2:45].

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

Not directly stated, but premarital sexual relations are tolerated without punishment of females. These relations are not encouraged though [2:31].

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

Not specifically. Dimasa custom says that female children born of premarital sex should be given to the female and male children born of this situation should be given to the male. Yet in practice, children of either sex more commonly live with their mother [2:31]

This is not common, but step-children and step-parents are recognized [2:58].

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

If a woman divorces or becomes a widow, she typically returns to her mother's house. Thus, the matriclan has strong ties to the children. "An orphan boy is usually looked after by the mother's mother but never by the father's mother who belongs to a different matriclan" [2:76].

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

Not stated, but the overall sex ratio is described as more or less balanced in most villages [2:13].

4.22 Evidence for couvades

No evidence of a sympathetic pregnancy per se, but there is an observed period of 'pollution' after the baby is born that applies to both the mother and father. The father of the child cannot leave the village for three days, and has a purificatory bath when the umbilical cord falls off [2:23].

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

No evidence found

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

Yes, a husband's elder brothers, wife's elder sister, and younger sister's husband are all referred to as boai. They are described as standing in the same parlour of avoidance to a woman [2:74]. In general, there is a relationship of avoidance with the elders.

4.24 Joking relationships?

Present. The term bobrauling is a joking term which is applied to a husband's younger brother and sister, wife's younger brother and sister, and husband's sister's husband [2: 74]. In general, there is a joking relationship with the youngsters.

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations

The Dimasa have dual descent i.e. both patrilineal and matrilineal descent systems are present. In reckoning one's descent, sex is primary. So a man will reckon his descent from his paternal grandfather and then his maternal grandmother secondarily. A female will reckon descent primarily through her maternal grandmother and secondarily through her paternal grandfather. This appears on the surface to be parallel descent, but the system is a little more complicated. Secondary affiliation changes over generations. For example, a father and son will belong to the same patriclan but from two different matriclans (from each of their maternal grandmothers). Additionally when a woman gets married her secondary affiliation with her patriclan changes to her husband's patriclan [2: 42-43]. In this system, females retain their mother's surname while males retain their father's surname. Recently, the Dimasa have had the tendency to conceal the matriclan of their females to outsiders and so girls will have the last name of their patriclan instead. This is superficial and does not mean that the matriclan is any less important as an institution [2:45]

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

It is apparent that there are rules of incest, which one must not violate. If someone violates these rules or other rules, they may be denied the chance of rebirth [2:131]. The rules are never really described as to who is considered kin and what exactly incest consists of in the eyes of the Dimasa.

There was a case where a man committed incest with his daughter's daughter and he was excommunicated [2:111].

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

Yes, marriage is best when performed after the harvest and on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or a Friday. "Before entering the bride's village a special ceremony, lamafungba (lama means road and fungba means to close) is performed by the father of the bridegroom by chopping an egg. It is believed that this will stop evil spirits from entering into the village. The next function is midogarba...a pig is sacrificed in honour of the gods. It is believed that this secures a prosperous life for the newly married couple" [2: 33]. The father of the bridegroom makes the sacrifice and the flesh of the pig is consumed by the bridegroom's followers. The bridegroom's father then pays the bride-price to the bride's father. The ceremony is then performed in an open courtyard in front of relatives who bless them and wish them a happy married life. A week after the marriage, another ceremony to worship the clan gods is performed by sacrificing a male goat or fowl [2:33-34].

Dimasa marriage is considered to be contractual rather than ritual in nature, and usually there are no priests to solemnize the marriage [2:56].

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

Sometime between the sixth and twelfth months of life they hold the infant's first rice eating ceremony. The name is chosen by the parents at this time, but sometimes suggestions are offered by others [2:25].

In the Dimasa dual descent system, females retain their mother's surname while males retain their father's surname. Recently, the Dimasa have had the tendency to conceal the matriclan of their females to outsiders and so girls will have the last name of their patriclan instead. This is superficial and does not mean that the matriclan is any less important as an institution [2:45]

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

There is a strong preference for both males and females to marry within their community. Marriage outside of the community is quite rare. Two girls who married outside of their respective communities were excommunicated and were never accepted again by the Dimasa [2:32].

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

Marriages are not arranged, but parental approval is involved and this differs somewhat from village to village. In Mikir Hills villages, the boy and girl usually handle the matter themselves and have a fair bit of freedom in choosing their marriage partner. There is more negotiation between the parents of the boy and girl in North Cachar Hills villages. In both cases though, final approval is sought by both parties' parents. The strictest negotiations may occur if someone intends to marry outside of their community. In such a case, the parents' approval or opposition is a much more important factor [2:31].

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Other than requirement or preference to marry within the community [2:32] and according to clan exogamy [2:45], there do not appear to be any other conflicts of interest.

Warfare/homicide

4.31 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

Not stated

4.32 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

The Dimasa are described as peace loving, and do not fight one another even in a drunken condition [2:147]. While there is not a lot of tension within the society, there has been much more violence between the Dimasa and outside groups in recent years. [3].

4.33 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

In-group killing has not been reported. Dimasa rebels have ethnically cleansed non-Dimasa people with automatic weapons and mortars [3]. So out-group killing is more common.

4.34 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

"Right from 2003, the Dimasa rebels have been involved in ethnic cleansing of non-Dimasa people and the Assam government has kept [it] quiet" [3]. "For 10 years, Dimasa rebel groups have unleashed a reign of terror in the area. The train was ambushed on a daily basis, hundreds have died in attacks by Dimasa rebels and even the army could do nothing" [3]. The region is struggling to maintain peace between different tribes.

4.35 Cannibalism?

No accounts found

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

The area studied by Danda included four villages which together had a population of 455, 230 males and 255 females. Of the four villages, populations of each were 205, 110, 34, and 106 respectively. Overall, village size is not very large and if the population grows quickly, people migrate to establish a new settlement to avoid overpopulation [2:12]

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

The development of an agricultural system has forced shifting cultivation patterns and thus people have had to become increasingly nomadic [2: 79].

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

"The Dimasa political organization is a three-tier system with the Autonomous District Council at the top, the Mouzadar in the middle, and the village council at the bottom" [2:96]. The functions and powers of the Autonomous District Council are to deal with civil and criminal judicial administration including a wide variety of taxes, regulation of agriculture, marriage, appointment of chiefs, establishment of village committees, management of forests, and administration of land [2:97]. The Mouzadar is selected by the district council to be the headman of several villages. The village council appoints several people in order of seniority to deal with matters at the village level [2:97-102]. The council members may be responsible to coordinate feasts or other ceremonies or to settle cases of petty theft, quarrels, adultery, and divorce [104].

5.4 Post marital residence:

After marriage, the couple must live in the wife's house for one year and after this they are permitted to reside wherever they would like to. This process is called minhabba and used to be required, but Danda says the current generation (in 1978) does not like this [2:56]. Typically the male will find lands to clear and build his own house [2:29].

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

Individuals demarcate their own plot of land for cultivation, and this is to be honored by all [2:106]. It is not stated if these are actively defended, but this is unlikely because the Dimasa are describes as peace-loving and law-abiding in this respect [2:108]. Sometimes fences are erected [2:10]. In recent years as more conflict has arisen in the area, land is more actively defended [3].

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

People seem to congregate and interact most with individuals of the same age group and sex as themselves. They often gossip together in the evenings [2:112].

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

Joking relationships are not mentioned outside of bobrauling which is a joking term which is applied to a husband's younger brother and sister, wife's younger brother and sister, and husband's sister's husband [2: 74]. In general, there is a joking relationship with those younger than you in your family.

5.8 Village and house organization:

"The Dimasa have a tendency to build their houses on hill slopes with a river or streamlet flowing nearby. The dwelling houses are built on plinth of earth – in two rows facing each other with a sufficiently wide gap in between" [4].

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

There are bachelor dormitories that adolescent boys aged 13 to 14 may choose to reside in [2:28]. These dormitories are called nodrangs and have sleeping arrangements in the form of a longhouse, usually located at the center of the village [2:113].

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

The Dimasa sleep on the ground on sleeping mats [2:37].

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

Both patrilineal and matrilineal are an important part of social organization among the Dimasa. The clan traced through the male line is known as seng fong or patrilineal and the clan traced through the female line or matrilineal is called jaddi or fulu. [2:44]

In reckoning one's descent, sex is primary. So a man will reckon his descent from his patrilineal grandfather and then his matrilineal grandmother secondarily. A female will reckon descent primarily through her matrilineal grandmother and secondarily through her patrilineal grandfather [2:42-43]. Overall, matrilineal and patrilineal are both important, but one is primary and one is secondary based on your sex.

Clan ties are so strong that if someone fails to fulfill obligations to his or her clan he or she may be sued in court [2:47].

There are 42 patrilineal and 42 matrilineal [2:49].

5.12 Trade:

"Besides rice, they also buy other necessary articles of daily use like salt, tea, molasses, kerosene oil, soap, narcotics, and safety matches from the market. They also sell mustard seeds and unprocessed cotton and buy mustard oil and cotton thread" [2:90].

The Dimasa often sell baskets at the market as well [2:93].

They have trade relationships with businessmen of communities such as Marawari, Muslim, Bengalee, Nepali, and Assamese [2:139].

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

"There is no hierarchical order of the Dimasa patrilineal and matrilineal. Four of the patrilineal and four of the matrilineal are called dauga. This indicates their close association with the royal court. During the Kachari dynasty [dauga] took important roles in royal activities...They do not enjoy any special privilege except that the members of these clans are somewhat respected" [2:51].

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

Not stated. Time is allocated to ritual practices, but not significant amounts of time. The Dimasa work very hard from dawn to dusk because their way of cultivation requires a significant amount of labor. There is little time for leisure and recreation until the evening [2:112]. It is unstated when ritual and religion occurs outside of big events like the harvest festival or in death ceremonies.

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

Only males can be priests or diviners, but the man must learn the art and technique first [2:107].

Priesthood is not hereditary, and any man interested may learn this art and technique. He will take on a priest apprenticeship, usually in adolescence, where he will learn elaborate rituals and incantations [2:135].

There is another type of religious functionary called a phatri who may be called upon in cases of major famine or drought. A phatri cannot be trained, he must have some esteem and power as deemed by the society [2:136].

Additionally there are magicians who have powers that cannot be learned. They can use divination to figure out where an illness or injury came from and how to treat it [2:136].

6.2 Stimulants:

Narcotics may be bought at the market [2:90]. Dimasa make home made liquor called zu and can buy liquor at the market [2:141].

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

“When a death occurs, a cock is sacrificed or an egg is broken near the head of the dead by a male member of the family. It is believed that the soul of the cock will accompany the deceased to the other world” [2:36]. Dead bodies are ceremonially bathed, and then carried by both men and women to a location where the body will be cremated. Paddy and cotton thread are thrown along the way to this location, and rice beer is offered to the spirit of the deceased before lighting the pyre. The party calls the dead ancestors of the deceased and asks them to treat the deceased well in the next world. After the body is burnt, the ashes are washed away and the party takes a purificatory bath before returning to the village. The deceased’s garments and belongings are later burnt on the same spot [2:36-37]. In the case of death by diseases such as black fever or leprosy, the Dimasa bury the dead [2:39]. No funeral rites can be performed if one is killed by a tiger [2:109].

6.4 Other rituals:

The harvest festival or busu is the most important festival of Dimasa cultural life. It is celebrated once a year after the harvest but there is no fixed date. There are two forms of busu, the abbreviated form which is the more frequent form that lasts for 3 to 5 days, and the elaborate form which is less frequent and lasts 7 days. The longer elaborate form is more expensive so it is usually observed every five or seven years or whenever there is an especially good harvest [2:115-116].

During this festival, normal working activities are stopped and everyone joins in the festivities. There is much feasting, and specific dancing styles occur throughout the duration of the festival [2:117-118].

On the first day of the festival, the boys dance and dress like Dimasa warriors, reenacting an ancient battle between the Naga and Dimasa. On the second day, everyone pays homage to elders, with the juniors giving seniors clothes and money. Offerings are also made to the dead on this day [2:119-120]. The elaborate form of this festival has more days of merry-making, and more days in which to slaughter animals for the feast [2: 123].

6.5 Myths (Creation):

The Dimasa are described as having a very faint concept of supreme being. They believe in a creator in heaven called Madai, but they do not worship him, and only occasionally pray to him during marriages or harvest festivals [2:131].

“According to the Dimasa myth of creation there was one Banglaraja and his wife Arikhidima. They inhabited in the heaven (damra). At that time the present world was a great vacuum. Once Arikhidima conceived and then the golden eagle was sent to search out a suitable place for delivery... There she laid seven eggs from which she hatched out six eggs” [2:137]. The 6 eggs hatched into great gods while the 7th broke and unleashed evil spirits [2:137].

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

Every village has muri or flute players who entertain people in the evenings. They are often accompanied by drummers. Unmarried girls participate in dance and sometimes practice dancing along with young boys. Unmarried girls occasionally play an instrument called a topang-kharam, which is similar to a harp. There is no vocal music at public functions and songs are only sung in solo while working the fields [2:113].

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

“In the Dimasa society men and women have more or less equal rights to observe religious rites. But the profession of priesthood is restricted to the males only. A woman cannot be a priest or a diviner” [2:107].

There is some restriction of women in observance of ritual rites. They may not take part in worship that takes place in the jungle or witness the worship of witches in the village boundary [2:107].

6.8 Missionary effect:

The following are changes influenced by surrounding communities, not missionaries. The traditional art of dyeing clothing has gone out of use [2:140]. Hinduism and the Hindu deities have made their way into traditional Dimasa beliefs, but the Dimasa still retain acknowledgement of many of their traditional deities. Hindu devotional songs are sung [2:141].

“Though the Dimasa are surrounded by Christian tribal groups they never embraced Christianity. This is probable because of their early contact with Hinduism... They, however, enjoy the Christian festivals that are observed in the nearby villages” [2:142].

There is an increasing use of modern medicines rather than supernatural aids to treat diseases [2:142-143].

The Dimasa who live closer to urban areas prefer Hindi cinema shows and music to traditional means of amusement [2:143].

6.9 RCR revival:

“Though certain changes are quite perceptible in certain spheres of the Dimasa culture, it is because of their somewhat conservative outlook, this could not touch the core of their culture. Whatever changes are found, they are hardly skin deep. The Dimasa attitudes and values, in general, have remained mostly unchanged” [2:144].

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

The Dimasa believe in reincarnation. "It is a general belief that according to one's earthly deeds one is destined to a better or worse life in the next birth... According to Dimasa theology, in order to have a birth in human form, a man has to perform all his duties properly which means that he should take care of his old parents and after their death perform funeral rituals with due regards. One should be loyal to one's wife and fulfill his obligations to the family and village" [2:131]. Additionally one should not violate the rules of incest, engage in adultery or black magic, or practice any unlawful theft or murder, otherwise the person will not be reborn [2:131]. There is no salvation of the soul. Reincarnation is the usual life continued beyond death. They believe if someone dies without being married, the soul will turn into an evil spirit and will roam about [2:41]. There is no concept of heaven or hell [2:131].

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

No evidence found

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

Yes. "There is a general usage of teknonymy in the society according to which while addressing a man or a woman a Dimasa talks of him or her as father or mother of so and so" [2:71].

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

Many Dimasa have more recently embraced Hinduism [2:46]. The idea of religion in the Dimasa is described as vague. "They consider themselves to be Hindu, though they only have a faint idea about Hinduism" [2:125]. They have their own traditional deities and also believe in several Hindu deities. Many of the Hindu deities are not present in Dimasa beliefs, however. The Hindu goddess Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth) is popular, but not worshipped. Dimasa religion is based around the natural phenomena that the people are so dependent on. Spirits of the jungle, rivers, rain, and trees are important and worshipped once a year [2:125-126]. "All patrilineal clans have their respective clan gods and area gods. The matrilineal clans... have neither" [2:45]. There are 6 different area gods which are treated as ancestral deities of the Dimasa, and each clan has its own clan god [2:126-127]. They believe that the gods are benevolent, while there are many evil spirits that hover around [2:130].

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

Not found

7.2 Piercings:

Not found

7.3 Haircut:

Females often use hair oil and combs [2: 37].
Men have "a slight growth of hair in the body and scant beard" [4].
A widow does not tie her hair until the cremation of her husband [4].

7.4 Scarification:

Not found

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

Family jewelry is mentioned [2:91]. Girls spend a lot of money on gold-plated ornaments [2:140].

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

Traditional garments are worn to perform dances [4].

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

"The males put on the traditional dresses like richa, rikaosa, paguri rimchau and rimchaoramai to perform the folk dances. The females put on Rigu, rijamfini, rijamfinaberen, rikaucha, rikhra, jingsudu etc. and wear ornaments like Kaudima, Khadu, Kamautai, Longbar, Panlaubar" [4].

7.8 Missionary effect:

Dimasa have been increasingly able to get mill-made clothes at the market, and such clothing like blouses for females and pants and shirts for men have become preferred over traditional clothing [2:140].

7.9 Types of clothing:

Traditionally men wore handmade napkins, but cheap mill-made clothes have become more common. Shirts and half-pants are often worn by men and boys. Women wear traditional homemade dresses, but in some villages, mill-made clothing like blouses has become more common [2:140].

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

Siblings have distinct terms according to age and sex. Sibling terms are never applied to cousins [2:73].

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

“Both levirate and sororate are permissible among the Dimasa but they are rarely practiced” [2:54].

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

The Dimasa have their own kinship system and terminology that does not fit into one of these categories specifically. Again, dual descent and the presence of patrilineal and matrilineal are important in reckoning primary and secondary descent in consanguinal kin. The Dimasa also have terminology for affinal kin related through marriage, but these people are not as important as consanguinal kin. Basically sex, seniority, and degree of affinity are all important aspects of kinship and kin terminology in the Dimasa [2:65-71].

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Every aspect of the universe can be understood in the harmonic union of male and female [2:145].

They believe that young girls can conceive before they ever experience menstruation, and that babies born of this situation die [2:21].

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