



**The Voice Of The Nicobari Community**

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The picture shows Nicobari villagers and children of Car Nicobar in the year 1954 during a PIG FESTIVAL. The photograph was clicked by I.R. Austin while he was posted in RAF, Car Nicobar. Austin is presently in England and wants to share his experience in the Nicobar and the photographs he had clicked during his stay in the Indian island. (Read Austin's diary in page 4 continued from previous edition)

आओ कुछ ऐसे काम करें, जिससे लोगों को लाभ हो,  
 अब हमारा सफल यही से शुरू हो रहा है,  
 हमें कुछ ऐसा काम करना है, जिसे हमारे समाज  
 और गाँव के विकास हो।  
 हम उन युवा ही में जाग्रता लाए,  
 इससे हमारे शक्ति में वृद्धि हो।  
 'वृद्धि में शक्ति है  
 वृद्धि में भलाई है  
 यही हमारा विश्वास है।'  
 "यही हमारा सपना है"

Anilka Rebecca  
 Tamaloo Village  
 Car Nicobar.



Picture shows the road leading to newly constructed permanent shelters at Pillo Panja in Little Nicobar. Villagers now demand for a pucca road connectivity from the sea shore to the shelters.

**Department of AH&VS Conducts Awareness Camps at Nancowry**

The Department of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Sciences is conducting awareness camps in the Nancowry group of Islands. The camps started from 29<sup>th</sup> June 2010. It aims at informing the villagers about the inputs and support provided by the department for setting up animal husbandry ventures by availing institutional/bank finance and the various schemes and programmes implemented by the department for the benefit of the Nicobari community.

Two camps have already been conducted, one at Kamorta and one at Vikas Nagar. The next camp will be held at Bada Inaka on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2010, Chota Inaka on 2<sup>nd</sup> August and at Champin village on 10<sup>th</sup> of August 2010.

(Through the Tata Institute of Social Science team at Kakana)  
 The Editor  
 Hamara Nicobar

Dated at Kakana 15<sup>th</sup> June 2010

Sub: Problems related to our development; Reg

Sir,

I would like to draw your considerate attention to some of the prevailing problems being faced by our community that is hampering our progress and development.

- 01. **Education:** It is and has been one of the most pressing issues that we have time and again taken up with the concerned department but no officers have shown their genuine concern in this regard. That English, Mathematics and Science- the backbone of any modern education- has never been taught in our Middle school for the past three years. Teachers posted to our village have been made to adjust themselves at Kamorta HQ.
- 02. **APWD:** The footbridge connecting our old village from the new village site has also been damaged as the mud is slowly but surely being eroded by heavy rains and unprecedented high sea levels flowing through the nallah. Further erosion can only be contained by converting the foot bridge into a concrete one without which the footbridge may not survive for maybe another two years. Roads are another issue that is taking ages to construct. Water reservoir or dam if constructed could be of immense benefit for our community during the dry months where we have had drinking water problems.
- 03. **Electricity:** We require a minimum twelve hours of electricity power supply and even this has not been possible despite our many requests to the department. The problems being faced by our community during the night is terrible and though we had been assured of twenty four hours power supply some three years back, it is yet to take concrete shape.
- 04. **Medical:** Two ANM and a ward boy are necessary for the regular and smooth functioning of the sub center. Despite the sincere efforts of the lone ANM staff that has been doing a wonderful job despite the odds like proceeding to Kamorta to attend seminars and meetings, the sick and suffering find it difficult to bear her absence. A couple of staffs more would probably ease some of our sufferings which have been our genuine demand ever since the medical department had set foot in Nancowrie.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully

*Bod*  
 (B BONIFACE)  
 D. BONIFACE BAWOOD  
 1ST CAPTAIN  
 KAKANA VILLAGE

"हमारा निकोबार"

द्वीप हमारा, धारा निकोबार  
हमारा जन्मभूमि हमारा धारा निकोबार

हम हैं जहाँ पत्ते, स्वर्ग जैसा है गाँव  
ज गम है जिन्दगी में  
खुशियों से अपार  
हमारा धारा निकोबार . . .

सागर की खेद में  
दरियाली में ओढ़े  
ज पास है जिन्दगी में  
बहती है भरना यहाँ  
हमारा धारा निकोबार . . .

आजाद हैं द्वीप हमारा  
खुश नखीब है हम  
जो निकोबार में जन्मा  
जीना मरना है यहाँ  
अपने धरती पर . . .

Jack Benedick  
Big Lepatty Village  
Car Nicobar  
"Dosti Group"

## Captain's Report

This recent decision of uniform pricing of petrol and diesel in the A&N Islands is just one issue which has been solved after many years, there are more that needs to be done.

Our islands have been paralyzed due to non supply of diesel. There is almost no electricity for the past one month, which has hampered all means of communication including cell phones.

The banks are not able to update itself because of continuous power cuts and ultimately our people are forced to suffer.

Another important issue is the irregular distribution of LPG cylinders in our remote islands. Even if LPG cylinders arrive in our islands, the suppliers are not able to meet the demand. People have no other option but to buy kerosene oil in private where it is rationed due to non availability of ships.

In this monsoon season, our people are not able to dry fire wood resulting in grave problems in our islands.

It is my humble request to the Administration and to the Govt. of India to kindly concentrate on these major issues, which has almost paralyzed our islands. Although the rates of petrol and diesel have been made uniform with other parts of the islands but the Administration should first think of regular supply to the islands. If there is no availability of petrol & diesel, what's the point in having done so much for uniform rates?

- Phortifer, Captain, Vikas Nagar Kamorta Island

नमशकार! इस बार से हम बच्चों के लिए ये SECTION शुरू कर रहे हैं! इसमें हम बच्चों द्वारा बनाई गई Paintings, Drawings, Poem आदी होंगे। इसमें Quiz भी होगा जिसका जवाब देने पर पहले तीन (3) बच्चों को इनाम मिलेगा। और हम यह चाहते हैं की इस SECTION का नाम आप इसे। अपना SUGGESTIONS, बच्चों को Drawing, Painting etc. आप DOSTI GROUP के MEMBERS को दे सकते हैं!

इस बार का QUIZ

- ① WHO IS THE FIRST BISHOP OF A&N ISLANDS?
- ② WHICH IS THE SOUTHERN MOST POINT OF INDIA?
- ③ HOW MANY DISTRICTS ARE THERE IN A&N ISLANDS?
- ④ WHICH IS THE STAPLE FOOD OF THE NICOBARESE?
- ⑤ WHO WAS THE FIRST QUEEN (RANI) OF NANCOWRY?

ANSWERS: ① BISHOP JOHN RICHARDSON ② INDIRA POINT ③ THREE ④ PENDANUS ⑤ RANI ISHLON

# MAKER AND BUILDER OF MODERN NICOBAR-BISHOP JOHN RICHARDSON - *Lucas Robert*

It was 32<sup>nd</sup> Death Anniversary of Late Bishop John Richardson who left peacefully for eternal bliss at his residence, Mus village. Car Nicobar on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1978 living his dear beloved ones.

John Richardson Hachevko was born on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1888 at Mus. Car Nicobar. When he was a child, his father was mercilessly killed at Chowra Island along with other sailors during his visit at Chowra. It was a practice by Chowrites to appease the Devil.

John Richardson is the maker and builder of Modern Nicobarese Community who brought them from the stone age to the new stream life. The Nicobarese is the only tribe who showed drastic changes in their life within short span period of year. It was John Richardson a stalwart who has nourished the Nicobarese and made them suit to the new world.

The year in which John Richardson was working when the Nicobarese tribal were under darkness and economically backward. To wash the brain of the people and teach them the good things and convert the idea of the people could have hardly have been an experience for him. But constantly his main idea was the upliftment of Nicobarese and to introduce education in Nicobar group of islands.

**HIS VOYAGE TO CAR NICOBAR:** Dr. Knight, Bishop of Rangoon visited Car Nicobar in 1904 and was in search of boys for higher study. In 1905, John Richardson was selected and sent to Mandalay upper Burma for education. He was in Burma for seven years. In 1912 he came back to Car Nicobar as trained teacher and catechist. Rev. George White Head, a scholarly person was deputed along with him to Car Nicobar. They were deputed to Car Nicobar to replace Solomon his teacher who was expired. John Richardson had to work with Mrs. Anbu Solomon in the Mission School. At the same time he worked with Rev. George White Head to reduce the Nicobarese language into writing. Together they made the

**N I C O B A R E S E D I C T I O N A R Y** - Nicobarese to English, and the Nicobarese Spelling Book "Ro Tarik"

The long period of his continuous labour as a devoted servant of God synchronized with the most eventful phase of the development of Nicobarese culture which remarkably remitted in the uplift of Nicobarese since today. Today, the Nicobarese present qualities of courage, faith and purity which are the great contribution of John Richardson.

Mr. Earnest Hard the first Assistance Commissioner in Car Nicobar arrived in 1920. He fell ill and was permitted to go to U.K. on leave. John Richardson was officially appointed to take charge of the Office of Asst. Commissioner, Nicobar and eventually, he was conferred with the honour of "HONORARY THIRD CLASS MAGISTRATE power". He continued to officiate till the Japanese occupation in 1942.

In 1934, John Richardson was called back to Rangoon to be ordained as Deacon. He was also Priest the next week.

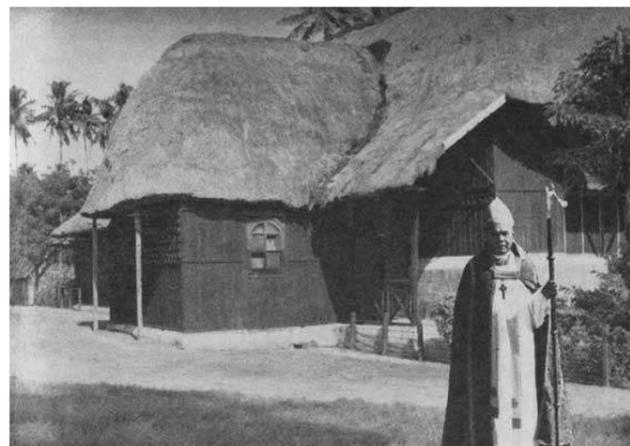
After second World War, there was a tremendous change in the life of the Nicobarese as John Richardson was able to reach out to the Southern Groups of Nicobares island - Chowra, Terassa, Katchal, Nancowry and bringing them united together.

**THE HONOURS:** On 15<sup>th</sup> January, 1950 Rev. John Richardson was consecrated at the St. Paul Cathedral, Calcutta to be a Bishop of Andaman & Nicobar Islands. In 1952 he was nominated as the first Member of Parliament for the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. In 1966 the "DOCTOR OF DIVINITY" was conferred on him by the Colleges of Serampore University (W.B.) and in the same year Government of India conferred on him the award of "PADMA SREE" and once again the "PADMA BHUSHAN" in 1973. He is the only Islander who was the recipient of Padma Shree and Padma Bushan awards.

**HIS VISION AND MISSION:** He was a man of vision who had mission for his people. After he came back from Mandalay with a new tongue of English in his mouth, the natives beloved him the other way. A foreigner to take away their land, not to be trusted but to be watched. Patiently he set an example to them. He moved with them, talked with them played and ate with them, and gradually the hears that hardened for years began to melt. Slowly they began to believe him as their natural leader.

The Second World War was a time of trouble and tribulations all over the World even in Car Nicobar. The Japanese occupied the Islands, tortured and killed the natives. The natives had to live under their dictated terms. John Richardson who was holding key-position was targeted by Japanese force. To disturb his status, one of his sons was killed by Japanese. John Richardson was captured and put into trial by the Japanese forces. It was Edward Kuchat who approached the Japanese senior military officer and told him that if you touch our beloved leader and anything happened to him, the whole island will revolt against Japanese forces. On the other way he was having the blessing of Almighty and this way he was escaped from the mouth of death. After Japanese force left the island, the differences and diversities gone, and the tribal unity and co-operation was born under the dynamic leadership of John Richardson.

**CAPTAINSHIP AND TRIBAL CODE OF LAW:** John Richardson was not only a religious head, he was a natural leader, par excellence. He began to introduce the unwritten tribal code of law. Thomas Halainypa was made the first Chief Captain of Car Nicobar assisted by seven Headmen. The Court was set up at Big Lapathy (Tokirong Seti). The cases of disputes were settled peacefully without bloodshed and even today this village has the same status. Few more villages emerged officially formed and given names and



today there are 15 villages at Car Nicobar. John Richardson introduced the captainship in every village in Car Nicobar, only to make Car Nicobar united and peaceful, prosperous and beautiful.

**CO-OPERATION - A WAY OF LIFE:** The Nicobarese live as a community, they exist for each other in a commune called "TUHET" headed by a chosen head of the family. And logically John Richardson choose "Co-operation" as a way of life: a means, for democratic, social and economic developments. He started the Cooperative Movement in the Nicobar Islands in 1951.

The people of Nicobarese are indebted to him for his visionary leadership which saw the development of Ellon Hinengo Ltd. as one of the largest and successful Cooperative Society in the country, which has gone a long way in helping the economic condition of the Nicobarese tribal. It was only due to his leadership and far sighted and self dedication, which saw E.H.L become owners of merchant shipping vessels, the first instance of a Cooperative owning in this country

The Christian civilization in the Nicobars is the story of Bishop John Richardson. They regard him as a tall leader, stalwart, founder father of the Modern Nicobar and without mentioning him the history of Nicobar can never be written.

During silver jubilee celebration of Andaman Nicobar Diocese a Car Nicobar on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1966, Bishop John Richardson was facilitated on this day in appreciation of his continuous 53 years of

devoted service to his community. Mr. B.L. Chak, IAS, Chief Commissioner of A&N Islands was the Chief Guest on this occasion. The Chief Commissioner in his address said that he was honoured with the prestigious award by the Govt. of India and other institutions in his recognition of his services to his people and to his country. It is our proud moment that we were present on the occasion to salute this great man. Bishop John Richardson in his address said, "Rewards are not the things that prove a man to be great. Let every person try to be truly great by being humble towards his fellowmen, utterly true to his faith and completely to his country".

In his life time, his statue in front of the St. Thomas Cathedral, Mus was erected by all his admirers for his sweet memory. But unfortunately this statue was damaged during Tsunami. The Nicobari Community has already in the process of installing his statue and very shortly the same will be unveiled.

His zeal and tenacity, his courage in fighting against heavy odds of oppression, his compassion to the poor and above all his loveable humility were the rare charm of his personality.

On this day, the people of Nicobars group of Island pay homage to the departed soul of Bishop John Richardson by conducting prayer in all the Churches. His absence is and will always be felt in all Nicobarese hearts in the days to come but his memories in the Nicobarese heart will never fade. His vision and mission will guide the Nicobari community through the ages.

# Car Nicobar, Memories Of An Indian Island Continued from previous edition ...

Note: "Dr" I.R. Austin, while on the Island was the only medical trained person. The term "Dr" was used by the RAF & the Nicobarese as an easy method for referring Mr. Austin.

**Fuel:** Fuel for aircraft and the power generating plant for the camp was shipped in by sea in drums. These had to be lowered onto a raft or floated ashore. Afterwards the locals helped us to load them on to a Bedford truck. From there it was taken to the fuel dumps well away from the camp. When the fuel bowser needed filling, it had to be pumped from the drums.

Any new trucks for the camp also came by Ship and were rafted ashore. **(Pantoon Pics)**

**Shop:** The N.C.O's on the camp took it in turns to run this, in it we sold Tiger bottled beer, soft drinks, sweets, cigarettes (tins of 50), stationery, soap and tooth paste etc.

We opened it when possible at lunch time then again in the evening. We were responsible for reordering stock and balancing the books.

Some evenings we ran Tombola or showed films flown from Changi. **(Canteen Pics)**

All the site facilities were available to staff and the Nicobarese and Indians: in most cases it was only men who came in to the shop.

**Free time:** Once the camp had stood down, and the staff had completed their duties, they were free to do what they wanted.

With the use of the Bedford, Ambulance or Land Rover, we could go off to any of the numerous beaches at Mus Bay, Sanai, Malacca, Lapati or Kimios for swimming and fishing. As an alternative we could go walking and had the opportunity of taking photos of the island.

Football and cricket was played with the Nicobarese and the Indians, while we were invited to watch their wrestling matches, canoe racing and pig fights. **(football Pics)**



At Christmas 1954 we attended their Carol Service, after which we were given presents by the villagers. I was presented with a large bunch of bananas, fresh coconuts, a



model of their fishing canoe, bow and arrows, fishing net and a pair of complete dried out coco nuts (of which I still have). **(Carol & Memorial)**

On various occasion I was invited out for meals with the Indian Doctor, Dr & Mrs. B Panigrahi, and also the resident India engineer who often cooked his special chicken curry complete with many bottles of Tiger beer. **(Dr. Panigrahi & Staff)**

A great number of photos were taken with my 35mm Balda camera. These covered various subject matters relating to the camp, planes, evens in the villages and life itself. The Nicobarese appeared to be more than happy to see us about and on numerous occasions offered us fresh fruit.

Most of the pictures of villages and bags were taken



and print our own films. Colour film had to be sent to Kodak.

**End of tour of Duty:** February 1955 was the end of my six month tour of duty, so I had to return to Singapore for a two week holiday, which I spend at Changi and the Malaya mainland.

On reporting back for duty I was offered a further six months tour, which I happily accepted!

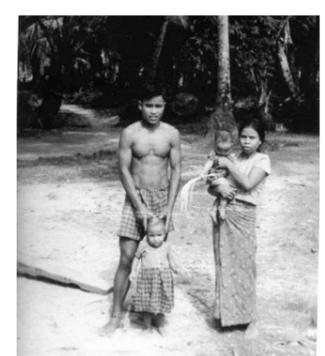
The memory of such a working holiday will always remain with me forever. Few people have had such a memorable time. It's hard to



The Nicobarese were very sociable, quite happy to talk to us and more than generous with their hospitality.

When I was told of my posting to Car-Nicobar I was given no reason why we were there, or told how to conduct myself during my time there. I was not aware of any trouble spots.

The only contact I had with the Indian authorities was with the island doctor and the site engineer, this relationship could not have been better. **(Below: Car Nicobar Village Pics)**



fully explain in detail the experience. I hope I have been able to share some of my pleasure from the past with you.

### General thoughts and opinions

As already indicated relations between the Nicobarese and the Indians with the RAF was good as far as I could gauge. The main daily point of contact was with the male population in respect of our work, with the ladies it was at social events and while we were visiting their villages and homes.

## Tata Institute Conducts Extensive Livelihood Survey to Develop Holistic Livelihood Plan For the Nicobaris

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) is conducting an extensive livelihood survey in the Nicobar group of islands. The aim of the survey is to develop a holistic livelihood plan, backed up with market linkages, to make the people self-sustainable as before or even better in terms of economic activity.

The Nicobar group of islands is going through a unique situation after the devastating tsunami of 2004. Post Tsunami, the govt. has provided ration support to the Tsunami affected areas as the traditional livelihood systems was ravaged by the Tsunami. But, from the moment govt. will stop providing ration to them it will open a great challenge to the tribal people.

If we analyze the traditional livelihood options for the Nicobarese, one can gather that fishing & copra making were the two major sources of livelihood. This society was totally agrarian in nature and it ran mostly on barter system of trade. Post Tsunami, there is an influx of money from different sources as compensation, aid etc. and it has changed the socio-economic fabric of the traditional Nicobari society.

Modern economic gadgets, auto mobiles, flashy dresses are available everywhere across the islands, but there is no holistic approach for rebuilding the livelihood. People are under the impression that govt. can't stop providing ration as it will

create extreme chaos and it may lead to starvation. During the discussion with several Nicobari youth, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) could not find any concrete plan among the stake holders in rethinking livelihood in these islands.

By nature, Nicobarese are contended people with few needs. There is an excellent social support system in the community (through tuhet) and mostly need oriented (and not greed oriented) economic transactions take place. People go to the sea for fishing only to catch fishes for their own consumption or to distribute to their relatives. People don't own property by themselves and the entire coconut plantation is owned by tuhet.

Traditionally, coconuts are plucked from the ground only (no harvest mechanism from the plant) and copra is made. But through motivation from EHL (Marketing Cooperative), people are harvesting coconut from their coconut plantations which were left after the Tsunami, at regular interval and copra making has become an important economic activity.

The livelihood survey by TISS in entire Nicobar Islands started with places with difficult accessibility like Pillomillo, Pillopanja, Pillobha, Pillopatia etc. After covering the entire Great Nicobar and Central Nicobars the team has now ventured into Car Nicobar, which is the last phase of the survey that

targets to create & maintain a database of present asset base & livelihood options for each household; To map the locally available physical & social resources; To explore different livelihood options, based on local resource base; To identify indigenous crops, products and to explore market for the such crops/products and To

design market linkages & to strategize marketing techniques.

During the survey the TISS team inspite of all odds covered all the difficult areas such as Pillomillo, Pillopanja, Pillobha, Pillopatia etc. After covering the entire Great Nicobar and Central Nicobars the team is now venturing into Car Nicobar, with which the survey would be concluded.

Apart from the survey feedbacks, while venturing into the difficult and inaccessible parts it was gathered by the TISS team that the many of the tribals villagers presently stay in their traditional huts as the rehabilitation work has not yet concluded. In other cases the



Resource mapping being done by the survey team of TISS at Pillo Ulo Village in Little Nicobar

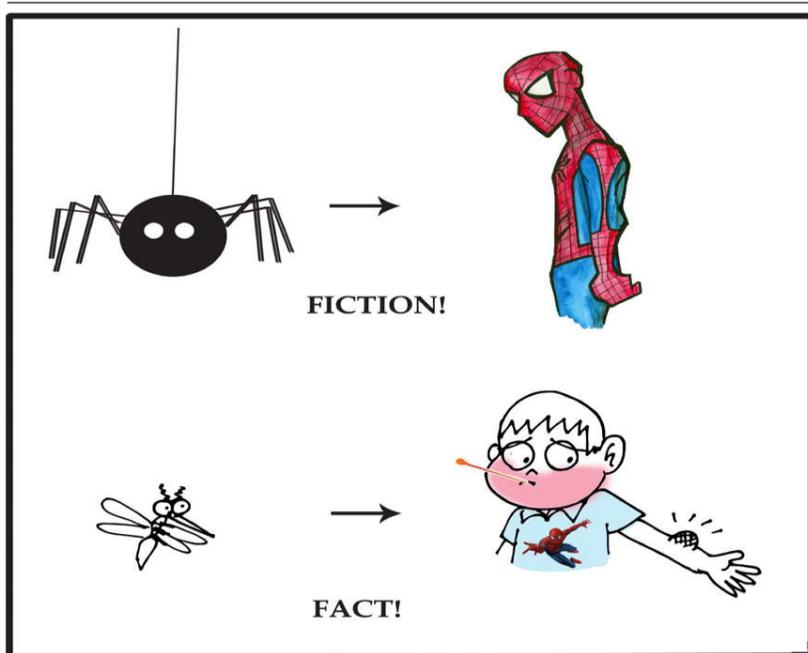
roads/footpath leading to the permanent houses are in a dilapidated condition making things worse for the tribals.

There were also complaints from the Nicobari tribals that the non-tribals have been venturing in their area and are exploiting their resources. The non-tribals catch fish from their area in huge quantities leaving nothing behind for the tribes.

During the focus group discussion, the women seemed to be dead against the Contractors and the labourers staying there for constructing the permanent houses. The women expressed that they were not safe amidst these labourers who have come from outside.

The people also demanded that they be given work under the NREGA, which would fetch some income for them. There were Self Help Groups formed by different organizations who had come after tsunami. But due to inaccessible pockets in the tribal areas, there is no marketing of products made by the SHGs.

The Nicobarese further explained that they have the capacity to make handicrafts like canoes, huts, decorative items etc. The tribals therefore demanded that the govt. should support them in terms of marketing their products.



KEEP THE AREA AROUND YOUR HOUSE CLEAN  
DON'T LET WATER GET STAGNATED

AND KEEP MALARIA AT BAY

**REGISTER WITH THE NEAREST  
PHC/ CHC/ SUB CENTRE/ HOSPITAL**

**UNDER  
JANANI SURAKSHA YOJANA**

For the  
**SAFETY**  
of YOU  
and your  
**CHILD**

**THE MOTHER RECEIVES CASH BENEFIT  
AFTER DELIVERY, UP TO TWO LIVE  
BIRTHS.**



Narration in pictures: 1) Nicobari youth of Pillo Panja returning to their village after a game fishing. 2) Nicobari youth roasting a pig in a traditional manner using dried coconut leaves. 3) Hintakoi: Statues of the ancestors carved in remembrance. This is quite common practice in the Central Nicobars. 4) Pendanus hung on the projected bars of the hut. Pendanus is a staple diet of the Nicobarese.

