

English translation:

Most of our land consists of lush villages and miles and miles of fertile pastures. Cow-herders take their cows there. With doves cooing in the background, in the lazy afternoons, they sometimes lay their *gamchha*¹ under the shade of banyan trees and take siestas. Sometimes they play their flutes. Our farmers are very kind hearted and hard working. They wake up at the break of dawn and head out for the fields, carrying with them their ploughs and other tools. They burn under the intense heat of the sun, and soak in the rain, and tend to their crops. They get their deserved reward when they see the ripe golden rice paddy in their fields. Our country's fertile soil bears many different types of rice paddy. They have some very fascinating names such as *paijaam*, *najirshal*, *onjonlokkhi*, *akashmoni*, *kataribhog*, *balam*, *birui*, *basmati*, *pakhiraj*, *kashphool*, *bashphool*, *binni*, *shongomukhi*, *manikshobha*, *kalojeera*, *badshabhog*, etc. In late autumn, the sweet fragrance of the newly harvested paddy fills everyone's hearts with joy. Everyone gets busy with the preparations of *nobanno utshob*, the festival celebrating the year's harvest. The air bears a festive mood. In the winter, the village people celebrate the *pittha puli'r utshob*, when they make traditional rice cakes and send [them] to all their neighbors and relatives. In their leisure time, the villagers organize musical events.

Jute is known as the golden fiber of Bangladesh. In the wet monsoon season, the farmers start to harvest the jute. The golden fibers of jute bathe in the beams of the sun and sparkle. In their houses, the farmers' wives get very busy. They arrange the bails of jute on their fences for them to dry. Young girls in Bangladesh engage in various crafts during their free time. They dye the jute fibers in many colors and make beautifully embroidered reticulate bags known as *nokshi shika*. The decorations are further embellished with beads, mother-of-pearl buttons and cowrie shells. They also make embroidered fans (*nakshi pankha*) with multi-colored thread. They stitch flowers, birds, trees and leaves into the fans. Girls also weave floor mats known as *sheetal pati* with a special type of cane from *murta* plants. Birds, palanquins, mosques, boats, tigers, deer and different kinds of flowers are woven into the mat. During their leisure time, Bengali girls stitch *nakshi kanthas*, traditional embroidered quilts. They adorn these quilts with flowers, leaves, sheaves of rice paddy, stars and the moon, birds, fish and many other images.

On the other hand, the blacksmiths and the potters craft many useful utensils. The *kamar*² makes farming tools and the *kumor*³ makes terracotta pots and pans. Other than that, potters also design flowers, birds, dolls, and fruits out of terracotta. [Sentence unclear.] People working as goldsmiths, bronzesmiths, tailors, launderers, barbers work for people from many professions in society. The flatlands of Bangladesh look like a green carpet has been laid over it. On the other side, there are beautiful green hills. Many of the indigenous minorities live in the hill tracts of Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban.

¹ A traditional Bangladeshi towel made from coarse cotton.

² Blacksmith.

³ Potter.

The main tribes are *Chakma, Morong, Marma, Lusai, Garo*, etc. They practice the *joom chash*⁴ method on the sides of the hills. They build small huts along the hillsides. They have their own culture.

The people of Bangladesh have been famous for their textile-spinning skills since ancient times. Once upon a time, the invaluable muslin cloth used to be made here. Weavers still make silk, *jamdani*, and cotton cloth. Some of the famous fabrics made in Bangladesh are muslin, silk, *tasar, munga*,⁵ *gorod*,⁶ *matka*,⁷ *jamdani, tangail* and *baluchori*. This is our land and our people. We love our country, and we love our people and our soil.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

© 2003-2009 Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and Five Colleges, Incorporated

⁴ Shifting cultivation.

⁵ Types of non-mulberry silk.

⁶ Fine quality mulberry silk.

⁷ Raw mulberry silk.