Jangpha Bakharok Tree*

The hill people learned to wear clothes after they came in contact with the plain people. Jangpha, however, refused to wear any clothes. He got married to the Kanskow Raja's daughter but despite various invitations, he refused to go to his father-in-law's house for the traditional period of labour which he had to undertake as the bride price.

One day, when he had gone to the market, his wife, along with her two children, finding the opportunity, slipped away to her father's house. She left behind a dog, a hen, a cat and a pig with instructions to make sounds (like bow, bow, etc.) when Jangpha returned home so that he would not realise that she had left.

When Jangpha returned, the animals made sounds accordingly and though he searched his house, he could not find his wife and children. This made him very angry and he cut the cat and with her skin he made a drum. Beating the drum, he went everywhere in search of her.

He sang:

“Aini Telesa Batesa Buingbo Thanka Tung Tru Tru Tru Tru”
(My son and his younger brother — where have they gone?)

After a tiring day's search, he met a girl who was carrying some wood. He asked her:

“Aini Telesa Batesa Buingbo Thanka Tung Tru Tru Tru”.
(My son and his younger brother — where have they gone?)

The girl replied: “If you collect wood for me, I will give you information about your wife.”

He collected some wood for her. Thereupon, she showed him the way. Again beating on the drum, he blessed her as under:

“Ham Zabak Thu, Rag Zabak Thu”
(Be well; be happy).

After this, he went singing along his way singing as follows:

“Aini Telesa Batesa Buingbo Thanka Tung Tru Tru Tru Tru”.
(My son and his younger brother — where have they gone?)

On the way, he met another girl who was collecting banana leaves. He asked her:

“Aini Telesa Batesa Buingbo Thanka Tung Tru Tru Tru”.
(My son and his younger brother — where have they gone?)

This girl too asked him to collect the banana leaves for her and she would show him the way. As he had done before, he helped her with the banana leaves and she showed him the way.

Near his father-in-law's house, there was a tree. He sat near the tree and thought: “How can I go to meet my father-in-law as I have not met him all these years?”

So he sat near the tree. When his son saw him there, he informed his mother and she prepared food for him. When his son went to call him, he said: “But my wife has not called me,” and refused to go. When his wife called, he said: “But my father-in-law has not called me”. When his father-in-law called him, he said: “But my mother-in-law has not called me.” He only agreed to go when his mother-in-law had invited him but when they gave him rice, he said there were no vegetables. When they gave him vegetables, he said there was no meat and so on. When everything had been provided he had his food and went out to throw the banana leaves.

As he was about to throw the leaves, his brother-in-law said: “Do not throw it there. It is the flower garden of my mother.” Similar objections were raised when he was about to throw the leaves at other spots.
Finally, he threw the leaves in disgust in some place. Thereupon, his brother and sister-in-law felled him to the garden where a dog bit him and he died. They cut his body into small pieces and told his children to throw the pieces away. His son sang:

“Sidal Sidal laibone
Babu Matha Kowa Khaiya (Bengali)
Kawa Matha Chichi”
(Will you take dry fish,
The crows will eat my father’s head
Throw away the crow’s head).

When the pieces of his body had finally been thrown away, his mother-in-law felt sorry for him. Every now and then, she would go to the place where his severed head had been thrown. This had grown into a Chalta tree. Even now, the Chalta tree is known as Jangpha Bakharok tree (Head of Jangpha) amongst the Tripuris.

*A Noatia Folk Tale
(Narrated by Dashman Doaza of Tarabencherra)