

# Oral History

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# Contents

1.	Angami .....	1
2.	Ao .....	3
3.	Chakhesang .....	9
4.	Chang .....	12
5.	Dimasa .....	18
6.	Khiamniungan .....	21
7.	Konyak .....	30
8.	Lotha .....	35
9.	Phom .....	37
10.	Pochury .....	45
11.	Sangtam .....	53
12.	Sümi .....	56
13.	Yimchungrü .....	67

# ANGAMI

## **Kohima district's brief profile**

Kohima district is the home of the Angamis, Rengmas, Zeliang and a small group of Kukis, Semas and some other minor groups. Its name is derived from KEW-HI-MIA meaning 'THE MEN OF KEWHI' It was chosen as the headquarter of the Naga Hills since 1878 and became a district in 1957. The capital is perched at 1444.12 metres above sea level. It enjoys a temperate climate throughout the year. Kohima town derived its name from Kohima village which is considered as one of Asia's largest village. The village greets visitors with traditional gates. There are stones of varying shapes and sizes implanted within the compound or skulls of buffaloes and mithuns adorning the portico reminding people of the past glory and status of the great ancestors. Some places of interest include Museums, Dzükou valley, Dzülekie, Pulie Badze, Japfii peak, Kisarna and Khonoma village.

With the passing of time, the old culture of the people has gone through many changes and has expanded through the process of borrowing knowledge and cultural elements from other cultures. In the past, people seek knowledge on how to gather food, build shelter, cultivate food, make handicrafts and cloths, protect oneself from natural calamities and hostile animals and people alike. Today, the value of material possession has motivated people to invest time and energy into it.

Among the Angamis most marriages take place from the time of sowing to harvesting. It is customary for the boy to first seek the hand of the girl in marriage. It is considered nothing shameful to be rejected in a proposal as this was how the nature of tradition was. A bachelor, eligible for marriage, gets counseling from his parents and is informed of the importance of starting a family of one's own. Situations also arise when a boy is compelled to get married against his will. In choosing one's life partner, the girl's character is given first priority and not her looks. The boy examines whether the girl can love and respect both their families equally. A girl who is kind and humble is most valued, for it is believed that a good girl brightens and tightens the family union, and a girl of crude or unpolished character destroys the peace and harmony of the family. Like wise when a boy proposes to a girl, she looks at his property and assets as these are necessities in starting a family. As such, in traditional marriages, the character, responsibilities one can handle and the quality one possesses played a major role rather than physical appearance. **PROPOSAL** The search for a matchmaker is one of the biggest challenges because it is through their convincing skills that marriage alliance is brought

about. Usually the task falls on one of the skilled negotiators in the village. The identity of the matchmaker is often kept secret until the mission is successful. Once the proposal is made, some days are given to the girl's family to respond, if there is no response, it is considered as disapproved. **ENGAGEMENT** Once the boy and girl agree to marry, they pay close attention to what their dreams (Kemhonyü) foretell. If their dreams are pleasant they start further preparations for the marriage. In case of unpleasant dreams, the agreement may be called off. Besides the dream, it is taboo not to call off the engagement in case of death among any family members. A ritual (Kerhukhru) is performed to call off the engagement in such situations. In this ritual, the matchmaker plucks a strand of thread from the girl's shawl, a handful of grass and heads towards the village gate (Kharu) and places them beside the village gate then buries it to ward off all evil that may arise between the two. If this ritual is performed, the girl is allowed to grow her hair and keep it long - for the girls were not allowed to grow their hair before getting married. (There were instances when a girl accepted marriage proposal in order to grow her hair and ran away after marriage). **MARRIAGE** In an Angami marriage the foremost importance is given to the feast and merrymaking. Therefore one does not find different types of marriage but how marriage is conducted in different manners. **The Pig Marriage (Thevo nyhü)** In this marriage a pig is killed and rice beer is made in abundance. The boy invites all the girl's family, friends and clan for the feast. This marriage is often conducted by prosperous families.

### **The Chicken Marriage (Thevü nyhü)**

Unlike the pig marriage, this marriage has less invitees. However, in this marriage also, the boy and girl invite their closest relatives for the feast. This feast is held during the night when the bride is brought at night.

# AO

## **Brief write up of Tribe Profile ( The Ao Nagas) (Ecology & Habitat, Socio - Cultural profile, Tribal Economy)**

### **1) Ecology & habitat:**

The Nagas as a whole exhibit a general similarity of culture , habitats and occupations in common , there vary many individual tribal traits which differentiate the culture of one group from that of another. Variations in physical type, in language and in customs provide material for classification and segregation into more or less well defined ethnic divisions and inspite of evidence pointing to a common ancestry.

Mokokchung, one of the districts in Nagaland is the home of the Ao Naga tribe. The Government of Nagaland has also recognised Mokokchung district as "Land of pioneers " because this place has produced a great number of luminaries in many fields. The entire district of Mokokchung are sub-divided into six physiographical ranges namely :

- i) The langpangkong range
- ii) The Asetkong range
- iii) The Ongpangkong range
- iv) The Jangpetkong range
- v) The Tsurangkong range
- vi) The Japukong range

Historically, Mokokchung Town was one of the first Naga hills where the Assam Rifles, led by the Britishers, established their outposts (then called stockades) in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Much of the Town initially grew around this post located in the D.O Hill. Mokokchung town is made up of 16 wards of which Kumlong, Sangtemla, Alempang and Yimyu are the largest.

There is no clear record of the Ao's migration before they settled at Chungliyimti, on the right bank of Dikhu river which is now a Sangtam area in Tuensang district. The oral tradition of the Aos states quite definitely that the ancestors of the tribe came out of the Earth at Longtrok (Long - stone, trok - six) sometimes called Ungtrok (Ung - chief, trok - six) lying on top of a spur on the right bank of the Dikhu river. The recent excavations at Longtrok area has unearthed lots of pot sherds, stone tools, post holes of houses constructed, steps, footprints, footpaths, burned clay etc as evidence that there were settlers in that area earlier. The ancestors of the Aos stayed at Chungliyimti for about 4 aso. For

the Aos, aso means one generation and one aso means 30 years. After staying there for a long time, the Ao ancestors decided to leave Chungliyimti. The decision was made not because they could not defeat the enemy's or because of ferocious wild animals, forefathers decided to leave Chungliyimti and go in search of a better place to settle because of the increase in population ;due to which there was not enough fertile cultivable land for all the population to survive. After deciding to leave the historical village, they must have looked towards the west side of the Chungliyimti village and decided to go there since from there the present Ao settlement area is clearly seen beyond the Dikhu river. After taking the monumental decision to leave the historical place, the ancestors of the Ao started towards Aonglenden (forest plain) But in order to reach the new settlement area they had to cross the Dikhu river, that was main problem they faced but they were able to overcome the problem and crossed the river by building a suspension bridge made out of cane ( arr apu). Since the Ao ancestors crossed the bridge in search of a better place to settle, they were called 'Aoer' which means those who went ahead / forth. The Ao ancestors evolved socially, culturally administratively at Chungliyimti and it is from this historic village that the clear record of the Ao's migration to their present settlement area can be traced.

## **2) Socio - Cultural profile**

The structure of the Ao - Naga society is basically rural in nature. Family is the basic unit of society constructed on the basis of institutions of marriage and kinship. Ao - Naga family rests on patriarchy wherein the father or the husband is the head of the family. For the Aos, family is the most important social institution like in any other culture. The traditional norms and values determine the gender roles and relations in the family and the customary law regulates them. The system of marriage is exogamous upon which the framework of Ao society was built to preserve their racial purity and social integrity.

The traditional system of rule and power in an Ao village is vested in Putu menden (council of elders, literally it would translate as seat of generation), this system of governance which was established by the Ao forefathers in Chungliyimti. This council of elders is generally of the elders of respective clans in the village and all are generally represented. This council is generally responsible for the village administration and other matters of importance affecting the whole village community with most of the clans represented in the council, the system of rule is described as democratic. The Ao tribe by way of language is characterised by two dialects namely Mongsen and Chungli group who differ not only in terms of the dialect they speak but also in terms of the costume they wear and their social and political organisation.

## **Morung**

The Morung is called "Ariju" by the Ao Nagas. During the time of our forefathers, the Morung was a learning institution, a bachelors' dormitory and a place where they attained manhood. The Morung was an integral part of the Ao – Nagas when a new village was formed, a strategic place for the construction of the village was first selected. A young man joins the Ariju after he attains 15 years of age. In the Ariju, there were different age groups and it was divided into stages. The youngest stage in the Ariju was called 'Sungpur'. One age group could only go to the next stage only when a new age group joined the ariju which happened after the end of every three years. The members of the Ariju were called 'Arijuchanger'. Every stage had an elder and a 'Tir' or 'chief' at the Ariju and had power to control the young men residing in the Ariju. Even among the Tirs, the eldest was made the 'Tir' of the Ariju.

In the Ariju, the young men were taught many things, like the art of making various things by using bamboo, they also learned how to defend oneself and fight the enemies when their village was under attack. They also learned folklores, folktales, customs and traditions from the elders, learned the art of talking in public. It was indeed a school of learning in many ways. The bachelor dormitory continued to dominate the social and cultural life of the traditional Naga village institution, an institution considered as the mother of Art and culture.

The log drum (sungkong) is a huge piece of log hewn out of a single tree trunk and kept outside the morung. It was only through the log drum that news of all sorts like whenever another village was attacking, or if a fire broke out in the village, and so on, were given to the villagers by the Morung members. Every beat was different for each message and all the villagers understood these beats.

## **Tzukitem**

In Ao dialect, 'Tzuki' means the place where all the young Ao girls slept together. It was a place of learning for them and also a place where they socialized with the young man of the village. The girls belonging to the same clan all went and slept at the place of the oldest widow of their clan and she was called Tzukuputsula by the girls. All the clans had their own tzukitem. At Tzuki, the girls learned the art of weaving, folklores and folktales, dances and all the hand work a girl needed to know when she married.

## **Festivals**

Moatsu and Tsungremmung are the two important festivals which is celebrated by the Aos.

### **Moatsu (a ceremony of blessings)**

Moatsu is the main and premier festival of the Ao Nagas celebrated during the spring season. It falls in the first week of May every year, the ceremony which is observed for 6 days. It invokes blessings upon new grains in the field and also protection from all sorts of pests throughout the season. Before the celebration of Moatsu, seeds of all kinds are sown in the field. The farmers depend on the mercy of Lijaba, believed to be the creator of earth who holds the blessings of the soil and the fruits that may bear plentifully. It is normally a festival of young boys and girls where they interact with each other through various activities, participating in all sorts of group actions exhibiting their best talents.

### **Tsungremmung ( a ceremony of thanksgiving )**

This is basically a pre-harvest ceremony observed for three days that is why it is also known as asemnii mung, a ceremony of three days observed in the month of August. Before the observance, of this ceremony, cleaning of the entire field should be completed and things required during the process of harvest are kept ready.

Thus, the festival of tsungremmung is characterized by strict genea, worship, offerings, meat eating, sharing of new wine and blessings. It is also followed by traditional games such as tug of war , songs ,dance and many other activities where everybody participate. It is a festival of thanksgiving to God and also asking blessings for a bountiful harvest.

The arbitrary suppression of all traditional customs, ceremonies and dances on the plea that they belong to the old days of heathendom and headhunting is a short sighted and retrograde policy. It strikes at the root of practically the whole social structure of the people and its effects are apt to prove disastrous.

Today, almost all the ceremonies, ritual practices, traditional belief system have already been given up by the Aos. However observance of Moatsu and Tsungremmung is now reviving in a bigger way in the modern Ao society. Infact, this is their cultural practice that would go a long way which would prove their unique socio- cultural identity.

### **3) Tribal Economy**

The Ao forefathers were primarily cultivators, their economy dependent on Agriculture. They practised both tekonglu (Thum cultivation) for which they have to clear the forest areas and tsulu (wet rice cultivation). The method of

cultivation commonly spoken of as "Jhum" cultivation is that practised throughout the hills of Eastern India and Burma, whereby a section of forest is cleared and after being allowed to dry are burned for growing rice or other crops in which the soil has been enriched by wood ash. Each field is abandoned after 2 or 3 successive harvest, after which the fertility of the soil has been exhausted or the invasion of weeds and grass has made it economically unproductive. A new section of forest is then chosen and the cycle is repeated. The cultivators return to the old field after a cycle of 10 - 15 years preferably longer, depending on the availability of tillable land and the population density.

Some of the main food crops cultivated are Rice which is the staple food, yam, millet, job's tear, maize, chilly, beans, cucumber, tapioca, pumpkin, soyabean, garlic, ginger etc ... apart from cultivation, they also domesticated animals like pig, poultry, goat, cow, dog etc. These animals are also slaughtered and consumed during festivals and religious festivals. Forest based activities form an integral part of the Ao - Naga economy. It ranges from collection of food, firewood, medicinal plants, building materials and fodder to hunting and fishing. Especially, the womenfolk collect minor forest produce like wild mushrooms, green leafy vegetables, fruits, broom grass, honey herbs etc from the forest and sell it supplement the household income.

The Ao forefathers believed in the presence of 'Tsunngrem' means God in Ao dialect. Before they went for community hunting or fishing, they observed genna (sacred ritual) During the observation of genna, they followed a strict ritualistic way of life within the family; the way they interact with others and lived was done in a very spiritual way. It was believed that if a man didn't observe genna before going to hunt or fish then he wouldn't be blessed with a good hunt or catch. Thus the observance of genna was considered as a very important part of life by the Aos.

### **Exchange and trade**

The Aos maintained Inter and intra tribal trade relations by barter system of exchange. Trade flourished between the Aos and the people of Assam due to the reciprocal demand of these commodities which were obtained from each other in exchange, on barter basis. The earliest currency known among the Nagas was the chabili in which one chabili represented a day's work or equal to four annas in the Naga Hills. The curious obsolete chabili of Ao currency was in the form of short strips of iron, resembling the shape of miniature dao. Ao economy was self sufficient economy. Cotton, chillies, ginger, gourds, mats etc were taken down to the plains of Assam in order to get in exchange of salt and also dried fish, cattle, agricultural implements, beads for ornaments etc. Once a year, during the winter season they visited the plains of Assam to barter and since it was a time when head hunting was practised, they travelled together in groups for their own

safety. Trade also flourished among the neighbouring tribes. For instance, Konyaks and Phoms used to buy clothes from Ao villages and exchanged with spears and daos (big knives).

## **Religion**

The religion of the Ao Naga forefathers was based on a system of ceremonies directed to the Gods and to the natural spirits on Earth, and strive as he may to do that which is lawful and right in the moral sphere, he will not prosper if he omit the sacrifices due to the deities around him who unappeased are ever ready to blight his crops and bring illness upon him. The ancestors of the Ao Naga tribe worshipped all the things that they believed to have spirits residing in them like big trees, big stones, rivers, mountains, the sun and the moon believing that there was God in all of them. Gods were worshipped as Lichaba (God of earth), Anungtsungba and Kodaktsungba (God of heaven), Teroktsungba (The sun God), Longtitsungba (God of the underworld) and Meyutsungba (God of judgement). Lichaba was the God of Earth and was one of the most important Gods worshipped by the Aos.

With the arrival of Christian missionaries in the lecentury, theAos were some of the earliest converts to Christianity among the other Naga tribes. The Christian missionaries interfered in the social and cultural practices of the Nagas to a greater extent than the colonial Government did. Thus, significantly, with the gradual and progressive acceptance of Christianity, the shift of cultural loyalty from animism to Christianity began changing the outlook and living culture of the people of Naga Hills.

# CHAKHESANG

## TRIBE PROFILE

### Ecology & Habitat

The Chakhesangs are a major Naga ethnic group found in the state of Nagaland, India. The headquarter of the Chakhesang tribe is Phek District, the eighth district of Nagaland. Phek is derived from the word '*Phekrekedze*' which means watch tower. Phek district was bifurcated in the year 1973, December 21 from Kohima district. It lies in the South-east of Nagaland, bounded by Kohima District in the West, Zunheboto and Kiphire Districts in the North, Myanmar in the South East and Manipur State in the South. As per 2011 census, it has a total area of 2,026 sq km with a population of about 200,000 (approx.) covering 83 recognised villages.

Chakhesangs are the former Eastern Angamis, now recognized as a separate tribe. The word '*Chakhesang*' is an acronym of three allied sub-tribes-cha from *Chokri*, khe from *Kuzha* and sang from *Sangtam (Pochury)*. It is a name unanimously selected by the leaders of the three sub-tribes in order of the alphabetical serial of arrangement giving full recognition and equal respect to each individual sub-tribe entity.

The people of this district, like other Naga tribes, have mongoloid features. Though it is certain that the people of this district came to this place from outside, probably from different parts of Indo-China and south-east Asia and through Burma the exact time of their arrival to the present settlement is not known. Most of the villages of this tribe fall within Phek district, though two Chakhesang villages are in Ukhrul district, Manipur. No other Naga tribe matches Chakhesang tribe in its composition interweaved with many communities. Chakhesang is a conglomeration of Khezha, Chokri, poumai, Sumi, Pochuri and Rengma. One can also trace the origin of few Tangkhul families as in Jessami. This made Chakhesang a unique tribe among the Naga family. With diversity in its social composition, there are different dialects spoken among the Chakhesang people. Chakhesang are known for their simplicity, great sense of humor, honesty, hard working; and economically self reliant.

Phek district is a mountainous region, 70% of the land area is covered in evergreen forest with warm and temperate climate. Majority of the land in Phek are either owned by individuals or clan or Community which has been passed on from generation to generations. The highest mountain is

Zanibu, with the summit over 2,400 m(7,900 ft) above main sea level. The largest rivers of the districts are the Tizu, Lanye, Arachu, and other three most important lakes are the Shilloi, Chida and Dzudu, Phek has very rich flora and fauna but so far there is no proper research done to document aromatic and medicinal plants available in the district. However, villagers use numerous plants which have medicinal values for treatment of various diseases such as diarrhea, asthma, gastritis, diabetics, sinus etc. Varieties of orchids are found in Phek district. Rhododendron, one of the tallest flowers in the world is also found plenty in Kapamodzu Range, Kikruma, Pfutsero and also other parts of Phek district. One can also find wild canes of different qualities in abundance in most of the forest.

Nagaland is rich in mineral resources including coal, limestone, iron, nickel, cobalt, chromium, and marble. But most of these are yet to be explored. Maximum of the mineral in Nagaland falls under Phek district. Exploration of copper, semi-precious stone, platinum group element, gold which is expected is on process. Weziho Cement Factory, the only factory in the state is run by the Department of Geology and Mining, Government of Nagaland is located in Phek district.

### **Socio- Cultural Profile**

The Chakhesangs are known for their rich cultures and traditions. The customary laws are unwritten but practiced by all villages. These laws are binding to members of the society and are being passed on from generation to generation through oral traditions. The elderly people of the village decide and pass the judgment on disputes and matters concerning the village.

### **Tribal Economy**

The tribal economy depends on agriculture which is the main occupation with Terrace Rice Cultivation as the predominant. In Nagaland, agriculture is the goldmine. With moderate climate in summer and cold in winter, it becomes possible to cultivate varieties of vegetables and fruits. Agriculture for people of Phek is not just an activity but is also an important part of their culture, a culture that is immemorial and an inseparable part with 80% engaged in farming. The main crops are rice, maize, millet, cabbage, yam, pulses, ginger, bananas etc. However, passion fruit, peach, plum, kiwi and cardamom are also gaining momentum in the district. Jhum cultivation is practiced by every Chakhesang village. The people are expert craftsmen and excellent in making pots, baskets, sculptures and furniture. Salt production, fruit juice production, weaving, bamboo and wood carving are also -- some of the occupation of this tribe.

## **Traditional Administration set-up**

Every village whether big or small has a village council. The village council members are elected or chosen amongst the villagers in accordance with the prevailing custom practice and usages. Every khel or clan is given fair representation in the village council by allowing the khel/clan to nominate/elect its representative to the council. Within the village there is also the Village Council Judiciary Committee board which has the power to try small and petty offences and can award minor punishment and fines. The village Court also performs the duty of a counselor to find a compromise between the disputing parties. Gaonburas (GB) are also very important functionaries of the village and are directly involved with the administration of the village.

# CHANG

## **ORIGIN OF THE CHANG TRIBE**

It is believed that the Chang tribe originated from a particular peepal tree (Chongnyu) which was exceptional tall and huge and could be seen from every direction. The Chang is derived from the word 'CHANGENNYU' which means standing tall or towering above its surrounding. According to Chang oral narration and history before man became existence he was living in perfect harmony with all the living creatures. Infact it is said that man's relationship with other living creatures was to such extent that he was able to freely communicate with every creature around him and vice versa. An instance where such a relationship existed is exemplified in the relationship which man shared with the tiger and its gradual deterioration as man slowly became aware of his own self existence. This special relationship is not only filled with instinctive communication but also with songs and dances which man shared with the tiger. Till today the Chang's revere and remember the place where man danced with the tiger (MOLO-DOMSHANG) in Chang dialect and the famous meaning of the song and theme 'SALAPONG' which means the tiger will devour the man. However as man became increasingly self aware, he departed ways with his fellow creatures, even the tiger.

Subsequently, as man attained consciousness, they settled together as a community at their place of origin. This place was the first Chang settlement or village and is known as ' Changsang', 'sang' which means village in Chang dialect. Changsang is located 22km from Tuensang town, located between Tuensang village and Hakchang village.

### **Origins of clans**

As man started to live in a community, he felt the need to make rules to maintain social order. And thus, in the famous 'Müilangshon/Müishon' or platform, the first rules of social order and the subsequent division of Chang community into four separate clans was put into practice at Changsang village. Chang tribe was constituted under Müilangshon' (community) platform to constitute social order.

Name of the four clans of the Chang tribe are:

1. Oungh
2. Kangshou

3. Lomou
4. Chongpho Hongang

## **Clothing**

After the advent of Christianity, several Changs have adopted modern clothing. The traditional Chang dress features distinctive shawl-like garments and ornamented headgear. Colonel Ved Prakash mention that the Chang shawl "surpass all the Naga shawls in beauty and eye-catching patterns". The shawl designs are different for different age groups and clans. Mohnei, a cowrie-ornamented shawl, could be worn only by a man who had taken more than 6 heads.

## **Social Practices**

The traditional Chang society is patrilineal, and the males inherit the land and the positions of authority. Nuclear families are predominant in the Chang society. The marriage is called chumkanbu and remarriages are permitted.

## **Traditional Marriage (Chang Nagas)**

Marriage is a bond between two individuals as man and woman, committed to live as husband and wife. This practice is traditional in itself as it existed as the root of human race from the time of creation as we believe. Only the ways of settlement in marriages have changed since then or else marriage existed since the existence of life. In the later stages, our ancestors also embraced different ways of marriage, which are still in use today though some forms of settlements in marriages may not be applicable to this present day.

So as in one of the Naga tribes of Nagaland, the Chang community followed strict and systematic norms of marriage settlement. These practices in the days of our forefathers were not recorded in written form but it is a known fact through some of the methods which are still in practice today. Some of the practices of traditional marriages were brought to our knowledge through verbal information that has been passed from one generation to the next.

Preparations of a marriage had many rules and beliefs from the days of Changsangmongku, the place of origin of the Chang tribe. These rules were strictly followed in the traditional marriages by the Chang community. Chang Naga traditional marriages were centred upon some guidelines where it was not just focused on two individuals committed to one another in a marital bond, but in some way or the other, every act in the settlement of a marriage

was sacred and was sensitive to the relations in the society. The Changs practice monogamy. Once a couple is settled as husband and wife, they are not allowed to have a second marriage unless they are departed in case of death or of unavoidable divorces which is done officially in the presence of the family members from both the sides and matchmakers; they being the witnesses in the process of the couple's separation which is based on the terms agreed upon during the time of marriage. Within the Chang tribe there are several clans and traditionally, the importance of choosing a partner for a marriage is taken into account in relations to these clans where two individuals belonging to the same clan were not allowed to marry. 'Youkoubou' is the person who holds an important role in the marriage of two individuals. He is the initiator, the mediator between the two families or the match maker for a marriage. His clan is different from the clans of the groom-to-be and the bride-to-be. The chosen match maker will not only be a middle person of the two families to be united but he will also take up the responsibility of performing the rituals during the marriage ceremony. Even after that, he will remain as the most important witness of the couple as long as they live together as husband and wife.

Proposals and marriages in the Chang community are not done during the summer season as it is believed to be a taboo. Apart from the summer months, the proposals are made and marriages are held through the rest of the clear seasons.

In the ways of approaching for marriage, A Chang girl never take the first step to ask a boy's hand in marriage. Even if a daughter in a family attains a marriageable stage, the girl's parents will not approach any particular boy's family for marriage. It is done first from the boy's side. A proposal is made when a boy in the family attains 20-21 years of age or when he is matured to marry. The parents will ask their son if there is anyone that he would like to settle with as a life partner, if there is then the son will share his thoughts to his parents of a particular girl that he sees fit to be his wife. If there is no one in particular, then the son will leave the choice to his parents to decide who would be the best for him. According to the son's response, the parents will carry out the plan and will have a talk of the matter with their chosen match maker; who will then start to play the most important role in their marriage.

After a careful study of the person whom the parents think is a good match for their son, or if the boy's parents are willing to accept the boy's preferred girl, they share their thoughts to the

Youkoubou. He will approach the girl's parents for a proposal. If the girl and her parents agree and give their word of acceptance for marriage to the boy's family, then the preparations for the marriage will follow starting with the fixing of the date for their engagement. On this day, the two families will come together to make plans for the day of marriage. The girl's family prepare the best wine and serve it to the matchmaker. After that, the A traditional ritual (Sijangbu) is performed by the matchmaker on the day of engagement where some ginger will be ground by the matchmaker with the help of the ornaments that is presented through him to the bride-to-be by the groom's family. It is done to mark the day of engagement of the couple. The ground ginger will be kept tied on the drying compartment near the fireplace. This practice signifies that the two families have now officially become one family through the agreement for the marriage of their children. During this time, whatever the boy's family can afford to offer is presented to the family of the bride-to-be. This is recorded as they start to live on as a family together where the matchmaker, from this point on, will stand as a witness between the two parties.

On the day of engagement, gifts are presented by the boy's family to the girl's family. These gifts are presented in accordance to the social status of the boy's family or as demanded by the girl's family. Apart from these gifts, the presentation of a special ladies' shawl to the mother of the bride-to-be is a must. This presentation is called 'Mother's Shawl' which is given to her as a token of appreciation for taking care of the bride-to-be during her childhood days. This is a compulsory practice, whatever the circumstances maybe, socially or financially.

Other than these, gifting of domestic animals to the boy's family by the girl's family was also practiced. In some cases, if the groom belongs to a different village than the girl, he has to buy a plot of land in the girl's village. This plot of land is presented to the father of the bride-to-be. This is done because during occasions, the best drinks and food is shared with the in-laws; this becomes difficult when they reside in different villages so to replace this necessary treat that has to be done occasionally, a plot of land is bought and presented to the parents of the bride-to-be.

On the sixth day after the engagement, the main ceremonial marriage is done to mark the final settlement of a marriage which is followed by a feast, later on the same day. This marriage ritual for the new couple is also performed by the matchmaker. The ritual

(Silep) starts with the taking of clean, unscratched leaves of a particular kind, similar to banana leaves but smaller in size, which is collected and filled with a portion of meat and liver of any domestic animal used for the marriage, along with some ginger. The leaves are split in two and laid down in four different places where on each leaf, small portions of ginger, meat and liver is placed and arranged in a criss-cross manner.

After this ritual is done, the matchmaker will place the leaves with the items on the bride's left hand. It is believed that this places a blessing for the new couple to live long in prosperity. After this, the bride and the groom share meal from the same plate as a sign of starting life together as husband and wife.

When the main ceremonial marriage ritual is completed, it is followed by a feast in a larger group or a smaller group, depending on the social status of the couple. This difference in the marriage feast is the only differentiation on traditional marriages in the community of the Chang Nagas. In case of a marriage feast of wealthy people, different types of domestic livestock are prepared and the meat of a whole animal is offered without the intestines, which will be shared among them as a sign of showing gratefulness and respect to the bride's family by the groom's family.

After the marriage feast is over, the parents of the bride, family members, bridesmaids and the matchmaker, while accompanying her to the groom's residence, will send along with her new shawls, grains, household goods, gardening tools, and others as offered to her by her parents. The bride should be careful not to fall or stumble on anything as she enters the groom's house as it is considered to bring bad luck to their new future. Here, another round of gathering is sat to discuss and share advice to the newly wedded couple on how to live a good life together.

After marriage, if there is a case of separation or divorce, there are strict rules and regulations to follow. If the cause of divorce is the husband, then he has to pay a very high price which involves surrendering most of his earned properties to his wife or as demanded by the wife's family. If the fault lies with the wife, then the husband has the right to send her back to her family empty handed. In case of separation due to death, where if the husband dies first, then the wife's family members will state that they would like to rake her back into their family but if the children or the family members of the husband insist that she stay with them, then

it is agreed to do so. If the wife dies first, the husband makes sure that every last rite is followed through, where he as well as the wife's family is satisfied without any grudge against each other. If the cause of her death is due to ill health and if during the period of her illness, she is found not been looked after properly, then on the occasion of her death, the husband has to pay a penalty as demanded by the family of the wife. Hence, every action for any case is dealt with according to how the husband and wife lived when they were together.

Marriage is focused on two people with a blessed private contract to love and to live together as husband and wife who is blessed and accepted by the society. This occasion comes as a blessing of bringing two families together to live and share a common place with each other like one family, bonded by marriage. Old ways of Chang traditional marriage seem to follow very strict rules in marriage but it certainly has a systematic role as compared to today's practice of embracing a commitment on marriage.

# **DIMASA KACHARI**

## **Traditional Administration of the Village.**

The whole Dimasa village as a cluster of houses is known as *nohlai* while the village with its population is known as *raji*. The village headman is known as *khunang(GB)* and he is always at the apex of the village administration. His main powers include customary usage, protection and preservation of land and properties, any rituals, preservation and promotion of heritage and culture, guidance during festivals in the village and maintaining law and order of the village. He is assisted by his 7(seven) other assistant members of the Village Council, namely *dilek*, *daulathu*, *habaisagao*, *pharai*, *mantra*, *hangsebekhu* and *jalairao*. The village headman is appointed by all the elderly males of the village, and generally the eldest one is selected, who also possess intelligence, courage, etc. The headman is also supposed to be a married man with children and the ability to host guests with great hospitality. The Village administration is headed by the *khunang(GB)*, resolves all the matters of disputes and conflicts. During matters related to women, the village administration also invites the elderly women to take part in the resolution. However, generally, the women do not have any place in the Village administration or any kind of decision-making process for the village. The District administration assigns additional tasks to the village headman such as, collection of house tax etc.

## **TRIBE PROFILE**

Like the great majority of the tribes in Nagaland, Dimasa kacharis have their distinct language, culture, folklore, tradition and beliefs. The term 'Dimasa' literally means 'the children of a big river', where 'Di' means water, 'Ma' means big and 'Sa' means children. The written sources and oral narratives recount the glorious past of Dimasa kingdom and occupies a unique place in the history of North-East India. The Dimasa legends indicate about their earliest settlements and their subsequent migration into different directions. Long before the Ahom state established in 1228, the Dimasa state had a large extent of their kingdom spreading from the Brahmaputra valley to the valleys of rivers Dhansiri and Kopili. Till the sixteenth century, the Dimasa kingdom controlled the greater part of the Dhansiri valley with Dimapur as its capital before slowly receding towards the Maibang hills of Dima Hasao district in Assam. The remnants of the past Dimasa kingdom can still be seen in the old stone relics and gateway situated at Kachari Rajbari, opposite to Circuit House, near Super Market, Dimapur.

Racially, Dimasas belongs to the Mongoloid stock and linguistically belongs to the Tibeto-Burman linguistic speaking group of ethnic community. In British period, Dimasas fell under the generic term 'Kachari,' which covered a fair portion of Tibeto-Burman speaking groups. In Nagaland, the Dimasas are recognized as Kacharis in official terms. There are total of ten Dimasa villages in the district of Dimapur. All these villages are located along the bank of the river Dhansiri. Three villages namely - Darogajan, Bamun Pukhuri I & Bamun Pukhuri II are located near the Dimapur town area. While the remaining seven are situated near the Assam-Nagaland border (around 26-28 kms away from the hustle and bustle of the Dimapur town) and falls under Dhansiripar sub-division of Dimapur district.

### **Socio-cultural profile and tribal economy**

Dimasas kachari are one of the few tribal communities in India which has a system of double descent. Hence, Dimasa society consists of both patrilineal and matrilineal clans. Each person belongs to a male clan from the father and a female clan from the mother. Since a Dimasa man and woman has double clan allegiance, equal importance is put both to patrilineal and matrilineal kinship. Traditionally there are forty male clans, *sengphongs* and forty-two women's clans, *jaadis ot jilikhs*. People from the same clan are forbidden to marry. Also, some clans cannot intermarry at all. Though most Dimasas consider themselves as Hindus, Dimasas have their own gods and goddesses who ruled over different localities. This indigenous belief system and socio-religious institution known as '*daikho*' holds a very important place in everyday rituals practice. The *daikho* is an unstructured shrine where collective rituals practice are played out in specific territorial units (Danda, 1978).

The ritual space is also strongly dominated with the worship of the evil spirits at the time of cultivation, during any disease, crisis and epidemics. According to Dimasa myth on origin, Dimasas believed that at the beginning the world was completely uninhabited. The Earth was full of water and there prevailed great silence and heavenly bliss. In the midst of unearthly silence, two Godly beings - a male and a female appeared. The male Godly being called Bangla Raja and female Godly being called Arikidima fell in love and had a divine conception. The myth is that the creator Bangla Raja and Arikidima laid seven eggs. Out of seven eggs, six gods were created and from the seventh came out the evil spirits. Sacrifices performed in times of crisis. From the first egg, the God Sibarai was born, from the second egg, Doo Raja came out, and in this way remaining four eggs namely God Wah Raja, Gonyung Raja, Brayung Raja and Hamyadao were born respectively. The seventh egg got rotten and it is believed that all the evil spirits came out from the rotten egg after being smashed by Hamyadao and that they are responsible for the diseases, sufferings

and other natural calamities. Dimasa worshipped the six gods as their ancestral deities. On the other hand, the evil spirits are worshipped at the time cultivation, during any disease and epidemics. In Dimasa society, both men and women have more or less equal rights to observe religious rites. However, the institution of priesthood (known as *jonthai*) is restricted to the male member only. The priest (*jonthai*) conducts most of the rituals with the help of assistance known as *Gisiya/Pharain*. Another important role is played by a person known as '*phatri*' who is said to be possessed by God and act as intermediate between the God and the people in conducting certain rituals.

Since Dimapur is plain area, Dimasas mostly indulge in settled cultivation. Cultivation of paddy is mostly undertaken during the rainy season. Rice is the staple food of the Dimasas. Livestock such as goats, fowls and duck holds a very important place in everyday ritual practices of Dimasas and in their indigenous religious system (known as *daikho*). Dimasas rear these fowls and animals for sacrificing to their clan deities and for domestic consumption and to some extent commercial aspect too. Besides these, practicing of sericulture, spinning, and weaving can also be found among the Dimasa. Traditional clothing attires hold an important aspect in socio-cultural life of Dimasa - from celebration of birth rituals to death ceremony. Almost all Dimasa traditional attires are hand woven. Collective fishing is sometimes organized and the whole members of the village participate in such expeditions. Today, many Dimasa women and men are breaking down barriers to pursue professional careers.

# **KHIAMNIUNGAN**

## **BRIEF PROFILE ON THE ECOLOGY & HABITAT OF KHIAMNIUNGAN NAGA**

The land of Khamniungans is predominantly a mountainous region where the elevation of land forms is above 1000 m. The region lies in between 26.2167 degree North and 94.9919 degree East (wikipedia). It is a landlocked region where on the east it is border by Myanmar, on the north it is border with Tobu sub-division of Mon district and Myanmar, on the west it is border by Tuensang and Samator sub-division of Tuensang district and on the south it is bound by Pungro sub-division of Kiphire district.

### **Demography:**

The Khamniungans are a homogenous group of people found in both Nagaland and Myanmar. The areas settled by the people of Khamniungan are a contagious both in India and Myanmar. Until the demarcation of boundary line between India and Myanmar, the people from both the nation were distinguished only on the basis of village but were living as one extended family. There are around 40 recognized villages of Khamniungan in India and above 150 villages in Myanmar.

The Khamniungans in India are settled in about 5 ranges from North to South direction. WOLAM (Pangsha) range is found in northern most range, followed by THANG (Noklak) range, to the further south we have NOKHU range which is followed by PATHSO (Panso) range and PUSHU range. The southernmost range in the Khamniungan region within India is occupied by THON (Thonoknyu) range.

Thang (Noklak) village is believed to be the biggest and the oldest village in the region within India. The total population as per the census of 2011 in the region (India) was about 50,000 and the density of population was 51/km<sup>2</sup> (Wikipedia).

### **Physical Feature:**

The topography of the region comprise vastly of mountains and hills with deep gorges and narrow valleys. The region is mostly found elevated above 1000m to 1500m sea level. Mt. Khulio-King is the highest peak of the region that lies along the border with Myanmar in a Patkoi range. The mountain in the region plays a vital role in the lives of the people not only

from the point of ecology but it provides a strategic location for defensive purposes for the people during the headhunting days.

The vast part of vegetation in the region comprises of mountain and terrains. This vegetation alone is a home to different species of living and non-living organism in the region. These mountains and terrains feed the forest with rain which further feed the streams and river thus maintaining the balance of the region with lush green vegetation throughout the year.

There are two important rivers that run through the heart of the region — Laang and Leen. These two rivers originate from the north of the region and passes through the region which merged with river Zunki in the south before eventually drawn into the river Chindwind in Myanmar. During the summer the two rivers brings sediments from the upstream that enriched the soil fertility on the bank and naturally contributes in the agricultural sector for the farmers.

### **Flora and Fauna:**

The region is covered by tropical and sub-tropical evergreen forest where we find plants like bamboo, palm, rattan, oak, pine etc. The practice of Jhum or slash and burn cultivation has led to many areas which are covered with scrub forest and high grass. Even though there is no designated wild life sanctuary or parks however, through the initiatives from the village administration with restricted gaming permits, we have animals like bears, sambar, hart, porcupine, pangolins, wild dogs, leopard, different species of monkey etc. thrives in the forest of the region. Also, Mithun, a semi-domesticated gaur which is a state animal of Nagaland and found as an emblem on the official seal is largely rear in the wild. This animal is considered as one of the most valued animal in the region.

The great Hornbill which is an important bird of the state are found in the region even though their presence is thin due to the unabated hunting activities in the past. Other bird species like Blyth's Tragopan, the state bird of Nagaland can be found in the region surrounding **Mt. Khulio-King** and beyond the international border in Khamniungan region.

### **Climatic condition:**

The climatic condition of the region can best be described as largely rainy season. The average rainfall in the region (India) is 2000 mm to 3000 mm (Thang Students' Union Golden Jubilee Souvenir).The region have longer rainy season than the dry season in a year. With the onset of April-May the rainy season starts in the region and last till Sept-Oct. However,

the precipitation remains the highest during June — Sept period. As the region receives high rate of rainfall the weather remains mostly cold throughout the year. One can experience warm climate in the region despite of high rate of rainfall during summer season due to the presence of high humidity in the atmosphere. The cold weather in the region starts from Oct-Nov. and last till March-April. However, the coldest period of the season remains during Dec- Feb. the maximum temperature in the region rise up to 30 degree Celsius during peak summer and minimum temperature drop to 5 degree Celsius during winter (Thang Students' Union Golden Jubilee Souvenir).

### **BRIEF PROFILE ON THE TRIBAL ECONOMY OF KHIAMNIUNGAN NAGA**

The age of primitive life style by gathering and hunting has long passed in almost all the societies around the world with the advent of modernity and this has little impact in the Khamniungan society as well. The push for the advancement has forced people of Khamniungan too to adopt various means for the survival. However, we cannot rule out the predominance of agriculture as the main source of livelihood for the people of Khamniungans in rural society. Although, today's generation of Khamniungans have ventured in various fields for the living but the vast majority of its people still depends on agriculture produces as their main source of economy.

The vast majority of Khamniungan, mostly, inhabited in the villages and inaccessible to the modernity still depends on agriculture and allied sectors. The people of these regions cultivate and tilled their land for the survival with little help from government of the day in the form of schemes and subsidies. The economy of these people comprises by and large of agriculture and its products.

These are some sources of economy for the people of Khamniungan :

1. Cultivation
2. Rearing of Animals
3. Aquatic products
4. Forest products
5. Cash crops
6. Land tax
7. Household industry

## 1. Cultivation

Agriculture is the main source of income for the survival of the people. Most of the products for their homes are directly dependent on the agriculture produces. There are two methods of agriculture practice by the Khamniungans:-

a). **Jhum/Dry Cultivation:** Jhum or Slash and burn or dry cultivation is an age old cultivating methods that has been passed down to successive generations which is vastly practice even to this day. This form of cultivation is known as IEM in Khamniungan dialect. Most of the farm products are produce from this method of cultivation.

In this method to cultivate a new field or fresh field, the villagers starts to slash/cut down the jungle by the end of December and January, which according to Khamniungan's calendar is called "Hokali". After cutting down the Jungle the field is keep for about a month or two for the trees to dry up before finally burn it in the last week of February and March. Right after burning up of field and clearing of dead woods and weeds, sowing of seed of various kinds begins in the field. Some of the main items produce from this dry farming are:

- I. Paddy
- II. Mize
- III. Millet
- IV. Beans of different kind
- V. Chilies
- VI. Taro
- VII. Sweet potatoes

b). **Wet/Block Cultivation:** Wet or block or terrace cultivation is largely witnessed in Khamniungan region near the bank of a rivers and streams. Paddy is the predominance product found in this method of farming.

## 2. Rearing of Animals:

Mithun rearing has been one of the most important and profitable source of income. In the case of Mithun rearing more than one person/individual can own one Mithun. A portion of Mithus, for example a lift limp can own by an individual, right limp may own by another. Similarly, the two remaining limps can be owned by two other persons. In this way one counts his wealth in a village.

Besides Mithun, another important animal that contribute to the tribal economy is a pig/hog. Traditionally, pigs were reared in open without pens. However, of late, due to the efforts from various villages based NGOs, now the pigs are rear in pig pens or in shelters with proper measures for cleanliness. Even though rearing of pig are not in larger scale but the attractive source of income generations from pigs has led every villager to introduced different breed for rearing besides the traditional potbelly breed. Other domesticated animals like cattle, goat, dogs, chicken etc. do contribute to the economy of villagers.

### **3. Aquatic Products:**

Traditionally, fishing was a pass time sport for the villagers and never considered to produce for income generation if not in few instances. Even to this day in almost all the rivers in Khamniungan jurisdiction fishing with net, poison/chemical, electrocute, detonator, gun etc is totally prohibited, anyone found misusing these elements in the river is considered as an offence. However, with increase demands from people living in semi urban or urban areas, the villagers have adopted rearing aquatic animals like fish in ponds and fisheries. Aquatic product like fish is contributing in the economy of the people although the production of fish from ponds and fisheries are in an initial stage in the region.

### **4. Forest Products:**

Products like firewood and timber are some of the main items that contribute in the economy of the villagers. Forest has been one of the main constituent of tribal economy in villages. Forest products like herbs, wild fruits, edible leaves etc. are some other products from forest which has immensely contributed for the well being of the people in the villages.

### **5. Cash Crops:**

The cultivation of cash crops is a new thing for the people in the region. However, the increase in cultivating cash crops by the people has a tremendous result. Some of the cash crops which can be witnessed more in the region are cardamom, tea, various kinds of fruits etc.

### **6. Land tax :**

Until recently, land tax was one of the important mean of source of income for the people in the region. With the advent of Christianity and the area/boundary demarcation between districts after the

formation of Nagaland state the practice of levying land tax was abolished in the region. The ancestors of Khamniungan from early established villages in the region give permission to the other new villages, to cultivate or tilled their land in lieu of tax in the form of crops and other domestic animals.

## **7. Household Industry:**

Household industry is one of major sectors which contribute directly for the economy of the people in the rural areas. Cloths weave out of loom at home by women are a great source of income for the people. Also baskets, mat and other similar products weave out of bamboo and cane and wooden products produce by men folks are another main source of income for the people.

The above discussed points are some of the sectors which were/are contributing in the economy of the Khamniungans people living in villages. With the increase influence of modernity there is a threat for the collapse of agriculture and other allied sectors which were once the back bone of tribal economy. People in search of white collar jobs and other corporate jobs in town and urban area has led to fewer numbers of people found engaging in agriculture and other allied sectors.

## **BRIEF PROFILE ON THE TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATION SET-UP OF KHAMNIUNGAN NAGA**

Administrative set - up in Khamniungan society begins from a family. A family is the first and the basic unit of administration in a village and the village heads/council is the apex institute of village administration in a Khamniungan society.

### **Village Organization:**

In a village few families comprises of a "**KAMHOI**" or "**KAMNOI**" (Morung), further two or three KAMHOI form a "**KAMNYU**" (Morung) which belong to a particular clan members in a village. A particular **KAM** of a clan also form into a Khel (**SOUNTHAP**) in a village. The different Khels from different clans makes a village.

## **Administration:**

### **1. Family:**

In a Khamniungan society, father is the head of a family. Any kind of decision in a family evolved with the head of the family i.e, the father. A father decides the course of his family which is to be obeyed by the entire family. In the absence of a father, the eldest son of the family will carry this responsibility.

### **2. Clan:**

One among the close relatives/clan who is more capable and efficient can lead or directs the entire clan, represent the clan in the village. He will further co-operate with other counterparts from different clans members in a village. These different clans come together and forms councils or head of the village in olden days.

### **3. Village Head/Council:**

The individuals from different clans who are efficient and capable as well as who knows the social way of the village runs the administration of the village. With the cooperation from all the clans in a village, the village council comprises of all the heads from different clans, carries out village administration and social works related to village and society. Any works related to village is carried out with the understanding and confidence of all the clans in a village.

## **KHIAMIUNGAN**

Khamniungan's trace the origin of their village at "Khamniungan Nokthang" The tribe is categorized into two major clans namely Lam and Shiu There are other multiple sub-clans, but they come under one or the other major clan. Inter marriage between the two clans was allowed Exogamy was strictly followed and endogamy was strictly prohibited by customary law.

## **PROPOSAL**

There are many ways of choosing a partner but only boys can propose for marriage. Proposal can be initiated by the boy's friends or his aunts and grand mothers can also act as

matchmakers and propose a girl of their choice. In some cases, during sowing season, boys and girls meet in working groups and may take a liking to each other leading to marriage. If parental approval is obtained then engagement takes place in the presence of their parents. It is the boy's bosom friend who is the important person in the whole marriage process.

## **MARRIAGE**

There are different seasons for marriage, though it is not encouraged during summer and rainy season and during the month of death in the family. Some people get married before summer so that they can give a helping hand in the sowing season, others get married after "*Tsokum*" festival (post sowing) with the intention of gaining manpower or helping hands during harvest. Some may yet marry during "*Khaozaosie*" (post harvest) festival when the granaries are full.

If the couple like each other then the marriage is conducted quietly. The boy narrates the details about the girl he likes to his bosom friend (who plays an important part in performing rituals for marriage ceremonies ) and discusses with him about the day and time for the marriage ceremony. The friend in turn will disclose the matter to their peer group in the *Morung* (men's dormitory). The men folk will visit the place where girl's sleep together, usually at a widow's place and while the others wait outside, the bosom friend will enter the house and call the girl out. Then they forcibly take the girl away and even if she wants to marry the boy, the girl will resist. The reason behind her resistance is that in case of misunderstandings or quarrel that may lead to divorce, she can take a stand and fight for her rights.

After they lead the girl away only the bosom friend of the boy will accompany the girl and the boy to the boy's house, the others will return to the dormitory. The friend will arrange for and prepare all necessities for the marriage ceremony. He will slaughter the cock/hen reared by the groom and put the blood inside a bowl made of banana leaves along with a slice of ginger. Then forcibly taking the hand of the resisting bride he will dip her fingers into the blood. The reluctance displayed by her is to enable her to take a stand. In case the cock/hen is not used then a bowl of wine must suffice. Dipping the fingers in the blood or wine signifies that, if any problems arises in the future between the relatives or in-

laws, all will be forgiven and forgotten. They should maintain a cordial relationship, giving up all disputes and forgiving grudges. It also signifies the helping hand rendered in times of need especially in cultivation works. While performing the marriage ceremony, the friend bestows blessing upon the couple muttering a prayer, "may this couple be parents of healthy sons and daughters, live a prosperous and long life'.

After the ceremonial part is over, the friend of the groom will cook food exclusively for the three of them, which must be consumed by the three without sharing it with the groom's relatives. For it is believed that sharing the food leads to harm, accidents or any untoward sufferings to the groom's relatives. The next day, the bride returns to her parents house. They present her ornaments and other necessary items like, lady's spear, necklaces, armlets and baskets. The Khamniungans characterize themselves with such a unique traditional marriage.

# **KONYAK**

## **DOCUMENTATION OF ORAL TRADITIONS, RITUALS, ETC. OF KONYAK TRIBE**

*Ecology & habitat, social, cultural profile, tribal economy, traditional administration , set-up etc.*

### **Introduction**

The Konyaks are the largest of the 16 tribes inhabiting Nagaland, located in the mountainous regions of the Northeast. They are spread across Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam in India and Myanmar. They come with a history of brutal headhunting and animistic culture. They are also called Lands of Anghs.

The word Konyak is derived from two root words (KHALI) head and (NYAKS) black. This name thus has a connection with the habit of using black colour on their teeth and faces by the people during the earlier days.

It seems the local term used by the Konyak for them is Haha and it is particularly popular among the people of the hill or the upper Konyak people of the month and especially the Tuensang districts. The Sema calls the Konyak-Taprongumi or Minvumo-Nagami whereas the Ao, Chang and Kachari call the Konvak Mirin, Chaak and Nahngra respectively. The Konyak have migrated to Mon, Tuensang and other parts of India from Burma (Myanmar) through the north-eastern Patkai range. During the Ahom and the British periods, the Konyaks were designated according to their respective areas such as Bauferia, Jobokia or the passes through which they use to visit the plains of Assam. The landscape of the upper Konyak area is hilly and rugged or less a plain area, touching the alluvial landscape of the Brahmaputra valley. Konyak are easily recognised among the Nagas by pierced ears and tattoos which they have all over their faces, hands, chests, arms and calves. Facial tattoos were earned for taking an enemy's head. They are also called as "Facial tattoo tribe". The other unique traditional practices that set the tribe apart from the rest are gunsmelting from - smelting, brass-works and gunpowder making. They are also into making jandail (machetes) and wood sculptures.

Linguistically, the Konvak come under the negative Kuki group of the Tihetoburman family. On other words the Konyak languages belongs to the

Northern Naga sub-branch of the Sal sub-family of sino-tibetan. The common dialect has evolved among them, based on the Konyak waching dialect. The Konyaks reflect all the morphological traits of the mongoloid group. The people are primarily non - vegeterain. They take all kinds of meat including pork, beef and meat of dog and monkey. Rice is their staple food. Jobstear, maize, soyabean and a variety of vegetables/fruits and tuber are taken commonly. Potato, pulses and milk are rarely taken. Homemade rice beer is profusely taken. The villagers prefer black tea rather than tea with milk and sugar.

## **I. INTRODUCTION OF LONGCHANG**

Longchang village is one of the largest village in Mon district. It is situated under the sub-di\ ision of Ahoi. It lies to the north of Tobu and south of Ahoi, west to yeongmon river and share boundaries with Phom, east Longnam mountain.

There are nine main clan in the village namely Bezo, Eangtok, Yim ship hu, Khuhlam, Antehu, Chapa hu. Shenvu hu, Ngonglam, and Shong lam.

## **ANGHSHIP AND IT'S ADMINISTRATION**

The village consists of one chief Angh and sub-Angh which administer under it's head.Law and order are vested under the chief Angh and sub -Angh .The chief Angh can exercise his powers and functions on any matter concerning his subjects. Traditionally, the chief Angh excercises his Anghship through oral tradition but due to the advancement of civilization and growing of Christianity the practice of traditional customs have declined.

There are various sub-Angh under the chief Angh, which are mentioned below :

### **1. MAAN (ANGH)**

The wealthiest person in the village is referred as Maan. It is believed that the wealth of the Maan is not acquired only by human sources but by a spirit -a spirit of wealth, the Maan's wealth are compared to the Angh in terms of possession and material wealth .Unlike other sub-Angh in the village, the Maan's house is built like that of Anghs. It has a logdrum and the walls of the house has paintings and wood carvings of animals.The Maan's power and functions are same as the chief Angh. The person from the maan is known as 'Maanpa,' it was also told that before

there was existence of Angh. Maan being the most respected as angh and later the time being the villager adopted the Angh in the village like others villager by the consult of Maan it was the chief angh that being came into existence. The material and property of Maan was lost due to invasion of village by the Indian army during 1950's and the coming of Christianity the village people embraced Christian religion and the practice of custom and tradition was vanished away. Today nothing remained of the past materials and Coming of Christianity and modernization the practice of old custom and tradition was totally declined. The traditional of Maan is powerful during those days, the rituals was also done in a careful manners if the ritual were mistake the curse action of the Maan's spirit would caused immediate action. The Maan huts was build like the shape of the Fish because in the house of the Maan the carving of all animals pictures were painted but the fish was forgotten to painted on the wall of Maan House. When the Mann huts to he built the villager were forbidden to go to their own fields as it was believed that the honour of the Maan spirit would curse the villager if they don't followed the rituals.

### **SHAOTU (ANGH)**

Shaotü Angh functions under the chief Angh. A Shaotü Angh work's is to maintain and care the enemy's skull whenever any villager oblique warriors killed an enemy and brought his head. It is the responsibility of Shaotü Angh to keep all the enemies skull well maintained under his cared.

### **AOSHI (ANGH)**

Aoshi angh is one of the sub-Angh in the village who predicts the fortune of the villagers, by using the eggs and burned it to predict the fortune for the coming year after the completion of harvest.

### **MOWANG (ANGH)**

Mowang Angh guides the villagers on festivals and events to he celebrated for the following year ho guides and fix the date and time.

### **LEEYAM (ANGH)**

His main function is to prepare the seedling of crops before anyone sow seeds in the field. He would be the first to start sowing seeds in his field followed by the villagers

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **1. REVENUE SYSTEM:**

The Angh collect taxes from the surrounding villages in terms of crops. Slaughtered animals head will be submitted to the king.

### **Traditional Administration Set-up**

Every Konyak village has Wang hamyen, a traditional village council. The council is formed by the representative from all the morung (club) inside the village and Anghs or chief Anghs is its supreme authority. The Anghs are of three categories such as chief Aqths. Wangsa and Wangshu. The chief Anghs supervises the junior Anghs. The representatives are selected on the basis of their experiences and meritorious deeds. The council enforces customary rights and adjudicates all disputes. The decision of the Anghs is final. binding and we're honored by all.

The punishment of any defaulters is dealt but it varies according to the nature of the crime committed. It is generally. that the punishment is imposed in the form of fine, in kind or cash, which is not paid to the aggrieved party... but is shared by the representatives. This sharing may be in the shape of a common feast. But however things vanished due to the changes of modern society. The Anghship is also related to socio-political religious and territorial functions. The Angh along with his subordinate Anghs solves all the problems of the village or his subject's jurisdiction. All classes of people are subjected or obligated to help the Angh. Further, the other two groups such as Thandu, are who used to tattoo their faces and Thenko,, who generally do not tattoo their face.

### **A Brief Account of Konyak Marriage System**

The Konyak practiced polygamy before the coming of Christianity. The Angh still practice polygamy but the case of polygamy is completely absent in the society. Polygamy was in vogue among the Nagas such as the Konyak Sumis. Lothas, etc. but the coming of Christianity has discouraged this system of marriage. The Angh may have several wives as he pleases and he even practices endogamous marriage therefore the social restriction for endogamous marriage doesn't matter to him. The Angh could marry any of his choice but the first wife is the Anghya while the others were the concubines.

In general, marriage is often arranged by the parents when their children reach certain marriageable age but in some cases such as in upper Konyak area, child marriage was practiced too. Exogamous marriage was strictly maintained in the society and it was a mana to have endogamy. Therefore, marriage within the clan or the same morung (Paan) is forbidden. Marriage may be love marriage, arranged marriage, capture marriage, force marriage etc.

The engagement for the marriage will be a meeting between the two families where they exchange the history of their family background in details after which the groom family presents a disc shape brass plate called mulang. The number of mulang may vary from 1 to 7 plates, the status of the bride and the groom is determined by the numbers of mulang. Once the mulang is given by the groom as proposal and if the bride's family agrees to the proposal then they may keep the mulang in their possession but if not it can be returned on the same day before the sun sets. On keeping the mulang over night or more than a night and if the bride changes her mind and refuses to break the engagement then it becomes an insult for the groom so the bride's family must pay the double of the gift as a fine. Therefore, the mulang may look simple but it is a priceless metal which continues to circulate within the community as bride's price. A spear head made of iron called 'ngoashao' and a brass bangle called shakphan may also be given as bride's price which will be accompanied by a plot of field.

After marriage, when wife pregnant with first child. She goes back to her parent and lived with them till she gives birth to the first child. The men folk of the wife relatives then escort the wife and the child to husband's house along with all her belongings. The man's family feeds the women's relative men folk with best drinks and food. They were asked to eat till their stomach was filled and drink till they were completely drunk.

Divorce in any case was seriously penalized with loss of a large field and numbers of mulang. Therefore, divorce was a rare case in the society.

Child marriage was also practiced by the Konvaks of the Tobu area. In the case of child marriage the parents on mutual understanding agree to have their children married when they attain their adulthood. Here the bride's price is also very high, it may be money, a field, a mithun, etc are paid by the groom on the demand of the bride. This kind of marriage has become rare these days but it is said to be practiced in small pocket areas of upper Konyak.

# **LOTHA**

## **ORAL TRADITIONAL OF LOTHAS**

Oral traditional of Lothas is the name of a major Naga tribe inhabiting the Wokha district of Nagaland, some twenty thousand souls which occupies a piece of territory that may be roughly described as the drainage area of the middle and lower Doyang and its tributaries, down to the point where it emerges into the plains.

The Lothas called themselves kyon which means simply man.

## **ORIGIN AND MIGRATION**

Various scholars wrote about the origin and migration of the Lothas along with the other Naga tribes has been forwarded by various importance scholars of the past and the present yet it has been all based on vocal explanation that has been passed on from one generation to another rather than articulated in on paper and since we don't have to say .

The Lothas started moving out from eastern part of china, passing through Malaysia, Indonesia, and Burma enroute. After many long years of movement, they reached a place called Khezakhenoma located between Manipur and Chakesang, where they settled for a short period of time. From Khezakhenoma they moved towards the present day settlement of the Lothas (Wokha) where they finally settled.

The Lothas migrated from Manchuria passing through the foothills of the Himalayas and reached Manipur via Burma. The story goes that three brothers Lima Chan, Izarnontse, and Rankhanda the ancestors of the three phratries of the tribe, came out of a hole in the earth near the miraculous stone of Kezakenoma. If one loads of rice were dried on this stone it become too loads. Owing, however to the indecent behavior of a man of a tribe the virtue went out of the stone and the Lothas set out on their migrations, taking with them a little piece of the stone which is still preserved at Pangti.

## **Dresses of Lothas**

Men used Rive. This consists of a long narrow piece of stout cloth ending in a broad flap. In putting it on a narrow piece is wound once around the waist so that it joins at the back and forms the back, and up through the belt, the broad

flap being allowed to hang down in front. Women used Skirt (SURHUM) and are about 22 inches deep. It is bound tightly round the waist and the overlapping top corner tucked in front of the left hip.

The edge which shows the often ornamented with iridescent beetle wings or bits of yellow orchid stalk. Among the Northern Lothas the Surhum is of dark blue cloth with narrow horizontal red stripes in threes and a band of paler blue embroidered with red three inches broad running round the middle of the cloth.

Some of the ornaments used by Lotha are- a little brass wire spiral and is worn in the lobe of the ear. The necklace that Lotha used is composed of four or five strings of black beads made from the seeds of the wild plantain. Sometimes they are in the form of a tight necklet, the rows being kept in place by narrow pierced conch shell supports.

Early, the first important weapons of the Lotha Naga are the Dao (Lepok) which is used for every variety of purpose. With it a Lotha can slay his enemy, cut up a chicken, fell a forest tree or pare down the finest strip of cane, dig a hole for a post or cut a thorn out of his foot. Spear (OTSO) is also an important weapon among the Lothas which is always thrown and never used for thrusting, the extreme effective range being about 30 yards. The length of the whole weapon is usually about six feet or rather more, and the favorite wood for the shaft is Nahor (*MESNA FERREA*) and palm and other wood are also used.

Oral traditions of the Lotha folk narrative are used to construct the whole world or rather give meaning to the world around them within which they experience their life. Among the Lotha also we find that the narrative are used to explain the creation, the cosmos which are the physical aspect of the world.

# PHOM

**Brief write- up of tribe profile (ecology & habitat, Socio-cultural profile, tribal economy, traditional set-up.**

**(a) Ecology and Habitat :**

The Phomland falls in the present district of Longleng, Nagaland. Also known as the "Land of handicrafts". It is bordered in the *East* by Mon and Tuensang districts of Nagaland in the *north* by the state of Assam, *South* by Tuensang and Mokokchung districts of Nagaland and in the *West* by Mokokchung district of Nagaland state. Longleng district has a total area of 885 sq Km and is located between 94'E -95' E longitude and latitude 26'N-25'N of equator. The size of population according to 2011 census is 50,593.

The topography can be divided into three range:

1. Chingmei range in the Northern part.
2. Shemong range in the middle part.
3. Yingnyü range in the Southern part.

The district headquarter Longleng Town lies in the heart of the Phomland. It is 232 Km away from Kohima via, Mokokchung with the nearest railway station at Amguri (Assam) about 100 km. The altitude of the district varies from 150 mtrs to 2000 mtrs above sea level. The district has rivers as its natural boundaries that divide itself from Mokokchung district by Dikhu river and Mon District by yangmon river.

**There are 6 major festivals celebrated by the Phom** throughout the year starting with the biggest festival Monyu in the month of April to Pungvum in October. They are :

- 1) Monyii
- 2) Hahmanghvu
- 3) Moha
- 4) Moivum
- 5) Bangmao

6) Pungvum.

<b>District</b>	<b>Longleng</b>
<b>Area</b>	<b>885 sq km</b>
<b>Population</b>	<b>50,593</b>
<b>Sex-ratio</b>	<b>903</b>
<b>Literacy rate</b>	<b>73.1%</b>
Festivals	Monyü, Moha, Moivüm, Hangmangvü, Püingvüm, Bangmoo Bangmoo.
Religion	Christianity
Rivers	Dikhu, Yangmon.
<b>No. of dialects</b>	5 (five)

**(b) Socio-cultural profile.**

Morung is considered as the core institute of socio cultural life of the Phom. The common term for Morung in Phom is called "Bang". The Bang (Morung) was the only platform for all public references and affairs i.e Teaching of art and culture, statecraft, law and order, norms and traditions etc.

Every Phom village is divided into khels and each has one Bang. The morung constitute of different batches of "yen" peer groups who are recruited at regular interval with each batch moving upward until they reach the 12<sup>th</sup> batch, after which they retire from active social life. However, after their term in Morung they remain as philosopher priest who conducts most of the community rituals.

Bang is also the place of recreation for the community. Singing, dancing, amusement and various games take place. Log drum placed in the Morung plays a vital role in the socio-cultural life of the people, there are about 12 different types of log drum beats each with its significance like for gathering, during festivals, war cry, ritual etc.

## **Arts**

The Phom people were skilled in arts and crafts. The wood carvings on the pillars of morung provide ample evidence of the great artistic nature of Phom. Various design of Basket both from cane and bamboo were weaved to carry out daily social and economic activities, pottery was known to Phom which was practised for centuries. Parts of different shape and size were prepared including a type of pot with punctured hole of the bottom which was usually used to steam gummy rice.

## **Costume and ornaments**

The Phoms used cotton fibre to make clothes. However, both men and women were scantily clad, women folks hardly wore few pieces of clothes one as shirt and the other as waist wrap while menfolk wore a small apron at the waist to cover their private part. With course of time they developed their own patterns of shawls and mekhala (waist wrap) which are worn upto this day. Different types of shawls and mekhalas including bags were used to identify their position, village and khels. Ornaments of bronze, copper, brass were used as earrings, necklace, brawls and armslet. The Phom were also fond of cowries and conshells which are used as design.

## **Language**

It is very interesting to note that the Phornland has 5 (five) different dialects spoken in the present day, there exist a common "Phom" dialect which is used for all official purpose. Like any other language Phom turns out to be a tone language and its sound is easily described in terms of its syllables and their parts of sentence. Lots of meaning could be differentiated simply by correct tonning.

## **Festivals**

There are six major festivals celebrated every year. Amount all the festivity ritual is directly linked to agriculture/ farming. They are Monyii celebrated in the month of April (1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>), Hahmangvili May last or June first week, Moha in the month of July, Moivum celebrated 10 days after Moha, Bangmoo in the month of October to November.

## **Music and Dance**

The folk song of the Phom could be broadly divided into two i.e. Vannyai and Mailok. The former contain history of origin , settlement of village, war, tributes,division of land, boundaries and various important development, it is sung only during MonyCi festival. The latter is the love song that the youngsters would sing to express their romance or impress their lovers, its lyrics has lots of incorporation of analogy from natures, power, political and philosophical.

## **Religious life**

Phoms believed in the existence of a super-natural being who was refered as Obü Kahvang" obü means grandfather, "kah" and "Nang" meaning "Earth" and "Heaven". Thus God was considered a transcendant God of Earth and Heaven. They also believed in the existence of devil besides the celestial God. They believed in the existence of souls in every human being called "Laangha". The souls continue to exist even after the physical body dies however not on this earth but would continue its journey to "yimching" the place of the souls.

## **Status of women**

The unequal treatment and exploitations meted out to women has been a universal phenomenon and the similar treatments of our ancestor to women were very upsetting. Having only girls without a boy was considered most wretched family and society also undermined them. In such cases, often menfolk sought (not all men) divorce in the hope of having baby boy with a new wife. Having more boys was considered a proud and fearless family and even let to daunting others.

A daughter was not entitled to inherit the properties owned by her father be it moveable or immovable assets. A beloved child of the father born to go empty handed to her husband house. Women were considered as second category of citizenship. They are expected to be humble, submissive, soft-spoken and hard working women were also debarred from all rites and rituals.

However inspite of such unequal treatment women folks were much loved which can be traced by the love showered upon them during the "monyte the biggest

festival of the Phoms. Competition among menfolk to give the best gifts and treats forms the most integral part of this festival. It was the men who paid bride prices in the matrimony. There are also instances where even plots of land were given to the daughters.

## **Migration**

The present Phom people are the amalgamation from various courses of migration. We can broadly make mention of three courses. Firstly, the Yingli are the people who are said to have once settled on the mountain called, Yingnyüshang which is located near the district headquarter of Longleng in the Heartland of Phom Area. Prior to their settlement in Yingnyüshang, they lived at Bongmohong or Bongaihong which can be interpreted as Eastern range. It's exact location still remains unknown. From there they migrated to Apaihong where they are said to have replenished greatly. From there they migrated to Wangkhamong where they became conscious of economic life to cultivate the Land. From there again they came to a mountain called, Yingnyüshang. It was during their settlement on that mountain the people came to the full realisation of their socio-cultural, economic and customs.

Another course of migration coming to the present Phom country was from Chungliyimti side. In the process of migrating from Chungliyimti, a group of people went along the Dikhu river bank and another group went crossing the river. Till that time the name of the tribes were non-existent. The people migrating along the Dikhu river bank were called Merir which means, those going along the river bank and to those who migrated crossing the river were called Aor which means, we are going in Ao dialect. The attribution of the names of different tribes were not on the basis of race or of blood line because the tradition shows that there was a time when people were few in number closely knitted as a family and there was no concept of sharp division into different tribes as we have now. It was purely an external man-made attribution and later invention. According to traditional legend of Yachem village, they are said to have originated from Longkhampong and they migrated to Chungliyimti. They found water and fire from there and came to full realisation of social and economic life. Later, they migrated to present Phom country.

There are also certain groups of people who have settled either at Yingnyüshang or Chungliyimti specially those who came from Assam and Eastern side. People who once settled in Yingnyüshang are now settled in present Ao and Konyak areas also. The human migration and distribution is identical to that of ocean current. The movement of the people is not always forward; some turn backward, some to left and some to right searching for better living conditions.

### **(c) Tribal Economy**

The means of livelihood of the Phom tribe was dependent on agriculture, cultivation of Rice, taro, tobacco, yam, corn, jopster, millet, gourd, pumkin, chilli were done by our ancestor which are still practised to the modern day. Jhum cultivation was practiced whereby they would own at the least two to three paddy fields called, Len, shep and shepya i.e. The fresh jhum fields, the field cultivated for second continuous year and those cultivated for the third consecutive year respectively. Every year the village authority would decide new sites for cultivation which would then be left as fallow land for the next 10 years after 3 consecutive years.

Gathering of wild foods was also an integral part of their livelihood. Hunting, Fishing and wild fruit from an important diet. There is no evidence of marketing, the excess foods were shared and consumed among the villagers.

#### **(i) Livestock**

Domesticated animals such as dogs, pigs, chickens and Mithun were reared for meat and also to perform various sacrificial rituals Domesticated animals were sometimes sold through barter system to perform sacrifices.

#### **(ii) Minerals**

Minerals like coal, oil, limestone, iron and salts were known to the ancestors however they had limited knowledge about its system. Lime was extracted for various daily activities.

#### **(iii) Handicrafts**

Since time immemorial they knew the art of weaving bamboo basket, making of earthen pots, preparing cotton wool, weaving and knitting, spears, daos (machete), bamboo basket, shawls, mekhala and beads with unique pattern, shape and size are the evidence of their brilliant handicrafts.

#### **(iv) Trade**

Since time immemorial the border villages of the Phom tribe had trade relation with Ahom. Which later on expanded and engulfed all the lower region of Phom to establish a permanent trade route and market place at the border of the two states (Assam and Nagaland) called "Haat". The border village of

phom were said to receive annual payments from the Ahoms. The first such "Haat" (market) is pointed to the present day Nazira (Nagajila).

In spite of possessing one of the most fertile lands the tribesman were unable to harvest its richness due to the insecurity i.e. Headhunting among the villages, Taboos related to Birth, death, calamities, sickness etc that disallowed or prevented them to go to fields for even up to 12 days on the Pretext of considering as cleansing period.

### **(c) Traditional administration set up**

The administration headquarter of the people of Phomland Longleng Town was established in the year 1951 with Shri Ranjan as Assistant Political Officer, the first administrator and later on gained the status of full fledged revenue district on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2004 headed by Deputy commissioner. At present there are four, Extra Assistant Commissioner at Yongnyah, Sakshi, Namsang and Yachem. Additional Deputy Commissioner at Tamlu Town and Sub Divisional office and Deputy Commissioner office at Longleng Town.

Each Phom village was a sovereign democratic republic, the village itself was the centre of all socio-cultural and political activities, the customary laws, were the bedrock of governance which is uncertain, simple and rigid.

The traditional administration of the Phom was based on the institution of "Bang" or Morung

### **Composition and structure**

Every child born in the village is eligible to become a member of the Bang. He would be recruited along with his peer group attaining the age of about 15 years, only then he would be considered a bonafide member. The recruitment of boys were done in batches of age groups at regular interval of years usually 3 to 5 years. The morung consists of 12 batches from the lowest to the highest, whereby the ranking hierarchy starts from 1<sup>st</sup> batch to the 12<sup>th</sup> batch.

The lowest or youngest batch is called yüngshok Ai or Aidep. Their duty is to bring firewoods, water, and mats for the elders, to make fire and serve the elders-water, food etc.

The second batch is called "Yen nyi" who are responsible to look after the first batch and lead them in different duties assigned by the Morung.

Similarly the third batch "Yen" command and supervise the lower "yen" or Batch, they participate in raids and wars. The fourth and fifth batch are called "öünang näi-e" and "öünang shüpa" respectively. However, the fifth batch are more powerful, they take care of all important issues and matters of the land, including warfare. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Batch are called "yannang" and "malang nang", they are the senior most batch who actively serve the community. The remaining batches from 8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> don't participate in warfare nor to they actively take part in planning and developmental activities. All those above 12<sup>th</sup> batch are those who have retired from all community activities.

### **Law and justice**

Morung is the law making body of the traditional administration system. All the decisions regarding the state craft were done in the morung which stands as final and binding in all matters. Social services like cleaning of the trade routes and inter village routes, community hunting, fishing, clearing of forest for jhumland, land and its produce.

Final decision in deliverance of justice and oaths are ushered by the institution of Morung. There is no higher ground for appeal, non-compliance to the verdict of the Bang would bear the brunt of severe repercussions even to the extend of ostracisation from the village.

# POCHURY

## **TRIBE PROFILE**

(Ecology & habitat, Socio-cultural profile, Tribal economy, Traditional administration set up)

Pochury is one of the tribes of Nagaland placed in the south eastern corner of Nagaland under Phek District. It is bounded by Myanmar in the east, Zunheboto and Tuensang districts in the north, Manipur state in the south and Phek district in the west. The headquarter of Pochury tribe is Meluri Town which is 240 kms away from Dimapur and 166 kms away from Kohima the state capital of Nagaland. It has a total area of 1011 sq km and a population of 21844 as per the 2011 census. Although the tribe had existed from time immemorial, with its distinct dialect, socio-cultural and political identity, it was recognized as a separate tribe only on 1911' April 1990. Presently there are 31 recognized village and 2 recognized towns namely Meluri town and Phokhungri town.

The term `POCHURY' is an acronym formed by amalgamation of letters derived from three names Sapo, Küchu and Khwiry. Tradition says that Sapo, Küchu and Khwiry are the three earliest groups who were the early settlers of the land. From these three tribes' names a new common name for all the three tribes was coined by joining the latter parts of their names PO+CHU+RY. The origin and migration of the Pochury Naga is shroud in obscurity. History was handed down through oral traditions and as a result, certain amount of memory is lost if not distorted. However, most of the elderly folks generally agree that Pochury Naga is a conglomeration of different ethnic groups who came from different routes to the present land.

The people of Pochury are primarily of Indo-Mongoloid race inhabiting the far east of Nagaland. Their lifestyles are closely related to the mongoloid features. This tribe is comparatively simple and unsophisticated and is known for their rich cultures and traditions. The people of Pochury are known for their cheerful nature, honesty, hardworking and hospitality. They were on earlier days a part of

Chakhesang tribe. The population consists of several ethnic groups having their own distinctive languages and cultures. Unlike the history of common ancestry and origin of other Naga tribes, the Pochury are mixed ethnic group who migrated from different parts of the neighbouring countries to the present geographical area forming themselves into a tribe.

The terrain is mountainous covered by rich and varied biodiversity of flora and fauna. The land is blessed with evergreen subtropical and temperate coniferous forest which support a myriad of flora and fauna. The region also has abundant resources of mineral wealth in the form of vast deposits of Crystalline Limestone, Iron Chromium, Nickel, Cobalt, Copper, Molybdenum, Chromites, Magnetite, Asbestos, Talc, Marble and various other minerals. The only Mini-Cement Plant of Nagaland is located at Weziho in Pochury area which has the capacity of producing 150 tonnes per day (TPD). Recently the Government of Nagaland has inaugurated a Decorative Stone Factory in Weziho. The land of Pochury is an area that is remarkable for its greenness, its tall evergreen forest, high and rugged mountains and silvery meandering rivers. The mountain ranges along the Indo-Myanmar border is covered with Rhododendron trees. The fast vanishing species like bison and hornbill are found in the land of Pochury. The land is rich in both minerals and forest resources. The International Trade Centre Avakhung is located in Pochury border village Avakhung where international trade is set to be opened soon between India and Myanmar. The infrastructure and buildings are nearing completion which is set to open soon. The Pochury Tribe is divided into five geographical ranges/areas such as Meluri, Kamaleah, Apoksah, Phoyisha and Phokhungri.

The land of Pochury comprises of mild slopes and almost the entire land is cultivatable. It is famous for rare birds and several varieties of beautiful orchids. Some of the most colorful species of orchids are found here. Some natural sceneries that add beauty to the region are, waterfalls, lovely hillocks, lofty mountain peak called Nazi.1pf1 which is the third highest peak in Nagaland, Tizu the longest river of Nagaland through the land, and Shilloi Lake which is the biggest lake in Nagaland is located in this area. The land of Pochury has good climate- summer is moderately warm and winter is not too cold. Monsoon sets in by the last week of May and lasts till August.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Pochury with 80.84% of the population engaged in agriculture. Jhum cultivation (slash and bum) and terrace cultivation in Tizu River and chichi river basins are the main occupations of the Pochury people. Different varieties of rice, vegetations and fruits are grown, and other major subsidiary occupations are animal husbandry, hunting, collection of forest produce and fishing. Besides agriculture people engage in local salt making, weaving, bamboo and wood carving, cane handicraft, pottery and blacksmith. Local salt making is still practiced by the Matikhrii village and Phoyisha range and are exported in medium quantity to the state markets. The staple food of the Pochury people is rice. Families were also engaged in local rice beer (akhah) making and everyone in the family drinks it.

Originally, Sapori, Kiichuri and Khwiry are the three main linguistic groups in Pochury tribe. At present Sapori and Khwiry dialects have become extinct, only kiichuri dialect is still in use by the Meluri people in Pochury. However, in spite of the extinction of their dialects, their cultural influences are seen even to this day in Pochury culture, like in folk songs, dances and other cultural practices. Pochury being a mixed people group migrated from different routes has more language diversity than any other Naga tribes in Nagaland. There are ten different dialect groups of people in Pochury namely Meluri, Lephori, Akhegwo, Phor, Yisi, Laruri, Miikury, Samphuri, Matikhrii and Kuki. From among these dialects Meluri village dialect is accepted and used by the Pochury as the official Lingua Franca of the entire group in the general meeting on 3rd of April 1957.

The customary laws of the Pochury tribe like the rest of Naga tribe are not written but are practiced by all villages. These laws are binding on members of the society and were passed on from generation to generations through oral tradition. Like the rest of the Nagas, The Pochury lived in village during the head hunting period. Each village was a democratic political unit. Villages had its own cultivable land, sufficient to support its own population with a democratically constituted village headed by a village chief. The Pochury villages are usually divided into khels (colonies) or sections. During the early days, only one clan lived in a particular khel, where khels were well-protected and fortified. The founding of a Pochury village preceded selection of the site and certain rituals. The availability of ample fertile

agricultural land and water sources and defense aspect were taken into consideration. Most of the Pochury villages stand on the hill tops mainly as a natural defense from enemy attack. The founder, and later on his descendants, used to be chief. The village chief first chooses the plot for himself, after which the rest choose their own plots. Traditionally, the founders and the first settlers usually got better and more land. The first step towards the establishment of a village was to construct the village chief's house followed by others. During the establishment of new village, the brave warrior or the village chief pronounces word of blessing followed by ritual and ceremonial feast.

The people of the village are bound together by social, political and religious ties. It was the village that gave protection and security to individuals. In Pochury the village polity was govern by the village chief and his council of members representing from different clans. Violation of ordinance pronounced by the village chief is a taboo. Hence, no one dared to challenge or violate the command of the village chief. The village chief is assisted by council members called second chief crier, assistant crier, season observer, taster-cum-priest, peace maker and blacksmith. These chieftains are very powerful in the village and their succession is hereditary. The village chief was the sole authority in the village yet it was more of a democratic form. The village chief is the spokesman for the people. He defends the village even with his life, and it was his responsibility to maintain peace and harmony in the village and was the ultimate arbiter of disputes. The village chief declares war or other emergency in the village when conflict arises with neighboring villages or external invasion. Creation of new village is done with the consent and blessing of the chief, the chief himself will go to the new village site and implant a new fireplace stones and blessed the new village to flourish bountifully and to multiply in thousands and light the fireplace. The village chief announces important days and occasions like festivals/meetings/feasts for the village. The annual cultivation starts with the blessing of the village chief where the chief first goes and slash the tree and the whole village follows him and began the yearly cultivation. Generally the people of Pochury followed a gerontocratic form of government where each village functions as a sovereign independent state under the chieftainship.

The Pochury primal religion is animistic to a great extent. They believe that there is some kind of continuity among men, nature and super-natural forces. This notion lies at the centre of the Pochury primal religion. Even though the people had a vague idea of God, they believed in the existence of Supreme Being (Nyi Nyieza Kijjiwa) who is the creator, sustainer and dispenser of the universe. Besides Supreme Being they also believed in the existence of many spirits and their daily life were encircled with taboos, superstitions and sacrifices in accordance with their assumptions and superstitious beliefs with the hope of achieving sound health, prosperity and successful life. The Pochury people recognize one Supreme Being and a host of spirits below the Supreme creator. They believed that there is the spirit of good and evil, the good spirit do good things to the people but the evil spirit brings harm to the person. There was no difference between religion and secular and every activity of their lives was governed by religion. All things share the same nature and interact with each other- rocks and forest trees, beasts and serpents, the living, the death and first ancestors are all one. They depend on certain beliefs which enslave them under the domain of superstitions. In ancient days, the life of the Pochury must have been completely dominated by their religion as may be seen from their festivals, rites, folklore and dances. The series of rituals and rites manifest that they are very religious by nature.

## **ECOLOGY AND HABITAT**

Tseminyu one of the oldest subdivisions under Kohima district is the headquarter of the Rengma Naga tribe. It is located just 55km away from the state capital Kohima. It is located at an altitude of 1421m above sea level. It receives an annual rainfall ranging from 120cm to 240 cm and temperature of 28°C during summer and 2/3° C during winter season. Topography of Tseminyu is hilly terrain. It is covered by tropical semi evergreen forest. Mt. Terogvuthun which is 1735m high is the highest peak of the subdivision. River Nra which flows in the southern part is the biggest in the subdivision. The forest which houses important trees including oak, palms, alder, hollock, bonsum, pine, gamari as well as timber and mahogany.

Soil types which occur under the area are inceptisols and ultisols besides others in small quantity. Mountain system can be categorized as middle range ones. Its average height declines as it starts from Kohima side.

Some of the important faunas which are found here include deer, wild boar, wild cats, wild dogs, porcupines, bears, civet cats, reindeer, tigers etc. Some monkey species are reported to be rarely spotted in some forests. Birds like jungle fowls, green pigeons, doves etc are found.

Due to the practice of jhum cultivation forest area is shrinking slowly leading to appearance of secondary vegetation like scrub, high grass, reeds etc in some areas.

## **SOCIO-CULTURAL PROFILE**

Rengmas have very a rich culture and heritage having its unique customs, traditions, festivals, beliefs etc. The tribe who were once headhunters are now Christians leaving behind the past. The tribe speaks two different dialects i.e., Nthenyijuh spoken in the northern part and Nzonkhwen spoken in the southern part. They are known for friendliness, hospitality and simplicity.

## **TRIBAL ECONOMY**

Agriculture is the mainstay of economy of the tribe. It is of subsistence agriculture. Majority practice shifting cultivation/terrace cultivation. The tribe is said to be expert in terrace cultivation. Mainly kharif crops are cultivated and they include paddy, yam, chilly, pumpkins, beans, tomato, maize, millet, mustard, cucumber, gourd etc. Most of the agriculture produces are used for domestic consumption however over the years farmers have started selling a part of their produces in the market for supplementing their income.

Backyard livestock farming has been an integral part of the tribe and it is gaining momentum among the tribe. It plays a pivotal role in supplementing income and generating employment

to the rural poor apart from efficient utilization of agriculture products and by products not suitable for human consumption. Pig rearing is a tradition and culture of the tribe and it plays an important role in the socio-eco development of the people. Small scale poultry is also an important economic activity of the tribe. Domesticating dogs, goat, cats etc is also popular.

Horticulture is gaining more popularity among the tribe due to conducive climate and soil conditions. People are venturing into this area i.e., orange, banana, pineapple etc from conventional jhum cultivation.

Rumisinyu and Logwisinyu village under Tseminyu subdivision have considerable area under orange farming. Due to its better quality oranges of this area is in high demand. Villages like Ehunnu and Yikhanu which border with Sumi tribe have taken up orange cultivation in recent years.

In view of environmental imbalance caused by degrading forest due to jhum cultivation people are also taking up tree plantation for land reclamation, forestry and other economic purpose.

## **TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATION SET-UP**

In the past Rengma tribe had a hereditary chieftainship system who assisted with advisors, leading men from other clans called Pa'onga governed the village. The chieftainship ended with the advent of the British rule. The village administration depended on the set of custom and tradition dictated by the past experiences of society. Some of the features of traditional administration presently in force are mentioned below:-

## **SOURCE OF LAW**

- Oral customs and traditions
- Wisdom and guidance of old people
- Precedents and practices of the past

## **JURISDICTIONS**

Civil cases

Criminal cases

Has jurisdiction within and between the village

## **PENALTY**

Varies from cases to cases with some cases being light and some stringent. Some examples are given below:-

In most cases of thief, the accused is penalized by imposing a fine of sevenfold payment of the value.

For the case of arson, the accused is exiled from the village.

## **COMPOSITION OF A COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATORS**

GB (Goan Bura):- Basically representatives from various clans in the village headed by head GB.

Village Council:- Village council chairman and village council members.

The GB and Village Council form the village court and is responsible for trial of cases whether civil or criminal and administration of justice on the basis of village customary law. The Rengma GB customary court which is the highest customary court of the tribe adjudicates cases and disputes that cannot be settled at village level.

# **SANGTAM**

## **KIPHIRE — A BRIEF GLANCE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Kiphire is located in the eastern most part of the State bordering Myanmar, and having a total area of 1255 sq.kms. The district is 254 km away from the state capital Kohima and is situated at an altitude elevation of 896.42 meters above sea level. The nearest railway station and airport is in Dimapur, which is 330 km by road. There's twice a week chopper service between Dimapur and Kiphire. Other modes of transport available are NST and private buses, taxi and private cars.

The majestic Mt. Saramati, the highest mountain in the state stands at the height of 3840 m and is one of the ultra prominent peaks of Southeast Asia. The climate in Kiphire district is humid and warm during summer and cold during winter with winter. Monsoon period extends from June to September and sometimes up to October. The average temperature is 19.1°C and the average annual rainfall is 876 mm. According to the 2011 census, Kiphire district has a population of 74,033; sex ratio of 961 females for every 1000 males and a literacy rate of 71.1%.

Kiphire is multi-ethnic in terms of its indigenous population. There are officially three recognized tribes — Sangtam, Yimchungrü, and Sümi. Besides these, there are several sub-tribes who are distinguished by their distinctive dialects. Co-habitation in close proximity for ages has made these diverse ethnic and linguistic groups understand each other's dialect and also results in cultural diffusion. There are variations in cultural practices and customs among the tribes of the district, but on the whole, their society is organized along similar structures. The people are mostly Christian, the Baptist and the Catholic are the predominant churches. The important festivals celebrated in the district are *Mongmong* observed by the Sangtam during September; *Metümnio* observed in the month of August by the Yimchungrü and *Tuluni* observed by the Sümi in the month of July.

All the three tribal communities have close social and cultural affinity with their counterparts in the districts of Zunheboto and Tuensang. The Sangtam and the Yimchungrü tribes of Kiphire and

Tuensang district have a shared history and culture with their respective counterparts. Similarly, the Sümi of Kiphire district also shares similar socio-cultural ties with the Sümi of Zunheboto district.

With the majority of the people living in the villages, agriculture remains the main occupation of the people of the district. The primary mode of agricultural practice is Jhum, also known as slash & burn cultivation. The main crops grown in the Jhum are largely traditional crops such as upland rice, maize, millet and jobs tears and varieties of beans. The farmers are slowly taking up cash crops such as potatoes with the encouragement from the department of Agriculture. Also traditional crops such as soya beans, local common beans called '*Kholar*' are grown as cash crop using traditional methods. In favourable terrains, farmers are also taking up permanent/terraced paddy cultivation. With the help from the different projects and schemes implementing departments such as Horticulture, LRD, Fishery, etc Pisciculture has also developed sporadically.

The general climatic condition of the district also favours horticultural farming. In colder regions such as the foothills of Saramati Mountain, apples are grown in abundance resulting in celebrating of the annual **Apple Festival** at Thanamir, a frontier village bordering Myanmar. Other fruits like orange, mango, guava, and banana are also grown abundantly.

Kiphire is located in one of the most geo-morphologically interesting zones of the state. There are a number of topographical features such as Saramati peak, Stone cave in Khongjiri, Mimi and Salomi villages which never fail to amaze the visitors. Trips to Zungki, Tizu and Likhimro rivers, mining locations in Pokphur and adjoining areas, Fakim Wild Life Sanctuary, proposed International Trade Centre at Mimi and Likhimro Hydro Project also holds its own unique rewards for the outdoor lovers. Traditional houses with roof made of stone slates which are rare sights in other parts of the State are seen in Phuvkiu, Mimi, Pongren, Phelungre and Pungro villages. A good variety of Orchids like Blue and Red Vanda, white, red and yellow Rhododendron which are not commonly found in other parts of the State are also found in Saramati and Jingkhu mountains. **Blyth's Tragopan (*Tragopanblythii*)**, Hornbill, and hill peacocks are among some of the attractions of the wild life in Fakim Wildlife Sanctuary. A hike to Mt. Saramati is worth taking a trip. This

mountainous track to the highest peak of Nagaland takes 5-6 hours vigorous trekking from the nearest motorable village called Thanamir. It has abundance of treat for the visitors and the best time for trekking is in the month of Oct-Dec & Feb-April.

# SUMI

## **BRIEF WRITE-UP OF SUMI TRIBE PROFILE (ECOLOGY & HABITAT, SOCIO-CULTURAL, TRIBAL ECONOMY, TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATION SET-UP, ETC.)**

### **ECOLOGY & HABITAT**

In the absence of written historical documents, the exact origin of the Sumis lies shrouded in mystery. Most of what is understood about Sumi origin and migratory routes are a construct from oral tradition passed down from generation to generations. From Oral traditions it is deduced that the Sumis originally migrated from *Khezakhenoma* from where they moved to other parts of the land which constitutes the present Sumi area. The Sumis were regarded vigorous and agile both at work and war. They had preferred to live in isolation atop steep hills, which provided security and defense when attacked by invaders, making it easier to spot approaching enemies, imminent danger or wild animals or forest fires. The Sumis traditionally dwell in autonomous villages ruled by a hereditary Chief ('*Akukatau*') whose powers were territorially limited. In fact, the chiefs are the founders of their respective villages and often named after themselves.

The Sumis today predominantly inhabit the hilly and mountainous region in the heart of Nagaland state under Zunheboto district as its oking, Surrounded by the neighboring tribe of Aos and sangtams (Mokokchung & Tuensang district) on the north, the Tikhiris, Sangtams and Yimchungers (Kiphire & Tuensang district) towards the east, the Lothas & Rengmas (Tseminyu-Wokha district) on the west and the Angamis & Chakhesangs (Kohima-Phek District) southward.

In the historic past the Sumis were referred to as the warrior tribe. The Sumi warriors possessed undaunted spirit of adventure. Hence they succeeded in settling at places where others feared to tread and today are found spread out in clusters far and wide to other parts of the state and beyond the state border as well. The Sumis in Nagaland includes the southern Sumi (Pughoboto-Kohima district),

western Sumis Dimapur district), northern Sumis (Wokha- Mokokchung district).

### **(INCLUDE AT WILL) ZUNHEBOTO -THE LAND OF THE MARTIAL TRIBE**

Zunheboto derives its name from a flowering shrub- '*Zunhebo*' which grows abundantly in the area and '*to*' meaning situated on top of a hill. Zunheboto covers a total land area of 1255 sq.km and is geographically located between 26.12° and 26.45° North latitude and 94.18° and 94.5° East longitude in the north eastern part of India. it lies at an altitude of 1874.22 meters *above* the *sea* level. The hilly topography of the district varies from 1000 to 2500 meters and most people live between 1500-2000 meter altitudes. Because of high altitude and location, the district experiences humid sub-tropical monsoonal climate.

### **SOCIO-CULTURAL PROFILE OF THE SUMIS**

#### **HEAD-HUNTING**

In times past inter village feuds, wars and raids prevailed, resulting in the consequent practice of head taking. The Sumis were fierce in war and the number of kills and heads taken by the warriors determined their status and standing in the society. To be a successful head hunter was the ultimate glory. A man's head was believed to hold the 'soul matter' and this soul which gains entry into the victors' village was considered to protect and shelter the village from harm. Head taking of an enemy was also believed to bring prosperity to the conquering village, reaping of bumper crops and an increase in population. The enemy's heads were therefore brought to the village as trophies and proudly displayed. A head taker is adorned with a special kind of attire, ornaments and head gear as a mark of the honorable status he achieves. The war winner also gains control over the defeated village and brings it under his territorial domination.

## RELIGION

The Sumis were an animistic society in the historic past. The presence of an unseen power which exercised over man's destiny was recognized and people expressed their beliefs through the worship of nature and natural phenomena, mostly gripped by fear and superstition. Elaborate gennas ('*achine*') were performed to appease the spirits of the fields and the houses,, who were believed to bring agricultural prosperity, peace in the village and harmony at every home.

## SUMI HOUSES AND SETTLEMENT

Decoration of Sumi houses depicts wealth and social position of the owner. Houses were made of supporting wood posts, bamboo walls and thatched roofing. Men of prominence adorn their front porch with skulls of game or *mithun* heads which the owner slaughtered during ceremonial feasts of merit. Generally houses within the same village shared the same style. Traditional huts were constructed according to status in the society ranging from '*latoku*' to '*lakuthu*' (9 to 3 partitions). Customarily, the house of the village Chief (*akukatou*) was the largest one. Typical Sumi houses are ordinarily divided into four interior parts :

1. **AKISHEKHOH-** front room where *Aboshu* (wooden rice pounding table) is kept
2. **ABIDEL4BO-** narrow room where unmarried maidens of the household sleeps
3. **AKUZU-ABO-** lies adjacent to 'AMIPHOK1E301-11 (hearth room) where head of the family and his wife sleeps
4. **AZHI-BO-** room for liquor storage

## SUMI FORMS OF TRADITIONAL ART & CRAFT

The Sumis are versatile artisans. The loin loom weaving by womenfolk at their home stead is an age old craft. Women weave assorted shawls ('*aphih*') and sarongs ('*hekusumini*') with intricate

designs, patterns and blend of rich colors, each with a unique story and legacy behind them. Shawls bear motifs and symbols representing social status, social identity, victory over enemies, victory over wild animal kills etc. Women's sarongs are varied in number worn on distinct occasions, seasons, agriculture cycles and auspicious ceremonies. Certain shawls, men's loin cloth (*'asholha'*) and women's sarongs are embedded with cowrie shells which is status symbolic. Every piece of traditional clothing is a depiction of ancestral lineage.

The Sumi men folk are proficient and skillful at wood and bamboo works, the raw materials being readily available in the surrounding forests. Wood carvings in many forms are made inscribing head hunting as motifs for decoration of houses and village gates. Craft designs produced are Traditional plates (*'asukhu'*), wooden pestle and mortar (*'Aboshu'*) for pounding grains, log drum (*'sheku'*) bamboo mug (*'mikhu'*), bamboo fishing gear (*'akhame'*), flute, mouth organ, ceremonial headdress, spears, wooden figurines of tiger, mithun head, hornbill and a host of baskets in varied conical and cylindrical shapes used for various purposes like grain storage, winnowing etc.

Sumi ornaments encompass a rich heritage and closely linked to traditional life. Women wear Colorful headgears also representing warrior status, earrings made of red fabric tassels with beads, brass bangles (akusa ),ivory bracelets, ashothi chipa, achikuhu chipa, tamla chipa necklaces made of several lines of tubular cornelian stones and ivory which are passed down as heirlooms within families. Men put on headgear, wristlet made of cowrie shells and goat hair, elephant tusk bracelet (*akuhaghi*) anklets, machete case, boar tooth necklace (*aminihu*) , decorated fur spears and daos.

## **FOLK SONGS, DANCES & GAMES**

Music forms the base of Sumi oral traditions. The Sumis are music lovers. Folk songs themes circles around animistic rituals, agricultural cycles, romantic love, death and war.

Various songs sung at the fields - '*Alulo kuhu leh*' are **Hango le-** sung during '*ghixu*' sowing period, **Moza / Luxa leh** are sung during weeding period.

**Mtsu-leh** are summer songs .

**Tixi le-** are sung during the first round of harvest.

Separate songs are sung during clearing of forest '*luh*' and during '*ghile*'- harvest.

***Thisho le-*** song sung during the pounding of rice.

A song accompanied by dance called ***Tata dala-*** is performed at ceremonies of rain invocation for crops. **Lejo le** is a celebratory song of appreciation and praise.

***Imunopi sujojo-*** a celebratory song and dance performed by young men by forming a human chain also portraying brotherhood and unity.

***Aphilakuwo-*** War dance performed by men after a successful head hunting expedition or at feast of merit. It is symbolic of victory at war. Every piece of jewellery and colorful gear worn by the participant are earned and therefore signifies achievement and bravery of the wearer.

***Apukhu kitki / akikiti-*** a game played between two men displaying skills and strength where players attempt to bring down the opponent by kicking.

## **FEAST OF MERIT/ COMMUNITY FEAST**

The feast of merit is a series of feast thrown by the wealthy, powerful and rich to the entire village and who by doing so qualifies for a higher social distinction and position in the community. The Sumi series of feasts in ascending order of importance are ***Shikusho, Apisa, Akikyege*** and ***Inami Kusa***. During ***Inami Kusa*** not only is the entire village invited but people from the neighboring village partake in the feasting too. For such feasts are slaughtered many *cattle, pigs and*

*mithuns all* signifying the accumulation of wealth of the host. Feasting, dancing and drinking rice beer continues till sunset. After sunset it was taboo to continue the feasting.

## **FAMILY & MARRIAGE**

The Sumis are patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal. Inheritance of property, rights, names nr title carried forward by succeeding generation therefore ic through the male kin (father's line). Infant ears are pierced as a rite of passage. Exogamous marriages are practiced where one takes a spouse from a different clan. One can marry within one's own clan if and only when considered beyond the 7th generation. A Sumi man to marry must achieve a certain social status and property which proves his worth. Hence he spends a period of '*Kutupu*' translated let bloom' when he learns the art of singing, dancing, fighting, working etc. from the village eiders along with other bachelors and working group called '*Aiojimi*' at the boys dormitory ('*apuki*'). Similarly young women of marriageable age undergoes a period of '*Kighili*' translated let play' when she learns dances, songs, weaving etc from elders at girls dormitory ('*iliki*') and working group called '*Alojimi*'. During the period of '*Kighili*'

The bride with the help of her mother makes ornaments, jewellery and weave clothing to be taken to her husband's home collectively called the '*Asanha*' or brides treasure. The *asanha* is laid out during '*arnekukugha*' or settlement of marriage.

Polygyny was prevalent to a large extent especially by the village Chiefs. From economic perspective, it was considered that more wives brought in more honor, increase of wealth to the household and respect in the society. Also, it was desired that the sons and daughters of chiefs marry the sons and daughters of other chiefs not only to enhance status and increase possessions but also to create alliance in times of war.

## **DEATH AND BURIAL**

The dead are buried in a graveyard or next to their dwellings. Funerals are solemnized by '*awow*' (priest) and on burial a grave stone is erected in memory of the dead. However the bodies of those

who die an unnatural death- '*ghui*' were not buried in the village but at a distant place somewhere away from the village for their spirits are considered to be unsettled.

## **TRIBAL ECONOMY**

Sumis are traditional agriculturists and hence their economy is intricately linked with the practice of agriculture. Rivers like *Tizu, Tsutha, Dikhu, Yeti, Lanki, Tsuyi, Doyang* runs its course through the Sumi territories making such river valleys most fertile for cultivation: Terrace wet, river cultivation is prevalent in the tizu areas while the hilly slopes and tracts are cultivated by way of jhuming. Traditionally jhuming has provided a base for alternate subsistence in terms of reserve forest supplies during crop failure and abundant fodder supply for pigs reared at homes. Pig rearing activity is common as the meat of pigs were to be used for festivals, celebrations and feast which was a way of life for the Sumi tribes. The preferred choice and custom of cultivation is closely associated with the prevailing climate, topography, eating habits, socio-economic needs of people and dependence on nature and available natural resources. Community work sharing in the fields occurs in rotation basis by a working group called '*Aiojimi*'. Such is the favored pattern of exchange of labour. The village Chief is not only the ruler but also the owner of the land. It is he who decides which part of land to be cultivated in each successive year. Popular crops grown includes rice (staple diet), maize, millet, potatoes, calocasia (yam), pumpkins, sweet potatoes, job's tears, soya bean, etc.

## **TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATION SET-UP**

Traditionally, the Sumis had an autocratic administrative system. The head leader of the village is known as '*AKUKAW*'. He is the supreme leader of the village and is responsible for all the decisions relating to village affairs. The Akukau is usually the founder of the village. The post of the Akukau is hereditary and the eldest son takes over the post after the former's demise.

The Akukau also appoints his secretary named '*CHOCHO*'. The Chocho implements all decision taken by the Akukau.

A villager may have one to five Akukau depending of the size of the village and population. However, there is a head Akukau who is the supreme leader.

## **SUMI CULTURE**

Zunheboto District is inhabited by the Sumi Tribe, one of the major tribe in Nagaland. The Sumi Tribals belong to the indo-mongoloid race and speaks a language which is classified under the Sino- Tibetan family. The word Sumi is generally accepted to have been derived from an Angami Word "Se" which means three. This acceptance is based on the legend that the Angamis, the Chakhesangs and the Sumis were the sons of the same father, Sumi being the third son. The legend that these three tribes had a common ancestry was confirmed in a joint meeting of the apex bodies of these three tribes held in 1997.

The Sumi tribes stand in several aspects of polity and socio-cultural practices. The Sumi tribes are a patriarchal society, i.e. the father is the head of the house and lineage is traced through the male side only. The Sumis also follow it a hereditary chieftainship unlike other tribes of Nagaland. The Konyak Naga tribe is the only other tribe following the same.

One distinct characteristic of the Sumi tribe is the payment of Dowry (Ameh) to secure a wife. The male has to pay dowry which may be in the form of money or livestock to the girl's father in order to marry his daughter. The payment of high dowry to secure a wife reflects the high status of Sumi women in a society. Another peculiar cultural aspect of the Sumis is that in their traditional dances they are the only tribe in Nagaland who do not have a dance that has both male and female participants performing together.

The Sumi forefathers were fierce warriors and head hunting was practiced, with gusto as anyone who took enemy head were held in high esteem. The more enemy heads a warrior took, more regard and honor was given to him unless a man took an enemy head he was not recognized as a warrior and therefore not allowed to wear the complete warriors attire which inspired young men of the Sumi tribe to be fierce head hunters. J. H. Hutton pointed out that "in warfare and hunting, the Semas are plucky and daring at any rate by Naga standard".

The Sumi social organization maybe stratified into the following:

1. Akukau (The chief)

2. Chochomi (Advisory council to the chief)
3. Kukami (Nobles related to the chief)
4. Common men
5. Mighimi (orphans, slaves dependant on the chief)

Every village is headed by the chief whose position is hereditary. He is the founder of the village or is the progeny of a chief. The chief directs the village in war and settle every dispute that arises in the village. He also decides on the land to be cultivated and distributes the land for cultivation among the villagers. The Chief assumes the supreme position in respect of power, status, wealth and property, J.H. Hutton describes the Chief as "the real pivot of the Sema society". The Chochomi who serves as a sort of herald, assists the chief in managing the affairs of the village. Other officials of the village also include the "Awou"- the priest, the "Amthao"- the first reaper, the "Lapu"- the burier and the "Ashiphu"- the divider of meat. J.H. Hutton wrote that " the Sema society is particularly suited to colonization, for it is customary for the oldest son of a Sema Chief to take, when he is old enough to manage it, a colony from his father s village and found a new village at a convenient distance in which his authority is permanent".

Although the Sumi forefathers did not have well established institutions to impart knowledge to the young, they had dormitory like institutions to equip the young with the art and skills required to sustain them as they up in life. This institution is known to exist among most tribal groups in north-east India and is commonly called Morungs today. The Sumi tribe had different dormitories for boys and girls called "Apuki" and "Iliki" respectively. In these dormitories young boys were taught the art of basketry, dances, folksongs and other life skills besides the very important art of righting. On the other hand, girls learned the art of spinning, weaving, cooking and other skills that would endure them in later life as responsible mothers.

The Sumi society is predominantly an agrarian one. The tribe depends on agriculture as its primary means for support and sustenance although they acknowledge other means of livelihood and work habits. Agriculture being the primary means for economic livelihood and survival, many of Sumi cultural practices, customs, traditions, and festivals has a link with agriculture. For instance the celebration of most festivals usually marks the beginning of a new crops or harvesting of new crops. The desire to get an abundant harvest or the prayer so that crops grow well made the Sumi forefathers start to make sacrifices and offering to the spirits.

The religion of the Sumi forefathers was labelled animism. The first American Baptist missionaries came at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Among the Sumis, Ivulho of Ghokimi village was the first who embraced Christianity in 1903, However the first Sumis to be baptized were Ghopuna and Ghusuna of Ighanumi village in the year 1904 by Rev. S.W. Rivenburg. Since then, Christianity has grown rapidly and today the Sumis are 99.9% Christians although a few still practice animism. This has impacted the social and cultural lives of the Sumis in all aspects. For instance, before the advent of Christianity, the day of reaping was announced by the "Awoup- the village priest and the reaping initiated by the "Amthau"- the first reaper. But today each cultivator selects his/her own convenient date and the act of reaping starts with a prayer in the line of Christian tenet. The role of the "Amthau" in initiating the reaping is taken over by a prominent figure in the church, someone like a Deacon. Festival days are a period of time of feasting or celebration. It may be religious agricultural or socio-cultural, that identify or give meaning to an individual and to the community. Depending upon the central purpose, the celebration may be solemn or joyful, merry and festive, often including not only feasting but also dramatic dancing and athletic events. R.R. Shimray noted that the Sumi Naga have one festival or the other almost every month of the year. However of the many festivals celebrated, the Sumis is identified by the Tuluni and the Ahuna festivals.

The Tuluni festival is one of the most important festivals celebrated by the Sumis. It falls in the month of July and celebrated for a complete week during the earlier times. The literal meaning of Tuluni food for consumption is available in abundance. The Sumis in warmer areas also call it as "ANNI" which means "Having". The celebration of Tuluni consists of the following days- Asuzani, Aghizani, Ashighini, Anighini, Mucholani, Tupulani and Tughhakhani. However in the recent times the Sumis celebrate this festival only for a single day and it falls in 8th July every year.

The Ahuna festival begins after all the grains and crops of the field are gathered and stored in the granary. This festival is celebrated on the 14th of November by the Sumis throughout the state. The most significant act is the cooking of newly harvested rice in bamboo vessel which is eaten during the feast. The Ahuna festival marks the end of all agricultural activities for the year and indicates the start of the next agricultural year.

Although festivals have lost most of its original meaning and significance, the celebration of these festivals today has taken up the most important role bringing the Sumis together as a community. It is also evident that the festivals

promote the rich culture and practice of the Sumi Nagas, which has been handed down from generation to generation. The celebration of these festivals have also contributed in instilling social solidarity, tranquillity and cohesiveness not only among the Sumi community, but it has also enabled the Sumis to reach out to other Naga tribes within the state.

With the conversion to Christianity, spread of education and the impact of modernization and westernization, many early cultural practices are fast losing their original meaning. With the aim to promote and preserve the rich Sumi Naga culture in the field of folk dances, songs, folktales and folklores, art and literature, paintings, handicrafts etc, The district Cultural Office, Zunheboto was established in the year 1982. The department also has a museum but with a very limited collection of specimens.

Sumi cultural Association was formed, in 1986 with Kiyevi Rotokha as its first president with the aim to revive, Preserve and promote the culture of Sumis. The association is instrumental in documenting the Sumi culture through literature, Recordings and video records. Currently the entire agricultural activities of the Sumis have been video recorded in order to preserve it.

Although steps taken to revive and preserve the rich Sumi culture, much stress is given to festivals and other areas like art and music, tools and weapons used by Sumi ancestors, handicrafts etc are neglected. Steps like training of young people to make crafts and tools used by Sumi forefathers should be taken up and also the district museum must be upgraded so that at least if not all important cultural items can be preserved and displayed for future generations.

# **YIMCHUNGRU**

## **SOCIO - CULTURAL PROFILE OF YIMCHUNGER NAGA**

Social organization of Yimchunger Naga offers very interesting features of a tribe. The society comprise of the family, clan, khel and village. Family is the smallest unit and is the basic organization. As the tribe practices patriarchal system, the head of the family is father. The father is not only the head of the family but also the manager of the family and is legally and morally entrusted with the task of providing all possible needs of the family. Mother is the home-maker and is consulted by the spouse and siblings in all family's business

### **CLAN**

The major stratification of a tribe is clan, which comprises of the people descended from a common ancestor. There are 6 (six) major clan among Yimchunger namely: Khiungrü, Kusunkhiungrü, Limkhiung Khiungrü, Jangrü, Kiphürü and Jankhiungrü. The marriages within the same clan are strictly prohibited and defaulter is penalized with expulsion from the village. The establishment of the village and the formation of the village council also ensure that each clan is represented. The essence of clan is strongly upheld among distinct clan of the tribe.

### **SOCIAL STRATIFICATION**

As a tradition the founder of the village becomes village chief. The posterities of those chiefs were regarded as a royal family. In most cases, their words and actions were final and binding upon their subject. This class was followed by warrior and wealthy men. These categories of people are highly respected and distinguished themselves from others by wearing special traditional shawls designed with cowry shells, armlets of elephant's tusk, tiger tooth etc. Men who never killed an enemy or prestige animals like tiger, bear and lion or who never host feast of merit were regarded as lower classes of people that differs from elites.

## **POSITION OF WOMEN**

Both men and women were treated equally in almost all the social sphere except in some cases such as restricting women from entering the Morung and disallowing them to participate in sacred events and other rituals ceremonies. Otherwise, they enjoyed working in the field, singing and dancing together during festivals and other social occasion. Women play an important role in consolidating friendship among different clans, villages and tribes through inter-marital relationship.

## **VILLAGE ESTABLISHMENT**

The formation of the village may be proposed by one or more person and followed by the number of the same clan or other. In the first place, site is surveyed keeping in mind the better defense location, greener pastures and so forth. During the dedication of the new village, the neighboring villages are also invited so as to establish hormonal relationship among them. The founder of the village was accredited with the status of village chief. The village chief is the de facto ruler of the village and his decision on all aspects were final and binding. He enjoyed the superior position in the village and performs all the important functions ranging from rituals — agricultural — law and order issues in the village.

## **HEAD HUNTING**

The origin of the head hunting is reflected in two version of stories. One postulated that, once upon a time, there lived an orphanage boy in the village. He had no friends so he used to play alone. His liveness and desperate need of friends urge him to made human structure with the help of some sticks, bamboos and hay and decorated the village gate by hanging it. As the field attendees comes back to the village, they found the decoration quite attractive and slowly began to inspire their mind — how beautiful and good looking it will be if decorated by hanging real human being, thus, prompted to hunt the head of other. The other view is drawn from the story of a man who went for hunting in the jungle. When he was in the forest, he observed two ants fighting with each other. As he was watching the fight, he was keen to witness the winner at the end of the

fight. Finally, one of an ant defeated and bitted off the head of its opponent. Hence, it inspired the man which led to the idea of head hunting. Regardless of this, Naga headhunting is based on a belief in a soul matter asserting that the vital essence of supernatural power resides in the human head. By sacrificing human heads, therefore, it was believed that such practices added source of human and animal fertility, economic prosperity in the village and to gain one's status and prestige in the society.

## **ECOLOGY AND HABITAT**

The Yimchunger tribe occupies the eastern Nagaland, and is one of the major tribe of Nagaland. Apparently, the tribe is known to have migrated from South East Asia through Myanmar along Irrawaddy and Chindwin River.

The geography of the Yimchunger comprise of the rolling hills, mountains, creeks, rivers, valley and bit of plateau. Its land is bestowed with rich flora and fauna. They have settled mainly in two mountain system in Nagaland, the middle mountain range and Patkai mountain range which are the offshoot of the Himalaya mountain system. Mt. Saramati, the highest peak in Nagaland stands in the eastern most part of Yimchunger habitation. It stands at 3840 meter (12,000 ft), 25 degree 44 ft 15 inches North and 95 degree 2 feet 15 inches east, lying under Thanamir Village jurisdiction. It is also a home to Tragopan bird which is a state bird of Nagaland. The Pungro range has the highest number of natural caves with Mimi and Salomi caves as the most significant and attractive spot. The Mimi caves are significant for the archaeological studies where several artifact of remote past has been recovered from the caves. There are also several pleasing Waterfall. The land of Yimchunger is blessed with rich resources. Minerals like iron, cobalt, chromium, limestone etc are found in its region. Likhimro Hydro Project (24MW) and Fakim Wild Life Sanctuary set up by the Government are assets to the tribe.

There are different types of land: individual land, common land, clan land, khel land and village land. Large areas of forest are also well conserved by the community/village.

Many important rivers such as Zungki (Thurak Ke); Kewuh Ke; Langa Ke; Yal-e Ke flows through the heart of the Yimchunger's habituated land.

The mainland Yimchungers are surrounded by the other Naga tribes — the Burmese in the east, the Konyaks and Khiamniungans in the Northeast, the Changs and Western Sangtams in the Northwest, Sümis in the West, the eastern Sangtams in the Southwest and the Pochury tribe in the South.

## **TRIBAL ECONOMY OF YIMCHUNGER**

Agrarian activities are the main backbone of economy for the tribe. 80% of the populations are engaged in agriculture. Shifting cultivation is mainly practices beside terrace cultivation. Major food items include cereals, pulses, rice, maize, millet, potato, yam, soya bean etc, rice is the stable food for the people. Kholar(kidney beans, the taste of Yimchunger tribe is significant not only for the personal consumption, but has been a great commercial demand; hence support the economy of the cultivators, Its (Kholar) cultivation is very common among Yimchunger, and has been an age old main crop item. The tropical fruit such as orange, mango, jack fruit, wild apple, pine apple, gooseberry etc, are found abundantly. Apple plantation has been a hallmark of economy around Saramati Region due to cold climatic condition that made the area suitable for apple to grow. It is fascinating to mention that 'Apple Festival' is celebrated every year in the month of September in Thanamir village.

The populations of Yimchunger are mainly concentrated in rural areas and depend on the produce of the land and the forest for their livelihood.

Occupation such as handicrafts, weaving, black-smith, animal husbandry, hunting etc. also subsist the economy of the tribe. The commercial activities like stone mining and cutting commonly to Kuthur and Yakor village also support the economy of the villagers. The spread of Western education has brought dramatic changes in the work culture of the tribe that in turn changes the landscape of economy dependence. People are now motivated to get white collar jobs as a means of earning an income for their livelihood. However,

majority of the population living in villages are still depending on agricultural land and forest to sustain their living.

## **TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

From time immemorial the Yimchunger villages practiced Democratic form of village administration. Each village had a Headman — popularly known as the Chieftain. Normally, the village chief would be the founder of the village. He was assisted by other elders and co-founder/s of the village. The village chief is commonly known as the "Kiulong-thsupuh". In all meetings, assemblies and court cases-matters, he would chair and he yielded the final authority to decide even the most serious issues involving criminal and civil matter. He adjudicates and settles different nature of cases in the village and the verdict/decreed pronounced by him is final and binding although necessary consultations is sought from other elders and leaders. He is the guardian and decision maker-in all aspects- such as, social, political, religious, culture & tradition, customary laws and so forth and assisted by elders and leaders representing the Clans and Khels.

In recent times, with the establishment of the present form of government, the village head man popularly is known as the Head Gaon Bura and his Deputy as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gaon Bura and others as GBs represent government at the grass root level. Like early days, they act as the guardian and custodian of customary law and practices, and upon this virtue settle disputes in the village. Each village has also Village Council headed by a Council Chairman and Secretary. The Hd GB and his GBs are also part and parcel of the Village Council. All village matters pertaining to development, settlement of cases and other issues are taken up by the village Council which functions basing on the customary rules and regulations as well as keeping in mind the laws and rules made by the popular government of the day. In some villages the Hd GB functions dual duties as the village chief as well as village Council Chairman, but depending upon the decision of the majority of the elders and village functionaries. All Hd GBs and GBs are issued with a red blanket and a red waist coat by the government. The red colour signifies and implies power and authority and as a representative of the government. Name tags are also displayed on their waist coat. Although, the village Councils are empowered to try all type of cases both civil and criminal in nature and has authority and power to

adjudicate the cases, the judgement is not final and binding upon the accused and the plaintiff. Any aggrieved party has liberty to approach the government courts to redress their grievances. The amazing aspect and the beauty is that, one can settle their disputes either in customary courts or in government courts. Both are acceptable to the people. This privilege is nowhere available in any place in India. This is a special provision made available to the Naga people in Indian constitution under article 371 (a). Thus, it can be summed up that the system of village administration through traditional norms and customs remain intact even today.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Yimchunger Tribe, like any other Naga tribe has no written record of its origin or history. However, on the basis of narrated historical accounts handed down from generation to generation, the origin of the Yimchungers is believed to be from Thailand. The present Yimchungers were not known by any name as a tribe. They lived mostly a nomadic life spending hardly one or two generation at a certain place of settlement as a village for want of more land for cultivation to meet the growing need of food and other means of sustenance. At other times the entire village population was compelled to abandon their village and shift to a safer place to avoid plague and epidemic diseases or as victims of constant head hunting amongst the neighboring villages, etc.

## **MIGRATION**

The route of migration of the Yimchungers from Thailand came through Burma (Myanmar), then from Burma to Mom (in India) from Moru to Chiru, from Chiru to Longyang, from Longyang to thunyim Kiulong (literally thunyim means fifty and Kiulong means Village thus Village of Fifty. Within the Indian territory). Thereafter from thunyim Kiulong to Tufhuong Kiulong (Near Pokphur Village), from Tufhuong Kiulong to Thsunkiuso (presently Thonoknyu), then from Thsunkiuso to Kemiphu (On the banks of Thurak ke or popularly known as the Zungki River now). Thereafter from Kemiphu to Tukheakhup Village. (Below the present Waphur village on the bank of Zungki river).

At each place of settlements only a portion of the group set out in search of better place with more natural resources they needed in their day to lay life, leaving behind the remaining population at such places as permanent residents of that village.

## GETTING NAMED

While they were settled at Tukheakhp, one day while a group of these people were fishing at the confluence of the Yayi River and Thurak Ke River or Zungki they found a burnt charcoal and partly burnt firewood floating down from the river Yayi. This discovery made them curious of other human settlement towards the source of Yayi River. Accordingly a larger portion of the people set out on their expedition towards the farther upstream along the Yayi River in search of other human settlement. Finally they arrived at a place where they found some signs of some other human activities, like clearing of jungle for cultivation, etc. having found signs of the existence of other human being in and around this place they Called it Yimkhiungto meaning 'found it' or 'have found it'. This place with time got the name Yimkhuing or Yimchung and the residents were known as Yimchungru or Yimchungru and the village now stands as Yimchung Awun meaning Yimchung Old (popularly known, as Y. Awun village till today). Prior to the establishment of this village there was no known name of the group as a community or a tribe. At each place of the series of settlements not the entire population was on the move, it was only those strong and able people who dared to face any new adversary that might lay waiting as this nomadic tribe continued to move from place to place after several years of residing at a place and even for two to three generation at certain places, in search of virgin soil to meet the need of their ever growing population. At any place of settlement the duration of dwelling could be any where between 10 (ten) to 50 (fifty) years. Thus it was at Yimchung Awun village that settlers of this Village were called Yimkhiungru.

The name 'Yimchungru' or 'Yimchunger' is mispronounced word for 'Yimkhiungru' or 'Yimkhiunger' which ought to be as it is which literally means 'the finders'. The residents who were left behind at several places of earlier settlements called the Yimchung Awun settlers as Yimkhiungru or Yimkhiunger. The name Yimkhiungru or Yimkhiunger later got diluted to 'Yimchungru' or 'Yinichunger', 'Yangchongru', 'Yachumi' and 'Yimchung' as they are called by the other neighboring tribes more particularly the early Chang Scouts and 'Dobashis' who accompanied the British explorers.

The Yimchungrus thus settled here for a long period of time at Yimchung Awun. With time when the population expanded a group of able people started to venture out to establish a new village further north of Yimchung Awun at a place called 'Langa' village below the present Kuthur Village. The names of some of the founders of 'Langa' village known throughout the generations were Lakiumong, Zongyimkiu and Kushang from the Jangkhiunger Clan, Pathong and Hernong from

Janger Clan and Sangpen from the Khiphur Clan. The group of Yimchungrus who settled at 'Langa' were with well build physique and were fierce warriors who dared to fight with spirits and other natural calamities like flood, fire, storm etc. to test their might and endurance. However, equally brave and fierce warrior the people started fighting for supremacy amongst them not willing to submit to each other. That being so they could not live together in harmony and unity. Finally, they parted their ways leaving the village desolate and uninhabited. The remains of `Langa' village still stands today bearing testimony to the once inhabited by hardworking and fierce Yimchungru warriors. It was from this village that the people got scattered into almost all direction. A group of these people moved towards the present Chang, some other towards the present Serra and some towards the Khiamniungan, Sangtam, Konyak and Phom area. A bigger portion moved back downwards to establish various villages of the present Yimchungru inhabited areas in addition to the residents those who chose to stay behind, stretching from Helipong mountain to Mount Saramati and far beyond into the present Myanmar (Burma) speaking different dialects like Langa, Tukhi, Mukhok, Chi, Longbou and Phunung. As it was once upon a time those days, each village had a distinct administrative entity not subjected to any other and individual village having a sovereign entity under the governance of the `Kiulongthuru' (meaning founder of the village or Village Head in Yimchunger Language) and elders of that Village. Each village big or small had equal respect as far as their rights and privileges were concerned. There was hardly any concept of community as a tribe beyond one's village territory hence head hunting for trophy and glory ruled the land then. But with the coming of Christianity and modern civilization the consciousness to live united and in harmony came into the lives of these simple people.

## **HOW MANY DIALECTS WERE/ARE SPOKEN BY THE PEOPLE OF YOUR TRIBE?**

The word Yimchunger is a mis-spelling of the word Yimkhiungru. The word Yimkhiungru means collection of persons who reached the location "LANGA YINLKHIUNGRLF from different directions of the present Yimchunger land. Initially the people of Yimkhiungru had 5(five) spoken dialects namely:

- 1.) The Langa**
- 2.) The Mukhokru**
- 3.) The Chirr**
- 4.) The Tikhirs**
- 5.) The Muru.**

The langa language was accepted as the mother tongue of the Yimchunger and it was made compulsory for all the Yimchungers to learn it as it was the lingua-franca of the Yimchungers tribe. Each dialect has a distinct and totally different pronunciation in their way of speaking their dialect. One dialect speaking group could not understand the dialect of another group. Hence each dialect speaking group established their area of domain and territory as is evident till today. Nevertheless, all 5(five) dialect speaking group remain as the Yimchungers till today. It is interesting to mention that though each dialect has a rich language of vocabulary, no dialect has a script of its own. The Yimchungers use the English alphabet as their vocabulary as early as only 1940's as Western education reached the people only in this period. Before the reaching of Western education there is no written or verbal records whatsoever to prove that the Yimchungers had their own literature script. It is worthwhile to mention that 5(five) spoken dialect of the Yimchungers were handed down from generations only through verbal or rather to be precise through mental power. It is beyond human knowledge to prove how each dialect started speaking their own dialect. One might as well truly believe and conclude that the Power of Bible was the genesis of the emergence of different dialect.

Though the 5(five) dialect of the Yimchungers speak in different tongue there is close resemblance in their culture, way of life; living habitate; eating habits; social customs; matrimonial systems etc. The folk lores vary from place to place even in song sung traditionally. Even among a single dialect speaking group say for eg: The Langa dialect; there are different dialect varying from place to place. People could judge a person from his accent as to which Village/area he/she comes from. Likewise, though, all these 5(five) dialect group constitute the Yimchunger tribe; one can easily point out to a person as to which dialect/area/he/she belongs to from their accent but, to contradict the statement here comes when one can't judge a Mukhokru from a Chir as both speak in similar tone and accent yet speaking totally different dialect. Hence, unless one know their dialect it would be very difficult to distinguish a Mukhorru from a Chit. The main dialect spoken by the Yimchunger's today are the Lang dialect, the Tikhir dialect, the Makoor dialect and the Chirr dialect. Majority of the population can be found in these four dialect-speaking people. The Mum dialect-speaking people are defined to only a Village or two.

# **LET US NOW HAVE A BIRD'S VIEW OF THE 5(FIVE) DIALECT C OF THE YIMCHUNGER TRIBE**

## **1. THE LANGA DIALECT**

50% of the Yimchunger tribe comprise of this dialect-speaking people. This dialect is accepted as the mother tongue and the lingua-franca of the Yimchunger tribe. The people of the rest 4(four) dialect-speaking people understand and also can speak this dialect. The people of the upper region of the Yimchunger tribe completely speak this dialect. As this dialect is accepted as the common dialect of the Yimchungers, the use of this dialect is practiced in churches/conferences/meetings and other big gathering. The song and biblical words of the Yimchunger tribe is written in Langa dialect.

## **2. THE TIKHIR DIALECT**

This dialect speaking people from about 15% of the Yimchunger tribe. They occupy the North East portion of the area. Ancestral origin of the Tikhirs with the rest of the dialect people is a consanguineous one. Of late, this dialect speaking people tried to gain leverage by speaking help from other forces to form a separate tribe but their movement for a separate tribe was not given any weightage as they have no separate entity nor is their present locus-standi a genuine one.

## **3. THE MUKHOKRU DIALECT**

This dialect speaking people from about 10% of the Yimchunger tribe sharing a conter minous with the Chin and the Murus. Their origin is also a consanguineous one with the rest of the Yimchunger tribe. They occupy the Southern portion of the Yimchunger land.

## **4. THE CHIRR DIALECT**

This dialect speaking group also form about 10% of the population of the Yimchunger tribe. Like the Mokhoru, they also share a consanguineous origin with the rest of the Yimchunger tribe. They occupy the Southern end of the Yimchunger land.

## **5. THE LONGPHUR(MURU)DIALECT**

This dialect speaking group constitute about 2% to 3% occupying a small portion of the Southern end of the land. They have a limited area of their dialect speaking group and is confined to a few villages only.

To sum up, it is noteworthy to emphasis that the Yimchunger tribe has a rich language with sufficient vocabularies. The use of 27<sup>th</sup> letter (U) is maximum in the language. Since, the Yimchungers has no script and literature of it's own, much cannot be said about the origin/composition etc. of the different dialects. The literature committee is trying their best to enhance the vocabularies accent of the dialects and also add more suitable vocabularies as per research and requirement.