

Rituals and Beliefs associated with Festivals

2018 - 19

2019 - 20

**SPONSORED UNDER TRI
DEPARTMENT OF ART AND CULTURE
GOVERNMENT OF NAGALAND**

Contents

1.	Angami	1
2.	Ao	4
3.	Chakhesang	8
4.	Chang	12
5.	Dimasa	13
6.	Khiamniungan	19
7.	Konyak	26
8.	Phom	32
9.	Pochury	38
10.	Rengma	47
11.	Sangtam.....	49
12.	Sümi	51
13.	Yimchungrü	54

ANGAMI

Rituals associated with festival

The ritualistic approach to religion among the Angami Naga is so vague that a tangible object is not necessarily the subject of worship. A certain conscience of 'animism' co-exists in the mind of each conscious individual for/as being part of the universe in which he dwells - and as such, respects 'mother nature' and believe in a supernatural being known as 'Ukepenuopfii'.

Among the Angami Nagas, the Sekrenyi festival is a major festival celebrated annually for ten days from the 25th month of Angami calendar (corresponding to 25th February on the Gregorian calendar). The objective of the festival is to cleanse the body and soul of the villagers.

The rituals associated with the festival are;

Kizie - On the first day, people sprinkle themselves drops of rice water drawn from a pot name 'Zurnho'. The water drops is collected into leaves by the chief lady of the house and is then placed on the four corners of the house pillars. This is followed by the men assembling at the well to bath known as 'Dziiva'.

On the next day, young men perform ablutions i.e, they adorn themselves with two new shawls and sprinkle the holy water on their chest, knees and the right arms to signify the washing away of their sins and ill luck. A sacrificial offer of a cock is performed on their return.

The New Year for the Angamis is marked on the fourth day of the festival. People spend time in feasting and merrymaking which lasts for the next three days. Young men and unmarried shave their heads during this time.

Hunting is done by young men on the seventh day and on the eighth day, ritual involving pulling down and replacing an old village gate is observed. The coming two days are set aside for exchanging visits and offering greetings. The ten day festival which suspends villagers from field operations is called 'Penvie. Only after this festival of 'purification' is completed, cultivation, house building and marriages may restart for the year.

Rituals associated with the construction of the Morung

Morung is the traditional social institution of the Angami locally called 'Kichiiki'. Among the Ao's and Konyaks, separate Morungs are constructed for boys whereas among the Angamis, they are housed in buildings built and occupied by families. Upon reaching puberty, young boys and girls are admitted in the Morung and engage in various curricular activities. They are taught to become responsible members of the society. Angamis prefer that the houses should face east and on this assumption, the west is called 'Kisatsa'. The house is constructed by setting up eight posts, four on each side and four higher corresponding posts to bear the roof tree down the centre of the house. House-horns made of wood known as 'Kikie' is placed on the front roof. Men of wealth decorate their house with heavy carved beams of men and 'Mithun'. When the house is to be build, the builder perform a ritual by placing two stones on the site and listen to his dreams on the night he does so. If the dreams turn out to be favourable, the next working day, he goes out in the evening with his wife, taking fire, fuel, a fowl and other food. He then builds a fireplace with three stones and makes the fire to cook. After some few minutes, the couple return home with the food, and dreams for another night. The site is definitely adopted if their dream is favourable.

When the house is completed, fire is brought from the house of a wealthy man who has the house-horn i.e 'Kikie'. The owner of the new house dressed in ceremonial dress enters the new house carrying spear and fire brought from the house of the wealthy man who must be a man from his clan. From this day, and for the next four days the couple only have rice beer and abstain themselves from having rice. However their children may be allowed to have from the house of any wealthy man ('Kikie Kepfimia') in the village. In belief to ward off evil spirits, and to avoid people who could be inauspiciously praising the craftsmanship, bamboos equipped with panjies are erected on the four corners of the site ('Kethie Thedi').

The Sacrament- Rituals involved..

There were some rituals that were strictly followed in traditional marriage. The bride is brought to the groom's house accompanied by her brothers to perform the rituals in giving away the bride.

1. The brothers also accompany the bride along with her friends.
2. A young boy (Chiichii) is entitled to carry some meat and is allowed to sleep at the groom's house for the night.
3. A young man (Zuchii) also follows the group and he is entitled to carry rice ber. However this boy is not supposed to enter the groom's house. There is an elderly lady looking after the kitchen in the groom's house and she pours rice

beer in a mug and serves the boy who will be outside the door.

4. One of the brothers of the bride carry boiled vegetables (Gaame) in the Chicken marriage. However in the Pig marriage, a pig's leg and sometimes some cooked meat curry is also carried along with the boiled vegetables. The husband gives a chicken in return. Eventually the husband ends up giving chicken to all of the bride's friends to increase the value of his bride. On receiving the chickens as a gift, the bride's friends bless the couple. Some of the blessings pronounced during this time , 'let their life together be prolonged ad may they guide generations to come after them, let their family contribute mightily to society, let them have children in abundance like crabs and spiders.'

The offerings like chicken, and other animals, made by the boy to the girl's family after marriage is not reared for it is taboo to do so, rather it is put in a safe place and later killed for consumption. When the next festival arrives, the girl's parents take her basket and go to the couple's house to hand it over to her. The basket contains five to six mugs of rice beer in a container, they also carry nine to ten baskets of cooked meat. Some rich families carry more gifts with them. The quantity of gifts given differs depending on ones ability. Generally, it is observed that in terms of gifts exchanged, the girl's parents give more than the boy's parents.

Sometimes a boy may go to another village to propose to a girl. If he is favored then a date is fixed when the girl comes to be with him. In this type of marriage the bride comes at night accompanied by a little girl, a young girl and a young boy. The groom receives the bride along with a young male and a young girl. The young male hands over a cock to the boy and a chicken each to the two girl escorts before they leave. He also gives them spear and spades. This night the groom's friends have a lot of fun with the couple joking and teasing them. It is so done because it is believed that before one gets into married life the bride and groom are shy towards one another but once they enter into married life, they have to face reality and the rigors of life.

(Note: It is taboo for the girl to visit her parents on the second day after the marriage but she is supposed to visit them on the third day)

AO

Rituals related to cultivation

The primary cultivation of the Ao-nagas was farming. They practiced cultivation for a period of 2-3 years in the same piece of land and for the subsequent years, they find another piece of land for farming.

After the harvest is done, the village people have to chose and clear another forest area for cultivation. After the place has been selected for farming, first they observe a day known as "Lepden mong". On this day, the necessary rituals to god is done. In the process, old people (putir) necessarily male would take eggs, break those eggs as an act of ritual while saying prayer for the blessings in their harvest. Also they make propositions that nothing bad happens to them as they cultivate in that land. It is only after the ritual that people start to slash and burn the forest. People predicted whether they would have a good harvest just by observing the direction of the smoke that is produced as a result of burning the forest for cultivation. If the smoke goes straight up to the sky and forms a white circle at the point of contact with the sky, then people assumed that they would have a good harvest. After clearing and burning the forest, another day is observed as "Alurong mong". It was observed in order to sanctify the land where people prayed that if any kind of animals such as pythons were burnt and devoured by the fire that would invoke/lead to a bad harvest that may Lichaba (god) take away all the bad things that would have negative impacts on them.

In such a way, people performed rituals and prayed so as to please gods as such that they have a good harvest.

Rituals related to construction of Morung (Arju)

Morung(Arju) is an important part of Ao-naga culture and tradition. Young men from the village were made to stay in the morung after attaining a certain age (15-16 years), where he learns about different ethics, culture, norms etc. It was significantly an important place as it was considered an alter where secret issues were discussed and made decisions. Thus it was considered very important place where confidential things like making a plan for raids of the enemy villages were discussed. Hence for the construction of Morung, people took it on a serious level and therefore performed rituals and say prayers while constructing a Morung.

The old people (priest) would perform rituals and predict things. One of the ritual known as "Anu aji" is a ritual performed regarding important things/events. In the ritual, the priest would kill a cock, take

the intestine and do some readings after observing the intestine of the cock. It is learned that the priest would carefully look at the intestine, and begin to predict things which they believed would come true.

This act of "Anu aji" was done only by priest/ or old people. However this art of prediction was not passed on to the generations due to advent of Christianity and hence, it could not be performed by the younger generations and thereby, it is not in practice in today's modern world.

TSUNGREMMONG

The Tsungremmong festival is one of the most important festival of the Ao nagas. It is celebrated for 3 days ie: 1st to 3rd August annually. Generally it is celebrated to give thanks to God for all the blessings showered and invoking more blessings for the coming harvest.

During the forefathers times, it was believed that Lichaba was the chief God who would bless them abundantly. A folk tale of the Ao nagas, the tale of yarla and her sister gives a view of how Lichaba blessed them abundantly for the kindness they showed towards Him. According to the tale, they were residing in a small house towards the periphery of the village, when one day, an old man-a traveler came seeking help and shelter to their village. The villagers just shut doors on him and refused to welcome him for the shelter. By the sunset, the old man happened to come to that small house of Yarla and her sister. On the old man's request for providing shelter for the night, the sisters admitted of how poor they were and that they had a small place and literally nothing to offer him. Despite of being poor, they however welcomed the old man to take shelter for the night. It is learned from the tale of how the old man provided sufficient food for them. Also, He blessed the sisters for a fruitful harvest and infact, that year they had a fruitful harvest while contrary to that, the villagers didn't had a good harvest. Soon the villagers realized that the old man was the God himself (Lichaba) who blessed the sisters and that they harvested abundant grains out of their small field.

From then on, people hoped that God would pass through their village again. And with expectation that God would come over again, they eagerly waited for God as such that they too could welcome Him and ask for his blessings in their harvest. Therefore , the festival celebrated on the eve of harvest (Chalipang mapang)to honour and appease their chief God (lichaba) for a fruitful harvest came to be known as Tsungremmong. By celebrating so, our forefathers believed that they would have a good harvest.

This festival was first observed and celebrated at Longsa village and therefore, it is also called Longsamong. Later on, different villages also started to celebrate this festival.

The proceeding of this festival are as follows:

The first day of the festival is called as "sungpen" when the firewood for the festival is collected by the youngest peer group(sungpur) of the morung. Pigs are slaughtered and the meat is distributed to households. On the evening, every family offers a piece of meat at the hearth as an offering to their God (lichaba).

The second day is called as "Yati" when a large quantity of rice beer is brewed. This day is observed strictly as such that nobody is allowed to go outside the village nor do any work except works that are connected with the festival. Each aged group (zunga) would prepare rice beer and cook meat in the house of their eldest member among their group. The day is also marked by tug-of-war between men folks and women folks. In the evening, the boys would visit girls' dormitory (tsuki) where they are served rice beer and rejoice dancing and singing songs of praise.

On the third day, people practiced of taking bath in the river side and there is no social visitation that night and thus bringing an end to the celebration of the festival.

Our forefathers have observed this festival so as to honour and appease God with the belief that there will be abundant blessings but with the coming of Christianity, these days, it is observed for a day in almost all the villages and is marked by a prayer thanking God for all the blessings and invoking more blessings for the coming days.

MOATSU

Moatsu, the premier festival of the Ao nagas is celebrated annually in the month of May after the completion of sowing. The forefathers celebrated this festival to please the god of nature so as to invoke the blessings for a fruitful harvest. During the era of Chungliyimti, the people suffered a loss or unhealthy harvest nor were they able to bring a warrior's head during the raids of the enemy villages. This urged the people to approach and console sorcerer (arasener) as of why they aren't blessed and successful in either of the way. The people were informed and prophesized by the sorcerer that on worshipping and performing rituals to gods, they would be blessed(moatsutsu). As it was foretold by the sorcerer that they would be blessed (moatsutsu) by god on doing so, the name Moatsu was thus derived.

The festival is celebrated in the month of May. It is a festival of song, dance and feasting. The boys and girls of different age groups rejoice in singing, dancing and merry making. It is a time to exchange gifts. Young men receive new dao straps from their lovers and admirers and the girl in return would get new tobacco pipes.

The first day of the festival is called sungpen where the sungpur (youngest peer group) in arju (morung) collect firewood for cooking and bonfire during the festival. This sungpur are most responsible for all the necessary arrangements of the festival like collection of firewood, collection of bamboos for erecting the platform, cleaning dormitories etc. The elder people will erect the platform where they kill pigs and cows. On this first night of the festival, people even refrain themselves from making love. Thus, they celebrated the festivals with much sanctity.

The next day is called as "yati". It is a day of general jollification where the sungpur (youngest peer group) will bring a wild creeper known as "shizung zu" to be used for tug-of-war. The tug-of-war is between the men folk and the women folk along with singing songs of praise between them. Indigenous games are also played as well.

The next day is called as "yati". It is a day of general jollification where the sungpur (youngest peer group) will bring a wild creeper known as "shizung zu" to be used for tug-of-war. The tug-of-war is between the men folk and the women folk along with singing songs of praise between them. Indigenous games are also played as well.

On the third day, the community feasting takes place. Also, many songs glorifying warriors were sung. On this day, house visitation (kimak) takes place.

It is a festival of dance, songs and merry making. So, there was not much rituals to be done or associated with the festivals but rather they celebrate it with songs of praise and dance.

As compared to earlier days, the celebrations of Moatsu in Ao villages are practically slowing down. These days, it is observed only for 1 or 2 days. However, this festival has contributed towards building and mending of bonds between friends and also between the villages by creating tradition of having "Ancha" invitee from other tribes and places. In addition to this, cultural troupes from other states are also invited. This festival is also celebrated in collaboration with other cultural center marking the festival a notable one.

CHAKHESANG

Rituals associated with festivals

Phek is land of festivals, one festival is celebrated after the other through the year round. The festivals mostly revolves around agriculture which is the main source of income to most of the people. Those who hold prestigious status in the community such as brave warriors and persons who could arrange feast of merit are looked up and honored. These people earn the beautiful shawl and their houses are decorated with horns in front and at back. The following festivals are celebrated one after the other throughout the year by the Chakhesangs.

Khuthonye (July)

It is celebrated in the month of July after the completion of the terraced field cultivations. Everyone rich and poor eat and drink heartily to regain the lost energies. This is also the time for harvesting millet therefore coinciding with Khuthonye the millet festival, 'Chunye' is also celebrated.

Turhinye (August)

This is a festival of preserving the crops from wild animals which may destroy the crops the labours and their hard work. During this festival community work such as repairing, cleaning of roads and their village paths are done before the festival.

Thurinye (December)

This festival is celebrated in December, after all the harvest, when the granaries are full of grain. A chaste bachelor has to perform a ceremonial rite called 'Mudzu', wherein a spotless piglet will be killed first. This will be followed by the rest of the villagers killing their own domestic animals and start the feast. People are jubilant, they offer thanks to the gods for protecting their crops from sowing to the stage of harvest.

Sükrünye (January)

It is the most important festival and is celebrated on 15th January. It is a festival of sanctification particularly of young boys and girls through rituals and ceremonies. The festival covers a period of eleven days.

The first of the festivity period is known as "CEDU". On this very day animals are killed and every household sprinkles the blood of the killed animals on the main posts of the house.

The second day is "Sükrü" meant for men folk. It signifies sanctification of young, innocent and unspoiled boys for this ritualistic ceremony. On this day every man is supposed to take a fresh-water bath and is forbidden to use water fetched by women. Unblemished cock is killed and cooked with unpolluted water and a new house is constructed where "Sükrü" is performed in order to get his house 'sanctified'. This whole process is called "Sükrü" and "Nye" is known as festival.

The third day is called "Thünomico" meant for women only where mother performs this ceremonial ritual to sanctify her young innocent daughter/daughters.

The fourth day is known as "Müthi Celhü where social feasts such as Mülekhü are given to age group and Zhotho Muza for merit.

The fifth day is known as "Cedü Zhongu" which means accomplishment of the festivals.

The festival's religious pursuits are relaxed, to mark the festival and continue feasting, dancing and singing throughout the day and night till dawn.

Tsükhenye (May)

A new year of activities begins with the arrival of Spring. All sports, games and other youth activities which begin after the harvest will cease with the closing of this festival.

The festival lasts for four days. On the first day, the village Priest will offer sacrifice with the first cock that crowed that morning. All male folks gathered to a designated well to purify themselves by bathing and put on new clothes. After which they performed certain rituals for strength, long life, good harvest and other blessings.

During this festival only the best and unblemished domesticated male animals are slaughtered for feast and shared with best friends. New wine are prepared and consumed. Games and sports, music competition is organised among the different age groups. Married women go to their parents' house and prepare the best food for their husbands. All leisure activities are forbidden after this festival.

Tsükhenye is a festival which celebrates the culmination of all leisure activities and a festival for welcoming a new year and a fruitful life.

Thuni Festival

Poumai Chakhesang from the Razeba area, Thuni is the most prominent festival and is celebrated from 5th – 10th January. "Thu" means new and "ni" for festival. Thuni is the celebration of new crops and paddies signifying the heralding of a new year. During the weeklong festival, 'feast of merit' begins, pigs and mithuns are slaughtered for the celebration. Every young and old are dressed up in their own traditional attires. The finest local wine are brewed by the female member of the house in honour of their brothers and the male members of the house. The festival also involves pulling and laying of monoliths - "Thuhu su" to signify that they have performed the feast of merit and are entitled to wear the prestigious shawls. Thunyi festival is celebrated with great solemnity.

Morung Construction

Unity is strength. No one knew this better than the warrior tribes inhabiting Nagaland's harsh hills. Festivals were times to come together, cement unity, sharing both grief and happiness, consolidate friendship, rekindle old ties and reach out to other neighboring villages. Both the males and females are coached in community bonding as early in life at *khel* or ward-specific Morungs (youth dormitory) and are divided among different peer groups. Sociologically morung is a key institution of Naga society.

In Chakhesang area, there is no specific dormitory buildings but the rich and wealthy families from the village host them in their houses, the females are separated from the males and stays with different family. There were no specific rituals associated with morung construction.

The host supervises and assigns the young boys to certain works. The boys collect fire-woods, engaged themselves in cane works, learn the ways of warfare and hunting. They build bonfire in the evening and engaged in merrymaking till dawn. They repay the host by helping him in his paddy cultivations, constructing his house or in any type of help he needs. The peer groups go fishing together, work in each other's fields, clear village paths and erect protective fences around the village.

The girls learn weaving and make yarns till dawn. They are taught to be perfect homemakers.

Cultivation

The festival of the chakhesangs mostly revolves around agriculture. As such almost all the rituals in cultivation are related with the different festivals. *Khuthonye* is celebrated in the month of July after the completion of the ten-aced field cultivations. Everyone rich and poor eat and drink heartily to regain the lost energies. *Turhinye*, celebrated in the month of August, is a festival of preserving the crops from wild animals which may destroy the crops the labours and their hard work. *Thurinye* is celebrated in December, after all the harvest, when the granaries are full of grain.

Other Rituals

When a person dies, the oldest person/ priest in the village will arrange the ceremony. The person will be placed in a bamboo made basket alongwith his belongings. All the type of seeds that he cultivates when he was alive will be wrapped and kept in a ^{small} basket for him to cultivate in his new world. □A plate filled with rice and meat alongwith a cup of rice beer is buried with the dead body. His livestock are killed and a feast will be given to the village, but the head of the killed animals are placed above his grave as it is believed the spirit of the animals will go with the master in the new world.

CHANG

Poanglum (Winter Festival) : January

The Poanglum is a post harvest festival and a festival of joy and gaiety celebrated with traditional folk songs and dances. It is celebrated in the months of January, it is a festivals of gifts exchange and merry making. The festivals itself is a herald to the villages to begin the usual process of cultivation in purity and newness to be blessed with abundant harvest in the next cultivation.

Kundang lum : April

Kundang lum is a five day festival. The first three days are spent collecting for the construction material for field huts in the Jhum cultivation area. The material is tested on the fourth day, and the huts are collectively constructed on the fifth day. The festival ends with feasting.

Naknyulum (July - August)

Naknyulum is the major traditional festival of Changs. According to the Chang mythology the word Naknyulum has two meaning "Naknvu" meaning mother of darkness and "Lum" meaning festival' date are fixed 2 days ahead. The ancient people had to remain inside their homes for six days due to extreme darkness. Naknyulum is held to celebrate the light on the seven day. It is a six day festival during which the dead are honored and the sky God/Spirit is appeased. Marriages are prohibited during the period. On the first day, the domestic animals are slaughter, on the second day (Youjem, dark moon day), the tribal's exchange gifts and food items and play sports. Women playa musical instrument called Kongkhin. The paths and the houses are decorated with leaves, and a shrub called Ngounaam is planted infront of the house to ward off the evil spirits. A sunset, seeds called Vui long are buried inside the rice husks and burnt around the house. People don't go out of their homes at sunset, as it is believed that the spirit Shambuli Muhgha visits the village and harms anyone outside the house. On the third day, the village and the approach roads are cleaned. Later, the paths leading to the fields and neighboring villages are cleaned.

DIMASA KACHARI

The Dimasas have some important festivals such as Bushu DimalBishu Dima, Rajini Gerba and Horni Gerba. There are specific significances of each, and the rituals are also specific for each of them.

Bushu Dima / Bishu Dima Festival

This is a Post harvesting festival of the Dimasa kachari, which has been fixed on 2nd January of each year, earlier this was celebrated between Decembers - January. In the year 2007 Bishu festival of Dimasa kachari of Nagaland was recognised by the Govt. of Nagaland, and declared a restricted holiday. The Bishu festival may be continuously celebrated for one week or the village members can decide it according to their convenience. At present, in Dima Hasao district of Assam, this date has been recognised as a local holiday by the Autonomous District Council since 1993.

The most efficient male and female youths are appointed as leaders, *naga hoja* and *mala hoja* respectively. During the earlier times, the male dormitory called *nodrang* existed and the *naga hoja* was always selected from there. Along with his assistants, known as *naga pharain*, they would collect funds, construct the traditional gate called *fangs/a*, collect other necessary items required for the rituals such as meat, rice and plantain leaves. There may be three different types of Bishu Dima, they are:

- (i) Jidab : Celebrated for one, two or three days
- (ii) Surem: which is again of two types: Surem Bishu, celebrated for three days, and Surem Bainoh celebrated for five days
- (iii) Hangseu Manaobal Hangsong: Celebrated for seven nights and one day

(i) Jidab

When lidab is celebrated for a day, generally a feast is held by the community members followed by traditional dance. For two-day celebration, all the rituals may not be performed, however on a three-day Jidab celebration; all the rituals are generally performed. The 'area - god' or *haphai ni madai* is offered fowl or goat. The event should begin either on a Friday (evening) - Saturday (morning) or Monday (evening) - Tuesday (morning), since these times and days are regarded as ideal and auspicious. Some important observances during a three - days *Jidab Bishu Dima* celebration are:

- a). *Maidung*
- b). *Beseng*
- c). *Baiphang*
- d). *Baiju*
- e). *Harongbaiba*
- f). *Longthai Zemba*

On the first day, *Maidung* and *Beseng* are observed. These involve offering of prayers and seeking blessings by the youths and married couples from elderly persons of the family and the village; thereafter, they receive money as token called *beseng*, from the elders. On the second day, the rituals of *Baiphang* and *Baiju* are observed. Generally, two elderly persons known as *baiphang* and *baiju*, from the village, are offered respect and honour by the youths and other village members. At around sunset, village members gather at the residence of the *khunang* (GB) and start a musical procession with the playing of instruments - *khram* and *muri*, which are types of drum and long flute, respectively. This long procession is made till the residence of the *baiphang*. Along the way, the menfolk howl certain sounds out of merriment which is called *haoba*. At the *baiphang's* residence, traditional dance called *baidima* is performed by the village members in merriment, and the blessings are taken from the *baiphang* by offering rice wine in a gourd vessel, which is called *ju laothai* and dishes of meat and vegetables wrapped in plantain leaves. Thereafter, a feast is given by the *baiphang*.

In the same manner, a procession is made towards the residence of another elderly person of the village, known as *baiju*, to seek his blessings and offer the packets of rice wine and meat dishes. Token of blessings in the form of money, called *beseng* is collected from both the *baiphang* and the *baiju*, which is handed over to the *Khunang* (GB), after they return back to his residence thereafter; a traditional dance is again performed by all the members in merriment till late night.

On the third day of *Jidab Bishu*, traditional games, *harong* and *longthai lembe* are held, which are like long jumps and shotput or discus throw, respectively. Mainly, the males play such games and the winners are rewarded with prize, called *blaishandi*. Some offerings are made to deity *Shibarai*, comprising of rice wine called *judima* and meat dishes. Thereafter, the same are also given to be consumed by the participants and village members. The whole night is spent with traditional dance and playing of instruments.

(ii) Surem

The term *surem* means voluntary working of the youths at the villagers' paddy fields and utilising the earnings for celebrating Bishu festival. *Surem* may be of two types, *Surem Bishu* and *Surem Bainoh*. *Surem Bishu* is observed for three days, while *Surem Bainoh* lasts for five days. *Surem Bishu* is similar to *Jidap Bishu* as both are celebrated for three days with the same rituals and traditional games; the only difference is that in the case of *Surem Bishu*, the youths voluntarily work at paddy fields to earn enough for the celebration fund. During *Surem Bainoh*, the youth leaders *naga hoja* and *mala hoja*, selects guides namely, *gajaibao* and *gajaibaojik*, from male and female elderly members, respectively. These guides are selected based on their wisdom and ability to guide and take the responsibility of ensuring the efficacy of voluntary work. The meetings are held about a month ahead of the festival in each of the guides' residences. During the celebration, the youths seek blessings from the elders of the village and the village *Khunang* (GB), and then performing the traditional dances in each of their residences, which is called, *baisingba*. The entire expense is made out of the earnings from the *surem* fund collected by the youths through voluntary paddy field service.

(iii) Hangseu Manaobal Hangsong Bishu

(iv)

The most extravagant festival is the *Hangseu Bishu* festival. It is held for a whole week and requires rigorous preparation from much time ahead. Here, the youths go for voluntary work at the paddy fields, just as in the case of *Surem Bishu* ; however, in this case, they have to start the work about a year ahead of the celebration. The guides, *gajaibao* and *gajaibaojik* are selected by the youth leaders, *naga hoja* and *mala hoja*. Thereafter, they offer prayers and seek blessings from the guides, offer rice wine and cooked meat dishes and perform traditional dance as a mark of respect before the guides. Then, they begin their work, which goes regularly for at least 3 to 4 days a week at the fields for a higher raise in fares.

For the offerings to be made during the festival, buffaloes, goats and fowls are arranged and well-bred till the time of sacrifice to the deities. The traditional *gatefangsla* is erected at the entrance of the village. The sacrificial animals are brought through the gate and the priest called *hojai* performs a ritual called *mayopha garba*, which is actually done for the successful observance of the *Hangseu Bishu*. A hall is constructed at the guide's home compound for the gathering of people. Then the main venue of festival is set up by erecting a pole at the centre and designed strings attached from it to all sides to form a cover overhead. The whole set-up is called *meprai basang*.

On the first day of Hangseu Bishu, the village members gather at the residence of the village Khunang (GB) where the animals and fowls are sacrificed for the deities. After the prayers and offerings are made, the meat is distributed to among all and the event ends with a customary howl called *haoba*, by the males.

The second day sees sacrifice of animals for deity offering, from the youths' side at the residence of the guide, *gajaibao*. This is followed by a ritualistic procession called *bagaoba*, which involves linear, circular and criss-cross movement of people while singing a particular song.

The third day is called Bishuma, where a ritual called *simang garba* or *makham garkhaoba* is performed. This ritual involves last offering of food and drink to the people who have deceased in the previous year. On this day, youths pay homage to the elders and also people visit other houses as guests to be treated with traditional delicacies and rice wine called *judima*. Later in the evening, the Asstt. priest *barwa* performs a ritual called *madaihuba*, by scarifying fowl and egg, next to the musical instruments in the presence of youth leaders and guides. After this, the musical instruments are played by the males and all the village members both male and female perform the traditional dance *baidima*.

On the fourth day, a procession is taken from the Khunang(GB) house to those of the two other selected elders of the village, namely, *baiphang* and *baiju*. The procession ends with offering of prayers and seeking of blessings from the elders and offering of rice wine and meat delicacies. This is followed by a feast and traditional dance at both the elders' houses. On the fifth day, the youths gather at the residence of the guide for a feast and then they perform *baisingba*, which is a way of seeking blessings by dancing and offering prayers from each of the parents and the village headman. The Khunang(GB) hands over some token as blessings in the form of money, which generally is more than that offered by the other elders.

On the sixth day, the youths visit the houses of all the assistant youth leaders, performing the *baisingba* ritual, which involves, dancing, prayer seeking, offering meat and rice wine. On the seventh day, the priest *hojai* performs the *madai huba* ritual, which involves sacrificing fowl and eggs. Then, by playing the traditional songs, *murithai* on the musical instruments, a symbolic door from the house of the guide, *gajaibao*, is removed as a mark of concluding of the ritual and the same is taken to be immersed into a river. Then they all dip into the river with prayers of gratitude to the deities, for the successful conduct of Bishuma. At night or in the following morning, a significant ritual called *gerba* is observed, in which the entire people of the

village are involved. It is a kind of purificatory ritual for the village, where certain sacrificial offerings are made to the deities, therefore, no one is supposed to do any work during this ritual, neither are any outsiders allowed to enter the village premises. Finally, the eighth day of Hangseu Bishu sees a customary practice called *naga - mala digarlaiba*, in which the youth leaders and the guides are escorted to their respective houses, with a thanksgiving feast arranged by the parents of the youth leaders.

Rajini Gerba

Rajini Gerba is a purificatory ritual, which takes place during the day. It is observed by sacrificing certain animals to the deities and making offerings so that the whole of the village is purified. This mainly takes place after major festivals or events such as harvesting festival or other gatherings, where impurities could penetrate through the guests who visit from outside the village.

Horni Gerba

Homi Gerba ritual is similar to Rajini Gerba, except that it is observed at night time for purifying the village from any sort of impurities. The offerings made during ritual are done for the deity that the family of the village Khunang (GB) worships. Therefore, the ritual is also always performed by the Khunang (GB) himself. None of the village members are supposed to do any work during this time or step out of the village. The main entrance of the gate is also kept closed so that no outsider comes in during such a ritual.

RITUALS ASSOCIATED WITH BIRTH, MARRIAGE AND DEATH

Birth Before the birth of a baby, the husband arranges for a ritual to appease a deity called *naisodi-nusodi*, who is responsible for ensuring the proper care of the baby. During this ritual, a hen is sacrificed as an offering to the deity. During birth, the help of the midwife called *barwajik* and her assistant *sengjaodi* are called for performing the delivery of the baby. The Dimasas believe that with child birth, the land and the people in the house becomes impure, till the umbilical cord comes off. When the umbilical cord comes off, a purificatory ritual is conducted, where, bath is given to the baby and his or her hair is shaved off the head. Thereafter, the baby is brought outside the house for the first time which is called *nana dihonba*. A ritual called *daosathaiba* is performed where fowls are sacrificed as offerings to the deities for the well-being of the baby. Again, when the baby is fed rice for the first time, there is a feast given to people, and the occasion is called *bisingjiriba*, which is conducted by the midwife. The midwife and her assistants are given due respect and gifts by the family of where the baby is born.

Marriage

In a Dimasa kachari society, marriage by negotiation is most commonly found. The boy's family first offers a kilogram of salt (*Semju*) to the girl's family as a proposal for marriage. This is known as *Semju/Sandi dangsingba*. When the proposal is accepted, the boy's family next offers rice wine known as *judima*, in four bottle gourd containers. This is called *laothai langba*. During this, the date for marriage is fixed and also the amount of bride price is discussed. Generally, the bride price known as *kalti*, ranges between Rs.100/- to Rs.500/-. The auspicious days for marriage are Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

On the day of marriage, the father of the groom arranges for a ritual to be performed, called *mayopha garba*, before beginning the journey to the bride's house. This ritual is performed for ensuring a good journey for the marriage. On reaching the bride's place, another ritual called *mido garba* is performed, in which a pig/goat is sacrificed as an offering to the deities for a prosperous marriage life to the couple. His bride price is handed over by the groom's father to the bride's father. Then the groom has to seek blessings from each of the elderly persons seated in accordance with their relation to the bride, which is called *khilimba*. After this, the couple exchanges garlands, rings and prayers are made, thereby completing the marriage ceremony. Rice wine and meat are served to all the guests. When the newly married goes to the groom's house after a few days, a ritual called *mayopha garba* is performed for happy and prosperous of their married life. Prayers are offered to the deities and sacrifices of goat and fowls are made. Thereby, the bride is accepted into the groom's clan.

Death

During the death of any member, a male member sacrifices a cock near the head of the deceased body as if to show the way to heaven. The body is then bathed, dressed in new clothes and then placed on the pyre, facing west direction. The Dimasas cremate their dead, and generally the sons perform the cremation. However, in the absence of sons, any other male relative performs it. After a few days of cremation, the family members of the deceased, arranges a memorial service (*shraddha*) in which the whole village members as well as the clan members are invited. Meat and rice wine are served to all. In case of death of infants or women at delivery, they are buried and not cremated. In such a case, memorial service or feasts are also not held.

KHIAMNIUNGAN

RITUALS ASSOCIATE WITH FESTIVALS, MORUNG CONSTRUCTION, CULTIVATION ETC. OF KHIAMNIUNGAN NAGA

1. Ritual Associated With Festival:

Bi-am/ Dedication of Storehouse or Granary:

Bi-Am is a festival celebrated in the month of August after the harvest of millet crop. "Bi" literally mean a 'granary or a storage house' and "Am" means 'prayer or ritual' in a Khiamniungan dialect. In simple term it is a festival celebrated over the dedication of a granary/ storage house. This festival is celebrated during the first week of August for about three days and it is observed with pomp and gaiety beside prayers and invocation of blessings. The festival begins with the dedication of granary invoking blessing over the grains. While dedicating the granary, generally prayers are offered on storage bin or container, "**Am-Tsang or Am-Thang**" which is specifically kept to offer prayers in the Bi. Am-Tsang or Am-Thang is comparatively smaller in size than the general storage bins or containers where grains are stored.

On the first day of the festival a fowl or chicken is killed in morning to perform prayer. The blood from the fowl is mixed with rice bear and millet seeds in a banana leaf. The banana leaves are prepared in a conical shape for the ritual. The wings of a fowl with feathers are then chopped off from the body to be used while performing ritual in the Bi. After getting ready with the articles for performing ritual or rite, the mother of a house will enter the Bi to perform ritual and offer prayers. It is a traditional practice that only the mother of a house is allowed to manage the Bi or storehouse.

Inside the storehouse, by dipping fowl's wing in the bowl made of banana leaves the storage bins are then sprinkled with millet seeds (already mixed with the blood of a fowl and rice-bear). Sprinkling and gently stroking on the store bins with the wings of a fowl, the blessing is pronounced upon the grains by way of muttering spells. At the end of the prayers and offerings, the articles which were used during ritual or rite are placed on Am-

Tsang or Am-thang. When the prayer and offering of grains inside the storehouse is over the feathers of a fowl is tucked or placed surrounding the wall of a Bi or at home as to signify that the Bi or storehouse is dedicated.

2. Ritual Associated With Cultivation:

Miu Festival:

Miu is a festival celebrated in the month of April for about a week before the sowing of seeds in a jhum field. During this festival, animals like pig and rooster are killed in order to please the God for blessing and also for the protecting from untoward incidents in the family for the whole year.

In order to celebrate this festival the villagers prepare for a very long time by rearing pigs and other domestic animals. Any family who could not afford to prepare for the festival will asked for blood of a killed animal from neighbors or relatives to be used while offering prayer.

As the grand celebration of festival begins, the animals are sacrificed at home. Some portion of meat, blood from sacrificed animals, rice and brew made of rice are carried to the jhum field to offer prayer. The prayer and offering in the jhum field is conducted on the fifth day of the festival which is also considered as the main day of the festival.

In the jhum field, Offering Pole resembling to a **Y-shape** on the top, is erected in a place of worship call "**AM THANG**" where lower jaw of a sacrificial pig is tied to the man pole. On the left, at the top of the offering pole, cooked rice, some pieces of lever, lung and heart wrapped in a banana leaf and millet grain and dry fish (**NGODAM LANGWAN**) wrapped in another banana leaf is tied on the pole. On the right a bamboo can (**MIU HEN THENGKAIU**) about a feet long containing millet seeds (11W01) mixed with sacrificial blood is tied on the offering pole. The families who cannot afford animal sacrifice offers prayers with blood (either bought or collected from neighbors or relatives) mixed with rice brew and dry fish.

While performing prayer a cone made out of banana leave called "**KON**" is filled with rice brew. The cone filled with rice brew

is hold on left the hand and by the mouth, the rice brew is blown from the kon on the "**AM**", muttering prayers to cultivate the field without any untoward incident in the family though out the year and seek blessing from God to bless them with abundance from the field.

Prayers are offered at home as well, for good life and bountiful harvest which is called "**OMPHAN**". The OMPHAN ceremony is done with the help of a priest from the khel. Three "**KON**" filled with rice brew, pieces of ginger, dry fish and salt, are hold with the help of a tong made from a bamboo. These kons are place over the skull of a sacrificed animal, over a fire place in a kitchen hung through the ceiling and at the edge of a ceiling in the kitchen.

On the sixth day which is also called "**PE MW HEN**" is performed in an old jhum field. The prayer and offering performed during PE MIU HEN in the old jhum is similar to the one performed in the new jhum field. The seventh day, which is called "**MIU A-NO**" means a Sabbath/rest day and is observed as a taboo to work at field on that day.

3. Morung Construction:

Construction of Morung is done during the off-season after all kindsof works in the fields are over. Before the construction of Morung, a day is fixed for the construction of Morung. On the day of construction, all the khel members will gather along with tools and materials for the construction of Morung. After the construction of Morung is done, the priest/elder will ask for a rooster from the khel members and whoever has the best rooster will offer the bird for the sacrifice.

At first, a fire is made by pulling a string over a wood through friction. Next a rooster is killed by strangulation and observed the movement of its legs. It is believed by the ancestors of Khiamniungans that if the movements of the leg stop with right foot, then it is considered as a good omen but if the movement of leg stops with left foot then the omen is considered as bad. The wings and head of a sacrificed rooster are chopped off from the body and on an erected three intersecting rods, the wings are hung on left and right and the head is hung on the middle rod. These body parts of the bird are then keep erected above the main post of the Morung.

The priest then seek blessings and prosperity from God over human beings, domesticated animals, to live a healthy life for the people, to be saved and protected from accidents and other untoward eventualities, to be victorious in war and raid while living under the newly constructed Morung.

MIU FESTIVAL

Miu festival falls in the month of April, which notifies the village folks that the paddy seed-sowing season is approaching. During this festival sacrifice of domestic animals like pigs and fowls is a must to invite God's blessings and also to prevent unusual happenings from taking place in the family. It is believed that the blood of the slaughtered domestic animal redeems the villagers from the wrath of evil beings. To offer such animal sacrifice a yearlong preparation is required. The poor families who do not have the means to offer such a sacrifice would have to ask for sacrificial blood from their neighbours or relatives for offering. The sacrificial pigs are killed in the morning at home as the grand Miu festival is held in the village. A portion of the sacrificial pork, rice, rice-beer and blood is carried to the field for prayer and offering. During Miu, friends, relatives and guests from other villages are invited to join the villagers. Trade and business popularly known as barter system also takes place.

The day of the festival, which is the fourth day of the full moon, is a day for preparing the rice-beer (*Jimthao*) On the second and the third days the villagers are kept occupied with preparations for the festival. The fourth day is a day for selling and buying of pigs "*Yah Chhai Chite*". Only the head of the family is allowed to take part in the business transactions at the bazaar (*Chhaikam*). The widows and orphans entrust their relatives for such business, as they are not allowed to be involved in this occasion. On the fifth day, the main festival starts and the day is called "*Em Mitt Hen*", which means offering and prayer in the new jhum fields. In the early morning the pigs are sacrificed and the meat and blood is collected by the families who buys the same for offering before going to the field. Those families who perform the sacrifice use the lower jaw and blood. Where as those families who could not make the sacrifice uses only the blood. The lower jaw of the slaughtered pig is fastened to the main *genna* post, which is erected at the worship place "*Amthang*". On the left side of the *genna* post cooked rice, is laid with three or six pieces of liver, lung and heart wrapped in a banana leaf. Another banana leaf containing millet, and dry fish (*Ngodam Langwan*) is also laid to the left side of the *genna* post. A bamboo cup, (*Mitt Hen Thengkaiu*) about one foot 'pang containir², uncooked millet (*Jiwoi*) mixed with the sacrificial blood is also placed on the right side of the *genna* post. Those families, who could not make the animal sacrifice offers their prayers with the blood purchased from others mixed with rice-beer, and

dry fish. A banana leaf (*Kon*) is folded at a right angle triangle shape. The priest holds it in his left hand and pours drops of rice beer on it. He then offers a prayer - "Let us cultivate this field throughout the year without any unwanted incidents in the family, God, help us, bless us to grow better paddy seeds and jobs tears for my sons and daughters". After the prayer and offering all the family members enjoy the food and rice-beer. Before serving themselves, the friendship making ceremony is performed by exchanging the rice-beer, meat and food with the owners of the neighbouring fields (*Phao E Wao*). During this ceremony the head of the family/father goes to the right side of the field and the mother to their left side field. The guests who arrive the previous day are also allowed to accompany them to the field. Certain sacrificial rice-beer, food and meat is not allowed to be served to the small children. So separate earthen pots are arranged for them.

Prayer and worship at home is called "*Omphan*". This worship is mainly for a happy familial life, a bountiful harvest and increasing the numbers of cattle etc. The *Omphan* ceremony is performed with the help of the elder man/priest from the *khel*. In this ceremony three *Kons* clipped with the help of bamboo splits (*Jongkai*) are made. Drops of rice-beer, slices of ginger, some pieces of dry fish and salt are placed inside the *Kon*. One *Kon* is hung on the slaughtered animal's skull, another one at the kitchen ceiling and the last one at the end of the ceiling. After completing this ceremony a grand feast takes place with guests, friends, neighbours and relatives. Again on the sixth day "*Pe Miu Hen*" is performed in the old *jhum* fields. On this day visitors and guests from neighbouring villages go back to their respective villages.

The importance and significance of Miu festival are the prayer of offering to God to sprout the seeds sown, to grant good health, numerous cattle and a bountiful harvest of the year. The blood of the slaughtered animal has a lot of significance as it represents redemption for the family members and prevention from unusual deaths. On the other hand, it is also important because of the friendship making ceremony with the neighbours and guests in the village as well as in the field.

EIU-AM FESTIVAL

This festival is celebrated in the month of March on the sixth or twelfth day of the new moon. The first day is called *Jimthao*, which is a day for rice-beer preparation. After the rice-beer preparation another three days is allotted for collecting ceremonial articles. Firstly, 6 to 8 ceremonial tree branches (*Shing*) from a particular tree called *Othsanpai* is collected to prepare for the pig sacrifice. Those families who wish to offer fowls and eggs would collect about 5 branches of the ceremonial tree. Dogs are also sacrificed but not used for

offering except in a certain location where dog sacrifice is demanded (*Jiloathe*). During this festival pig, fowls and eggs are used for offering.

On or before Eiu-Am festival six branches of *Mopai*, another ceremonial tree is gathered. Each branch is then split into four segments and these branches are erected at the worship place (*Amthang*). In the middle of the worship place one branch is placed a little higher than the other five, which is meant for the head of the family. On this day all the family members even the small children goes to the field for prayer, carrying boiled eggs placed in an egg holder. They are allowed to take the eggs to the field or bring it back to the village. At first, after reaching the field the head of the family makes fire out of Sangjei by rubbing a bamboo rope against a dry *Mopai* tree branch. During the fire making he prays - *Ngo loniko yangkü nung eium nou phaka tsütheke, hoka tsüthekü ahe, joumpong lümeikü, nyienpong lümeikü jüthso sam hao ayakiü*" which means, 'From today onward, let my family cultivate this field without injuring our fingers and toes, let the paddy fields grow good grains and bless my sons'.

After lighting the fire he kills the domestic animal brought for offering. Then six *Mopai* is collected for the ceremony and erected at the worship place (*Amthang*). Then the head of the family begins to pray - "*Nung eiunyu nüko, jüthsosam eiuko, thsamli khiamh shiokü ahe-e*", meaning, In this field I and my family will cultivate without any problems, without facing any diseases or death just like the clear water'. Then six small baskets (*Amthsom*) are made and placed upon the six erected *Mopai* ceremonial tree clipped between the splinted ends.

Those families who kills fowls for offering fastens the fowl's head on the middle *Mopai* which is erected a little higher than the others and both the wings are clipped on the split tree on the left and on the right side of the fowl's head. Those families who wish to organize a big feast by slaughtering mithun, buffalo and cow during the ensuing Tsokum festival make use of a different kind of ceremonial genna tree (*Jeipai*) having equal branches on both sides and it is erected besides the others. As above, the fowl's head is fastened on the top of this erected *Jeipai* and the wings are fastened below the head on both branches facing the farmhouse. On the left a *Kon* made of banana leaves containing fish (*Ngodamlangwan*) is placed and on the right is placed another *Kon* containing ceremonial meat, liver, lungs and a portion of meat from the neck. At the center another *Kon* is placed with a few drops of rice beer dropped on it. This process is repeated three times.

After the prayer and offering ceremony is completed, the campers are served with meat, food and rice-beer with the owners of the neighbouring fields. The sharing of meat must consist of not less than four and not more than six pieces along with rice-beer and other food items. The family who offers fowls or eggs share a leg with preserved meat carried from the village.

The importance and significance of Eiu-Am festival is the dedication of the first jhum field by shedding the blood of domesticated animals. It is also a festival of the new jhum in order to sow all kinds of seeds. Moreover, it is important because it is a festival of friendship making with the owners of the neighbouring fields, to felicitate harmony if any disputes on the boundary issue or other misunderstandings arise.

DOG SACRIFICE DURING EIU-AM FESTIVAL

During Eiu-Am festival dog sacrifice is performed in a certain location. For example on a fountainhead, a big rock or a distinct land form. It is believed that such kind of landform is harmful to the people while cultivating the land. Therefore, in order to appease the wrath of the evil spirits, the blood of a dog is shed.

To perform the dog sacrifice on the Eiu-Am festival day, a priest, medicine man by profession (*Meshoun*) is called for to offer prayer and sacrifices. Without the *Meshoun*, they cannot proceed with their offering during the Eiu-Am festival.

On the day of the sacrifice, the priest kills the dog on reaching the field. Then the priest takes a portion of uncooked dog meat and mixes it with six pieces of fish (*Ngodamlangwan*), which he lays on a banana leaf and places it in a selected location. This signifies the cleanest part of the sacrifice which stands for "Who gives life" and "The god of richness". On the other side some pieces of sacrificed dog meat, which is cooked separately in a ceremonial earthen pot, is placed with six pieces of fish in another banana leaf, which represents the farmer's share. It also represents the lives of the farmer's family and his bountiful blessings during the year. In the middle of the offerings the sacrificed dog's head is fastened upwardly putting a white stone between the upper and lower jaw, which signifies the lives saved from the evil spirits.

After the dog sacrifice offering is completed, the priest takes his shares, which is usually the foreleg from the slaughtered dog. The priest also talks with the spirits in his vision and it is believed that what the priest sees in his vision actually takes place in the ensuing year. Thus it is one of the most important and significant events of the dog sacrifice of the Eiu-Am festival.

KONYAK



SIGNIFICANCE OF AOLEANG MONYU

Dry cold winter had gone, hot and rainy days had not yet advent. Aoleang is being celebrated amidst the most favourable season of the year. Aoleang had been christened as Monyu since it is the biggest festival of the Konyaks and according Aoleang Monyu is observed from 1st - 6th April each year. It is a time when Konyaks are jubilant as the sowing of seeds is completed and nature is blessed with fresh blooming buds and greens. It is a period of transition from an old field to a new sowing year. Hence, Aoleang also heralds the advent of a new year. Aoleang Monyu is also observed by offering innovation to the almighty for his manifold blessings. It is also a time of celebration with loved ones as they gear up to venture out into the world of uncertainties.

The main objective of the Aoleang festival is to celebrate the presence of “Wangwan” or the divine spirit of blessing. On the first day people would erect Wangwan inviting its divine present amidst the celebration. The presence of Wangwan is invoked through singing, dancing, feasting and drinking. Traditionally, Wangwan is being symbolized by erecting bamboo pole with palm leaf hanging on its branches which is hoisted at front of every morung. The people seek for prosperity, blessings and protection in their endeavor. On the last day of celebrations, people hid farewell to Wangwan by carrying out his symbol in the outskirts of the village. They hid their farewell and wish upon his return the next year.

The Aoleang festivities are marked by much singing, dancing and feasting. It is a time remembering friends and relatives. It is also a time when each household remembers the women folk who have married out. They are honored with best gifts and great feasts.

On day two of celebration, family members bid adieu to departed soul of the family that had passed during the year. The bereaved family pays homage by visiting their graves and offering food and drinks to their souls.

Aoleang is also the time of "Nvevah-Suopanpu" where young boys and girls who attain adulthood shall begin to wear traditional dresses and join the adult group in singing and dancing from that day onwards. During the Aoleang, both the young and the old display their best and colourful dresses and attires that had been preserved.

Aoleang also signifies a time of peace and reconciliation. Anyone willing to make peace and reconcile by forgiving their past incidents or debts takes this opportunity of Aoleang.

Aoleang Monyu is closed with community social work on the last day.

Image: Festivals of Konyak Tribe



RITUALS

The important rituals of Konyak that cycled with life are mainly related to birth, marriage and death. When a child is born to a family an offering of chicken is made in the name of Gawang, the Supreme god for the good health of the baby and the mother. Name of the child is given by the elderly women.

Marriage ceremony, is also performed within a day. While searching for a life partner, negotiation plays an important role. He/She is responsible for the entire arrangements between the two families as well as the would be partners. The bride price is settled and the groom's party marches to the bride's house where ceremony, is held in the name of their supreme God/gawang.

A feast is held after the ceremony and after the feast they return to their respective village.

The next day the groom's family arranges a feast for friends and relatives.

The traditional funeral ceremony lasts for six days. The news of the death will be immediately announced to the whole village along with that log-drums are beaten on the death of a person.

Relatives, friends, villagers and loved ones gather to express their grief on the death.

Traditionally the clan boys of the death prepare a new wooden figure for the soul of the death. While the girls prepares two new caps made out of fresh leaves of the local tree.

One for the death and the other for the effigy.

Some even dyes with white colour. Feast is also prepared for all the mourners.

Rituals Associated with Festivals, morung construction, cultivation and other rituals.

- I. Festival and its rituals. Konyak people have many festivals like that of any other Nagas. The two main festivals which are mainly associated with agricultural functions are Aolingmonya and Oniehu.

A) The Aolingmonya is observed from 1st – 6th April every year after harvest. It signifies the arrival of spring.

The main festivals are Aoleng, langmhao, gaming or hanging pangpo, laonen, pangpo. shahawin pangpo, pongjim pangpo and ghumrak pangpo.

There are different rituals for various occasions:

LAO ONG YOM; NYAK TIDKPU:

It is observed after the completion of the harvesting of crops. This kind of ritual is performed as a sign of tribute to the Supreme being (God) for good harvest and completion of the year and thanking for the sound health and to seek blessings even for the days to come. This is done by particular households after the harvest of crops is done. At night after the log drum beating is performed, they return home for a festive serving with local delicacies and rice beer.

YAMJONG(ALTAR):

Sacrificial altar made of wood. It is placed in front of the field hut. During the time of festival, animals are slaughtered and their blood is offered in the altar for the appeasement of the spirit so that no misfortune or sickness would come in their family. Food, rice beer, sticky rice and meat are also offered in the altar.

YUEANG LAMM:

It is believed that when someone is sick or ill the person should go and seek the fortune teller. But if the fortune teller suggests that the sick person has lost his spirit or secluded somewhere then they were advised to go to that particular place to search for the sick person's spirit. After reaching the place the rituals should be performed. The person responsible for the ritual must go with chicken/pets and slaughter them on that spot, then he must spell the words and come back home. Any ornaments or necklaces from the ritual is forbidden to bring back home by that particular person.

YANG JEN PU

This is one of the practices of the custom of the village, this is to be done when the lightning strike caused in the particular fields. house or any areas it was believed that if the person goes to that spot the person would

get the itching disease in order to avoid from such they were performed rituals going to that spot and offered sacrificed of rooster etc. and came back from that field and in the house they were share the feast.

CHILD BIRTH

The male child born were called lümpu whereas the female child born was called lümnyu.

Religion and beliefs

Like other Naga tribal religion, Konyak too have a mixture of theism, animism, supernaturalism, superstition. It is connected with the practice of sorcery, magic and exorcisms. Priest received special knowledge through training wandering off evil spirits and for the conduct of various ceremonies. Ritual practices are also held so as to avert epidemics. which are believed to be a representation of an evil spirit's shadow, owing to the failures of appeasement by the individual, family or villagers. During such a situation eggs are laid on the path or near the village gate wrapped in a leaf. Systems of invocation and appeasement of spirit varies from village to village and even from one household to another. Sacrifices of meat etc are also offered.

Rituals on newly cultivated of paddy field

The major crops of Konyak people cultivate rice, maize, millet, yam. Besides these the Konyak people also cultivate chillies, pumpkins, cucumber, gourds etc. These are cultivated in the jhuming fields. Practices of terrace fields will be found only in Tizit area. The system of jhum cultivation has several drawbacks. It requires large area of lands as it cannot continue to cultivate in one particular place for years as the fertility of the soil decreases. Further, the crop is entirely dependent on rainfalls for the soil to moisten and it requires to bring it to maturity.

The villagers and the people practice shilling or jhum cultivation that vary from one field to another. When the villagers are about to start their new cultivation they carry along with them animals to slaughter and sacrifice before they begin to clear the new fields.

If one of the villager or a member in the family is sick or death the villagers of their clan, relatives help them to work in the fields.

During the sowing of seeds and building of huts they had to offer animals as a sacrifice and as a respect to their God and also to cast the evil spirit. After the completion of harvest they do the same.

The farmer also has their own song called **SHAQBI PU**. It is a rhythmic song sung by farmers as they plough the field. The sound they produce rises to a crescendo and falls back as they sing in unison. These songs help them to synchronize and coordinate their movement as they plough the field with their hoes.

PHOM

Documentations of Oral Traditions and Rituals of Phom tribe, Longleng District.

1. Rituals associated with festivals, Morung construction, cultivation and any other rituals which need to be documented.

Rituals on festivals and Morung construction of the Phom tribe. (Note: *All the cultivation rituals are one with the festival rituals.*)

(a) Mituals of Festivals

Rituals were an integral part of our ancestor which was observed with great dedication and faith. Everyday life of the Phoms were intertwined with those rituals and specifically the festivals were observed with pure ritualistic character. In fact festivals could be considered as series of rituals combined with merry-making. It is the type of rituals that sets apart between festivals and also in maintaining the order of life. There are six major festivals celebrated in the Phomland since time immemorial. Which are discussed below in underlined headings:

(i) Monyü (1st – 6th April)

This is the biggest festival of the Phoms celebrated in the month of April every year. Monyili is celebrated to welcome the spring season, it is also considered as the beginning of the new year. Secondly, it is the time to unite and celebrate with near and dear ones and from far off lands especially to call home the married daughters and sisters and shower them with love and blessings. The time for Monyu is decided by gazing at the moon. After the date is decided the youths start beating the log drum in three days advance. On the fourth day Monyu festival sets in beginning with:

Day 1: Shongten laiphen :

On this day the denizens would folk to the fields and forests to collect various materials needed for the festivals. Bundles of plaintain leaf and bamboos cut into cups besides firewood and bamboo straps are arranged and kept in store for use during the feast.

Day 2: Ching oak shok:

On the second day the villagers can celebrate at home by slaughtering pigs and chickens, it is the day of feasting and merry making.

Day 3: Yenthiü :

On the third day invitees would reach at the host place from far and near to celebrate and spend time with their family, friends and villagers as a whole. Special dinner is served with best food and wines to this guest. Usually the guests would be the married daughters and sisters or close kins. It is the time to show off their love towards their married daughters and sisters and their families, by providing the best food and wines. The menfolk would take this opportunity to compete amongst themselves as to who hosts the best.

Day 4: Chingthem

On this day rowdy is expected to go to work, they are not even allowed to go hunting or travel except for *moo shorn* i.e. *offer food and meat to their aunts and sisters*. Special Phom recipes like *anhoü* and *anphat* (rice and meat porridge and bamboo steamed rice and meat) *Nukchaiü* (gummy rice) are prepared at almost every house. Meat and special recipe are offered to their guests and neighbours and bosom friend. In the evening the priest and elders (male) would perform "*nükshash vanpa*" a special rite to ward off all misfortune and evils of the past year.

Day 5: Yen yon:

On the fifth day the guest departs for their homes. All the guests are gladdened with gifts by their hosts like food and meat, clothes, seeds, spears, machete, basket etc.

Day 6: Vang hi sho tük:

The last and final day is declared as the day of mass social work to clean up their entire village and burn all waste of households, gardens and community places.

(ii) Hahmangvü:

This festivals is celebrated for a day usually falling on the last week of May to 1st week of June every year. Prior to the day of hahmangvü the

villagers bring sapling of each plants cultivated in their fields and placed it on the temporary alter prepared for the occasion. On the day of the festivals the priest or "ngongpa" would stand by the alter and offer prayers for a prosperous year of farming. After the prayer a chicken or pig will be slaughter and he would predict how fruitful the year would be by looking at the entrails of chicken or the position of the hoofs of the slaughtered pig.

(iii) Moha:

This festivals falls between the last week of June to first week of July every year. Prior to the day of Moha the villagers would prepare a special meal usually chicken for dinner. The next day, work are divided amongst the adults according to "yen" batch as per the norms that exist in the tradition of morung different agricultural roads and all other significant trade route and inter village roads are cleared, clean and repaired. All those who are yet to register in the "yen" are given works within the vicinity of villages. Moha is dedicated to this social service where every adult individual should perform his duty, absence from works would amount to certain penalty.

(iv) Moivüm:

This festivals rituals falls in the month of July ten days after the "moha" this ritual is dedicated for bountiful harvest. Prayers are offered on the day, usually moivüm is observed a week before the start of harvest to seek blessing from the gods to provide them good health and favourable weather to harvest their fields.

(v) Baangmoo:

Literally the word "baangrnoo" means winter festival, it falls in the month of October every year. It is the feast of thanksgiving for the rich harvest. On the day of the feast "ngongpa" the priest or volunteers would visit every households to collect whatever they have to offer. Generally Rice, was given to them, however in addition to that vegetables and handicrafts items were also given to them.

(vi) Pungvüm, (Dedication of barn):

This is a rituals to dedicate the barn one week after the harvest is done and the paddy kept in barn the father or elderly male member of the family conduct the püngvüm he would go alone and cook chicken in front of the barn, which are built a little distant from their house. He would then

grind the ginger place it in the leaf and tie it to the "ashum" a huge bamboo basket where paddy is kept, after tearing the cooked chicken into tiny pieces he would place in the plaintain leaf and along with the flower herb called "chüong" it is fixed to the "ashüm"

This ritual is carried out so that his family would be able to survive until the next harvest from this barn.

(b) Rituals associated with Morung construction

MORUNG is the most important institution of the Phom tribe. It plays a very significant role in the lives of the people, regulating the socio-cultural as well as economic life of the of the phom tribe. The common form of morung in Phom is "Bang" the etymological meaning of this word, Bang is to "listen or obey". Wherever new village settlement was proposed the spot for "Bang" is reserved before choosing plots for private housing. The constitution of the "Bang" was ceremonial in nature despite the heavy manual labour. Division for construction of morung had to be taken one year ahead which will allow denizen to grow more food to have more stocks for the coming years, i.e the year of morung construction.

Mr Yannang Konyak in his research paper on Ahom-Konyak relation talks about the coining of the term "Morung". The Ahoms who frequently visited Konyak villages observed dormitories resembling to that of the Rang Ghar at Sivasagar which was used by the Ahom Kings as play-house. On being asked about the dormitory in the Konyak village was their Rang Ghar, to which Konyak guide replied, "Mor Rang Hoi" which meant "yes my dormitory". The Konyak thought 'Rang' in Ahomia meant dormitory and the Ahomia thought "Mar Rang" meant dormitory.

The place for construction of morung is decided even before the villagers starts to settle down. A cow or Mithun would be reserved for the feast in advance. The construction site is dedicated through prayers by the "Ngongpa" a chief priest or group of elders of the village by warding off evils and seeking blessings through pouring of wine or "yu auhpf.r. After the consecration ceremony, the construction begins by collecting the best materials for construction of the "Bang" or Morung. Decoration of Bang begins along with the construction work, highly skilled wood carvers are employed. Various figures of animals, birds and humans are carved on the main poles and beams of the morung accordingly which is also a part of the morung. Generally or almost all the morungs has figures of the tiger carved on the giant wooden pole on top of the elephant, and on top of it a python is carved. On top of the python, three monkeys are carved holding hands and the

hornbill on top of them. The eagle is carved on top of the Hornbill and black Drongo bird on top of the hornbill. Human figures, bulls and lions are also carved in some morungs. The elephant signifies strength and richness, the tiger signifies ferocity and bravery, the monkeys stands for friendship, the python signifies ownership, the hornbill signifies beauty/ handsome and the Drongo bird signifies smartness/vigilance.

The boundaries of the morung is believed to ensure long and blissful life, it is considered a revered place where no lies are tolerated and he who disrespect the ideals of truth are believed to receive the wrath of nature.

On completion of the "Bang" two men would climb atop on each end and recite the verse of greatness, bravery and the sacrificial deeds done by the community. The guest invited from the "Mai ching" or "Bossom village" are expected to reach the village to celebrate the dedication of "Bang".

The guests are expected to be taken care of by the women folks of the village. As part of the ritual each of them would be picked by women on their arrival to the host village to be fed dinner in their house. All of them would gather outside the Bang in two groups of youths, one from the host village and the other from the guest village. Youths of the guest village would try to enter the Morung whereas the host would try to block their entrance. The commotion finally ends when one of the men from guest team enters the Bang and beats the log drum. They spent the night singing "mailok" songs of affection by sitting around the fire. The next morning women of host village sends them off till the boundary of the village.

(c) Other rituals

(i) Dinchingpü. The Rituals of Healing.

It is a showcase of traditional healing that was practiced by the Phoms since time immemorial. The healers were rare and the sick had to be brought to him he who wanted to get his disease cured. Through mountains in search of traditional healer men would seek carrying the sick on their shoulders/bamboo shaft through the rain and sun, day and night.

On examining the patient the "DIN CHINGPU" Healer would ask his needs to perform the rituals including a meal, tea leaves and rice beer. None other than him should consume the eatables used during the rituals or the sickness would transpire through it into their body. The ritual is usually performed with the White Feathered Chicken. If the patient is a male, the healer would circle the Chicken around him six times where as the females

would be circled five times, (The number six is considered as male number and the number five is considered as female number). If the patient could not be cured with the first ritual it was then followed by the next ritual that is with the Black Feathered Chicken'. On the persistence of the diseases or illness, the healer would order a four legged animal a "Male Goat" for the third ritual and is kept under observation for days, as many he would prescribe. Even after the third ritual if the diseases refuse to leave the body he orders a final ritual which would decide the fate of the patient. For his final ritual the '*Din Chingpti* orders a 'Black Coloured Dog'. Hence this would seal the patient's fate, he/she would either be healed or be left to die.

(ii) VANGNYÜKPÜ: RITUAL FOR RAIN

This ritual is carried out to relief the land and its dwellings from the thirst of water. When there is an abnormal pursuance of a long dry season without rains or it has surpassed the sowing season, the community prepares to call the rain.

On a chosen particular day the villagers assemble to witness this rain ritual performed, only by certain selected clansman from amongst the villagers. It is carried out by using a special instrument called "Hümbin", derives from the sound it makes while swung in the air. A single stick with strings attached to it is rotated in a circular manner with regular rhythm one after the other. Usually two but sometimes more men performs the Hümbin which is accompanied by songs and dances from the villagers while calling the rain. The sound from the ritual is believed to reach the heavens and awaken the thunder and storm resulting in rainfall that quenches the thirst of Mother Nature.

POCHURY

RITUALS ASSOCIATED WITH MORUNG CONSTRUCTION

Aweikhuh (Morung) is a sleeping dormitory for men-folk in Pochury. It is constructed in a strategic location of the village where men-folk usually guard the village from enemies and other danger throughout the night. On the day of the construction of Aweikhuh (morung) no one should brew wine at home. Women folk are totally forbidden from entering the morung.

The Pochury morung is constructed with much significance related to it. Posts of the morung are carved with many designs which hold importance significance. The three posts and the cross-beams, projecting high above the gable were richly ornamented with carvings. The two cross-beams resemble a sharp dao which denotes the daos used by man folk in all activities. The main front post is a carved dog which signifies the dog's intelligence and alertness with the character of men folk. Heads of pig, wild deer, stag, buffalo and horn are carved which signify the richness and abundance of the village. On the second top of the post is a carved moon which signify that men folk knows the timing of different seasons for cultivation by studying the moon movement and on the top most of the post is the two carved head of human which signify the head hunting days which are won at war. From the edges of the roof and the extension of the gable hung long tassels of thatching grass swinging in the wind. On the door is an adjoining post and on it is a breast of a woman which signify the respect and admiration of the woman shown by men folk. And in the middle is the carved heads of human which signify how much one has hunted the heads of the enemy. If a person killed a tiger he will not sleep at his home and will sleep at a morung for one month as a ritual. Festivals celebration or deaths of any member of the village are announced first from the Morung. Important meetings and gatherings are also done in the morung. A Morung serve not only as a sleeping or guarding place but it act as the learning place for the men-folk. They learn folk stories, songs, dances, warfare, plays and about cultivation and also making a way of life and are past down orally from generation to generation. Once a man gets married he no longer can come and sleep at the morung though he can

sometime make a visit. The morung plays an all round development in men's life.

Alashie is a girl's dormitory in Pochury. On the 8th day of Nazhu festival the men-folk will construct Alashie for girls in a particular home where merit feasts are organized and hosted. Men-folk will go for cutting down the oak tree in the path leading to the field and women folk will collect the wood cut down by men folk and bring it home. The very next evening there will be a tug-of-war and if the rope is torn then the rope will be used for binding beams and post in the construction of Alashie (girl's dormitory)

It is a taboo to use other rope other than the tug-of-war torn rope to bind in Alashie construction. A group of adolescent girls who are yet to reach youth life within three years will shaved off their hairs, it is a taboo to keep the hair long and on reaching the youth life on their third year they can start growing their hair. The term for young girls to sleep in Alashie is for three years only and on reaching the term one can get married or if unmarried should start sleeping at her own home. Alashie is not only a sleeping place but also learning place for young girls. During the time of Jhum cultivation young girls come back from field collecting varieties and different trees with the skin/bark of the tree peeled off to Alashie and do the guessing of the trees among themselves and learn much of them. The young girls learn cultural stories, songs, dances etc in Alashie. One must bring her own Awie (bed) and blankets every night and must take it back home the next morning. It is forbidden to leave behind in Alashie. On the day of seed sowing all the young girls come to have food together in Alashie with their own cooked fishes from home as on this day it is forbidden to have any kind of meat. And the food must be taken in a small bamboo basket covered by fig leaf and who ever eats the biggest fish will collect the fish bone and decorate the entrance door of Alashie (dormitory). On the day before the harvest all the villagers must stay home and prepare all the necessity for the harvest for the next day as ritual and the next day early in the morning all the young girls who have been sleeping in the Alashie must depart and go back home taking back their own beddings.

Any kind of tribal education and discipline- the art of warfare, handicraft, music and dance, moral and social education were taught in the Morung. The Morung was the pride of the village

and is considered to be an important educational, political and social institution.

NAZHUKHU

NAZHUKHU is one of the premiere festival of Pochury tribe, which falls between during the fortnight of January and February. In the days of yore, the duration of the festival span for a dozen of days; also a ritual practices before a new slash/Jhum cultivation is ventured out. It is also a time to invoke God's blessing, good health, good fortune, bountiful harvest and prosperity to the Village.

As the beginning of the end of winter season unfolds, the Nazhu festival marked the celebration of the new calendar year. Besides the various rituals observed, the festival is also flavored by revelry with much pomp and gaiety irrespective of young and old; high and low or status and position.

From all accounts, here is a brief rituals of Nazhu festival in chronological order as observed or practiced since time immemorial.

1. The festival of Nazhu is preceded with numerous feast of merit hosted by wealthy families. And as it inches closed to the season of feast of merit, the host of feast perform a ritual called "Athsothuo" and announces/ declares on the eve of fourth day.

2. ANYOTE

The commencement of the second day called Anyote is a day reserved for the preparation of a traditional special bread "Küsüshie" (Bread for the death soul) coupled with a long bamboo pole is raised high, and a gently wrapped sticky rice and pork meat is placed in a small basket (Nyiezakhuo) allowing to suspense around the pole. It is both an obligatory and a ritual for every household who has a male offspring to erect one.

3. NYIEMPAKHU (A day for male)

The third day is called Nyiempakhu where a specially cooked bread prepared on the previous day is relish by the

families. However, the said food/bread is exempted for the warriors.

4. KHUJI

At the dawn of fourth day progresses, after the meal, the entire youth supervised by a few senior steward are flocked to the forest and retrieve a specific long fern rope called `Kaloli' at the outskirts of the village. Simultaneously, women are engaged to fetch water collectively and prepares the best variety of dishes to serve men at the end of the day.

5. AKHAKÜZJIUKHU

On the fifth day of festival, it is characterized by young boys and girls with a shared responsibility collectively carrying firewood which they had stacked earlier in the jungle for the festival. Besides, from amongst the four khels of the village, the Khutsori khel will assemble at the flank of the village and proceed onto the village with loud tune in melodious, traditional voices. This continues and enliven across each khels and lastly ensemble at their khel amphitheatre.

6. RÜLA MÜLO-A(Matrimonial ceremonies)

A day exclusively reserved for matrimonial ceremonies for all the engaged couples. When the night falls, the relatives of the bride or interceder will walk her to the groom's residence. The bridal shower follows however, it is confined to the bride's families alone. In the death of night, the food is also catered to the young boys and girls at the morung.

7. AZHEJU (Construction of resting house)

The seventh day of the festival is particularly assigned for the village Chief who is also the leader of religious rituals. In the early hours of the morning, he will sneak into the forest to the supposed site for the new slash cultivation and retreat after a landmark is placed on a few woods. When the sun majestically glides down on the horizon, the menfolk track to the location of the landmark and on retreating construct a resting place on their way home. Only ginger and dried fish are dined before they retire for the night.

8. KHARU NEZHU (Retrieving of Kaloli)

All the menfolk on this occasion, before the meal, are obliged to retrieve the long fern rope (Kaloli) to the village which they had placed earlier at the outskirts of the village. Subsequently, in the following hours the young boys are tasked to carry wood material back to the village for construction of 'Alashie' (Sleeping berth) especially for the daughters of families who have organized a feast of merit. This is then followed by a tug-of-war being played between young boys and girls until a rope is ripped apart. An ensemble of folk dance and songs is performed after the assigned task is attained.

9. ZHUHLAJU

On the ninth day, a strip of iron metal in variable sizes are cut and carried for disposal where spring water are located at the site of cultivation to appease or dwarf of evil spirit. Meanwhile, the boys are embarked to construct Alashie (sleeping berth), for the daughters, of the host of feast of merit contributor.

10. MUNYIKHU

A gesture of goodwill and hospitality is favoured by the host families, of the feast of merit, for the assistance rendered towards the completion of their daughter Alashie (sleeping berth). The first category of people belongs to the young boys, and they are served to relish a sticky rice, rice brew and rice. The second batch are women catered with rice brew. And the last group are composed of men folk who are served with rice brew and retire for the night with numerous enthralling heterogeneous tunes and songs.

11. KHAJ1 BOUTSA

This is a day for clearance of forest where all the villagers pursue to their respective plot for cultivation. However, in case a natural calamities or any demise befall amongst the villagers in the midst of the festivals, a day long rest is observed by everyone as a sign of respect and homage to the departed soul. But for the young boys, a variety of best dishes are cooked marching towards the outskirts of the village as a steward for the day and retreat by evening.

12. AJURA NETSA

The twelfth day of the festival marked the conclusion of the festival. On this day, a ritual restrict villagers to venture outside the vicinity of village. However, the men folk are relaxed and allow for movement within the confined of a nearby village surrounding.

From the rituals practices as observed from our progenitors, the sole objectives of the Nazhu festival is not only confine to the extra curricular activities. But ostensibly, it reflects the socio-economic, cultural and political lives of the people. Moreover, it also depicts a pure, simple social interaction of yesteryears, where moral philosophy are thrived by the ideology and concepts of collectivism, strong bond or friendship, generosity, workmanship, unity and cohesion, a sense of social responsibility, humility, respect and outmost integrity.

YEMSHE

Yemshe is the premier festival of the Pochury- Naga Tribe, which is celebrated to welcome the new harvest. The arrival of the new harvest is welcome and celebrated with great fun & fair during Yemshe festival. All the Pochurires, young and old, rich and poor ceremonialised this festival with great pomp and gaiety expecting a good harvest which they deserve after a year's hard work under stewing sun and relentless rain. No one is allowed to harvest, until the whole festival is over.

The Literal meaning of Yemshe is "Yem" which means "house" and "She/alüshe" meaning "odours", which comes out from the cooking of the food and meats during the festival as almost all the households cook the best preserved meat and food during this season to celebrate in enthusiasm.

Generally, the festival begins in the latter part of September with different categories of ceremonial rituals till the final day which falls in the first week of October every year. The main function of Yemshe is observed only on 5th October keeping in tune with the closing ceremony of the long period of festivities. The advent of the festival is announced by the village Crier (Bvifüpa). Subsequent upon the announcement, the festival starts the next day with the youth of the village cleansing all the important footpaths leading to the fields and neighbouring villages, wells, etc. And construct Basketry-cum-Resting Sheds.

For sanctification of a house, ritual feast is hosted by a rich family and the Head of the family perform all the rituals. Necessary materials used in rituals are fastened to the main post or the house entrance. Engaged couples (fiance & fiancée) renewed their relationship with exchange of food and wine and eat and drink together. It is also an occasion where many young people come to know each other and get engaged for marriage. Hence, this festival has great importance and is therefore, an enjoyable season, especially for the young people in particularly and farmers in general.

The family hosting the sanctification feast, besides providing wine, meat, also has to host a dance party (Mükhow lungtreüm) of his (head of family) age group. The host who is able to provide everything will be called the "Yemshe Father". He may also invite dance party from neighbouring villages and establish diplomatic ties (a necessity during those head-hunting days). Only paddy rice is provided (not millet, maize, etc.) for food, and mugs from which they drink wine are made of bamboo and kept in the house of the host. Small quantities of foodstuff are also offered to the dead souls.

In remembrance of the departed and loved ones, prior to the sanctification, feast is offered lavishly by the host. The host will ask the villagers to fetch him pine-wood for lighting during the festival. Sacrificial acts, rituals, construction of bridges, ladders, collection of materials for construction of houses, etc. are done until the culmination of the festival.

The host family who host the Purification Feast has to fulfill the following conditions before the great feast (the great closing ceremony) day.

1. The Host family of Purification Feast has to provide wine to all families of the village.
2. They have to host dance party of his (head of the family) age-group, men and women in the village and in Khel-wise as well. Feast is given to the dancers, and meat is distributed to all his age-group friends.
3. Cutting of Bamboo Mugs takes place twice. All the host's clansmen/nephews make new bamboo mugs. They take wine from the mugs, kept with the host. All the old Mugs are collected from every house and kept in the host's family for drinking wine.

4. Only paddy rice is arranged (not millet, maize, etc.) and distributed to all the houses by the host for cooking and later the cooked rice is again collected and redistributed to all the families in the village.
5. For reserving of frogs, one axe each for three rivers is given to the villagers as a sign of frogs in these three rivers reserved. This is followed by giving out a big feast to all the village elders. After that, it is announced in the village that frogs in these three rivers are reserved by the host of Purification feast or Yernshe Festival. Hence no other villagers should go to these rivers to catch it.
6. After wine and food is arranged, the host of the festival asks his villagers to fetch him pine-wood and he gives a big feast to the villagers. Men take 6 pieces of meat while women take only 5 pieces on the occasion.
7. All the clansmen carry well-prepared food and wine and go to the reserved rivers and make bridges/ladders for frog catchers to enable them to go to any part of the river. At the same time, they eat and drink and enjoy on their own. This is a part of many games they play during the festival.
8. A chicken is kept in a cage on a selected tree on the way to the field. Selected group will go to that spot with dried frogs where chickens were kept and have a feast there. Every household in the village has to perform this ritual. Even the poorest family has to perform this ritual by roasting brinjal if he has no chicken.
9. It is traditionally believed that the most fertile lands were under the control of spirits. Sacrificial rituals are therefore, performed according to the fertility of the land. For the most fertile land a Mithun has to be sacrificed, then a pig and for the less fertile land, a chicken has to be sacrificed in the field. Two big gourds (in the olden days gourds are used for water and any other liquid storage) of wine is carried, one for halfway and the other for sacrificial consumption at the spot. While coming back from their fields the group do not mix up with other groups. Thus, a Mithun group, Pig group and Chicken group shall come back home separately. Likewise, wine is also taken separately.

After all the arrangements, like collection of green vegetables, rice, meat and performance of rituals are completed, the host selects 6

supervisors; two for washing ginger, four to supervise the butchers for preparation of the feast for the whole village. All young and old will come and help the host in preparation of the feast. In this feast, Mithun, Pigs and Chicken are slaughtered. If there is no Mithun, three pigs substitute a Mithun. Womenfolk pound rice and cook while the menfolk busy for meat, and other seemingly difficult jobs. By sundown, all the villagers, from youngest to the oldest come together to attend the great feast. Few quantities of all sorts of foodstuff and rice grains are shared and offered to the dead souls as farewell gifts and greetings on the final Yemshe Feast. The last day of the feast will be impressively observed as the ceremonial feast. A part from sanctification, every parent will prepare a special meal for their children called "Luchishe to eat together with his/her best friend among friends called "Luchipa" for boys and "Luchifü" for girls who are bonded to be friends till death.

On this day everyone will remain at home and no one will do anything or go on a journey. The celebration ended with a grand festivities hoping for good harvest and prosperity.

From the very next day harvest starts and house construction materials are collected.

NOTE: Cultivation rituals are related with Nazhu and Yemshe Festivals

RENGMA

RITUALS

Rites and rituals form central part of the culture and tradition of the Rengma Naga tribe. Culture is incomplete with rituals. Where culture is a whole ritual is a unit. There are a number of different rituals associated with the tribe. Important features of rituals are sacrificial acts, offering, worship, propitiating, sanctification, forgiveness, cleansing, protection, wisdom, good health and long life, bountifulness, wealth, honour and glory, driving out demons etc. There are a number of rituals of the tribe. Important ones include Morung Construction Rituals, Aghikezi (Warrior's Rituals), Akhunavuu (Ngada Ritual) Aketsonkedonshaa ritual, Alenkesashaa (Dulajushaa) ritual etc.

AGHIKEZI (WARRIOR'S RITUALS)

This is an important ritual of the Rengma tribe. The period of observation of this ritual is 16 days. It is done when a warrior killed an enemy and brought enemy's head or flesh. During ritual period husband and wife will not sleep on the same bed in order to abstain from any sexual activity. They shall have to fast without food till the ritual period is over. They shall be allowed to drink Azutsazu or wine which is prepared without putting yeast. Social interaction is barred during observatory period.

ALENKESASHAA (DULAJUSHAA) RITUAL

A ritual which is offered for the purpose of cleaning the field paths and also an offering of appeasement to the souls of the dead ones. In this ritual an offering of wine is done to the spirit of the death at the graveyard.

MORUNG CONSTRUCTION RITUALS

According to Rengma Naga customs establishment of a village is believed to be incomplete or meaningless unless there is construction of morung. Morung served as an initial training centre of the youth for acquirement of warfare skills, basic social etiquettes, rules and regulations etc. to protect the land.

Akhunavuu (Ngada Ritual) procession would start at the morung. Akhunavuu is a ritual of forgive and forget. If a warrior kills an enemy he has to sleep at Azughu (morung) for three nights. Azughu courtyard also served as a centre for discussion of all important matters including confidential ones. Murder case is also tried only at the Azughu.

AKETSONKEDONSHAA RITUAL

A ritual to respect the earth and the heaven to lay down on ground with weapons.

SANGTAM

A REPORT ON THE RITUALS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF MORUNG BY THE SANGTAM OF PHELONGRÜ VILLAGE

RITUALS ASSOCIATED WITH MORUNG CONSTRUCTION

The Phelongrü village is situated merely a few kilometers away from Kiphire town but this Sangtam village represents the wholesome idea of the tribe unique culture and tradition. The Phelongrü speaks a different dialect from the other Sangtam villages and follow a strong custom and tradition of the tribe. There are rituals associated with cultivation, festivals and Morung construction.

The Morung is locally known as "*Turh*" in Phelongrü. It is a place for conducting meetings and a training place for warfare and the place where strategies are secretly legislated and executed. Therefore, it is a village court where necessary decisions are made. Womenfolk are barred from entering the morung and for that matter are not even allow near the morung compound. Adolescence girls from the age group of 12 years and above are restricted to the morung facilities but small children have the liberty to do so.

The ritual or "*zee*" associated with the construction of morung is first performed by the soothsayer. After studying the pattern of six sticks laid before him, he predict the favourable time for construction of the morung but it is most preferably done in the month of February. If the prediction signals a good omen to go ahead with the construction, the "*Zho-Zho*" or the Announcer relay the message to the people for collecting of the building materials.

Collection of building material begins the following day. In the morning, all the young men of the village go to the forest and slash the palm leaves for covering the roof and after the lunch, bamboo and planks are collected and transported to the village. The collection building materials has to be done within a day. The women folk are to refrain/forbidden from going near the stocked materials.

To begin the construction of the morung, "Malak" a long bamboo pole is erected to signify that the work is in process. The leader of the ceremony, herald a slogan to start off the construction. There is hullabaloo in the beginning but as the work progress, the crowd maintains decorum and the work becomes more systematic in precise order. The meals are usually the contribution of the villagers and it is practice that some meats of any feasts are smoked dried and preserved aside for consumption during this construction period. Cooking of food and serving is done only by the male folk. It is also considered a taboo to take any of the left over to the farm as it is belief that the act will spoil the harvest. "Athrongrü" are the warrior and it is their duty to be on high alert and protect the village during this period. Forest hunting, feast and folk dance follows the morung construction.

SUMI

Rituals associated with festivals, Morung construction, Cultivation and any other rituals which needs to be documented.

FESTIVALS

TULUNI

During olden time, each Sumi village was a village-state, independent of the other. Hence, all the Sumi villages had their own numerous festivals. However, in the year 1976, there was an agreement between various sumi leaders to hold a common festival “Tuluni” to be celebrated on 7-8 July every year.

Tuluni is celebrated to start the sowing of seeds. Also, it is celebrated to pray to gods to protect the seeds from insects and other natural calamities. During this festival, cleaning of village and surroundings is done by the community. Traditionally, the Sumis celebrated *Tuluni* in a span of seven (7) days. The seven days of *Tuluni* were:-

ASUZANI (FIRST DAY)

On this day, millets were sown in the fields.

AGHIZANI (SECOND DAY)

On this day, rice seeds were sown.

ASHIGHENI (THIRD DAY)

On this day, domestic animals were slaughtered. Some groups labored and earned by working in the farmland of other people, from which they buy cattle to be slaughtered on this day and shared among them equally. However the head of the slaughtered animal was always given to the group of the leader. Also, meats are distributed to the in-laws on this day.

ANIGHINI (FOURTH DAY)

It is the main day for cooking and enjoying the feast. High jump, long jump, kicking of spear and singing songs are some of the activities of the community on this day.

MUCHOLANI (FIFTH DAY)

On this day, the senior people track road to the field.

TUGHAKHANI (SIXTH DAY)

This day is dedicated to the youths.

TUGHAKHANI (SEVENTH DAY)

The last day was observed by not permitting anybody to go out of the village and the gates were shuttered as a preventive measure for bad spirit to enter.

One interesting ritual or practice during *Tuluni* is the use of rice beer and banana leaves. Banana leaf is hanged on a post plate inside the house. Rice beer is split on the banana leaf on the day of *Tuluni*.

The significance of *Tuluni* is that it brings the community together and restores peace. It is also observed to pray for protecting the crops from bad events. Exchange of meals between families takes place, to signify love and unity

AHUNA

The word AHUNA means “bamboo or vessel cooked food”. The sumis celebrate ahuna to bid farewell to the current year and welcoming the upcoming year. It is a post-harvest festival celebrated on 13-14 November.

Rituals observed during *Ahuna* are many. Just o the eve of *Ahuna*, the men along with his sons and women along with her daughters sleep separately. The father and sons sleep outside the house in a temporarily built shed, whereas, mother and daughters in the house.

On the day of *Ahuna*, rice is cooked in a bamboo vessel and eaten with meat and other delicacy by the community to foster the spirit of ones and togetherness among the people. One interesting observation of the festival is that, if it is celebrated by the family, they cook one extra bamboo cooked rice which is meant for the spirit or ghost.

Also, on this day, a bamboo cup filled with rice-beer is taken to the field to be spilled on a flattened platform. If the rice-beer overflows out of the platform, it means that the upcoming year will bring rich harvest. However, if the rice-beer sticks to the platform it means bad luck. The same bamboo is also split into half and thrown I the air. If the split bamboo lands on the same face

either side, it brings bad luck. However, if it lands on the opposite side it signifies good luck for the upcoming year.

It is also believed that all the people that died on that particular year go to the 'abode of the dead' on the eve of *Ahuna*.

YIMCHUNGRU

FUNERAL RITES

Traditionally, the corpse is buried nearby the hearth. The reason behind such indoor burial was a precaution for avoiding damage of deceased body by animals in the event of burial outside. For the burial, the priest (amukeampuh) would measure the length and breadth of the corpse. In the case of death of a warrior or a renowned hunter, a dog is slaughtered and then hung above the deceased's head so that the dog would bark and lead the deceased to the land of dead.

Within the specific period of funeral observation, all the funeral provisions should be completely consumed or disposed off. It is deleterious to carry such meat, rice etc to the field or to any other places.

When a person dies, bamboo or wooden poles are prepared for disposal of the deceased articles known as "Hah bah pung" at the outskirts of the village. In the case of a warrior, a traditional mug known as "Ke — Iuh", its handles and ball shaped bamboo crafts symbolizing the war trophies (heads and limbs of an enemy) are hung upon such poles in proportion to the number of enemies he had killed. In the case of wealthy men and hunters, befitting articles and trophies are disposed along with their attires, ornaments, weaponry etc.

The closing of funeral rites is marked by sweeping out all messy residuals; the utensils are cleaned and rinsed properly and also make the fresh fire from where the family members shall cook food for consumption.

RITUALS ASSOCIATED WITH FESTIVALS

For the Yimchunger, festivals are celebrated in association with certain rituals. The performance of rituals by the chief priest of the village is a significant aspect of festivals necessary to invoke blessings.

The Yimchunger believed in the existence of several human souls. Hence, "Me" meaning "soul", "Dum" meaning ritualistic respect/honour and "Neo" meaning feast, is celebrated in this belief system. The date on which the ceremony falls is announced by a person known as "KIULONG-ZHIPUH"(announcer), declares the days of the festival 5 (five) days ahead of the appointed day, by pronouncing the day i.e SHITO, ZHIHTO, ZUMTO, KHIHRESUK, SHIRESUK. The festival is inaugurated by an elder/priest known as "Khiung — Puh" or "Kheamphuru" after performing certain rituals and offering prayers. On the first day, the required animals like mithuns, cows, pigs and buffaloes etc are killed for consumption. The festival begins with splashing of rice beer on the right side of the house early in the morning and uttering the words — “Ani thsu ang Hey”. Pieces of meat on string are kept tied on the door entrance. On the second day, each and every house displays a tuff on a pole at the right side of the house. Before displaying the tuff on the pole the owner of the house will pray that throughout the festival period the days be bright and sunny. The tuff is called "Mung — betsun"- comprising of three banana leaves containing three pieces of meat and ginger. Young boys then climb the pole and get the tuff down and share the contents with friends. On this day the priest would release a cock on the road leading to the fields with a prayer to the Supreme Being for bountiful harvest in the year.

Special prayers are offered for the new born babies on the occasion. In order to respect the new souls, if the new born baby of the family is boy. Ceremony is performed with 6 (six) pieces of meat and if the baby is girl, ceremony is performed with 5 (five) pieces of meat which is placed on a ceremonial plate of a priest for religious rites. The significance of offering 6(six) pieces of meat and 5 (five) pieces of meat is based on the traditional belief that male have six souls while the female have five souls respectively.

The Tsungkamneo festival is celebrated from 14th — 16th January. The idea of reconciling with the enemies and sharing of one's blessings are the two main emphasis of this festival. It is also known as Ngyo — Do — Ngyo (Neo — Do — Neo) meaning big/main festival, and Tsungkam means winter as it is/was celebrated and observed during winter season. During the festival days, special ceremonies are devoted to invoke almighty power. The priest, "Amükeamrü", officiate the ceremony. During this prayer, the priest places three banana leaves in line with cooked rice and pig's intestine. Then, then priest takes a cup of rice beer and pour it over the pack of offering.

The pack is later kept on the top corner of the house. The prayer utter by the priest is *lani tsuang de* (let the sun shine). The prayer seeks for the sun to shine over the house and bring forth protection, blessing and prosperity to the house.

Tsunglakneo which means 'sanctification of shield' is celebrated in the month of October. The worship is done collectively in a house of rich man and warrior. The owner of the house offers the best and biggest cock free of cost to perform worship. The group will collect all kinds of weaponry items such as cross bow, arrow box, spear, dao, shield etc. The priest kills the cock and observed the sign as it dies. If the cock dies with its right leg place over the left leg or the right leg making the last move, it is taken as a positive sign. On the other hand, if the left leg covers the right leg or the left leg makes the last move it is considered as negative sign. The cock's intestine and heart are taken out and placed on an arrow, which is pierced on a particular tree where they usually hang rival's head. While doing this, the priest chants to let their rival spirits come and eat it. Then comes the sanctification of the weapons. The remaining parts of the internal organ are crushed into pieces; mix it with rice beer and ginger. The priest chants and throws these on the weapons, which are lined up before him. If any of the pieces get stuck on any of the weapon, it is taken that the very owner will bring rival head or hunt an animal before long.

TRANG TRANG CHIN PAH KHI (RITUALS AFTER THE FESTIVAL — METEMNEO)

The rituals "*Trang Trang Chin Pah Khi*" is performed after the *metemneo* festival is over. It is a general believed that through this ritual one can predict which side of the field would produce more crops.

The preparation starts with an announcement made by an elderly male from the village. Every household would catch a cock for the rituals and feast. The cock is killed as the preparation of ritual began; six pieces of meat and a part of the head are wrapped in banana leaves. The ginger and rice beer are also brought to be used during rituals. Usually, the eldest male child of the family will take all the articles arranged at home and join the group of people set for the ritual performance. When everyone gathered at the ritual site, the leader will brief them about the process of ritual. He would dump up a tree and chop off branches for each member. Then, the bundle

of broom stick (trang trang) would tie together and strung up on the tree. The food that they brought is eaten together with the leader offered the biggest chicken head as a sign of respect. The rice beer is poured out on the ground and the side where the rice beer flows is believed to indicate which part of the field would produce more crops.

At the end of the ritual, the leader directs the group towards the village with a warning that the last person would be named as thief of the village. Though there is a warning, the leader is the last person to follow the group and ensure that no one is left behind.

RITUALS ASSOCIATED WITH CULTIVATION

No cultivation of crop proceeds without ritual ceremony. Indeed, rituals are observed mandatorily from the very beginning of cultivation process like from the cleaning of forest till the harvest of food crops. This has been followed so as to have bountiful harvest. The ritual is also done for the sanctification of the seeds to be sown and significantly productivity of crops as have been mentioned. After all the clearance of the field, a day is selected for sowing the seeds of village community. However, ahead of the day, the priest (Yang-tan-puh) shall venture in the field and perform certain rituals. He would sow the seeds within a small patch of soil and return home. No other members of the village should go to field or enter the jungle on the same day as it is taboo to be strictly maintained. Yang-tan-Puh (priest) should not see or talk to any other person while on his way to field. At the intersecting junction/main junction of the village road leading to the fields, he would make a 'Y' shaped mark

known as - Mu-re-chin, where upon a rice beer shall be poured to obtain prediction. If the rice beer flows on the left side of the 'Mu-re-chin', it is predicted that the villagers shall harvest more crops from the old field. However, if it flows at the right side, it is evinced that the new field shall reap bountiful harvest. The succeeding day, the community genna is observed. Once the genna is announced, no members of the village shall initiate works or set in the jungles and fields. In the event of negligence, unfortunate disaster would befall upon the defaulter(s) and even extend to the whole villagers. A particular festival known as *Wunthsuneo* is also celebrated throughout the land to mark the dedication of newly constructed farm hut. People go to the field and kill cock to sanctify the hut.

RITUALS ASSOCIATED WITH MORUNG CONSTRUCTION

In the olden days, Morung was the store house of skull collected from head hunting raids. Inside the morung is installed a big log drum. Separate compartment is made which is used for all the young men to sleep till they are married.

Morung constituted the centric aspect of village life among Yimchunger community. The construction of morung is marked by some rituals performance usually by priest or elder man of the village. For the ritual, the biggest and best cock was brought and the priest or elder man killed the roaster by strangulation. As the cock dies, he observed the omen, such that, if the cock right leg makes the last move it is taken as a good sign where prosperity of the village will flourish, whereas if the left leg makes a last move then, it is considered as a bad sign. The blood of the sacrificed roaster is rubbed on the king post to invoke the spirit and thereof brings good fortune to the people.

The wings and head of the sacrificed roaster are chopped off from the body. For this, three intersecting rods are erected and placed it above the king post where head is placed at the centre and wings are placed on left and right rods.

No outsiders from other areas were allowed to enter during the phase of morung construction. On the day of morung dedication all the villagers gathered in the morung premises and celebrated with a grand feast

RELIGIOUS, SUPERSTITION, BELIEF

Before Christianity religion penetrated Yimchungru land, the people did not profess any known religion. They were neither idol worshipers nor worshippers of the Christian God of today. Initially, they were nature worshippers. Gradually the worship turned to animistic worship.

The people believed that, there is a creator male and female. These creators are a good, kind, benevolent, supreme, all knowing, and all seeing and present everywhere. The people called the male creator " THRUNPUH " and the female as " THRUNBE ". They had no particular rituals, prayers or worship to this deity. They regarded the creator as God who created this world and everything in it. The creator is the judge and is responsible for every birth and

death. Everything is attributed to him. In other words, this creator is responsible for everything. The people also believed that evil [Satan] also exist and this evil spirit live in dark places, forest, rivers, mountains and deserted lonely places, they called the evil spirits "ARIMRI". The male spirits were called "ARIMPUH" and the female "ARIMBE". The people regarded all disease, curses, accidents, misfortunes and other calamities responsible by these evil spirits. Hence the people use to follow some animistic rituals to appease the evil spirits. The people also believed that the dead persons has a ghost and also given to believe in the existence of various other friendly and malevolent spirits. The people also believed in omens, superstitious, dreams second sight. Tiger man and tiger soul, bird man, snake soul and bird soul, soothsaying, prophecies, magic cure, sorcery, witchcraft and supernatural powers. Mythology abounds with various savings that the people even have had interactions with other beings from another world. There are myths and stories of inter marriage, physical relationship with them, and even children beget of them. Their use to be "THUMURU"[local doctors] who would attend to all delivery cases and also believed to cure all sickness and diseases. The people also sought the services of these local doctors frequently. The local doctors are believed to posse's supernatural powers of even communicating with the unseen spirits and even spirits of dead people. They are also believed to escort back the souls of sick people from the way of hell or heaven. The people also believed that heaven exist for the good people and the hell for the bad people after death. The people also believed that soul of the parents pay occasionally visit to their children to see how they live.

Dreams played and important part in peoples' life. Good dreams made them happy where as the bad ones warned them of dangers and misfortunes likely to happen. Another superstition the people believed is the fore casting of good luck or ill luck by using small pieces of sliced tree branches. It is similar to the use of deices to fore cast the luck or otherwise. Some people are believed to practice sorcery and witchcraft to settle score with enemies or on payment to do so from other people [customer]. The people how ever Dreaded and hated this sort of evil practice. Hence anyone found and proved practicing this evil ways were ex-communicated or exterminated the whole family or race.

Another belief of the people is the existence of humans possessing tiger souls and snake souls. People fear and avoided those who were supposed_ to posses such souls. They are believed to get even with those people who are not in good terms with those possessing such souls. If the tigers or the snake is killed, the person possessing it also dies. However the tiger or snake is believed to guard and protect family members or the entire village from enemies, dangers, wild animals etc.

Following are some of the superstitious beliefs and omen of the Yimchungru people:

1. It is inauspicious for the people to undertake a journey or any other expedition the next day after a big festival or event.
2. Raw meat even offered by an enemies should not be returned back to the sender, it should be thrown away, give it away or destroyed, otherwise it may cause ill luck or ill health.
3. It is inauspicious to see snake copulation.
4. When snakes enter homes and hearth it brings bad luck or ill health.
5. Crowing of cocks before midnight is regarded inauspicious.
6. The people believed that whosoever touches, burn, gather or use wood, plants which is hit / strike lightning may fall ill.
7. Whenever a tiger or a leopard is killed the flesh is made to be eaten outside the gates of the village. Thereafter those who had eaten flesh of such animals are not allowed to entry into the village for three days. Breaking the rules brings ill health and bad luck to the village.
8. It is inauspicious to see a live porcupine or an anteater during daytime.
9. Meat offered in honour of the dead is supposed to be consumed totally is inauspicious to keep any left over.
10. After a visit to a funeral service / place on return one has to wash hands and feet before entering house, it is inauspicious if one do not follow the rules.
11. Wild animals entering in to a village or a house is regarded to bring ill luck or calamity.
12. Snakebites, dog bites and lightning strikes on humans are considered inauspicious.
13. The dead bodies of those who die because of drowning are not permitted to be brought inside the village. They are made to be buried straight away in the cemetery. It is inauspicious if this is not follow.

14. It is believed that keeping of luck stones and tails, nail, teeth, skins, feathers bring good luck.
15. It is believed that, whenever a soul bird sounds, death is imminent to some people in near future.
16. Insect bites and stings on human genitals are considered inauspicious.
17. Lying on snakes or snakes crawling over humans while asleep is considered inauspicious.
18. Rainbows seen near swelling houses is considered inauspicious.
19. Ghost or spirits of a person supposed to have seen is considered inauspicious.
20. A snake, cat or cow-crossing path while hunting, fishing trip is considered ill luck.
21. It is considered inauspicious to see the genital of a cock.
22. It is considered inauspicious to wear an unpattern shawl. Warriors and men folk should not wear such shawl.
23. Men folk are not supposed to touch weaving materials before undertaking any hunting or fishing expedition, in order to avoid ill luck. 2
24. Men folk are advised to avoid sexual intercourse with women the night before one undertakes hunting, fishing or head-hunting trip. It is supposed to bring ill luck if this is not followed.
25. Seeing a naked person in dreams that the person who was dream may fall ill.
26. Seeing a man's or women's genital in dream means that, someone has spoken great ill of the dreamer's reputation. Seeing human faces also mean the same thing.
27. Wearing warrior's shawl in dreams that victory is in the offing.