CHAPTER-VIII

CONCLUSION
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Manipur, which is situated on the eastern-most corner of Indo-Myanmar border, is a land of many ethnic groups. The hills are inhabited by the Nagas and the Chin-Kuki-Mizo tribes. The valley is inhabited by the Meiteis, Meitei Pangals (Muslim) and other Indian communities. Many tribals are also settled in the valley especially in the Imphal East and West. As it is inhabited by various ethnic groups, it has rich culture and traditions. It is also a land of rare beauty filled with rare flora and fauna. Moreover there are many places of tourist attraction.

The Tangkhul Naga tribes are mainly settled in the Ukhrul District of Manipur. The geographical area of the District is 4544 sq.kms. with a population of 1,40,446 according to 2001 census report. The District is divided into five sub-divisions/T.D.Blocks i.e. Ukhrul, Phungyar, Kamjong, Chingai and Kasom Khullen.

Like all other Naga tribes, they lived on the summit of the hills for security purposes. Head hunting was prevalent before the dawn of Christianisation but there were strict laws and regulations for head hunting and wars. No one could take any head or wage any kind of war against the laws of war and regulations. This enabled them to live peacefully. The Tangkhuls also believed that head hunting is a religious act. Because by taking heads, they not only rise in their social ladder but also the persons whose heads a person has taken will also be the servants for him after death
in the next world. All the heads that were brought within the village should be ritualised and sacrificed on the sacred altar of the village.

Every Tangkhul village has a well-organised dormitory system for both young boys and girls. In the ‘Longshim,’ they learnt discipline, singing, handiworks and handicrafts, social interaction and welfare. It is also the place of courting in their search for life partnership. Every ‘Long’ has their respective rules and regulations which should be followed by every ‘Longgoers.’

Before the coming of Christianity, the Tangkhul Nagas worshipped an unknown God and various spirits. They also believed that there was a Supreme Being called ‘Kasa Akhava’ who created everything. To appease and get the blessing of their creator and various spirits, they sacrificed domestic animals on the sacred altar, offer food and libate rice-beer on the sacrificial altars, in the fields and at home. They also perform rites and rituals and strictly observe taboos and gennas.

The Tangkhuls from time immemorial lived peacefully and independently having their own village administration. They had an innumerable unwritten conventional law, which served as their guiding principle, fundamental rights and canon laws for the administration of all spheres, political, social, economic, judicial and religious lives. The village chief was both the secular and religious head. In the traditional village administration, politics and religion were not separated. It was rather working hand-in-gloves. Though the chief’s power and position tend to be of a dictatorial nature, he could never utter a word and execute any action against the will of the councillors and the people at large. There were certain
checks and balances, which curtailed the powers of the village ‘Awunga’ (Chief). The institution was indeed purely a democratic set-up, where, the chief was the head as well as the leader of the councillors. The ‘Awunga’ cannot be removed from his office on a flimsy ground except in criminal cases or if one indulgences in any incest or immoral activities which is a tragic violation of the Thangkhul customary laws. The ‘Awunga’ and the ‘Hanga’ (councillors) cannot override the customary laws and act against the will of the people. Whenever the Chief-in-Council took any decision and passed any bill they should always take the people’s mandate. The same system of village administration is still practised in the present day with a little change. The Manipur village Authority Act was passed in the year 1956 and adopted by many villages. But since there are many practical difficulties, the Act could not be adopted in toto. Moreover, the Act is not in conformity with the Tangkhul customary laws and cannot be adopted successfully. Some are having elected chairman and the village ‘Awunga’ (chief) remained as the hereditary or nominal head of the village, e.g. in Tolloi village there is an elected chairman but the role of the hereditary chief is still very essential though he is only a ceremonial head. In Somdal village too, the same system is practised but the village land is in the hands of the hereditary ‘Awunga’ (chief). The Tangkhuls who are also considered as one of the highly political conscious tribes in Manipur is attributed to their well-organised political institutions of the past. Even women were not an exception to it. There were stories of many outstanding women taking the rein of headship in the village administration like Keireila of Tolloi, Harkhonla of Marem, etc.
If any one violates any customary laws and regulations the law-breaker was punished and action taken sternly for disturbing the harmonious lives of the society and hampering the smooth running of the village administration. Punishment was given according to the nature of crimes and offences. Sometimes the culprit or the offender was chased out or excommunicated by the whole villagers without having any social intercourse even if he resides within the village. The village chief settled all disputes with the councillors basing on the unwritten customary laws and sometimes with the wisdom of the elders. Their main occupation was agriculture and were self sufficient with their own products as they led a very simple and humble lives. Moreover, they were blessed with many valuable natural resources, rich in flora and fauna. The favourable climatic condition and location enabled them to live a healthy life in the absence of all modern medical facilities. They do not raise army but the youths guarded their respective villages alternately. The Naga society in general has no class or castesystem, no political party, no beggars, no heavy taxation, no servant, no tenant system, no money-lenders, no brothel, etc. The rich always shared with the poor by throwing feast of merit or in some other ways of sharing.

Till the advent of the British, the hill tribes of Manipur remained as an independent entity ruled by the village chiefs and the councillors who represent each and every clan of the village. However, administrative changes were made when Manipur lost her independence in the war of 1891. The hill areas of Manipur also came under the British control. Since then, the British Political Agent carried on the administration of both the Hills and the Valley. In the hills, the system of indirect rule was imposed and according to this provision the colonial rulers guaranteed the quasi-
independent status of native rule through the legitimisation of its traditional polity. Even in the reconstituted Darbar, a British officer was nominated as president with a full charge over the hill administration. The scheme for the administration of the hill areas, which was introduced in 1902 by the Governor-General in Council, was continued.

**Administrative changes in the Hills since 1947:**

After the colonial rule, the Maharaja-in-Council was responsible for the administration of the hill people as provided under the Manipur State Hill People’s (Administration) Regulation Act 1947. According to this Act, the hill area was divided into circles and sub-divisions. All the villages of the hills were grouped into nine circles and there was one circle officer for each circle.

To initiate people’s representation at the grass root level, the Manipur state enacted the Manipur Village Authority Act 1956 for the administration of the hill areas of Manipur. It introduced the system of election on the basis of adult franchise by repealing the Hill People’s (Administration) Regulation 1947.

The Constitution of India also recognised the tribal people as the scheduled tribes within the ambit of the Article 366 of the Constitution of India. The Constitution (27th Amendment) Act, 1971 has inserted Article 371c in the Constitution thereby providing for the better administration of Hill areas of Manipur state. In 1972, the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Council Act 1971 was passed. The Act provides for the establishment of District councils in the hill areas of Manipur. But the working of District
council in Ukhrul district is not satisfactory, as full autonomy is not given in the field of administration, legislation, finance and judiciary. There is a demand for the introduction of 6th Schedules of the Constitution of India in the hill areas.

After independence, Manipur went through a long journey of more than 20 years of constitutional evolution, from Advisory Council to Territorial Council to Territorial Assembly, from Part-C State to centrally administered Territory, Manipur was finally granted statehood with the strength of 60 Assembly members.

Other than this new political arrangement under the Indian Constitution, the modern ‘Tangkhul Long’ exists for the governance of socio-cultural and judicial administration for the whole region on the model of traditional ‘Tangkhul Long.’ In the absence of written record, the exact date of the origin of ‘Tangkhul Long’ and ‘Regional Long’ cannot be ascertained. It is only through the continuation of its practice, usage and convention that the system exists till date. The ‘Tangkhul Long’ is the highest court of traditional judicial system. It also deals with the socio-cultural aspects of the people. Only one law exists for the whole Tangkhul region.

The modern ‘Tangkhul Naga Long’ covers the whole areas of Tangkhul inhabited areas of Ukhrul District. ‘Tangkhul Long’ has four divisions of Longphangs. They are Ato (north) Longphang, Aze (south) Longphang, Zimiksho (East) Longphang, Zimiktun (West) Longphang. Every Tangkhul village is a part of ‘Tangkhul Long’. It has eleven elected members, they are the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Vice-Secretary
and all the Chairman of the four 'Longphangs'. The 'Tangkhul Long' has an apex court called 'Long Karot.' Below the Long Karot, there are four regional courts established in their respective headquarters called Longphang Karot. Every village has its own village court called 'Hangashim.' The Apex Court is established in the district headquarter, Ukhrul. In the apex 'Long' court, there is one Chief Justice, and four other judges who are nominated from the four regions (Long Phangs). The age of the judges should be above 45 years of age. The Long court is the highest court and it heard appeals from the lower courts. All the cases that cannot be settled in the lower courts are settled by the apex court basing on the Tangkhul Customary Laws. The hierarchical judicial system is the replica of traditional 'Tangkhul Long.'

The main function of the Tangkhul Long is to preserve customary laws, culture and traditions and continue to uphold the old system followed through the generations. The function of the 'Long' is also to work for the development in the village, region and for the whole Tangkhul area. It has to conserve forest and protect the forest wealth, to settle disputes of all kinds of both civil and criminal cases. It is a non-political organisation that has no linkage with any political party. It is purely a social and cultural organisation based on traditional ethos. It is to maintain social harmony based on Tangkhul Customary Laws.

Another distinct feature which we find among the Tangkhul society is that people hardly go to legal courts, except related to official, service matters, human rights violation and in some difficult criminal cases. Most of the disputes are settled by the village courts and the difficult cases which
cannot be decided easily is put up in the Regional Long which acted as the high court and the Long court as the apex court. All the difficult cases are settled by the Tangkhul Long. The Tangkhuls have no written law books but their rich conventional customary laws serve as their law books. If the case happens to be a land dispute or marriage dispute then the judges will refer it to the customary land laws and marriage customary laws. In Ukhrul district, 99% of the Tangkhuls are Christians but they never forsake their forefathers’ customary laws. They respect and follow strictly till-date as before.

In the ‘Tangkhul Long,’ there is no women representative. It is purely a male dominated organisation but as the time rolls by, the role of women is greatly felt in all the organisations. With the Changing of time, there should be women representatives in the ‘Tangkhul Long.’ Though they are not given a seat to represent in the Tangkhul Long, Tangkhul women have also organised their own Long (organisation), purely for women called the Tangkhul Shanalo Long (Tangkhul Women Organisation).

The story behind the creation of this women’s Long was that in the month of March 1974, a number of Grihang and Kumram (Ngaprum) young women were sexually assaulted by the BSF personnel. Among the rape victim was Miss N.S. Rose of Ngaprum, (now Kumram ). She committed suicide on 3rd March, 1974. This is also one of the incidents in which Security Forces had behaved towards Naga women like beasts. Realising that unless a platform for women is formed, the same torture and harassment, assault, etc, would continue in the days and years to come, the Tangkhul Shanalo Long was formed on 8th May 1974. Mrs. K. Sarah was the Convenor of the first meeting of 8th May 1974. The meeting resolved to
form an association, under the name of East District Women Association (EDWA) and now the nomenclature has been changed into ‘Tangkhul Shanao Long’ with its first President, Ms. Masophi Luithui.

Every Tangkhul woman born as a Tangkhul is a member of ‘Tangkhul Shanao Long.’ However actual membership starts when girls reach the age of fifteen. Till 1996, 197 villages have become units of TSL (Tangkhul Shanao Long) having nearly about 197 villages. The head office is in Ukhrul headquarter.

The President is the chief functional officer of the organisation. She is a full time worker with its general secretary along with its executive members. The executive meets at least four times in a year. Each village has a local unit and there is no other regional unit.

**Aims and objects of Tangkhul Shanao Long:**

1. To safeguard the rights, modesty and dignity of women.
2. Promote educational, culture and customary life of women.
3. Promote economic growth and welfare of total livelihood including animal husbandry, handicraft, weaving, tailoring, agriculture, etc.
4. Promote peace, development and prosperity in all respects.
5. Maintain and create healthy atmosphere in life.
6. To establish contacts with other organisations having similar objectives around the globe.
(7) Create awareness among the villagers through organising and conducting training, workshop, seminar, consultation, etc.

(8) Participate in maintaining ecology and environmental balance.

(9) Organise relief, charity and grant for whoever is in a genuine need due to natural calamities and unforeseen incidents.

Since the inception of the ‘Tangkhul Shanao Long’ it has taken up many vital issues related to women. It launched a struggle against illicit liquor sales, drug trafficking and consuming with the help of various social organisations and police. They have also conducted a number of seminars, workshops and other awareness programmes relating to women and environment. With the initiative of TSL, the East District Women Sports Association was formed in September 1976 in order to motivate sportsmanship among the Tangkhul women. In 1978, about 700 Tangkhul women staged a procession demanding the Manipur State Government to eliminate violence on women’s modesty under the influence of liquor. Since 1981, the TSL has been encouraging women to develop their skill in modern technologies in the field of handlooms, handicrafts, tailoring and knitting. So far, within 14 years, about 1,120 women from different tribes including non-tribal women have been trained.

For their activities on social upliftment, fighting against human rights violation and such other related activities, the TSL have been honoured with an award given by the Indian Federation of Small and Medium News Papers (IFSMN) on its 10th anniversary celebration in Bombay 20-21st Sept., 1995.
Factor of changes in the lives of the Tangkhuls:

The Tangkhuls lived an independent life having their own village administration and a well organised social institutions. They never imagined nor thought of any other people, culture and colours living in other parts of the world. Their village was everything to them. It was only after the annexation of Manipur by the British Empire that the Tangkhuls came in contact with the alien people and culture. They never crossed their borders, perhaps due to the prevalence of head hunting or ignorance. It was only during the First World War that the Tangkhuls crossed the borders and went overseas. Many Tangkhuls went to France as Labour Corps. Mr. H.J.Higgins, the then president of the Manipur State Darbar (PMSD) tried to raise the Labour Corps. He visited most of the Tangkhul villages and tried to convince the village chiefs (Awunga) to organise Labour Corps from their respective villages but all the Tangkhul Awunga's unanimously decided to oppose the call. He then requested W. Pettigrew to help him in raising the labour corps. W. Pettigrew, wisely persuaded the people and the village Awungas and they later on accepted his proposals. The Labour Corps consisted of 2000 members from Manipur and out of these 1200 were from the Tangkhul tribe. The Labour Corps party went to France in the year 1917. To lead the contingent, five interpreters from among the first converts and literates were appointed. Among them were Ruichumhao Rungsung, Kanrei, (both Tangkhul), and the Manipur team was led by Jt. Cole. Many persons died during their journey and in the war. In this way many young Tangkhuls sacrificed their lives in the First World War in France.
Those lucky persons who returned from France saw a new world and civilisation. It was indeed an eye-opener for them. After witnessing the horror of war, they learnt the futility of waging wars with one another and voiced against the dreaded custom of head hunting and such other practices which hindered the growth of the well-being and society. Other than these, they learnt the spirit of nationalism from them and when they returned home, they mobilised the spirit of nationalism and patriotism among their respective villages. In Naga Hills, the Labour Corps party founded the Naga club and this was the first organisation which gave birth to the origin of Naga nationalism.

It was again during the Second World War that Tangkhuls came in contact with the foreigners, which had both good and had effects. The Tangkhuls called the Second World War as ‘Japan Rai’ (Japan War). Many Tangkhul villages became a fierce battlefield and many soldiers and civilians died in the fighting. During the war, the Tangkhuls came in contact with the three armies belonging to the Azad Hind Fauz, the Japanese war armies and the Allied soldiers.

When the war broke out, Mr. Young from England was the Sub-Divisional Officer in Ukhrul. As the 15th division of Japanese army was proceeding towards Manipur for invasion, an order was issued to the British Military Engineers to construct motorable road from Litan to Ukhrul and Shangshak to Hommalin in Myanmar. Major Finch and Mr. Mehta were instructed to start the work from July 1942. As the construction of road was an immediate task, it could not be undertaken by the military personnel alone. So, they appealed to the then SDO of Ukhrul, Mr. Young, to supply
local villagers to help in the road construction. This was promptly accepted by the then SDO and Mr. Kanga, Road Maharar was sent to Litan where other ‘Lambus’ were sent out to different villages, to collect workers for the road construction.

The construction started as planned and many villagers joined in the road construction as the payment was made on daily basis and paid higher rate than the normal wage. Major Finch and Mr. Mehta were very happy as the work was progressing very fast with the overflow of coolies and sincerity of the villagers. The work was completed within the year of 1942.

Life was peaceful and had not experienced any war till the Japanese entered the Tangkhul Hills during the Second World War. The Japanese forces of the 15th Division and 31st division started the operation in Tangkhul Hills in March, 1944 on their march towards Kohima and Imphal. This was perhaps the first time that the Japanese and the Indian National Army (INA) set their foot on Indian soil during the Second World War.

Ukhrul was captured by the Japanese on 21st March, 1944 after three days of fierce fighting. Thus Ukhrul was the first Indian town captured by the Japanese during the Second World War and it remained in the hands of the Japanese till July 1944. On the day Ukhrul fell (21st March 1944) Premier Tojo declared in the Diet that the provisional Government would administer occupied areas of Indian Territory.

Simultaneously, a bitter ten days of fighting ensured at Shangsak, nine miles south of Ukhrul with the Japanese and INA forces. On 30, 1944, Shangsak also fell into the hands of the Japanese forces. The village was
burnt down on 23rd March 1944 and there were heavy casualties including the civilians. The Tangkhul hills suffered disastrous results. The battle was fierce and the destruction was great. The wooden houses of the Tangkhuls were severely destroyed in the bombardments. Many villages were affected by epidemics where hundreds of people died of dysentery, typhoid, piles, acute fever and cholera. The writer's mother-in-law's two elder brothers died of cholera and the other one was hit by the ration box which was dispatched out from the flying aeroplane. She was the only survivor of the family. Her three brothers fell victims of the war as one of the fiercest battles was fought in her village 'Khangkhui' at Harvakhangai.

Many bitter battles were also fought at many places like Sokvao, Lambui, T.M. kasom, Litan, etc. Thus the areas inhabited by Tangkhuls became one of the grounds of battlefields and people came in contact with alien people and cultures. It was a great landmark for the Tangkhuls. In spite of the untold miseries and destruction caused by the war, it also brought a great development as it linked up kutcha motorable roads from Litan to the extreme of Indo-Myanmar border. By collecting parachutes from the jungle, they also learnt the art of stitching blouses and shirts. They even made half pants for the small children.

**Impact of Christianity:**

It was William Pettigrew who brought Christianity to the Tangkhuls. He was born on January 5, 1869 in Edinburgh, Scotland. In 1890, at the age of 21, Pettigrew decided to serve the Lord overseas and was sent to India towards the end of the year by the Arthington Aborigines Mission. Pettigrew first lived in Calcutta and studied Bengali and Manipuri for two years.
Meanwhile the war of 1891 attracted his attention to work in Manipur. He therefore asked permission from the administrative authorities of Manipur for his entry permit. Accordingly, Mr. A. Porteous, the then acting political Agent of Manipur granted him permission to enter Manipur. He arrived in Imphal on January 1894. His main intention of coming to Manipur was to work among the valley people and he started devoting most of his times in writing and literary works. But his work in Imphal valley was strongly opposed by the Orthodox Hindus. They suspected that it was an attempt to destroy Meitei culture by imposing Christianity. In the meantime, a notification was issued to W. Pettigrew by the political Agent of Manipur to leave the valley. He was asked to work in the hill areas of Ukhrul, which was then under the British administration at his own risk.

William Pettigrew then decided to work among the Tangkhul Nagas. After three days Journey on foot from Imphal, William Pettigrew reached Hunphun (Ukhrul) village which is situated on the north-east of the capital in January 1896. After reaching Ukhrul, his first and foremost duty was to find a suitable place for his mission centre. In his search for a suitable location, he came first to Ukhrul and went as far as Paoyi, Shiroi, Khungkhui and back to Ukhrul which was eventually considered as the best place for his missionary work.

Life in Ukhrul at first was rough and very hard to drag on. He was not welcomed by the people. He was also nearly killed by the angry villagers of Ukhrul who came with spears, daos and sticks but the headman of Ukhrul, Raihao came to his rescue. Pettigrew chose Ukhrul as the mission center. He approached to the then Government and acquired a plot of land for setting up
his mission centre. He introduced Humphun village dialect as the common medium of all Tangkhul Nagas through his writings of Tangkhul Premier, other books, translation of Gospels, hymns and Bible as there was no common language for the whole Tangkhul Nagas. His main objective in giving education to the tribesmen was to propagate Christianity. He therefore began to work by establishing a school called Middle English School in February 1897 by getting assistance from the State Government. As soon as the school was opened, Pettigrew requested the village elders of Ukhrul to give him 20 students each from Ukhrul and Hundung (Hunpum). It was indeed a tough start and parents refused to send their children to school. Pettigrew out of helplessness reported the matter to the Political Agent, Major Max Well, the then State Superintendent. He warned the village elders that unless they come up with enough students, they would be penalised. With great difficulty, Mr. Raihao, the headman of Humphun (Ukhrul) managed to send 21 students to school. Raihao was also among them. Mr. Zingthan, headmen of Hundung village sent 15 boys. Thus with the support of the two big village headmen, the school had an enrolment of 31 students which in turn began to influence other boys, and girls. Actually the villagers refused to send their children to school as they suspected that the white man came to take away their children to a far away country where they would either be killed or made them slaves. Some of the village warriors came with spears and shields to take the heads of the missionary and his wife. It was Raihao the village Headman again who saved them. At another time, they again almost killed the missionary for taking photographs of village children. Photography, in those days was considered a kind of
necromancy which could transport the spirit of human being to another country for trading.

After his stay for five years among the Tangkhul community, Pettigrew could not convert even a single Tangkhul. It was only in 1901 that 12 students from his little school confessed themselves and were baptized at Ngayira, a pond at Ukhrul. As the progress from 1905 was conspicuous, Pettigrew established many more schools with the help of the Government at Tolloi, Huining, Paoyi, Chingjaroi, Phadang and Somdal. Between 1896-1905, Progress was seen both in the field of education and conversion.

Shortly after, women education was also introduced at Ukhrul through tireless efforts of Mrs. Alice (wife of W. Pettigrew). It was in the year 1908-1909 that Mrs. Pettigrew started interacting with the Tangkhul girls. She along with the male school teachers went from house to house urging the parents to send their daughters to attend the night schools after the day’s work was over. Mrs. Alice used her bungalow as night school for the girls. Later, she extended the spread of imparting elementary education in the girls’ dormitories. This was one of her greatest achievements in her missionary works.

Eventually, the elderly women also started attending the night school and they learnt to read and write. Among them nine girls attended the night school regularly. They were later taken up to Ukhrul for further education. In addition to reading and writing, they learnt how to keep a home clean, maintain sanitations, how to sew and knit, etc. The names of the nine girls were L. Sanamla Ragui, Lasengla Lumthao, Mahongai Lumthao (from
Ukhrul) Charani, Ngaleou, Asserwo (Chingjaroi) and Shurila (Paoyi). All the nine girls accepted Christ and they later became active leaders in their respective churches. Out of nine, seven of them were sent for nurses' training at Gauhati. One of the first lady teachers who assisted Mrs. Alice was Charani Chingjaroi and Mrs. Sanamla who also served as Matron in the mission school at Kangpokpi. Thus they became the torch-bearers of women education amongst the Tangkhuls.

The new faith brought a sea of change in their socio-cultural and economic lives. In short, Christianity was the chief agent of transforming the primitive society into a modern society with both plus and minus points. By embracing the new religion, they abandoned their original worship. Head hunting was completely done away with and they turned into soul hunting to a religion of love and forgiveness. They also gave away the status oriented feast called ‘Maran-Kasa’ (the feast of merit). The Western anthropologists pointed out that through giving such a feast “the Naga rises in social and prestige and esteem of his neighbours”. The practice of necromancy was totally banned and sending off dead soul’s ceremony was also stopped. Eventually, the dormitory system also got extinct as the youngsters started going to schools. Bullfight, making of huge giant long bed called ‘Bedkhok’ or ‘Sumkhok’ were also given up. Religious practices like observation of Kapa khayang, Harkho khayang, Ziklen khangana, observation of gennas and taboos, traditional rites and rituals were all brought to a halt. These religious practices were replaced by the Christian sacramental life. Sacrifices of chicken, animal or performance of rites and rituals, offering of thanksgiving to the goddess of wealth, shim wui Kameo (goddess of home) ‘Lui Kameo’ (god of fields and forest) ‘Kasa Akhava’ the creator of heaven and
earth were also replaced by the presentation of the first fruits to the church and the offering of thanks-giving for his bounteous gifts. As they were believers in the Supreme Being 'Kasa Akhava' and were god-fearing people, they did not find it strange to embrace the new religion and be religious and ritualistic as before. They also stopped feast and festivals which naturally relieved them from their monotonous daily round of works confined within their village. The main feature of the feast and festivals were meat, rice-beer, tobacco smoking drinking and dancing. But the missionaries considered feasting, drinking and dancing to be evil as well. Gradually, the entire culture of the Tangkhuls with its rich culture and traditions, songs, dances skill of wood curving, traditional costume jewelry makings, art and craft, etc., all went out.

With the coming of Christianity, the dawn of education appeared in the Tangkhul horizon. It is considered as one of the chief agents of transforming the socio-cultural and economic lives of the people. As mentioned earlier, the teaching of Christian doctrines and education went simultaneously. People began to appreciate the intrinsic value of education and their response has become tremendous. They gradually realised that education alone could reform the society and enables them to be at par with other civilised societies. Education refines and perfects an individual and makes a good citizen of the community. Despite many hindrances and economic constraints, many educated youths are produced. Now among the Tangkhuls, there are doctors, engineers, technicians, scientists, educationists, Lawyers, Pilots, IAS, IRS, IAAS, IFS, IPS. IFS (Indian Forest Service) MCS (Manipur Civil Services), MPs (Manipur Police Services), Bank officers, Professors, Lecturers and various employees serving in different
cadres of State and Central services. There are also people who are working in the department of Airlines, Railways, Defence forces, etc., in the different cadres. They have also produced leading missionaries and highly qualified theologians. Many Tangkhul educated persons are also working in the foreign countries. The Tangkhuls as a community have also produced leading politicians and leaders. The literacy percentage of Tangkhul according to 2001 census report was 68.96. But compared with other advanced communities and tribes, the Tangkhuls lag behind and they have a long way to go in order to catch up with others. They have to discipline themselves and work hard in order to compete with the rest of the world.

The new faith also brought many changes in their life-styles, standard of living, diet, dress, manner and way of life. The missionaries taught them personal hygiene, house keeping, cleanliness, how to sew, and how to dress. Before the coming of Christianity, people were living in half-naked condition. One cannot imagine how they passed the biting winter. After embracing Christianity, men started wearing trousers, shirts, etc. Even women started wearing blouses and skirts. As the time rolls by, the modern Tangkhul youths are crazy after the western styles and after the latest fashion of the time. Moreover, there is a big change in their overall living standard with all modern luxuries and amenities.

In Manipur state, the hill districts are in a regrettable situation though statehood was granted in the year 1972. The government gave little efforts to develop the hill districts. It is also felt by the people in general that the elected people’s representatives are not sincere to work for the people. The people of this border district have started feeling that they are given step-
motherly treatment both by the centre and the state, as there is no
development at all. Hardly any Union Minister visited the most strategic
place, which is bordering Myanmar from north to south. Even the state Chief
Minister hailing from another district hardly paid visits to this border area.
All these happenings make them feel hurt and have gradually started losing
their faith in the popular government.

From the days of yore till date, the Tangkhuls depended on their
simple ways of cultivation. The absence of modern methods of cultivation
and technology hampers the production and hence cannot produce surplus
products for sale. It solely depends on human labour and outdated
agriculture tools. Over and above that agriculture in the hill district is a
gamble of the monsoon. Once crops fail, there is no other substitute. The
government has not taken up any drastic steps to tackle such an eventuality.

In Ukhrul district, majority of the villages have not been covered by
motorable roads. For instance, the western area of Ukhrul district has the
highest population and the most literate area of the district but all these big
villages have not been yet covered by road. The proposed Mahadev-Tolloi
road only remained on the paper. Only Ukhrul to Tolloi road was
constructed by the local villagers during the 50s.

Due to this unavailability of motorable road and bad communication,
all the agriculture products like cabbage, potatoes, linseed, maize, squash,
ginger, chilli, citrus fruits, bananas, plums, papayas mangoes, etc., which are
grown numerously and harvested in abundance cannot be transported and
sold in the market. More-over due to non-availability of cold storage,
fruits and vegetables cannot be preserved and used to get rotten in the fields. In this situation, farmers lose their incentive to produce more than what they need or consume. The climate and soil of Ukhrul is best suited for taking up horticulture and other allied farming, e.g; the lime of Kachai village (Western area) bear fruits as the marigold flower blooms. The sweet plums of Ukhrul are very famous in Manipur due to its unique taste. Manipur can be a land of fruits but such a free gift of God is not utilised by our people. The state and central government should give special attention to this kind of farming so as to enhance the economy of the people. Other than this, small scale industries of weaving, pottery, art and crafts work, bamboo and wood works should also be encouraged as the people of this district excelled in all these trades.

People in the remote villages have no schools and dispensaries. Even the teachers and doctors posted in these areas hardly go to their work places. The government of Manipur should keep an eye on these employees and takes stringent actions for their irregularities and negligence of duties. Due to the absence of doctors and nurses many people have died of common curable diseases. Sick people often die on the way before reaching the Ukhrul District Hospital as the patient has to be carried on the wooden stretcher by walking on foot for a long distance. More over, Ukhrul District Hospital is in a deplorable condition as even the basic equipments are not installed and non-availability of specialist doctors worsen the situation. As such there is no facilities for emergency operation.
In the absence of good schools, many young talented children are spoiled. Parents cannot afford to send their children to study within the state or outside the state. In the absence of schools in the remote villages, parents keep their children in Ukhrul for study at rented houses. But since parents are not staying with them, the students loiter around without studying and some indulge in drug abuse and other anti-social activities. Most of the government school buildings are standing with a handful of students with one or two teachers. It is felt that more mission schools be opened in the remote areas of this district.

In spite of all these economic constraints and non-availability of modern developmental facilities, the district can develop if the government sincerely gives a boost to make use of the natural gifts of the district. The district has the potential of turning into a tourist centre. Its natural beauty filled with medicinal plants, rich flora and fauna, etc., attracts many tourists who by chance visited this part of the land. Through tourism, the district can enhance their economy and thereby give benefits to all the citizens of Manipur. Tangkhul Pottery can be improved by applying modern technologies. Through this trade, many youngsters can be employed and the products can be exported outside the state as it has great demand. T. Rolle Vareishim, a handicraft promotion officer during the interview said that “through the internet, the crafts society of Manipur has introduced the Longpi Pottery (Tangkhul, Pottery) and Kauna crafts of Manipur in the International Market of London recently and the demand was found to be very high. In fact, it has become a supply problem rather than marketing problem.” So far, three pottery artisans of Longpi village (in Ukhrul district)
have been awarded National Award. The popularity of Longpi Pottery is due to its uniqueness.

There are also many places worth visiting like Shiroi Peak, Khangkhui Mangsor (K) Cave, etc. Shiroi Lily is found on Shiroi peak and not grown in any part of the world. Secondly, the Khangkhui Mangsor is a wonderful natural cave, located at Khangkhui Phungcham. An European catholic priest once visited the cave and remarked, as “it is very strange that such a wonderful handiwork of God is kept hidden from the world.” Recently, in the last part of December 2001, many Nepalee-Hindus numbering 2000 on a pilgrimage came to offer prayer at Khangkhui cave. But since there is no scope for accommodating such a big crowd, the visitors made their own tents around the cave and made the road approachable by themselves. Now the road is under repair and small 4-wheeler vehicles can pass through this cave. It is half an hour walks from the main road of Imphal-Kamjong road.

Angoching range should also be declared as National sanctuary as the forest is filled with rare flora and fauna. It is an untrodden land of the Tangkhuls which stands as a boundary line between Manipur and Myanmar. More-over there is a long and extensive stretch of fertile valley below the ranges of this mountain crossing beyond Kangpat village (Tangkhul village in Manipur). These valley should be brought under cultivation with the help of modern technologies and make the place fit fore human habitation as people cannot go and stay there due to repeated malarial attack. Other than these, there are many places of worth visiting. Through tourism, the state can also get a big revenue.
It is high time that the state and central government pay attention towards the hill district particularly Ukhrul district as half of the population are living below the poverty line. Their main occupation being agriculture without any modern facilities.

Manipur is a home of many ethnic groups and communities and should therefore foster a sense of fraternity, equality and justice in all aspects of life and development so as to bring peace and prosperity to the state. Both the hills and valley should be developed equally as disparity creates disharmony.

Thus the Tangkhuls are undergoing rapid changes in their social, economic and political lives. Due to the introduction of higher education, many educated Tangkhuls are influenced by modern ideas of urbanisation and political change. The educated youths by forming organisations and unions are trying to bring a creative and constructive change so as to march in the right path of development. On the other hand, the traditional village councils are also playing a very important role in the observation and preservation of customary laws. It may be said, the Tangkhuls, are in between tradition and modernity. The interaction between these two forces is leading the Tangkhul to a higher level of development.