Chapter – V

SOCIAL CONFLICT AND DESERTED VILLAGES

Introduction

The social conflict in the region that took place since time immemorial has been continuing to the present days, in the territory of Ukhrul and its adjoining areas. Historical artifacts, monuments and materials that include social class for their regional dominance who want to control the area. It deals with the reactions of the people of Ukhrul and its adjoining areas. Geo-historical parameters are considered in detail. Politics flourishes in geo-historical areas and yesterday’s politics becomes today’s history and therefore, historical geography witnesses social conflicts and their settlements in due course of time.

The conflict between different communities has its impact on the other community which has its root in the beginning of conflict. It is rooted
in socio-hierarchical structure- age, gender bias and one cannot avoid race, class, caste ethnicity and religious affiliations. Age old hierarchical structures in the society give more power to adults and middle group people than children and younger adults.¹ Gender based hierarchies give more power to men than women. Group conflicts and oppression like racism, ethno-centrism, sexism nationalism and **regionalism** etc. can be regarded as the different manifestations of human predisposition to form group based hierarchies and to a certain extent can be identified with tribalism.

The social conflicts taking place in the Ukhrul and its adjoining areas were group centric as well as ethnocentric. Here, we reflect upon the relations between the Manipuri Meiteis, the Tangkhul and the Kuki at different points of times and also between the British and also the Hill tribals particularly, the Tangkhuls. We also reflect upon how the people of Ukhrul and its adjoining areas reacted to the British during the First and the Second World Wars. We also incorporate the Naga and the Kuki turmoil and its present scenario. The Manipuri and the Burmese relations also affected the regions. Though geography does not change, history is always built upon aspects of the geographical socio and political structures and

¹ Web: page on Research articles on social conflicts for regional dominance, p. 1
sub-structures. Theories of structuralism begin to emerge from these bases of developing forces.

The Tangkhul-Chassad relations and its consequences

Both the Tangkhul and the Chassad were head hunters. To Hodson it is "related with blood feud where the duty of vengeance remains unstated until the tally of head is numerically equal"\(^2\) which turn the relationship of head hunters into terrible and gruesome. The Tangkhuls like the Chassads also fought among themselves.\(^3\) It is said that the tribal chiefs, warriors, and men of courage who were convinced of their socio-political status in their lifetime and in life after death practiced head hunting. There exists a myth, which centres on the killing of a slave by the tribal warrior of the Chassad and the Tangkhul.\(^4\) According to this myth, the Chassad buried their chief alongwith his killed slave. This can be presumed as the most important cause responsible for the blood feuds between the two tribes.

In due course of our fieldwork, we enquired and researched about it. We found that the Kukis buried human skull (heads) with their Chief or king perhaps for the posterity of the chief's soul in life\(^5\) after death. We

\(^2\) T.C. Hodson, op cit p.115 - 116
\(^3\) Foreign and Political Department No.8527-2, p.1 Part II dated the 31st December,1920, p.3
\(^4\) Interviewed Paokhohang Haokip (70), Veikhoneng Haokip (80) and Lianjathang (50) on 10/8/2004 at Imphal
\(^5\) Pratiyogita Darpan, Extra Issue, Exam Oriented Series 17, Indian History, Modern India, Agra, p.53
found that this belief had existed in the past and continues to be believed in the present. From the burial practices of the Chassad, it is very clear that their belief in life after death solely commanded their activities on the earth. The Kuki waged wars to settle disputes among the Nagas and to a large extend stopped them from their endless practice of head hunting. Prim Vaiphei writes “In many places Naga villages requested the Kukis to come and settle near their village for their protection.” This was so because the Chassad were not only brutal but also just in their administration and in delivering justice. They provided able leadership because of their culture and temperament. They were over all protective of their dependents and those who had reposed faith in them. The Tangkhuls took the Kukis as their enemies in the early days of their event. But the skill of warfare brought by the Kukis was new to the Tangkhuls and they recognized the Chassad Kuki as their neighbouring village for protection.

The intention of the Chassad to merge with the Samsok raja after the assassination of their Chief Nehlam and the constant fighting with the Tangkhuls had invited terrible and gruesome events. In 1880, 19th February morning the Chassad Kukis and five Tangkhuls raided

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Chingsaw. It is reported that the warrior killed 20 males and 25 females and took away three persons as captives besides reducing half of the houses to ashes. Refusal of paying tribute to the Sumjok Raja and the Chassad appear to be the main reason. It was brutal decisive. That is how feuding groups’ behaved. Genocide took place as punishment and for territorial aggrandizement. Therefore, Chassad were feared and respected as well.

In 1893, a Tangkhul Naga village of Swami (Chingjaroi) was raided and attacked by a large group of armed Kukis who killed 297 people including women and children and burnt down 40 houses. According to the traditional accounts of the Kukis, "the main reason was the murder of Kisong, a Tangkhul youth, who lived with his mother under the protection and care of Tukih Lupheng a very powerful Kuki chief. Kisong was a Tangkhul chap give a named after 'Tukih'. On a certain occasion Kisong was sent to Khoiran (Chingjaroi) to collect grains which the Kuki Chief claimed from the Chingjaroi villagers as compensation against the trampling of crops caused by the mithuns belonging to the accused village." The account also reveals how the villagers tried to escape by

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7 Foreign and Political Department No.3 dated Shillong, 22nd April, 1880. See also Foreign and Political Department, 733 dated Simla the 23rd August 1880, p.1. Foreign and Political Department Rangoon 10th September, 1880, p.2
8 Lal Dena, British Policy towards Manipur 1891-1919, Imphal, 1984, p.23 See also Foreign and Extl.I Branch Proceeding No.40-44 Part B
9 Interviewed Jamkholun Haokip (65), K.Salbung, and Churachandpur on 5/10/2002
climbing upon a big tree, which hid them. However, the raiders surrounded the tree and felled it. The eyewitness account, which they handed down through tradition, asserted that village youths embraced their dear/lovers and committed suicide by jumping down the cliff. In another incident on the Tangkhul Naga village of Konke not less than 153 people including women and children were massacred and the village was burnt. In his main report, Colonel Johnstone states that the Chassad Kukis committed a series of petty raids on the Tangkhul Naga subjects of Manipur. Raids and counter raids were the order of the day. It represented the potlatch system in a distributed way.

Besides constantly fighting among themselves, the Nagas also continually raided the upper Chindwin and Manipur. In 1911, Colonel Shakespeare, the then Political Agent entered the tract and destroyed a village called Phungtret in Somra. Frequent expedition also resulted in migration of the Kukis of various clans into the tract from Manipur to escape disarmament and settling down. Traditional accounts of the Chassad reveal that the Kukis migrated to the region because of heavy taxes levied by the British on the hill tribes of Manipur. The British government

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10 Report on a brief history on Somra tract by W.Street, Deputy Commissioner, Upper Chindwin District, Mawlaik, No.8527, Part II dated 31 December 1920.

11 A letter to A.C.Lyall Esq.,C.B., Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department by C.J.Lyall, Officiating Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam Dated Shillong 22nd April,1880.
established three military posts in the Somra Tract mainly to prevent the Kukis harassing the Tangkhul Nagas\textsuperscript{12}. From the Thaungdut area, several Kuki villages were removed. The Kukis were not allowed to cross the Nantaleik.

In the nineteenth century many Kukis arrived in the inhabited areas of the Tangkhuls. They fought with Musket, while the Tangkhuls fought with bows and arrows and spears. The Kukis fought with many Tangkhul’s villages and had the stories of fight with the Tangkhuls recorded. The Tangkhuls who were fond of war had disadvantage of using spears, daos, and bows and arrows against the Musket users. But the advantage was not to last long. The Kukis were initially not allowed to settle down in most of the areas. The Tangkhuls stood together and fought their common enemy. Undaunted spirit led to the retreat of the Kukis from many places of the region. They settled in only few areas where they had reached an agreement with the neighbouring villages but in some cases there were frequent fights.

Street' terms the Tangkhul Nagas and the Chassad Kukis as wild clans, probably on account of their manners, customs and frequent raids among themselves. From the available sources, it appears that their

\footnote{A letter to the Commissioner, Sagaing division by W.Street, Deputy Commissioner, Upper Chindwin, District Mawlaik, No.8528-2, p.1 Part II, dated 31 December 1920, p.4.}
relations were never good unless the vanquished tribe remained submissive to the victor. As such, the idea of converting the native inhabitants of the entire North East to Christianity evolved in the minds of the British administrators. The English missionaries thought that by spreading the message of love the hill tribes could come together and live peacefully. The circumstances were more than collection of tribute. The Chassad chief and Samsok raja probably selected Chingsaw a powerful Tangkhul village, so that the punishment of which would induce all other Tangkhul villages (territories) to transfer and transact themselves within the Burmese (Samsok raja) territory peacefully.

The Kuki believed in philosophy of 'ai' ceremony, which worsened the relation between the Chassad-Tangkhul and other tribes of the North East. It is said that the Kukis' buried human heads with the chief or king so that the soul of the former become the slave of the latter in the next world. So the circumstances reflected by the British officers, only cannot be considered. Most of the tribals of North East India are headhunters. It does not mean that they were never at peace. Oral sources reveal that some

13 Fr.Peter Tongmang Haokip's article, Thadou-Kukite laha Christianity Sakho Kiphudoh (The advent & establishment of Christianity among the Thadou Kuki, Thugil lagil bu (Prose & Poetry for Class XII), Churachandpur, 2004, p.58.152
14 A letter to A.C. Lyall, Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, by offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, dated Shillong 22nd April 1880, p.2.
15 Pratiyogita Darpan (Extra Issue), Exam Oriented Series, Indian History, Modern India, A Swadeshi Bhima Nagar, Agra, p.53.
Kuki villages settled at the request of the Naga villagers as large numbers of population was required to defend the people from the fierce wild beasts.\(^{16}\)

After the restoration of peace in the region, the Chassad Kuki and Tangkhul Nagas maintained cordial relation again. Some Tangkhuls could speak fluently the Kuki dialects and the Kukis could speak Tangkhul dialect. From each village different families made friendship. 'Give and take' of paddy and other domestic products and community feasts marked their relationship. The Tangkhul Hundung Khunou Khullakpa (Mapithel range) gives his 'Sating' to the Chief of Monglham village to mark the latter’s effort and justice in settling territory disputes with his neighbouring villages until the Kuki-Naga conflicts flared up again in 1992.\(^{17}\) The communalization of the Kuki and Naga relations, worsen and took the lives of thousands of innocents and uprooting many villages leading to subsequent demographic changes.

The response of the Tangkhuls in the ensuing war for supremacy in Ukhrul and its adjoining area was partly a confrontation of two entities for

\(^{16}\) Two Chassad Kuki villages were set up between Itham Tangkhul and Kasom Tangkhul viz. Kholep and Mamong, in the present Ukhrul district, on the request of the Tangkhuls. It is said that fierce and dangerous animals used to eat up man and domestic animals. Sadar Hills near the Hundung and Itham village. The cordial relation preceded the advent of Christianity and British administrator.

\(^{17}\) Interviewed Veikhoneng (80) and Jamkholun (60) of the erstwhile Monglham village at Imphal
regional dominance. Many were killed and the villages were subdued. There was fierce battle in every village at the time of invasion. Event after their invasion they remained alert on the villager and the enemies. On the other hand Anglo- Kuki war had taken a toll of many lives and put the Kukis into a different kind of torture and suffering. It is therefore, necessary to discuss at least the battle that took place within and adjoining area of the present the Ukhrul region. The Anglo- Kuki war 1917-1919, was an open challenge to the British imperialism and is undoubtedly a great watershed in the history of Manipur. The Kuki and the Tangkhuls understood the geo-politics in historical perspective and therefore were against the British.

The First World War prompted urgency in many part of the world particularly, in the British colonies. The Indian nation came forward to help the British. Manipur state authorities donated a sum of Rs.100,000 to the war fund and also gave Rs.1, 34,000 as war loan. In addition to this, 2000 Naga and Kukis were recruited and sent to France against their will in May 1917. The Naga and Kuki chiefs strongly raised an objection to the second recruitment. The Tangkhuls too did not accept the attitude of the british. Therefore, they organized several oath ceremonies in Ukhrul and

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18 Laldena- The British policy. p 58
19 Ibid.
various parts of the state. They were forcibly made to carry their loads, makes roads and labour corps. Lonpi and Longya, located in the south western side of the Ukhrul district have played a very significant role during the war. The Kukis paid to the political Agent a sum of Rs. 1,500, three gongs and one mithun as a SALAM. Salam is a kind of customary fine imposed upon one who breaks certain rules and traditions that bind a society among the Kukis. They hoped that by performing such a value laden custom they would be exempted from labor corpse by that time. However, against their hope and aspirations, Higgins flatly told the chiefs to recruit within the stipulated time frame or else submit to punishment.²⁰

Aishan and Chassad located towards the northwestern and eastern side of the Ukhrul become the storm centre of the Anglo-Kuki war. The area divisions of the war strategy are- eastern hills (Chassad area), North eastern hills (Aishan area), Southern hills (Lonpi area), Southwestern hills (Henglep area) and Western hills (Jampi area). Lonpi Jampi and Aishan areas fall within the adjoining areas of Ukhrul. Chassad area falls within the Ukhrul. Therefore, our study covers larger geographical area of the Anglo- Kuki War 1917-1919 A.D.²¹

²⁰ Ibid- p. 59
²¹ For detail see S Kipgen Political and economic history of the Kukis, unpublished PhD thesis, MU, 2006
Lonpi and Longya lies in the present Chandel district, adjoining areas of Ukhrul. Lonpi chief, Ngulkhup was the area commander and assisted by Nguolbul, chief of Longja and Mualtam chief, Tongjang.\textsuperscript{22} Ngulkhup openly challenged the stern warning of Higgins to the Kuki chiefs. He sent message to the Kukis of his surrounding village that” if they send coolies their village would be burnt down and their women and children killed”\textsuperscript{23} The Kuki fought the first battle with the British at Lonpi area in September in 1917. In the battle the British force lost three soldiers whose bodies were left behind while they were retreating to Imphal.\textsuperscript{24} Sugunu on the trans-border of the present Churachandpur and Chandel was the base camp of the British. Higgins took the action of Ngulkhup as an issue of prestige and went to the latter’s village, Lonpi on October 17, 1917 to arrest the latter but burnt down the village on that day as they could not arrest him. The last village that was burnt down by the British seems to be Pantha, not far away from Sugunu (see map.).

Chingakhamba Sanajaoba Singh, who professed to have supernatural powers\textsuperscript{25} living at Kumbi, near Moirang spread up a rumor that” the kingdom of the British is coming about to end now and wants its

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Ibid, p.26}
\footnote{Laldena opcit, p.59}
\footnote{M.Gangte, Untold History of Manipur, Anglo-Kuki War Patriots Memorial Foundation, Manipur, Publication, Imphal, 2005. p.26}
\footnote{Jhalajit Singh, p.320}
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people to be killed at the same time with them”. He invited ten Kuki villages at the Wakha and looted forest toll at Ithai on the 19th December, 1917. The Kukis were planning to attack Imphal on the 22nd December, 1917. The great Kuki rebellion broke out in the adjoining area of the present Ukhrul. The Assam chief commissioner deputed Cosgrave to Manipur to take up charge of political agent in December 1917, so that Higgins could freely deals the Kukis. Higgins and his escorts numbering 150 moved to Ukha and burnt down all the houses after losing several lives of his men. Cosgrave also moved to Lonpi but was less successful. The British diverted 800 Nagas who were recruit for France to the operations against the Kukis. After heavy fighting in January 1918, Cosgrave and Higgins destroyed Lonpi (Mombi) and other rebelled villages. The mid March, 1918, witness another show down at Chassad-Kamjong. In the encounter, several casualties got inflicted and Lt.Molesworth was killed and Lt.Kay Mauyatt, who came from Burma, was seriously wounded.

Different scholars, writers and observer have expressed different views: however, for the Kuki and their chief it was great national revolution struggle for the defense of their independence with supreme sacrifices. It is

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26 Laldena op cit p.60
27 Ibid, p.63
therefore, a war against the foreigners - domination of the Kuki territory. By 1930, the Kabui Naga of the southern Churachandpur or western Manipur revolted against the British. The Tangkhul didn’t submit their authority to the British but with their consent they rule their villages independently. Taking advantage of the outbreak of the war the Kabui-Naga directed most of the attack and raided. They carried out raids to the Kukis of their neighboring villages. The Kukis and the Kabuis solved their differences internally AND UNTIL THE RECENT KUKI Naga conflicts in 1994-1997 region witnesses’ peaceful co-existence.

**RESPONSE TO THE SECOND WAR WORLD 1939-1945 UKHRUL AND ADJOINING AREAS OF MANIPUR**

The outbreak of the second war world in 1939 is directly or indirectly related for regional dominance. It is clear that the provisional government of India led by Sub has Chandra Bose and Japanese alliance to root out the dominance of the British imperialism. “On the 21st march 1944, General Toyo stated in the Diet that the administration of Indian Territory occupied by the Japan would be carried out by the provisional government of India of Subhas Chandra Bose.”

Almost all the activities directed by the British dominance come from the Manipur south. The

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28 Jhalajit Singh, op cit, p.334
pamphlets distributed to the people if Manipur comes from Sugunu. In March 1944, three army divisions of Japan entered Manipur after crossing the Chindwin River, different hill ranges and thick forest. The INA and the Japanese troops entered in Ukhrul and ensued the war in the northern and central region. The fierce war was fought at Harva Khangai at near Khangkhui village, Shangshak and in between Jassami and Kharasom. Many Tangkhuls were injured and some were maim and killed. The war was fought in almost all part of Ukhrul.

The Japanese division group number 15 reached Pallen, adjoining area of Ukhrul located on the road between Moreh and Imphal. Combine forces of Japanese division number 33 and Indian national army marched towards Tiddim road. Still Tiddim road passed through headquarter of the present Churachandpur district. The combined forces of the INA and the Japanese at last compelled to retreat to the 17th division of the British forces completely from the southern portion. On the April 10, 1944, on the 13th April, the British troops vacated Moirang and northern side up to Potshangbam. The Indo- Japanese advanced group had a discussion with M. Koireng Singh and some local members at Tronglaobi in the morning of April 14, 1944. Col Saukat Al Malik commander of the Bahadur (intelligence) group of the INA planted the tricolor flag, embossed with

29 M.Shanti Devi- INA Movement and its impact in Manipur, unpublish Ph.D thesis M.U. p.135
springing tiger planted at the historic Moirang Kangla, Manipur on that
day.\textsuperscript{30} Moirang is about 20 KM from Churachandpur located toward the
Northern side of the district and become a part of Bishnupur district.

A bout 15 members of Nikhil Manipuri Mahasabha, who were either
leaders or workers, welcome the appeal made by Netaji. They secretly
reached Moirang and joined the people of Moirang in collecting large
quantities of ration and in carrying out espionage activities. They liberated
the entire Moirang and its surrounding village’s up to the present
Ningthoukhong.\textsuperscript{31}

The INA forces could reach Moirang under the guidance of Teba
Kilong. The Kukis knowledge of the topography of the area was of great
help to the INA and Japanese forces. Three Japanese divisions, INA and
Kuki and Meithei forces dominated several part of the state. The present

Churachandpur district and its adjoining area - Falam in Myanmar,
Behiang and Bishnupur and Nambol,\textsuperscript{32} ought to be mention here. The
Japanese force had established a camp on the western mountain of
Bishenpur in script a sword on the stone. It still remains till today. About
80 Kukis join INA and contribute something for the cause India’s freedom.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid, p.137
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid, p.139
\textsuperscript{32} PS Haokip, Zalengam the Kuki Nation, p.200
At Ukha gate a high school has been establish in the name of those Indian national Army, popularly it is called INA high school. The school is now governed and managed by the government of Manipur. Ukha gate is located between Moirang and Churachandpur.

The social conflicts for regional dominance taking place in Manipur can be link up because; these are connected directly or indirectly. Ukhrul and other hilly regions of Manipur including Lushai hills and other Kuki inhabited region has been largely own and responsible by the village chief or headman. However, the methods of drawing the chiefs varied from the member of senior clan and powerful warriors. Mostly inter and intra conflicts originated on account of the wishes of a chief to dominate other groups and vice versa.  

After setting a powerful village called Lhungtin, on the Salli range of hills, the Hangshing clan also harassed the Lushai severely. The Lushai persuaded and initiated peace by presenting one spear, shield and one Khipichang (a large bead) to the chief of the Thadou so that the later told them to stop. Peace and normalcy returned between the Lushai and

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33 W. Shaw, Notes on the Thadou Kuki, p.44: At the time when the Thadou lived in the Chin Hills and the Lushai hill (Mizoram), the Lushai raided a lesser tribe called Ralte and the later took refuge among the Thadou. However, due to their acts of atrocities i.e. an attempt to kill the Thadou chief, the latter raided and drove them back to the Lushai.
Historical traditions of the Thadou also reveal that Keirap, a Kom-Kuki village of Manipur had murdered Thangpao and Thanglam of the Thadou clans.

The Lushai chief Lalula drove the Thadou Kukis and other Chin Kuki ethnic groups since early times. The first recorded incidence seems to be 1810 onwards. The incident took in the erstwhile Lushai hills and may have fled to the present Churachandpur district and hence to its adjoining areas. The Raja of Manipur wisely establishes cordial relations with the Thadou who moved up west of the Barak River. He utilized them against the Angamis. He places the Thadou who moved between the Barak and the valley of Manipur in the midst of Kacha Naga and used the Kukis of the Manipur east as a barrier against the Burmese.

Similarly the Maharajah Chandrakirti raided and killed powerful Kuki chiefs who dominated their territory and subjects. Nehlam, the principal chief of the Haokip Chassad, whose chiefdom lies on the present Thengbung range near Sugunu, within the present Singat zone of the Manipur state, was muttered by the Maharajas. The raja of Manipur accused the Chassad chief for extending relations to the political agent as well as Soja for being establishment of independent village. The Raja

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34 Ibid, p. 45
35 Ibid p.46
36 Ibid, pp.46-47
killed the two powerful chief around 1859-1860 so that he could easily control and dominate the present Churachandpur and its adjoining area. Nevertheless, Nehlam was murdered by the official of the raja near Sugunu on the trans-border of present region of the Churachandpur, Chandel and Thoubal district, an adjoining area of Ukul. Such atrocity committed by the Raja’s official later on compelled the Chassad chief Tongluh and other Kukis to declare independence from Manipur in 1879 after he settled down in the present Chassad village (Kamjong). Social conflict gained momentum and significance even in the Manipur assembly. The Manipur government passed a bill to abolish chieftainship in the entire Manipur hills, particularly for the Kukis in 1966. 

POST CONFLICT SCENERIO OF THE UKHRUL AND ITS ADJOINING AREAS

The geographical features have helped the people retain their historical past and this past could be fractured when the historical places and monuments and their event were not properly maintained in the region. The genesis of historical formations will get covered up without proper preservation in many adjoining areas. Thus, a glorious heritage may be lost

37 MSS. The Manipur Hilla Areas(Acquisition of Chief’s Right) Bill, pp.1-13
over which the politics of the region had thus seen a blending of the politics in the region within the confines of geographical parameters.

The region had been in turmoil due to social, religion and political conflict. Social conflict is due to differences of opinion among different communities. The Kukis think that they were minorities’ communities and tried to curve out a niche for themselves. The Tangkhuls take them to be of foreigners who came to stay recently in the area. So the Tangkhuls and the Kukis always fought themselves from the early days till recently many Kukis villages were uprooted from the center area of Ukhrul. The Tangkhuls too faced the same problem and settled in the areas where their communities hold the region. After the outcome of kuki-Naga conflict of 1994-1998 they understand each other better and now they live together in peace.

The Meiteis and the Nagas did not saved from political conflicts. The Meiteis were majority communities in Manipur, so they tried to dominate the other communities where the Nagas never accept other dominance. From the early days their villages were independent and no one ruled over them. So the Nagas struggle to throw out the majority dominance till recently many strikes and memorandum had been submitted
to different heads of the state and country of India. But the conflicts between the different communities could not be solved till today.

The Tangkhuls were struggling to free themselves from conflict in their society. The regional division which led to conflict social, political, and religion. Leadership crisis for controlling over each other groups and region had far reaching effect on the social harmony. We observed many divisions within the region and society struggling for supremacy for dominance. Conflict within the church brought not only damaged the unity between the Tangkhul societies but image of Tangkhuls oneness was tarnished. All these conflict foster for the transformation of new societies among the Tangkhuls.

**Deserted villages**

The internecine strife in which the villages of Tangkhul engaged till the nineteenth century had far reaching consequence. Some of the weaker sections of Tangkhul groups from different migration group was absorbed by their more powerful group. With the balance of power of the neighbouring villages or the villages that survive by themselves were left independent though some tributes were to be accepted from the defeated
villages. It was well told by the elders of Tasom\textsuperscript{38} that the Tangkhul powerful villages never reflected the idea of formation of state and compact kingdom.

The Tangkhul villages are old as their coming to the present habitat. According to account of the village elders of Halang village and Phungcham village they are the first settler and only Tangkhul lived in the Ukhrul district from the ancient times. During the process of migration they did not faced any opposition from different race or people. Their fierce enemies were wild animal and ferocious reptiles. The forest was thick so they clear the jungle, built their house to live in and settles down. While choosing the site of the village proper investigation was carried out for the habitation of human. Thus village came to exist, later some of them deserted their villages to seek a new beginning. They abandoned their village which was mainly due to inconvenience or had become unsafe on account of communal crises and had been ravaged by diseases.

Champhung village in Paosaitrung about fifteen kilometers away from the Ukhrul headquarter that once existed was deserted and settled at the present Mahadev near Yaingangpokpi under the chieftainship of Ipaosan. He was later put to death by Meitei Maharaja for stealing valuable

\textsuperscript{38} A village in the extreme north corner of Ukhrul
necklace of Maharaja. These villages Shifted again to Western part of Ukhrul near Tora village\textsuperscript{39}. We still found the remains for grinding paddy, plate of pig carved out in the stone at Halang Paosaitrung.. We also found the remnants of their settling places which are very old. According to the oral tradition they shifted as there was political subjugation from the surrounding villages. Besides, they wanted to search out for a new venture since the other village had occupied the already existing areas; they searched for better place to give them more sustenance.

There was also a village known as Alang village at between Tallu and Halang village. The Alang villager deserted the place and set out for searching a new place. They encountered a number of their enemies at different places on their way. They finally reached near Phungyar and settled at the present Alang.

The Khambi village of Phungyar block had also once been deserted and inhabitant had got scattered in various village of the southern Tangkhul villages. Later they came back and resettled at the previous site. They had deserted the village because their village had been burnt down in bright day light when they had gone out to work at the field. That very day everyone went out to work at the field. When they returned they found all their

\textsuperscript{39} Information received from the elders of Champhung on November 5, 2009, 3pm.
houses had been burnt to ashes. That day only one man stays with the children at home. He was insane, it is being alledge that he burnt one house which burnt other houses one after the other and the whole village. Subsequently got burned down to ashes. When the villager came back their houses burnt to ashes. They took the sign as bad omen and they fear that a kind of epidemic may occur in such village. Thus the villagers took to mass desertions and shifted to different villages. After many years they came back to resettle at the same site and at present these village have more than one hundred household in the village⁴⁰.

The Lungpha group Khambi, Sorbung, Sorde, Maileng, Kumram, Lambakhul, Leishamlok, Patbung, Nongman, Sorathem, Punge, Shungriphai, Satakunpi, Kongleiram, Irong, Heinganglok, Lungthar, Kharan, Leihoram, Saram Tangkhul, Lisamlok, Poirao, Kaprang, Lembakhul, Kangoi, Kangkum, Khonglo and Chongdan were the offshoot of Khambi desertion. These groups had been living at present Khambi village. However, they shifted to other places and spread to the southern Tangkhul areas and they founded different villages. Later they form MODI group which denotes that they came from the same place and race. The word Modi derived from Moba and Dinu which they called the eldest

⁴⁰ Information received from the Chief of Khambi on Aug. 17, 2009, 7AM
male is known as **Moba** and eldest sister is known as **Dinu**. All the villages above mentioned used this word and they came to know from the nomenclature that they are from the same origin even if they settled down in different villages.

The Tangkhuls had deserted their villages on different ground. According to the elders of Matiyang (Present name) their village migrated from Hungpung and first settled at the upper site of the Khangkhui village. But fate luck as it was one day their houses roof which was made of thatch was ate away by termites. They took it as bad omen understanding that they had not been accepted by their creator so they deserted their village and migrated to present site. They were one of the first settlers in their region. Later they shifted again to Chammu for safety from the enemies. It was when Roni villagers murder a man of Khamasom village they thought that warriors of Khamasom village might come and take revenge. So the Roni village was deserted. As Roni village and Matiyang village was very near they feared that the intruders might mistaken and attack their village too. Instantly they abandoned their village and settled near Chamu. Later on with the agreement between the two villages Matiyang merged with Chamu. In due course of time Kukis came to settled in Matiyang village.
But Kuki Naga clashes forced Kuki to abandon the area. It was followed again by resettlement of Tangkhul Matiyang village.

Lakhi village settled between Shingza and Rongzo. Lazai village lies between Lakhi and Seihomphung. Between Shilok Lakhi and Maokot a village existed but due to inter village fight between Shilok and Kanlhang the village was completely devastated and no more exist. Lakhi and Lazai village do not exist anymore. It is due to fear of more superior villages the smaller villages deserted one after another and merge with bigger villages. In the early days of Maokot settlement Tangkhul and Kuki co-existed but after Kuki Naga clash the Tangkhul deserted the village and settle in different villages among the Tangkhul people.

There were more than thirty Tangkhul villages in the westernmost part of Ukhrul. They were known as Khaorui. To name a few Mapao, Yongpa, Hakhei, Ngaphee, Makhok, Angahm, Chihi (chawui), Tangshang, Marong, Lungter, Kachou, Tuichun Sitangphung, Ngafa, Hongman, Zingtai, Yirtek, Harya, etc. These villages deserted one after another on account of different reason. Some had been deserted because there was fear of Kuki invaders and the other for searching for a better place as they could not sustained themselves in their village. The Sitangphung village was now settled by Kuki. In this way they deserted one after another which we find
only two villages now. They are Mapao and Hongman. All the above mentioned villages lie at the north east of the present Mapao village.

During interviewed at Shingza, Mr. Luishomphang\textsuperscript{41} give information that Malung village existed between Phalung and Maku villages. But now it is no more. Jabeyara village settled near Langli and Chasat. After their desertion the Kuki were replaced and the villages was settled. Thangme village that was once settled between Khangkhui Khullen, Khangkhui Khunou, Shingza and Pushing have disappeared as their village was condemned by the neighbouring villages for Khangayei\textsuperscript{42}. Their village land was divided by the neighbouring villages.

Resident of Challou village in the northernmost zone of Ukhrul also deserted their village and got resettled near the river of Challou. They settled near the river because their old village they had settled found lot of water scarcity. Besides, their field were too far from their village. So they migrated to a nearby river where they could work and find water. In the same way Wahong village of North Tangkhul abandoned their old village because it was at the summit of a hill and settled near the river for their convenience to work in their field and in a more fertile place. Thus we

\textsuperscript{41} Elder of Shingza village.
\textsuperscript{42} Man turned animal like ape.
\textsuperscript{42} A. Mackenzie, op cit. 205
come to know that the village of Tangkhul deserted their villages on different ground.

There is a Tangkhul village named Chingsao near Chatric village. These villages were deserted in the nineteenth century as there was a constant threat from the Kuki musketeers. Before the desertion the Chassad Kukies raided Chingsao village mentioned that forty five (45) people were slain and three persons were taken as captive\textsuperscript{43}. These Kukies were armed with gun. It was not possible for the villager to protect their village as numbers of people were less and weapons were more sophisticated. Larger villages could stand the strength of gun like Chatric which is near the Chingsao village. Chahong Khullen site was deserted due to fear of Kuki raider and it was occupied by the Choomyang Kuki from Samjok. It was claimed to be a part Samjok but the Manipuris troops driven out the Choomyang Kuki\textsuperscript{44}

Mapao village existed at the summit of the hill. This village was deserted and settled down to a nearby field as two villages at the valley. One village settled at the east and the other at the west of the old Mapao Khullen village. The west village was known as Mapao Khullen and the

\textsuperscript{43} A. Mackenzie, op cit p. 207.
east Mapao Keithelmanbi. The people had deserted the old village around 50 (fifty) years back. It was mainly due to inconveniences in their working in the field, as it was too far from their old village. They had to walk up the hill for more than a Kilometre after working in their field. Thus they shifted to a nearby field for their conveniences.

Kachai village that once existed at the top of the hills shifted to the low land which is their present settlement. The summit of the hills become difficult for livelihood and to avoid the inconvenience, the people deserted their old settlement for easy and accessible living. Now their village is the largest producer of lemon in Ukhrul and also in Manipur.

Kuki village known as Tadung settled between the Leiting and Phalang but now it has been deserted. Between Kangoi, Kasom, Molen and Samachin village there lies a Kuki village known as Taret village. It is now deserted. Near Khambi village Kuki village known as Paishat existed but it is no more. In this way, Kuki also desert their villages one after another.

The Naga- Kuki clashes had driven both the community to the brink of misery and there were lots of misunderstanding between the two communities. The clashes began early May 1992 at Moreh town located at the border between India and Myanmar (Burma). Moreh is in chandel
district of Manipur. Later the clashes extended to wherever the Kukis and Nagas settled. Many Kuki and Naga villages deserted and many more became refugees. In Ukhrul district alone, more than fifteen Kuki villages had been deserted and the people had settled in the foothills of Imphal valley, Chandel and Churachanpur district. There are some villages that are being deserted and resettled. That is, Chasad, a Kuki village and Kaihao, a Tangkhul Naga village.

During the Kuki Naga clash, Island village, a village situated near Imphal valley shifted their village at the nearby Risophung village. The reason for this shifting may be due to the sense of feeling insecure as the village was surrounded by Kuki villages on all sides. The search for a safer place seems to allow them to move to a safer area in 1997. Before the outbreak of the Naga Kuki clash there were 56 (fifty six) houses in Island village but after the communal clashes there were only 22 (twenty two) houses left in this village⁴⁵. After so much advancement they were deprived of government aids. Safe protection was not provided to them thus the inhabitants scattered here and there. Many of them left the place and shifted to different areas that they thought were safe.

⁴⁵ Information received from Shingtaileng Jajo, village chief of Island.
The Tangkhul village desertion was caused because of various reasons as mentioned above. The leader normally was one of the first settlers among the villagers who become the chief of the village. The villagers were under obligation to obey the order of the chief that was taken in consultation with the elders of the community. Unlike the Kuki chiefs who usually took decisions unilaterally and are more like a dictator, the Tangkhuls did not solely depend on the chief’s decision; it was the public opinion that became the order of the chief. The land was also not only controlled by the chief but the villagers as whole. The desertions had been taken not under the order of the chief. It was the wish of the people who preferred to seek a new and better place. The village migration from one place to another was not a new thing to the Tangkhuls but it had been practice since older times. Thus, the Tangkhuls who migrated from different directions had deserted their villages and got settled in Ukhrul region.