Chapter - V

CONCLUSION

Throughout this volume, attention has been drawn to the study of the sphere of the folk dance of the Thadou-Kuki i.e., incorporates traditional costumes, accompaniment of music and the development and evolution of their dances. The sphere of cultural and religious significances to their society and the contribution of folk dance to their society, revival of their folk dance, thus national pride and group identity continued to be asserted and displayed in their folk dances. Their folk dance contributed in integrating their society as a unit cultural community.

Folk dances, unlike most other dance forms, tend to have no stringent rules, and are sometimes formed spontaneously among groups of people. The steps of folk dances are passed through generations, rarely being changed. Folk dancing is usually associated with social activities, although some dances are performed competitively. Folk Dance,
recreational or ceremonial dance performed by members of the community to which the dance is traditional. Varying criteria have been used to differentiate folk dance from other kinds of dance. Folk dance can be an art, ritual, or recreation. It goes beyond the functional purposes of the movements used in work or athletics in order to express emotions, moods or ideas; tell a story; serve religious, political, economic, or social needs; or simply be an experience that is pleasurable, exciting, or aesthetically valuable. Their folk dances are well defined and are being passed from generation to generation. Their dances in its existence are an integral part of the community activities. Individuals learn the dances as they grow up in the society.

Their folk dances have their own traditions of music and dance, which are central to the way they remember their past and celebrate their present. They brought many presentations of modern dance, particularly in connection with festival series; ethnologic dance; and a continuing development of the educational dance field, with respect to private academies and a general expansion in these and related
activities. There are festivals like: Chapchar Kut, Mim Kut, Chang Kut, Lholhun Kut, Hun, Lom Juneh/Kivah, Chang Ai, Sa Ai, Chon, Vangkho Nitnom etc celebrated with joy and merrymaking. On these occasions, sportive events such as Suhkho, Khaoloi, Kangkap, Kangchoi Kap etc are played and different kinds of dances are performed throughout the night.

Christianity and nationhood have transformed their society, and new folk dance forms have developed in new social contexts. Colonial rule shifted borders, and the cash economy prompted labor migrations. These migrations, often to multiethnic towns, undermined the tight-knit communities so basic to traditional dance, though the art form has survived in rural areas and in connection with traditional ceremonies. At the same time, urban living has given rise to an abundance of new dance forms, Vannoi lam.

The origin of secular or communal celebration is a matter of conjecture. Thadou-Kuki folklorists believe that the first festivals arose because of the anxieties of the early peoples who did not understand the forces of nature and wish to
placate them. General agreement exists that the most ancient festivals and feasts were associated with planting and harvest times or with honoring the dead. These have continued as secular festivals, with some religious overtones, into modern times. Secular festivals and feasts have many uses and values beyond the public enjoyment of a celebration. In their prehistoric societies, festivals provided an opportunity for the elders to pass on folk knowledge and the meaning of tribal lore to younger generations.

The earliest manifestations of dancing, music, the use of masks, ceremonies and the organization of society into patterns that was apparently fairly complex. The various elements of culture have evolved in the society over a long period. These elements have been gradually created and developed by certain persons either by chance or by necessity or borrowed by one society from another. Generally, it is the creative ability of individuals responsible for new inventions or discovery. The idea of how culture evolves should not be confused with its geographical position, its natural flora, fauna,
and its environment. Environment literally means the aggregate of all the external condition, which influence and affect the life and development of an organism. Man as an organism is grown and developed in conformity with both physical and social environment. Thus we can see that the evolution of cultures and their folk dances resulted from the influence of their own environment. Culture is not ethereal but very real. Artistic expressions in dance and dramas, in arts, crafts, and handicraft; in music and poetry; in games are the most realistic expressions of human life from the beginning of creation. They are the epitomes of culture. Traditional culture in transition would thus seem to offer an important natural laboratory in which to explore the historical and development factors that contribute to specific organizations. What really bind men together are their culture, the ideas, and the standards they have in common.

Nature’s mystic elements, its power and unknown forces, its vastness and great silence amidst the distant forest, and the spirits of ancestors which are said to reside in sacred
groves are worshipped. They are deeply impregnated with the consciousness of people living amid nature in the raw, since time immemorial. These impressions have produced certain inner psychological responses and an awesome veneration for the secrets of nature and the universe, and created the belief in existence of supernatural powers. It is these phenomena that have given rise to various creeds, taboos, rites, customs and ritualistic and religious practices, which have been reflected through their dance; art and craft expressions, particularly among the tribal people.

*Sa Ai* and *Chang Ai* are on the same scale - the former performed by man the latter, by woman. *Sa* means animal and *ai* is literally translated as subjugation, thereby denoting a ritual of subjugating or having completed dominance over the animals killed. In the same manner *chang* (paddy) *ai* is seen as victory over the soul of paddy. We prefer to see the occasion as the conferment of degree to a person who has qualified for a higher grade in the many modes of existences in a person’s life. For a man it is the duty to hunt games, provide sufficient meat to the
members of the family, and also provide occasional feasting for the villages. Woman on the other hand, is responsible for procuring abundant grain for the family. So, when surplus grain is accumulated for several consecutive years she is considered fulfilling her duty, thus entitled to perform *Chang Ai*.

Festivals that are not in connection with feasts of merit, but as an annual feast of the society were: *Som Kivah/Som Juneh, Lom Selkai, Voicha Kih, Ponkap, Pol Kut, Tapho Kut, Mim Kut, Khodo* (fighting the spirit of the village and the celebration of the New Year festival). *Somkivah*—with the passage of time, a stage came when most of the *som* grew up. Some of them pursued diverse interests.

Thadou-kuki religion, ‘*Chungmang Pathen*’ was an object of one-pointed devotion and worship. God as the creator, Merciful and Sustainer of the Universe, a prominent place was accorded to him alone. But the time comes when the people were inclined towards pluralistic world view by negating the one on various grounds. One of the most important factors conducive to the development of polytheism among them was
‘Power Concept’. Animism: belief in spirits or the spiritual world, or the world of spirits, is central to their religion system. Spirits (like Angels and demons in the Jewish, Islamic, and Christian traditions) directly communicate with and impact the lives of human beings, as individuals and as communities. Their traditional conception was that all the animate or inanimate objects were actuated by spirits. This spirits associated with any unnatural phenomena were held to be empowered to do harm or good to mankind. Whereas, Indoi symbolism as encompassing such diverse activities as social, culture, economic and political aspects. It has been rightly noted that the institution of Indoi can be considered the distinctive mark of their society. It stands for their very being and serves as the visible identification mark of their existence as a people.

The Thadou-Kuki folk dance provided an excellent opportunity to expand their horizons by contact with people and activities of other cultures. Folk dancing as a “democratic socializing agent” and as an “agent of citizenship,” which is an assets in welcoming diverse clans of their in making them, one
and a unified society. Democracy involved not the elimination of differences but rather the perfection and conservation of differences. It aimed, through union, not at conformity but at variety involving give and take, mutual respect and mutual cooperation based on mutual understanding. Due to the actual process of folk dancing, participation required total involvement and it did not isolate the various heritages; rather the mingling fostered by the dance broadened the participants’. Their folk dance allowed all to receive a more intimate knowledge of the thoughts, customs, traditions and histories of their own. Folk dance constituted a positive social force by wielding a unified whole out of a nation of diverse elements.

In the final analysis, the present study reveals the fact that for centuries they have made a variety of cultural contributions. These include a rich heritage of art, music, dance, storytelling and legends. Due to the powerful influence of Christianity (in the process of evangelism), the polytheistic-branded religion of them took a new path, and encouraged miscegenation in which new forms of dance call Vannoi Lam.
Often these were a part of their daily lives. Some were created for everyday use and some may have had ceremonial purposes. Their dance sequences were imbued with different meaning according to the secular or religious festival being celebrated and it was not unusual to find patterns of steps offered to natural elements and phenomena, as well as to concepts of duality, fertility, good and evil, life and death. In the early 19th century all forms of arts were promoted by the old-genre. It was at this stage that a large number of dancers and dance teachers as well as musicians, and several other professionals in other diverse art forms from the new elite groups, fought to forge a new identity incorporating its diverse ethnic dance traditions. They worked hard to recover and maintain existing traditional dance forms from all around the country; at the same time, they were helping to established new styles of folk dance. This all helped to give status to the national cultural and to increase a sense of their own identity.