CHAPTER-IV

KHONOMA
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The village of Khonoma has played an unparalleled role in the history of Nagaland. Although a small village, situated in harsh and rugged terrain, it had long been considered to be the most powerful and feared in the Naga Hills.\(^1\) Dreaded by the Zemi villages for its barbaric and ferocious attacks, it meted out cruel harassment to these villages, and caused the Zemi to compare it with a hurricane or storm. It is probable that the word 'Angami' was coined by the Zemi from their word 'gami' meaning 'thieves or invaders',\(^2\) although this point is strongly disputed by the other Angami groups which have their own version of the origin of the name. The tradition of warfare continued to colonial times when Khonoma stubbornly and valiantly resisted the British advent into the Naga Hills.\(^3\) Khonoma played a most significant role in nurturing the growth of the Naga struggle for independence and it is also the village of A Z Phizo, the Father of Naga Nationalism.

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2. This information was given to the scholar by Haigwang Zeliang of Pulwa village.
The name of the village is derived from Khwuno, a native plant which grows wild in these hills. The original name, Khwunomia, meaning 'Men of Khwuno', has come to be called Khonoma in more recent times. It is believed that the original name was given by settlers who preceded the present inhabitants, but moved on because they found the climate 'too cold to grow rice'.

When we look at the source materials regarding the formation of Khonoma, the factors appear similar to those that led to the establishment of other Angami villages.

4. This information was given by Theyievizo (87) of Khonoma village.

5. Since childhood, the scholar had participated in many festivals and special occasions where the history of Khonoma was narrated and discussed - a usual customary practice from early times. As a child, the scholar attended the Thehu (morung), a traditional institution and dormitory where the young boys are taught the culture and traditions of the tribe by the elders. For over a decade, the researcher had interviewed hundreds of people in Khonoma with a specific purpose in mind. It is impossible to mention all their names. Listed below are a few names of persons representing various clans who narrated the history of Khonoma to the scholar.

Bizo (62), Gaon Bura of Thevoma clan.
Dietho-u (63), of Thevoma clan.
Khotonyu (61), of Thevoma clan.
Yieto (90), of Thevoma clan.
Visieu (65), of Thevoma clan.
Visesie (45), of Thevoma clan.
Theyievizo (87), Gaon Bura of Merhuma clan.
Pusieto (68), Gaon Bura of Semoma clan.
Keriu (60), of Semoma clan.
Khu-u (69) of Kuthotsu clan.
Vivor (80), of Kuotsu clan.
Krulhubi (65), of Semoma clan.
Petenihu (48) Merhuma clan.
Thoniu (48) Merhuma clan.
Sebi (62) Merhuma clan.
Khonoma is situated in the extreme west of Angami country. Although most of the area is mountainous, Khonoma also has considerable stretches of valleys within the hill tracts. In the south, Khonoma borders the Zemi territory and the romantic Dzuku Valley which stretches to Manipur. The northern side faces Zubza, and in the east is the village of Jotsoma while the village of Mezoma lies to the west.

The population of Khonoma is around 2000. The village land stretches to over 20 Km in length from east to west. The whole area is rich in forest resources and has innumerable varieties of trees. The forests are of a mixed deciduous and evergreen type, with vast areas of

6. The various hills determining the nature and topography of Khonoma are Ho Phera, Mhoziekha, Nikriba, Sikhri, Virkiecha, Gagidaathi, Thekhwecathi and Kradi.

7. Unfortunately, there is a serious lack of detailed geographical accounts on Nagaland. Evidence of the village boundaries has been derived from the long fieldwork carried out in the area of study.

8. Ibid.

9. According to the Khonoma Baptist Church Census 1985, out of the total population of a little over 4000, only 1945 were living in Khonoma in August, 1985. This shows that more than half of the population were living outside the village. Many have jobs in Kohima and others have migrated elsewhere – mostly to Dimapur area, but most of them keep a close link with the village and are registered in the church membership and electoral rolls. This makes it extremely difficult to give the precise population of Khonoma.
jhum-stands predominated by *Alnus Nepalensis*, locally known
as *Rupo*. Almost all these hills have a young sedimentary
rock formation and there is a possibility of coal and uranium
in some areas. Climatically, the area is pleasant although
winter can be cold with mild snowfall on the hilltops.
However, the factor which seems to have proved a major
attraction for settlers is the terrain of Khonoma which

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10. Among the varieties of forest products, *Rupo*, *Alnus*
*Nepalensis*, occupies a dominant portion. *Rupo* is popularly
known as alder. The tree plays a very important
role in the economy of Khonoma. It has a unique capacity
for regeneration. After felling, when the stump of
the tree is so treated by the villagers so as to allow
fresh shoots to grow out of the cut stump, five to
ten such shoots sprout up from each stump. These
then grow to maturity within a period of three years
after which they are cut for firewood. This leaves
the stump of the tree ready again for the growth
of a fresh batch of shoots. Since the cycle of jhum
cultivation follows a three-year course, the next harvest
of firewood would be again after three years. However,
if larger branches are desired, the tree may be cut
instead after six years, i.e. during the next jhum
cycle. In addition, the alder plays an important ecological
role in maintaining the balance of the fertility of
the soil. Its leaves serve to form a rich natural
layer of topsoil.

11. Unpublished Official Records, Department of Geology
and Mining, Government of Nagaland, Kohima.
provided large scope for terrace cultivation, and the steep hills, particularly Mhoziekha, which provided a natural defence.

Since the beginning of human history, the search for food has been part of the struggle for survival among all tribes. As we have discussed in the chapter on Migration and Settlement, Kosa's descendants went out of Kheshakenoma and formed various villages and tribes in the Naga Hills. One of his descendants was Vadio. Tradition narrates that of Vadio's many sons Zuonuo and Keyhonuo founded the villages of Southern Angamis and formed the Zounuo-Keyhonuo clans. One of their descendants by the name of


13. See Chapter Two of this thesis on Migration and Settlement.

Mekhu lived in Kigwema village. Mekhu had two sons - Merhu and Pfukha. Pfukha is said to have lived and died in Kigwema but his brother Merhu migrated to Khonoma with his youngest son, Meyase, following his two other sons, Khwukha and Khate, who were among the founding fathers of Khonoma. The oral history of the village records that it was during a hunting expedition that Khwukha and Khate discovered Khonoma. It is indicated that the emergence of Khonoma into a village settlement was due to the fact that the Naga tribal organization depended by and large on hunting for their subsistence, although efforts were also made to supplement it by agriculture. After Khwukha's and Khate's visit to Khonoma site, the two brothers were

15. Visa, an old man of 79 years, from Kigwema village, is a traditional storyteller and was kind enough to give this information. These evidences were cross-examined in Khonoma.

16. Please see the geneological table at the end of this chapter.

17. There are many different versions regarding the history of Khonoma which is a sensitive issue, and each clan stands firmly on its own version. The different interpretations can even lead to clan feuds, the scholar has come across many heated arguments on this matter in the course of his studies. However, after cross-examination of all these versions, the scholar has been in a position to evolve some sort of consensus which was accepted in the light of historical details by almost all the clans of Khonoma and this stands devoid of any traditional bias.
convinced that the establishment of a village was not possible without joining hands with some more members. They immediately went to Jotsoma and invited one Ratsa and his brother Vokha to join them.18

We find that when Khwukha and Khate contacted Ratsa and Vokha, the latter could not come immediately because he was wounded in a war. From this evidence we can strongly postulate that these early settlers were active participants in inter-village feuds. Contacting Ratsa was not without significance. It seems probable that since these brothers had been involved and perhaps defeated in a feud and since Vokha was wounded, they would be open to the idea of establishing a new settlement. Giving shelter to co-tribesmen, on Khate and Khwukha's part, would be counted as a point of merit, because in doing so, they would also be gaining the allegiance and loyalty of those persons needed in the formation of a new village. The settlement would require manpower for its protection as well as for its habitation. Thus, once they had chosen Khonoma as a potentially advantageous site for settlement, they lost no time in inviting

18. For founding a new village, a long-standing tradition among the Angamis is to invite more people from neighbouring villages.
those people who would be able to fulfill the various roles needed in establishing the new village.  

When Ratsa decided to accompany Khate and Khwukha to Khonoma, an agreement was arrived at amongst them: they were to set off on their journey together and each member was to carry a load consisting of exactly the same number of belongings so as to ensure that they all started on an equal footing materially in the new village. However, they stopped on the way and checked each other’s luggage, and it was discovered that Khwukha had hidden an extra skein of goat’s hair in his shield. The presence of this skein of hair led to a prophecy that Khwukha’s descendants would be blessed and that out of his clan would arise the heroes of the new village.

19. Even in a tribal social formation, when a village settlement on a permanent basis was founded, it required many men and materials not merely for the development of the village, but more so for protecting it from other clans or tribes.

20. This points to the basically democratic nature of early tribal society where equality in all its aspects was greatly valued.

21. Goats were considered sacred animals and the possession of their hair was considered as precious and a sign of good luck. It is possible that Khwukha secreted the skein of goat’s hair in the superstitious hope that the extra hair he carried would bring him additional blessings.

22. "Tsiesie rei Khwukha dzupuo Khwunoria sier sier tuo derei kemelha lievi" meaning "from Khwukha’s clan will emerge heroes, but they will be arrogant." Narrated by Pfukolle Khwukha (85) of Khonoma.
The founding of this new village was accompanied by many such human episodes and incidents which have been recounted and passed down to the present generation. 23 These incidents formed the basis for prophecies regarding the clans and village life which, strangely enough, have proved creditable enough to be still taken seriously by the villagers to this day. In the face of these prophecies and legends, one cannot discount the view that although the move to Khonoma was motivated by a search for improved material conditions, the early settlers also believed that they were led by the Spirits in their selection of a new home. For instance, as they approached Khonoma, one of the members of the party lost a packet of salt. A search ensued and the culprit was found. It was then foretold that there would be cases of theft in the village but in each case the culprit would not escape undetected. 24 Again, according to Angami tradition, the settlers brought with them sacred chickens with which to consecrate the founding of the village through a ritual called 'phesevu'. 25

23. As Jan Vansina has observed, culture is carried from generation to generation through memory related into words and deeds. Jan Vansina, Oral Tradition as History, Op.cit., p.xi.

24. "Tsiesie rei Khwunoria gudi sier rei telie lie tie ha, sidl pupic jushie" meaning "There will be thieves in this land but the culprit would not escape".

25. A number of rituals and sacrifices are involved in the consecration of a new village. Sacred chickens are used for these rituals.
when the chickens were let out of their baskets, they began fighting with each other, signifying that there would be enmity and inter-clan feuds within the village. Because of this, Khate decided to settle on a hill-top in order to have the advantage should fighting ever break out.26

Tradition tells us that the leader of the group first arrived at the spot and unearthed a stone under which he found numerous crabs. This led him to foretell that the people would multiply in this land. He called out to his friends saying,

"The land worthy of habitation, the land of beauty and goodness, the land free of plague, the land that shall be victorious in war - here is the land we have been seeking. Come, O my people."27

Then his companions gathered around him and he recited a prayer to consecrate the foundation of the new village. A simple translation of the prayer goes like this:


27. Khonoma Folklore.

See also Khonoma Baptist Church Centenary Committee Report, 12th April 1987. Recorded by Tsiu Terejha, Sebi Dolie and Thinou Seyie on behalf of the Centenary Committee. Translated by Babuno Iralu. See appendix for original text.
The gods have destined that this land shall be ours. We shall dwell here happily and prosper. Here young maidens shall sit and weave and children spin their tops to their hearts content. Our seed shall multiply and fill this land. It shall be a land where rice abounds and the wine vats overflow, where joy and contentment fill every heart and the songs of victory resound over the earth. No plague shall touch it nor famine enter it. Life in this village shall be the envy of all others.
Response: It shall be so.\textsuperscript{28}

Moving into the village, each settler selected the site for his house and these traditional sites have remained with their descendants to the present day. In selecting his land, Ratsa was given instructions by his brother, Vokha, to settle on that land which he had already chosen — an area which had thekre (a kind of native plant) and megu (a local tree) and which was watered by a perennial spring. However, when Ratsa reached Khonoma, he mistook the site and instead settled down on a piece of land that was similar to the one Vokha had described although not as good or lush (this is the present Semoamma land). When Vokha, recovering from his war wounds, finally reached Khonoma, he found to his anger that his brother had not settled down in the land that he had selected and instead,

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid. Appendix for original text.
the land he wanted was now occupied by other clans. In frustration and anger he cursed the land of his original choice.

There is a host of other stories and episodes connected with the settlement of Khonoma, but these would not be relevant to our discussion at this stage. Whether we can attribute the settlement of Khonoma village to these legends alone is again subjected to doubt because according to Angami clan organization there are two moieties: Thekrunomia and Thevomia also known as Thepa/Thevo or Kepepfumia and Kepezomia. So far as the Angami traditions and religion are concerned, people from

29. The reference is obviously to the clan of Khwukha and Khate.

30. To this day the descendants of Vokha and Ratsa believe that this land, Hiekhakilie, still bears the curse of Vokha, and that this curse would overtake anyone settling on this land. "Tsiesle rei ase ayie mia bu luju ha Ihoukenyu" meaning "Cursed be any of my descendants who would live on this land". Khonoma Folklore, narrated by Kerin Mor of Semoma clan of Khonoma.

31. To understand the various internal mechanisms of the Angami social structure, one should very carefully examine the literature that we derive from various kinds of written or oral information. The Angami legends say that they sprang from two brothers — Thevo and Thekruno. The growth of population and many other intricacies divided Angamis into various clans but all these clans are identified under these two divisions. One group of clans animated and multiplied from the branch of Thevo and the other from Thekruno. This dual division of Angami social organization of Thevomia and Thekrunomia, also known as Kepepfumia and Kepezomia was termed as kelhu to avoid confusion. There are complicated intricacies involved in the division of these moieties, especially in the breaking-down of phratries, clans, lineages and kinships, i.e., thino and pfutsa.


one moiety alone could not form a village. The entire history of Angami village formation supports this statement. Participation of the other moiety was a must for the growth of a village because each moiety had a different ritual to perform. For instance, in any religious or social ceremony, it was required that the members of the Thevonia had to first partake of the food before the rest of the village could eat. So, although Khwukha, Khate and Ratsa were regarded as the founding fathers of Khonoma, we have no definite evidence to this effect because all these men belonged to Thekrunomia moiety. Thus we cannot depend solely on the information extracted from folklore. Probably we can afford to say that it could be that Khwukha, Khate and Ratsa came first to explore the suitability of Khonoma for settlement, and perhaps shifted to the area, but that Khonoma became a full-fledged village only when the clans of the other moiety joined them.

32. This practice is strictly followed even to this day.

33. The concept of village formation has been discussed by various scholars on the basis of their empirical situations. Since we are not discussing village formation on conceptual lines, the discussion shall, therefore remain limited in this area. Vansina has done a valuable work on this aspect.

Looking at the present nature of clan structure in Khonoma, we find that the entire population is divided into three major clans (thino): Merhu, Semo and Thevo. Of these, Merhu and Semo belong to the Thekrunomia moiety, while Thevo belongs to the Thevomia moiety. As we have demonstrated earlier, Khwukha, Khate and Ratsa were the first settlers in Khonoma. But the presence of the Thevomia moiety in the present structure proves that the formation of the village was completed only when the members of that moiety came to the village.

A study of the formation of each of these clans would be necessary at this point.

34. The exact number of clans which have branched out from the Angami tribe cannot be established as yet, because the analysis of this aspect involves some complexities. In the recent history, the growth of population and other opportunities of business and employment through the process of modernization has shaken the very foundations of clan-based relations, and many more sub-clans have been formed. For instance, Putsure, Vizol, Kevichusa and so on are very recently formed sub-clans. So to give the number of clans will not be appropriate in this respect.

35. Although there are slight variations in these narrations, the history of the first settlers form the fabric of a common knowledge as the villagers have grown up hearing these tales at their firesides and festive occasions. Therefore, it would be unfair to cite any single person or clan as the source in this case.
MERHU: As already indicated, the Merhu clan consisted of the descendants of Merhu through his sons, Khate, Khwukha and Meyase. In addition there was another section of the Merhu clan who owed their origin to Nriu. Nriu was the adopted son of Pfukha, brother of Merhu. Although Nriu himself did not settle in Khonoma, his son and grandsons were brought to the village by Khate. The section of the Merhu clan which has originated from Nriu has played a very important role in the history of Khonoma. Therefore it is necessary to probe into the circumstances that led to Nriu's adoption and the subsequent migration of his descendants to Khonoma.

Nriu was an orphan turned legend. He was of the Zemi tribe of Tsiekwuma village. He was brought up by his brother but his sister-in-law seriously ill-treated him, compelling him to leave his brother's house to fend for himself. Nriu was a hard working man, proficient in the art of agriculture. As the fruit of his labour he harvested

36. The oral literature is replete with various references to Nriu. He seems to have played a significant role in the evolution of some of the traditions which are still held by the Angamis with great reverence and regard to Nriu.

37. Oral source, collected from Khonoma villagers.

38. Ibid.
a hundred baskets of millet single-handed which was a great achievement in his village given the nature of the means of production at that time. To mark his achievement, he announced that he would perform a Feast of Merit. But his sister-in-law, in her jealousy at his growing importance, burnt down his barns and Nriu was forced to leave the village. This disappointment made him to chose the path of an ascetic which was completely divorced from material culture, and he dwelt in the romantic Dzuku Valley living on wild fruits and vegetables from the forest.  

One day, Pfukha and his friend, Seca found Nriu in the valley and brought him home to their village Kigwema. Both the friends wanted to adopt Nriu and so entered into an agreement as to who would adopt him. They decided that the one whom Nriu first addressed as 'Apfu' or 'father' would have the right to adopt him. After this, Seca took Nriu home, but the young man never spoke a word. Pfukha then had his turn of keeping Nriu. Here too, Nriu was silent for many days until one day, Pfukha came home.

39. Dzuku which means 'cool water' is a valley in the frontier of Manipur and Nagaland. Abundant in wild animals, flowers and fruits, it has a wild and haunting beauty. Many legends and myths are connected with this place.
with many birds which he had trapped. His other children thronged around him calling out to him. He rewarded them with a bird each. Nriu watching the scene, was moved to also utter the word 'Apfu' or 'father' whereupon he received his share of the hunt. Pfukha, according to the agreement then adopted him. 40

Nriu lived in the house of Pfukha until one day, Pfukha's daughter, Thoose, received an offer of marriage from Merhiese of Secuma village. The marriage was arranged and Nriu was sent to accompany his foster-sister to her new home. For this reason, to this day, the descendants of Nriu are known as 'the descendants of the one who washed the hands of Thoose'. 41 He found favour with the villagers of Secuma and grew in popularity. When the time for his return came, the villagers refused to let him go back. 42

41. The descendants of Nriu are known in Angami as "Thoose bitinuo yiemia" which literally means "descendants of the person who washed the hands of Thoose". This title had adhered because according to folklore, Pfukha sent his adopted son, Nriu, along with his daughter as a servant.
42. Oral sources say that Pfukha sent his men three times to Secuma to bring back Nriu. But the Secuma villagers refused to let him go back, and instead sent gifts including conch shells to Pfukha through his men. Pfukha was furious with his men for accepting the gifts, but after a time he realized the futility of trying to get Nriu to come back. Thus Nriu settled in Secuma.
Ultimately he married and settled there and had two sons - Thorenyu and Soru. Thorenyu had two sons - Gwisanu and Lievuse. Gwisanu became the priest of Secuma and died there. But his sons and brother, Lievuse, were brought to Khonoma by Khate.43

Thus it came to pass that the descendants of Nriu came to Khonoma and increased in number and their prosperity grew. Their contribution proved a major factor in the building of Khonoma into a powerful village.44

SEM0: The second clan that has significantly contributed to the growth of Khonoma was the Semo clan. This clan consists of two phratries - Chalieutsu and Kuthotsu.45 Chalieu was the father of Ratsa and Vokha, the first settlers. Although he himself did not come Khonoma, the clan, descended

43. It is of great significance that Nriu's son Gwisanu became the chief priest (Zievo) of Secuma. It must have been a great achievement on the part of Gwisanu to have acquired such an important position and status as one who would be considered as a newcomer.

44. It is appropriate to mention that the famous Naga Nationalist leader, Mr A Z Phizo, is a direct descendant of Nriu, who has played a key role similar to his ancestor in shaping the history of Nagaland.

45. The suffix 'tsu' such as in Chalieutsu and Kuthotsu means grandson or in general usage, descendants. Thus, the word 'Chalieutsu' would mean 'descendants of Chalieu'.

through Ratsa and Vokha, retains his name. The other sub-clans of Chalisetsu are Mor, Rulho and Seyie.46

The Kuthotsu phratry was named after Kutho who came to Khonoma from Secuma village.47 The sub-clans of this phratry are - Vupru, Secu, Zhunyu and Rurhie.48 An interesting point to note is that Kutho for whom the clan is named is actually not the originator of the clan. The clan was originally founded by two other men - Pelevi from Secuma village and Hiesenu from Jotsoma village.49 When Kutho came to Khonoma he allied himself with them. But in course of time he and his descendants became more influential, overshadowing the members of Pelevi and Hiesenu. The result was that the clan acquired his name. This illustrates that the clan or sub-clans does not always bear the name of its originator, but sometimes chooses to call itself after a more popular or illustrious person who may join the clan at a later stage.

46. Ulalhou Vupru (50) of Semoma clan, Khonoma, gave this information.
47. Secuma is an ancient Angami village near Mesoma, in the western Angami sector. Once it was a powerful village but is now reduced to a small village of about 40 houses.
49. Ibid.
THEVO: The type of clan emergence mentioned above also occurred within the Thevo clan. The sub-clans of this clan today are - Chatsu, Phetsu and Kotsu. However, the first settlers belonging to the Thevo clan who came to Khonoma were Kehiekha and Keviso, who came from Merema village. As mentioned earlier, Thevo clan forms part of Thevomia moiety, the presence of which was imperative to fulfill the ritual requirements involved in the establishment of a village. It was Kehiekha and Keviso, as members of this moiety, who were invited to settle in Khonoma for the purpose of fulfilling these obligations. But today their descendants are united under one clan called Chatsu, descended from Necha of Merema. The Phetsu clan consists of three divisions of kinships - Kruse, Pieru and Yalie. This clan was founded by a man called Pfuphe who came to Khonoma from Kiruphe village.

Ko, the founder of Kotsu clan, came from a place called Kojuzhu, a place near Kohima village. When

50. Diathou (65) of Chatsu clan, Khonoma, gave this information.
51. Ibid.
52. Visesie (46) Phetsu clan, Khonoma, gave this information.
53. Viver (81) the oldest member of Kotsu clan, traditional storyteller, narrated this. The ancient Kojuzhu village is now the site of the present 'Little Flower School', Kohima.
Ko heard that a new village, Khonoma, was being founded he was eager to settle there too. However, he was delayed as he had to perform a Feast of Merit (Jashu). Also, tradition required that any man who wished to leave a village to settle in a new village after giving a Feast of Merit had to perform certain harvest rituals. He thus had to grow and harvest a crop before he could leave for Khonoma, after performing the necessary rites.\(^{54}\)

Once these major clans - Merhu, Semo and Thevo - settled in Khonoma, other sub-clans, phratries, lineages and kinships continued to emerge and multiply to form the present intricate network of clan structure and relationship which affects the affairs of the village to this day.\(^{55}\)

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\(^{54}\) In a society where agriculture is predominant, sowing and harvesting often form the basis of religious ceremonies.

\(^{55}\) These developments indicate the gradual promotion of material resources of the tribe which ran parallel to the growth of population. In fact, at this stage the lack of improvement in technology and non-incorporation of external influences seems to have been a major reason for not transforming the growing clans into a state structure of any degree. In other parts of India, it was at this stage that the application of the varna system worked as a dissolving influence for transforming the tribal structure. It was the varna system which expanded the social division of labour and laid the foundation of a stratified social order.

The emergence of chieftainship, Peyumia, played a unique role in consolidating Angami tribal social organization.

"The Nagas are republicans and their peumahs, or chiefs are elected, and though they often have great influence, they are in theory only, Primus inter pares, and are liable at any time to be displaced. Practically, they often remain in office for years and are greatly respected."56

The term Peyumia has been loosely translated as 'chieftain'. But one may differ on this point. There are some characteristics that differentiate them from, say, the Mizos or the Khasis.57 In these tribes the chiefs, by and large, depended on the mode of selection or election, i.e. chiefs are generally hereditary or elected by the people. But what may be pointed out here is that the Angami Peyumia were neither from a hereditary lineage nor were they the result of a search for the election of a leader.58 The Peyumia, rather, were those who emerged naturally as respected and recognized leaders. The basis for such an emergence could be personal charisma, integrity of character, power of oratory, diplomacy,

physical prowess and skill in war, wisdom and wealth. A combination of some of these traits would make a man stand out in society as a peyumia. Once a man was accepted as a peyumia, he had considerable power and influence, the strength of which did not follow any regulated jurisdiction but rather rested on the strength of his own individual achievements and personality. Thus, it was quite possible for a number of Peyumia to co-exist at one time in a single village and to work in co-operation with each other, if they all proved themselves possessed of the criteria required. The peyumia, one or many, had a strong voice on all matters regarding governing of the village and related affairs. But although the peyumia would wield great powers, the very mode of emergence

59. A well-known peyumia of Khonoma village was Pelhu under whose leadership Khonoma invaded and plundered Gariphe village in the middle of the 19th century. In 1889, after the famous Battle of Khonoma, when a Peace Treaty was made with the British, the leader of the Khonoma delegation was again Pelhu, who was now an old man. After Khonoma was annexed, the British made Pelhu the first Gaonbura (village headman) of Khonoma, thus starting the office of the Gaonbura which became a very powerful and influential position for nearly a century until the creation of Nagaland State in 1963. It was the creation of the office of the Gaonbura that more or less displaced the traditional system of peyumia.
dictated that the basic tribal democratic structure was not disturbed or displaced.\textsuperscript{60}

The steady and sure supply of food and the availability of large tracts of land led to the growth of population in course of time. This increased the labour force which brought more lands under terrace cultivation and also provided security from the other tribes as well. It was here that the first preliminaries of division of labour sprang up.\textsuperscript{61} Besides, the location of Angami country, particularly its nearness to the plains of Assam and Manipur, brought the Angamis into contact with other peoples and cultures. Thus came in the

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{60} Here it comes closer to Gamo society of South Africa where in an assembly each citizen had the right to express himself freely. The decisions were adopted unanimously by taking a vote and counting of voices. But what makes the Angami peyumia distinct from the institution of Gamo society is that the latter, the institution had the right to punish those who refused to obey their authority, which did not exist among Angamis. Therefore the Angami society seems to have been possessed of actual democratic norms.


\textsuperscript{61} We do not deny the fact that prior to this growth of population no division existed in the Angami society. There was a rudimentary differentiation, which evolved on the basis of ritual tendency, priesthood, wealth, warriorship and some other aspects similar to the one illustrated by Laibman in his analysis.

\end{footnotesize}
new skills both of craftsmanship and agriculture and strengthened the social differentiation. However, the multiplication of population did not mean the diffusion of tribal social organization altogether. The increasing population led to the formation of new clans and sub-clans mushrooming new peyumias. For example, when Meyase came to Khonoma, he became the originator of the Meyase clan. In course of time as the population increased, the descendants of his sons formed six sub-clans or kinships of Zetsuvi, Keni, Kwakha, Pfulise, Sanyu and Iralu. It appears that the establishment of Khonoma itself nursed the ascending wave of Angami influence. From Khonoma they began to extend their area of influence by bringing some neighbouring tribes under control by force and persuasion. The basic fundamentals of statecraft at this stage were not developed


64. An analysis of state formation made by Romila Thapar is useful while studying such situations. But unfortunately the Angamis had a non-state society which will manifest itself in our analysis. There must have existed some arrangement for collection of tribute from other tribes. It appears that, usually, that no organized or preliminary machinery for tribute existed. It was the individual affair of various Angami chiefs bordering non-Angami tribes. As a result these relations could not be formalised as has been discussed by Romila Thapar. R Thapar, Op.cit., pp. 11-13.
at all. But paying tribute was considered an important symbol of subordination and recognition of one's authority. 64

This extension of authority could not have been so easily effected. It must have involved a lot of conflicts and fighting among various tribes and clans. The people of Khonoma were in receipt of tribute from some villages of other tribes particularly the Zeliangs. 65 It was this important factor which later convinced the British to come to terms with Khonoma Angami, which, of course, at first proved to be a difficult task. 66 The practice of tribute collection, extortion of services and contribution from various tribes did not merely provide security to these tribes but also helped the growth of economic organisation and division of labour among the Angamis. The mechanism of collecting dues from various non-Angami villages was a surplus

64. The author of this thesis belongs to the same clan.
65. J H Hutton, Op. Cit., p. 252 - "These tribes are situated to the south of the Angamis and have been very much influenced by them. The Zeml having been long virtually subject to the Angami village of Khonoma."
66. For details see Chapter on British Colonization of this thesis.
appropriated by the peyumia systematically. Since the level of consumption was not high in the Naga Hills given the nature of society, the early Angamis exchanged commodities like cotton, ginger, salt, woven cloths etc. for iron which was used for fighting, hunting and agricultural equipments.  

The terrace cultivation in Khonoma certainly required a more improved technology than what was required in jhum cultivation. The regular labour services of men and in some cases slaves were utilized. Small canals from streams were cut across the hills for irrigation of fields and other purposes. Other activities included weeding, ploughing, harvesting, cutting of...  

68. The phenomenon of slavery as such did not exist in Khonoma or for that matter in the entire Angami society. When we refer to slaves there are some isolated cases when they forcibly captured men and women of other villages or tribes and employed them in such tasks to earn their livelihood but there did not exist any slave market nor an economy based on slavery as was in the case of Roman society. M Gibbs, Feudal order, London 1949. Barry Hindess and Paul Q Hirst. Pre-Capitalist Mode of Production, London, 1975, pp. 109-147.  
69. The canals were cut with labour from the rivers of Dzuyieru, Krukhuru, Dzuza, Khwunodsukhuru, Khuru which are fed by natural sources. These facts were verified by field work conducted by the scholar.
wood and so on. All these developments gradually improved the living standard of the Khonoma people in particular and the Angami in general. These measures led to further growth of population because more people would have meant more labour and productivity at that time. The regulation of irrigation, the supervision of the process of production and appropriation, the conduct of war affairs and the other general activities gave birth to a kind of administrative organism. Within the clans obviously the numbers increased and formed sub-clans which went on multiplying. They owed their allegiance to clan elders by assisting in various works assigned to them thereby giving impetus to clan multiplication.

Gradually, it seems that the power and authority of Khonoma increased to such an extent that even neighbouring rajas and chiefs were apprehensive of their attacks.

70. In such an administrative organism the authority was regulated and supervised by the Peyumia and this did not develop to a state level and does not therefore qualify under the elements of early state as discussed by Henri J M Claessen and P Skalnick in The Early State, Op.cit. See also H J M Claessen, "The Internal Dynamics of Early State" in Current Anthropology, Vol.25, No. 4, Aug-Oct 1984, pp.365-370.

71. With the increase in their numbers the Angamis went on subjecting their neighbouring villages and thereby raised voluntary contingents for furtherance of their authority.
Possibly it was because of this expanding power that the Dimasa Raja offered one of his daughters to an Angami clan leader in an attempt to forestall the liquidation of his authority. Matrimonial ties have been an assurance of security and friendship between various principalities from ancient times.

Now, Khonoma had built up a kind of state apparatus without dissolving the tribal organisation. It was at this stage of development that there emerged some heroic personalities who excelled in various facets of human activity—some were skilled in warfare, others in the art of agriculture. Some attained distinction as soldiers, still more as craftsmen and men of art. There is an abundance of folklore on the subject with some exaggeration of course. But a careful examination does provide us with valuable historical examples.

For instance, the legend of Valie is notable. There are a number of legends which illustrate his

courage, skills and knowledge.\textsuperscript{73} Two of the most well known of these narrate his exploits in killing a tiger single-handed and plundering Lakiema, a Zemi village. In the second instance, he forced the people of Lakiema village to pay tribute to Khonoma.

Likewise, Meruno went to the Ahom king in disguise and confirmed many details of trade and commercial prospects. Folklore tells us that Meruno traded in gold, a commodity hitherto unknown to the Angamis. He emerged as one of the first Angami merchants and introduced good trade relations with the Manipuris.\textsuperscript{74}

There are also many instances where Khonoma had plundered and invaded a number of villages. One such instance was the war with Gariphe village sometime in the middle of the nineteenth century. Khonoma invaded Gariphe village and completely razed it to the ground. The heroes of this war, Pelhu and Pukahie, captured Saruu, the most beautiful girl of

\textsuperscript{73} The legend of Yalie is common knowledge in Khonoma. There is still a huge monolith which was erected under the supervision of Yalie. It is called "Yalie tsie" which means "Yalie's stone".

\textsuperscript{74} Khonoma folklore. Meruno is a fictitious name but his role as a historical character cannot be denied like that William Tell of Switzerland.
the village and brought her to Khonoma. A song that Saruu composed while living in Khonoma as a captive shows the strength of Khonoma during that period.

A loose translation of the song is as follows:

"Terhuso's sister Saruu
Kidnapped from Garipeheju
was taken to Khwunoria,
captive of Pelhu and Pukahie -
mighty warriors both and renowned.

Standing upon that alien land, I thought
Were we both bulls of equal stature
I would have unwaveringly fought you.
You are a full-grown bull
I am but a fledgling calf.
Behind you lie your allies -
The dwellers of Japfu's vales
As mighty as, as terrible as
Spirit-fires burning upon the mountains
Leaving nary a spot unsigned.
You waged war upon me
And I, defenceless, outnumbered,
Could not withstand your onslaught
But choose instead to yield to your might".75

The emergence of these folk heroes not only transformed Khonoma into a very powerful village, but also earned for her higher social standing, elevating the position of her inhabitants. It was through the efforts of these heroes that the Angamis made their presence to the neighbouring territories felt in a forceful and impressive manner.

75. Khonoma folk song, translated by Babuno Iralu, see appendix for original text.
In this manner, Khonoma grew to enjoy a certain supremacy by its power and strength over other tribal villages. Hutton wrote,

"It is not without reason that Khonoma, in particular, has been chosen as a typical Angami village. Before the coming of the 'Sarkar' no Angamis enjoyed such widespread tribute as Khonoma. In spite of serious clan dissensions within the village, they were known and feared from Henima to Themokedima, and Razama to the Mikir Hills in Golaghat. Kohima, it is true, were too numerous for Khonoma to attack with any hope of success, and perhaps had the greater influence over the East Angami country and did all the trade on that side. It is only of recent years that Khonoma has taken of trading far afield in that direction. But this hegemony, if it may be called such, of Khonoma, merely meant that Khonoma was stronger than most other villages and consequently bullied and levied a sort of 'Denegelt' wherever it could." 76

The Khonoma group has also been described as "that group which is generally regarded as being Angami par excellence".

77. Ibid.
Plan of Hill Fort, Konomah, Amahmea, Nagah Hills

Genealogy of the scholar Visier.

MEKHU (Kigwema Village)

PFUKHA

MERHU (migrated to Khonoma)

KHWUKHA

KHATE

MEYASE (migrated to Khonoma with father)

ZETSUVI KAYIEGI(SANYU) PHULISE KENIEU

KEVIRUSIE

IRALU (A descendant of Sesu, one Sanyu)

KEVIRUSIE II (son of Kevirusie)

PERHICA

LHUNYU-U

ZHAVITSO MESELHU DOZENYU KERUSE

NGUNIU

WHEZIELIE

ZAPUSALIE PFUSIELIE

GOKHRIELIE KHRIEKRULIE

THEYIEVIZO VILARHTUO MEGOLAU

NIGWENO(F) PERHICHA(M) DOZO(M) NIYIEHU(M) PHONO(F) JAKIENO(F) VISIER(M)

KEVISATO
KHONOMA CLAN ORGANIZATION

KHONOMA

(A) MERHU  (B) THEVO  (C) SEMO

(1) GWIZANTSU  (2) LIEVUSE  (3) MEYASE

SAVINO  MERU  SOKIELIE

NISENYU  RICHALIE  DOLIE  CHASE

LIEGISE  KHATE  TERHUJA  THO-U  SAKHRIE

ZETSUVI  PFULISE  KENIEU  IRALU  SANYU  KHWUKHA
THEVOMA SECTION OF KHONOMA FORT page 134.
ANGAMI CANE BASKETS  page 74.

ANGAMI DAO AND HOE FOR DAILY USE  page 71.