EPILOGUE
Recapitulating the main observations made in the preceding chapters and making an evaluation, has unearthed many interesting facts about this tribe, Maran Nagas, hitherto not much known. The tribe was just like a beep on the screen of many writers as the radar falls on bigger and larger tribes. But the study of the problem reveals that like any of the Naga tribe, the Marams have their own history, though oral, and rich cultural heritage which are unique in many ways. These traditions are handed down from generation to generation and they are the sources of information for reconstructing the history and culture of the people. In the identifications of the Marams and their geographical habitat, the Maram people who are described by Pemberton and
others as belonging to the ‘Great Maram tribe of the Nagas,’ as the most powerful, populous and wealthy\(^1\), but one found that the tribe is not heard much and not widely known. It is also said that the Marams live in one large village of 900 houses under two chiefs.\(^2\) However the most populous village of the Marams today, Maramei Namdi, perched on the hill top hardly touch 550 houses and approximately about 5000 souls.

In the examinations of their legends and folktales with regard to the history of their origin, migration and settlement, it has been found that the Marams have the same origin with the various tribes popularly known as the Nagas. Today the Nagas comprising some 66 odd identified tribes are found in the South Eastern Himalayan Mountain range i.e northeastern part of India and northwestern part of Myanmar. They are Mongoloid belonging to Tibeto-Burman linguistic family. It is exactly not known where the Nagas might have come from. Folkloristic traditions speak of the Marams as the descendents of *Maram Pungsas*, the eldest son of the first parents *Pou Madungkasii* and *Pei Samongtingdungpui*. There after migration took place. The legends say that the various Naga tribes or groups belong to the same parents who had departed from Makhel and Khezakhonoma. Whatever may be the truth, the fact remains that the Nagas have been living in their present settlement for centuries. It is believe that the Nagas have been living in village-states since time immemorial that was republic and anarchical in nature based on the principles of democracy and socialism by and large. There are also others who tried to fathom the origin based on the cultural traits and the material used, which is traced to South East Asia. However due to lack of enough evidence, the origin of the Nagas still remains a mystery. Thus at best we can say that the research remains inconclusive as much as the origin is concerned. For no written materials provided the origin of the Nagas in general and Maram in particular. Otherwise Historically speaking the earliest record of the Marams is about the war, which the Marams had with the Meiteis during the time King Khagemba (1596-1652). The war probably took place in 1645 as found in many of the literatures. This indicates that Maram *siigong* or chief once a powerful tribe and extending hegemony over neighbouring tribes as indicated by the names of the many Shiipfomei villages given by the Marams.

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It is from this tradition of sovereign Naga village-states that one finds a type of self-determination already practiced among the Naga villages. In course of time, villages were organized into tribes and various tribes constituted into a larger tribe called Naga. Today, the Nagas believe that they descended from the same ancestors, although they had been living as separate entities for centuries together due to unfavourable social and geographical conditions. But it is a fact that the conciousness of the Naga tribes as ‘one people’ did not well effect until the British came into contact with the various Naga tribes.

The Marams though live in different parts of the northeastern states of India migrated from Mamei Namdi. It is found that there are many factors for this migration, the details of which are being discussed in Chapter two. Further many of the villages underwent great change due to the impact of Christianity. But the migration after the coming of Christianity were mostly due to differences and diversities brought about by the new wave of conversion, which according to the elders, would bring disasters. Otherwise the migrations were mostly due to rivalry among the various clans in the village. The establishment of the village by certain group of clans and establishment of bachelors house, which were class based, and clans living in blocks had proved this. Some have migrated even to some non-Maram villages like the Angami and Tangkhuul Naga villages.¹

The Marams though living in different villages, have common features in their social, economic, religious and cultural life. In the examination it has been found that their social system was based on lineage and clan system. In a Maram society, the family was the smallest social unit and the village, the largest. The life starts from a village and ends in a village. It encompasses everything and one has nothing to do beyond his village. There was no social interaction among the tribe and between villages. This was mainly because they look at another village as rival. The society is patrilineal and so the descent is traced through father’s side and property is therefore, inherited by the sons. Marriage is considered as a sacrament and so it is an interesting aspect of social life of the people. Marriage within the same clan is strictly prohibited, and the violation of which is considered a serious crime resulting not only in the expulsion but also not admitted to the clan anymore.

¹ Vide supra, pp. 34-5
Their society is a society that looks after the welfare and interest of every section of the society by classifying them into different groups according to their age gradation. It was due to this that the people built dormitories separately for boys and girls as per the age group. Such a system remains a cohesive force to defend themselves against any internal and external dangers. Love, respect and high honour given to the women are also another important aspect of their social life.

In the discussion on the political system, it was found that the polity of the Maram Nagas was democratic in nature. They have been living for the last many years, which were republic and monarchical in nature on the principles of democracy and socialism by and large.

In the study it has been found that there was the traditional village -states of the Marams where every able bodied citizen in one way or the other was involved in maintaining the security of the village, be it for offence or defence. There was this village council of elders besides sügong and gongpei to help in the administration of the work. Gerontocracy was their form of government. One of the prominent traditions of the Maram Nagas that was crucial for management and sustenance of sovereign village-state and their way of life itself was the tradition of inter-village war popularly known as head hunting as an indicator of the Nagas to the outside world in the past. In short, it can be stated that in the past every Maram Naga village was a village-state who were more or less sovereign and independent. This long isolation and nature of independence perhaps led to villagism, tribalism and of course nationalism in the present day for the notion of tribe and nation were absent in their earlier life.

In the economic life of the Maram Nagas, it is found that there were local variations in the traditional land ownership system depending on the nature how a village has been established. The village people generally have their own private land. But in the entire village, the community land is the biggest. Jhumming by burning slash and thrash were generally taken up in the community land. Terraced farming was also practiced. Of all the crops rice was the principal crop. Uses of coins were noticed in the early part of 20th century among the tribe. This was more so in some of the villages like Tamuilong, Takaimei, Tagapuimei, etc. situated nearby the old Great War road as popularly known to the villagers were nearer to markets. Overall their main occupation

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2 The road mentioned is the present NH No 39. The elderly people of Tamuilong call it Great War road. It is to be noted that the village Tamuilong which was under siege by the Japanese troops during the Spring of 1944 during Second World War practically making it their army camp was just over looking the British Inspection bungalow and Mission Centre which located at Kangpokpi.
was agriculture. The size of the village, setting of the village depends to a large extend on economic factors.

Culture is inextricably linked with the religious belief of any people. The Maram Nagas have rich cultural heritage. The number of festivals, feasts, songs, dances and ornaments, all of which having definite meaning and importance of their own. Many of their festivals are inextricably linked with the belief for good harvest, prosperity, purification, etc. There are some festivals like ‘Siwmi Kilang’ after the plantation is over as thanks giving to God for the completion of the work and good harvest. And festival like N’jhanght is quite popular in the southern region. This festival is not practice elsewhere. There are also dances and songs for specific cultural occasion. The richness of the cultural life is also found in their numerous songs, which are broadly classified into songs for seed sowing, weeding, harvesting, dances etc. There are also different songs to be sung at the funeral, at the lighter moment, romance, etc.

Language variation was found in different villages and region. There is also a particular dance performed generally during marriage ceremony called ‘pūhaau’. Besides these, there is a particular way of shouting while singing in-group called ‘mükék’. And there is a particular way of singing called ‘miigu’ that are unique in many ways. The remnants of bachelor dormitories indicate the size of the village.

The Marams believe in the existence of the supreme God called ‘Pūmpī Pramha’. The Maram pantheon consisted of a supreme deity called ‘Pūmpī Pramha’ who is the Almighty God. Besides the supreme God there are other deities, evil spirits. The people believe in life after death and the notion of heaven and hell, end of the world and believe in rebirth of good men. Various rites and rituals were associated with their belief.

In the conversion to Christianity one find significant differences among the various Naga tribes. Whereas in many of the Naga tribes the missionaries try to study their cosmological world and tried to fit in to that religious believe by implanting Christianity through the introduction of a literature mostly the translation of Bible scripture. It was successful with some because of the similarity but not in all the cases. However in the case of the Maram there were clashed of interests between the doctrine preached by American Baptist Missionaries and culture. And this defect was detected by the Catholic Missionaries and tried to spread Roman Catholic without interfering with the local laws and custom, in short, culture. This was one of the reasons that as per
the percentage of the total Maram speakers, the Marams have the highest percentage Roman Catholic followers than any of the Naga tribe.