GLOSSARY

AI
The word ‘AI’ in common parlance is translated as ‘rite’ or ‘ceremony’. But in its specific context it means, “to fascinate”, and “to obtain power over”, or “to subjugate the wild animals and human beings killed”; or “the material wealth acquired by a person”. A wild jungle turmeric is also called ‘AI’ in ‘Thadou-Kuki’ and other Kuki tribes.

The ‘AI’ ceremonies in the traditional society may consist of ‘HANG-AI’ (a ceremonial festival on account of abundant paddy harvesting); ‘BUH-AI’ is also considered another form of CHANG-AI. ‘SA-AI’ is ‘the great hunter ritual’. The great hunters who are wealthy may also perform both ‘CHANG-AI’ and ‘SA-AI’ together (if they are willing to do so) which is termed as “SELKOP SHU”.

BEPA/BE
Every family in the Kuki society has practically ‘BEPA’ or ‘BE’ which means household helpers or spokesman of the family. In other words it is “an officiating man in one’s family”.

BAWLPNU: The private priest in the old Chin-Kuki-Mizo religion as opposed to ‘Sadawt’ public priests. It is Mizo term.

BULPIZEM: The word ‘BUL’ means ‘source’ or ‘beginning’. ‘PI’ is the ‘feminine marker’. ‘ZEM’ means ‘script’. Dr. Khuplam claimed it to be the original script of the children of MANMASI. It consisted of 32 alphabets, both in Capital and Small letters. In ‘Thadou Kuki’ it is also call ‘LAIJEM’ (Specimens of scripts enclosed)

BOITONG: The traditional garments or shirts made of a hand spun cotton. (Thadou-Kuki term)

CHHINLUNG: Literally, it means the ‘covering rock’; it is a big stone that is believed to have blocked the passage from the netherworld/underworld to the earth in the Chin-Kuki-Mizo legend.

CHIKIM: It is an abbreviation of Chin-Kuki-Mizo. CHI – the first three letters of the word CHIN: K1 – the last two letters of – KUK1, and M – the first letter of MIZO. Hence, the word - CHIKIM. Besides, only the word ‘CHI’ and ‘KIM’ literally means ‘tribe’, and ‘complete’ respectively. Hence, the combination of the two words ‘CHI’ and ‘KIM’ as CHIKIM means ‘complete tribes’.
CHOL-NGOL-NI: Literally the word ‘CHOL’ means ‘yeast’ (the white cake); ‘NGOL’ means ‘fasting’ or ‘abstention’; ‘NI’ means ‘day’. So it means the day of abstention from yeast.

CHON: A ceremony honouring someone for his great deeds or to perform a ceremony on account of worthy achievements. It is also called a wealth ritual. Another meaning of ‘CHON’ is culture.

CHONGJA/SONGJA: The mythical ancestor and the ruler of the subterranean region called (NUOIGAM). He was the elder brother of Chongthu. As he was the ruler of the underworld he was called ‘Nuomangpa’. The suffix ‘pa’ denotes him as the protector.

CHUNGHU-NULENG: A Mizo term which means ‘one who dwells above’, an epithet for God (Pathian) or ‘Pathian’.

CHUNKHOPI: ‘CHUNG’ means ‘upper’, whereas ‘KHOPI’ means ‘city’ and therefore, CHUNGHKOPI means ‘upper city’ or ‘upper village of human habitation on earth after the emergence of mythical progenitors from the underworld’. This needs to be analysed further with reference to the ‘underworld’.

CHONGTHU: It is also known as SONGTHU or TAWNGTHU. CHONGTHU is the mythical progenitor or ancestor believed to be the relative of the ruler of the underworld called NUOIGAM.

DOIBUOM: ‘DOI’ means ‘magic’ and ‘BUOM’ means ‘basket’; so the word DOIBUOM means ‘magic basket’; the assemblage of seven sacred objects traditionally kept during the year in each family house. The DOIBUOM gives protection to the household.

The seven objects are – VOHCHALUPANG, the pig’s skull; KELCHALKI, the goat’s horn; NAMCHEMPHA, a sword; UM, a gourd; CHAO, a woman brass; TIENGCHA, the spear; and GOPI, a small bit of garden bamboo. All these objects are tied by KHAOPI, a rope on a specific tree called SI-THING.

About the Doibuom it is interesting to note the significance of the object used. Every ingredients of the doibuom carried different meaning to justify their offering of worship.

i. A pig’s skull implies vigour and fertility.

ii. A goat’s horn implies conferment of beauty and vigour.

iii. A Dao (sword) represents a weapon to defend the owner against all evils. It ensures security against the attack by the forces of evil and the Dao will cut through all that is high or low.
iv. A gourd implies to confer plenty of water and wine, grain, seeds, and for rapid increase of prosperity and perfection like that of the gourd.

v. A woman's brass bracelet or a circular jar is to ensure that every wealth acquire by the owner is encircled and cannot escape or lost,

vi. A spear is meant to ensure that every killing either man or animal and all misfortunes shall be pierced or driven off.

vii. A small bit of bamboo meant to ensure rapid increase of its size with accompaniment of prosperity. (See photo)

**DOITHU** : It is a sacrificial or 'magical chant' recited by a traditional priest.

**GALNGAM** : He is a very popular legendary hero of the Kukis who introduced the DOI (Magic) into the Kuki society. His name is also associated with the tiger-man called HANGSAI.

**GULHEIPI** : It is believed to be a powerful and dangerous mythical snake or python, blocking the passage of the exit of KHUL or KHUL-KOT. It is believed that the snake called GULHEIPI guarded the passage and killed whoever tried to go through.


**HUN** : A special day of family worship normally held in the early part of the year. HUN is a tribe of Central Asia too who invaded India in the early part of the Christian era.

**KHOLKIP-KHOLJANG** : Literally, it means “the flat, broad place”. It is a legendary place where in primeval times, men and animals dwelled peacefully together.

**KHUL** : Tradition says that the progenitors of the Kukis came out of the bowels of the earth or a cave called ‘Khul’ and thus ‘Khullian’ means ‘cave dwellers’. It is believed that ‘KHUL’ is an important place of residence surrounded by a number of villages. Pu. N. Hangsing in his book – “KHUL KON HO THUSIM” (History of the Khullian or Khul descendants) described KHUL as a ‘Town’ or ‘a fortified village’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KHUL-KOT</td>
<td>While ‘KHUL’ is ‘a cave’; ‘KOT’ means ‘a door’ or ‘a passage’. KHUL-KOT is thus ‘the passage’ or the spot of exit of the land beyond KHUL the village boundary from where the habitation of wild animals like the deer, bear, etc. begin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>KHUANU</td>
<td>A Mizo name for the chief deity in its feminine aspect, or in the old religion; one of goddesses; and ‘AKHUA’ is a friendly spirit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>KHUAPA</td>
<td>A Mizo term for the supreme deity (in a masculine aspect.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>KHUAVANG</td>
<td>Literally, it is ‘a guardian’. KHUA is considered by some to be a name for the supreme deity in the old religion of Mizos.</td>
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<td>KUT</td>
<td>It is a holyday and a festival-time for merry-making.</td>
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<td>LAPI</td>
<td>A traditional song usually sung on festive occasions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEIDUPPI-</td>
<td>Literally, it means the “land of good soil or earth, land of oil”, a mythical land of fertility.</td>
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<td>LEITHAOPA</td>
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<td>LEISANPA</td>
<td>The first man; literally, the “red earth man”.</td>
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<td>MANMASI</td>
<td>It is the name of the mythical ancestor whose descendants supposedly called themselves ‘Children of Manmasi’ (‘Manmasi chate’ in ‘Thadou-Kuki’). In Mizoram they call themselves ‘children of Manasa’. The name is also called Manasia. In Manipur the common form is MANMASI. The Hmar claimed that MANMASI was the Hmar form of Manasa or Manasia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MENASEH</td>
<td>The Hebrew name of the biblical tribe of Manasseh.</td>
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<td>MILUI</td>
<td>The literal term for ‘MI’ is ‘people’ and ‘LUI’ means ‘old’. So, MILUI means ‘old people’. Amongst the different clans of the Kuki tribes, the Lenthang, Lunkim, Chansan, etc. are called as the ‘Milui’ or ‘Milui Khongsai’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MITHUN/</td>
<td>The Asian wild ox (<em>Bos frontalis</em>). It is popularly known as SIEL or SEL among the Kukis, which was once widely raised by all the Kuki-Chin-Mizo people as a semi-domestic animal for its meat and for its utility in major ceremonial sacrifices and festive occasions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MYTHUN</td>
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</table>
NUOI-GAM / NUOI-KHOPI : Literally 'NUOI' means 'lower' or 'beneath' and 'GAM' means 'territory'. and 'KHOPI' means 'city'. Thus it means the lower village or the lower city, a place inhabited by Kuki ancestors in the underworld before they emerged on to the earth or the upper village or city called CHUNGKHOPI.

NUOI-MANGPA : MANGPA means owner, king, ruler or chief of the underworld. Therefore 'NOUIMANGPA' means 'ruler or protector of the underworld', which is called NUOIKHOPI/NUOIGAM. This is similar to Sanskrit word gramā, which means village. In other words, NUOIMANGPA means 'great one below' or the 'god who was the lord of the underworld'.

SIEL/SEL : See Mithun/Mythun.

SIKPUI : The great winter festival of the Hmar tribe.

SHI HUANGTI : The first emperor of a united China (d.210 B.C.E.), He built large parts of the Great Wall and in 213 B.C.E. ordered the burning of all books not officially recognised by the State.

THEMPU : A Thadou-Kuki term equivalent to Lushai/Mizo’s BAWLPU or 'public priest'.

THEMTHU : A sacrificial chant recited by a Thempu (priest).

THIIKHENGPA : The official village blacksmith.

THIMZIN : The 'great darkness' of the mythical time believed to have lasted 'seven days and seven nights' in which all mankind perished.

TUISOGIET : Literally, it means the mythical "the eight flowing waters", generally referring to the ocean. The name of the rivers however, is not known.

TUITOBIN : Literally, it means "the plugged water", the great flood that according to Chin-Kuki-Mizo legend took place in antiquity.

THLAROPA : It is a Mizo term, which means "owner of our souls". an epithet for Pathian.

VANGALPA : He is one of the seven persons who were said to have emerged out of Khul. He is also the stone lifter, believed to be a very strong
man. The other person according to William Shaw (1983:25) were Chonghthu, Khupngam, the keeper of the dog, and the four others whose name were not known.

**ZAWLBUK**: The "bachelors’ house" in a traditional Mizo village in which all unmarried young men lived, equivalent to ‘Thadou-Kuki’ term for SAWM/SHOM.

**ZU**: Rice-beer.

**ZUKHA**: It means “Bitter Zu”, a distilled Zu with high alcoholic content. A little different from the preparation of Zukha are Zuting, Zungou, Vaizu etc.