CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Folk song comes to be established amongst the people through the ingenuity of the simple folks. The folk songs ruminates the essence of living of simple folks and bringing into focus the rudimentary philosophy of their way of life. The basic events of life that they have experienced or faced are thus engaged to conjure them into the form of folk songs to keep alive memories that could be relived in these songs by the future generations. Folk song shows the emotions and the spontaneity in the way the people of that generation characterizes themselves. Folk songs bear testimony of the past. Events like war, relationship of the community, seasons, rites and rituals, belief system, moral norms, occupational behaviour, leisure times, or the total cultural and social milieu of the people are preserved and kept alive in the form of this genre of oral tradition. Folk song thus flourished amongst the rural folk as it was the product of a less classy community or in other words folk song was kept alive with the simple rustic people as it was their own unsophisticated product best known by them. Folk songs are very valuable ethnological material as they open windows on traits of individual personality and the value-system of a society to the outside world other than their own. This is what folk song is to a folk community.

The Mao community has a rich tradition of folk songs known as Opfu-Opelo meaning father–grandfather song that is songs of the forefathers. For the Maos
folk song is a treasure trove of the events of human experience in all phases of human life. The folk songs are composed and sung about a wide range of cultural practices. In the absence of any written documents of the past, the origin of the Nagas in general and the Mao community in particular, have been traced on the basis of folk songs and folklore. Folk songs are accorded a position of importance in serving as a template to the ways of the community. In other words, Mao folk songs bear testimony to the legacy and larger cultural attributes of the valour and courage, of love affairs, honour and in praise of the man of consequence, on head-hunting, tragic circumstances and other related subjects finds place. In fact, the entire life cycle is traced through songs and chants. Therefore, songs are the common outlet for the people, during festive occasions, religious ceremonies, funerals, common gatherings, or while being engaged in agrarian work, songs are a common feature in all of them.

Demographic and Cultural Profile of the Mao

Land and People

Mao is an ethno-linguistic term referring to the Memai\(^1\) people and their language. The different communities residing in many parts of north-east India are labeled names which are contrary to the names the particular community identifies themselves. It is no different with the Maos as well. The community is officially known as Mao, but the community identify themselves with their indigenous term in their own language Memai. Mao or Memai is a major Naga community inhabiting the hilly terrain along the foot
hills of Mt. Esü on Japfü mountain range of Senapati district, in the northern part of Manipur. The community is recognized as a scheduled tribe by the Indian Union and the state of Manipur. The community has a population of 58,212 speakers distributed in twenty-five villages².

The Origin

Myth is etiological in nature and so is the Mao’s Origin myth. The Maos have their place of origin at Makhraifü or Makhrai Rabu¹. The place is talked and sung about to this day⁴. The origin of the Mao community is shrouded in mystery and remains untraced as there are no written records. An oral narrative, a myth ascribes to the origin of the community to one Dzüliamosüro. The tale relates that in the beginning were the flat earth and the green sky. A divine woman named Dzüliamosüro inhabited the earth. She roamed about the whole earth. On one such sojourn she felt very tired and laid to rest beneath a large banyan tree. And as she lay resting, a big mass of cloud engulfed her and droplets of water dripped into her vagina and thus the woman conceived. She bore three offspring namely Ora or God, who is the eldest, Okhe or Tiger, the middle and Omai or man the youngest. The siblings lived a happy contented family life at the place of their birth with their mother and this place came to be known as Makhrai Rabu or Makhraifü in the Memai land. Thus the Mao community traced their progenitor to this mythical woman Dzüliamosüro and their place of origin to Makhraifü or Makhrai Rabu.
Migration and Settlement

It is believed that the Maos originated from Makhrai Rabu and from here they relocated to other surrounding settlements. This is also true of other Naga communities who claim to have departed from where the tree Chiütebu-kaie stands today. This tree marked the dispersals of different Naga communities from this spot.

The Mao community makes their settlements on the upper reaches of mountains. This is from the strategic point of warfare as one could see enemies approaching from a distance. Despite the hard life a Mao would continue to opt for similar location for his safety. Each village has one main gate and other secondary gates depending on the position of the village. The surrounding is fortified with sharp-pointed bamboo stakes varied in sizes and lengths. The gate is built with an embankment on both sides and closed with a strong and heavy wood hewn out of a single tree.

Language and Linguistic Affinity

Mao belongs to the Naga group of the Tibeto-Burman language family. Language classification showing language family affiliation following different classifications right from Grierson (1904) till Bradley (1997) shows that Mao belongs to the Naga group of languages. G. A. Grierson first gave an extensive study on the Naga languages in 1903. He and Konow put the Mao under the Āgā-Kuki sub-group of the Tibeto-Burman language family. Marrison (1967), improving over Grierson’s classification gave a more
descriptive study of Naga languages and put Mao under Angami sub-branch of languages which consists of Angami (Khonoma), Angami (Kohima), Chokri, Kezhama, Mao and Sema. Paul Benedict (1972) put Mao under the Southern Naga group of the Kuki-Naga branch. Though different scholars might have placed the Mao language under different sub-groups, even so the language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group of family.

Community Life

The Maos have a very vibrant community life which can be seen in their day to day social-cultural life. The social-cultural life of the people revolves around the year in a cyclic manner. Maos have very closely knit family ties. Once a son or a daughter gets married he or she leaves the parental home to set up one’s own new home and hearth. The parents and relatives of the newlywed couple help out in setting up the new home till the couples are ably independent on their own.

The Maos follows the patriarchal family system. The father is the head of the family and as such the offspring takes the surname of the father. The ownership of ancestral property goes to the youngest male child. The marriage systems of the Maos are well defined. There are arranged marriages, love marriage, love-arranged marriage and in the past even forced marriage is also talked about in the tales and songs of the community. But today that is hardly known.
Dormitory System

The Maos practised bachelors’ and maidens’ dormitory system known as *Khruchüzi* for the boys and *Lochüzi* for the girls in the pre-literate period. The dormitory is usually hosted by an elderly man for the male and by an elderly woman for the female, persons who are well versed in all spheres of life. It is in the dormitory the youngsters are taught the skills of life in the warlike tribal world of yore. Life in the dormitory starts after the male child undergoes the ritual of initiation. For the female child it is after the girl attains puberty that she enters the dormitory life.

The dormitory or institution serves as the cultural cradle or hub for the Maos, where songs, dance and lore of different hues are passed on from generation to generation by the elder raconteur. Folksongs are composed, taught and sang at the institution, the different dances are enacted and taught and oral narrative the backbone of every society pertaining to their past is narrated and inculcated night after night. One factor in considering to the appointment of an elder as the institution keeper is his adeptness or expertise in oral narratives of the community. Thus, different genres of oral narratives or verbal arts are disseminated to the youngsters through the memory in spoken language from the mouth of the elder raconteur day after day, month after month and year after year. This is how the oral tradition of the people was kept alive through this institution for the past many centuries.
**Head Hunting**

The culture of head hunting is a practice that dates back to early period of pre-history. The culture of head hunting has made the Nagas famous or rather infamous to the outside world. The Maos are known for their brevity and action oriented acts, courage, bravado and also for their ferocity. Head hunting was known to have been practiced by the Maos and this is further substantiated by the fact that accounts of head hunting are immortalized in the folksongs and lore of the community.

**Fishing and Hunting**

There is a fishing festival called *Beluni*, where the people go for fishing on a specific day. The community also has group fishing using the bark of a *khaikh*i tree which is mashed to pulp to produce a secretion which is released into the river. This concoction intoxicates the fish and the people are able to collect them easily.

**Hunting**

Hunting is another socially important activity for the community. There is a day set aside for community hunting, where every kill of the animal is shared by all the participants in the hunt, the person who gets the first strike of the animal gets the head. The chief of the village a leg, the hunting dog a good lump of meat and so on.
**Bird Hunting**

The Maos also have a day where the men folk of the village undertake to catch birds. On this day the chase begins early in the morning. No catapult or gun or bird lime is used in this hunt. The people catch the bird with bare hands or strike them with sticks and bamboo poles. The catch is never consumed but brought to the village chief’s house, tied on a bamboo pole and set up on the front of the house for the rest of the year.

**House Construction**

The Mao’s houses are generally simple and spacious. The house structure is made of wooden pillars, bamboo splits, knitted and covered with thatch. The houses are usually constructed during the dry season. The house usually consists of three different compartments, the portico, on top of which a stage can be constructed for the dormitory, the granary room, which also doubles up as cattle room and the kitchen which doubles up as the bedroom for the family. The house has two doors, the main entrance in the front and the backdoor.

**Agriculture**

The Maos are by nature hard-working and are a very advanced group of agrarian community. The community has a robust economy which is based on agriculture and with very little dependency from outside for their livelihood. Their day-to-day food products and other basic necessity is self produced. The
Maos are very enterprising and on the whole have good knowledge of the many farming practices throughout the year.

**Jhum Cultivation**

*Jhum* cultivation which was practised by the Maos in the past is a bygone activity. One of the reasons for abandoning jhum cultivation is that it involves more labour and but yields very little. The fact that it takes a toll on the land and the cultivators is also responsible for its abandonment by traditional cultivators.

**Wet and Terrace Cultivation**

These are the most common forms of cultivation amongst the Mao community today. Today the people have adopted wet and terrace cultivation on a large scale. This cultivation is basically for paddy cultivation as well as for growing vegetables. Vegetables such as potatoes, cabbage, squash and different pulses, lentils are grown to meet their needs.

**Basketry**

Basketry has been known as a trade in the past. The usage of different kinds and size of basket and other accessories are known to the community. Baskets are woven out of cane and bamboo slivers. Usages of baskets are varied in nature, some are used to carry things, and some are used to store things while some are used during rituals.
Weaving

Mao community was not known to grow cotton. So the barks of fibrous plants are processed and refined into fine thread like materials to use in the weaving of cloths. The Maos use the loin-loom for their weaving. Different cloths are woven for different people and for different achievements or purposes.

Carving

Carving amongst the Mao is often found on the village-gate, the house walls and also on the plates and bowls carvings of wood. Motif of head, animals, birds and others are often found on the walls of houses. Carving is an age old trade followed by the Maos as a hobby to meet the need of the house but has never been known to be used for commercial purposes.

Festival

Festivals of the Mao community are known for their festive celebration. Every festival is accompanied by feasting and the important festivals are, Chithuni, Chijuni, Saleni, and Onuni.

Chithuni

The Chithuni festival is the first festival in a calendar year. It is celebrated in the month of Chithuni, the first month of the year. It is celebrated for five days starting on the 25th day of the vernacular month of the community. It is a New Year celebration of a thanksgiving for the past year and for the bountiful harvest. It is also a festival supplicating to the supreme
God praying for favourable climatic condition for agricultural activities in the year.

**Chüjüni**
The *Chüjüni* festival is celebrated on the 27\(^{th}\) of the local month *Pfozü*. The *Chüjüni* meaning ‘feast of the earth’ is celebrated with a huge display of eating and drinking. During this festival people consume lot of meat and rice-beer in order to physically prepare for the upcoming plantation season.

**Saleni**
*Saleni* is celebrated for five days in the month of Sale of the lunar calendar. The festival sets in on the 28\(^{th}\) day of the month till the 02\(^{nd}\) of the *Rolie* month. This festival comes in right after the transplantation of paddy is over. This is a festival which is celebrated to compensate the energy lost during the process of transplantation of the paddy. This period is considered as one of the most strenuous times of the year in their agrarian cycle.

**Onuni**
*Onuni* is celebrated on the 28\(^{th}\) day of the *Onu* month of the lunar calendar. Unlike the aforementioned three festivals, *Onuni* festival is low-keyed comparatively. It does not have the usual grandeur of a feast. The importance of this festival is the observation of different rites that is important for the welfare of the village.
Religion

Religion in the pre-Christian era for the Mao community involved the worship of the Supreme God. They believe in the existence of a Supreme God called Oramai. They also believe in the existence of benevolent and malevolent spirits. The benevolent spirits are considered as good and helpful whereas the malevolent spirits are evil and destructive to human, causing sickness and suffering and therefore need to be appeased through sacrifices and offerings.

Rites of Passage

Rites of passage in the Mao community are many. The rites and rituals of the Mao community are based on their beliefs. They revolve around the life cycle of man, the agricultural cycle or a war and upon their beliefs in the Supreme Being and the spirits. The rite of passage is a ceremony or an event that marks an important stage in someone’s life. In a broad sense of the term it connotes the progression of social life of a person which is phase structured or interval marked by different rites as life goes on.

Statement of the Problem

Folk songs form a particular mode of oral tradition that contributes towards maintaining the history of the people. Folk songs used to play a vital role of regenerating the society in times of war and calamities. They also find a special place in festive gatherings, religious ceremonies and other occasions. Therefore, the role of folk songs in tribal societies occupies a position of great importance. The Mao community is undergoing a stage of transition due to the
influence of western culture thus causing a neglect of the ethos of traditional culture and the oral tradition. No effort or little effort has been made to retrieve, document or disseminate this wealth of material. Today there are very few accomplished folk singers who are capable of rendering the folk songs in their complete form. While some are good in a particular genre, others are good in another. Therefore, there is an absence of cohesive knowledge about the tradition of singing. Folk songs are still sung occasionally, yet to comprehend the text of the songs is a difficult one. The help of knowledgeable elders for the purpose of interpretation is required, yet that too is few and the knowhow limited. Till date not a single booklet on the different genres of folk song exist in the community and the situation may not change much in the near future.

Survey of Literature

Many authors have written about the Nagas inhabiting the hilly areas of Manipur and the state of Nagaland. These books are written by scholars like Julian Jacobs and T.C. Hudson, Hutton J, Baveja JD, Panchani C. S and others. Yet Mao, one of the recognized major tribes of the Nagas inhabiting the area within the political boundary of Manipur does not find much mention in written material. Extensive research has been done on the origin of Nagas by scholars tracing the Tenyimia roots to Makhel. It is during such instances that the Mao community gets mentioned and that is where it ends too. Surprisingly, scholars tend to confine their attention to the geographical environs, in and around those settled by the Mao tribe and copious mentions
are made of the Angami, Chakesang, Tangkhul and Maram communities but nothing much gets written about the Mao.

R. Constantine in his book *Manipur-Maid of the Mountain*, writes, “… the main Naga tribes of Manipur are the Tangkhuls of Ukhrul district, the Kabuis of Tamenglong, and the Maos of the Mao sub-division …” (Constantine: 1981)

Takatemjen in *Utilizing Naga Music-Nagas ‘90* wrote: “… most of the Naga tribes used to communicate with one another through songs instead of normal conversation. Thus songs played a very important role in the Naga society. There are songs for solo, duet and for smaller groups. . . ” He further writes, “ . . today hardly any Naga born into a Christian home knows Naga folksongs well . . Christian hymns have replaced the Naga music to certain extent, but it has failed to replace the traditional music which was a natural expression related to real life expression …” (Takatemjen: 1990)

G.A. Grierson in *Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. III part (II)* gives a little description about Mao-Naga, the people, geographical location of settlement and the language. (Grierson: 1903)

T.C. Hudson’s *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* gives a very good account of the Mao community: “… the Mao and Maram Nagas who inhabit the hills north of the valley and to whom the title quasi Angami Naga has been given by some writers …” (Hudson: 1911)

Joseph Thong’s *Head Hunter Culture*, deals to some extent with the rituals of the Mao-Naga. He observes that even during rituals the male members go in groups to the wells and springs to the accompaniment of chorus singing in rhythmic sounds: “… ritual of purification begins early in the morning before dawn. All able-bodied male members would go to the village wells or springs and take bath. They then bring water for the young boys and wash them at home …” (Thong: 1997)

R.R. Shimray’s *Origin and Culture of the Nagas* tries to describe the *Morung*, which is the place where singing practice and performance is spawned: “… almost every night and specially on festival days the Morung members listen to the talks given by the village elders and the old man on war, discipline, manner and love, and to stories of brave warriors and sometimes descriptions of natural calamity …” (Shimray: 1986)

M. Horam in *Naga Polity* writes: “the youth receive invaluable lessons in leadership. They also get acquainted with the history, culture, folklore, songs and dance of their village, the curriculum of the morung is not all work. Play, singing and dancing are regular …”
Barry Phillips’ *Bulletin of the Folksong Society*, 1933 is the standard book for the study of the folksong and its use in the present study will be of critical significance.

While the survey of literature provides insights into some of the general aspects of folksong tradition and genre of north east India, the intended area of specific study is not adequately covered by the works mentioned above.

**Objective**

The present study is on the folk song of the Mao community. The objective of this study is to textually document the folksongs and to categorised them as per their thematic contents. The study also meant to analyse the documented data from the guiding aspects of translation, semantics and aesthetics. The mentioned parameters are faithfully adhered to and the data was analysed exhaustively to cull out the imbued significance in the folksongs. The study was analytical in nature. The study of this nature on folk song is the first of its kind in the Mao community. This in turn could help in the further development of folklore in the community.

**Methodology**

The methodology applied in this study involved collecting of data through primary and secondary sources. Primary source of data collection was through fieldwork and data was collected from performers. Personal interaction with
performers and knowledgeable elders of the community were the source for extra inputs to the song texts.

The source of secondary data collection employed by the scholar was gathering of information from secondary sources. Published books, journals, newspapers, magazines and seminar papers served as the main sources for secondary data. Visitations to different libraries by the scholar helped in widening the knowledge on the subject. The libraries the scholar visited during the course of the study are North-Eastern Hill University Central Library, North Eastern Council Library, State Central Library, Shillong, Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Culture Library, Indian council of Social Sciences, Shillong, Sahitya Akademi Library, Kolkata, Ethnographic Museum, Jhodpur, Central Institute of Indian Languages Library and Indian Institute of Advanced Study library.
CHAPTER TWO

LOCHU

The second chapter analyses the data on Lochu folk songs. Lochu literally means matured songs. Songs coming under the term Lochu always do have a back-ground story. They are occasion-based compositions.

The songs are occasion-based or contextual compositions and can be sung at all times. Lochu songs are of different themes; it can be people based: individual, family, village, and community, about place, events like war, and others. Some of the songs can be broadly classified into different thematic context.

a) Oso-orilo: Most of these songs would be composed relating to war and the chivalry of warriors or anything that is related to warfare. These historical songs can be sung during social gatherings with the intention of disseminating facts of battles to the younger generation.

b) Khukrielo: The compositions of these songs are on people, praising them for whatsoever they have achieved in battle or in the society. Literally it is a eulogy. These songs can be sung on any occasion.
c) *Chokhrulo*: These types of songs are few and even the few that are there are not sung often and therefore not known much. These are songs that have overt amorous themes. They can be sung at different occasions.

d) *Fūshulo*: These songs are composed when the people leave in search of new settlement due to the increase in population or simply for want of a better place.

e) *Pomarakatalo*: These are songs composed and sung to narrate instances of people’s dispersal due to conflicts, wars, epidemics or natural calamities.

f) Others: There are other *Lochu* songs which cannot be classified under the above thematic classification. And therefore has to be termed as ‘Others’. These songs can about nature, about people, animal, birds, places and all that cannot be placed under the above thematic classification.

Most of these songs are disseminated for most of the time in the dormitories broadly known as the *Morung*. *Morung* the pre-literate institution of learning in the bygone days played a very important role in the dissemination of folk songs and folktales or for that matter the development of the different genres of folk literature in the community. The *Morung* institution served as the cultural cradle, where songs and lore of different hues are disseminated from generation to generation by elder raconteurs so that the facts of life within the
community do not die out. Folk songs are composed, taught and sung at the institution. The oral narrative, the backbone of every society pertaining to their past is narrated and values inculcated night after night. The different genres of oral narratives or verbal arts are disseminated to the youngsters through the memory in spoken language from the mouth of the raconteur year after year. This is how the oral tradition of the people was kept alive through this institution for the past many centuries.
CHAPTER THREE

ODOLO, SHANGAILO AND OKRO-KOLU

*Odolo*

*Odolo* consist of two varieties that can be categorized as *Odolo* and *Do kochu lo*. *Odolo* literally means songs of pleasantries. Whereas *Do kochu lo* literally means songs of choice, that is the songs are used to choose an individual or group for the purpose of dueling. The first variety *Odolo* is the more common one today as the second variety is hardly known to the younger generations.

Composing of songs comes in different thematic genres. In *Odolo* compositions the two most common themes are recapitulation of the past and imagining of the present or future. Composing of songs is based upon the life of a person\(^\text{10}\) or two\(^\text{11}\) and others\(^\text{12}\). Often the past or the bygone days is relived in the form of those songs.

In the composition of this genre of folk songs the composer is creative and innovative but often the listeners miss the warmth of the song that the singers of old of this genre often generate. The tune is the same as old, but today the singers seems to sing the songs mechanically, whereas the older generation singers sang the songs with passion and conviction which generates warmth in the heart of the listeners. The theme of the composition of these songs could be contextual in many ways and the language colloquial\(^\text{13}\) and easily understood by the listeners.
Do kochu Lo or Duel Song

The second category of Odolo is the Do kochu lo literally meaning songs of choice. These songs are songs for the purpose of dueling in the form of conversational exchange of pleasantries, insults or duels through songs in place of verbal debates and it is known as Kodo chu lo. Kodo chu lo is sung during agrarian work or on fishing expedition but chiefly in the dormitory. These songs are usually sung in two groups or in the ratio of 1:1, 2:2 or 4:4 persons each on both the sides. The uniqueness of Kodo chu lo is that, if group A sing in appreciation of group B, group B humbles themselves and more praise is heaped on group A. In the same manner if group A sing in insulting or demeaning lyrics, then group B would choose a more heated or intense lyrics to outdo the other group. At most times dueling songs are used to flatter, cajole, provoke and instigate the other group or individual. The subject and the context of these songs are purely fictional in keeping with the requirement of the same.

There was a time when youngsters gather in maidens’ dormitories and do engage in song singing sessions, this is in the form of singing duel between two groups, usually between the sexes and this is where and how folk song singing was practised and preserved in the past. The thematic content of the dueling songs will depend in accordance with the preparedness or mood of the group or the context or the setting. Often the male bachelors of one dormitory come to one of the girls’ dormitory for the song duel. The starting of song dueling is cordial and flattery of the other group is indulged in. They would
sing to please in the same vein. Often the singing session would end cordially and the bachelors go back to their dormitory. At times it does not end in a cordial atmosphere. The song singing sessions could be long and in due course, flattery and flirtation becomes part of the long song singing duels. This is when the atmosphere gets charged and heated debate and choicest of abuse is hurled across in the form of songs. What started as a cordial singing session becomes a game of one-upmanship. When this happens the night ends in acrimony for the two groups and the song exchanges are taken over to the next night or the next meeting of the groups. There are no pre set lyrics in this form of singing, it is the wit and spur of the moment to meet the demand of the situation, to retort or reprove the opponent. The skill of the singers, the aptitude and the attitude is tested to the fullest. The singers’ verbal repertoire of rustic intelligence and wit appears in its purest form in the song dueliong.

**Shangailo**

*Shangailo* is one variety of the Mao folk songs. These songs are based on people and his surroundings, animals, places and happenings or calamities caused by nature. These songs are sung on festive occasions. The lyrics of these songs may share common element with that of other songs but the tune employed is a completely different one. The tune of *Shangailo* does not have the free flow of one octave. It rises and falls constantly. Not all singers can adapt to this particular genre of folksong, as it requires a high degree of expertise to render the songs with ease.
**Okro-kolu or Dirge**

Dirge is the equivalent term for the word *Okro-kolu*, which literally means characterising the memories of the past. This genre of song is sung during funerals only. There are no set lyrics attributed to the Mao dirge. The lyrics are spontaneous inner feelings, reflections, composed at the moment by the singer. As there are no set lyrics, it is always sung solo.

A dirge can be sad and mournful in its expression, in other word dirge is the highest and deepest expression of one’s feeling for a deceased person. *Okro* is the last month of the Mao lunar calendar and *kolu* means unwinding. The word *Okro* is often associated with death or the month of the dead. Here, *Okro-kolu* means recollecting or unwinding the memories of the deceased. The lyrics are impromptu expression of inner feelings, reflections that are stirred within the cognitive process of the person in relevance to the deceased. The dirge to the Maos comes from the deepest emotional attachment with the deceased and this is expressed in the form of a dirge by the mourner. The Maos holds a belief that on the death of a person if no mourner culls out a dirge, the deceased feels unwanted and comes back to haunt the living. But if a dirge is culled out the deceased feels loved and wanted and thus be on good terms with the living.
CHAPTER FOUR

ONHÜ KONHÜ AND MADA KAVE

**Onhü konhü**

In this chapter the genre of songs are purely based on, ‘on the spot compositions’ during different functional activities that are undertaken by the people. The Onhü konhü are basically work songs. The Onhü konhü is performed to enliven the people at work. It also brings people together and creates a bond of camaraderie and a sense of collective feeling and accomplishment after the work. Elders often remind the younger generations that during work if one does not perform the Onhü konhü people tend to be lazy and the work is not properly done and often not accomplished. It is not that everyone can perform the Onhü konhü but persons who are good at Onhü konhü performs and the work-force follows up with the work. The Onhü konhü is divided into two varieties; a) Non-verbal phonetic rendering and b) Verbal rendering.

a) **Non-verbal Onhü konhü**

The non-verbal Onhü konhü or oral aural non-verbal phonetic rendering is onomatopoeic in nature. The rendering of Onhü konhü be it the verbal or the non-verbal takes place during the course of some form of work. Onhü konhü is not agricultural-centric, apart from being performed during agricultural work it is also performed on other occasions like i) *Otu kosü* or dragging of monolith,
ii) *Okho kotsü* or fishing expeditions, iii) *Oru* or during war and iv) *Asoto* or signing of peace treaty.

i)  

**Otu kosü nhü**

*Otu kosü* or dragging of monolith takes place when a man hosts the feast of merit. There are several stages in hosting the feast of merit and erecting a monolith in one’s honour is one such stage. Normally a stone is identified and selected and preparations are made to bring home the stone. Food and rice-beer are prepared, creeper ropes are gathered, and a wooden toboggan is made ready to drag the stone. A day is named and the people are informed the stone is loaded on to the toboggan. An individual ululate and the crowd response by sounding *zhü* this is repeated and every male present takes a hold of the rope and the dragging of the stone begins with the *Onhü in tow*. The first two or four who takes the tip of the rope leads the *Onhü*.

ii)  

**Okho kotsü nhü**

In the past there were community fishing expeditions and during such expedition the *Okho kotsü nhü* was performed. While on their way from the village to the spot of fishing and while returning to the village the people perform the *Okho kotsü nhü*. The holler performed during this fishing expedition is known as the *Okho kotsü nhü*. 
iii) *Oru nhü*

Bloody skirmishes were common among the communities or within the community. Inter-village feuds were common and on occasions the victorious side performs the holler as they return to their village. This performance is known as the *Oru nhü*.

iv) *Asoto nhü*

In cases of reconciliation between two warring villages or communities reconciliations and settlements are carried out in the vernacular month of *Khrana* and ultimately conclude with what is known as *Asoto* meaning to rest and feast. After taking the oath of peace by the men with spear in hand the *Asoto* is celebrated. This final act of agreement to end the war or not to continue the war is celebrated with a feast hosted by one of the village or community and reciprocated in the same manner the following year. The village that makes its way to the other village for the celebration performs the war holler on their way and also does the same on their return as well. This performance of the holler on this occasion is known as the *Asoto nhü*.

b) **Verbal Onhü konhü**

No doubt the non-verbal *Onhü konhü* is very interesting but when one gets to listen and witness the verbal *Onhü konhü*, the actual testament of pure verbal art and aesthetics is witnessed in the form of on the spot compositions or in the manner of here and now situation. The verbal *Onhü konhü* does not follow any
pre set lyrics and with hardly any pre-conceived idea, that set apart the verbal
*Onhū konhū* from other genres of the Mao folk songs.

Individuals who are expert in *Onhū konhū* are hired during *Chokhro-pfuva kasa* which can be described as goodwill friendship work. During this type of work some will not work seriously, so, experts in the *Onhū konhū* performed in such a manner that those who are lazy are chided and admonished whereas those who work hard are praised and encouraged. The performer acts as a deterrent to people, who are not serious in the work but rather participating in the work for the sake of food and drink. Thus the performer acts as a guiding factor to the entire workforce.

**Mada kave**

*Mada kave* literally means to lie and tag; *Mada kave* is very much a part of the *Onhū konhū* and is performed during the course of work. The kind of expertise and exposition of *Onhū konhū* is known as *Mada amayi*. Such performance of the *Onhū konhū* allows one to get carried away and immersed oneself in the work. These songs are sung during agrarian operations in the fields where the singers are divided into two groups, male and female or two mixed groups. In the course of the work, the songs are sung in a manner of duel and exchange. The duel songs can be of one line, or two, a stanza or a number of verses that would be the source for different types of message that is communicated to the other group. It is not the melody or the rhyme but the content of the lyrics that is important in these songs.
CHAPTER FIVE

MAKAI AND MOVU

*Makai* and *Movu* are oral non-verbal phonetic renderings which have their own significance and appeal. The performances of *Makai* and *Movu* are very expressive and purely oral with no lyrics. The absence of lyrics has been responsible for making scholars be influenced to mistakenly regard these sub-genres as meaningless. It is therefore imperative that the performances of the *Makai* and *Movu* are observed and witnessed by researchers to understand them and appreciate the aesthetics of the performance itself. There are no verbal expressions in *Makai* and *Movu* and so, syntactically it is void in the realm of linguistics. It is an exhilarating expression of self and a necessity in the sphere of cultural activity and social milieu for the Maos. And so when viewed at a deeper level in the realm of semantics, the importance of *Makai* and *Movu* performances connotes semantics in accordance with its usages and context.

*Makai or Ululation*

Ululation is the equivalent term for *Makai*. Ululation can at best be described as an attention caller. This act of *Makai* is an attention caller to an individual, a group or the general public present within the hearing distance of the performer. This expression of ululation is of very high pitch that a human can produce in an orderly manner. It also goes without saying that not many people can perform the ululation even after considerable practice bouts.
Makai is an important element of the social and cultural usage in the life of the Mao community. It is performed during social get-together or during cultural programmes. Elders often say that only the healthy and the expert in the art should ululate. The contention is that only the healthy can perform ululation as it requires a long stress at very extremely high pitch without breathing or holding the breath for a long time at a go. Physical fitness becomes necessary to achieve that and which in a sense shows the exuberance of life of the performer. Only an expert can ululate and at the same time ululation is not performed by all.

Movu or Holler

Movu or the holler is a non-verbal phonetic rendering of sounds like the Makai. Movu has no lyrics of any kind. This is a song-like performance at different pitch levels or parts like any other song. Movu is one of the most thrilling and exhilarating performance to witness or to be a part of the performance during festive or socio-cultural gatherings of the community.

To perform the Movu what is usually required is for the crowd to pick up the different parts of the rendering by different persons as leaders of the packs. When people gather to perform the Movu, a single person ululate signaling or calling attention to the gathering to begin the Movu. When the person ululates to start the Movu the crowd responds to it with a deep throated sound of zhū ü ü ü ü. The same person ululates again and from here the rhythmic Movu of the group begins with different people taking different parts and it rolls on. In the
Motu a set of sound pattern is adhered to in its performance. The Motu continues for some period, and when it is near closing the momentum of the Motu goes quicker and quicker and people start ululating by the dozens. The Motu conclude with multi ululation and interspersed gunshots as guns are fired into the air.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The conclusion highlights the findings and enumerates or demonstrates their relevance in terms of translation, semantics and aesthetic in present day Mao community.

Endnotes

1 The term used by the Maos to refer to themselves in their vernacular language
2 Census on Population of Communities Hill House Tax in Senapati district 1999-2002; conducted by the District Information Centre, Senapati
3 Presently known as Makhel
4 In our current study, the folksong entitled Makhrai Hrü is been studied in chapter -2
5 Big wild pear tree at Shajouba village
6 Name of a tree in the vernacular language
7 An indigenous religion which is still followed by some people
8 The good and evil spirit
9 An expression of praise for someone who has died
10 A family member or best friend
11 Lovers or couples
12 Often friend circle
13 Unlike the other category of folksongs –Lochu- which is full of archaic words
14 Especially Lochu
15 In a set pattern