Chapter IV

EARLY EDUCATION
TRADITIONAL EDUCATION-I

Much is not known about the tribals of Manipur of the long past and how they led their life in the prehistoric times. But one can gather something about them by indulging in presumptions on the basis of the folktales and legendary stories handed down from generation to generation. That something very clear about them is that there was no system of education pursued by them as it is done an masse by the populace today. Another thing again very clear about them is that at any stage of civilisation, with them no distinction or discrimination on the bases of clan, caste, creed as prevalent with the Indian Hindu society was to be seen. In the Indian Hindu society, varna system was seen prevailing, thus many, many Indian youths were debarred of some occupations by birth. But such thing of discrimination or distinction never prevailed with the tribal society. Every one was equal before them. No one according to them was destined by birth for any particular occupation.

In the Indian Hindu society, there was varna system prevalent strictly followed, which destined every one to a particular occupation by birth. There were four orders in the Hindu society as found the reference in the Rig Veda corresponding to the four strata viz. Brahmna, Rajyana (Ksheiya), Vaishya and Sudra. The belief was that some came from the moult, some

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from the arms, some from the thigh and some from the feet of
the creator and in corresponding to their creations, people
became distinct from one another and destined to particular occu-
pations by birth. This varna system stood as a stumbling block
in the growth or progress of education in India. The tribal
society had been since long an open society in which no one was
and is barred for any trade or profession in the past with the
tribals. Life was quite primitive and simple. All the adult men
and women were busy in their agricultural pursuits which would
be their mainstay for most of them and the children underage
for going to their work site would simply stay back at home. In
India, in the prehistoric times, i.e. before 1000 B.C. the family
played a still greater role in the educational system. According
to Dr. Altekar, at that early period the professional teacher
was yet unknown; so generally the father was the usual teacher
and the home the usual school. Several examples are preserved
in Vedic and Upanishadic literatures of fathers themselves tea-
ching their sons. Such condition must have been with the tri-

bals too in respect of education in the prehistoric times.

So in the absence of any literature in regards to the
education of the tribals of the prehistoric times, one has to
depend on his presumption by deducing that instructions must

2 Altekar, Dr. A.S.: Education in Ancient India, Nandakishore S. Bros. Varanasi
(1965), p.36
have given by fathers to their respective children at least the 'dos and don'ts' in life and guidance in works they were to do. Hence, the modern terms in education like 'work experience', 'participant education', 'professional education' etc. were in practice without their knowledge with the ancient people in ancient times. Certainly there was no organised and formally articulated system of education but education was very much with them because they could develop many beautiful arts, cultures, customs, practices upon which the modern tribals or people could not do anything for their improvements. The ancient tribals were prepared to be self-reliant, self-sufficient and self-content in every thing. They were more so than the modern men who claim to be educated, even then many things which ancient people invented like agricultural implements, utensils, etc. and in cultural spheres, various ways of dance, formation of household councils, the manner of settling the disputes of serious nature etc. are still not only workable for modern life but better systems are not evolved by modern man. Therefore, one can not deduce that education was nil with the ancient tribals, rather can come to an allusion that home was the school, parents the teacher, family plus the society, the environment and as regards to manners, etiquettes and giving assignment of work to children. Ideal time was considered all through the ages in the families of the tribals from time immemorial as the best time for parents to
five assignments and advice to children and other junior members of the family in social norms, manners, etiquettes etc. In all practical works the senior members gave guidance and supervision to the junior members as and when needed according to the demand of the situation. Practically any sort of formal teaching was nil with the ancient tribals, the systems of education available with them was only informal system of education.

As referred to the tribals of this part of the land in the preceding chapters, most of them were believed to have come from the central land of China through Tibet and Burma, though the exact date and year of their departure from China is difficult to establish yet all their traditional accounts drive us to the conclusion that they came from China. In the Thado tradition, evidence is seen that while they were in China they were engaged as labourers in the construction of the China Wall. They fled China because of the ill-treatment meted out to them by the workmaster and they came through Tibet and settled in Burma for some centuries together from which period, a kind of their own civilization started. Here one must be well convinced that in the contemporary situation of the tribal identity 29 tribes have been in the list of Scheduled tribes recognised by the Government of India but ethnically they are of the same stock, hence their ancient tradition can not be seen in isolation.
Many more things were held in common by the tribes of Manipur in the past, their present terms—Nagas, non-Nagas, Kukis, Non-Kukis, Chins, non-Chins, Micos, non-Micos or Zomis, non-Zomis were not used to refer to the tribals known now by these terms. Right from that ancient time, in two things or fields they wanted to gain proficiency—for the boys, all through the ages, their aim in life was to be a hero-hunter killing as many wild, ferocious beasts as possible and to be able to arrange feast of merit and for the girls, their aim in life was to gain proficiency in handicraft and dexterity in weaving. The proficiency gained by a girl, in producing cloths for the family, counted very high in the social yardstick of her dignity and status. But, no formal course of training was open for them, every one was free to attempt self-training nor not to attempt, it was purely a private affair, yet talents came out automatically from amongst the youths. Here, a maxim that necessity is the mother of invention came true with the ancient tribals as they could make so many agricultural implements like hoe, small axe, sickle, baskets of various shapes and sizes, etc. They could also get fire with an instrument called 'Meishah' in Paite and utensils for cooking pots made out of clay, for storing and carrying water they made big types of bamboos and for carrying water for drinking purpose they made sword of various sizes. And for war or feud or fighting, or for the purpose of hunting games they could make many weapons—arow, sword, gun, gunpowder, etc. and various types of traps
for wild animals and birds they could make. The expertises that they attained in the fields of agriculture, industry, defence, etc. are the indications of the standard of education prevalent with them. The exact date and year of their attaining such standard of expertise can not be traced, yet one can come to be convinced by studying their epic poems in which they made a number of references to the days of their settlement in the land of 'Pagur' which is in the present Burma. According to Mr. Tualchin Neihsial in his book, 'Suite Area Occupation', the present Paite tribe and other allied tribes who had been occupying the south west hills of Manipur had settled in the land of Pagan in Burma and had attained certain standard of civilization during which they began growing crops of various kinds, developing many of their present cultural patterns, having their own administration system—every village with independent status, around the year, 1085 A.D. Another tradition current with one of the minor tribes, called Hoyons, too made a reference to their second settlement after leaving the cave in China, where they grew rice. The poem runs as follows:

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O Tungphaijuur, o my land,
Were I to sow 'Itae' (rice), luxuriant it will grow,
Luxuriant it will grow, were I to sow rice;
Suitable it is for celebration by the rich.

Now from the facts mentioned above, we came to learn that the tribals who had been occupying the hills of Manipur had come from a cave believed to be somewhere in China and had also attained certain standard of civilization before entering Manipur. Despite all their civilizations in ancient times, there was no formal institution imparting education worthy of the true meaning, the standard of education that they could attain had to be necessarily very low and the philosophy of education among the tribals was to be like his or her parents which can be seen from the lullaby of the Zomi tribes as below:

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"Dawi, aw! Haung khang mengmeng! aw,
Pana luidawng haung bang aw,
Pana luidawng nawaing bat chian;
Nu tha, khek aw, Pa tha khek aw,
Dawi. aw e."

(Free version in English)

"My pet child! grow luxuriantly and quickly,
Just like a plant (a very quick growing plant) growing
nearby a river,
Just like a plant growing nearby a river;
When becoming just like the plant in the nearby river,
Replace and represent your mummy and daddy, my pet child!

Here what can be pointed out in terms of educational philosophy is that the baby or child was wanted to become just like his or her parents. In olden days, what the parents could teach their children was only to continue what they had practised in life and also adopted the same occupation which was nothing but their toiling in their agricultural pursuits.

**Discrimination on the ground of sex**

Right from the time immemorial, among the tribals under study here, there had been discrimination on the ground of sex in regards to the statuses, roles, duties and responsibilities
of male and of females. As such sons had been trained to be like their fathers, the authority of father in the family affairs among the tribals had been considered final and in his absence his son replaced him. Here one Paite saying goes like this:

'Somei thu leh vaakhuang dong', meaning woman’s word is contemptible as much as the feeding through/the pigs. This saying shows clearly both the statuses of man and woman in the tribal society. And regarding the roles or duties or responsibilities of male and female in the society and family, a big gulf of difference had been pleaded all along, the boys were expected to carry out all the tougher works in life like waging wars, killing ferocious beasts, clearing the forests for jhumming sites, constructing and maintaining houses, carpentry works, making tools and implements, and generally the following works; feeding pigs, chickens, cooking meals, sowing varieties of vegetable crops, all the works involved in the process of making cloths, collecting firewoods, fetching water, maintaining cleanliness in the home etc. had been considered the domains of female members in the family. Accordingly, the boys and the girls had been getting themselves trained in the corresponding domains as referred to as above. The maintenance and practice of discrimination on the ground of sex among the tribals had very far reaching effect in the field of education.

In ancient time, in the absence of formal education, parents became teachers for their respective children. One saying,
'Hu hihlhouh pa hihlhouh bang', meaning 'Behaving just like untaught by the parents had been the usual utterances in rebuking children who happened to have misbehaved. This clearly shows that the only institution in the past was the home, parents were the only teachers, society the environment and anything or every thing under the sky the subject with the method thereby being participation of the learner practically in the work.

TRADITIONAL EDUCATION-II

From Cave known by various terms - Khul, Khur, Sinlung, Chhinlung, the next settlement of the tribes who are presently found scattering in the hill areas of the state of Manipur seems to have settled in Shan state in Burma. Giving a chronological years of their settlements in China, Tibet and Burma in definite terms was difficult in the absence of recorded source materials, yet we came to learn that their settlements in these countries were a historical fact strongly supported by their folktales, folksongs, epic poems, legends and traditions. The time that they entered the Shan state seems to be sometimes in the 6th century as pointed out by a Khur historian, Mranglien Songate and as narrated by an octogenarian, Lianzamang, a living historian of the Paite Community.

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5 Kamkhenthang, Dr. R. Paite Paumak, published at Convention Press, Churachandpur (1973), p.73
In Shan state their civilization advanced much farther than the Cave (Sinlung or Khul) period and the people showed greater intelligence. They knew how to celebrate agricultural prosperity, learned better art of war, and made festival of their victory over the enemy. Further more, they learned the use of iron implements and moulding of pipes (out of brass).  

Many of their civilizations, it is said, at present, were being the results of their associations with the original Shan state inhabitants till the 14th century A.D. After the 14th century, the periods of peace and prosperity were intercepted by many hardships like famine, feud among themselves and the arrogance of the superior communities. The famine, it is said, was so severe that a prized song, ordinarily sold for a hundred bushels of rice, was bartered for a handful of unhusked rice and the local made gun, normally sold at the price what an ordinary man could never afford, was exchanged for the gun-pipeful of unhusked rice. All those circumstances compelled them to disperse into various directions. And their dispersal took place clanwise, then their various cultures took their births and carried on even today. Hence, the Chnars were the people who moved towards the northern direction, the Sinte were again the people who moved towards the southern direction.

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DORMITORY : A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

Right from the time before their dispersion, a culture of having one social institution called dormitory for the youths was developed in the tribal society. This fact can be taken as proven as the dormitory institution existed since long back with all the tribes of Manipur. This dormitory institution, as rightly termed by Mr. R.R. Shimray in his book, "Origin and Culture of Nagas", as Nagas School,7 can be studied as the most effective agency of education among the tribals of Manipur before the introduction of modern system of education in their areas in the absence of any formal educational system.

In many other parts of India, this social institution, "Bachelors' Dormitory" was found in existence with most of the tribes. It was known by various names in their dialects as: Orono-Dhaukuria, Lunda-Sitio or Sitio, Conda-Gotul, Guru-Hokpanti, Aher-Hosup, Sikir-Torang, known commonly as horn, by the Nagas, the Nagaland Nagas like the Angami's call it 'Michuki', the Aos call it 'Arirju', the Lothas and the Semas call it 'Jembo' and 'Dakha Chang' respectively, the Manipur Nagas the Tenghuls call it 'Longshim', the Habuis-more systematically call it 'Khangchu' for boys, 'Luchu' for girls and

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among the Zomi groups, the dormitory is known by various names: the Ganga, the Mizo (Lushai), the Thado (Kuki) and the Vaiphei call it 'Zaulbuk', the Hmar call it 'Buonzaul' or 'Sier' and the Paite, the Jainta and the Zo call it 'Zau'.

All the tribes in Manipur had this social institution and its inception had become beyond our trace. But we came to learn that it was a necessity for every tribe for many reasons. Out of the many reasons, three glaring reasons may be pointed out as follows:

(1) **Security reason**: In olden days, inter-village feud and war was very common, thus it became a necessity to train their youths in warfare, fightings, duellings, etc. and in self-defence.

(2) **Discipline reason**: The tribal ancestors too were aware of the need of some social force to control the young energetic men and women at that stage of human life.

(3) **Social efficiency reason**: The tribal ancestors were fully aware of the fact that interdependence of the individuals and co-operation of one another were the basic principle needed to be learned by all human beings to gain social efficiency.
This social institution had been in existence with all
the tribes of Manipur without exception but the nature, the
structure and the mode of such social institution were not all
alike in all the tribal communities, and in the modality and
style of running the social institution some more differences
from tribe to tribe were to be seen. Some of the Naga tribes
had the dormitory for both boys and girls whereas the Zomi tri-
bes did not have generally the institution for both boys and
girls. Generally the dormitory houses in most of the village
were found located in the most commanding spot which was
necessitated by their constant inter-village feuds among the hill
men. Most of the Naga villages normally had only one main gha
and the main gha was kept under continuous vigil of the youths
in the past. For their becoming vigilant about their enemies'
movement, they had to organise the institution of dormitory. In
its purpose, the dormitory was comparable with the barracks of
the armies of a country which stood in any thing for the van-
guard of the country and its people. In its function, it was
also viewed as a contrivance deliberately set up by the elderly
groups for certain ends. Again in its usefulness, analogy could
be very nicely drawn between the dormitory and the school.

Before attempting the appraisal of its educative functions
and values, it would be interesting to acquaint ourselves with
its organisational structures, measures of discipline etc.,
enrolments and discharging manners from membership as practised by various tribes. The organisational structure of dormitory differed from tribe to tribe very widely. For instance, among the Nao Nagas, two dormitories were compulsory, one for boys called 'Khruchozu' and another for girls called 'Lochozu' in every village. Leaders in both the dormitories emerged automatically from among themselves in the primitive days but in later stage they nominated leaders, of course without definite term or tenure. They had very great impact on the authorities in the village administration as in all the activities - social, political, economic, cultural etc. of the village their co-operation had been most needed. Understanding this fact fully well, most of the village chiefs did run all the affairs of administration in consultation with the leaders of the dormitories always. Again amongst the Kabuis, the dormitory organisation was well knitted. They too had two dormitories compulsory in each village, for the boys and girls separately in a very systematic way and manner. The members of the boys' dormitory were organised in three grades in three institutions. The Gana formed the juniormost grade consisting mostly of the unmarried youngsters in the dormitory called 'Khangchu', the next grade was Gangi strata in the dormitory known as 'Ganchang-Maibang' and the highest grade was called 'Khangbon' in which the members were all middle-

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aged men and their dormitory was called 'Banza-Kaibang'. Prof. Mangthoi Thaimei pointed out that according to Kabui customs and traditions the Khangbons were at the head of the Khangchu organisation. Peace and prosperity of the said organisation, therefore depended entirely on the ability, efficiency and leadership of the Khangbons. Transition by promotion to the next grade took place every year from the lower grade to the next grade. In respect of the girls too there were three-tiered dormitory systems, namely, Luchu, Mathenmai and Kengzaplui. The last two were also called Rakhui Kaibang and Karamei Kaibang respectively. From her early childhood till the last stage of her life, a female member of a Kabui village was inevitably a member of the dormitory. All the young girls of a village belonged to the Luchu dormitory until they married. But as soon as she married, her membership of Luchu was considered discontinued and automatically transferred to the next grade. Here too her membership was compulsory in the group of the married women called Mathenmai or Rakhui. Then according to their seniority in age, the most senior group known as Kengzaplui or Kamepi was meant for old women.

\[\text{Thaimei, Prof. Mangthoi: The Kabuis or The Raongmeis, in 'An Introduction to Tribal Language & Culture of Janipur, published by NIERA, 1976 (Seven Tribes), p. 41}\]
Among the Tangkhul Nagas also, the dormitory system called 'Longshin' in their dialect was very much prevalent and it was usually patronised by some rich people of the village. The pattern of arranging the dormitory was again different from that of other Nagas. The Tangkhuls, very often, formed the youths into many small groups and in one village there could be many dormitories. Most of their dormitories were attached to the houses of the patrons. Of course, the dormitory groups were keeping the interest of the whole village uppermost in their minds. The Tangkhuls too ran dormitories for both sexes separately.

Now coming to the groups of the Zomi tribes, all of them without exception had the dormitory system but in the patterns of running or forming the institution, some slight differences are seen. As pointed out earlier, the Thado (Kukis), the Gangtes, the Mizos (Lushais) and the Waipheis call it 'Zaylbuk', literally it is a combination of two words, - zawl and buk, the meaning of 'zawl' is 'friend or plain' and 'buk', 'but', hence in full 'butmen of friendship'. The Hmars call it 'Suanzawl' or 'Sior' which again literally means 'a plain ground of wrestling' and the Paites, the Sintes and the Zoos call it 'Sam' which literally means rough-and-ready.

Among the Thados, the dormitory was also known as 'Sawn' which literally means 'sleeping in one another's
place'. Most of the Thado villages practised the pattern of the organisation of the dormitory, by selecting a house of their choice from among the village houses, normally there would be girls in the house to which the dormitory was attached and if there were two or three girls in that family, the eldest one got a social status, 'Sawanu' meaning 'dormitory damsel'. She was supposed to see that all the belongings of the dormitory members were kept tidy, if need be, she had to wash their clothes. The oldest member of the dormitory was known as Sawanu. It is he who held all the authority in the affairs of the dormitory. There was no hard and fast rule that all the youths of a village should be combined in one dormitory, hence there used to be many dormitories in small groups in a village. Not only with the Thados, but also with other Zomi tribes, dormitory for girls was not run. But the girls of the village were bound to oblige any duty or work to be done by female members of the society on demand according to the situation. Amongst the Zomis, a culture so popular was 'Hunagak hel' meaning visiting girls. The girls were not supposed to pay a visit to the boys and also not expected to loiter here and there even in their leisure times. Instead they were supposed to maintain all possible courtesy, politeness and modesty and to receive all visitors politely without showing any partiality. The girls who could give equal treatment to their visitors were considered wise and tactful, otherwise, failure in this respect on the part of girls might be
very harmful for them in their future prospect of the marriage-market because most of the visitors came from the same dormitory or the other dormitory of the same village, the girl whom the visitors socially condemned could not stand very good chance in getting a good life-partner.

Membership and Enrolment: The dormitory being a social institution did not prescribe any hard and fast rule in regards to the admission of the members, but the usual practice was that any young man at the time of attaining puberty was supposed to be in the dormitory. If some one could not join the dormitory at the time of attaining the group age, he must have been a young-man below average physically or mentally. So it is everybody's aspiration to become a member of the dormitory. It is also the wish of the parents that their sons would be able to associate with their mates in the dormitory. If some one happened to have been trailing behind his contemporaries in any thing, the metaphorical expression commonly used by the parents among the Zonis was 'Ha vual, na pai va-uk in long Zota', the literal meaning of which is 'All your friends have advanced flying just like a flock of birds.' The expression clearly reveals that the parents wished their sons to be with their contemporaries anywhere.

10 Va-uk in some of the Zoni terms is a group of birds very much together in moving, in seeking food etc.
for any good purpose. In regards to the admission of their sons to the dormitory on the parts of the parents reluctance was never shown, rather they were eager and happy to see that their son(s) could join the dormitory. Here the parents would have many reasons in being happy for sending out or allowing to stay away from them as they knew fully well that their sons were going to learn so many lessons from the dormitory. What can be termed as Pre-admission training was given to the groups of children underage. In the absence of schools of the modern type, children belonging to the age group of 5-12 years were just free of all obligations, family or social. In fact, they were not assigned any compulsory works, hence, they had ample leisure times. Just for the sake of engagement of them, the dormitory junior members led them to serve the dormitory as errands and for collecting firewoods. The firewoods were burnt in the evenings for giving them light as well as for warming up the dormitory. Thus the children belonging to this group were anxious and eager to join the dormitory as full members.

Generally there was division of the dormitory members into two groups - the junior groups and the senior groups on the basis of age. Seniority in age counted. The junior group during the normal situation was entrusted to keep watching their dormitory in the evenings whereas the senior group members were freely outing to pay a visit to the girls of their love. But the junior members were restricted to certain disciplines.
In the presence of the senior members, seats should not be occupied by any junior members if there were not sufficient number of seats. In any discussion of any subject or some negotiations, the junior members were not supposed to supersede the senior members. Any one violating the social decorum of the dormitory was liable to a very severe punishment that could lead to the extent of excommunication. Such punishment being a social action was feared by all. The junior members ought to show respect to the senior members. In any case, the junior member was never supposed to raise argument against any decision made by the senior member. The junior members were also not supposed to join the gossiping of the senior members unless such a gesture to do so was hinted.

The senior members of the dormitory, most of them grown up in age, were entitled to certain privileges, they were not expected any more to bother about collecting firewoods for the dormitory, going as errands, and becoming free from certain restrictions enforced upon the junior members like returning to the dormitory at a time fixed in the evening and also free from heavy social works where a lot of physical power was required but becoming supervisors, overseers and guides in such works and becoming the link between the authority of the village and the youths. And if there were any good work done by the dormitory, they were applauded, and on the event of getting somestable
things offered by some one without the consent and initiative taken by the senior members, the junior members could not even touch the thing. In any thing to eat the first chance was for them; in any thing to do theirs! was the last chance. Of course that was the traditional norm prevalent in the dormitories.

The educative functions and values of the dormitory

The educative functions and values of the dormitory may be analysed and enumerated as follows:

(1) Its function of socialisation: The socialisation function of the dormitory can never be exaggerated as it served the whole village in several ways as

a) the biggest headquarters of informations and broadcasts, By staying and sleeping in the dormitory, one could gather all sorts of informations about the village and the individual subjects in detail. Hence, the informations, whether correct or wrong, were all enlightening and illuminating to most of the insiders.

b) the greatest community centre for the village: For the youths of the village, it served as the most effective centre of cultural training. The youths in the dormitory every evening sat together exchanging their views and ideas on
numerous topics and issues, narrating folktales, poems, fiction stories, composing songs and singing traditional songs together, practising their cultural dances. Through their interaction in that direction went a long way for the improvement of their individual talents resulting into the emergence of divergent and wonderful cultures, many beautiful art-forms of dance, composing several folksongs, narrating many interesting folktales, fiction stories etc.

(2) Dormitory as the most effective centre of training in games and sports: Dormitory was the centre for Physical health education in the past with the tribals. In the past, the tribals had a variety of games and sports, some were group games, some individual items. Some of the group games were 'Ling' in Zoni terms, in Manipur 'Kang'. This Ling game can be played by any number of players, each of the players has to possess the material known as Ling, a bean like plant's seed normally sizing from three to four centimetres, mostly oval shape and about a centimetre in thickness, reddish black in colour and about four to five grams in weight. Another group game quite popular was tug of war which can be played by any number of players at the minimum by two, then another game 'Buk-huk' which was a very popular game with most of the tribals.
This Suk-hek game was a game played with an instrument used for unhusking paddy called pestle which is usually, extremely smooth. The players hold the pestle at the one end and at the other end tightly and at the counting of 'one, two, three' both the rival players wind it in the opposite direction. Wrestling was also a very popular game. Then, a game of touching was also something like modern game of 'Kho Kho'. Another game played with 'Hui' made of ling and hard bamboo shell binded by a very strong cotton thread when the thread is pulled suddenly in its anti-winding way, the Hui danced on the basis of force given through the pulling of the thread and thus the competition lies in hitting each other's Hui. In the past, mental games of various types were also there, among them, in counting numbers 'Gatang' a bean type seed was used. A game of "Thai" with pebbles or bamboo sticks was also popular as indoor game. Another indoor game known as 'Sapi-untuah' in the Zomi term was also very popular. Many other games like arrow shooting, sword duelling, gun-firing etc. were also popular. All those games and sports prevalent and practised by the tribals in ancient time went a long way for the improvement of their physical health.
Dormitory as a centre of training in handicrafts, hand-dexterity and many industrial trades. Since dormitory membership was unofficially compulsory for all the youths of the village, it became the centre of training in a variety of industrial trades, in the evening after meal the senior members sat in their dormitory making several articles out of cane and bamboo. Out of cane they could make a basket like box known in Zomi term 'Loi' almost air tight, which could be carried from place to place. The Lelpi (a big size of it) was one of the items usually brought by the brides as their dowry. The highest craftsmanship training was thus available in the dormitory where most of the experts stayed without any payment of fees. Only those youths who had the aptitude in any particular trade took interest in observing or participating when works were on. Some of the senior members were experts in making implements in relation to the production of cloths like gin, spinning machine, weaving looms etc.

Dormitory served as the religious centre for the youths. There was no particular institution for religious teaching in the past with the tribals, therefore, what one knew or learned from the elderly people about their traditional practices in religion was communicated and through their constant interaction among themselves some became religious
men and became ultimately the priests of the village. Whatever practices and adoptions in their worship were transmitted through their life in the dormitory.

Dormitory as a centre for building up good characters, morals, habits and personality: Dr. M. Horam mentions— "So we see that in the absence of schools, specially in the olden days, the Morung (dormitory) was a training ground for all lessons that youth must learn before starting to live independently. Here they were taught also the important and invaluable lessons of discipline, hard work and the spirit of service." A Hmar writer, H. Thanglora referred to this social institution in the following words, "The Buonzawl (dormitory) consisted of a big hall with constantly burning fire in the hearth. The administration of Buonzawl used to be under village Val upas (senior youth members), appointed by the chief. The Val upa was responsible for the orderly conduct of all the young men under him. His word was law. It was his job to see that the boys got their training in tribal war, in hunting, wrestling, village government, obedience to elders, art of singing, dancing, etc. The young men in the Buonzawl were very well disciplined. They were not expected to drink zu (country beer) except on festivals.

On those occasions also they used to be given a mild type of zu called aufang. The stronger drinks like rakzu, supui and tinuzu were not given to them as a matter of rule. Through all their social interactions and exchange of view and ideas, the insiders of the dormitory got tremendously some enlightenments and a good amounts of sociability resulting into having a sense of duty to their family and society. The junior members were not supposed to get up later than the senior members in the morning. So they got up early in the morning always and looked after all their night clothings kept tidy they became dutiful and diligent, thereby formed very good habits. They ought to give respects to the senior members, in the presence of the senior members they were not supposed to take the lead in any gossiping and discussions of any issue. They were not allowed to use any vulgar terms. Hence they developed good moral characters. The boarders developed social efficiency and leadership in themselves through their social interactions. Many leaders were produced through the institution of the dormitory in the past from amongst the tribals.

Dormitory served as the modern defence Academy. In general, in the dormitory the leaders were quite efficient in maintaining the disciplines of the dormitory, once decision was made, they were never left unimplemented. It was just like military rule, no complaints were entertained. They kept constant vigil about the security and safety of the village from any possible attack by the enemy. On the Haga morung (dormitory, Dr. M. Horam made a reference that it is in the morung that the boys get all the useful lessons of community living. The morung gymnasium turns out skilled sportsmen, wrestlers and warriors. Here the youth received invaluable lessons in leadership. They also got themselves acquainted with history, culture, folklore, songs and dances of their village. The curriculum of morung was not all work. Play, singing and dancing were the regular features of this institution. The morung was, therefore, both a training school in the arts of life and war and a club for entertainment and fun. So we see that in the absence of schools, specially in the olden days, the morung was a training ground for all lessons that youth learn before starting to live independently. Here they were taught also the important and invaluable lessons of discipline, hard work and the spirit of services.¹³

But now this invaluable institution of the tribes has been at its vanishing point. Only in the three villages in the northern hills among the Harans, this institution of Horung is still retained, that too only because of their being remained non-christian and their being ignorant of the modern system of education. The three villages are: (1) Yangkhulon, (2) Willon and (3) Haran. The existence of Horung in these villages too was no longer in its proper traditional form but in a manner of modern youth club. The illiterate youths of the villages sleep together in night without retaining fully all the olden day disciplines of the Horung. 14

About this institution called Horung commonly by the Nagas and Zawluk by the Zomi groups, Prof. J. Roy has also put a short account as, "Each village reserves two separate houses - one for the boys belonging to a certain age and the other for the unmarried girls of the village. Boys and girls reaching at puberty sleep in these houses or dormitories. These dormitories are maintained by the entire village. These dormitories are the centres of activities in the villages and the system as a whole plays a vital role in the tribal way of life. The Horung are usually decorated with the trophies of war and games and representations of animals on wood. They are the headquarters of..."

of village defence, recreation clubs and the centres of education, art and ceremonial functions. Young men are trained here in various arts and crafts, dance and music, morality, disciplines as well as in the arts of offence and defence. Discipline is strictly enforced.15

But with the advent of the modern system of education, the old tribal traditional school is bound to decay completely as it has become impossible to house all the school going young boys and girls in the Korung or dormitories unless the dormitories are modified in such a way as to meet the needs of the students of the present time.