CHAPTER - V

Social Organization:

The Wancho society can be broadly divided into two main division: 1. Wangjen and 2. Pangjen. The Wangjen comprises of chiefs, the royalty and the Pangjen are the commoners. The word 'jen' means clan or family unit. The Wangjen and the Pangjen are believed to have come from different patriarchial lines, some prominent names of the Pangjen are - Azangham, Chema, Jamikhan, Panglaham, Tikham and Zsham.

The Wancho society is characterized by the existence of class distinction, a system uncommon amongst the Nocpes. The Wanchos have four classes, each class is formed on the basis of marriage relations and each one of them received social recognition according to their
gradation and status in the social hierarchy. The highest of these four classes are the Wanghama (chiefs) and the lowest are the Wangpens (commoners). The Wangshas and Wangsus are two intermediary classes who have sprung from inter-class marriage. The Wangshas are the descendants of Wangham fathers and Wangpwn mothers; whereas the Wangsus are said to have descended from marriages between Wangpen men and Wangham women. Determination of the class and status a person belongs to, follows from his birth. The Wanghams, the Wangshas and the Wangsus practically control the society and the Wangpen merely obey and abide by their decision. This fact has certain implication regulating social behaviour and social relations.

The sequence of descending lineage of the people belonging to the chieftain class is as follows:

Wangham (chief) → Wangsia (chief’s wife)

Wangham (son)           Wangsia (daughter)

But a chief may have other children born of wives taken from the lower classes of Wangshe, Wangsu and Wangpan. This commoner wife will be termed as Wangnu.

Wangham (chief) → Wangnu (commoner’s wife)

Wangsa (son)           Wangsacha (daughter)

The Wancho word sa means children, son or daughter and su meaning grandchild.

The Wangsha and the Wangsu, though lower in status than the Wangham, still have some royal blood in them, and
consequently are entitled to hold certain position in society. They might be appointed to look after the Pahnu (chief's morung). "Social distinction in the ordinary course of life does not become obvious but it is recognizable during some social function where the whole community participate. For example, in social festivals, the Wangpens who are at the bottom of the society are not allowed to take meal sitting in the same row with the Wanghams. A Wangpan under no circumstance can aspire to marry a girl who is above him in social status. We cannot say how far this division of classes resembles the caste system of the Hindus, but perhaps, we notice something like a nascent state of caste distinction.\(^2\)

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2. Ibid., p. 239.
Marriage:

The Wancho (gamy) or marriage is arranged. Girls are betrothed to boys at the same time of birth or infancy. However, these marriages are clan endogamous. People of villages either subordinate or paramount to each other do not marry from each other's villages. It would be considered incest for the people of the subordinate villages are the descendants or emigrants of the paramount villages. All these villagers are said to be their own blood. Girls are married from rival villages. After the negotiation and the acceptance of the proposal, it is obvious that the two families become closer, this is termed as the chongning. Many a time the children on growing up break the engagement. Love marriages are popular too. The exchanging of Salipan between the couple is a sign of a marriage proposal, while
A Wancho bride
the Wangham marry several times maintain a harem the Wangpan (commoner) as a whole stick to one wife. The Wangham reserve girls from the Panjan clan who play the role of subordinate wives, another extra hand in the field and house. This was the main reason for the Wancho practising polygamy marriage. The offspring of the Wangham father and the Wangpan mother is the Wangsa who has no right to inherit the royal property. Compulsory marriage with a childless brother’s widow is carried out by either the elder or younger brother of the deceased under moral obligation. Often the widow children but that does not deter the marriage. Sometimes an elder brother dies leaving his fiancee in an advanced stage of pregnancy she becomes the responsibility of the younger brother. If a brother is already married and is not willing to be encumbered by some children and wife another
widower or any other eager suitor marries the widow or pregnant fiancee. A Wangham widow will have to marry a Wangham only. There is a taboo against Wangham widow marrying Wangpan men. In the case of sororate marriage, it is not always obligatory. Sometimes the younger sister marries her deceased elder sister's husband when there are younger nieces and nephews. If the deceased elder sister was engaged to a man the younger sister is married off to her sister's fiance to respect the negotiation and word of honour. Though this kind of marriage is not compulsory.

Widows and widowers are allowed to remarry. On non-availability of a close relative, a widow may marry into another family. Her new husband settles with her if she has male issue who is an heir to his deceased father's property. No rituals are performed for this type of marriage.
Negotiation for this type of marriage are carried out after the purgatory rites of the dead mate have been performed. The Wancho believes that a woman cannot survive without her male counterpart so no matter how old and senile the widow or widower is remarriage is approved.

A Wancho selection of mate through divinity is done by a priest (Wangchupah) - who breaks three eggs and pour them separately on three leaves. He observes these eggs and if he finds them good, negotiation is started if not it is cancelled.

Marriage are negotiated in the Wancho society. The opah predicts whether the match is suitable. The betrothal ceremony is called toimonmonk or hawale. The bride is taken for the ceremonial visit to her future husband's house accompanied by the mother-in-aide and a few friends.
She carries with her two bundles of rice with her - *Wangthaw* (white rice) and *Wangnaugh* (black rice) in a basket - *Khang*. She continues to live with her own parents. The marriage is final when she conceives. One of her thigh is tattooed.

In the sixth month of pregnancy, the marriage is declared, and complete. A feast is arranged *Pangtuk* or *Noktuk*. She is again tattooed *khahuta* on the breast. Marriage rituals differ from clan to clan and between Lower and Upper Wanchos. The Opah predicts the unborn's future in the early months by tearing leaf - *Nongchak* and burning dry bamboo leaves. During her pregnant stage, any religious rituals if performed will be in the groom's house. In some clans the bride delivers in her mother's house. She goes home to her parent before the baby arrives accompanied with her mother-in-law. This is called *cahmp chat*. The
The bag of rice are still carried to and fro. While in some clans the bride conceives in her mother's house and the childbirth pains will herald her preparation to leave for her husband's house. The bride's parent arrange meat, fish, rice and go to their son-in-law's house to feast.

Royal marriages are said to be different: The Wangham sends some village elders with a proposal to a ritual village asking for the hand of a Princess for his son. Before this is done the Opah on the basis of what he has read in the eggs predict - Oti. This egg will be shown to the princess when she come to visit her in-laws house. The bride and groom do not usually see each other. The Gaipah is the priest who performs the marriages. The groom's and bride's friends accompanied by their mother-in-law aide and village elders meet at a place - pangkham or boundary. Here a platform is made, food, meat, fish, rice, zu, are collected in this platform from both parties. The
young couple still do not see each other, their friends sing, dance, make merry, recites lores before finally feasting. After the feast the marriage party and bride is escorted back to her father's house. The bride's father sacrifices a dog on his doorstep and sing a song of his past bravery before the bride and groom enter the house over the dead dog. That night abridal chamber is arranged for the new couple to see each other for the first time.

Next day a feast is again given, the friends of the bride and groom tour the village. At cross roads shots are fired may be to chase away the evil spirits. Sometimes feasting goes on for 3-4 days.

The Brides Dowry:

The Wangsu - Wangsa keep an account of the dowry which consist of mithun, rice, salpiras. The groom's friends are
given loin clothes and dao, the opah is given a spear - pah. The dao symbolises good friendship for with it the jungles can be cleared between the two villages so that they may visit each other. The bride's party is also given white Nithan and red 'nina' cloth, dao chang and loin clothes, and spear for the opah. A cooked meal is given to the groom's party when he takes home his bride so that they do not go hungry till they reach the boundary - Pungkham. After they cross this boundary, the groom's party takes the responsibility of meals. The bride is accompanied by her mother or mother-in-aide. She carries with her the two bundles of white and black rice as she makes her trip to and fro between her husband's and father's house. The period when she stays in her father's house is called khaithotuk. Pregnancy legalises the marriage. In her husband's village the new queen chooses some families
as her own so that they can help her in times of trouble.

Love marriages are not uncommon. The bride and groom choose each other Nongche – Nongchen and marry after their parents give the approval. Rituals like the one stated above are not carried out in case of widow or widower remarrys.

**Divorce:**

Divorce is not easy, but it is granted on payment of fines. The Wangsu–Wangsa (the village council) take an account of the dowry that the woman had brought as bride price. All gifts that had been exchanged are returned and the divorce is complete.

**Festivals:**

The Wanchos have a number of agricultural, social and religious festivals. The names of the festivals vary from village to village and also among the different groups of
the Wancho. The number of festivals also vary. For example, sixteen different festivals are celebrated in a year at Wakka, whereas in Pumao area, only six festivals are observed. Similarly Minnu village observes fourteen, Longkai twelve and Pongchau seven festivals. One of the most important festivals observed all over the Wancho area is Ojiyele. This festival continues with great enthusiasm for six to twelve days during March-April every year just after sowing of jhum paddy. Pigs, buffaloes and mithuns are sacrificed and feasts are arranged in each and every morungs (dormitories). Songs and dances by boys and girls in ceremonial costumes make it joyous and colorful. The people put on clothes specially on this occasion, as the festival also signifies donning of new garments. Farm houses are constructed for new harvest. Ojiyele takes a festive look at Pumao where dances are held around a long ceremonial pole called jangham planted for this occasion.
Rituals performed in the Grannery:

During the harvest an animal be it pig, hen or dog is killed, its blood is smeared on the granner post and doorway. The Chejampah (family priest) performs this rituals.

Festivals celebrated in the Longding area:

In all there are eight important besides other festival that the Mancho celebrate. In this eight, is included the harvest as well as the loin cloth ceremonies.

1. Kamgai: Kamgai is celebrated in the month of August. It is the loin cloth ceremony for boys. The celebration lasts for four days.

2. Thawan: It is celebrated in March. This is the girl's loin cloth ceremony. They go to the fields and have a party that last for three days. Boys do not attend this party but on the girls return they exchange presents.
3. Hadujing: It is celebrated in the month of May on the occasion of millet harvest.

4. Tagpoi: This is celebrated in the field in the month of February. Sheds are built in the fields, the big shed is given to the Wangham and commoners stay in smaller sheds.

5. Bannui: This is celebrated for six days in the month of March. The people make a chang or platform and make a zangbang (figures) of Wangham, his queen and his son. The queen dances with the Pausa youth. Pausa meaning subject. For three continuous days tales of the past and present are narrated, for two days dances are performed and the best day a big grand feast is held.

6. Ordernu: In February, the people go to the fields with the priest Napah or Opah to pray to the God of Earth Baurang and invoke blessings and divine powers for a better and
properous harvest.

7. **Dungtham**: This is celebrated in February by the children. They go to the Sheta river. A platform is made to catch fish. They swim, play, laugh and tease. This ceremony is for the welfare of the children.

8. **Laujen or Oriah**: The Upper Wancho term for it is Laujan, the lower call it as the Oriah festival. It is celebrated to welcome the new year and implore the Gods for a better and prosperous year. The Jangwan is an important part of the Oriah festival. The sky God Ganger Zoban Rang, Lainu Moon god, Gamgtan Sun God, lansa - stars and Baurang, the soil God is prayed to for blessing and prosperity.

The Oriah festival consists of the Rangwanthal and the Oriah Nilauk. The first consist of erecting a bamboo post and the second is hoisting of Oriah flag. After that follows the serving of endless glasses of rice beer - Zo or Ju.
To drink *zu* is known as *Juling*. After the drinks the feast - *Naktoh* starts. This festival lasts for three days, *Ashoi neih*, *Bohnu neih* and *Bohsa neih*. On the last day the traditional bamboo post is carried away - *Rangwan Paw*. All Wancho are very attached to this festival and wait it to come again.

Besides the annual *Oriah* festival, harvest festival called *Lauden* festival in August is celebrated. In the last week of March, *Pungyam* is celebrated to announce the cultivation of millet. In some villages, festival is known as *Chachiyan-anyaek* - *chashi* meaning rice and *anyaek* meaning invitation is celebrated to benefit prosperity by invoking deities like *Rang* for fertility and *Baurang* to protect and not to destroy the crops.

After the new harvest, a festival called *Pactakle* is celebrated in which the skulls of the dead are taken out and offered *zu* rice-beer and food. In some villages
the annual, religious ceremony called the Sangaam, Pagen and Gakgam are performed. The priest Gipa kills a big cock and sprinkles its blood over the accumulated weapons. The sacrificed cock is then taken to the field. The priest utters prayers to the Supreme Power to shower blessings so that they may have good crops, good fishing and hunting expeditions, good health and peace. This ceremony is also performed when a new chief is appointed. Besides games community fishing, hunting, swimming, the Wancho love singing and dancing. Their folk songs is known as Lailung and their dance as Shon. Lailung means tying a bundle, lai means leaves, bung means rope made out of bamboo strips. For rituals leaves and this type of rope is used nothing can replace it. Likewise to Lailung, Lailung are more common among the Sangjeh. Nowadays, lailung is taken as common folk songs.
In the olden days, Wangpahs did not sing lailungs along with their Wangham. Youngster did not sing them in front of their elders. These were sung in the morung, among fields and to one's sweetheart. Lailungs cannot be sung alone - two teams are needed. The lailung are usually about love, romance, tales about bravery, legend etc. Competition in lailung singing is often held. The exercise helps to extend and sharpen one's wit and intelligence and brings about a spirit of competition and sportmanship. One team usually loses but all in good spirit.

Maibon is also a form of folk song. It is mainly sung by the Tangjen. The differences between Maibon and Lailung are in the tones and in the contents. Lailung has comparison and similies.
Songs:

Wancho songs can be heard echoing through the night sometimes even during the day. When one Wancho hears the strains of a song over the hills he sings too, to support and show his understanding for the feeling of the unseen singer. At a time many voices join the singing. This is form of communication and expression. Songs are sung everywhere during marriage, at home, in the jungle, fields and at any time of the day. They say when one sing he forgets his fatigue and boredom. They sing both when happy and sad. The believe in singing helps one to cultivate good thought. Meaning of a Wancho song that is sung in the jungle while chopping wood:

"We all gather to sing,  
It will be fun if we sing together,  
Do you think of me when you go to the field?  
Do you think of me all the time on the roads and while working?"
A Wancho singing
Where will you be going today? 
only by thinking of me can my 
Jamsa (beloved) end her day. 
In the daytime I think of my parents. 
At night I think of you my Jamsa 
When I am hungry I remember my Mother 
At leisure and while drinking zu 
I think of you. 
My day and night becomes an ordeal 
When I do not think of you and see you, 
My mind is restless”.

Plea to his ex-girl friend:

"I will go look for a new mate, 
The old wife has gone ugly and ill tempered 
My old girl has a new friend. 
So I will go look for a new mate, 
Please let me go look for a new mate. 

Wancho songs are full of romance, the themes are of love 
gained or lost, battles, heroes, legends etc. The lailung 
are full of imaginary. They are simple but full of 
comparative similes.

Songs sung in the field:

Words: Wake organ chidku huling 
Meanings: Jungle cut and the sun dries it. 
W : Chape longsam hanew lung 
M : A feeling of wellbeing like as if staying in 
    the palace of Sukafa the Ahom King. 
W : Mai pung jibnu chi oybi opu chophon ma ha 
    dei manjonbi jha sa phontu tabi new indei. 
M : Comparing of girls with flower. If he sees 
    a girl he wants to know her. If he sees 
    a flower he wants to put it in his ear.
Parables:

These stories reflect the Wancho view on animals and nature.

(a) Pig and the dog:

Long, long ago the pig and the dog were given equal importance and were good friends—meaning animal friendship. These two the pig and the dog were owned by a man. Their master sent the two of them to work in his heaven. Everyday early in the morning the two would leave the house at their master's orders and head for the Harem. The pig was a sincere and hard worker. The dog was lazy and slept there throughout the day. One day the pig felt he should tell his master the truth. The tired pig went up to his master one evening and complained that it is always he who
works. He said, "My owing (friend) slept the whole day while I was busy. Did you not ask both of us to share the work?". The master asked the dog in a stern voice, "Is what your aming the pig saying the truth?". The cunning dog immediately denied the facts and told his master that he always works very hard. The master believed the dog, the pig now to prove that he is in deed a hard worker started working harder. He never took any rest even at midday. While his friend the dog slept under the shed. Every evening, before the tired pig would reach home the dog was already by his Master's side. The man sternly asked the pig, "Where were you?". The dog replied, "He was sleeping". Before the pig could say anything and prove to his master that he had been working in his master's harem, the man took a stick and began beating
the poor pig. The dog became the favourite of his master, while the poor pig took shelter under the house, the dog stayed in the house with his master. From that day onwards the pig was denied inside and remained outside the house, he was not considered an equal to the dog. The door step was raised so that the pig could not enter. Hence the pig and the dog were never friends, even now the pig is said to have cursed the dog and now it's the dog who has to work while the pig remain at home.

(b) Frog and the crab:

It is said that long ago the crab had long elegant legs and the frog could stand upright. The frog and the crab were close friends. They lived together and shared a harem. Alternatively if one stayed at home to do the house work, the other went to work in the harem.
At midday, they would both have lunch in the field and talk. One afternoon the frog was waiting for the crab to bring him lunch of roasted kachu. The frog waited and waited the sun was about to set but still his aming the crab did not come. He began to get worried and left the field in a hurry. When he reached home he saw the crab rolling helplessly near the hearth, the poor crab while resting the kachu caught fire and his elegant legs got burnt. Seeing the condition of his friend he laughed so hard that his backbone broke. Since then crab crawls and the frog hopped.

(c) **Crow and the monkey:**

The crow and the monkey were neighbours and good friends. They helped each other in the fields. First they worked in the crow's field and then the monkey's field. The monkey was growing millet and other grains, crow was growing stick rice (baragrain). After the harvest the
crow invited the monkey to have a share of cooked sticky rice. The poor monkey not having tasted this kind of rice before took up his dish eagerly. But to his disappointment he could not relish the cooked rice. It stuck to his paws, the whiskers and all over his face. The crow was eating his share with great enjoyment. The next day the monkey invited the crow for food. The crow was happy to accept and whole day he kept contemplating about the food at the monkey's house. He reached his friend's house and monkey served him watery gruel made out of millet. The crow did not know how to eat. The monkey smiled, the crow put his head down for he realised the monkey was as smart as himself. It was a case of tit for tat.

(d) How the dog lost his horn;

The dog of long ago had horns. He was very
proud of his long and pointed pair of horns. One day the
dog wanted to gaze out on the valley to see if any of
his friends were near about. He did not want to bump his
horns against the boughs of the trees. So he took them
off his head. He placed the horn of the ground under the
tree and climbed up. While he was on top of the tree a
goat came up the hill saw the pair of horns, placed them
on his own head and strolled away. The dog was surprised
to see his horns gone. He looked everywhere and then he
saw the goat wearing his horns. The dog chased after the
the goat. The goat fled and refused to return the horns.
The poor dog lost his horns, even now when he sees a
goat he barks and chases, but the goat will never give
him his horns back. That is why goat and the dog are
bitter enemies.
Religion:

The Wancho do not worship any idols. They believe that there is a supreme power or divinity which they refer to as Zang. Rang on personify as Zauanpa. Like the Hindus the Wancho people offer sacrifices of food articles, animals, objects to the Zaunpa. They do not however, have a specific place for worship.

Though there is no picture of their God -

Zaunpa, the Wanchos described him as magnificent. His head is adorned with the sun and the moon, his khatet (loin cloth) is the rainbow. Zaunpa is linked with every aspect of Wancho life. The Wancho believe in countless religion rituals. For this they have a number of priests to pray as well as perform the rituals, be it birth, death, marriage, harvest festival. For nearly every

* based on the author's fieldwork.
occasion a specific priest is around.

The Wancho opah, zampeh, chajampah, gammu etc have a great influence of the people. Besides, these priests and rituals they have a concept of the same human being considered to be pure in body and soul have immense power. These beings are called Aje. He has powers to see the future, to heal sickness, to change bad for good and bless. Aje is said to have an abnormal behaviour. Some strange shining black pebbles are found with the Aje. The Aje do not know from where these pebbles come into their possessions. Sometimes one, two, and even three pebbles get her in one year. These pebbles are kept in water pots in a sacred place. If these pebbles get lost the Aje loses his power. The Aje has to live a strict and holy life - sins will make his pebbles disappear. It is said that if these pebbles disappear disaster will strike. Although
they live normal lives, marry, rear children and even
work to earn their own living they have to pray regularly,
eat prescribed and restricted diets.

The life of Aje go on, the old Aje's power are
transferred to a new Aje. The old Aje can predict the
future. Aje - from where and how the new Aje will emerge
'falling of a start'. It is believed that God drops a
star and when it falls on a house, a member of that house
is chosen and granted supreme power to become an Aje.
Aje does nor harm of practise black magic, he believes
in non-violence. Their power is so great that on seeing
a person's belonging's the Aje can predict and talk of the
person who is no where in sight and whom Aje has nver
seen.

It is found that strange cfeatures enter the house
before an Aje emergea in that house 9 snakes. monkeys,
wild cats appear. Animals and snakes that enter the house are not chased away. They are taken as a sign, symbol or as messenger of God.

**Practise and Significance of tattoo (HUTU)**

Tattoo is an art and the Wanchos are skilled in it. Tattoo marks are made with a dao or any other kind of sharp pointed instruments and pointed bamboo tings. After perforations and lines are made the spot is rubbed with a paste of rice flour mixed with the blue or black juice of some jungle berries. The tattoo mark on the face is called *ak* or *tunho*, that on the neck as *dinghu*, on the chest as *khannu* and on the back as *tackhnu*. A man is allowed to tattoo his face after he takes a skull. Tattoos are a sign of heroes, fearless and courageous warriors. Tattoo was an award of bravery. It was a mark of high birth. No Wangham would marry a girl without any
tattoo marks so, no matter how painful the girls went through it, after puberty and after marriage. Many a times a bride would scream and screech while her friends had a gala time with the boys from the bridegroom's party and the marriage feast.

The tattoo on the man's face consist of four lines that travels from the forehead round the eyes, up the nose, cheeks mouth and chin. Spots outline these lines. Designs are drawn on the nose, wrist, shoulders, arms, neck, chest and back sometimes. In this respect clan differs, some tattoo the face some the other parts of the body.

Tattooing for women holds great importance as it marks different stages of life carries and much emphasized part of marriage rituals. Tattoo on the thigh is called as betam hu, that on calf as chichin-hu. At the age of six or seven years the girl is tattooed on the calf if she is engaged, or at around eleven to thirteen years of age (puberty).
In the seventh month of pregnancy a 'H' design is tattooed on her chest. The chief's daughter has more tattoo designs than other girls.

Clan wise tattoo designs differs even for women. The shoulders have a diamond design, cross garter design for the thighs, vertical lines for the legs right up to the skinnbone, a cross on the navel and lines drawn on the breast to the stomach. The most common tattoo marks is the crosses on the navel which is skillfully with three fine lines and looks like a Maltese cross.

Beliefs and superstition:

The full moon and the crescent moon are held auspicious. Without the moon they do not perform any ritual – dark night or moonless sky is not held to be a good period. One is liable to fall sick or one will
lose fertility if any sacred ceremony is carried out on moonless nights.

The Wanchoo explains the phenomena of the solar eclipse in an endearingly simple way. They say that the sun is eaten up by a giant frog. During the eclipse the village is closed and general works are stopped for the time being. Jerking or throbbing of any muscle of eyes, arm, thigh is considered unlucky.

During wars, the Wangpah or priest predicted the outcome of the war through the observing of egg shell and egg yolk. If during the journey or raid, the food that is carried gets rotten. It is taken as a bad omen.

Birth and puberty rituals and ceremonies:

Pregnancy is an important matter in a Wancho society for it finalises marriages between a couple. The opah predicts the unborn child's future in the
second or the third month. Sons are preferred to daughters.

The Gumnu (mid-wife) is appointed by the Wangham. After the baby is born the Gamnu cooks red rice and fish for the mother. The diet is continued for three days or more. The Gumnu looks after the baby, washes and cleans it for the first three days and she even names the boy. The Gumnu is an important person in the society.

As soon as the child is born he is given a lick of the Zu; boys are made to touch a live fish. After a few months solid food is introduced. Popular, good looking and moral abiding people are given the privilege of feeding the baby its first solid food. The parent of the new born hold big feasts to welcome and celebrate the coming of a new member in the family. The ritual at the time of delivery and after is called Nauchan. The Gumnu
piercethe years of the baby with ginger juice and ties a string of beads and predicts the baby's future on the second day. On hearing of the baby's arrival marriage proposals will come. If it is a girl she will be reserved with gifts and a garland from her maternal uncle for his son. In the Zotham festival, the baby is given solid food.

According to the child's physical development a loin cloth is given. Boys are generally given a loin cloth when they are around 14-17 years old. On that day the boys father gives a feast. The boy is given a dao and also a membership in the morung. A dog is sacrificed on the doorstep before he enters it.

The number of patches of land on Haram are locked under the Zhum cycle, Haram helps to calculate a person's age. If the cycle of certain haram started on one's birthday, repetition of this haram will be counted
as years for him. The tenth rotation will be his tenth birthday and so on. Girls are given their loin cloth when they are between 11 and 14 years old. As usual a feast follows.

**Lightning:**

They believe that God uses lightning to show his wealth. If lightning strikes a place that place or spot will be abandoned for ever.

**Earthquake:**

During an earthquake, pregnant women are put under restriction and thought to be unfortunate.

**Animals:**

Tiger is called the king of all animals - it is sacred. Tiger slayer are given knighthood - Nawmai.

The snake - python is considered to be and as an evil
symbol. Anyone who sees one should kill it or he will be cursed, but not when one's wife is pregnant, if he does the child will have the habit of flicking out its tongue like a snake.

**Birds:**

Cawing of the crow and cry of the owl are believed to be predictions of bad news and times. The cry of the eagle and the cuckoo predict love and news of lovers eloping.

**Taboos:**

Prenatal and post-natal periods - pregnant ladies and their husbands are put under restrictions. The husband is forbidden to kill snakes, strike nails and stakes into the ground. During the delivery period, the menfolk stay away for 2 days. Locks and knots are united, unpowder
and weapons are stored elsewhere. Husbands and wives live
separately till the child is nine month. Twins are considered
to be a bad omen.

**Brewery:**

The men are not allowed into the room where rice-
beer is made; he is not to touch the *Tongkhah* (yeast).
If he does he will lose his virility and becomes equivalent
to a women. Guns, spears, daos, fishing rods and nets are
not allowed near the breweries.

**Disposal of the dead:**

The Wanchos have a word to mean death - *Zukting*
(*zuk= grave, platform for dead; ting= land*). The
purgatory rites (*Zafoat*) differ from clan to clan and between
upper and lower Wanchos. The Wangham and the Wangpan have
different cemeteries. The cemetery for natural death and
accidental death is also different. The corpse is washed, wrapped in and cloth and adorned with his/her belonging and offered food. The Gamph (priest) who looks after the dead body. The Wangham as they are blue blooded do not perform any death rites for the corpse. Oangjen woman married to a Pangjem is appointed as Tanthuroo. She performs the purgatory rites for the royal family. She washes the body and offered food and drink to the departed soul.

The corpse is carried on a stretcher with his belonging, to an already made chang (platform). Corn, drink, meat, fish, are offered to the departed soul. His money, pipe, watch, clothes, torch, umbrella, dao are all placed over or near the corpse. The Wancho believes in the existence of the other world. These possession are either torn or spoilt for the Wancho believes that if in this world
things are broken, in the next world they will be better.

In the dead man's house the hearth is not lit, food is sent by sympathetic and helpful neighbours. If a nephew or niece dies the maternal uncle provides the food for his sister - Namsa (mam=dead, sa=rice). For two weeks the corpse is visited. When after a month or so the body decomposes, the skull is separated. The Zampah cleans the skull, offers food and drink and puts it in a pitcher - this occasion is known as rapoly. It is said earlier the Wanchos kept the corpse of their relatives near the house. The Governments constant urges to stop this practice has persuaded the Wacho to shift their cemeteries towards the approach or entrance of the village. After the people return from the cemetery in a procession they touch a bamboo chunga filled with water before entering the house as a purification rite.
Accidental deaths do not get so much of importance. The corpse is visited for five days only. It is died in a mat and hung somewhere far away from the village cemetery. Effigy of wood, carved similar to the dead man is put on the platform, no effigy for ladies are made. If the dead man was tattooed his effigy would be tattooed too.