CHAPTER IV

Nature of State

Literary and ethnological sources indicate that the early wave of the Mongoloid migration entered India in the east before 1000 B.C. at about the same prehistoric time as the arrival of the Aryans in the west. As no material proof of these movements and ancient settlement of the people has been discovered, we can, at the present stage of our knowledge, do little more than faintly trace the courses of tribal migration that took place in comparatively latter times.¹

The Wancho are believed to have originated at two places Tangnu and Tsangnu both in Tuensang². When asked about how the village was formed the Wanchos come up with many theories. One such theory was narrated by a resident of Niausa. It is not know how the villages

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actually formed. There was no chief or raja to rule the
people who had assembled in the area after migrating
from Nagaland. So from Tangnu a chief was called to rule
over the people. The leader who was ruling these people
before the Tangnu chief made an appearance was Kianupa.
He was weak and could not control the people so he was
overthrown and his place was taken by the outsider from
Tangnu, who became the Wangham (chief).

One tradition is that the original place from
where the Wancho started migrating is Nyannu Ofan, and
they first came to a place called Tinao. From Tinao they
went in two directions. One group went to Tangnu and the
other to Tsangnu. From Tangnu and Tsangnu they came to
their present habitat. Before the Wancho came to their
present habitat the land, they say, was occupied by
a different people, who, the Wancho assert with pride,

3. Srivastava, L.R.N., Among the Wanchos, p. l.
were not as developed as they. The migrating Wancho drove most of the people living there. This however is doubted by doubted by some who believe that the area presently occupied by the Wancho was not inhabited by any people before them. The two migrating branches of Tangjan from Tangnu and Tsangjan from Tsangnu continued to move towards the east and established themselves in the villages occupied by them at present, & at times occupying unclaimed lands, and at times onsting the original settlers. These two groups of Tangjan and Tsangjan further got themselves divided into several smaller Jans.

Under Tangjan are Nijan, Kanjan, Kongjan, Choujan and Wakkajajan. Under Tsangjan are Niaujan, Ngojan, Zujan, Chopjan, Chejan and the independent village of Senua.

The geographical division of the Wanchos does not co\textit{incide with their social division. Some of the

4. Ibid., p. 2.
The Wancho trace their lineage from the family of...
four brothers first settled in Tangnu and Tsangnu of Nagaland. The four brothers were - Moipu, Hanglang, Tingpong and Takham and are believed to be the forefather of the Wancho. The eldest Moipu is said to have settled in Niannu his descendant are said to be the Lower Wancho - Niajen, Choujen. The descendants of the second brother Hanglong are the Jannu. Zajen and Chopjen are said to be the descendant of the third brother Tingpong. The fourth brother Takham is said to have gone back and remained in Nagaland. It is believed that the Wannu village was the centre of migration of all the different clans of the Wanchos. Among the five families Ralang, Arang, Pongla, Niyamik and Tanbo the chief was selected, from the Ralang family.

This Wangham (chief) was all in all. When a prince is born the villagers go out to hunt fish and celebrate
the occasion. The occasion when a person acquires the seat of a Chief is also celebrated. A feast is given to honour the new ruler. The chief's eldest son Taichongpa is given more importance, then the younger sons - Nawlisa and Naulipa who leave their father's house after they marry.

The Wangnuali (subordinate villages) pay tribute to the paramount villages. It is said that Borduria village 6 pays salt tax to the Chanu village.

The Wangham directs and also keep an eye over the welfare and wellbeing of the village community. Without the Wangham's sanction nothing can be done, be it cultivation of Haranis, construction of house, road, observing rituals, giving punishment to the guilty etc.

The paisa or subject offer a share of meat or fish to the king if they had gone hunting or fishing. The new

6. It is a Nocte village.
queen usually select a few families in her husband's village as her own, a sap is then given to the families as a sign of honour and proof of the new relationship. After this, she can dine with the family and go to seek their help in times of troubles. The chief's lands are cultivated by his commoner's wives - \textit{wagnu}. Some of the village youths stay with the king - they wait on him, bring him food, pur him \textit{zo} (rice beer), light his opium pipe, these youth would even die for the king. These attendants are appointed by the cillage and mostly hereditary. The Wancho are proud of their warrior ancestry and in the olden days, their war-tactics had won them many victories. They were accustomed to guéguerill type of warfare. They were expert in ambush. They did not go in for open confrontation with the enemy. \textit{Nawmei} (braces) helped the king to fight wars.
Most of the weapons were stored in the King's homes.

**Village Organization:**

Villages are divided into units. Most villages have different names for the village units which generally amounts to two or three units. The Upper Wancho call these units as CHINGKHAW and CHINGKHE. In the Lower Wancho the units are called TINGNU and TINGSA. While in the next and independent Senne village there are three divisions - TINGNU, ZONGPONGZONGHAM, and TINGSA.

The word *thom* is given to a group of villages. Each village has two or more smaller units Jhong consisting of a number of houses each under a Junior Controlling leader - Wangsa. In the Wancho village 20-40 houses form an unit called Tingzong. Each of these units have a *Pah* (boy's dormitory). The *Pah* plays an important
plays an important role in the society. A village may have 2-6 or more pah depending upon the size and population of the village. A royal family or a person of high rank is usually the owner of a pah. The ownership is hereditary. The owner is responsible for building, maintaining and managing the affairs of the pah. In return the members of the pah known as pahsem help him in the fields or do other odd jobs. The pah is a dormitory for unmarried boys. Soon after attaining puberty the boys are taken into the pah. They continue to sleep in the pah till they marry. Every evening after dinner the boys troop out of their houses, taking with them their dags, tobacco pouch, betel nut store and things they would need for the night in the pah. They return to their house the next morning.
The *pāh* is like a club house here the teenagers cut, joke, sing, play, sometimes make cane furniture out of wood or bamboo, make bead ornaments, and relax on the whole. The *pāh* is a recreation centre. The youth have great fun, singing *lailunge* (folk song). This kind of singing involves two groups—each tries to outdo the other in singing. It is a portive competition. A common sight in each *pāh* is a long drum *khum*. It is used as an alarm. The beating of the drum can be heard far over the hills. In the olden days *pāhs* acted as guard houses and centres for discussion and strategy. It is believed that the word *pāh* comes from the word *apah* (meaning to listen). *Pāhs* are built near the gates of the village to act as guard room.
Councils:

In each Wancho village there exist a well organized body for the administration of justice. It is the council of elders, the Wangchu-Wangcha of which the Wangham (chief) is the head. As assisted by a number of members with different function, this self-regulating socio-political organization has been in existence since ancient times. It is not merely a traditional judicial body but it has a direct influence on the socio-cultural and socio-economic life of the community. The members and their designations vary from village to village. At Pumao, for example, the council consists of Wangham, ngopa (priest), Wangcham and the senior members of the village representing each clan. The Wangcho and the Wangcha are also called Khonsai and act as ministers. The Chief before giving a decision on any matter, consults the two Khonsais.
The wangcham acts as messenger to the Chief and the council. He informs the village about the meeting and calls the members to attend it. The village council of the Niaujan group, consisting of Niannu, Niausa, Mintong, Longphong and the Zedua villages are similar to that of the Pumao council, but here the executive body consists of only the wangcham (chairman), wanchapa, wangchampa and the Wangchupa. At Wakka, the council has a large number of members: the tang-ngam (chief), da-pa, gangsa-pa (junior chief).

In case of dispute within the village, the decision of the council is accepted and regarded by all, but in inter village disputes, when the decision is not accepted, a dispute led to serious and even head-hunting in the old days. The council generally meets at the chief's morung, where all the members are invited.
Function of the council:

In the old days, the main function of the council was to decide and plan about warfare, and to settle cases and disputes within the village. But nowadays, besides dealing with minor cases and disputes, the council takes up all kinds of development work, such as the construction of the road, cleaning the village paths etc. "A good of such council can be found in Chanu village, where it is more a development work and each member is responsible for the different activities. At the same time the council settles the disputes and rites cases". 7

The Chief respect the decision of the Council members. If the chief is a young man the elders of the village address him as Wangpa meaning some

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All the councils works within the frameworks of the Assam Frontier (Administration of Justice) Regulation of 1945 which recognises their importance and authority and confers on them considerably powers. This is in recognition of the fact that 'modern democratic government can have a solid foundation only in the village democracy'.

Punishment:

The Wangham's word is law. Dispute within the visit generally arise out of theft, seduction of girls, adultery, etc. But inter-village disputes arise mainly on account of encroachment of land by the members of one village over another's village. There are disputes over the rights on water. Hunting and fishing in another territory may also cause enmity. In the olden days Wanchos law were strictly enforced, corporal punishment was common.

Seduction of the Chief's wife is a serious offence earlier it led to death sentence to the culprit. Exile from the village is also considered to be a serious punishment. A theft of agricultural crop is compensated by payment of a fine of one pig to the village councillors.

In the old days, it is said that if a thief stole such articles from the house of a chief, he was sold to another village for one elephant tusk and a gang. Adultery with a betrothed girl is also compensated by payment of fines. Generally seizing of their ivory ornaments, harama (cultivable land), animals and banishment were common form of punishment.

The Panchayat Raj Regulation was introduced in what was then known as NEFA of which Wancho region was a part. It did not come in conflict with the traditional
village councils which has been in existence since time immemorial.

The NEFA Panchayat Raj Regulation 1967 (No. 3) provides a three tier structure of self-governing bodies -
1. Anchal Samiti 2. Zilla Parishad 3. The Agency council-

In the NEFA (Admin) Supplementary Regulation 1971 a Pradesh council was constituted in the place of Agency council. The 37th Amendment Act of the Constitution 1975 provides for a legislative assembly in the Union territory of Arunachal Pradesh and at that time Pradesh council will cease to exist. The 1971 Regulation defines a Gram Panchayat as 'a body of persons elected according to the Tribal customary methods by the residents of any village or agency of villages. The Gaonbura and Kataks have made adminis-
tration of development plans easy for the officers. The
Gram Panchayat at the village level, Anchal Samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level have been working effectively and were readily accepted by the people since an infrastructure of such an institution had already existed in the villages.