CHAPTER 2
CHAPTER- 2

Traditional Tangkhul Social Structure and Status of Women

The Tangkhuls constitute an important section of the highlanders of the North-Eastern region of India. They inhabit a geographically very difficult terrain, accessibility to which is beset with high hills and deep gorges. Geographical isolation in the hills has reflected well in their social organization and cultural pattern. For all practical purposes each village is a social political and religious unit under the leadership of the village chief called Awunga. Earlier, a village had its own independent social, economic, political and religious concerns. Beside, it had independent external policy, free from the interference of other powers from outside. Regarding the early village of the Nagas, Horam is of the view that: 1

Whether or not, the village was always a social, political and religious unit, the fact remains that, it was an important unit. Among all the Naga tribes, in the days before Christianity came to the Naga Hills, every village was not only a religious unit but also politically and economically a distinct unit. The village is an independent unit in the tribe.

The habit of head hunting during the pre-British days among the Naga people forced each of the tribal group to live in isolation from one another. Not to speak of
fighting among different tribes but within the same tribe living in the adjoining villages had also disputes and differences which often resulted in constant feud and fighting.

After the advent of Christianity the Tangkhuls started embracing Christianity through missionary work. Inspite of the stern resistance given to the new religion in the initial period, Christianity became the religion of the whole community. The conversion to Christianity and the belief in the new religion brought an end to the old beliefs and practices. There had been a total rearrangement in the structure of the system of beliefs and practices. The old belief in the evil spirits and the world of evil spirits dominating the human world was done away with. With the disappearance of the old beliefs, the practices connected with them accordingly disappeared.

Agriculture still plays a dominant role as a source of basic subsistence in the villages but lost its traditional importance as a source of prestige and economic wealth. New source of wealth like government jobs, commercial tradings and education become associated with status and prestige.

**Political Institution**

The outstanding social and political unit among the Tangkhuls is the village. The sizes of villages may vary from a very small village consisting of 10 houses to very big ones of about 600 houses. Irrespective of the size of the village every village has its own administrative body headed by the village chief known as ‘Awunga’. The office of *Awunga* is hereditary. He maintained his position through brilliance, his personal
qualities and abilities. On the event of the death of the chief his eldest son succeeds to the chieftainship unless he is unworthy of the post due to physical deformity or unsound mind etc. If the eldest son is so undeserving due to some reasons the second son automatically is preferred to be the chief of the village. In the absence of other alternative sons the nearest male relative of the chief inherits the chieftainship.

The Awunga or the village chief was the secular and religious head of the village. He acted as the ritual head as he was always the first person to perform all the rituals in the village agricultural activities. The agricultural activities of the year was set forth with the blessings and ritual performance by the Awunga of the village. No other villager could sow seed or plant anything before the chief and his wife had performed the ritual for the sowing lest the doer attract bad luck for the whole village resulting in a poor harvest. The chief was the first to set foot and plant the first seedlings at the time of transplantation and he was the first to reap the first harvest of the year with the precedence of appropriate rituals. He presides over all religious events and thus his presence in all the religious observance was indispensable. In effect the Headman was the keeper of the faith with the help of the village priest. For individual cases, each family was responsible to call upon the village priest to conduct sacrifices.

The chief of a village retains some ritual prominence at the time of the agricultural festivities like Luira which is the festival of sowing seeds, but its significance is lost with the population embracing the Christianity. With the coming of Christianity the western/ modern education was introduced to the Tangkhuls and
gradually traditional political organization became accommodative to the new elites. The emergence of new elites in the traditional political organization affected the power and functions of the village chief. In the name of development, Chairmanship is in a trend to replace the post of the chief in administrative, political and judicial field. In recent years, in many Tangkhul villages, the chairman is elected for, say, a period of 3-5 year term with a provision that the chief would return to the post if the chairmanship does not function satisfactorily or rather prove better than the chiefship. In the course of transition from tradition to modernity there has been internal conflict leading to formation of Tangkhul Wungnao Long (Tangkhul Chiefs’ Union) to safeguard the rights of the chiefs and the traditional political structure.

The villagers had equal access to the village territory, the right to hunt any wild animal and the right to cultivate the land as much as the chief’s. However, the chief was recognized as the legitimate guardian of the village land. The chief with the help of the village councilors had to see that outsiders did not encroach on the land, as the practice of head hunting put the village under constant threat. He along with the councilors took care to see that the village was well protected from the attacks of the enemies and preserved the land from wasteful use and fire which swept the hills at the time of burning the fallen jungle for jhumming.

The chief was the administrative head. He summoned and presided over the meetings of the village councilors. Though he was the head of the administration he was not free from constrain. Although he had legislative power and executive functions, he
was, to a large extent, guided by the counsel of the councilors. He could not ignore the opinion of the councilors who were the representatives of the clans of the village. Thus in all matters of dispute and considerations he had to consult the councilors and respect their opinions.

Despite immense powers given to him as the ruler of the village the chief could never be an autocrat as he was bound by the various customs and laws which are followed with much stringency. He could never ignore the counsel of the councilors and the villagers as the councilors help the chief in day-to-day administration of the village. The village was generally divided into several wards and quarters, comprising of a number of patrilineal clans, which in turn was further ramified into lineages. This has been broken since the coming of Christianity. The village council or Hangva in the village is the highest organ of power and its basic units are the respective clans from which the councilors are selected. As a matter of fact the head of the clan or Pipa is the permanent member of the council though he might nominate someone on his behalf in the council. The nominee keeps going in office as long as he commands the confidence of the clan. He is to protect the interest of the clan in particular and the interest of the village in general. All important matters affecting the village community are subject to the decisions of the Hangva based on customary laws, constituted by tradition and convention. The Pipaship of a clan, like the chiefship, is hereditary. A Pipa of a clan may be a member of the Hangva and may remain through his life time or until his eldest son could replace him or he could nominate a person from the clan if he wishes to do so. The Pipa’s nominee carries on the office under the guidance of the Pipa and remains
in the office as long as he enjoys the confidence of the Pipa in particular and the clan in general. The Pipas are the most influential persons in their respective clans as they are the ones who take care of the welfare of the clan members. A pipa of a clan is not necessarily a member of the Hangva. His right and eligibility to the office of the village hangva stems from his status in the village at the time of the founding of the village, as the founding of a village was not always easy.4

The entire social system of the Tangkhul rests upon the clan system called Shangnao. Shangnao is a combination of two words- Shang meaning group and Nao-meaning children. Thus, etymologically Shangnao means children of the same group, pointing to the founder ancestor. Shangnao may again be subdivided into a number of lineages called meiphung meaning hearth or Vathei meaning seeds of one father, as such meiphung or vathei consists of the children of one father, which is a descent group consisting of persons unilineally descended from the known ancestor through a series of genealogical links of relationship which they can trace with precision.5

Tangkhul clans are hierarchically organized. Everybody belongs to a clan in the Tangkhul community. There is no person who does not belong to a clan. Every simple biological family is a part of meiphung and each meiphung is a part of a bigger unit, the clan. Member of a family discuss all the problems of the family and refer certain matters which are beyond their control to the meiphung. Meiphung further refers the bigger problems to the clan which in turn may refer to the village hangva.
The solidarity of a clan is maintained by the co-operation of its constituent units. On every issue of the clan, all members of the clan extended their co-operation as representatives of its major group, the clan. In all the affairs of common concern, rights and duties, privileges and obligations are shared equally by all the members of the clan. This kind of equality makes them stronger to stand as one solid unit. Moreover, since it is believed that they are the descendants of the same ancestor, they consider themselves to be *chinaongara* i.e. male descendants of the same parents. Their clanship ties, summed up in the concept of *chinaongara* (brotherhood) are believed to have the same strength of bond of kinship that exists between brothers. Mention may be made here that by the rules of exogamy women members of a clan marry out of it. They do not contribute to its perpetuation in the parental family and do not affect its organization, whereas they contribute equally to their husband’s clans to which they belong after their marriage.

All the clan groups in the Tangkhul society perform various functions. It is the duty of the clan to see that all its members are economically sound. Every family needs and extends co-operation for the successful operation of their agricultural and associated activities. They are to help, particularly at the time of affliction by natural calamities like epidemic diseases, fire havoc, hail storm etc.

The clan elders keep vigil of the proper conduct of its clan members. As such if some one deviates from the social norms they give proper advice to the concerned
person or persons in order to avoid earning a bad name for the clan. Therefore, a deviant in a clan is a matter of worry to the entire clan.

It is the look out of the clan members even at the time of marriage. To begin with, in the matrimonial arrangements some responsible persons of the Meiphung go with the parents of the groom to the bride’s family with the relatives of the bride’s party for the confirmation of the engagement. Clan members of both the families take the responsibilities of the pledge agreed upon, after the engagement is complete. At the time of marriage all the members of the clan extend their help to the groom’s family to enable them to arrange a generous marriage feast. On the other hand, the bride’s party takes care to see that during the marriage she takes presentations that are satisfactory to the groom’s party. The presentations include some traditional shawls which the bride presents to the members of the groom’s family and also to the Pipa of the Meiphung.

According to Tangkhul customary law, after the marriage the fate of the young wife is fully protected by the husband’s family members. Be it a desertion by the husband or death of the husband, the wife’s welfare is the concern of the husband’s family. If they fail to do so her husband’s clan members should come to her help. Proper care should be given to the widow and her children for their maintenance after her husband has died. If no proper care is available the clan members should take care of her future by extending all possible help and care to her.

In every Tangkhul village there is an administrative body which assist the head of the village in the administration of the village. This body is known as Hangva or the
Village Council. Each clan in a village sends their representatives in the Hangva who looks after the interest of the clan. These clan representatives discuss and solve the problems referred to them and matters concerning the village.

With regard to the number of members of the Hangva there is no fixed structure. According to the size of the villages the number of the village council varied from village to village. A smaller village with lesser clans has smaller members while a bigger village which has more number of clans has correspondingly more members. It may however be noted that a big village with less number of clans may have more members according to the requirements for the execution of various hangva’s functions.

Mention may be made here that only the married male members are eligible to represent in the hangva as marriage is considered to be the sign of maturity. Women are excluded from political life and thus have no membership in the village council. Though women are not given the right to represent in the hangva they are not debarred from the Assembly and their wisdom and knowledge are not totally ignored. Cases may be very rare but it is not nonexistent. There are instances of women taking part in the village affairs. Oral tradition speaks of one Harkhonla of Marem village. Harkhonla was Honsan’s widow of Marem Village. She was known for her wisdom in the village and among the neighbouring villages. Shatsang 6 said that in the assembly of the Awunga and hangva in all matters, great and small, Horkhonla was present, and her words of wisdom were always accepted. No discussions would proceed in her absence. There were incidences where proceedings of a meeting of the neighbouring villages to sole disputes could not be carried out because Harkhonla was absent. Harkhonla led the
villagers in defense against the raid carried out by the neighbouring villages. Another woman being Seikhangla (wife of a chief) of Thawai village. She was wise and was an excellent administrator. She executed many a responsibility of a chief, along with the members of the village council on her husband’s behalf. She went about the neighbouring villages along with the councilors wherever her interference in settling a matter or a case was required. The hangva were not against her leadership.

Like most Naga tribes, Tangkhul society is highly democratic in their functioning of the village council. Free and cordial discussion takes place in the council meetings concerning common matters under consideration and every representative in it has the right of free expression. No decision was thrust on the villagers by force. The community spirit inspired in them the feelings of loyalty and solidarity.

The functional administration by the hangva, which is based on tradition and conventions are orally transmitted from generation to generation. The council, in fact, bound the people in various social and cultural activities within the village jurisdiction thus maintaining village identity and solidarity. All sorts of disputes among the villagers are settled by the hangva. Thus the functions of the hangva could broadly be divided into Executive, Administrative and Judicial though there is no distinct separation of the powers. The highest power of the village rests in the hands of the hangva. They formulate policies of the village during war and in peace. Besides, they are the custodians of the laws of the village. They not only execute and administer the laws but also perform the roles of judges in the court of law.
Disputes of any nature within the village are settled by the elders of the disputing parties. If they could not settle the cases the matter might be referred to the hangva whose decision is final in the village itself. But disputes between two villages, if the disputing village elders could not settle the problem the matter might be referred to the Long-phang (Range Council) or to the Longrei or Tangkhul Long (The Apex Council/body) which is the highest body of the Tangkhuls, for its final decision. In the warring days, the representatives of the Long-phang would try their best to bring the disputing parties to a compromising point. But if the parties involved refused to comply with the proposal they might have a pitch battle and the representatives of the Long would be present there as witnesses.

When both the warring parties could not come to terms, it was the Pukreila who intervened. ‘Pukreila’ or the ‘neutral lady’ is one who got married with a man from outside her own village. There are two theories regarding the meaning of the word pukreila. One theory is that the word Pukreila comes from the word Phakhareila where pha mean body, kharei mean great and la is a suffix used in a name to indicate the sex. Thus, Phakhareila means a “lady of greatness”. To support this, it was argued that because of her intervening capacity in times of war, where no one dared to move about, she was considered great. Thus, the title Phakhareila was given only to the woman who mediated in a war between two villages. Secondly, some are of the opinion that Pukreila is a term for a woman who got married to a man outside her village. She may or may not practically intervene in a war but by virtue of her marriage she becomes Pukreila and that in times of war between her husband’s village and her brother’s
village all the *Pukreilas* of the two villages are obliged to intervene and bring an end to their enmity. The *Pukreilas* of these two villages are those women from the Y village who got married to men from the X village and those women from the X village got married to the men from the Y village. They become *Pukreilas* only in between her husband’s village and her brother’s village. And her neutrality is recognized only in between these two villages. This argument thus asserts that though the days of head hunting and war are well passed every modern Tangkhul woman who is married with a man outside her village is still a *Pukreila* in between her husband’s village and her brother’s village.⁸

From the above discussion we can draw a conclusion that women acted as mediators in settling disputes which defied solution, resulting in wars between the disputing villages before the organisation at the tribal level came into existent. The origin of the establishment of the earlier form of *Long* is obscure as there were no written documents amongst this people prior to the arrival of the British, as late as 1896. However, oral tradition points to the existence of Hungpung Long which was a collection of a number of villages led by Hungpung village. The existence of the *Long* before the arrival of the British was evident from Hodson’s writing:⁹

From the unanimous evidence of our authorities for the period immediately and approximately proceeding British rule in Manipur, it is clear that the tribes in this area were in a state of constant hostility, but it is notable that there is no evidence of any tribal organization or of combination except among the
Luhupas or Tangkhul who sent contingents from subject villages at the behest of the dominant village.

Thus, it is clear that there was a tribal organization to maintain peace even in the days of head hunting. Horam referred to three councils in his work *Social and Cultural Life of Nagas*; the Tangkhul Nagas. He wrote:

Though each village has its fixed boundaries and administrative set-up, there were three Range Councils or Longs one for each Range for the entire Tangkhul tribes: (1) Kasomkong Long, (2) Shongva Long, and (3) Vārā Long.

The leading villages of Kasomkong Long were Hunphun (now known as Ukhrul), Faring Ato, Ngainga, Talla (Talloi), Shongron (Somdal), and Phadang. Those of Shongva Long were Hunphun, Faring Azeshi, Phungcham, Longpi Kachui, Longpi Hirei, Lunghar, Shirui, and Langdang Phunghon. Vārā Long was led by Hunphun, Langdang Phunghar, Luithar, Khangkhui Phunghar, Khangkhui Phunghon, Lungshong, and Humpum Vashinao.

He went on to say that “the three erstwhile enjoyed solid administrative powers. With frequent raids and attacks being the rule, intet-village disputes were numerous. Some of these were land disputes which occasioned enmity between villages for generations. The Longs were formed during such conditions and the wisest men served as its members. When the Long made a decision or when a joint meeting of the three Longs settled a dispute no village could refuse to abide by the decision or reopen the matter.”
Thus, it is obvious that the purpose of the Long was to maintain peace and security among the member villages.

Today there is only one Long for the entire tribe and it is called Tangkhul Naga Long. It had its beginning in the late 1920s. One Shangyang Shaiza of Hunphun village with the help of the early Christian leaders organized all the Awungas of the Tangkhul villages under the banner of ‘Tangkhul Union Long’. The main objective of the Long was to fight against the exploitation of the Tangkhuls by the Britishers. As it was difficult to fight against the exploiters individually, the people felt the need to have an organization at the tribal level. As a result the Tangkhul Union Long came into existence as an organization of the entire Tangkhul people. Later in 1947-48 the name was modified into Tangkhul Long. The nomenclature of the Long was further refined in 1960s as Tangkhul Naga Long as it is today. Today, Tangkhul Naga Long is in many respects a completely different entity from that envisaged by its founding members of the early ages. Many of its provisions are now interpreted very differently. The Tangkhul Naga Long has its functions quite different from the organizing principles of the past.

At present the whole Tangkhul area is divided into four divisions, i.e.i) Ato Longphang where ato means north, long means council and phang means branch (the meaning of longphang is the same in the following reference), which means northern branch council. Ato Longphang consists of 43 villages, 12 ii) Aze longphang – Aze means south i.e southern branch council consisting of 91 villages, 13 iii) Zingsho
Longphang – Zingsho means east i.e eastern branch council consisting of 64 villages and iv) Zingtun Longphang - western branch council consisting of 34 villages. All these four branch councils are expected to take care of their respective areas. As it was in early days of Long, matters which could not be settled in the village may be referred to the respective longphang, and further if the longphang is unable to settle the matter it may be referred to the Tangkhul Naga Long or Longrei (Long means council and rei means big/ high), which is the highest Council of the Tangkhuls.

The Longphang is represented by the representatives from all the member villages of that particular region. The number of representatives may differ from village to village according to the size of the villages. The representatives of the longphang may elect a Chairman, a Vice- Chairman, a Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, an Accountant and a Treasurer from among themselves. Along with these office bearers the council may select five persons who are knowledgeable about the customary laws to be the members of the Standing Committee (Executive Committee).

All the four longphang are the constituent units of the Longrei, besides the village councils of the Tangkhul villages. The Longrei has executive committee consisting of President, Vice- President, General Secretary, Two joint Secretaries, Accountant, Treasurer and two representatives each from all the four branch council. As has been observed in the village council, the apex organization of the Tangkhul does not have women in the executive committee. Women never represented in the organization in the history of the organization and it continues to be so even today. The Tangkhul
Shinaolong, the apex body of the women’s organization, in recent decade, has been bargaining hard for the representation of women in the Tangkhul Naga Long or Longrei.

As Tangkhul Naga Long is the only organization that covers the whole of the Tangkhul tribe, irrespective of sex and faith that looks after the affairs of the people on all matters it is said that this organization is purely a social and cultural organization. But, ‘in the making of Long, the village council, one of the smallest political unit of the state government, becomes one of the constituent units of the Tangkhul Long. Matters that could not be settled in village Hangvashim (village court), may be referred to the Long, (Article 26 clause IV) this indirectly made Long organization a part and parcel of political institution of the land.” The Hangva under the Awunga is a traditional structure which has been encapsulated as a political unit of the state government as village council/ village authority. Even in this modern structure the representation of women is not there.

**Family and Kinship Institution**

Among the Tangkhuls, there is a clear distinction between kinship by descent and kinship by marriage, although kinship is reckoned and recognized on both lines. As a patrilineal society, the rule of descent is strictly based on the male line only. Thus, all children acquired membership in their father’s clan group which might be a localized group or might spread horizontally over many villages and could never acquire membership in their mother’s clan group. Thus, recruitment to any clan among the
Tangkhuls has been strictly based on descent through the father’s line only. The pattern of inheritance, rules of succession and residence closely followed the system of descent.

Among all clans, the rules of succession required that the eldest son should be the proper heir, although other male children also had a share in the family property. The eldest son of the family is saddled with full responsibility and obligation towards the family who would soon be the head of the family after his father. It is his responsibility to keep close ties with his father and also with other members of the family and clan. It is said that he is responsible for the marriage of his brothers and sisters after the death of his father or if the latter is too old to execute his duties. It is for this reason that the eldest son gets the parental house. Besides he also inherits the best/lion’s share of the ancestral property, be it war equipments/articles like spear, shield etc. or land i.e. homestead, paddy field, and so on and so forth.

The younger sons are expected to help the parents at home and in the field. But when they reach the marriageable age they marry and set up separate houses of their own as a branch family. The younger sons may inherit or may not inherit the property of the parental house depending upon how wealthy the parents are. But as said before, the eldest brother with the supervision of the father, if he is still alive must make a house for his younger brothers providing the necessary properties, both movable and immovable to establish a separate house of his own. If the elder brother fails to carry out this very responsibility of his, he is considered a deviator from the social norms leading to chaos in the family.
Apart from setting up separate houses for the younger brothers the eldest son is also to marry off the daughters in the family if the father is no more or is too old. A daughter has very little time to stay in the parental house for she marries and eventually leaves the parental house. She does not stay back in the parental house after marriage even if the family has no male issue. A daughter does not have any legal claim on the family property except a small share at the time of marriage which she carries with her in the form of gifts. Even in the absence of a male child, a daughter cannot claim, as a matter of right, the family properties, which in this case normally go to the nearest male relatives.

A girl’s greatest attributes were physical fitness, skill in the looms, competency in domestic works and ability to exert hard labour in agricultural work. A daughter is thus, like the mother, expected to be very busy before her marriage as performing the domestic works efficiently which is in turn considered to be the most important qualification of a girl. Apart from the domestic works she also learns the art of weaving and she weaves for the entire family. In addition she helps in jhumming land for cultivation, digging the paddy fields, transplanting paddy etc. The ability to perform hard work is the greatest single attribute a girl can use in the marriage market. While the society is tolerant of the free mixing of boys and girls, there is social degradation on premarital sex on the part of the girls which does not permit intimate relationship with boys.
A daughter is bestowed much love and affection by the members of the family. A daughter after her marriage is not totally cut off from the family though she may not be recognized as a member of her patri-clan and does not retain the name of the same, unlike the Mizos of Mizoram where she is recognized by her patri-clan name, even after marriage. She continues to share responsibility in her natal family even after the marriage. The sharing of the responsibility is clearly expressed at the time of house construction, death ceremony, wedding, etc. For instance, at the wedding of her brother, depending on her economic status/capability she contributes a buffalo, or she may jointly contribute along with her other sisters (if more daughters are married off). And if she is only an average she contributes a certain sum to meet her brother's marriage expenses. No matter what economic status she may hold she puts her share to show that she belonged to the family and still shares the responsibility with the family. The sharing of the sisters, who belong to other family by marriage, in the expense of the brother’s marriage and other such expenses is the measure of degree of her relationship with the family and is called Vak. All the daughters of a clan who are married to the other clans and have become the member of those clans, have the same responsibility to contribute in the expenses when any of the sons of the clan gets married and throws a lavish feast to the village, depending on their order of proximity, keeping in mind that the immediate sisters of the groom share the greater amount. The married daughters of the clan are called Yorla.

The Yorlas of a clan are not sent off empty handed after such festivities or ceremonies but each are given specific portions of meat to each of them. The
distribution and allocation of the different parts of the slaughtered animal is described in
the best manner by Ruivah: 19

Allocation of different parts of the slaughtered animal is made according to the
status of the person in the kin group. ...all the married women of the family will
come and collect their share of meat from the slaughtered animal, according to
their status in their parental home. ...the right hindleg is given to the eldest
married daughter or sister, the left hindleg to the second married daughter or
sister, the right foreleg to the third and the left foreleg to the fourth and so on.
In case the groom has only one married sister the remaining legs may go to the
nearest female relatives of the former’s lineage group.

Marriage is the outcome of youthful courtship followed by the approval of their
parents or arranged by the parents. Tangkhul society is free in matter of matrimonial
affairs. A boy or a girl is given freedom to choose his or her life’s partner without much
interference from the parents. However, the proposals made may be acceptable to both
the children and the parents. While choosing a partner he or she should bear in mind the
rules of clan exogamy. Breach of this strict rule will result in heavy punishment and
nullification of the courtship process. A cross-cousin marriage i.e. a boy marrying
father’s sister’s daughter (Vakhalat) and a boy marrying mother’s sister’s daughter or
parallel cousin (Chinaora) marriage is prohibited. The most preferred proposal is a
cross-cousin arrangement called Pam i.e marrying mother’s brother’s daughter
(mother’s brother’s daughter’s marriage). In the choice of spouse, economic class
structure plays an important role, apart from the personal attributes. Marriage alliance
usually takes place between the members of the same economic status. The rigidity of the economic status in choosing a daughter-in-law/son-in-law rings out loud in the well known love story of Shimreishang and Maitonphi where Shimreishang, the boy comes from a rich/wealthy family and Maitonphi stems from a little lower status. Their love affair was sternly objected by his family. Strong disapproval from Shimreishang’s parents resulted in marrying off of Maitonphi to another man from another village. The rigidity in economic status may vary from one family to the other. This is also explained in the same story i.e. the man who married Maitonphi is also from a high status family (said to be a chief/headman of the village).

When a boy reaches a marriageable age he discloses his wishes to the parents and if the proposal is acceptable to the parents they may entrust a go-between woman or a match-maker for further negotiation. On the other hand if a boy reaches marriageable age a female relative may take the initiative of match-making. If the proposal is unacceptable on either side discussions for further negotiations may be delayed. As and when the problem is resolved the formal proposal is made by the boy’s parents or employs a go-between known as Ngalahangsan to negotiate the proposed matrimonial alliance. The go-between woman, on knowing the mutual acceptability of the families, fixes the date with the girl’s family for engagement and then informs the date to the boy’s family.

The engagement ceremony takes place at the girl’s home. The close relatives and senior members of the bride’s clan are invited to witness the ceremony. The
groom’s father along with some of the close relatives proceeds to the girl’s house. In case of the absence (death) of the groom’s father, the eldest brother or one responsible male member of the family acts on behalf of the groom’s father. The bride’s family receives the guests warmly. The bride’s parents treat the guest with the best available food and drinks. The drink of rice beer that they provide on this day was called Neirakhamang in the olden days. It is on this day that the groom’s family declares what properties both moveable and immovable would be given to the couple after their marriage. The parents discuss in detail about the bride price or Manho and the presents/gifts to be brought by the bride on the day of their marriage. As a sign of confirming the engagement a hoe and one rupee is presented to the bride’s family by the groom’s family. Pressing the services of the Ngalahangsan in linking and cementing the relations between the two families is traditional. She stands as a witness to all the transactions and commitments made between the parties before the marriage and after the marriage as well. After the engagement ceremony the couple can work in each other’s field but the bride is never allowed to enter the groom’s house till marriage is solemnized.

Negotiations and engagement is followed by marriage. A considerable period of gap of two or three years is kept between the engagement and marriage for proper arrangement for the celebration. Sometimes the gap may even be longer depending on the capacity of the families for the preparation. During this period the boy and the girl remain extremely attentive to each other’s affairs.
Properly arranged marriage through the go-between or a match-maker is considered to be a regular one. Should a serious dispute arise in the family, the whole family, clan and relatives would be involved. In this way the new couple secures social security. Marriage by eloping is treated as immoral. Neither the parents nor relatives would interfere in times of controversy in such a kind of marriage.

The practice of patrilocal residence results in the loss of one member in the girl’s natal family. The loss of one member may be said to be compensated by the creation of wider kinship network. On marriage the girl also partially loses her identity by shedding her clan/sur-name and assuming her husband’s clan name. For the boy’s natal family, the marriage resulted in all-round gain, a gain of one extra labour force and wider network of relationships with the alliance group, at the cost of giving away bride price.

Monogamy is the highest and best conceivable practice among the Tangkhuls. Polygamy is also practiced among the Tangkhuls. As marriage involves heavy expenditure polygamy is very rare and so only the chief of the village, pipa or head of the clan and some rich people can afford to have more than one wife. Rareness of possessing more than one wife is not only due to economic factor but it is also one’s choice to have one wife, as polygyny is not looked upon with respect. In this regard, A.S.W. Shimray remarks “Polygamy is frowned by the society, and it is regarded as a reproach to peaceful existence of the family atmosphere…”21
There are various forms of marriage in the Tangkhul society. Marriage by payment of a quantum of money called *Manho* by the groom to the bride’s parents as mentioned above. In this form of marriage the amount to be paid is fixed with the help of the go-between woman called *Ngalahangsan*. As soon as the negotiation and engagement is over a long period of preparation begins for an elaborated marriage ceremony with much pomp. This form of marriage is ideal and generally practiced. There is a practice of marriage by exchange whereby a man’s sister marries his brother-in-law i.e his wife’s brother. It is an exchange of sister for a wife. This form of marriage is uncommon and is not encouraged. This type of marriage is called *Seingathat*. Sororate and levirate are not meted with discriminations. Regarding Sororate and levirate K.Ruivah informs that. 22

Though sororate is practiced, sororal polygyny is not practiced. It is expected that the sister of the wife may be married only when the later has died. Sororate is encouraged by both the families. However, it should be borne in mind that the deceased wife’s sister is not regarded as a substitute and also not compulsory. It depends on the wishes of the man and the woman. But to look after the fate of the motherless children and to extend their love and sympathy, both the members of the families persuade the concerned person to fill the vacant position…levirate, both junior as well as senior, is practiced in Tangkhul society. Senior levirate is, however, not favoured. In the levirate marriage no marriage ceremony is performed. It is practiced only to save the fate of the widow…, this system is not popular.
M.C. Goswami has termed these forms of marriages as the secondary form of marriage among the Tangkhuls. Another form of marriage that is in practice among the Tangkhuls is the marriage by elopement which in local term is Ngapuikathui. Elopement is the result of parents’ disapproval to the children’s choice of their marriage partners. It is the last resort for the lovers whose parents do not agree to the proposal. Being frustrated by the refusal of their parents the couple stick to their resolve not to separate for lack of parental consent. The unapproved marriage is regularized after performing a post-marriage feast called Vashumkasa.

Maturity is the deciding age for marriage in the Tangkhul society. When a boy or a girl is grown up and is able to work independently on his/her own accord he/she is assumed in his/her age group called Yarthot. Entering into the yarthot is considered a passport for marriage. Therefore, it is expected of every Tangkhul to pass this age to be eligible for marriage. Besides entering the Yarthot one has to also have mental maturity to be able to manage and maintain a family. If one fulfils these requirements one is expected to marry as and when one wills to do so. The general age group for marriage ranges from 16 to 20 years and above.

Divorce or Ngala kapang is of rare occurrence, and among the Tangkhuls is given only on the defaulter of either party. The practice of divorce although very rare is prevalent among the Tangkhuls. The agreements made at the time of engagement and the vows exchanged at the time of marriage are the binding force which keeps a couple together in spite of their differences. The defaulter of these agreements and vows is
inflicted with severe punishments. Occurrence of divorce is rare as it can cause inter-clan feud or even inter-village feud if the parties involved are from different villages. Parents and relatives take up the matter seriously and try to prevent it. But in spite of all their efforts and disapproval if it is ineffectual the guilty is punished.

The practice of asking for dissolution of marriage is available to both male and female in the Tangkhul society. The initiator of the divorce is to restore the marriage price and also forfeit the properties both moveable and immovable. If the husband initiates the divorce he forfeits everything, "... except the spear, shield dao and other male tools.,” including the house and the wife along with the children remains in the house and maintains the properties which he declared to be his own. This protects the interest of the helpless wife and at the same time dissuades the husband from seeking a divorce. On the other hand if divorce is initiated by the wife she has to forfeit everything, "...except her ‘ZEITHING’ and Tansop”, and lose her identity as well i.e. she ceases to be a member of the husband’s family and even the clan. Thus, as Brown has stated that divorce is allowed, but seldom resorted to, on account of the great expense.

A prayer for dissolution of marriage can be made by any of the parties to the marriage. There are a few grounds that lead to divorce. Among them the most important one is adultery. Adultery is condemned and looked down upon in the Tangkhul society. It is a punishable crime in the village court or hangashim. In case of anyone of the married spouses committing adultery comes to the notice of the aggrieved party,
immediate divorce is effected with due approval from the village council. No one can defy the customary penalty imposed on the guilty person by the hangva. Unfaithfulness from either of the party to the marriage can end up in divorce as this leads to quarrels and disharmony in the family.

Sometimes barrenness of the wife may result in a divorce as desire for an issue is strong among the Tangkhuls. Polygamy being accepted in the society, instead of resorting to divorce, some wives, acknowledging the need for issue, may allow the husband to marry a new wife. In such case barrenness may not result in divorce. A wife can ask for divorce when she realizes that her husband is impotent. Divorce based on such ground is very rare but is permissible.

Unsound mind or lunacy of either the husband or wife is also a cause for divorce. Besides if either of the party to the marriage is treated with cruelty, physical or mental, by the other, that would amount to a cause for divorce. But the marriage among the Tangkhul being the outcome of courtship there is hardly any room for such harshness leading to divorce.

Moral character being one of the attributes sought for at the time of marriage alliance, habitual theft of either party may cause the aggrieved party to seek for divorce.

Husband and wife in the course of their life may want to separate from each other for whatever reason understood by both the parties and thus may agree to part
their ways with mutual understanding. This is called Shatngathan. Such cases are very rare though it is permissible in the society.

Remarriage both of men and women after the dissolution of the earlier marriage is permissible in the Tangkhul society. Remarriage of a widow and widower also is permissible.

The heirship of a childless couple is automatically devolved on the nearest relative of the couple as such they do not feel the necessity of adopting a child. Besides, it is the responsibility of the nearest of kins to take care of the childless couple during their infirmity and in their old age. Therefore, adoption or Ruikakhui is not widely practiced in the Tangkhul society. Though adoption is rare it is not totally absent. There are two theories of adoption. The first is that prior permission or consent of the nearest relative must be obtained before the adoption takes place for the recognition of the adopted child as rightful child of the adoptive parents. Formal recognition by the nearest kinsmen empowers the adopted child to inherit the landed property of the adoptive parents though the ancestral property/land may be retained by the former. Besides, if the adopted child is from outside the village a general declaration called Raivao (declaration of adaptation) has to be made by the adoptive father through the hangva by paying Raivao fee. The hangva would then make a general announcement to all the villagers that the adopted child would be a member of the village from the date of such announcement and no one would be allowed to call the adopted child a “stranger or Mikhamang”. On the other hand the second theory believes that there is no such
prescribed regular procedure for effecting an adoption. An illegitimate child is, however, to be adopted to a particular clan in order to establish his identity for all social rights, duties and obligations.

However, whenever an adoption takes place in a family, the adopted son must strictly follow the normal regulations of the adopting clan and he becomes a member of the clan which his adoptive parents belong to. Accordingly, the adopted son cannot marry anyone who belongs to the adoptive parent’s clan.

**Religious Institution**

**Religious Beliefs, Practices and Status of Women**

The religion of the Nagas before the advent of the British in the Naga Hills is labeled ‘Animism’. Y.L. Shimmi \(^9\) writes “Sir James Frazer, somewhere in “The Golden Bough”, lays down that “when definite deities with specific names and function are recognized the Animist has become a Polytheist and the term Animism is no longer applicable”. W.H. Furness in *The Ethnography of the Nagas of Eastern Assam* writes that: \(^{30}\)

Throughout the different tribes I was able to trace a belief in one powerful god, and several lesser gods of the harvest, and many revengeful demons. The chief god appears to be the protector of mankind, and to him sacrifices and offerings of grains and fruit must be made that he may avert or alleviate the malignity of lesser gods who have been offended, and who seek revenge by afflicting man
with poor crops, sicknesses, sudden blindness and deafness. In one or two of
the tribes there is a belief in a god, sometimes a goddess, of the harvest, to
whom pigs and fowls must be sacrificed when the grain is planted.

S.H.M. Rizvi and Shibani Roy note the salient features of Naga religion prior
to advent of Christianity in Naga Hills as “According to experts in the study of religion
the Naga religion is described to be animistic which lays emphasis on the existence of
the deified manifestations of nature and propitiation of spirits both benevolent and
malevolent. The causes of discomfort, illness and troubles which befall the family and
the inhabitation are attributed to the action of the evil spirits. They hold that
commitments, omissions and occasional failures to appease them are the reasons for
incurring the displeasure of spirits. By divination they trace such sufferings, ailments
and misfortune to the influence of the evil spirits and latter are appeased to ensure good
health, and prosperity. The Nagas also believe in the presence of a supreme being called
Ukepenuopfu and other local terms used by each group in its own dialect. He is the
creator progenitor of race and all living beings. Curiously this Supreme Being has both
male and female attributes”. It is learnt from the said that Nagas had clear notion about
the supper natural power and the need to appease the same when displeased. “The fear
of punishment of God and the deterrent measures of the social bodies are the essential
factors which served as panacea for the ills of all societies, small or big. That is why the
Nagas were God fearing and extremely meticulous in religious rites.”
Before Christianity was introduced the Tangkhuls believed in the existence of one supreme being called Ameowo by some and Arah by others who was benevolent. His abode was above the clouds in heaven. As the God was good and did not harm them, the Tangkhuls did not feel necessary to propitiate him. Apart from the existence of the Supreme Being, the Tangkhuls believed in the existence of other supernatural beings (Kameo) that lived in the jungles, fields, precipice, rivers and streams, trees, rocks, etc. They believed that some of these supernatural beings were good while others were bad. However, the good spirits did not take much place in the Tangkhul system of belief decidedly as a result of the constant anxiety and fear created by the belief in the evil spirits which tormented them. Thus, there was a broad division between the God of heaven, and the other spirits of the world.

The Tangkhuls' believed that the evil spirits harm them constantly. It was for that reason they often made offerings of animals and fowls to propitiate them. As much as the daily activities of the Tangkhuls had been in the domain of the evil spirits such as in the jhum fields, hunting in the jungles, fishing in the streams, their daily life was filled with constant fear of the evil spirits. They believed that any intrusion to the abodes of the evil spirits would cause illness to the intruders. As such, any illness was believed to have been caused by the evil spirits demanding sacrifices of various natures; the actual sacrificial offering required for any illness was known only by the priests and the physicians or Khunong, who were considered to have telepathic contact with the evil spirits. The priest/physician first diagnosed the illness and then he was able to tell which particular spirit caused the illness and the particular type of sacrificial offerings.
required. Since each type of evil spirit demanded a particular type of sacrificial offerings, as there were different kinds of evil spirits causing different types of illness, there were equal number of sacrifices, the details of which were known only by the priests or the physician. The spirit of the victim (sacrificial offering) slain was supposed to propitiate the evil spirit; and almost in all cases, the remains of the victim were partaken by the priests and members of the subject’s family barring women. The sacrificial materials, the tools and portions of the victim’s flesh set aside to represent the victim’s spirit became sacred, (it is not clear if this can be called sacred) not to be touched, soon after the priest had completed the rituals of sacrifice.

The communal observances of the Tangkhuls round the year and their religious rites were connected with their principal economic activities and agricultural undertakings. Accordingly, the spirits (*Kameo*) or the gods and goddesses to whom the Tangkhuls made offerings, sacrifices and invocations may broadly be divided into three:

a) *Phunghui Philava*

b) *Shimlui Kameo* and

c) *Kokto.*

a) *Phunghui Philava* - ‘*Phunghui*’ was considered to be female and it was a common name for spirit of harvest/crop and ‘*Philava*’ means princess. *Phunghui* was believed to have long hair sweeping the ground. It was believed that when *Phunghui* strolls by, that particular side of the field will have a bountiful harvest that year. Riches or bountiful
harvest (as agriculture is the mainstay of the people, good harvest meant prosperity) was believed to be possessed only by female spirit. It was, therefore, that the Tangkhuls made sacrifices and offerings to Phunghui to ask for a good harvest (Mawon). There were many phunghuis like Kazing (Heaven) Philava, Ngalei (Earth) Philava, Shim (House) Philava, Lui (Field) Philava and so on and so forth, every place had its own philava. There was no count as to how many Phunghui Philavas were in existence but the Tangkhuls mostly invoke the blessings of Kazing Philava and Ngalei Philava.

Phunghui was appeased at different times, occasions and events like Luira, Ma Khaling (Lui Kashom), Mangkhap, Harra Khayang, Mawon Kazai, Dharkashat, Ma kahat, Rakhong kakhon, Chum kaphut, Chumsin Sakhami, Zingkan khamui Sakhami, Mawon Khamui Kasa etc.

Luira was the first and one of the greatest agricultural festivals of the year among the Tangkhuls. Luira falls in the month of Marun (Lunar Calendar of Tangkhul) February and March and the period of the festival spreads for more than ten days. It was the time for merry-making, eating, singing, traditional pageantry, dancing, wrestling and rope-pulling.

In the past, to set open the feast, the village chief and his wife would go to sow seeds in the field. They would sprinkle the blood of a fowl on the paddy grains and pour out some wine in manner of offerings to the spirit (Kameo). The ceremonial sowing of the seed was called Shimlui kathui. Nobody could sow seed or plant anything before the chief and his wife had performed the ritual lest the doer attracted bad luck or a poor
harvest for the whole village in that year and thereby the fear of famine. With utmost care the chief and the village priest along with the village councilors read the signs of the season and decided upon the date for the festival. Sowing the seeds in time ensured a good year ahead. Here is a folk song that tells about the villagers requesting the chief to set off sowing seed before it was too late:  

1  O kazing kum ura  O Wungnaowo  
O Year season has dawn, O Royal Highness  

Luithuimi haolo  
Initiate seed sowing  

Wungnaowo,  Luithui, O mihaolo.  
Royal Highness,  O initiate seed sowing.  

2  O Luithuimi haolo O rashamthei  
Initiate seed sowing  O paddy cropping  

O Rashamthei  O Rashamthei  
O paddy gropping,  O paddy cropping  

Manao pai shina  
Lest it be late.  

3  O Mamanao mara O Wungnaowo  
O it will not be late O Royal Highness  

70
Luithui mashunga
Its been timely sown (rightly timed)

Wungnaowo Luithui O mashunga
Royal Highness O it’s been timely sown.

4 O Luithui mashunga O Rashamthei
O It’s been timely sown, O Paddy cropping

Phungla makanya
Rich harvest it was (So rich that lots were left over)

Rashamthei, phungla O makanya
Paddy crop O rich harvest it was.

Free translation of the foregoing

1 O right season has down, o your highness
Commence seed sowing
Your highness, O commence seed sowing.

2 O commence seed sowing, O paddy crops
Lest it be too late
Paddy crops, O lest it be too late

3 O it will not be late, O your highness
It's been timely sown,
Your Highness O it's been timely sown.

O it's been timely sown, O paddy grains
Can't carry all home
Paddy grains, O can't carry all home.

After the chief and his wife had done Shimlui kathui ceremony then on the next day the villagers were allowed to sow or plant in their respective fields followed by the chief announcing of the date of the festival. On the appointed day some animals were killed and the village chief did all the sacrificial ceremonies which were followed by every household on the very next day.

The village gate remained closed and no one was allowed to enter the village until the third day. On the third day they (villagers) would welcome the guest from different villages. This was the day when the guests from other villages, friends and relatives were entertained. Besides merry-making, singing and eating there was village fair where buying and selling would take place through barter system. The following day all the villagers would leave the village. After that the whole village observed a day of rest from the normal work.

After the festival, planting of the paddy in the jhum land began, and that was called Ma Khaling where Ma means paddy and khaling means planting. Side by side with the planting of the paddy the other crops that were grown at the same season were also planted. By the time the jhum plantations were over the seedling for the terraced
plantations were almost ready and therefore there was no time to waste but get into the terraced field to prepare for the seedlings. In a place where they practiced only jhum transplantation this was not required. Transplanting of the paddy saplings from seed bed to the terraced field is called Lui kashom. Like in Luikathui, the chief's family had to begin the transplantation in the village. In places where there was only jhum cultivation the owner of the area, for cultivation, for that year may be the first one to plant or sow the first paddy grains (the forest was cleared and burnt for cultivation only for a year and a virgin jungle was cleared like wise in the following year. They might cultivate the once cultivated area after a period of 14-15 years only.). It was believed that if any other family, other than the chief's family, started rice plantation, the crop would be infested by insects, pests etc. resulting in poor harvest and thereby famine. It was for this reason that they observed it in a very strict manner.

When all the work in the terraced field was over, it was time for them to take rest and relax and feast again to mark the end of sowing and planting of the year. This festival which is still being observed after the completion of transplantation of paddy is called Mangkhap. It is observed during the month of July depending upon the timing of the transplantation due to early or late Monsoon. Mangkhap means, Mang= drink, kup= finish/over, that is to say that all the festivities and celebrations of the year are done and the feastings come to an end with ‘this’ and so “Mangkhap”. Every family, rich or poor, according to their capacity, killed their domestic animals during this festival.
In the past, before the actual celebration began at home, the village priest would go to the paddy field and perform the sacrificial rituals. The next day the head of the family of every household would go to their respective fields and fix up feathers of a fowl in every field. As they fixed up the feathers they would invoke the spirit that the crops planted would be plentiful and that it might not go in vain. After that, began the celebration by inviting their relatives, friends and neighbours and sharing with them the best available drinks and meals. It was during this festival that the married daughters got presents from their parents and also from their brothers who were married and had established their own families.

The Phunghui Philava was invoked at the time of reading the omens for the agricultural engagements. Harra Khayang was one of such time of observing omens for the selection of the location of jhum cultivation for the running year where Harra means ‘egg’ and khayang means ‘to see or to observe’. This ritual was performed either by the chief of the village or the owner of the area in which the jhumming was to be carried out. This ceremony was performed in the intended area for jhum.

The performer would break the egg slightly and put it on the hot ashes (Phunhai meisum) prepared for the purpose. The manner in which the egg boiled, and spilling of its content indicated whether the omen was good or bad, whether the village will face epidemic or war etc. If the omen indicated unfavourable that site/ area was not chosen for jhumming that year. But on the other hand, if the omen indicated well, the performer would announce it to the villagers. Once the announcement of the site for
cultivation was made each family would go and choose their own desirable site and size and then clearing and burning of the forest was done in due time. In return for performing the ritual all the villagers, at the time of harvest gave some share of their produce. The produce might be paddy, millet, corn/maize, etc.

When all the work in the paddy field was done and when the paddy is almost ready for harvest a day of rest or rather a day of village wide taboo was observed. The observation of this taboo was called Mawonzai. The village chief fixed the date for the festival and every head of the family in the village performed the ceremony- sacrificing meat and wine to the spirit, invoking the spirit to protect the crops from the storm, insects, pests and from any other danger and thereby ensuring a successful harvest during that year. In the real sense of the term, Mawonzai festival was not a celebration of an occasion. It was rather a time of prayer and sacrifices to Ameowo. Since this season happened to be the best available leisure time, people of different age groups organize picnics in different places.

Dharkashat: Dharshat, another festival was observed when the crop was ripe and was ready for harvest, before the actual gathering. The head of every family in the village would go to the field and cut the ears of the grain and wrap it with a cloth. The performer was not supposed to talk to anyone on his way to field and back, until he reached home fearing that if he spoke the good luck would go away from the family. The paddy that he brought was then dried, husked and prepared for the family. As it is the day to eat the first harvest every family kills their domestic animals and fowls. The
head of the family performed the necessary rituals with some meat and wine after which the members of the family partake the cooked rice with the meat. It was believed that if any outsider happened to partake in the first meal it was mandatory for him/her to join the family on the reaping day as well. The belief that the good fortune of the family will be taken away by the outsider who had joined the first meal if he failed to join them on the day of harvest was strong. Failure to join on the reaping day was taken as an insult (*Sharkakharag*) to the family. Though every head of the family performed the ritual it was the normal practice, to let the chief of the village perform the ritual first.

When the paddy field is ready for harvest everybody prepares themselves by keeping ready their implements and cleaning up the granaries. In the past, observing the condition of the paddy was a must in which members of each clan gathered themselves and discussed the order in which harvesting had to be carried out. They chalked out the details beginning with the one whose field was most ripened.

In the days of yore, prior to the appointed day of reaping as fixed by the clan members the head of the family (of whose field to be reaped) would go to the field to make a sacrifice to the spirit either with an egg or with a fowl. He would invoke the spirit of harvest to keep ready, gathering grains from every comer of the field for the harvest. On the eve of the harvest a ritual was performed by killing a domestic animal. No one was permitted to enter the house except the members of the family. 37 Strict silence was maintained in the house through the night, even while moving the stools and other things.
At the dawn the family would prepare the required mid-day meal and the couple (the head of the family and his wife) would go to the field. The husband then would perform some ritual in the courtyard of the hut and the duo would start reaping the paddy sheaves before the arrival of the clan members. Other participant joined them for the day long work. While some reaped the sheaves others carried the same to a place (ranpum) where they gathered for thrashing. As the reaping and carrying of the sheaves went on, the thrashing also would go hand in hand. When all the grains were gathered the chaff was then winnowed and was ready for the barn. The food which was prepared and brought from home was served when all was set to take the grains to granary. It was taboo for anyone to enter the house before anyone of the participant of the reaping entered the house. Therefore, they would fix a branch of a tree or leaves at the entrance to keep people from stepping in.

After the food, everyone would collect their load according to their capacity to take it to the owner’s barn. It was the housewife who entered the granary first. She would invoke (pemtha pemtailo) the spirit to fill up the granary and put down the load she carried. After that every one would bring in their load and she gathered all the grains properly.

A day of rest or village-wide taboo was observed after the harvest (Ma-kahat) just before the Chumphha festival (see below). This day was called Nakao Kasa. On this day everyone would take leave from their daily normal work and it was taboo to touch the farming implements as well. After observing a day’s taboo the villagers would clean
their village ponds area-wise. This was known as *Sova Sakhamatha/ Raso Sakhamatha* or *Rakhong Kakhon* where *Rakhong* means pond and *kakhon* means to clean, i.e. cleaning of pond.

Cleaning of the village pond was not done at any time. It was done only after observing the said taboo. Every family was expected to join in the cleaning of the pond failing which may be banned from drawing water from the pond. Village pond was cleaned because the sacrificial new rice was to be cooked with the new water; old water from the pond was taken out and the spring would fill the pond with fresh water. On this day the villagers cleaned the whole village and its surroundings as well which was called *Veivakakhaning*. On that day all the husbands would go to field to collect a pair of crabs- a male and a female along with the mud heap dug out by the crabs and also an herb called *Phungfu* which the wives used for performing rituals.

The grain that was gathered in the granary could not be taken out and consumed before conducting the opening ceremony or the ritual of the granary. So the word *Chum* means granary and *kaphut* means to open. *Chumph*a was a festival of eating new rice. It was celebrated in the end part of November or *Ngaphei* in local term. This festival was celebrated for three consecutive days. The village chief along with the members of Village Council/ Village Authority fixed the date for the festival. They would assess the progress of the harvest of the villagers and fix the day which was known as *Changkui Kakap*.
There are two versions regarding the name of the festival. One version that was common to Western part of Tangkhuls called the festival as *Chumphu*. ‘Chum’ means barn and ‘Phu’ means sacrifice. *Chumphu* simply means sacrificing in the barn. Another version that was common to the Raphhei holds that the name of the festival was *Chumphut*. ‘Chum’ means barn and ‘phut’ means opening. It was the celebration of opening the barn that was filled with new grains.38

*Chumpha* was the festival of woman. *Chumpha* was the only festival in which the ceremonies were performed by the women folk. She/ the mother of the family, was the Priestess of the festival.

It was taboo for the man to see the ritual performed by the wife. On the day of the festival, after the village and the ponds were cleaned, by evening all the male members of the family would leave their house. They kept their weapons like axe, dao, spear, trap etc outside the house and also slept outside the house (jungle or atleast in the court yard of the house). Some said that they slept outside the village gate39 for the fear that they might see their wives perform the ritual. The wife/ mother than would take the crabs, break the limbs and placing them facing each other covered the crabs and their limbs with the wet mud that was brought. She would then climb the biggest granary and burry the lump in the paddy. It was believed that as the crabs dig hole under the ground that heap up mud, they put the crab in their barn wishing that their paddy might also heap up.40 The mother would then invoke the Spirit that her grains might never be over as that of so and so, mentioning the name of one who has plenty of grain in the village.
She would also call upon the spirit to come in, that her family should never fall short of food grains. After the mother had buried the crabs in the paddy she would get down and taking the choicest cooked meat and the best wine she would pour it out near the barn/ chum and would chant that the grain would not be out of stock. She continued this ritual/ sacrifice till dawn which was called Chum Zangkhangawor. With the completion of the offerings she would close the lid of all the barns believing, if they don’t close it the Mawon (spirit) may go away from her barn. Then she takes out a bushel of paddy from the biggest barn and would dry it in the oven. The dried paddy was than pounded and cooked with the water drawn from the pond. A woman of modest character would first collect the water from the pond on the day of Chumpha and the villagers would draw after she finished drawing. It was with this fresh water the first rice was cooked.

*Chumsin Sakhami*: A daughter-in-law who had just come to the family was not permitted to take out paddy from granary. Chumpha festival was also considered as a time of handing over the responsibility of mother to the newly married daughter-in-law of the family by the mother-in-law. This was called Chumsin Sakhami.\textsuperscript{41} In some cases if the family was well to do, a ceremony was performed to hand over the charge of the chum. Normally this ceremony was performed a few days before the Chumpha festival. For the ceremony a pig of about a year old and a cow/ bull were killed to feast with the neighbours. The animals killed for the ceremony was called Chumsinsa.

When there was severe drought people would invoke the spirit of heaven to shower rain. To please the spirit the villagers baked bread known as Zingkan Khamui
Sakhami where zingkan means drought, khamui means bread and sakhami means to make. Every household, in the name of the female members, would bake bread about fifty numbers and offer them to the spirit. This festival was observed so that the spirit might shower rain and that the crops placed in the ground might not dry out for short of water.

Mawon Khamui Kasa: If any of the village physician happened to see in a dream that the crops planted for the year would not ripen and that the village would have famine then he/she would inform the chief about the dream. The chief would then inform the village announcer/crier to announce to the villagers that the village community would observe a spirit’s bread baking day. Every household, in the name of the female members, would bake bread, five each, and offer them to the spirit invoking her that they might have good harvest the current year. There was no specific time to observe this festival nor was it observed every year. It was observed only when any of the village physicians had had a dream.

b). Shimlui Kameo: As discussed above, every village had their own kameos (spirits), and every household, field, jungle, sea, stone, practically every place had spirit of its own. In general the spirits of the said are called Shimlui Kameo where shim means house, lui means field and kameo means spirit. Though the Tangkhuls believed in the existence of one Supreme God they did not feel the necessity to worship or make sacrifices directly to Him. They believe that wherever there was man there was also a spirit and thus make sacrifices to the spirit for its help and protection. These spirits were
appeased at different times round the year like Shim kasa, Maran Kasa, Manei, Kashong Kahao, Kaphani, Meishimi, Mei Phani, Lamkhavao, Shar Kasa, Harkhari Kharan, Har Katun, Nao katun, Khana kasa, Mingpho Kasang, Suikaham, Sharana sei rungkaphok, Khanong kasa, kappa kasa, etc.

Construction of a house is known as Shimkasa. There were two types of houses: i) Lenchengshim and ii) Ngashishim. Only the royalties and the rich could afford to construct a Lenchenshim as it involved a huge expenditure. A man could not simply construct a Lengcheng house because he was rich. He had to observe various omens from the nature and also take omens from dreams. After observing all these and only if the omens were favourable then he could announce that he would be constructing a house. Construction of Lengchen house required a lot of ritual performance which was performed by the village priest.

Construction of Ngashishim involved lesser expenditure as compared to that of Lenchengshim as it required only a pig to be killed to feed the people who helped in constructing the same.

Whichever type of house a man may construct he was always helped by the relatives and also the whole village community. On completion of the construction the close relatives gather together to install the hearth (consisting of three stones). On installing the new hearth all the old fires were put off and a new fire was kindled with pieces of wood (frictional fire-making) and killing either a fowl or a pig a ceremony was performed.
The Tangkhul Nagas were known for their generosity of heart. The rich or the more prosperous people did not hoard their wealth. They would share their surplus to the whole village. This sharing was done by way of throwing feast – *Maran Kasal* Feast of Merit (redistribution of wealth). In this feast male members of the family and their relatives took an active part. For all those who took part in the arrangements of the feast certain taboos were to be observed involving restraining conjugal relationships with their wives. This taboo was observed more strictly by the man who intended to perform *Maran*. He not only abstain conjugal relationship but also perform some rites and divinations with the village priest to observe the omen and consult the spirit. He would make public declaration of his intent only when the omens and consultation of the spirit were positive. Once the declaration was made, then come the months long preparation of food, drinks and meat was done. Though the actual feast began only with the felling of the tree, a month long preparation was done- preparation of the rice beer/ wine and all sorts of drinks. Women took active role in brewing the drinks.

On the day of the *Maran* a huge selected tree (or stone), carefully chosen for the purpose was felled. (This tree was usually in “Y” shape, carved into designs and was erected in front of the house called *Tarung*) After the felling and shaping the post it was usually tied into ropes to be carried home. Sometimes it took days and weeks to bring the post or the stone home as often the post was from a far distant forest. If anything was needed from home then a child was sent, for it was taboo for a man to go home. Then the able male populations of the village would drag it home. In all these activities of felling the tree, carving and dragging nobody could get injured in the process. If
anyone happened to get so it was a belief that someone in the congregation had defiled the ceremony. This defilation is called “Sharkakkha” or “Sharkasho”.

After the post was dragged home then the village priest would take the blood of the animals sacrificed and would smear to the post and then it was erected in front of the house of the donor. In this ceremony the king or the Awunga of the village was invited and offered the prominent seat and served the best choice of meat and wine. The entire population of the village was also invited for the feast.

All these while women folk of the village actively participated with much enthusiasm. They were the ones who supplied food and drinks to the men folk in the course of dragging until it was brought home. During the dragging of the post much noise was made in rhythm called “Khamahon”. It was taboo for women to participate in rhythmic cry of the men folk in such occasion.

After the feast was ended the remains of the animals killed, head, was cooked for the women folk known as Pareikom. They would drink the Khorkhan, dregs of the drinks.

A festival, Kashong kahao was observed to protect the crops from insects and pests, soon after the plantation was over. This festival was observed only if the cultivation was completed in time i.e. before the end of July and not if otherwise. The village priest performed the ceremony outside the village gate by sacrificing a fowl to the deity of fruitfulness who grew and protected the crops from any danger. After the
ceremony of the priest a young man who was physically, mentally and morally good was chosen to cut down a tree by a single stroke. The omen for the harvest of the year was taken from this felling of the tree. If the young man felled the tree well, it was considered to be good omen and if he could not fell by a single stroke it was considered to be bad omen. Thus a very careful selection was made while selecting the young man to fell the ceremonial tree.

*Kaphani* is another occasion where *Shimlui kameo* was remembered. *Kaphani* was not a festival. It was announced all of a sudden by the village crier with the consent of the village headman that no one should go to field to work or carry out their normal work in the field the following day. This announcement and observation of genna took place when someone from the village was killed, when someone got killed falling from a tree, when someone committed suicide in the village etc. This genna was observed that such an incident should not happen in the village thereafter.

The village priest would make a sacrifice outside the village gate when fire breaks out in the village and burned down houses, be it by mistake, out of jealousy or out of enmity, etc. This act of sacrifice for smothering the fire was known as *Meishimi*. The sacrifice to the deity was worth a pig and a vessel of wine (untapped) shelled out either by the victim (whose house is burned) or the one who set the fire. It was a taboo to punish or impose fine on the culprit in such an event or accident.

On hearing the news of fire in other village the neighbouring villages observe a day’s genna in their villages and this is known as *Mei Phani*. On the day of genna no
one would go out of the village to work in the field, every household would throw water mosses on their rooftops and the walls and some would tie fresh plantain stems on the walls praying to the deity of the house to keep it cool and moist.

When someone became ill believing it to be caused by the Kameo of a place, the village priest would take two fowls and would make a sacrifice at the village gate. He would perform the ceremony with one fowl and he would leave the other alive, invoking the kameo to set free, the bound soul/spirit of the person who is sick. This was called Lamkhavao.

Shar kasa was another type of sacrifices and offerings. When someone acquired a new field, he would make sacrifices worth a dog or a pig in order to please the new spirit. Sometimes even if the field was an old one but produced a poor harvest then the owner would make a sacrifice to please the spirit. Besides, if someone from the family of the owner of the field had had a bad dream and someone felt ill very often, then the owner would request the village priest to appease the spirit by making sacrifices worth a buffalo or a pig.

When there is a rumour about an epidemic the village priest would go to the village gate and tie the intestine (Harkhari kharan) of a fowl from one end of the gate post to the other end. This was done so that the kameo would not bring in the epidemic to the village.
It was taboo to enter a house where chicks were hatched from the eggs until an invocation was done. Usually the entrance of the house was blocked with a stick so that people would know entrance to the house was forbidden. Once the chicks were hatched, a child of a good health and good structure was called home to make an invocation so that the chicks might be as fruitful as the sparrows and so on. This was called Har Katun. The child would then perform it, holding a herb called hanchang in the hand and sprinkling water around. The child would then keep the leaves in the basket where chicks were contained.

Nao Katun: If a male child was born in a family, a boy was called to make the invocations and if a female child was born a girl was invited for the invocation. A fowl was sacrificed and the sacrificial meat was put in the plate and the plate was swung six (6) times for a male child and five (5) times for a female child. After that on the sixth day a male child was named and on the fifth day a female child was named.

Ear piercing or Khana kasa was widely practiced among the Tangkhul Nagas. Only the rich could afford a pig or buffalo for ear piercing of his son and the ordinary families would do it with a fowl and sticky rice. Only an elderly priest would carry out the ear piercing and it was taboo for others to carry out the task. Ear piercing of a child was done with much care for defiling might result in tearing away of the ears. There were three reasons for ear piercing: i) That the person might live, ii) That he might hear (that he might be bright) and iii) to be able to deck with ornaments.
The manner of address was an important custom and tradition among the Tangkhuls and normally it indicates one’s social status within the clan and lineage. When all the elders of a lineage were dead and the nearest relative wanted to claim the name/ title (manner of address) he was required to kill a buffalo and throw a grand feast in the village making sacrifices to the deity which otherwise was not recognized and thus he could not claim the title.

The process for acquiring the new status is called Mingpho Kasang. Mingpho is a combination of two words where ‘ming’ means name and ‘pho’ means address and Kasang means to put. That is to say, to address someone by prefixing an address with his/ her name which shows his/her status in the lineage and also in the village for instance Luinam may be addressed Amei Luinam or Achui Luinam or Achei Luinam etc.

When a gossip or rumour of a person was spread, irrespective of the matter, it was considered bad and it was believed to affect the person adversely by way of ill health leading to a short life span. Therefore, a fowl was killed and the feather of it was put in a winnower which the priest winnowed, symbolizing the winnowing away of the negative effect of the rumour. This was called Suikaham. Suikaham is derived from two words where ‘sui’ means gossip (attached to someone particular) and ‘kaham’ means to winnow.

The death of a person, the Thisham, Maran kasal Feast of Merit and such other feasts and occasions were worth at least a buffalo or more. For any sacrificial buffalo
killed on those mentioned occasions the village priest was the first person to spear the animal and the others would join him. That was for a simple reason that the harassment of the living animal by the living men attracted the anger of the deity and that by the stroke of the priest the fury of the deity would befall on the priest. The opening of the ceremony by the priest was called *Sharana sei rungkaphok*. Numerous omens were observed while slaying the buffalo, in the manner of struggle before its death, manner of falling and lying on the ground, the direction of its head and so on.

The belief in spirit naturally gave rise to the belief in the existence of human spirits. The illness of the subject was due to the spirits keeping captive of the subject’s spirit for intrusion into the spirit’s abode, and only by releasing the human spirit from the clutches of the spirit by proper propitiation that the illness would subside. The belief also gave rise to the world after death which will be discussed below. There were no female priest but the physicians could be either male or female or both. It was believed that the spirit (kameo) was with them and inspired and directed them to give directives to the families of the sick to make sacrifices of animals like dog, pig, buffalo etc. according to the requirement. According to their faith, some experienced relief while others didn’t which they interpret it as “the kameo was determined to take away the soul/spirit of the sick”.

During head hunting raid and war there was always one person who was incharge of observing omens with the help of *kappa*. He would do it before going for the raid and during the raid. During such times all that he said was accepted without any
challenge. On the day he performed the ritual he would not permit anyone from leaving the village, he would stop the women folk from fetching water in the morning and also forbided them to touch and carry the winnower around. The whole village was genna on the day the omen was consulted. Everyone stayed inside the village and no one would go to the field or carry out their daily work.

c) Kokto: Tangkhuls believed in the existence of the other world or the life after death (kazeiram) and Kokto was the head in that world. All who died went to live in his presence. Kokto was known as the cruellest spirit they ever knew and therefore, at the event of death and during Kathi Kasham all the rituals were performed carefully with perfection and thoroughness. They fear that failure to carry out the rituals with perfection would attract the anger and displeasure of kokto. It was a belief that all that was gifted on the event of dead was taken to the other world or the world of the dead and when he (spirit of the deceased) came in the presence of kokto, presented him with the shawl meant for him. The top shawl was never torn as it was meant for Kokto. The shawls meant for the deceased were with tear on the edge because if it was torn kokto would not accept a torn shawl for himself. Kokto was appeased in different manners and occasions like, Kathi mahon, kathi kachifa, Chikhur Kharui, Thikhong Kharung, Wonra kasa, Wonyaithing kashun, Kathi kasham, Wonra khamathai, Chikhur khamathai, Kazei kazang, etc.

It was a tradition to dance on the death of a person (male) and this was called Kathi Mahon where Kathi means death and Mahon means dance. It was believed that
there was life after death, as lively and natural as the life on earth, carrying out all the activities. The notion of prestige, rich and poor continue to be felt in the life after death. It was for this reason that the living dedicate dance for the subject on the occasion that he might lead a prestigious life after he had gone to the land of the death. There were four types of Kathi Mahon, they were: i) On the death of any male dance was performed (Kathi mahon), ii) Zeipao Kasang, iii) Long Mahon, and iv) Thisham Mahon.

The burial of the rich were very expensive requiring four- five or even up to ten buffaloes while ordinary villager managed a cow or a pig. Kathi kachifa means the burial of the dead. Even if the deceased did not have one his nearest relation would bear the expenses for his burial. The animals were slain before the grave was dug. It was believed that all that was gifted on the occasion of death was taken along with him to the world of dead (Kazeiram). It was for this reason when one grew old he would prepare well (like domestic animals, clothes, etc.) all that he wanted to take with him when he would die.

Shortly after the death, the body was washed, dressed and was placed on a bed where friends and relatives would come with gifts of salt, chili etc., and number of songs were sung. When it was time for burial the body was dressed with head gear, if the deceased the was male, and also dance was perform after which a loud cry by someone saying ‘let this be the end’ followed by the crowd saying ‘hooh...huhih’, ‘o...o...o’ ‘hooh...aoh! hooh...huhih!’ which was somewhat like ‘Amen’. After that the corpse was placed in the tomb with all the gifts for the journey to Kazeiram. A male dog
and a spear were also placed if the deceased was male and if female a Zeithing (walking stick made of steel or iron) and a Tansop (a basket made of wild bamboo used by women when they go to field) were also placed in the tomb along with the body. All the clothes given to the deceased were torn at the edge except the one meant for Kokto. Before the corpse was actually placed in the grave an elderly person would descend into the grave with a pine torch, and twirling it round beseeches an ancestors of the dead to come and fetch the deceased on his way to “Kazeiram” saying ‘o... so and so is coming, (mentioning the name of the deceased) o... granny, grandpa and everyone come and welcome him/her.’ After that the corpse was taken inside the tomb and all the belongings of the deceased and then finally closed the tomb with stones and earth and a torch of pine would be burnt and placed on the tomb.

It was taboo that anyone would be in the house after the dead body was taken out for burial until every ritual was completed. With the corpse carrying out of the house the fire in the hearth was put out and the ashes cleared, and on entering, fresh fire was brought from another house near by. On returning to the house after the burial ceremony, a male member would lead home beating a tin to frighten away if there be any bad spirit lurking inside the house. On entering the house the family would look for any footprint on the ashes leveled to see if there were more bad lucks or deaths to be expected. If there were none it would mean a favourable sign.

The Tangkhuls had the belief that the dead people, long after they were buried and gone, longed to have the experience of the brightness of the world again. For this,
family graves were opened up after a considerably long gap (when the corpse was expected to have decomposed) on the occurrence of death, and the same was used for the other person. On opening the grave, the bones were collected in a shawl (either Changkhom or Luirim) and the skull was washed with the best wine called Zamshei Vaitei. This was known as Chikhur kharui. The bones were put on one side of the grave along with a gourd of wine and gourd cup and some parcels of salt and chili as it was customary to send parcels to their ancestors and to their near ones on the occasion of death. When a great number of these bones were collected, and there was not sufficient room for a fresh corpse, they were taken out of the tomb; and when the fresh corpse had been buried and covered to the depth of a few feet, the bones were thrown in to fill up the grave.48

When someone died, his spirit would remain in the house until he was finally given a send off on the occasion of Thisham (feast for the dead held once every year). During the period, offerings would be made to the deceased at every meal in the plate he had used when he was alive and placed the plate on the deceased’s seat. This was called Thikhong Kharung. The deceased’s spirit was treated as if he was still alive. The food was then taken away when it was expected to have been consumed. The dogs would feast on it later.

When someone who was wealthy died, a platform or Wonra (a resting place) at a good viewing point was usually constructed in commemoration of him. It was constructed for the dead by the living that they might rest and have a good view of the
landscape/field when they move about. When such platform was built, at every harvest (for six years) every woman would pour (offer) out some share of their wine on their way back from field. This ritual was performed for the fear that the dead being in the form of spirit might harm the living, if he was not quenched.

The resting platforms constructed at the death of some great men were maintained well; weeding, cleaning etc. once in a year, consecutively for six years after which might be relaxed. A pig or a calf was killed for weeding the Womra for the first few years and they managed with a fowl for the remaining years.

After the harvest has been gathered in and all instruments in connection with the same had been put aside the Wonyaithing was erected. For the purpose the rich kill a cow, the rest manage with pigs and dogs and for those whose children had died, eggs were boiled. The village priest was called in for the performance of the rituals in individual homes that had had deaths that year. After the rituals were performed all friends who came forward to help in erecting the “Wonyaithing” were distributed meat and beer. They then erect the structure.

Chikhur Khamathai: The living never neglected their responsibility towards the dead, weeding of the grave yard or Chikhur khamathai was another such. The grave yard was never neglected totally. They kept weeding year after year at specific time of the year i.e. January. This weeding was carried out for three days which were also observed as festivals though no special significance was attached to it. The priest performed the ritual and made sacrifices with a fowl and rice beer.
Kathi Kasham: A common farewell was given to the spirits of the dead once in a year known as kathi Kasham. This was a very important festival for the dead celebrated during the month of January for a period of ten to twelve days. Rev. William Pettigrew and S. Kanrei had given detail elaborations on the festival. Among all the rituals the rituals performed during Thisham was observed with much care and rigidity. All that a man had amassed wealth during his life time was given to him when he died either on the day of death or at Thisham by means of killing the animals, performing dances (Performing dance on the occasion of dead was quite an expensive item. It was performed at the request of the deceased by his sister’s husband’s clan members. These dances were performed exclusively by the males. It was taboo for women to participate in dancing on such occasion.), clothing etc. Even if the deceased did not insist on taking everything of his wealth, it was the responsibility of the family not to send him empty handed. If the deceased was dissatisfied with the wealth he was sent with to Kazeiram, his spirit would inflict illness on the living. The swan song of the deceased was observed/ carried out with much care and honour.

There was a belief that if the deceased loved/fond of someone when alive, may continue so even after his death by making the person weak. This was called Kazei Kazang. When someone experienced that then a fortune teller known as “Khunong” was called upon to dialogue. The khunong would then make a sacrifice of a fowl and rice beer spreading a bamboo mat on the floor. He would lie flat on the mat with a fowl and would remain so for sometime, breathless (They say that he dies and along with him the fowl also dies). After about half an hour when the Khunong was about to come back to
live the fowl came back to live ahead of him and made some sound followed by the Khunong. His body being stiff he was helped with some massages to sit up, and then he would narrate the dialogue he had at Kazeiram. He would give the reason why the person in poor health was so, that the subject was enchained because he was loved much or that the deceased was not happy with him/her, etc. and now with his intervention being released.

d) Belief/ Omen:

Tangkhuls believed that man could not relate to gods face to face, because of which there were various ways of communication with gods. They believed that the gods and goddesses spoke to them through nature. They observed signs and symbols from the nature to decipher the will of the gods for them. Some of the most common ones were:

i) Kapa Khayang: Kapa is the chipped wild bamboo, out of which omens were observed and khayang means to see.

ii) Harkho Khayang: Harkho means legs of fowls. Omens from the feet of the fowls were observed from the position of the feet at the time of consulting the omen i.e by strangulating the fowls either the right or left foot crossing over the other. If the right leg crossed over the left leg the omen was considered to be good and so on.
iii) *Harra Khayang*: Omens observed from eggs are called *harra khayang* where *harra* means eggs. This omen was observed especially at the time of selecting the site for jhum cultivation.

iv) *Raihai Kakapeo*: Omens connected with head hunting. This omen was observed before going for head hunting raid.

v) *Makho Kazang*: Omens connected with fertility. *Makho* was like an altar where a pot with a lid was placed either on tree top or underground. *Makho* was located usually outside the village gate. This omen was observed by the village priest once in a year. He observed before the village chief set off for sowing of seeds followed by the villagers. No seeds were sown or planted before consulting this omen.

Within a hundred years of missionary work in the Tangkhul area, the traditional beliefs and practices were replaced by Christianity bringing an end to Tangkhul animism. Christianity relieved the Tangkhuls of the clutches of the evil spirits and the fear of the evil spirits. The American Baptist Missionary reduced hundreds of Tangkhul village dialects into one single common language. Besides, it was the Missionary who gave the Tangkhuls a written form of language following the Roman script.

The early opening of the mission schools attracted the commoners to Christianity. But the inimical attitude of the missionaries on the consumption of rice bear created strong opposition from the masses which slowed down the process of conversion. The arrival of the Catholic Missionaries in 1952 which was more
accommodative to the Tangkhuls’ culture of drinking rice beer and other brewed drinks was more acceptable to the then non-converts. The conversion continued until the whole Tangkhul population became Christians as late as the present decade.

In the initial period, active Church members were the most educated people as Christians were the forerunners in getting western education. But Christianity spread faster than education and many Tangkhul Christians began to absorb the tradition of the Western missionaries and slowly relegated their traditions as anti-Christian. With the spread of western education there emerged educated elite who have come to feel the loss of their tradition and culture resulting to social degeneration and moral degradation. They realized the need to revive their lost treasure by way of gathering knowledge and literature of the pre-Christian era. The documentation of the Tangkhul Festivals by the Tangkhul Theological Association (comprised only of Baptist Mission) was one such attempt apart from the many research being conducted on the traditional Tangkhul social structure.

The Baptist Mission from the very beginning (in Tangkhul area) had been more liberal in incorporating women in their mission work as was exemplified by the very participation of Mrs. Alice Pettigrew in the Mission of her Husband William Pettigrew. The slowness in the spread of education and the attitude of the parents towards their girl child in education were the two main factors besides others that hampered women to become leaders in the church. It was only in 2005 that one Pamleiphi Horam of Namrei village became the first Tangkhul woman to become a full-fledged Pastor in the
Baptist Mission. Including Miss Pamleiphi there are now two women pastors, the other being A.S. Khathingla of Longpi village, in the whole Tangkhul region. Women assuming responsibilities in the church has some resemblance in the pre-Christian era where women performed the role of priestess in the *Chumpa* festival.

**Economic Institution**

I

Agriculture

Agriculture was the mainstay of the Tangkhuls. It was subordinated by domestication of animals, handicrafts, weaving, pottery, trade and commerce. Prior to the introduction of the terraced cultivation, the slashing down of the jungle for cultivation was widely practiced. Each year, the chief and the *Hangva* (members of the village council) decided upon the site of jhum land for the year’s cultivation. No other part of the village land other than the agreed ranges or stretches of land should be cleared for the year’s cultivation by any family. It was not strictly for the fear of the chief and the councilors but for the fear of the *Kameo* (spirit) of the site, whose signs of acceptance for the year’s cultivation had been consulted and another reason being animals and birds. When the jhum land was wider, cultivated by many, it was easier for them to scare the animals and birds as the borders were shared, unlike in the isolated jhum, where one had to guard all the four corners of the borders.
Before the site for the year's cultivation had been decided, the omen consultation (Hara khayang) was carried out at the intended site either by the chief of the village or the owner of the land. If, after the necessary rituals, the omens were positive then general announcement was made to the villagers. After the announcement was made the range was then publicly opened. Each household head would select a plot for his family and that would be demarcated from the others by a small stream or other natural or artificial dividing lines or indicators like big trees or fallen trunks etc. As the hill men were familiar with the village territory, boundary lines might also be simply expressed in words. The clearing of the jungles was started by late December. After the trees were fallen, it was left to dry, to be burnt in late February or early March, which is followed by clearing of the remains and preparation of the seedling. The cultivation of the whole village is affected by the village taboo. The Awunga or the chief of the village had the rights and powers to perform the rite of the taboo. He performed the rituals and offered sacrifices to the spirit for a good harvest. Only after he had performed the rites and rituals and sowed the ceremonial seedlings, the cultivation of the village for the year began. Both men and women work in the field. Even a child starts working at his/her tender age. In the days of yore, all able-bodied men were engaged in the defense of the village as constant inter-village war necessitated them to safeguard their village and its populace and thus women and children alone worked in the field. But during normal situation they all had to work together except in hunting and other activities where women could not take part. While men engaged themselves in constructing jhum huts the women folk busied themselves in seedling. The seedling work was and still is now,
over by April or beginning of May. By June the first round of weeding begins. Weeding is done two times a year— one, in the months of June/July when paddy grows to the height of ten to twelve inches; and the second weeding is done in the months of August-September when the plants are about to bear fruit.

Though the Tangkhuls practiced both jhum and terrace cultivation as it is still done even in the present day, these practices are not evenly distributed all over the Tangkhul inhabited area. Terrace cultivation is practiced more in western and norther Tangkhul villages whereas jhum cultivation is mostly carried out in eastern and southern Tangkhul. In certain villages of eastern and southern Tangkhul, terrace cultivation is far more extensive than jhum cultivation, and in certain other villages, both jhum and terrace cultivations are practiced on equal basis. Some villages are fully dependent on jhum cultivation only. Irrespective of the pattern of cultivations done the harvest is normally good. Even when the crops failed due to natural calamity they did not have the problem of sustenance as they have adopted the method of self existence and survival and consequently, there is no begging in the Tangkhul society. The Tangkhul economy was a self-sufficient one.

With the completion of the first round of weeding they immediately shift their work to the terrace land for transplantation of the seedlings. This is the hardest and the busiest season for the Tangkhuls as the plantation work is to be completed within a period of four to five weeks’ time. The entire paddy plantation must be over by mid July if not it would be late. This is the time where the agricultural partnership known as
Yarthot (same age group) is most popular (the significance of Yarthot has become much less now), besides during the digging of the terraced plot and in the jhum land. Youngsters of the same age, both boys and girls, of the village or locality in cases of big village work together in their fields by rotation. They continue the rotation of work till the field of each member is done. In group working, the work is accompanied with singing and producing a harmonious tone called khamahon. There are different songs of work depending on the nature of the work, like there are songs for tilling the ground, songs for transplantation, songs for harvest etc. Singing and healthy joke of laughter minimizes the fatigue. Yarthot is not practiced only by the grown ups but even the married women practiced. The team working and the nature of rotation are the same as that of the younger. The married men as they were involved in the village war and defense did not have yarthot other then just a few days’ exchange of labour depending on the requirements of their labour and the nature of work like felling of trees and arrangements of water canalling system for terraced wet field. Agricultural work partnership was and still is, a reciprocal give and take form of agricultural work. The relationship among the agricultural work group in the agricultural land was governed by mutual adaptation and perfect co-operation.

Rice is the most important food crop of the Tangkguls. Besides rice many other crops like corn, soya bean, sesame, millet, job’s tear, millet and a variety of vegetables are grown. The mode of production in the jhum area was and still is following, the primitive system of jhum cultivation because of which the level of production is comparatively (time space) low. Nonetheless, jhum cultivation had provided the ethos
necessary for the villagers to experience the feeling of oneness resulting from the common bond derived from the sharing of the village land in a uniform way. The cycle of the jhum cultivation was usually fifteen to twenty years but now due to the growth of population and the liberal exploitation of the forest, the cycle has been reduced to ten years in average. The villagers did not return to the same plot within the jhum period when they had sufficient forest to cut.

In the past, as did in the sowing of the seeds, the *Awunga* offered the sacrifices to the *Phunghui* for bountiful harvest, for the entire village community followed by every household after which the mass harvest began. The harvest begins by the middle of October and finishes by late November or early December.

Tangkhuls had surplus agricultural products and regardless of social status people could perform feasts of merit in which wealthy men fed the entire village population for days. Rice, meat and rice beer and wine were served to all alike; and the widows, orphans and poor people could satisfy their hunger and thirst.

Though agriculture in the traditional period did not directly result in the accumulation of wealth, but the pressure of agriculture was so great that without first having a substantial position in agricultural wealth, it was almost impossible to pursue other sources of wealth. Wealth in paddy and other daily essentials became indirectly connected with accumulation of wealth since the store of food and other consumption goods allowed one to pursue economic gains in other spheres which were intrinsically related to the ritual ceremonies, the ceremonies of prestige or honour. The accumulated
wealth may be redistributed by way of ceremonial feast or feast of merit (Maran Kasa) as a show of pecuniary ability. Because of this the release of accumulated wealth in a conspicuous manner was usually accompanied by a corresponding raise in the social status. In fact, any raise in the social status must be attained by conspicuous redistribution of wealth through the giving of ceremonial feasts. Durable material goods such as spears and ornaments were highly cherished and regarded as the possessions of only wealthy families, and the possessions of these valuables accrued a higher rank in the society to the possessors, but it did not amount to attaining prestigious position in the society as a whole. Thus, the possession of wealth might give one social respect and esteem in the village, but outside the village this wealth might not be recognized as a show of prestigious position and the owner might not be accorded a higher rank at all.

Today, agriculture continues to be the main occupation of the Tangkhuls and still plays an important role in the social and economic life of the Tangkhuls in the interior villages and more so in places where only jhumming is practiced. But with the dwindling yields of the land people have become less attached to agricultural work and look for commercial openings offered by the various programmes of development planning under the government of Manipur. But Ukhrul, the district headquarters have a semi independent economic life of their own based on cash economy. The increasing pressure of economic hardship as a result of influx of population and the decline of agricultural products forces the town dwellers and the villagers to enter a mad race for economic supremacy. Earlier, the nearby villages of the Ukhrul town were the suppliers of the consumption goods in the town, but in recent years these villages have failed to
meet the needs of the town and the goods are being imported from Imphal, the capital of Manipur. Besides, the recent flow of developmental fund from New Delhi in a way has increased the purchasing capacity of the people but that result in spiraling up of prices and making the cost of living all the more, dearer. The inflow of the fund has made the Tangkhuls occupationally differentiated society, but only a small section of the population are benefited from this change and the masses remain in deplorable condition.

Apart from agriculture on which the Tangkhul economy rests, domestication of animal also forms a part of their economy. Animal husbandry is commonly for consumption as the Tangkhuls are fond of meat as other Naga tribes are. The domestic animals of the Tangkhuls are cows, bulls, buffaloes, mithuns, pigs, dogs, cats and fowls (chicken). Fowls had been used for omen consultation at the time of migration, in search of a place for settlement. Every family has to rear their own livestocks for ready availability of meat in times of entertaining a guest who may come unexpectedly. Besides, earlier, the festivities that used to fall round the year required rearing of animals as all kinds of festivals entailed killing of a number of buffaloes, pigs etc. where dogs and fowls were not usually counted.

Animals especially cattles were used as a unit of value before the emergence of the cash economy. The bride price at the time of marriage paid by the groom’s family to the parents of the bride was paid in terms of cattle head; the strength of a Feast of Merit offered by rich man was measured by the number of cattles killed; purchase of field was
also measured in terms of cattle. Besides, criminal were fined in terms of livestock as punishment according to the severity of the crimes committed. Hence animal husbandry played an important role in the economy of the Tangkhuls, and this served the commercial purposes of the people as well.

Majority of the domestic affairs were in the hands of the mother of the house in the Tangkhul society as it is today. As domestication of animals falls within the domain of the house, it is the womenfolk who bore the burden of looking after the domestic animals besides her other activities. She feeds and looks the pigs, poultry and cattles. Animal husbandry was and is still widely practiced by the Tangkhuls as part of their economy. Livestocks are converted into cash after the introduction of the cash economy. At present, full grown buffalo costs about forty-five to fifty thousand of rupees and about fifteen to twenty thousands of rupees for a full grown pig at present. A full grown fowl costs about five hundred to six hundred rupees.

Handicraft is another supplementary economy of the Tangkhuls. Their wood work, basketry and mat weaving and other domestic articles show the rich culture in handicrafts. Wood-carvings like wooden drums for storing water, rice beer, giant pounding tables and wooden plates are made by the Tangkhuls with excellence. Besides, bamboo and cane are used for making baskets and mats of high quality. Bamboo and cane are used for making ornaments and decorative articles like head-gears, helmets and leggins. Before the iron nails were introduced in construction of
houses bamboos were used for construction work for tying and thatching the roofs and nailing of the wood planks.

The art of pottery had been developed in Tangkhul since remote past. T. C. Hodson remarked: "Three clans of Hundung and the village of Nunbi make earthen pots from beds of clay close to their villages”. He continued further: “They make vessels of all sizes. These vessels are devoid of any but simplest ornamentation, but are, nevertheless, strong and well-suited to the requirements of the purchasers and command a large sale over the whole of Tangkhul country.” The village of Hundung (now Hungpung) has lost this art of making earthen pots but the Longpi village continues to make earthen utensils. For instance, one Machihan Sasa of Longpi village has won several state and national awards for his skill in pottery.

The Tangkhuls weave a variety of cloths extensively. Weaving was exclusively the occupation of women among the Tangkhul Nagas. They make varieties of shawls, loin cloths for both men and women, cloth/shawl for men and women, for Awunga and for the Pipa of the clan etc. Of the various types of Tangkhul shawls, Changkhom is worn by the womenfolk, young boys and girls. Haora is worn by the married men and the unmarried males who are well-grown up. Thanggan shawl is worn by the elders and the pipas of the clans as a sign of honour and position. But Thanggan shawl is no longer popular in the recent decade and is slowly over taken by the popularity of the latest design called Chingchui Kachon or Centennial Kachon. Chingchui or Chingjaroi is the name of a village in the northern Tangkhul and kachon means shawl. In fact this shawl
is a modification of the original *Haora kachon*. The modification was done by the people of Chingjaroi and so the shawl is named after the village. It is also called Centennial shawl because it was designed at the time of the celebration of the Centenary of the Baptist Mission in Tangkhul area.

Another shawl called *Seikui Kachon* or *Raivat Kachon* has become popular in the present Tangkhul society. This shawl is not very modern in its design and origin as its popularity. It is said that the shawl has its origin in Marem village. A popular myth narrates that the Meitei Maharajah and the British with their contingents came to Marem village, drained dry the small lake called Palang Ngayi that was within the village and excavated a golden bowl and the *Seikui kachon* from the lake. The Palang Lake still exist today though the water of the lake dries up during the dry season. Because the *Seikui kachon* was found or excavated in a mysterious manner the Meiteis believed that the shawl was designed/ drawn by the spirit of the lake and therefore called the shawl as Laiyekphi where Lai means spirit, yek means to draw and phi means shawl. The shawl, as it was taken away from the village to the Meitei valley, was manufactured by the Meiteis ever since and the Tangkhuls used to buy from them. Though it was made by the Meiteis, to this date they do not claim the originality of the shawl to be theirs. They refer to this shawl as Haophi which means tribe shawl which is normally understood as the Tangkhul shawl. To this date the name remains unchanged.

It is said that weaving of the *Laiphi* or *Laiyekphi* was a monopoly of one Meitei clan. The shawl was worn only by the wife of the village chief among the Tangkhuls. As wearing of the shawl indicated the status of the wearer, ordinary people would not even
dare to use it. Moreover, many people could not afford it as the sahwl was expensive and not readily available in their country as it was an imported item from the Meitei kingdom. In the days of yore, the design and drawing of the shawl was not woven but was drawn, using colours. With the improvements in the methods and techniques of weaving among the Tangkhuls, they have been able to weave the shawl; and in the recent decades, the design of the shawl has been successfully woven or embroidered and this makes the shawl more durable. The shawl has gained popularity in recent years as it is manufactured by the Tangkhuls now and it is easily available at a reasonable prices and restriction on the use of the shawl being relaxed.

Weaving being an indoor activity could be carried out all through the year. Nonetheless, cloth manufacture was done in the intervals of agricultural work. Intensive weaving was carried out after the harvest. Usually a girl starts learning the art of weaving from a very young age of four or five years and by the time she becomes a teenager she develops the expertise in the art and is in a position to meet her needs and supplement the family income by selling the cloths she has made. In recent years there have been some improvements in the techniques of weaving which has made the process of making easier and faster. In terms of quality the new technique has not been able to prove superior to the old method of loin loom. People still prefer the cloth made from the loin loom which is still costlier than the cloths made using the new technique.

As mentioned in the above pages, a Tangkhul village was a self-sufficient unit. The economic resources and products of the village could sustain its population. But
due to the availability of the product and the suitability of the soil and climate some
villages produced some crops more than the others while other villages had abundance
of certain goods which some villages lacked, and thus, the need for exchange of goods
arose. This could only be fulfilled through trade and commerce, and therefore, inter-
village trade and commerce was practiced among the Tangkhul villages since early
days. There was a village fair known as Leingapha where buying and selling of goods
was carried out. All kinds of economic goods and items, available in the village such as
cloths, handicraft products, animals etc. were sold and bought in the village leingapha.

According to Shimray[^55] “the first known fair held was at Hongkha-Muja, a twin village
at Ango-Ching (Patkoi-rang). All sorts of articles were brought from different directions
and surrounding villages and made the Leingapha a grand fair. This was held every
year. Selling and buying continued for days, even weeks; and along with it, there was
merry-making with songs, dances and sports competition. Similar Leinhapha was held
at Samsok kingdom where the fairs were more elaborate. According to tradition, it
lasted for a month where hectic competitions in sports, virgin-dance, song completion
etc. were conducted.” Before the emergence of cash they followed the barter system of
exchange where they exchanged goods for other goods.

Today, the Tangkhuls still maintain the similar fair which is conducted every
year by Hungpung village. The village fair is held at the onset of the harvest where food
items from the new harvest is brought for sale and various games also formed a part of
the fair. The fair is held usually for a day. As Hungpung village is close to Ukhru, people from the town flock to the fair for buying and selling their goods, and many go
there to have a taste of the first fruits of the harvest. Both men and women take part in
the fair actively, women bring their agricultural products and men bring their hunting
games.

II

Economic Status of Women: Inheritance

The Tangkhul society is patrilineal as they count the line of descent always
through the father. The office of the chief of the village, the position of the headship of
the clan, lineage and family is always passed on to the male descendants. Succession
and inheritance is transmitted to the male line. The eldest son gets the best and lion’s
share of the father’s property. As each son gets married they get their share of property
according to the order of birth (only of male). In this regard Hodson has remarked
thus.56

On the eldest son of a family marrying, the parents are obliged to leave their
house with the remainder of their family, the son who has married taking two-
thirds of the parent’s property, not only of the household but of his father’s
fields, etc. Occasionally the parents are recalled and allowed to remain for
sometime, but eventually they have to leave and the property is claimed and
divided .... When the parents are well off they provide a house beforehand. On
the marriage of another son the same process is repeated and may be again and
again; but according to the usual custom the parents may, after the process has
been repeated several times, return to the house of the eldest son.
The property of a Tangkhul usually consists of both moveable and immoveable possessions. The properties may be of ancestral or earned by themselves. The moveable properties include livestock, weapons, agricultural instruments, household articles, ornaments, musical instruments, etc. The immoveable properties comprise of land-homestead, forest, field- both wet terraced field and jhum-land, house, etc. By and large property is owned by a man. A woman may own only moveable property that is given to her at the time of her marriage which is in turn gifted away to her daughters at the time of their marriage. Women do not succeed to immoveable properties. In default of sons, the immoveable property goes to the brothers of the deceased, and the moveable property is distributed among the women.57 A man enjoys absolute ownership over his properties though restricted to some extent with regard to immoveable properties. He can will away his immoveable properties that he has acquired by his hard work, to his daughters as well if she marries within the village. To cite an example let us take a case history: One Wonnui (Name changed) of Khangkhui village was the only daughter of Mr. Khumkhui (Name Changed). Mr. Khumkhui, apart from his inherited property had acquired some pieces of land (wet terraced field) but he had no male issue. By custom, on his death all his immoveable properties would automatically fall into the hands of his nearest relative (Shimluikat).58 On his death bed he requested his Shimluikat that he should not take otherwise or create complications after his death and that he wished to gift away his field, Choitharvak, to his daughter Wonnui in his memory as she was married within the village. This was acceptable to the Shimluikat and till date the same field is being tilled by the daughter.
Generally, the immediate successor to the property of a man is his son. If he has no male issue his elder or younger brother’s son inherits the property. If the deceased’s children are still minors, his widow manages the property until the eldest son grows up and is able to shoulder the responsibility of the family. In case he has no son, it is the responsibility of the Shimluikat to look after the welfare of the widow and her children. It should, however, be noted that the widow and the children have the right to maintenance out of the deceased’s property till all the daughters are married and the widow is dead. In case the widow dies before getting the daughters married, the daughters may either stay in their house or in the house of the Shimluikat. It is only after the deceased’s daughters’ marriage and after the death of the widow the Shimluikat inherits their property.

It may be interesting to note here that if a man dies leaving no male heir, sometimes, the Shimluikat becomes impatient to inherit the deceased’s property and thus the widow and her daughters are deprived of their maintenance right. They are literally chased out of their house and are not even allowed to till the field. To cite an example let us see another case history: Mr. Shangmahing (name changed) of Ukhrul village died leaving behind his wife and three daughters. He had no male issue. The daughters were all minors at the time of his death. A few years after his death, the Shimluikat of Mr. Shangmahing wanted the widow and the daughters of the deceased to leave the house as he (Shimluikat) wanted to make use of the house for his son. He also warned them not to till the field anymore in the ensuing year (it was after the field was sowed/ planted). The deceased’s widow and daughters having no where to go, requested
that they might be permitted to stay in the house and also allowed to cultivate the field. Their request was granted and thus they were allowed to stay in the house and cultivate the field for a few more years. And then the Shimluikat came again asking them to vacate the house for good and that the field (terraced) field would be given to his son as his share of inheritance as the son was married. As the widow and daughters had no were to go they stayed on only to realize one heartbreaking morning the roof top of their house being removed partially. With the help of the neighbours they sealed it back during the day. The next day came, the widow and the daughters left for the field and on their way back home they were denied entry into their house. Such is the plight of a widow with no male issue. Though the callousness of shimluikats may vary but such occurrences are not uncommon.

Tangkhul society being a patrilineal society, a girl at her marriage looses all her previous identity and assumes her husband’s identity. The social status and identity of a woman is defined by the status and identity of her husband in the family and also in the society. When the husband is the head of the family she gets the ration but when the husband dies leaving no male issue she has no say in the family. It should be borne in mind that a man becomes eligible to represent the family in the village only after his marriage and when he becomes the head of the family. It does not matter how responsible and able he may be, he cannot represent his family if he is not a married man. There are some exceptions to this rule when it comes to the son of a widow who is just growing up and is only learning to assume the responsibilities of the family and
succeeding to the position of headship of the family. Under no circumstances a woman succeeds her husband's position, be it in the family or in the society.

As mentioned above, in a family every son inherits some property from their parents. But in some poor houses the younger brothers may not get sufficient property from the parents, in such cases the eldest son who inherits the lion’s share takes the responsibility to pass on some immovable property to the younger brothers at the time of their marriage.

The illegitimate child (male) who has established his identity and recognition in a family is also eligible to claim his share from his father's property. But the status of the illegitimate child is lower than that of the legitimate children in a family. Thus, children born out of illicit relationship get their share of their parental property according to their status. The case is different when the illegitimate child is a girl. There is no custom to protect her from future insecurity. She has no right to claim a share in her father's property even after her identity/ genetic father is made known. She is left to the total care of her mother and at the mercy of her grandparents (mother’s parents). The genetic mother takes full responsibility in bringing her up, to be an acceptable woman in the society someday.
Notes and References:


3. Early Christians shifted and settled in separate locality irrespective of their clans and lineages, away from the non-Christians. With the whole of Tangkhul population being converted into Christianity the earlier separated localities have become one and the patrilineal clan’s locality is no longer maintained.


7. As narrated by Mr.T.S. Angelus Shimreingam of Hungpung during my Field Work in 2007.

8. The theories on Pukreila was drawn at the time of field work in 2007 and later on, from the discussions with various person who were knowledgeable about the Tangkhul Customary Laws and Practices.


11. Ibid p 75.

13. Ibid. pp 223-225

14. Ibid. pp 221-222

15. Ibid. p. 220.


17. Ibid. p 178.


24. Ibid. p. 62


27. Ibid, p 100

28. Brown, Dr. R. (Political Agent in Manipur) 1870. “*Selections from the Records of the Government of India, Foreign Department,*” No.LXXVIII. p 121


34. The Khunong, sometimes come back to life with some branches of a tree which he plucked on his way back from Kazeiram. Besides he also returns with his tobacco and water container empty, having shared with the spirits in Kazeiram.

35. This song was sung to the researcher by the elders of Hungpung and was translated by Mr. T.S. Angelus Shimreingam of Hungpung during my Field Work in 2006.

37. When there is genna in a house, usually a branch of a tree or some leaves is hung at
the entrance to announce the people about the genna and restriction of entry to that
house.


39. Ibid p. 44

40. Ibid p. 44

41. Ibid p. 46

   Period Till 1826,* New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, pp 126-127.

43. Ibid pp 127-128.

   *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain & Ireland,* Vol.XLIV, P
   33

45. Tea, Coffee, Sugar, etc. were not known to the Tangkhul Nagas until the Western
   Missionaries came in the late 19th century.

46. Kapa is a thin chipped wild bamboo piece which was used for making baskets, mats,
   etc and this was also used for observing/ consulting omens.

47. Kazeiram is very close to the meaning of hades.

   by the Tangkhul Nagas, Manipur, Assam, February.’ *Journal of the Asiatic Society
   of Bengal,* Vol. V.No. 2. (N.S.) p 37

49. Ibid. pp 42- 46.

51. Current Pastor of Namrei Baptist Church, Namrei Village, Ukhrul District, Manipur.

52. Current Pastor of Maremphung Baptist Church, Maremphung Village, Ukhrul District, Manipur.


57. Ibid p. 103

58. The one who inherits the property of the nearest relative.