CHAPTER – III
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC : STAGES OF
STATE FORMATION PROCESS : EVOLUTION OF SUR SHNONG
(VILLAGE MUSIC), SUR RAID (MUSIC AT THE LEVEL OF THE RAID) AND
SUR HIMÁ (MUSIC AT THE LEVEL OF THE NATIVE STATE)

In the background of the foregoing analysis on Khasi Folk Music, we now enter another field of music termed as Traditional Music. Khasi Traditional Music is that type of music which is handed down from generation to generation but unlike Folk Music, it is acquired through learning, repetitive practices and constant involvement of the performer with the art and the music. It may not be wrong to say that from Folk Music, Traditional Music takes its root to establish itself as a class of music which is not without discipline, practice and learning. We can further explain that Khasi Traditional Music is unwritten yet, it is an organized form of music. It is this feature of Khasi Traditional Music that makes it more authentic than Folk Music. Khasi Folk Music is spontaneous and creative, but does not contain the rhythmic pattern as can be found in Khasi Traditional Music. Khasi Folk Music involves no teaching-learning process, while Khasi Traditional Music has to be learnt and handed down from generation to generation through training and practice. Further, in Khasi Traditional Music, the art is
handed down from the father to the son but sometimes not necessarily within the same family. It can therefore be handed down to the nephew, the niece, the trainees, etc. This is the tradition which to a Khasi means Ka Riti Ka Hok that is inherent in Khasi Traditional Music. Even gestures speak of this tradition which adds a significant factor to the formation of the ‘classical content’. Ka Khublei Arti* is very symbolic because it reflects good will, solidarity and justice under the umbrella of Ka Sad Ka Sunon (The Seat of Sovereignty). In fact, there are many ingredients in Khasi Traditional Music which have formed the “classical content”. It is therefore, the elements within the Khasi Traditional Music System itself that can make it “classical”. Reference to the Indian Classical Music System or Western Classical Music System only explains the yardstick and the concept used in the work. Khasi Traditional Music is classical** because of the elements within it. These elements appeal more to the ‘intellect’ in a sense that time-measure of the beat is strictly followed. In the opinion of Arun Kumar Sen,

"The composition of Tala (Rhythm) is basically intellectual. Only Laya (tempo) can be considered to be natural."

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*Khublei is a significant word in Khasi. It means ‘Thank You’, ‘Good Morning’, ‘God Bless You’, etc. Arti implies ‘With Both Hands’. It therefore means where both the persons use both their hands in greeting one another. This is a usual practice found at Hima Khym.

**This term shall be thoroughly discussed in the Chapter on the classical content.
It is however difficult to say exactly at what point of time traditional music moves away from the folk. Prof. Birendranath Dutta says that these distinctions are not water-tight. It is only when things are refined and codified that they can become traditional or classical. Codification is therefore very important. In the opinion of Prof. Komal Kothari, Traditional Music contains some elements of organization and learning process though not in a structured manner. He asserted that training starts at the level of Traditional Music and in this way, excellence is achieved. It is at this point that music moves away from the folk. The relationship between the audience and the performer is initiated. For instance, the religious beats* of Khasi Traditional Music are performed at the annual state religious festival of *Hima Khyrim* at Smit. These religious drum beats are still being retained at *Hima Khyrim* today and they display an organized rhythmic pattern of Khasi Ritualistic Music. Each unit of drums and each drum beat played signifies a particular mood, a particular ritual and a particular dance form.

Referring again to the interview had with Komal Kothari, he further said that Traditional Music unlike Folk Music, has a "conscious grammar" and it is because of this that it has the capacity to achieve

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2 Interview had with Prof. Birendranath Dutta.

*These are used at the level of the *Hima* or 'native state' and are called *Ki Shiphew Ksing Bad Arphew Hynniew Skit* which literally means 'The Ten Units of Drums and Twenty Seven Beats'. The explanation of the term 'Religious Beats' has already been given in Chapter-II.
"classicism". Classical Music in turn works not only with the grammar but also with meta-grammar, that is, the grammar of grammar.

Khasi Traditional Music acts as the container of Ka Riti Ka Hok*. The term 'Tradition' has been defined as 'the handing on of acquired characteristics'. Music tradition therefore is a function of culture – a dynamic conception. Traditional Music is unwritten but is part of the tradition of a society and also part of the community group. It conforms to formal or accepted standards which is very much absent in a folk practice.

Khasi Traditional Music can be classified under two types – (1) The Religious or Ritualistic Music found at Hima Khyrim which includes the religious beats of the Hima. (2) The Non-Religious Music found at Hima Mylliem which includes the socio-cultural dance beats used at the level of the Raid under Raid Mylliem (Mylliem Native State). After the bifurcation of Hima Shyllong**, Mylliem was deprived of all religious rites and practices due to the fact that it descends from the younger sister. Hence, the Traditional Music prevalent here is non-religious. However, the music of Raid Mylliem enjoys the patronage of the Lyngdoh Raid. Patronage should be understood in the sense that the

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4. Ibid...

*Ka Riti can be translated as 'Tradition' and Ka Hok means 'Righteousness'.
**Cf.: Chapter-I, p.21.
presence of the Lyngdoh Raid is significant in the music and the rituals of the Raid. He sees that music and rituals are being retained at the level of the Raid. Surprisingly, the Syiem of Mylliem does not take part in the ritualistic practices of the Raid. This further explains that music at the level of the Raid is still non-religious and is only for Ka Rong Ka Taw (Festivity). It is only at Hima Khyrim that the Traditional Ritualistic Music prevails. At the annual state religious festival (Nongkrem Festival) held at Smit, the melody of the Tangmuri* from the village of Wahkhen and the sound of the drums from Nongblai can be heard. This type of music is strictly bound by the religious practices, the time-factor, the mood of the Duhalias** and their involvement in the music. These characteristics have been found to be much needed in ritualistic music.

In the state formation process of Hima Shyllong, music plays an important role. In fact, the role of music at Khyrim is so prominent at each level of political development that the Duhalias occupy a significant place within the Hima. According to Komik Khongjirem, the Duhalia acts as the maternal uncle of the Hima in religious practices. This implies the important task assigned to the Duhalias. The maternal uncle in Khasi thought is the one who actually makes or gives decisions.

5. Interview conducted with Komik Khongjirem, the leading exponent of Khasi Traditional Music from the village of Wahkhen of Khyrim Syiemship. He is the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee of the year 2001 in the field of Traditional Music.
*A Khasi Windpipe and is played like the Flageolet.
**Traditional Musicians.
In a word, he plays the role of a counselor as well. This explains the dual role of a Khasi man within the society, as a father to his children and as a maternal uncle to his nieces and nephews. The Duhalia assumes this status because his presence is indispensable from the beginning to the completion of any ritual and dance be it Ka Shad Nohkjet* or Ka Shad Tyngkoh** or Ka Knia Muhuri*. It is here that Ka Synshar (administration) and Ka Niam (religion) work hand in hand with Ki Skit (beats) to strengthen the growth of Ki Sur Hima (Music at the level of the native state). The importance of Ka Niam has been referred to by H. Lyngdoh who writes thus.

*Ka Niam (Religion) comes from the word Nia which means a cogent between man and God.*

(Translation Mine)

The Syiem under the umbrella of Ka Sad Ka Sunon (the seat of sovereignty) patronises Ki Skit to retain the traditions for posterity. This has led to the growth, development and stability of the Traditional Religious Music at Khyrim. It is not irrelevant to say that it is with this concept that prayers and allegiance are offered to Ka ‘Lei Synshar$ at


*This is a dance of the daughter of the Syiem Sad during the Nongkrem Festival under Khyrim Syiemship. It is U Rangbah Duhalia (Head Musician) along with the Bakhraws, etc. who guide her to the dancing arena in front of the ling Sad. She is then joined by other female dancers.

**This is a dance of the Bakhraws, the Sohblei (Chief Priest), the Lyngskor, the Syiem, etc. The Head Musician along with the Sohblei is the one who leads the dance.

#This is a ritual performed at mid-night for the Tangmuri, for its sweet melody. It is the Head Musician again along with the Sohblei who takes part in the ritual.

$’Lei or Blei means ‘God’ and Synshar means ‘Administration’. It is considered to be one of the divine attributes of God in Khasi belief.
Hima Khyrim and at Mylliem (Raid Mylliem), Ka 'Lei Long Raid* is invoked during the ritualistic practices at Mawnariang village.

Coming to the religious beats employed in Hima Khyrim, we find it worthwhile to examine Ki Shipheu Ksing Bad Arphew Hynniew Skit (The Ten Units of Drums and Twenty Seven Beats), which have been in use for generations. It is difficult to comment on their origin, but we presume that they may have taken shape in terms of classification and uniqueness at the final stage of state formation process in the Shyllong native state. These are Ki Skit Niam Ha Ka Hima (Religious Beats in the Native State) and are still in an unwritten notation form. Some earlier writers like H. Lyngdoh** have classified them as follows:

1. Ka Sing Blei - (i) Ar Dieng
   (ii) Lai Dieng
   (iii) Lai Kyndup

2. Ka Sing Mastieh

3. Ka Sing Khrop

4. Ka Sing Lynti or Ka Sing Mih or Ka Sing Kynud

5. Ka Sing Kynther - (i) Sei Dieng
   (ii) Tynruh
   (iii) Kynting Dieng

*Divine attribute of God invoked at the level of the Raid.
**cf. Chapter-1 for the credentials of H. Lyngdoh.
6. Ka Sing Kher -
   (i) Ar Dieng
   (ii) Krud
   (iii) Shi Tynruh
   (iv) Ar Tynruh
   (v) Shi Kynting Dieng
   (vi) Ar Kynting Dieng

7. Ka Sing Surmaw -
   (i) Sei Dieng
   (ii) Tynruh
   (iii) Kynting Dieng

8. Ka Sing Rong -
   (i) Sei Dieng Lane Sdang
   (ii) Shi Dieng
   (iii) Lai Dieng
   (iv) Shi Krud
   (v) Ar Krud
   (vi) Shi Tynruh
   (vii) Kynting Dieng

9. Ka Sing Shang Kieh

10. Ka Sing Mastieh.7

In my findings through recent field study, the “Ten Units of Drums and Twenty Seven Beats” are as follows*:

7.lbid., p.91.

*Only literal translation of the local musical terms like Ar Dieng, Lai Dieng, etc. has been given. However, from musical point of view, they should be taken or understood as playing techniques and styles on the drums.
1. Ka Ksing Blei (Ksing means 'Drums' and Blei means 'God'). It is the first unit of drums and contains three skit or beats. They are:

   (i) Ar Dieng, (Ar means 'Two' or 'Twice', Dieng is 'Stick').
   (ii) Lai Dieng (Lai means 'Three' or 'Thrice')
   (iii) Lai Kyndup -- (Kyndup means 'Scooping Movement').

   In each unit of drums, there is Ka Sei Dieng which symbolically means the beginning. The inclusion of Ka Sei Dieng as a beat as observed by H. Lyngdoh cannot be found in today's religious beats. The instruments used in this unit of drums include Ka Ksing Shynrang (Male Drum) two numbers, Ka Padiah (a small drum), Ka Kynshaw (Cymbals) and Ka Tangmuri (Wind pipe or Flageolet).

2. Ka Ksing Kylla Mastieh contains one Skit (beat) in itself. This unit of drums creates the sensation of the call to one and all to come and partake of the joy at the Nongkrem Festival (religious state festival) at Khyrim. For this reason, Ka Ksing Blei, as an invocation to God is immediately followed by Ka Ksing Kylla Mastieh. Kylla means 'to change' and Mastieh is the beat which transmits the call. The instruments used here include Ka Bom (Big Drum), Ka Ksing Shynrang (Male Drum)
two numbers, Ka Kynshaw (Cymbals) and Ka Tangmuri (Wind pipe or Flageolet).

3. Ka Khrop contains one Skit (beat) in itself. Ka Khrop literally means ‘to kneel down’ and this drum beat also contains the drum syllable Khop which means ‘to be silent’ or ‘to be quiet’. It therefore, symbolizes the submission to the Creator for his guidance and protection for the well-being of the Hima. The musical instruments include Ka Ksing Shynrang (Male Drum), Ka Padiah (Small Drum), Ka Kynshaw (Cymbals) and Ka Tangmuri (Wind Pipe or Flageolet).

4. Ka Ksing Lynti contains one skit (beat) in itself. This unit of drums is played as an invocation to God to pave the way and the path into his domain through music and rituals. Ksing means ‘drum’, Lynti is the ‘path’ or the ‘way’. H. Lyngdoh also refers to it as Ka Ksing Mih, (Mih means ‘to come out’). This unit of drums is also played in front of the ling Sad (Religious House) at Smit, before going to U Lum Pomblang for the religious rites. Hence it has been referred to as Ka Ksing Mih against the above context. He further refers to it also as Ka Ksing Kynud. Kynud can be explained as ‘a soft humming sound’. This can be understood from the fact that Ka Ksing
Lynti contains Ka Krud Ksing*. This is a symbolic gesture of the Duhalias signifying an appeal to God to clear the pathway. Dennis Royse observes that "this creates a sighing sound as if the drums are praying to the three ancestral deities of Khasi culture." 8

5. Ka Kynther Dieng (Kynther means "to shake off"). This unit of drums contains three skit (beats). These are:

(i) Kynther Beit, which can be translated as "to simply shake off".

(ii) Shi Tyndung or Shi Tynruh which means "to jab with the stick once only".

(iii) Shi Kynting which means "to toss up".

The musical instruments used here include Ka Bom (Big Drum), Ka Ksing Shynrang (Male Drum), Ka Padiah (Small Drum), Ka Kynshaw (Cymbals) and Ka Tangmuri (Wind pipe or Flageolet).

6. Ka Ksing Kher. Kher implies the neighbours, friends, etc.; in a word, it implies those who are not from the cognates and the agnates. It contains seven skit (beats). They are—


*Literally meaning "Rubbing of the Drum".*
(i) Tem Beit which means “to simply play it”.

(ii) Shi Krud which means “rubbing of the drum once only”.

(iii) Ar Krud (Ar means ‘twice’).

(iv) Shi Tyndung (as pointed above).

(v) Ar Tyndung (Ar means ‘twice’).

(vi) Shi Kynting (Kynting is “to toss up”).

(vii) Ar Kynting (twice).

This unit of drums stands for the annual tribute given to the Syiem within the Hima by Ki Khun Ki Hajar (children of the soil/Hima) to preserve the tradition and above all, the sanctity of Ka Sad Ka Sunon (Seat of Sovereignty).

7. Ka Sheiwew implies “coaxing” and “cajoling”. This unit of drums contains three skit (beats):

   (i) Tem Beit (as pointed above)

   (ii) Shi Tyndung (as pointed above)

   (iii) Shi Kynting Dieng (to toss up once only).

There is no reference to this unit of drums in H. Lyngdoh’s book. In my interview with some of the prominent Duhalias, Ka Sheiwew is actually Ka Sing Surmaw* as referred to by H. Lyngdoh.

*‘Sing or Ksing means ‘drum’, Sur means ‘to seal the cromlech’ and Mqw means ‘stone’. This is a beat which is played at a ceremony called Ka Thep Mawbah, when the bones of a clan are kept in the cromlech.
8. Ka Ksing Rong (Rong literally means "colour"). It also carries the connotation of celebration, festivities, etc. or Ka Rong Ka Taw. This unit of drums therefore implies the mood of festivity amidst the ritualistic practices. It contains three skit (beats):

(i) Tem Beit (as pointed above)
(ii) Shi Dieng (Shi means 'once').
(iii) Lai Dieng (as pointed above).

9. Ka Kruin Shang* as a drum beat implies "bringing together". It contains four skit (beats):

(i) Shi Kynther (to shake once only).
(ii) Ar Kynther (twice).
(iii) Shi Tyndung (to jab with the stick once only).
(iv) Shi Kynting (to toss up once only).

10. Ka Shang Kieh Kylla Mastieh is the last unit of drums and contains one skit (beat) in itself. Shang is the 'container', Kieh is 'to make noise'. This drum beat explains that the people, the administrative unit, etc. of the Hima should do away with all the misunderstanding and come to Ka Sad Ka Sunon for an assemblage in good will. Hence Ka Kylla 'change' Mastieh (the beat which transmits the call). The conclusion on Ka Mastieh explains the joy that prosperity is

*Shang literally implies 'cane container' or 'basket'. Kruin means 'termite'. This unit of drums symbolically means containing all that is good and shaking off all that is bad or evil.
bestowed upon the Hima.

These religious beats have remained although they are still in an unwritten notation form. They are so unique in their framework and rhythmic pattern that they have been used only in the Ritualistic Music prevalent at Hima Khyrim. Hence, they are called Ki Skit Niam (Religious Beats). According to my findings, Ki Shiphew Ksing (The Ten Units of Drums) are the "Parent Drum Beats" and each one of them can be understood as a unit. This unit completes one cycle of all the beats. The variations within the Ten Units of Drums are twenty-seven in numbers. These are called Ki Skit. We can safely presume that Ki Arphew Hynniew Skit have evolved from the Parent Drum Beats called Ki Shiphew Ksing. Within the Parent Drum Beats and the variations, there are Ki Khup* used to determine the number of divisions in each unit of drums. On closer observation, it is found that there are other smaller beats within Ki Skit. These become audible only when performed or played on a drum. However, till date, they are still unwritten or undefined. This aspect requires a technical analysis so as to bring out their connotation and their use to be able to examine the classical content in Khasi Traditional Music. This will be examined in the chapter related to the classical content.

*It can be defined as the divisions used in each drum beat so as to determine the number of beats within each division. In the Western Music concept, it can be explained as the "Bar Line", whereas in Indian Classical Music, it is known as "Vibhag".
In my findings, I have observed that the Duhalias often refer to a parent drum beat as Ka Skit. Ki Skit as we have technically examined them are not the parent drum beats, they are the variations within the parent beats. It is therefore misleading to call Ka Ksng Lynti as Ka Skit Ksing Lynti. This is a unit of drums which constitutes a parent beat. It has been found that these religious beats have played an important role at Hima Khyrim to explain the state formation process of the erstwhile Hima Shyllong. The rhythmic pattern of the Ritualistic Music of Hima Khyrim unveils the role of the Syiem under Ka Sad Ka Sunon; the role of the Bakhraw, the Basan, the Lyngdoh, etc., within the Hima. The beats played at Mawnariang village under Raid Mylliem (Mylliem Native State) do not fall under this category, hence they are non-religious except for Ka Ksing Mastieh. To study the different stages of state formation process, it is necessary to examine the beginning of these Parent Drum Beats, because music has always played a vital role in the evolution of the Hima and the concept of democracy. Our study therefore begins right from the level of Ki Shnong (villages), Ki Raid (administrative units), till the foundation of Ka It Ka Hima (native state).

Ki Shnong (villages) are important segments in the concept of Khasi polity. Khasi polity begins with the founding of Ka Kur (clan). It is said that when a particular Kur or clan settles down in a certain place,
the members form a village, and also assimilate other members from other Kurs within the same village. The growth of many clans within a village leads to the foundation of Ka Dorbar Shnong (Village Durbar) with the Tymmen Shnong (Headman) as their representative. As L.S. Gassah observes,

Traditional Khasi polity also works through various other Durbars right at the village level. A village had and still continues to have its own Durbar which held frequent sessions in which all adult male residents ought to attend. It thus imparted some kind of training in the art of self-government and creative citizenship, guided or directed the standards of public morality. It also functioned as a Court of justice by trying petty cases besides handling law and public administration. 9

At the village level, music is found to be still very rustic and unorganized. It is a fact that Khasi Folk Music derives its background from the villages. Rural setting coupled with natural surroundings are source of inspiration for a folk artiste and composer. Most Khasi Folk songs are in the form of group participation together with the use of common drum beats. Ka Lymmuh as explained in chapter-II is a popular drum beat at the village level. It is mostly used during the game of archery, village announcement or proclamation, etc. Popular

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folk practices like archery, local theatre, etc. have contributed much to the making of Ki Sur Shnong (Village Music) predominantly in the rural areas. There has been an assimilation of tunes between one village and another, but the beats have always remained the same. C. Khongwir observes,

Not much strictures are laid in Ka Rong Ka Taw and even certain flexibilities are introduced especially in melody. These special additions are known as Ksing Bylla or Sur Bylla (hired beats or tunes)* where one Hima (state) takes the traditional tunes of another Hima and combine them with their own.10

It is this factor that has helped the classification of Khasi Music. We can further add that such practices can be considered as newer elements which were incorporated to enrich the system of Khasi Music. This has not only contributed towards the evolution of Khasi Music but also towards the examination of the classical content. It may not be wrong to say that newer elements have also been incorporated in the use of musical instruments. The Mohori (Wind Pipe) can also be found in other parts of India and in Assam, reference is made to the use of the Mohori right from the 14th century A.D. onwards.11 Prof. Birendranath Dutta further asserted that the Mohori is used by the Dimasas, the Karbis, etc.

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11.Interview had with Prof Birendranath Dutta.

*They also mean "borrowed or improvised beats and tunes".*
Therefore, the Muhuri as sometimes referred to amongst the Khasis is basically a folk instrument but certain innovation has been made of it to becoming a Tangmuri. The prevalence of the male and the female drums, the use of the old and new Marynthing (string instrument)*, etc. have all contributed towards the evolution of Khasi Music and its development towards the classical form.

Theatre Music at the village level, too, has developed through interaction and assimilation. People have always referred to the Harmonium (Indian musical instrument) as Ka Harmoni used for accompaniment in the songs. In fact, the use of the Harmonium in most of the Khasi villages has been associated with theatre music. Some of the Duhalias from Khyrim and Mylliem Syiemships are found to be excellent performers of theatre music. It is noted that most of the people from the villages are familiar with Indian Musical Instruments. Theatre singing is therefore popular amongst the villagers because it is not only a form of recreation but it also provides them with an opportunity to display their talent at local functions. It is observed that theatre music reveals a lesser degree of the use of definite drum beats though people have some knowledge of what they call Ka Tar.**

*The old Khasi Marynthing has only one string, while the new one consists of five strings.
**This can be translated as Taal or 'Rhythm'.

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The growth in the number of villages necessitated the formation of the Raid (the political and administrative units within the Hima). We have already defined the role played by the Bakhraw, the Lyngdoh, etc. within the Raid in the first chapter. At the level of the Raid, Khasi Music takes a completely different shape. It may still retain some of the folk elements in it but it shows a certain degree of uniformity in the rhythm which can be found at Raid Mylliem and is still being practised today at the village of Mawnariang. Music at this level is non-religious and the beats employed do not fall under the category of the Religious Beats called Ki Shiphew Ksing Bad Arphew Hynniew Skit. In a word, there is an admixture of the religious and non-religious beats. Music at the level of the Raid is therefore not so rigid and is mostly meant for Ka Rong Ka Taw (festivity). Yet, it has developed more in comparison to music at the village level. Hence, it is no longer 'folk' but 'traditional'. The present Lyngdoh of Raid Mylliem, Charles Marbaniang and the Duhalias of the Raid corroborate the fact that religious rites and rituals no longer prevail at Hima Mylliem ever since the bifurcation of Hima Shyllong. It is Raid Mylliem alone within the Hima which still continues to adhere to some of the religious ceremonies performed once in a year though with not much rigidity. It is for this particular reason that this Raid has been chosen as a subject of study on the
evolution of Sur Raid (Music at the level of the Raid). In an interview with the present Lyngdoh, he opines that Raid Mylliem holds a special position within the Hima because it still retains certain ritualistic practices and some beats. He further asserts that the Bakhraw of the Raid play an important role in the making of the Hima which explains the structure of Khasi polity and democracy. Since music at the Raid is non-religious, Ka Jainspong (Khasi Traditional Turban) for the Duhalias is not being fixed by the Lyngdoh but done so by the musicians themselves. At Khyrim, however, Ka Jainspong for the Duhalias is tied and fixed by the Basan Nongkseh*. This shows the important role of music in determining the status of the Lyngdoh, the Duhalias and the Bakhraws. The drum beats used at Mylliem are seven in numbers. The first unit of drums is called Ka Ksing Lumpaid**, played on Ki Lai Khup (Three Bar Lines or Divisions). It is a non-religious beat and is immediately followed by Ka Ksing Lynti. Ka Ksing Lynti at Raid Mylliem is different from Ka Ksing Lynti used at Hima Khyrim. At Mylliem, it contains four beats in each division, and at Khyrim, it contains three beats in each division. This explains that Ka Ksing Lynti played at Raid Mylliem is not a religious beat and does not fall under the category of Ki Shiphew Ksing Bad Arphew Hynniew Skit. It is in fact Ka Ksing Shad Wait* which

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12. Interview had with Charles Marbaniang, Lyngdoh, Raid Mylliem (Mylliem Syiemship).
*He is an Elder (Basan) from the Thangkhiew clan of Nongkseh.
**Literally meaning "gathering of the crowd".
*It is a beat which is played in Ka Rong Ka Taw (Social festivity).
has actually been called as Ka Ksing Lynti. This further explains the root of the religious beat called Ka Ksing Lynti. It has been derived from the non-religious beat Ka Ksing Lynti Rong (Rong literally means 'colour') used in the non-religious context. This in turn derives its origin from Ka Ksing Shad Wait (Shad means 'dance' and Wait means 'sword'). This derives its root from Ka Lymmuh, a popular beat at the village level. It is these ingredients that form the essence of the classical content of the Ten Units of Drums and Twenty-Seven Beats. We can further add that the non-religious beats of Hima Mylliem have definitely provided the background to the Traditional Religious or Ritualistic Music of Hima Khyrim. The variations in the drum beats at the level of the Raid have contributed towards the organized and refined music at the level of the Hima through the patronage of Ka Sad Ka Sunon.

The religious ceremonies performed sometime in March every year at Mawnariang village is a symbol of obeisance and allegiance to the Creator. Prayers are offered with Ka Nguh Ka Dem (obeisance) to God the Maker for good administration and prosperity of the Raid. Divine attributes of God like Ka 'Lei Long Raid' and U Suid Ni Long Raid** are invoked in the rituals. It is here that we find Ka Nguh Lyngdoh (a ritual of paying homage to the Lyngdoh) which is

**"Lei or Blei is 'God', Long is 'to make for the prosperity of the Raid'.
**"He is believed to be the maternal uncle of the Raid. The first Syiem of Hima Shyllong is also believed to be U Suidnia or U Suid Ni Long Syiem, the son of Ka Pah Syntiew and the first maternal uncle of the Syiem Shyllong clan.
equivalent to Ka Nguh Syiem (paying homage to the Syiem) at Hima Khyrim. Two types of ritualistic practices can be found here, one which is purely religious in character which is observed for three days and the other which is purely for Ka Rong Ka Taw which is observed for another three days. During the goat or pig sacrifice, the beat of Ka Mastieh alone is played. Ka Mastieh, another beat used at Mylliem, is one of the religious beats, yet it connotes varied meanings when it comes to Hima Mylliem. It gives the “call” to the people, it is also the end lude and at the same time, it evokes joy of participation when women too take part in this dance. It is said that in the non-religious context, both men and women dance to the beat of Ka Mastieh, but not in the religious context. It is said thus, “Ha ka kmen ka sngewbha, shad lang bad kynthei bad shynrang, ha ka thma ka ktien, shad tang u rangbah”. This means in festive occasions, both men and women participate in the dance, but in warfare, or in verbal warfare, only the men dance. This explains that when the Mastieh beat is used as a preparation for warfare and rituals, the women do not take part in the dance At Khyrim women are not supposed to dance in front of the ling Sad when Ka Mastieh is played. It signifies the preparation of the male members for warfare, for defence and protection of the female within the society. Hence, women cannot dance Ha Khmat Ka Duwan (in
front of the ling Sad), which is the respect given to Ka Sad Ka Sunon, the symbol of Ka Niäm Ka Rukom (Religion and Tradition) with the Syiem Sad as the keeper of the trust. Ka Mastieh at Mylliem begins with Ka Ksíng Shynrang (male drum), followed by the beating of Ka Bom (Big drum). Ka Tangmurí (Wind Pipe or Flageolet) is also used.

To go back to the beats of Raid Mylliem, we can refer to the other socio-cultural dance beats. On the two drum beats of Ka Dum Dum and Ka Nalai, Raid Mylliem displays finesse in its performance. Ka Ksíng Dum Dum* has its appeal in the use of Ka Bom (Big Drum) as the Percussion where the musician uses his left palm for playing it. The small drum of Ka Padiah is not used at Mylliem which depicts the non-religious character of the beats. Ka Ksíng Shynrang (Male Drum) is placed in an upright position and is played on one side of this drum as the rhythm of Ka Padiah with small bamboo sticks. Ka Nalai or Ka Ksíng Padiah Nalai** is another socio-cultural beat where Ka Bom (Big Drum) is not used. This particular beat reflects the dance and festivity that is pre-dominant at the ceremonies of Raid Mylliem. The dancing steps based on this drum beat are not only heartening but very relaxing too. The small drum of Ka Padiah is again not used here. Ka Ksíng Klang or Ka Ksíng Mareh# is another beat used at Raid Mylliem. As the name

*This drum beat may have derived its name from the style of playing the big drum Ka Bom which produces a similar sound of ‘dum dum’.

**Ka Nalai derived its name from the playing technique of the drum beat itself.

*Klang actually means ‘ablaze’ or ‘roaring fire’. Mareh means ‘to run’.
itself suggests, this develops on a very fast tempo. Ka Ksing Shynrang (Male Drum) is again placed in an upright position and played with small bamboo sticks. Ka Ksing Shad Wait used at Mylliem is the most common social beat. It is also sometimes referred to as Ka Ksing laid which can be literally explained as "a drum beat played while walking". At Khyrim, this beat is also used but not during the ritualistic practices, rather as part of the preparation for the festival, that is, on the day of Ka Sait Ksing which literally means "washing of the drums." Indeed, variations in the style of playing this drum beat prevalent in these two Syiemships depend largely on the skill of the performer. The seventh drum beat used at Raid Mylliem is Ka Ksing Shad Pyllun*. It is observed that dance is a prominent feature found in the study of traditional non-religious music of Raid Mylliem.

Raid Mylliem therefore preserves these beats in the form of Ki Sur Raid despite the fact that it has lost the religious beats which Khyrim retains today. This aspect explains the fact that music at the Raid has not reached the level which can be regarded as 'classical'. Rigidity in the use of the beats is not followed though the rhythmic pattern prevails in some cases. The theory of mood does not find a place in the non-religious music of Mylliem which is a necessary ingredient of

*Shad is 'dance' and Pyllun means 'round'. 
being ‘classical’. It is the music under the patronage of Ka Sad Ka Sunon of the Hima which can attain the stature of being “classical”. This leads us to the fact that the final stage of state formation process takes place with the foundation of the Hima and music has a great role to play in this. In a word, we can say that the Traditional Non-Religious music of Hima Mylliem has given a firm background to the growth and development of the Traditional Religious Music at the level of the Hima which is purely religious and ritualistic.

As pointed out earlier, two ceremonies are performed, one at Mawnariang village and the other at lewduh in Shillong. The ceremony at lewduh is held sometime in September, October or November. Three goats, two female and one male, and a pig are used for the sacrifice. One male goat signifies U ‘Lang lewduh*, another stands for Ka Synshar Ka Khadar (administration) and another goat for the divine attribute called Ka 'Lei lew ‘Lei Dwar**. The pig is a symbol of U Suid Ni Long Raid (Divine attribute invoked at the level of the Raid). This ritual at lewduh lasts only for a day and is concluded by a dance of the Seven Drum Beats at Basa Kwai#.

*Lang or Blang means ‘Goat’ and lewduh implies ‘the last market day’ or ‘the biggest market in Khasi Hills.’
**lew is ‘Market’ and Dwarf is the ‘Gateway’. Ka lew Ka Dwar are imilatives or akin wards in Khasi language.
#It is one of the marketing areas at lewduh in Shillong where betel-nut is sold. Basa means ‘a stall’ and Kwai is ‘betel-nut’.
The Traditional Religious Music takes a complete shape at the level of the Hima. Considering the background of the religious beats, it may not be wrong to say that they have been properly formed and developed right from the level of the Raid. The origin of Ka Ksing Lynti has already been discussed. Other religious beats have also developed from the framework provided by the non-ritualistic beats. Ki Skit Ha Ka Niam (Rhythmic Beats in Religious Practices) have profoundly influenced and shaped Khasi polity. They reflect the different stages of development of Khasi polity. At the annual state religious festival of Khyrim Syiemship, Ki Shiphew Ksing Bad Arphew Hynniew skit are used. At this level, Khasi Traditional Music can be regarded as 'classical' based on a close examination of the ingredients inherent in it. Patronage of the Syiem, it is observed, is essential. Rigidity in the rhythmic pattern is found. The performer remains within a set of musical rules and scales, despite the fact that he has the freedom to elaborate or embellish the melody. This type of music depicts the final stage of state formation. The native state festival of Khyrim till today symbolizes the undivided Shyllong native state. Ka 'Lei Long Syiem or Ka Pah Syntiew, the Root Ancestress of the Syiem Shyllong clan, U 'Lei Shyllong, the first Father of the Shyllong native state and U Suid Nia Long Syiem, the first Syiem of the Shyllong
native state figure prominently at nearly every stage of the festival. This annual native state religious festival held at Smit is an occasion where gratitude is shown to God for the good health of the people, eradication of famine, ill-luck, etc. It is also an occasion to pay tribute to the Syiem by Ki Khun Ki Hajar, (children of the soil/Hima), Ki Shnong (villages), Ki Raid (administrative units) and above all an expression of solidarity and oneness of the Hima under the umbrella of Ka Sad Ka Sunon. Ki Sur Hima (Music at the level of the native state) is therefore well-defined, disciplined and developed in structure, form and text. Music is very essential in the rituals that the role of the Duhalias is indispensable for without whom no ritualistic practice can be prepared and performed. The essence of music within the Hima can be studied against the following observation made:

1) The Duhalias perform the religious music beats within the Hima.

2) The role of the Syiem and the Bakhraw within the Hima is defined through Ka Shad Tyngkoh (Tyngkoh Dance).

3) The role of Ka Sad Ka Sunon is defined through Ka Shad Nohkjat (Nohkjat Dance).

Before the commencement of the Festival, Ka Phah Kyrwoh (Sending of Messages) takes place. The practice of sending information to all the Raids under the Hima for the coming Ka Pomblang Nongkrem
(Nongkrem Festival) is by using a special type of bamboo made or woven by the Duhalias in the form of 'rings'. The spirit of the people is kindled when Ka Sop Phlang (Sop means 'to cover' and Phlang means 'grass') of the ling Sad (Religious House) begins. This is a ceremony where the Raids come with their own bunch of dried grass to cover the roof of the ling Sad. In order of protocol, one Raid after another will cover the roof of the religious house. There is participation by all sections of people from within the Hima and also from Mylliem as well although rigidity of participation is maintained in religious practices only. Helen Giri and Lapynshai Syiem observe,

Notwithstanding the growth of Christian population, the Nongkrem Festival sees the 'Secular Character' where the Khasi Christians within Khyrim Syiemship spontaneously come forward to share and partake of 'Ka Riti Ka Hok' 13

The first day of the Festival begins with Ka Sait Ksing (Washing of Drums) by the Duhalias at Wah Umiew (River Umiew). The legend of U 'Lei Shyllong can again be linked with Ka Sait Ksing at Wah Umiew.

According to the Gazetteer of India (Meghalaya District Gazetteers),

The Shillong Peak (U Lum Shyllong) is the highest peak in the Khasi Hills. The base of the peak is the source of four important rivers – the Umngot, the Umiew, the Umjasai (an important tributary of the Umiam or Barapani) and the Umkhen. This explains the myth and the legend and the historical validity that can be found in the emergence of I 'Lei Shyllong. The First Day of the Festival also falls on Ka Sngi Iew Shyllong (Shillong Market Day). On the way to the river, the non-religious beat of Ka Ksing Shad Wait is played. This beat can be explained as the drum beat to prepare for the festival and to welcome the spirit of solidarity under the protection of the Syiem, hence it is also called Ka Ksing Ka Jingleit Shaw Burom which means ‘The Drum Beat to welcome with respect and dignity’. Ka Ksing Shad Wait on this day is played without the Tangmuri. At Mylliem, Ka Ksing Shad Wait is accompanied by the Tangmuri also. On reaching the Umiew river, there is a traditional call to one and all by the Head Musician, thus,

'To ia sait to ia sum, Ki Wait, ki Bom Ki Ksing, Ki Waiitlam Bad Narsuh bad ka Padiah, Ka Kynshaw ba la poi ha wah Umiew, ban

Oh let us wash let us bathe, the knives, the drums, the swords and small iron equipments, and the Padiah, the Cymbals, for we have reached the River Umiew, to be cleansed and purged, for the joy and blossoming of dance alongside the traditions in religious beliefs and practices.

Artyl/i Ki Wait (Two swords) are symbolically washed at the river by the Duhalias. One is meant for the Syiem for protection and shelter, and the other for the Duhalias to lead the way into the domain of God through music. There is also washing of seven Narsuh (small pointed iron equipments) used for piercing the seven pieces of the Blang lewduh (Goat of the Last Market Day)* sacrificed at U Lum Pomblang.

W.W. Hunter asserts,

In the Khasi Hills the inhabitants reckon eight days in the week, named as follows – (1) Lynkah, (2) Nongkrem, (3) Umlong, (4) Ranghep, (5) Shillong, (6) Pomthih, (7) Umni, (8) Yeo-duh.15

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*It is a usual practice to calculate the days of the Festival from the number of market days held in a week. The first day of the Festival begins on Ka Sngi lew Shyllong (Shyllong Market Day), the second day begins on Ka Sngi Pamtiah (Pamtiah Day), the third day on Ka Sngi Umni (Umni Day), the fourth day on Ka Sngi lewduh (lewduh Market Day), the fifth day on Ka Sngi lew Lyngka (Lyngka Market Day), and so on.
These eight market days in a week include (besides one week) also the first two days of the succeeding week as well, skipping Sunday. It is presumed that the above market days must have been calculated within the areas in and around the Shyllong native state since the 1830’s till the 1870’s. However, after the break-up of the Shyllong native state and also for reasons of economic convenience, the calculation of market days till today differs from one area to another.

To go back to Ka Pomblang Nongkrem, the significance of Ka Sait Ksing is primarily the art of ‘purging’. This is symbolic of the preparation for the religious festival. It is again the role of the Head Musician which is prominent in Ka Sait Ksing, which explains the predominance of music in the state festival. On Ka Sngi Pamtiah (Pamtiah Day) which is the second day of the festival, the ritual of Ka Suit Dohkha* is performed at Ka Rympei (One of the rooms) of the ling Sad. This is an invocation to U Lei Shyllong, Ka ‘Lei Long Syiem and U Suidnia Long Syiem. It is the chief priest U Sohblei Rumnong from the Rumnong clan who performs this ritual. At Ka Shlur (another room of the ling Sad) another ritual is performed by the Head Musician to Biskorom or U Sormoh and U Sorphin as known to the Khasis for their gift of knowledge in the use of iron equipments and musical instruments. Ka Suit Dohkha

*Suit is a kind of a ritual and Dohkha means ‘fish’.
in a word is a ritual which tries to fathom the inner life and understanding of one's religious belief. We may argue that just as the fish, however small it may be, dives into the inner most part of the deep ocean for sustainance, Ka Suit Dohkha symbolizes the sustained effort to reach the fathomless depth of man's relation with God. The dry fish used in such a ritual explains the migration wave of the Khasis in the dim historical antiquity as a process of food preservation for one's survival. When the ritual is over, there is partaking of dry fish (Ktung) distributed by the Head Musician and then partaking of betel nut (Kwai, Tympew) at Ka Shliur.

Ka Ksing Blei, one of the prominent religious beats of the Hima, is played during the ritualistic practices. When the rituals are over, Ka Shad Tyngkoh (Shad means 'dance' and Tyngkoh is 'to hop') which is a dance of the Bakhraws, the Basans, the Lyngskor and the Syiem follows. Ka Ksing Shynrang (male drum) is played when the Bakhraws dance, but when the Syiem dances, Ka Ksing Kynthei (female drum) is used which explains the nature of Khasi Syiemship and the concept of democracy. It also speaks volume of the matrilineal structure of Khasi society. The Syiem is considered U Syiem U Kmie (the Syiem the Mother) by the people. He is the one who protects his people and takes care of Ka Taro Ka Shwar (Evil spirits that can cause sickness). In an interview
had with the Lyngdoh of Raid Nongkrem, Phrikshon Lyngdoh, he asserts that the Bakhraws and the Basans stand on different poles considering their position in the Khasi native state. The Bakhraw is the Syiem maker, he anoints the Syiem Clan to take care of Ka Taro, Ka Shwar (Evil spirits that can cause sickness etc.), Ka Nar Ka Bili (Fetters or Chains). With gradual annexation and enhancement of political sway, the growth of the Basans also begins. The Basans in a word, are the newly adopted members of the newly annexed Raids. 16

The beat used for Ka Shad Tyngkoh is not a religious beat, yet it is significant because it is the Sohblei Rumnong who is U Nongsuit U Nongshor*, who leads the dance along the Head Musician called U Rangbah Duhalia. The use of the female drum when the Syiem dances again speaks of the hierarchy of administration within the Hima. The Syiem is not the dictator, in fact, he rules but does not reign. The Bakhraw on the other hand is the Syiem maker but again not a dictator. It is here that music plays a significant role in determining the status and part played by the Syiem, the Bakhraws and others.

On Ka Sngi lew Umni (Umni Market Day), the same ritual of Ka Suit Dohkha is again performed followed by Ka Shad Tyngkoh. Ki Shiphew Ksing Bad Arphew Hynniew Skit are played at Ka Shilur. At

16 Interview had with Phrikshon Lyngdoh, Lyngdoh of Raid Nongkrem, (Khryim Syiemship).
*The one who performs the rituals and who is considered as the Chief Priest.
midnight, *Ka Knia Muhuri* takes place, which is an invocation to the
divine attribute *Ka 'Lei Synshar**. This is a ritual which symbolizes
protection from any invader, any outsider, to be able to preserve the
sanctity of the rights of the people. It is a ritual to bless the work of the
Bakhraw, the Basan, etc. to consolidate *Ki Khun Ki Hajar* (children of
the soil/Hima) along with the blessings to be showered upon the
musicians, especially upon the tunes played on the *Tangmuri*
(Windpipe or flageolet) for peace and contentment throughout the
year. Here we refer again to the views of Helen Giri and Lapynshai
Syiem.

During the sacrifice there is the cutting of the

neck of a hen and only a female drum beat is played .

. . . . This implies the 'feminine characteristics' of this

particular ritual. One could feel the awe-stricken

atmosphere at the time of the *Knia Muhuri* which

perhaps gives enough room to ponder on the question

of divine traditionalism prevalent at *Ka Shad

Pomblang*.17

A particular ritual is done for the *Tangmuri* alone. This can be

17. Helen Giri & Lapynshai Syiem, op.cit.,

*Knia literally means a ritual or sacrifice. Muhuri or Tangmuri means the 'windpipe or flageolet'.

**Divine attribute invoked for the well-being of the people, for *Ka Synshar* (Administration) and success
of state craft.
attributed to the fact that the Tangmuri is considered the 'queen of Khasi Musical Instruments'. *U Thylliej* of the Tangmuri is made from a special type of bamboo called **U Siej Japung**. This particular piece of bamboo is plucked from a special place where the cock will not be able to hear. The metaphor of the cock is due to the belief that the melody of the Tangmuri is as sweet and appealing as the crowing of the cock. The higher the pitch, the sweeter is the appeal and the aesthetics of the Tangmuri. This belief can be further explained from the fact that if the cock perchance hears it, then the reed used for blowing the instrument may not be able to produce the required tune. Herein we can refer to a popular folk narrative told and retold in almost every Khasi hearth. It says that when the world was young and knew nothing but righteousness, the people learn the art of singing and drumming. It was therefore an idyllic life for them. When sin crept in, darkness covered the earth and the sun refused to shine. A council of Ki Laiphew Mrad was convened to solve the issue. It was the featherless cock which was chosen by the council to go to the cave where the sun hid herself and request her (the sun is referred to in the feminine gender amongst the Khasis) to come back from the cave. In

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*U Thylliej means 'tongue' used for blowing the instrument.
**Siej is 'bamboo' and Japung is actually a 'reed'.
***Thirty animals, indicating all kinds of creatures; Laiphew literally means 'Thirty' and Mrad indicates the 'beasts'. It is believed that men and beasts understood each other during this time.
brief, the cock met the sun and refused to eat and drink until the sun agreed to its request. The sun at last agreed to come out from the cave. The cock said it would crow three times as a call or signal for her to come out. It is in this context that the melody of the Tangmuri has been likened to the call of the cock. Its melody is sweet and piercing, it indeed gives a call to one and all.

On Ka Pomblang lewduh*, the rites and rituals are initially performed inside the ling Sad. The ritual at U Lum Pomblang or U Lum lewduh situated at Smit again symbolizes the undivided Hima Shyllong. lewduh is in fact the biggest market place situated in the heart of Shillong. Today it remains under Mylliem Syiemship. H. Aiontis Roy Kharphuli writes,

*U Lum lewduh at Smit commemorates the importance of lewduh in Shillong which now remains with Mylliem Syiemship which has been conducting religious ceremonies all this time. Monoliths, megaliths and dolmens at Khlieh lewduh (Top of Bara Bazar) stand as mute testimony to the wisdom of the founders of lewduh.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{18}H. Aiontis Roy Kharphuli, Shillong Centenary Celebration Souvenir, ed. Souvenir Sub-Committee, Shillong, 1976, p.17.

*It can be literally explained as the Goat Ceremony which takes place on lewduh Market Day.
As a mark of respect to the religious house, Ka Ksing Lynti (Niam), the prominent religious beat is played before leaving for U Lum Pomblang. Traditions have it that the religious beats can be played only during the night when the rituals are performed. In front of the ling Sad, however, the religious beat of Ka Ksing Lynti is played. At U Lum Pomblang also, Ka Ksing Blei is played only during the rituals on Ka Ar Dieng, Lai Dieng and Lai Kyndup. After the Blang lewduh is cut, it is immediately followed by Ka Ksing Mait Blang.* It is observed that after the Blang lewduh which is a male goat, is cut, amidst rejoicing and shouts, there is partaking of the parts of the goat. At sunset, the Pomblang ceremony is concluded by the Mastieh dance of the Syiem who holds the sword in his right hand. Coming back to the ling Sad, the religious beat of Ka Ksing Lynti is played. Before entering the ling Sad, the musicians play the beat of Ka Ksing Rung ling (Rung means ‘to enter’ and ling means ‘house’) after paying homage with folded hands to U Sawkher – Lai Lyngdoh (the makers of Shillong native state).

At midnight, Ka Bujai Blang (Bujai means ‘to give’ and Blang means ‘goat’) takes place. Ka Bujai Blang is an offering of tribute in the form of a goat by each Raid to the Syiem. While doing so, the representatives of each Raid communicate with the Syiem and discuss

*Mait means ‘to sever’ or ‘to cut’ and Blang means ‘goat’.
with him matters relating to the well-being of the Raid, the grievances of the subjects and so on. The goats received from each Raid are kept in a special room called Ka Kynram Blang overnight to symbolically explain that the Raids are under the Hima and the protection of the Syiem. The Bujai Blang is concluded first by Ka Shad Tyngkoh followed by Ka Shad Sawdong, performed only by the males at Ka Shlur. This continues till the daughter of the Syiem Sad gets ready in her dress and costume for the dance called Ka Shad Nohkjat in the morning.

On Ka Sngi lew Lyngka (Lyngka Market Day), Ka Shad Nohkjat takes place which is led by the daughter of the Syiem Sad. A female drum beat is played. Other maidens join her after she dances three times at Ka Shlur and then in front of the ling Sad, round the musicians, flanked by U Kongor (her father), the male relatives of the Syiem clan, the Basan Nongkseh, the Bakhraws and the Duhalias. This dance is a symbolic call of Ka Sad Ka Sunon to Ki Khun Ki Hajar for the protection under its umbrella. Ka Shad Paidbah (dance for all) then begins. In the evening, there is a ceremony called Ka Khatar Sla* which is a ritual signifying the offering of allegiance to God after ritualistic performances are over. The Syiem Sad takes the gourd and other

*Khatar means 'Twelve' and Sla means 'Leaf'. These signify the twelve divine attributes called U Diengiei, U Morshan, U Naram Shyllong, Ka Phan Syiar Shyllong, U Biskorom, U Blei Shyllong, Ka Blei Longsyiem, U Phan Kynthei, U Phan Shynrang, Ka Lei Duwan, Ka Syiem Sngi and Ka Blei Synshar.
sacrificial ingredients along with a cock or a hen in a copper plate. One pair of the copper plate containing the above ingredients is given to the Sohblei Rumnong signifying that one plate is given away to "Lei Shyllong and the other to Ka "Lei Long Syiem. Before the sacrifice of the goats kept at Ka Kynram Blang takes place in the evening, it is the Sohblei who begins the ritual, to clear the way for cutting of the goats. Then there follows the sacrificial cutting of goats kept at Ka Kynram Blang by the Syiem according to the protocol and finally the cutting of the 'Lang Paidbah* either by the musicians or the Bakhraws.

In the process each time a goat is cut and its neck completely chopped off, there is a joyous shout along with traditional gun shots symbolizing victory and that God is pleased. The Syiem takes the sword, Ka wait, from the Sohblei, and both bow down to each other as a mark of submission to the Creator. When the cutting of the goats is over, the same gesture is repeated and the sword is returned back to the Sohblei. After all this is over, Ka Shad Mastieh (Mastieh 'dance') begins where the Sohblei and the Head Duhalia dance, the Basans also dance. With the dance of the Syiem and the Basan Nongkseh there is lighting of the Dongmusa (Bamboo Lantern), there is traditional gun shot every time they come to the centre to bow down to each other.

*"Lang or Blang means 'goat', Paidbah means the 'crowd or public'. These goats are also from the Raid, they are sometimes called as 'Lang Raid."
other with the sword and the fly-flap, again a symbol of obeisance to the Creator. The Bakhraws standing at the outer ring on both sides, raise their hands up and down three times and with their shouts of exaltation. This is finally concluded by the Risa Bah which is a shout by the children of the soil.

The last day of the Festival is a day when they give their account and assess the expenditure and the rites which have been performed. Hence Ka Khein Sbai (counting of Cowries) by the musicians takes place. The musicians come out of the ling Sad with the Sbai (cowries) to go to the house of the musicians. They pray to God for the well-being and prosperity of Ka It Ka Hima. Then they go to the house of the Sohblei Rumnong. At the house of the Sohblei Rumnong, there are shouts and joyous celebration. Shouting is done three times and then there is a partaking of rice without salt, after which they return to the ling Sad. The importance given to the Duhalias in Ka Khein Sbai is that the role of the Duhalias is very prominent in the state religious festival of Khyrim. Ka Ksing Mih ling (Mih means ‘to come out’ and ling means ‘house’) is played before coming out of the ing Sad to go to the house of the Duhalias for Ka Khein Sbai. An important point to be noted here is that Ka Bom (Big Drum) is not played. It is only carried by one of the musicians on his back. The Head Musician leads them. There is Ka
Dorbar Sla (Dorbar means ‘durbar’ and Sla means ‘leaf’) which is held at night where the Syiem humbly submits to the Creator for guidance in statecraft and also for the blessings and prosperity showered upon the Hima. In a word, the Dorbar Sla is a prayer of the Syiem to the Creator. It is held at Ka Tyngkong (Veranda) of the ling Sad where the pillars of U Saw Kher – Lai Lyngdoh (the Makers of the Shyllong native state) stand till today. Before it begins there is Ka Kynto Shnong (literally meaning village proclamation). However, in this context it also means calling one and all to rapt attention. It is said that while the observance of prayers and allegiance is going on, strict solemnity is to be observed. According to the Syiem Sad, Batriti Syiem, any person who knowingly disturbs the silence of the contemplation is sure to meet with grave misfortune in his life and there has been certain evidences of such a disaster.\(^{18}\) It is further observed that the Sohblei Rumnong and the Syiem Sad undertake fasting since the Pamthang Day till the Lyngka Day for purging, complete meditation and surrender to God Almighty.

The native state religious festival of Khyrim Syiemship gives a complete shape to the formation of the religious beats. A critical examination of the musical technicalities involved in these beats will be discussed in the Chapter on the classical content. Briefly, we can state

\(^{18}\) Interview had with Batriti Syiem, Syiem Sad of Hima Khyrim.
That Ki Shiphew Ksing Bad Arphew Hynniew Skit have developed and influenced every level of polity development within the Hima. Undoubtedly, they form the essence of Ki Sur Hima Ha Ka Niam (Ritualistic Music at the level of the Native State).