CHAPTER III

THE LIANGMAI NAGA RELIGIOUS TRADITION
The Liangmai Naga religion emphasizes the fact that it is Tingwang, *God the Almighty*, who is the creator of the universe. It is interesting to note that though the creation started with man, Tingwang also created plants, animals as well as birds with him. Among them man was closer to a crow, a small plant called 'hu-ngbang', and a big plant called 'tashiangbang'. The three friends of man were leading a life of contentment and happiness. But, man was terribly lonely because there was no other human being with whom he could share his joys and sorrows. He, therefore, desired to have another human being as his companion. To his utter dismay he could not find one as he was unable to travel the length and breadth of this vast earth. He, therefore, sought the help of his three friends, and his friends readily agreed to look out for his would be companion. The crow after a long and strenuous search, sighted smoke in the southern part of the earth. The crow came back to the man and reported about his having sighted smoke. The crow inferred that there might be man living there, so he advised him to go to that place to find out for himself whether there was really a man living there or not. The man heeded the advice of the crow and set out immediately in search of that human being whom he believed to be living in the southern part of the earth. The crow had given him elaborate directions so as to locate the exact place. The man followed the directions carefully and searched the

* Tingwang means king of the universe. (Ting=Universe and wang= king)'Wang' is a short form of 'Chawang' meaning king.
place despite many difficulties.

The man found a hut near a river bank. He went to the hut and knocked at the door. The door was immediately opened by a beautiful girl whose name was 'Charah Ting Rangpui'. This beautiful girl was the daughter of Tingwang, God the creator. The man explained the nature of his plight. He requested Tingwang to kindly allow him to take His daughter as his companion. Tingwang was not willing to do so in the beginning. But the man did not give up. He went on pleading and persuading Tingwang. Eventually Tingwang relented and allowed him to marry His daughter but warned him not to sleep with her until he fed her with 'khiangshi', a sour fruit.

Tingwang also in His graciousness gave man the power to know the distinction between good and evil and also the freedom to choose either good or evil. He warned him that all of his actions would be recorded, and that he would be rewarded for his good acts and punished for his bad acts. Man's purpose in this world is to beautify God's creation by maintaining peace and harmony on earth. Man is also aware of the fact that the life span of the earth depended on his actions. He knows fully well that as long as he maintains the ecology of nature by practising certain moral values, he can fully enjoy the fruits of life on earth. God warned him that if he failed to live according to morality.

* Charah-Tingrang-pui: Charah means god; Tingrang means source of all causes or origin; Pui means mother.
natural values, He would destroy the earth by a fire called 'kuliyi-myi', which means a fire without flame. Thus God made man conscious of his responsibility to preserve the planet earth and its inhabitants. So that they could avoid total annihilation. After having sufficiently warned man, Tingwang blessed the man and wife and bid them farewell.

The man fed his wife with 'khiangshi' as he was told by God. They led a bliss conjugal life. As a result of this, his wife gave birth to all kinds of animals, birds, and plants when they reached a junction of eight foot-paths. She also gave birth to a 'Tating kang', a hard and smooth stone the tribe used for sharpening their weapons. The man wanted his wife to give birth to a human baby but to no avail. The man wanted his own offspring so badly that he went back to God for His help. God took pity on him. He gave him a walking stick made of iron and advised him to hit the tating kang after performing a suitable religious ritual. This particular ritual can be performed with the help of two kinds of herbs namely, 'Ka'ang nui' and 'tagai nui'. The man followed the advice of God in letter and spirit. As a result of this, many human beings came out from the stone! Thus the earth was filled with many human beings.

According to the Liangmai Naga history, in the beginning, human beings lived in harmony. They spoke the same language, and
had perfect communication with one another. Not only the human beings communicated with one another by means of language but also there was communication between human beings and trees and animals because trees and animals also spoke the same language. Also there was no conflict between human beings and other creatures of God, Tingwang was also part of such a society. He used to talk to them in the same language. Thus, there was no separation between God and His created beings. No wonder this period was considered to be the golden age of the Liangmai(Zeliangrong) Nagas. In this golden age, justice, righteousness and peace reigned supreme. Human beings and other creatures did not have to worry about anything at all. They never went hungry because God provided them with plenty of fruits to eat. Unfortunately, this golden age did not last long for the following reason: as the population of the human beings increased the human beings became selfish and greedy and they stopped having consideration for other creatures. In fact human beings became so greedy that they started destroying plants and trees even when they did not have any genuine need. This thoughtless action of human beings became a permanent threat to all the creatures on earth including his own fellow human beings. Slowly but steadily the separation between the human beings and the other creatures became a reality. The plants stopped bearing fruits in protest against the irresponsible behaviour of the human beings. The fruit bearing plants felt no more responsible for producing fruits for mankind. However, they continued to produced fruits for other creatures.
they stopped this also because they could no longer put up with the greed of the human beings. Due to lack of food all the creatures became nearly extinct. Even those who remained had to face starvation, and their suffering knew no bounds. Fortunately some vegetables and other plants took pity on the suffering creatures and they started producing food for all the creatures for a short time till human beings could tend for themselves. The human beings were well aware of the fact that it was only a temporary arrangement. The elders talk of this desperation which drove the men once again to God. "In desperation, therefore, they selected two strong men to place their problems before Tingwang or God".

God was very much displeased with human beings for their irresponsible actions. He told them in unequivocal terms that they would destroy the paradise on earth unless they change their ways. He also reminded them that it was the duty of mankind to take care of the other creatures but not to destroy them. God gave them two sacks of paddy and warned them not to stop on their way home under any circumstances. He also warned them that if they disobeyed, He would neither show His face nor would He talk to them again.

God made the human beings toil for their living. Thus, man had not only to look after the other creatures but also to look after himself. He had to depend on paddy for his food. Therefore, paddy had to be looked after with great care and attention. With this warning God bade them farewell. As luck would have it, these two
men on their way back home became very thirsty. They were so thirsty that they forgot God's warning and left their sacks of paddy near a river bank and quenched their thirst by the river water. After quenching their thirst they returned to the place where they had left the two sacks but to their utter dismay they found that the sacks were no longer there! This made them remembered the warning of God. They simply had to get back the sacks of paddy. Fortunately for them there were certain marks which left by the sacks! They were aware of the fact that if they failed to recover the lost sacks it would bring about the total destruction of all creatures on earth. They were responsible for their own suffering because they disobeyed God. They travelled for many days and nights; eventually, they found their sacks of paddy in the middle of the ocean! But they were beyond their reach. They sought help from some birds namely, Ake (parrot) and Mazai (a kind of bird who feed on paddy). These birds instead of helping them ate some of their paddy and flew away. The two men became helpless. They just stood there looking at the sacks. They were hoping against hope that some kind of help would be forthcoming. Taza makhe pai, queen of rats took pity on them and volunteered to procure the sacks of paddy on the condition that men should share their harvest with her race for all times to come. Men were left without any option but to accept the condition laid down by the queen of rats. They promised her that her race would be allowed
to enjoy the left over and also to stay with the human beings. Satisfied with their promise, she brought a small portion of paddy from the sacks for the benefit of mankind.

Here ends the tale but man never learnt from his mistakes. Neither did he try to reform himself. Instead he became more and more aggressive and selfish. Although God kept His distance from mankind due to their disobedience He did not withdraw His grace from mankind for sometime. Hoping that mankind would mend its ways but this never happened. God became so furious that he went away from this world. Because of this, the world became very gloomy and the creatures on this earth started suffering from all kinds of deseases. The Liangmai Nagas believes that the withdrawal of Tingwang is the source of all natural calamities, deseases and sufferings. They also believe that the size, height and even the span of life of man was reduced because of evil thoughts and actions. They believe that a day would come when men would become smaller and smaller in size so much so that he could climb even the small cotton plants. And one day he would completely disappear from this earth unless he reforms himself.

Men's evil deeds generated enmity and hatred not only among human beings but also among different kinds of creatures. Man became the worse sufferer as he had not only to fight his own fellow human beings but also with other creatures. When doomsday
was fast approaching God in His kindness decided to give a second chance for mankind so that he could realise his goal of life on earth. Therefore, God sent Manu: Tinglahbou to convey His goodwill to mankind. Manu: Tinglahbou advised mankind to rectify their mistakes and reconcile with their creator. But to his utter dismay no one paid heed to his advice and men became worse than before. Men's uncompromising nature made God more unhappy and He decided to set a new life pattern for all creatures on earth. Thus the dark age came to an end with the great feast called 'Amangbou Zou Hubo'. This great feast was the first and the last feast on earth where all the creatures as well as gods and goddesses gathered together in order to decide their future. After this great feast of 'Amangbou Zou Hubo', men, land animals, aquatic animals, birds and gods were divided into different kingdoms. Charahwang (king of gods) was the Chief Guest of that great feast. It may be noted here that Tingwang, God the Almighty did not attend the great feast. God did not attend because He had already decided to completely withdraw from this earth. A deity called 'Puichamyu' also did not attend because he had rivalry with his elder brother Charahwang as regards leadership (refer to appendix). During this great feast of 'Amangbou Zou Hubo' the future of all other creatures was enhanced for they received certain boons from Charahwang. Man gained nothing because of

1. Amangbou was the richest man on earth in that particular time. According to the Liangmai Naga tradition only the richest man in a village or in the region is allowed to celebrate the great Feast called 'Zou Hubo' or 'Chakiw Kariew Dungbo'.
the fact that he was busy spending his time in merrymaking by
eating and drinking. It is believed that even after the feast was
over man did not return home to plant the paddy. Timwang therefo-
re, had to send some birds to warn men that the season of sowing
seed was almost coming to an end. Man came home very reluctantly
cursing God on the way home for not having allowed him to eat up
all the food that was available at the feast! Man did not ask for
any boon from Charahwang in order to enhance his future. He had
no regret for not doing so. His only regret was that he did not
have two stomachs to store up more food. Charahwang however, reas-
sured him that he was still a special creature of Timwang. He al-
so told him that one day he would be able to rule over the whole
world through his wit. But his rule will not last very long for
he had forgotten his responsibilities and had opted for evil and
selfishness. Man started a new life knowing fully well that he
had fallen from the grace of God. The Liangmai Nagas believe th-
at after this great feast man lost his capacity to communicate
with God and other creatures. They also believe that he was no
longer able to see God face to face.

The Liangmai Naga religion revolves round this above men-
tioned tale. All the fundamental religious beliefs, rites and ri-
tuals have been derived from this. The religion emphasizes the
fact that God not only created man to inhabit the world but also
√ gave him a special status by conferring intelligence on him. This
special gift of intelligence has made man manifest himself in different dimensions of his personality. According to this myth, God gave man the great responsibility of taking care of the world and its inhabitants. In the beginning, God wanted man to enjoy the bountiness of nature without any hard labour but man lost his paradise on earth due to his own foolish and irresponsibility. Because of this fact he had to face many a hardship and sweat for making a living. Man's disobedience to God also paved the way for evil to have a hold on this earth. The disobedience of man not only endangers his very own existence but also endangers the other innocent creatures on earth and as well as the life span of the earth itself. God created man with a specific purpose. He made him free to choose whichever way he would. We learn an important lesson from this myth. The lesson is this: a good man must lead a rational life and work for the welfare of his fellow beings. The supreme strength of man lies in his power to make a distinction between good and evil. This strength is superior to any other kind of strength.

Man's constrained relationship with Tingwang, God the creator, resulted in the emergence of gods and godheads who eventually rule over all creatures on earth. Man's repeated disobedience of Tingwang paved the way for Charahwang, a powerful godhead in the Liangmai Naga tradition to became a supreme ruler on earth. He also gave the power to his younger brothers to control over different natural phenomena like, rivers, mountains, rain, wind, storms, fire

* Appendix, the myth of Charahwang.
and so on. The Liangmai Naga religious tradition also emphasizes that man can become godhead through various ways. For example, Am-
angbou became a godhead (a god of wealth) through his exceptional quality of generosity, and Ashabou became god of wisdom, on account of his exceptional cleverness. It may, however, be noted here that the Liangmai Nagas albeit venerate and pay homage to the one who achieve the feat of godhead, they hardly encourage their youngsters to emulate him. It is because of the fact that, the tribe considered this goal of life to be something which does not collaborate with the purpose of life of man on earth. For them the top priority of man on earth is to sacrifice his happiness for the welfare of his fellow beings and strive for maintaining peace and harmony on earth but not to escape from it.

The Liangmai Nagas' myth of creation gives a vivid picture of man and his inseparable relationship with God and nature. Ting-
Wan, (God) is considered to be a Supreme creator and planner. He is also considered to be the giver and dispenser of life with power to give life and dispense the same. Man is expected to be the manager of God's creation by maintaining peace and harmony on earth. Though God stopped communicating with man directly because of man's repeated disobedience He wanted to have a communication with him through the medium of nature. Thus, nature not only reflects God's will but also acted as a mediator between man and God.
It (nature) helps man to understand itself by observing the different seasons, the signs of rain, drought and as well as the sign of many other natural calamities. Man is able to have his own calendar on the basis of the movement of the Sun, the Moon and the stars. He is also able to understand the inter-connectedness and the inter-dependence of everything that is in nature including the animals and himself. Thus we often hear of phrases like, 'tathi ka-bak kumbo' (like dogs and pigs without a sense of basic human decency) when they wish to express contempt. The coward and timid persons are known as 'tathian pabi khuontu pingjiu pakbo' (as timid as deer). The lazy person is equated with 'kabiyu kiyuna' (beetle like insect). Senchang (a particular type of python) is compared with a person who possesses the qualities of greatness, nobility, courage and serenity even in the midst of troubles and dangers. This person is willing even to sacrifice his own happiness for his society. Quichang, the tiger, is compared with a person who would not harm a fly without any provocation and who would devour his enemies once the dignity, prestige and honour of his community or his own is in danger. Winged creatures also evoke certain similarities with that of certain human qualities. The Liangmai Nagas learns a good lesson from the way 'tapengpui' or the butterfly, flies up and down, very much like the life of man on earth full of ups and downs i.e. fortunes and misfortunes. A king today may be a beggar on the street tomorrow and vice-versa. The tribe also admires the free and
independent nature of 'chakhua' and 'charenq' (sky lark(?) and horn bill) as the people love their freedom and independence. It compares a foolish person with 'Abeng' (Owl), and a Tyrant and oppressor with that of 'chakiang' (a kind of bird which feed on smaller birds).

Similarly, the Liangmai Naga also learn many important lessons from plants. He knows that a tender but solid grass spike will one day grow into a tall bamboo. Without knowing its fate, the young shoot grows thinking proudly that it will certainly reach the sky. But nature has shown that there is no such guarantee. Thus, the elders of the tribe would always ask the foolish and carefree youngsters to learn their lesson from it. A thorny plant called 'thurung' is compared with a quarrelsome person who makes enemies wherever he goes. The tribe compares 'Mashangbang' (a kind of palm tree which resemble with betel-nut tree and coconut tree) with the person who is endowed with courage and determination to fight single handedly against social evil. Like the plant 'Mashangbang', he knows that he is alone in the midst of his enemies. Despite this he always stands for justice and truth without any fear even at the cost of his own life. The person who has these qualities is also compared with 'chamiangkien' (a creeping plant) which has no importance while it is fresh but emanates an uncomparable sweet fragrance which will last for many days when it
gets dried up after a few hours. These two plants signify two things, namely, 1. a good man with great qualities renders valuable service to his society at the risk of his own happiness and prestige, and 2. people recognize his importance and the worth of his achievements and sacrifices only after his death. A huge banyan tree is compared with a benevolent and kind hearted person who is always helpful to the poor and needy people.

Thus, for a Liangmai Naga, nature is like a book, he derives knowledge and wisdom from it and makes use of it in his day to day life. The Liangmai Nagas examines the objects around him meticulously. He cares for and treasures all he sees and observes so that they could become his guiding principle. Nature is also like a big hospital which provides all types of medicines which cure all bodily ailments. Nature and man compliment one another. Nature is everything to man therefore, it would be suicidal for man to ignore his inextricable relationship with God and nature.

For the Liangmai Nagas, to be born as a human being is a great blessing from Tingwang, for He created this world especially for mankind to enjoy the life on earth. The goal of mankind is to be born again on this earth as human beings. But unfortunately this goal of life cannot be realised by all human beings due to their actions of the previous life. Hence rebirth as human being is determined by the past actions. Those who commit heinous
crimes but escape the punishment in their life time are bound to be born as animals. Such person's souls do not even reach 'Charuidih' or the land of the dead but soon after their death they get born again the animal kingdom. And even as animals God will judge their actions and if they are not repentant for their misdeeds the process of rebirth would continue as birds, insects and so on. But all those who pursue good conduct in their previous lives would continue in the process of birth and rebirth and will continue to be born as human beings till the last day of this planet called earth. Tradition also states that those who die young would come back to earth earlier than the old. So for all creatures to be born as human beings is a blessing. Suffering in our life is due to our past misdeeds and it can be also caused by the misdeeds of our ancestors. The evil effect of all misdeeds can be removed by certain religious rituals known as 'tingthi rah thiubq' and 'Niyuh thiu luanbo' which involve the appeasement of the spirits of those who suffered from injustice we or our ancestors had caused. And if this religious ritual is not performed immediately, then the spirits would continue to punish three generations of our descendents. In other words, according to the Liangmai Nagas, if we have done good deeds in our previous life, then we would enjoy this present life, and if we pursue evil, then this very existence is hell itself.
The life span of this planet (earth) itself is dependent on the actions of mankind. As long as man can maintain the balance of nature and also peace and harmony among the fellow beings we will enjoy the fruit of life on earth; but once man ceases to preserve the balance which gets disturbed by the evil force unleashed by man then God will destroy the world by the fire which is called 'kuli myi' (fire without flame). This destruction is ineluctable therefore, it is said that men in the land of dead or charuidih always pray to God the Almighty to release them as early as possible so that they can enjoy their life on earth once again before its total destruction.

For the Liangmai Nagas, it is not necessary to worry for the heavenly bliss and eternal joy because all the good souls would enjoy this heavenly bliss after the total destruction of the planet earth. In any case, the seeking of heavenly bliss even if it would be attained beforehand would be either an act of escapism or a selfish act since majority would be still left suffering on earth. Therefore, they consider the life on earth to be the best as there is no other place more fit to serve humanity. For them, suffering serves as a stern teacher which helps in constructing one's personality and making man realise his goal of life and work for the welfare of his fellow beings. "No matter, friends or foes whosoever comes for help one must accept even to the extent of risking one's life. One must take up their burdens
as one's own and bring justice in the society. No criminals should go unpunished, but he must be given a fair chance to defend his life" are the popular wise word of the village elders. Thus the virtue of man is to preserve peace and harmony in the society which must function with a sense of justice. It is a duty of man to cherish the moral values and justice in order to maintain peace and harmony in the society. Man must enjoy the fruits of life: power, wealth, fame and so on, but it should be with the spirit of love and affection towards his fellow men. Accordingly, in the Liangmai Naga society, those warriors who work for the welfare of their fellow beings and strive for peace and harmony in the society are considered as ideal man or Liangtuang. Each and every warrior is not considered as 'Liangtuang' if he does not work for the welfare of his fellow beings even if he is exceptionally brave and has mastered the art of warfare. (This kind of exceptional warrior would be known as 'Chari Chagau' but never as Liangtuang). The word, 'Liangtuang' stands for the one who sacrifices his happiness for the welfare of his fellow human beings. A cursory glance at the Liangmai Naga religion, the concept of the good and the Godly makes me confident enough to lay the claim that for this tribe, the goals of religion and morality are interwoven and one appears to lead to the other.

The relation between morality and religion is undoubtedly close as they are both fundamental to the way of life of an indi-
vidual or of a society. Though most philosophers recognise that morality and religion are connected they are not clear as to what kind of connection it is. Some are of the view that religion is nothing but ethics illustrated by stories and reinforced by liturgical and homilatic arts, while others hold that morality is simply a consequence or outgrowth of theological position, and it is wholly dependent on religion, that is a man who has no religion cannot have any morality. It becomes necessary for me to first discuss the concept of morality and religion before analysing the relation between the two.

The word, 'moral' is said to be derived from the Latin word 'more', meaning convention or practice. It is our morals that inform us of the difference between good and bad, right and wrong, virtue and vice. Morality helps us to attain a good life to maintain peace and harmony in the society. But we seldom talk about morality as such. The main problem of morality is that it has not been adequately distinguished from other guides to conduct. Generally, people are convinced that morality is simply any code of conduct adopted by a group.

If we equate morality with a code of conduct adopted by a group of people and try to discover whether there is a universal morality our investigation may reveal a universal code of conduct. Plato would say that moral concepts are universal and changeless.
As a matter of fact, Plato was aware of the important difference in codes of conduct of different societies. And yet, he tried to formulate a universal morality by thinking that an analysis of human nature could provide him with a foundation on which to build this morality. Today many philosophers try to use the findings of psycho-analysis or sociobiology in the same way. But if the facts of human nature are to provide a foundation for morality, these cannot be newly established facts known only by those acquainted with the relevant science, but must be facts that are known by those whom we consider to be responsible moral agents. In any case, it cannot be that prior to psycho-analysis or sociobiology normal people did not know those facts about human nature upon which morality depends. According to them, therefore normal people would not have had sufficient reason to accept morality.

There are some other philosophers who thought that an analysis of rationality could provide the foundation of morality. Among them, Immanuel Kant is an outstanding example. For all of them, morality got equated with a form of rationality. They tried to show not only that it was rational to be moral, but also that it was irrational to be immoral. But there are instances, that some responsible moral agents often want to act immorally, and if rationality is to be considered as a basic criterion for morality then no responsible moral agents must ever want to act irrationally.
Even though all of those who have investigated the nature of morality start with an account of morality that has a specific content, almost none of them regard the content as an essential feature of morality. Instead, they define morality by means of some formula. As indicated, some define morality as the code of conduct adopted by a social group. Some define morality as the code of conduct that would be adopted by all rational persons. They, then, try to derive the content of morality by determining what code of conduct all rational persons would accept. Some others define morality as that code of conduct which a person takes to be over riding or most important. The content of morality is then determined by each person for himself.

However, I accept the view that morality is a public system that applies to all rational persons. A justified or rational morality is a public system that all impartial rational persons would advocate adopting to govern the behaviour of all rational persons.

A public system is a system of conduct that is both known and understood by all those to whom it applies and one that it would not be irrational for all those to whom it applies, to adopt to govern their behaviour. The rules of a game usually form a public system, which are known and understood by all those to whom they apply. And it is not irrational for all the players to adopt the rules. But morality differs from other public systems
as it applies to all rational persons. It is regarded as a system of conduct that all rational persons know and understand. As a matter of fact, ignorance of morality is never regarded as a legitimate excuse. It follows from this that morality includes not only behaviour that affects oneself but also that which affects others.

Indeed, morality or moral system, contains 1. beliefs about the nature of man, 2. beliefs about ideals, about what is good or desirable or worthy of pursuit for its own sake; 3. laying down of rules as to what ought to be done and what ought not to be done; and 4. motives that incline us to choose the right or the wrong course. We learn as children that we should be unselfish, that we should not tell lies and that we should follow the rules covering different aspects of life.

Generally, morality is concerned with relations between men, with how they ought to behave toward each other, with that general rules governing relation between men ought to be adopted by a society. As Thomas Hobbes has pointed out in Leviathan, the province of morality is limited to "those qualities of mankind that concern their living together in peace and unity."¹ The need of morality arises because a small human group such as a family, tribe, etc., needs mutual support and cooperation for defence against other groups, against animals, and against forces of nature. Quite apart from the advantages which accrue from society, man normally delights in each other's company.

¹. Leviathan chapter, 13.
Along with the direct and indirect needs for the company of his fellows, man has tendencies that disrupt the society on which his life and happiness depend. When man faces misfortune or when the question of survival arises, his desire to preserve his own life leads each man into competition with his neighbours. Consequently, pride, jealousy, and sheer stupidity get the upper hand, and they lead to what Hobbes called a condition of war. To avoid this undesirable condition man has devised the system of rules which we know as law and morality. Though systems differ widely in detail, their common origin and purpose in the overriding need to preserve social harmony ensure a broad similarity in fundamentals.

It will be more appropriate if we discuss not only the content of morality but also motives which lead men to act morally, that is, to obey the moral rules of their society. We obey moral rules, even when it is irksome or inconvenient to do so, because we know that we shall suffer if we do not. Society enforces its code of rules by such sanction as disapproval, social ostracism, retaliation, and the penalties of the law. It is partly fear of such penalties that leads us to obey the rules. But it is not only fear. There are some people who are intelligent enough to see the advantages that they will gain in the long run by fulfilling their moral obligations. Secondly, we are creatures of habit and have been trained to obey and respect the rules of our society.
from our earlier years. Of course, people sometimes obey the rules for no reason other than the fact that they are just the rules. This attitude is reflected in such saying as 'a promise is a promise', 'It just would not be right'. Very often respect for rules is enhanced or even created by respect for the author of the rule; we think it is right to obey a rule, even though we do not see the point of obeying it, because it emanates from a source we recognize as authoritative, worthy of our esteem, and competent to exact our obedience. This attitude will clearly be important when we come to consider religious rules, since to be a believer his God is precisely such an authority. Finally, it is possible that one may simply love to respect the right of others without having anything to do with the moral obligation or moral rules prescribed by the society. Sometimes, one may even violate certain existing moral rules of the society and consequently, the society may impose social ostracism on him; and yet he may be still considered as a moral person. This becomes explicit when we take up the cases of some of the 'good' and exceptional men those referred to as Lia-tuang in the Liangmai Naga tradition.

Turning to the definition of religion, we find that the term 'religion' has been generally connected with the verb 'religare' that is, 'to bind'. People who are generally accounted religious do find themselves bound by various precepts, rules, and obligations imposed upon them by the laws or observances of the religion seems
to foster a tendency to loyalism. Yet the adherents of Buddhism and other religions all claim, in one way or other, some sort of release, some kind of liberation, which seems to contradict that known characteristic of religion to impose binding duties and required observance to its adherents.

For most people, belief in God and in after life are the essential ingredients of religion because these are prominent elements in the religion we know best. But if we include these in a definition of religion, we shall find ourselves committed to excluding many types of religions. In Buddhism, for example, there is neither a personal God nor personal immortality. What is essential to religion is 1. belief in supernatural powers which may be thought to either as persons or impersonally as 'forces'; 2. appropriate emotion attitudes, a sense of the sacred or numinous or uncanny, and an attitude of humility or reverence in its presence; and 3. rites, ceremonies, and other religious duties. Where the supernatural is thought as person or persons, these duties are either thought of as duties towards supernatural persons or as enjoined by them, usually both. However, a naturalist would hold that there is nothing over and above nature. For example, Auguste Comte is of the view that, it is to humanity that the individual man owes everything that he is and has. It is because he shares in the general biological and psychological capacities of human nature that he is able to live a human life. And the men of given generation are able to
lead a fully human life because of the labours of their predeces-
sors in building up their cultural heritage. Moreover, according to
Comte, the service of humanity, in the many forms this can take, is
the noblest ideal which could be proposed to an individual and hu-
manity, unlike an omnipotent God, needs this service. Thus, Comte
proposed to set up a religion of humanity with man, viewed as a uni-
itary though spacio-temporally scattered being, as an object of wor-
ship.

A naturalist is committed to rejecting traditional religion,
which is based on beliefs in supernatural. This does not necessari-
ly carry with it a rejection of religion as such, however. Many nat-
uralists like Ludwig Feuerbach, Auguste Comte, John Dew and Erich
Fromm envisage a substitute for traditional religion which will pe-
form the typical functions of religion without making any claims
beyond the natural world. We can best classify naturalistic forms
of religion in terms of what they take God to be, that is, what th-
ey set up as an object of worship. In traditional religion the su-
pernatural personal deity is worshipped because he is thought of as
the zenith of both goodness and power. More generally, we can say
that religious worship is accorded to any being because it is rega-
arded as having a controlling voice in the course of events and at
least potentially exercising that power for good. This suggests
that to find a focus for religious responses in the natural world,
we should look for a basic natural source of value. Broadly speaking,
achievements of value in human life are due to factors of two sorts: 1. man's natural endowments, together with the deposit of his past achievements in the cultural heritage of a society, and 2. things and processes in non-human nature on which man depends for his successes and indeed his very life. Most naturalists locate their religious objects primarily on one or the other side of this distinction, although some try to maintain an even balance between the two.

Though there are various definitions of religion none of which specifies a set of characteristics which gives us a unique essence. It is cultural variation which determines what becomes special as a religious factor for a community. For religions such as Catholicism and orthodox Judaism, faith in personal God would be the dominating factor. In other religions, ritual may be sharply de-emphasized, and with it the demarcation of certain objects as sacred, as in protestantism. Beliefs in supernatural beings can be whittled away to nothing, as in certain forms of Unitarianism, or may never be present, as in certain forms of Buddhism.

There is no dispute over the definition of religion in the world of the Liangmai Naga tribe. The equivalent term of the word, 'religion' is known as 'charah cheng' in Liangmai Naga. The literal meaning of the word, 'charah cheng' is God's way of life. For them there cannot be any 'charah cheng' or religion without God or gods. They strongly believe that men need to follow charah cheng or God's
way of life because, it will bring not only peace on earth but also better understanding with God when the time comes for mankind to live with Him (God) in eternity.