CHAPTER IV

THE EXCEPTIONAL MAN AND THE VIRTUE OF HEAD HUNTING
In the Liangmai Naga society, as I have shown those great warriors who work for the welfare of their fellow men and strive for peace and harmony in the society are considered as 'Liangtu-ang'. The word, 'Liangtuang' stands for the one who sacrifices his happiness for the welfare of his fellow beings. He is the upholder of moral values, justice, equality, unity and balance of power in the community. He is also the defender of human rights and the protector of the innocent people who suffer from injustice. His goal is to fight against the evil force which disturbs the peaceful existence of his people even at the cost of the lives of his dear and near ones, and his own life.

This being so it is interesting to note that he is not seen as a rebel or a recluse by the member of his society. He is not like the existentialist hero(The Fall) trying to find meaning of life in an alien setting. As I have made reference to the hero of the existentialist novels, I may refer specifically even though very briefly, to Camu's 'The Fall' to illustrate my point. As one goes through this monograph, we find that though Jean-Baptiste Clamence, the hero of 'The Fall' tries to rise above the ordinary people by serving humanity he fails to achieve his goal of life. In the beginning, he considers himself to be higher and more intelligent than the rest of his fellow men. He is definitely a successful lawyer, who tries his level best to be honest in his profe-
ssion. Apart from his profession he also commits himself to the service of the poor and needy people by helping them in every possible way. In this way, he enjoys popularity and success in his society, yet he is not satisfied with his achievements. The reasons for these are obvious to my mind.

Apparently of course, he loves to work for the welfare of the people who are in need but in reality he loves no one other than himself. He does not believe that human affairs are serious matters. But he occasionally pretends to take life seriously. However, very soon the frivolity of seriousness strikes him and he merely goes on playing his role as best as he can. He plays at being efficient, intelligent, virtuous, a good citizen, responsible, high mindedness and so on. However, he has no idea where seriousness might lie, except that it is not in all that he sees around him — which seems to him to be merely an amusing game, or almost tiresome. Hence living among men without sharing their interests, he could not manage to believe in the commitment he had made. He is courteous and indolent enough to live up to what is expected of him in his profession, his family, or his life as a citizen, but each time with a sort of indifference that spoils everything. And yet he likes his own life under double code, and his serious acts are often the ones in which he is the least involved. Thus, at last he could not forgive himself and the people
around him. He finds out that his achievements are meaningless, and that he has been indulging in an act of hypocrisy. So finally, he escape from his own country for the purpose of finding out the meaning of life in an alien setting. The Liangtuang's commitment can be seen in sharp contrast to Jean-Baptiste Clamence's. Unlike him the hero of the Liangmai Naga tradition is very clear about his conception of the ideal moral values and the ideal moral life. As a matter of fact, he is above the speculated ethical code of the society; he knows how to deal with any crisis according to time, place and situation. Sometimes he lifts himself above the particular existing law of the society and imposes his own law for tackling a particular situation. But whatever he does is not for his own good but for the good of his society as a whole.

I am re-emphasizing this commitment to the service and welfare of his society on the part of the Liangtuang because of the total misunderstanding of this ideal in the literature of the world. For years thanks to the writings of colonialists I find the bias even amongst Naga intellectuals regarding the warrior tradition of this society. Here I specifically refer to the so-called practice of head hunting or 'Tapi lubo' in Liangmai Naga tradition.

Hence, in this chapter, I would like to examine the concept of head hunting or 'Tapi lubo' and the exact implication of the term, 'head hunting' in Liangmai (Zeliangruang) Naga tribe. I will also try to explicate the significance and importance of this practice in the moral system and religion of the tribe. The concept of head
hunting or 'tapi lubo' is a complex one in the sense that there
are various ways of taking home the victim's head, but all are
not considered as 'head hunting' in the true sense of the term.
Hence we have to transcend the literal meaning of the word, 'head
hunting', to differentiate it from all cases of cutting head. To
understand the concept of head hunting I need to refer back to
the religious beliefs and the moral values of the tribe in the
earlier times.

Dr. T.C. Hodson, a pioneer in the field of ethnographical
research on the Nagas in his book, 'The Naga tribe in Manipur',
says:

"The simplest and most obvious form of head hunting is as-
sociated with the blood feud, where the duty of vengeance re­
 mains unsated until the tally of heads is numerically equal. Hen­
ce, as a matter of practical politics, it is usual when reconcil­
ling two villages to insist on the return of heads; for by this
means a recrudescence of the feud is effectively prevented."1

Here, Dr. Hodson is not talking about the concept of head hunting
but he is talking about the concept of revenge or 'Rikhum lubo' in
Liangmai Naga tribe. Taking revenge is more prevalent especially
during inter village warfare, which has nothing to do with the con­
cept of head hunting. However, he admits the complexity of head hu­
nting. He says:

"I do not think it possible to reduce head hunting to a si­
ngle formula. I have found it connected with simple feud with a­
grarian rites, and with funerary rites, and eschatological rites."2

1. T.C. Hodson, 'The Naga Tribes in Manipur' Section III, Page 115.
2. T.C. Hodson, op. cit. p. 122.
His inability to adequately explicate the concept of head hunting is due to the fact that, he could not fathom the religious and moral implications of head hunting. Also, he wrongly equated the concept of head hunting with many other types of criminal activities.

J.H. Hutton, while talking about head hunting in Angami Naga tribe puts all the Naga tribes in one basket. According to him, for the Nagas there is no distinction between a fine buffelo head and the head of human being. I quote:

"...nor does the Nagas make so much radical a distinction between human heads and heads of games. Man is the biggest game and the most dangerous game, and his pursuit is therefore, attended with precautions which may be unnecessary in the case of smaller game, but he is still game. There is after all, not so much to separate a sportsman's desire for say, a fine buffelo head and a Naga's desire for the head of man." ¹

J.H. Hutton, goes on to condemn the practice as savage and barbarian. He says:

"Head hunting as an accompaniment of blood feud ... Head hunting in one form or another is a wide spread practice, and whatever the various incidents of head hunting in various quarters of the globe, the ultimate reason of its existence in any particular spot must probably sought in some deep-rooted and innate characteristic of human nature. Among the Naga tribes, at any rate, head hunting, though associated with vague idea of the benefits accruing from human sacrifice, must also be connected in no small degree with ordinary, everyday human vanity. What man, or at least, what Naga, who has killed his enemy does not want to boast about

it? And unless he can show the body, where is the proof? Most savages are somewhat economical of truth; at any rate the Naga is when it comes to his exploits in war and the chase. If slayer can produce the body of the slain his statement is likely to be accepted as true; since retrieving the body would be laborious, not to say after dangerous proceeding, the head is the natural part of it to bring back as testimony, as it gives a definite assurance that the foe has been killed, not scotched. This at any rate is the Angami explanation. Moreover, if it can be retrieved, the Angami does prefer the whole body, and if the whole body is not available he will take the arms, hands, legs and feet of the corpse as well as its head. And in this connection it must not be also forgotten that the Naga does not fight in the open country and under the eyes of his fellows, but in heavy jungle and in raiding parties of small numbers from one upwards, where none can observe his deed of daring.\footnote{\textit{J.H.Hutton, op.cit., part III. page 107.}}

J.H.Hutton, I wish to show in his haste to explain everything about the Nagas in terms of savagery and barbarism, leaves out many important factors which determine the concept of head hunting in Naga society. He also misrepresents the whole system as he views Naga culture from the point of view of his own failing to overcome his prejudice and bias. Experts say that, there is an element of savagery in all human beings as they are after all, species of the class animal, but they also at the same time, admit that they differ from other animals in having intellect and rationality. However the latter two qualities which are part and parcel of human beings, are absent in only the primitive people who alone are savage and wild in nature. That the so-called savage and primitive
people do always give a rational explanation and as a matter of fact their (i.e., Nagas) acts are based on rational consideration which the critics fail to acknowledge.

But this myth about the savage Naga is propagated not only by outsiders but also the Nagas themselves who are equally responsible for the distortions of their own culture and more specifically about head hunting. It is no exaggeration to say that, most of the Nagas are of the view that head hunting is closely associated with the concept of revenge, and in certain cases, they also equate head hunting with the criminal activities of the raiders! If we consider the practice of head hunting from only one angle, their assumption may have some validity; for instance, if we take the literal meaning of the word, 'head hunting' certainly it will give an immediate impression that it has something to do with violence and indiscriminate killing without any valid reason. However, when we closely examine the concept of head hunting in the context of the Liangmai Naga tradition, it gives an entirely different picture altogether. As far as the Liangmai Naga tradition of head hunting is concerned, the term, 'head hunting' or 'tapi lubo', is applicable only to a warrior who brings home the head of a notorious criminal who has been a nuisance in the society. This head hunting is done according to certain norms, for example, the enemy is given a fair chance to defend himself. This practice not only symboli-
zes courage and physical prowess but also it indicates sincerity, honesty and truthfulness of a warrior. J.H. Hutton was partly right in pointing out that, for a Naga warrior taking home the victim's head is a natural part of it to bring back as testimony, as it gives a definite assurance that the foe has been killed, not merely scotched (refer page 105). Thus, for a Naga warrior, there is no better proof of his worthiness in the society than either capturing the criminal alive¹ or taking home his head as a trophy of a fair fight. However, this does not mean that a warrior is free to do as he wishes. This 'tapi lubo' can be abused by 'mazarihmai' or a pseudo warrior and 'In-garih mai', the raiders. The tradition, therefore, regulates the code of law of head hunting in order to keep surveillance over the warriors, and also to avoid victimization of innocent people. If a warrior is found guilty of violating the code of head hunting for the first time, he will be termed as a pseudo warrior and the society will impose social ostracism on him. For his second consecutive violation, he will be considered as a criminal who deserves to be punished severely. The law of head hunting allows no warrior to challenge or kill a person without first having evidence of the person's crime. And even if a person is found guilty of committing a serious crime he has to be given a fair chance to surrender so that unnecessary blood-

¹ Ideally speaking, capturing a criminal alive is more prestigious than taking home his head, but in practice, it is almost impossible as no Naga warrior would lower his prestige by giving up without fighting to the end.
shed can be avoided. Only when no alternative is available a war­
rior is permitted to use force. Head hunting is therefore neither an indiscriminate killing without having valid reason, nor is it always associated with violence. The term, 'head hunting' is in fact, not only complex but also a value based concept.

An act of indiscriminate killing in Liangmai Naga tradition is called 'duangri gihbo' and it is regarded as different from 'Richang gihbo' or killing an enemy in a fair fight. 'Duangri gihbo' or an indiscriminate killing is done by 'mazari mai' or a pseudo warrior and also the raiders or 'In-gari mai'.

As per the code of law of head hunting, there are two stages of a person's becoming an outstanding warrior. (a). 'Pajeng-lwilubo piu' or a person who has mastered the art of warfare and also the one who has already fulfilled the basic requirement of a good warrior; (b). the 'Liangtuang' or the ideal man. If an ordinary warrior has a desire to acquire the most prestigious title 'Liangtuang' he is expected to acquire the title 'Pajeng lwilubo piu' first. However, in certain cases, a person may be considered as 'Liangtuang' without even having qualified for the title 'Pajeng lwilubo piu', solely, because of his good deeds and sacrifices for the welfare of his fellow beings. Traditionally, if a warrior has a desire to acquire the title 'Pajeng lwilubo piu' he has to either capture alive or kill at least, a hawk, a python, a wild boar, a ti-

1. Generally, this type of warrior will be awarded the title only after his death.
ger and a notorious criminal besides rendering valuable service for the welfare of his society. After capturing alive or killing each of his victims he has to perform certain religious ritual and pay respect to his victims according to their status. For the first three victims, he has to observe one day each, for a tiger two days, and for a criminal warrior three days. This particular ritual is called 'Alangh kyi klubo' in Liangmai Naga. After achieving the feat of 'pajeng lwilubo piu' if he wishes he may further strive for the title, 'Liangtuang' by rendering valuable services for the welfare of his fellow beings. However, if he is content with the title, 'pajeng lwilubo piu', he may live like common warrior ever after.

As a matter of fact, even achieving the feat of 'Pajeng lwilubo piu' is a tough task. To become a 'Liangtuang' is much tougher. Nevertheless, the tribe would always encourage the youngsters to emulate the Liangtuang. Thus, when a male child is born in a Liangmai Naga family, the eldest member of the clan, and the eldest male of the village are to go and bless the newborn baby so that the child may grow up to be a Liangtuang. After eight days of birth, there will be a naming ceremony which is called 'Tajumh gyibo' in Liangmai Naga. This naming ceremony or 'Tajumhgyibo' is very important as the tribe has a belief that the giving of an appropriate name to a child would determine the life-line of the child. La-
ter, all boys in their pre-adulthood are required to perform a certain religious ritual called 'Aloubo' where once again they will seek the blessing of the elders. Thereafter, they sleep in their respective 'Khangchiukyi' (boys' dormitory). These dormitories serve as educational institutions where strict rules and regulations are enforced. The eldest member of the dormitory is called 'khangpi' and he is entrusted with the responsibility of disciplining the youngsters. During this period all the boys are required to undergo a rigorous training which will later help them to face all kinds of dangers in life. After completion of their training the elders will once again test their mental and physical ability by sending them for fishing and hunting. Only when their performances are satisfactory will they be allowed to pursue their goals independent in life.

Soon after the completion of the basic training an aspiring 'Pajeng lwilubo piu' has to go and hunt the wild animals and notorious criminal single handedly. No warrior should be assisted while executing this dangerous mission. A warrior who has accomplished his mission and brought home his victim's head as a trophy in a fair fight has to yell before reaching the village gate. And when the villagers hear the yelling, which indicates victory over evil, only then the title holder or 'Pajeng lwilubo piu' in a village is allowed to welcome him with a
white robe. It is believed that, if a warrior has accomplished his mission sincerely as prescribed by 'the code of laws of head hunting', the village gate will open by itself, when a 'Pa-jeng Ivilubo piu' ask certain question to victorious warrior for clarification, and perform certain religious ritual. This welcome ceremony is attended by a selected few of 'Apa'i' (village elders) and 'Aku' (high priest). Soon after the welcome ceremony is over half portion of the white robe should be presented to the victorious warrior as a sign of respect and another half of the white robe will be used to wrap the victim's head so as to hide it from the general public. When this is done, along with the village Chief (Chawang), Aku and Apai he has to take rest for three days in order to pay respect to his victim, and also to perform a religious ritual for the future course of action. This particular religious ritual is known as 'A-langh Kyi Kiubo' in Liangmai Naga. In this religious ceremony the warrior has to take oath in the name of Tingwang, God the Almighty that, he will always maintain the dignity and responsibility of a warrior, and that he will never challenge or kill unequal opponents or innocent and helpless people. More importantly, this religious ritual 'A-langh Kyi Kiubo' is to seek forgiveness from God as they have violated the law of nature. As per this 'law of nature' one has no right to take away the life of his fellow beings. Therefore, if this ritual is not
performed immediately, God will punish them severely. This particular punishment from God is called 'Chuk kiubo' in Liangmai Na-
ya.

This welcome ceremony is important since it determines whether a person concerned is worthy of the title or not. It is generally believed that if a warrior concerned is not sincere and honest in his mission the village gate will not open by itself even if they perform the religious rites for one hundred times. It is also believed that during this ceremony when the truth is revealed a pseudo warrior would die for he has not only violated the code of head hunting but also he has done great injustice to himself, and to his personality. This kind of death is called 'Changgam jiu shaibo'. Because of this reason, usually a pseudo warrior will not dare to bring the victim's head and demand respect from his society. However, even if he could manage to keep his heinous crime a secret during his life time, he will be exposed by a 'phanton' (prophet) when he dies -- God will punish his soul by not allowing it to enter into the land of the dead. In case, he is discovered of his duplicity during his life time the society would impose social ostracism on him for a certain period of time. During this period, the society will not allow even his kith and kin to help him when his enemies come to take revenge on him. If he is not repentant for his misdeed, and continues to indulge in criminal activities, the society would
consider him as a criminal and he will become an object of head hunting. It may be noted here that if a warrior could manage to capture the criminal alive the welcome ceremony is not necessary since the prisoner himself bears testimony to his bravery.

A pseudo warrior is actually an aspirant for 'Pajeng lwi-lubo piu', but while taking up his dangerous mission he succumbs to devious means to achieve his end. As a result, he is not able to execute his mission sincerely, he would take the easy path on a flimsy ground and demand respect from his society. However, his dream of becoming a 'Pajeng lwi lubo piu' will not be materialise as he will be strictly dealt with by the code of head hunting. A pseudo warrior is not considered as a criminal for his first crime because, according to the 'code of head hunting' he is a fallen angel who should be given one more chance to reform himself so that he will be able to come back to the main stream. Therefore, the society would excommunicate him only for a certain period of time, so that, he might be able to realise his mistake and start working for the welfare of his society. However, if he is not repentant he will have to meet the same fate as the raiders and the criminals.

The raiders are a gang of criminals and outlaws who are not bound by the 'code of head hunting'. They do not have any sense and moral responsibility. Therefore, they do not bother
whether their action is right or wrong as long as it serves their purpose. They think only in terms of material gain, and as a result, they always commit crimes by robbing and killing the innocent and helpless people without mercy. They also collect as many heads as possible so that they will be able to show off their physical prowess and gain some respect from fellow criminals. The raiders are therefore, considered as a source of evil and destruction.

It may be also noted here that, though some of the inter-village wars were either over a land dispute between two neighbouring villages or killing of a neutral villagers who happened to be in the rival village during the war. But, in majority cases of inter-village wars it were the raiders and the pseudo warriors who were to blame. Let me explain. According to the 'code of head hunting', a warrior must give a war cry before attacking his enemy, and in this particular war cry he has to mention his name and the name of his village, clan, father and also the great grand-father. The significance of this particular war cry is to avoid misunderstanding and confusion in the society. However, ironically, this practice gives a golden opportunity for the raiders and pseudo warriors to commit crime — the raiders and pseudo warriors would always give wrong information whenever they commit a crime. Consequently an innocent village would victimize another innocent village and they will fight
against each other in retaliation for years to come.

It is also a common practice of the Nagas that, when a particular village declares war against the rival village they have to send 'thiyu rashi' (a ripe chilly) tied to 'Masumdangh' (a piece of burnt wood) as a symbol of war. Sometimes, the senders would indicate the place where the battle was to be fought, but in case, they fail to do so both the parties would have to be ready for war at any time, any place. However, when they besiege their rival village they have to give a warning yell before entering or attacking the village. So that women and children can run for safety. J.P. Mill gives wrong information about the declaration of war in Naga society. He says:

"A sudden raid was usually the first declaration of war, and villages at peace, if they were wise, remain on the qui-veve." 2

Here, J.P. Mill, in fact, confuses the criminal activities of the raiders with the actual war declaration. As I have pointed out above, traditionally, the Nagas do not attack a rival village without giving a prior warning except in retaliation. However, J.P. Mill is right in saying that a wise Naga village would always

1. This is a paradoxical situation as on one hand, the tradition gives more concern for the safety of the weaker section (i.e. women and children) in the society, and on the other hand, their heads are more prestigious than the warrior during the inter village war. This situation may be because it is almost impossible to penetrate the defending warriors as they would safeguard the lives of their women and children at any cost.

2. J.P. Mill: 'The Ao Naga' (war and head hunting) page. 207.
remain on alert and keep ready for any eventuality. This precau-
tion is taken just to meet any impending danger from the raiders; because, the practice of sending a war declaration symbol itself provides a golden chance for the raiders to create utter confusi-
on in the region. It is a common practice of the raiders that, when a particular village is too strong for them to raid or if they feel that, the particular village may oppose their evil de-
sign they would instigate another powerful village by sending a war declaration symbol on behalf of that village in secret.\(^1\) As a result, the innocent, and unprepared villagers would be massa-
cred. Thus unnecessary bloodshed would continue for generations to come. The raiders being too crafty would create enmity betwe-
en two powerful villages and then could kill two birds with one stone -- for once weakened with constant warfare, they can be easily raided. The situation would then be ripe for unleashing the reign of terror for the years to come. At this critical jun-
cture, the ideal of head hunting plays a crucial role as it will help to bring back normalcy in the region by eliminating the root cause of social evils.

'Richang gihbo' or the act of killing an enemy in a fair fight is also of two types. (a). Taking of the victim's head duri-
ng the inter village war, and (b) taking of the criminal's head

\(^1\)In the 18th century some raiders sent a war declaration symbol to Khonoma (Angami) village on behalf of Nreng (Liangmai) village. Though Nreng village was one of the most powerful village during that time they were not aware of this plot. Thus they were massa-
cred by the Khonoma villagers.
(a). When we closely examine the history of inter village wars in Naga society we find that to some extent, the immediate cause of the war may be revenge. As I have pointed out earlier, the root cause of most of the inter village wars were the raiders as they were responsible for creating confusion and disturbances in the society. However, the situation would have been easier to tackle if the concept of revenge was not firmly rooted in the belief of the Nagas. As a matter of fact, the concept of revenge encouraged the people to take revenge for their deceased relatives (especially during the inter village war) to fulfil a religious obligation. And according to the concept of revenge, if someone has taken away the head of innocent person, his relatives have to replace it immediately either by taking the culprit's head or his relatives. If one has to take revenge, it has to be according to age, sex, size etc., of the concerned victims. So that the victim's soul may find solace in the land of the dead. And if it is not done immediately, the enmity may continue even in the land of the dead.

The Liangmai Naga tribe believes that if someone has taken away the head of an innocent person it has to be replaced before he reaches 'Charui dih' or the land of the dead. The souls do not leave the earth soon after the death of the bodies; they wait till
the living relatives give a farewell feast called 'Chake ngi'; which is usually celebrate in the last part of every year. Thus, the living relatives try to take revenge for the death of their innocent kith and kin before this festival so that the innocent soul may not suffer from an inferiority complex or 'Chalyubo'in the land of the dead. In case, the living relatives fail to take revenge before the farewell is given they will have to hunt for not only the culprit's head but also his relatives! It is to be noted that the living relatives usually do not take revenge for the killing of a criminal. Even if they do so, it would not help the criminal. On the other hand, they themselves may be branded as criminals.

If the inter village war is waged only with the purpose of taking revenge, cutting off heads would not amount to real head hunting. As a matter of fact, tradition makes a clear cut distinction between head hunting and revenge by arranging a welcome ceremony only for the genuine head hunters. For the other warriors (especially during inter village war) only a religious ritual called 'Alangh kyi kiubo' is performed without a welcome ceremony while in the case of genuine head hunters, the religious ritual as well as the welcome ceremony.

(b). We find different explanations for taking the victim's head even among the Naga tribes. For instance, according to
J.H.Hutton, the Ao Nagas has a belief that, taking the victim's head not only gains a man glory in this world and a slave in the next, but it also brings prosperity to his village in the form of bumper crops, many children and good hunting.\(^1\) A similar belief is entertained by the Kuki tribe of Chin Hills according to which the slain becomes the servant of the slayer in the next world.\(^2\) Quoireng (Nagas?) tribe of Manipur also holds a belief similar to that of the Aos' that taking home the victim's head will bring wealth and prosperity to the village.\(^3\) Though the Liangmai Naga does not have a belief like that of the Aos, and the Chin Kuki tribes, they do believe that if the living relatives do not replace the head of an innocent victim, the victim would suffer from 'Chalyubo' or inferiority complex in the next world. They do not believe like the Ao Nagas and the Quoireng tribe of Manipur that possession of head would bring wealth and prosperity to the village. As far as the head hunting tradition of the Liangmai Naga is concerned, the ideal of head hunting is associated only with the criminal's head brought by either a 'Liangtuang' or an aspiring 'Pajeng lwilubo piu'. Though the assignment of both Liangtuang and Pajeng lwilubo piu is to eradicate social evils and maintain law and order in the society, the ideal of head hunting is intrinsically related to Liangtuang only. This is because of the fact, that, an aspiring Pajeng lwilubo piu cannot be fully trusted as he is only the beginner who can

\(^1\) The Ao Nagas, p.200, by J.H.Hutton.
\(^2\) The chin Hills Gazettier, I.196, recorded by Carey and Tuck
\(^3\) The Naga Tribes of Manipur, page.119. By, T.C.Hodson.
easily fall prey to greed and self-gratification. On the other hand, a Liangtuang is well prepared physically and mentally to face any crisis in life so that he can avoid the pitfalls of self-glory and self-gratification. For, to become a Liangtuang just acquiring physical prowess or mastery over the art of warfare is not enough; he should also possess certain good qualities like, truthfulness, sincerity, honesty, unselfishness, nobility, love for peace etc., through which he will be able to develop 'Pah-ri-ngiew-tanbo' or a strong personality. The Liangmai Naga has a firm belief that without a strong personality no one can achieve great things in life. If, one possesses this quality no evil spirit can harm him or stop him from achieving his goal in life. According to the Liangmai Nagas, those great warriors who work for the welfare of their fellow men and strive for peace and harmony in the society are considered as Liangtuang. The role of Liangtuang is therefore very crucial especially during the inter village war as his duty is to eradicate the senseless killing by banquishing the culprits. Usually, a Liangtuang would remain neutral even when his fellow villagers enter into a war with another rival village. Thus he will be able to mediate between the two warring villages for, he being without bias both villages will listen to him when he reasons with them to solve their problems by peaceful means. When a particular
or spiritual enlightenment. The Liangmai Naga religious tradition, on the other hand, emphasize that to be born again on earth as human being is a blessing from Tingwang, God the Almighty, for He created this world for mankind to enjoy the life on earth. But unfortunately, this goal of life cannot be realised by all human beings due to their misdeeds in their previous lives. Thus, rebirth as human being is determined by the past action; and evil persons who escape punishment in their life time are bound to be born as animals.

The significance of the doctrine of rebirth lies in pointing out that good action produces happiness in the end, and that bad action brings about self-destruction. The doctrine of karma or action and rebirth is true of almost all religions; without which there is no question of reward and punishment. Even the Liangmai Naga religion revolves around the concept of rebirth and the doctrine of karma, and these are the two main principles, which validate the concept of head hunting. However later on, the practice of head hunting became degenerated so much so that a time came even the Nagas themselves were no longer aware of the religious and moral implication of this practice. Once we isolate the ideal of head hunting from the religious and moral values of the tribe it becomes a different concept altogether. Due to this reason, many people (including the Nagas) equated the practice of
head hunting with the concept of revenge and other criminal activities

As I have already pointed out that though these two concepts consist in taking home the victim's head they have diametrically opposed ends — the ideal of head hunting minimizes the conflicts and maintains law and order in the society while the practice of revenge results in more conflicts and bloodshed. The distinction between the concept of head hunting and the concept of revenge is that while the former consists in killing of the criminals and outlaws either by a Liangtuang or an aspiring Pa-jeng lwilubo piu in order to maintain peace and harmony in the society and as well as to save the soul of an evil doer from eternal punishment while the latter consists in the killing of a culprit or his relatives by the victimized family or village in retaliation. The latter is more prevalent during the inter-village war when there is no one to enforce law and order in the society. It may be pointed out here that though all ancient Naga villages, big or small, were like independent states; when someone raided a village without declaring war the victimized villagers do not usually take the law into their own hands without knowing who the aggressors were. Therefore, if there was a Liangtuang to enforce law and order in the region, they would seek his help to punish the culprits. Unfortunately, owing to
unavailability or non-existence of Liangtuang in all ages, the practice of taking revenge has taken precedence over genuine head hunting. In most cases, the innocent villages would blame each other and fight among themselves in retaliation. And eventually this would lead to a declaration of 'Charui rih' (unending war which has to be fought even in the land of the dead). Once this kind of war is waged, even if there is a Liangtuang to pursue the ideal of head hunting, he becomes completely helpless as no compromise can be brought about on earth except in the next world through Divine intervention.

There is also another distinction between these two concepts. While the concept of head hunting is based on a valid reason, the concept of revenge is not based on any valid reason. For example, the ideal of head hunting does not indulge in indiscriminate killing as it is strictly governed by the code of the law of head hunting whereas the criminals do not obey any law. There are certain cases, where an aspiring Pajeng lwilubo piu may violate the code of head hunting by killing innocent people on flimsy grounds in order to acquire the title, but he will not be accorded the welcome ceremony of head hunting. However, a Liangtuang will never violate the code of head hunting just for the sake of self-gratification. In fact, he will always opt for peaceful means even with a notorious criminal who deserves to
be killed. That is why, the ideal of head hunting is more related to Liangtuang than to an aspiring Pajeng lwilubo piu.

On the other hand, the concept of revenge encourages indiscriminate killing. According to the concept of revenge, if one has to take revenge for the death of his dear and near one it has to be according to the size, age, sex etc., of the concerned victim. Therefore, revenge affects not only the culprits but also their relatives. The tradition justified this practice of killing innocent relatives of the criminal by saying that one has to share with his family members not only his happiness but also his trials and tribulations. The Liangmai Naga religious tradition further believes that, the effect of evil forces is bound to harm the succeeding generations of the offender's people. Therefore, the descendents and relatives of evil warriors have to suffer the bad consequences of action committed by their elders. This belief of the Liangmai Naga is similar to that of the Christian belief of the original sin. Whatever one may say, it is wrong to punish the innocent children for the crime which their parents have committed. Therefore, the concept of revenge cannot be considered as a moral concept since the validity of this practice can never be morally established.