Folklore and tradition have tremendous influence on literature. Unfortunately some of the very typical folklores and traditions have been forgotten due to social changes and also because human memory is weak. At present many folk-tales have lost their vitality and significance. They provide interesting glimpses of the past in which we find immense wealth. Proverbs, wise sayings and ethical lessons have their importance in providing safeguards for preserving the moral fibre of the race and for tackling the social problems which see to distort society. The folk-tales have high moral value.

Folklores told are intended to perpetuate the historical changes and incidents which took place; they record the rise and fall of kingdoms and serve as powerful narratives. Some folk-tales are connected with art and sculpture, religious beliefs, civil organisations, economic activities and statemanship.

These tales, on a wide range of subject matter, were transmitted from generation to generation with emphasis on moral and ethical behaviour. It is regrettable that time had erased some of these pure and indigenous tales from memory.
The ancient story-tellers were concerned with perpetuating these folk-tales, by repeating them from one generation to another. They used different forms of recitals for their audience to emphasise the moral of the tale.

Folklore also inculcate the spirit of adventure and provide incentives for social reconstruction within the community. These stories were recited by the minstrels and also by fathers to their children and uncles to their nephews and nieces, at home, around the fireplace. They afforded means for imparting a traditional system of education. This curriculum covered training in morals, warfare, megalithic erection, masonry, craft-manship, smithery and citizenship for men. They used several parabolical expressions and metaphors to impart the themes to their listeners. The folk-tales still play an important role in the village life.

The Pnar Hills abound in rich antiquities in which the folk-tales contribute greatly. Yet a lot has to be done to dig deep into tradition, to learn the lessons for solving the modern problems and counter acting other influences which are disastrous to the contemporary society.
These tales have greatly impressed the people to increase their skills in arts and architecture. They speak of the genius of the people, the faith lost and regained, a transition from disunity to unity of race and the call for awakening. Several of these tales illustrate the achievements of their forefathers, moral integrity, of the victory of virtue over vice and serve as indications for the future. They also pinpoint the emergence of great statesmen and artists, Herculeen warriors and persons of extraordinary powers as if providence had moulded such persons to give lustre to the indigenous culture of the people.

1. **U LOH RYNDI AND KA LIH DOHKHA**

The Pnars give the following explanation of the origin of the Siems of Suhtnga. There was a man from War Umwi named U Loh Ryndi. He went one day to fish in the Umwi streams. When he caught only one fish, he returned home. He roasted the fish and placed it on the tyngir'. He forgot about it, and did not eat it. The next morning he went out for a walk to the hill. When he returned home in the evening, he found his house had been swept and looked after and that the rice was cooked.

1. A swinging shelf above the hearth.
He was much surprised at this. The next day the same thing happened. When this state of things continued to occur, he made a pretence of going for a walk to the hill and he called his dog. But he hid himself the whole day outside the village, and when it was time for cooking rice in the evening.

He returned home. He saw that smoke was rising from the house, he crept up stealthily in order that he might suddenly enter the house. Finding a woman there, he asked her who she was. She replied that she was Ka Lih Dohkha. She was the fish whom he caught and forgot to eat. She further added that she had many relatives. She wanted to go and fetch them all. Therefore U Loh Ryndi and Ka Lih Dohkha went together. They arrived at the place where he caught her. She jumped into the water and he remained on the dry land. After a while she returned, bringing with her her relatives but how many of them there were is not known.

They all went to the house of U Loh Ryndi. When Ka Lih Dohkha was entering the house, and was about to cross the threshold, she saw a broom which his mother had placed on the threshold. She therefore abruptly turned back with all her relatives to the river.
U Loh Ryndi saw in a dream that Ka Lih Dohkha had gone by the river Umwai Khyrwi to a village called Suhtnga. He went to angle for her in that stream and when he had caught her, he found that she looked after him just the same as before. He married Ka Lih Dohkha and she bore him twelve daughters and a son.

When the children of U Loh Ryndi and Ka Lih Dohkha grew up, both of them returned to the stream Umwai Khyrwi. It is said that from the fishing rod of U Loh Ryndi which he left on the bank of the stream, there grew up bamboos, the joints and leaves of which grow upside down to the present day.

2. **WHY THERE ARE SPOTS ON THE MOON**

In olden days there was a woman who had four children, three girls and one boy. Their names were Ka Sngi, (sun) Ka Um (water), Ka Ding (fire) and U Bynai (moon). These four children belonged to rich gentle folk. The Moon was a wicked young man, for he began to make love with his elder sister, Ka Sngi.

2. Since that time all the fish have left the river up to the present day.

3. Narrated by Sr. Catherine Susngi - Jowai
In the beginning the Moon was as bright as the Sun. When the sun became aware of his bad intentions, she was very angry. She took some ashes scolded him for harbouring incestuous and wicked intention against her, his elder sister, who had taken care of him and held him in her arms and carried him on her back like a mother. She covered his brow with ashes and sent him away.

Then the Moon felt very much ashamed. Then onwards he gave out a white light because the sun had covered him with ashes. What we see like a cloud on the Moon when it is full are the ashes which adhered from the time the Sun covered him with it.

The three daughters, however, remained at home to take care of their mother, until she grew old and died. 4

3. HOW THE DOG CAME TO LIVE WITH MAN

In olden days, when the world was young, all the beasts lived happily together. They bought and sold together. They jointly built markets. The largest market to which all the beasts took their articles for sale was Luri-Lura in the Bhoi country.

4. Ibid.
A dog came to sell rotten peas. No animal would buy that stinking stuff. The animals looked at it and smelt it. It gave bad odour. They were offended. They kicked his ware and trampled it.

The dog then complained to the principal beasts and also to the tiger, who was at that time the priest of the market. But they all condemned the dog. Finally the dog went to the man. He told him to come and live with him. The man promised to take revenge on all the animals who had wronged him.⁵

The dog agreed and went to live with the man. Then the man began to hunt with the assistance of the dog. The dog knew well how to follow the tracks of the animals because he could scent their footprints.

4. THE KOPILI

The Kopili river rises in the Black Mountains⁶ and flows northwards into the Brahmaputra. Any traveller who wishes to cross this river must leave behind him the rice which he carried for his journey and any other food that


6. These mountains are the high hills which lie to the east of Jowai and which form part of the boundary line between Khasi and Jaintia Hills and North Cachar.
he may have taken with him. If he does not do so he has to offer a sacrifice to the Kopili goddess. The people offer her three fowls and three goats i.e. one to the goddess herself and the other two to her sons, U Shyngkram and U Jali, so that they may all feast together. This is in the case of one transgression only. But in the case of a man who has crossed the river more than one, it is not possible to say how many goats and fowls must be sacrificed, because the river often demands offerings on the basis of man's parentage or relatives having crossed the river at sometime or other.

From the time of the old Dolois to that of U Ram Singh, people sacrificed to this great goddess two persons during the months of January and December at the time of offering the sacrifice at Jaintiapur. After the ceremony is performed by the Brahmins at Jaintiapur the victims are led to the Mawshai market. They are allowed to take and eat anything they like. After that they were taken to sumer but some say that the stone on which the victims were beheaded is situated below the village of Ka Jew Ksi, near a stream which falls into the Kopili. There is a mawkynthei close to that sacred river.

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7. = The present Shangpung
8. Flat table-stone.
They place the victims on that stone, where the executioner beheaded them with a terrible sword. After that they threw the heads and bodies into the river. But at the time of U Raj Indro Singh they ceased to do so. The victims are known by the name of Mugha Khara.

At that time all the people of the territory of the twelve dolois were in a state of great fear. It is said that the victim-catchers pretended to be very innocent. They first enquired about the clan, of the victim and then caught them. They selected the Kongngors\(^9\). If no one was available some of the king's slaves were selected for the sacrifice\(^10\).

5. **THE SIEM OF MALYNIANG**

The siem of Malyniang was one of those kings about whom people said that he was one of the god kings. He lived in the village of Madur, which is now in the Maskut doloiship. There arose from the royal family of Malyniang a King whose name was Kyllong Raja.

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9. A Kongngor is one who has married a Khasi Princess.
10. From the lips of Rev. Herman age 69. Raliang.
His manners were very peculiar, but he was at the same time both stern and courageous. He made up his mind to conquer the whole of the Synteng country as well as the territory of the siem of Shillong in order to extend his own kingdom of Madur.

The Kyllang Raja did not require many followers when he went to war because he was a very strong man and a person whom nobody could kill, for if he was killed he came to life again. The Synteng king once chopped him up into pieces and threw his hands and feet far away and thought he could not come to life again. Nevertheless next morning he came to life just the same way and he walked along the paths and byways to intercept his enemies. The Synteng king was in great trouble on account of him, and was at a loss for a plan how to overcome him, because having been killed once or twice, he came to life again.

The Synteng King thought well over the matter, and hit upon a device which he thought a very good one, by which he could ascertain by what means he came to life again after having once been killed.

11. Narrated by the people of Jowai.
The Synteng King's stratagen was the following, he selected the most beautiful girl in the country. He put on her ornaments of gold and silver and royal raiment of great price and he told her that he would give her all these and more besides, if she could obtain for him, the secret of Kyllang Raja's coming back to life again after being killed. He would send her to the market there to see whether Kyllong Raja takes a fancy to her and if he would be willing to take her to be his wife, that she should go and pretend to love him as far as is in her power. Afterwards she should inquire regarding all his secrets and wisdom i.e. how he comes to life again after he has been killed, and after she had found out all these things, she should inform him so that he may overcome him. Then if she was successful in her mission he would give her a great reward.

He then sent her to the market. Kyllang Raja saw her and fell in love with her, and he took her as wife and kept her at Madur. She pretended to love him exceedingly. She repeatedly asked him his secret how he came to life again. Kyllang Raja, fancying that she really loved him confessed all to her.

He told her that his life depended upon these things that he had to bathe daily. He had to wash his entrails after that only he took his food.
There was no one earth who could kill him unless he obtains possession of his entrails.

When the girl had learnt all these things, she sent word to the former King that he should send one of his elders, to whom she would reveal the secret of U Kyllang's existence. As the king heard this, he sent his elders to her. She told all these things that U Kyllang had confessed to her.

The King after learning all these gave orders to get hold of U Kyllang Raja. They found him one day bathing with his entrails placed on one side of the bathing-place, so that afterwards he might wash them.

Therefore a man from Raliang seized the entrails and killed him. He cut the entrails into little pieces and gave them to the dogs. Thenceforth U Kyllang Raja was not able to come to life again. Madur was conquered and all the members of the royal family of Malyniang were scattered from that time. Seven generation have passed since then12.

In the northern portion of Khasi Hills there lived a man by name U Manik. The people nicknamed him U Manik Raitong because he was an orphan. He was very poor and all his clanfolk had died. Manik was always sad due to orphanhood and beggary. There were no enjoyments of life but to smear himself with ashed and dust. He passed his days in weeping. Manik made a flute upon which he played pathetic and mournful tunes.

He had to work as daily labourer whenever some one called him or else he used to sit and weep. At night after bath he dressed himself and after having eaten his meal he used to play the flute till morning. He was a skilful player and played twelve principal tunes.

In the same village there lived a queen. Her husband used to be absent for a long time due to his duties. One night the queen listened with great pleasure U Raitong's flute. With compassion for him she arose from her bed at mid-night and went to visit him. She asked him to open the door after reaching the house. But U Raitong scolded her for visiting him at that late hour. He went on playing with tears in his eyes.

The queen broke open the door and entered in. U Raitong admonished her and sent her away. She departed and U Raitong carried on his usual way. However the queen ensnered him by another device. While the king was still away in the plains, she gave birth to a male child.

When the siem returned he was surprised to find that she had a child during his absence. But she would not confess the truth. The elders and young men were called to judge the case but no proof was found. Then the king called all the males of the state each holding a plantain. They were made to sit in a circle.

The king said that he would place this child in the midst of the people and to whomsoever the child goes, he is his father and the adulterer. According to law they should put him to death. Accordingly when all the people were made to sit in a circle and the child was placed in the midst, he went to no one. Then the king asked for those who were absent. They found only U Manik Raitong was absent. He was ordered in. Some suggested to leave him alone for he lived like a dog or a cat, an unfortunate life.

However to the surprise of all when U Raitong came in the child laughed and followed him. Then they realized who was the guilty one. The king and his ministers decided to put him to death outside the village.
U. Raitong pleaded to prepare a funeral pyre and he would burn himself. The poor man bathed and dressed himself well. He played the flute and walked around the pyre.

He walked three times around the pyre and then planted his flute in the earth. He threw himself into the flames. The queen too ran quickly and threw herself into the pyre.

After the cremation a pool of water was formed in that very place. The bamboo flute sprang up whose leaves grew upside down. From U Raitong's time it has become a practice to play the flute at funerals as a sign of mourning for the departed.

7. AN EARTHQUAKE IN THE STONE INSCRIPTION

The village of Syndoi is near Jowai. There is a stone inscription of an earthquake. In the past earthquake caused enormous loss of lives and damages. In this particular village many persons, cattle and goats were killed, cottages, terraces and orchards were upturned. The village people were at a loss. Prayers were offered, sacrifices were performed, divinations were conducted but no solution was found.

However they came to know that there lived a giant. He was a strong and strange being. When he was in peaceful mood, he just sat reclined, folding his hands. But when he got puzzled, he used to rock and swing. That was why the hills shrunked, the precipices were torn and the vegetation was upturned. Thus people and livestock perished.

A durbar was held to find out means to kill the giant. By waging a war, they knew they would be at a loss and would bring more troubles. It would be useless to reason with him.

The durbar was in the dark. It was on the point of being dissolved, when an aged men stood up and addressed a way to solve the riddle. We shall send a lady he said to visit his place on the pretence of collecting orchids. The giant may be induced by her the old man thought. Thus the whole durbar agreed to give a trial.

In that village there was a charming and attractive lady, her cheeks shining forth as gold, her hair beautiful. She agreed to trap the giant. She took a pernicious step to approach his place as is she was collecting orchids and repeated that daily. Finally she went to the village to report the matter to the elders.
She told them how, she saw the giant daily gently behaved but spoke never to her. The elders, therefore selected a group of warriors to accompany her on the appointed day to the place. Their intention was to strip of his power.

On the day fixed the lady came with the warriors. When he giant saw the warriors he was provoked.

He thundered saying what business they had in his dominion. One of the warriors spoke up saying that the lady had brought them to see the place. The lady scolded him for thundering like a roaring lion. She explained further that these were her brothers. She would die she added if he were to punish them.

The giant became calm again. Then he divulged the secrets of his love to the lady, giving her a chance to see his dominion. She too confessed her love to trap him. They agreed to marry. But the visitors pointed out that he was too strong. Therefore they requested him to reduce his strength a little. For her sake he agreed.

They tied him up to a big stone. He innocently confessed that his strength was on his fingures. These men took knives and cut of his fingures. The giant was weakened. Blood spilling out of the wounds the foolish giant died.
The trecherous lady went back to the village of Syndoi glorious. Even since the village of Syndoi has been free from earthquakes. This stone inscription still remains.

8. HOW JAINTIAPUR BECAME THE CAPITAL OF THE SUTNGA SYIEMSHIP

The Sutnga Kings had influence over the Jaintia Hills but their head quarters were at Sutnga, the place of their origin. They continued to administer their kingdom for five generations.

In course of time, their kingdom extended far and wide including North Cachar and the territories in sylhet and Nowgong. The syiem found Sutnga unsuitable to continue as the headquarters so a search went for a new site. The syiem with a survey party went out to explore the eastern region but for its foul smell it was rejected. Therefore they proceeded southward. The syiem halted at Borkhat. Here he set up an outpost and placed a Viceroy i.e. a Laskor. They went through many villages where they opened markets. They came at last to the plains. It was autumn, the paddy was ripe. They longed for all the land of Jaintiapur.

15. Narrated by Vincent Khympat 36 age - Village Tluh.
The syiem met a female land-owner. He played a trick on the simple woman. He offered to purchase the land from her at the price of two silver shields with heaps of coins on their concave side. The plot of land should be as large as the deer's skir he added. The woman was happy to make the agreement.

The syiem rendered the skin into tiny tips, scattering them over various directions he acquired a great expanse of territory at Jaintiapur. He ordered at once the shifting of the headquarters to Jaintiapur. Until the British annexation the syiem was like a lord in Jaintiapur. Later on he acquired the twenty-four Jaintia parganas which he integrated into his kingdom.

Many builders and sculpturers from the hills were sent for by the syiem to erect stone monuments of various styles which still remain to be seen16.

9. JAIN'TIA - KACHARI ENIMITY

Jaintia-Kachari enimity which occurred about 600 years ago round U Sajar Nangli, a fugitive who fled from Raliang in the Jaintia Hills to the North Cachar Hills.

The reigning syiem had grown jealous of U Sajar for his skill in architecture. He conspired a policy to kill him. Therefore U Sajar fled away from his homeland. Sajar, during the flight, was accompanied by a multitude of his followers who would not let him go alone as they loved him.

U Sajar leaving his home-land, addressed his followers who had assembled from thirty elakas i.e. units of the middle uplands to go back home and to mind their own affairs. But his followers wanted to follow him. They could not part with him. They would adhere to him until they breathed their last.

Thus a multitude, numberless and uncountable, men and women led by Sajar, embarked on a journey for the unknown home. They went eastward, crossed the Kopili river and proceeded to the Cachar hills from where they split into two batches, one proceeding to the patkoi and another to southern Nagaland. In the Chakhensang hills, east of Angami the pine trees said to have been planted by him and his men. They are still seen.
Time could not erase Sajar's name as a great sculpturer. It was he who laid down a carved stone rhinoceros design at Moteshroi in the Nongkhlieh doloiship, on the occasion of his journey with a host of his faithful adherents to the land beyond the Kopili river. Traditions also ascribe a foot-print on a stone near Wahiajer to be his own which perpetuates the memory of this historic occasion of his forsaking the Jaintia Hills.

Another tradition upholds that Sajar on hearing that the syiem was still after him, fled for shelter to Dimapur, then the Kachari headquarters. The Sutnga king's wrath knew no bounds when he learnt that Sajar had been sheltered by his own enemy. He gave a chase but learnt from his spies that Sajar had left Dimapur for the Naga Hills. Therefore he postponed his plan to chastise his subject in an unknown land. This led to many Jaintia-Kachari conflicts which filled up the pages of past mediaeval history, for which Sajar was accounted in a tradition a traitor to the cause of his country.

At Khorungma in North Cachar there are the remains of fortresses encircled by a deep ditch and according to a local story, they formed the abode of Sajar who maintained his position as the king before the Jaintia Syiem 17.

17. Narrated by the people of Puriang.
Once there lived a man at Latuber, a village twelve miles to the east of Jowai. His name was U Shitang. He was strong and muscular blacksmith. He was a sturdy athletic who could challenge any strong man to a duel. Once he challenged the authority of U Barkusain the representative of the king of Jaintia who was incharge of trade and commerce, on the question of establishing a market place in the village of Borkhat. The king himself had to intervene and put U Shitang straight.

Shitang was surnamed U Kup Dhup because of a ponderous rug (dhup) which he used to wrap (kup) himself in, day in and day out both in summer and in winter he used to carry it over himself and warmed himself with it. At night when going to bed he required neither a bedsheets nor a quilt. His rug was about a mound in weight and it served him as a money bag too. He kept all his money inside it and whenever he was asked to pay for anything he would scratch out a hole in some part of it and then draw his money out of the hole. Persons who did not know him well used to take him for a fool.

U Shitang was very diligent and hardworking. He could manufacture adequate quantities of tools and implements for meeting all the demands of the surrounding regions.
U Shitang had two younger sisters for whom he had great love and affection. Their parents died when they were still young. Thus U Shitang had to take great responsibilities for the welfare and livelihood of his sisters. But U Shitang had a good sense of responsibility and by dint of his labour he could ensure a happy and prosperous life for his sisters. When he grew up and his wealth too increased out of bounds, the people of his locality began to respect him and they regarded him as their leader and spokesman in all important social and political affairs. No two opinions would ever arise when he spoke. He became a very influential personality.

Once he arranged a party to go on a hunting expedition in the thick forests nearby and this expedition was to be entirely at his own expense. He invited all the strong and athletic persons to the expedition. They were in the woods for many days but none of the animals worth shooting came out. Finally they saw a gigantic deer whose horns had branched out several times. When the deer became aware of the presence of the hunters, she tried to dodge them, but the hunters closely followed her. On reaching a precipice she found that she could neither proceed nor turn back. Soon she was at the mercy of U Shitang who killed her with his spear.
U Shitang desired to test the love of his sisters for him. He sent messengers to them. Accordingly he sent them to tell his sisters that their brother having erroneously shot at a breeding bull, had been arrested. He needed money to be released. The messengers called on Kongdiah\(^{18}\) and reported all the news. But unfortunately she turned a deaf ear.

Sadly they went to Kongmai\(^ {19}\). When she heard the messengers report she collected all the money she had and sent with them to redeem her brother. She also went with them weeping.

People had gathered around the dead body of the deer at the bottom of the precipice. They had gathered around her brother she thought and her sorrow was greater. But reaching near she was surprised to see a dead deer and her brother alive\(^ {20}\).

The deer was carried to Kongmai's house and they had a feast for which Kongdiah was angry and displeased.

U Shitang and his friends were waiting for his sister is known as Kariat Iam Sier\(^ {21}\).

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18. Kongdiah = Pnar = affectionate form of addressing younger sister
19. Kongmai = elder sister (Pnar)
20. From the lips of Sr. Catherine Sussgi Nongbah.
21. Kariat Iam Sier = the precipice where one wailed over a deer.
One day three female strangers came to Mulang to a village about seven miles away from Jowai. They visited a poor widow. They looked graceful and adorable and the angelic smiles radiating from their lovely faces transformed the widow's hut into a palatial mansion. One of them who was affectionately called Ka Du spoke up. They wanted to stay and dine with her that night she added. The poor woman agreed. But however she said that her house was not fit for such dignified persons. It was filthy. It would soil their clothes. The three ladies insisted that they minded nothing, only required hospitality.

On such persuasion the old woman would not but warmly welcome the three charming ladies as her guests. Many days passed by and the three ladies kept on staying with the woman. Gradually the woman did not feel herself a stranger to them any longer. Instead she entreated them to remain with her for ever and subsequently adopted them as her children. She loved them and liked their winning manners. Ever since they came to her, she was never allowed to work and labour for her livelihood. They too loved her most affectionately and wanted that everybody would think that she was their mother.
Everyone who met them was mystified by their charming personality. Many rich merchants and aristocratic nobility wanted to marry them.

At last they decided to disclose to woman the errand on which they had set out. One night they sat around the old woman. They disclosed the secret that they were goddesses. They were the children of a God. Their father was called The Thunder and their mother was known as Lightning. They had been sent there on a specific mission, namely, to live among mankind in that fine and wholesome part of the earth and to bring gifts to her. They would do much to serve her and her people. Their services would be everlasting and concerned with the happiness and prosperity of mankind in that land. So saying the three divine beings vanished and in their place three wonderful springs sprouted out, which turned into three big rivers, the Mynthu, the Myntang and the Umiurem.

These three important rivers of Jaintia Hills have their sources in the vicinity of Mulang. The river Mynthu surrounds the town of Jowai and fertilises the two tiny villages and runs fast to the south in order to reach its destination earlier than her opponent, the river Myngngot.
The second river Myntang chooses her direction towards the north and passes by the villages of Nonglah, Mukha, Wahiajer, Nartiang and Nongjngi. The Umiurem river took the eastern direction and after nearly surrounding the village of Shangpung. The three rivers are the wealth of the region.

12. **KA SYIEM JALAPANG**
(Queen Jalapang)

Long ago a village by the name of Manar existed in Jaintia Hills. Its situation has been located at a place two or three miles away from the village of Shangpung. Long since Manar has gone out of existence but Shangpung still exists. These two villages never had peace, always quarreled over trifling matters.

Each village had its royal head to look after the administration of Justice, law and order. Shangpung commanded superiority in size, population and armed strength. Manar though smaller in size and weaker in strength, had one very important advantage and that was its strategic position. Shangpung could not subdue the people of Manar due to the natural fortifications it had.

22. Information collected from the people of Jowai.
Once during the reign of Queen Jalapang of Manar, a full scale conflict flared up between the two villages when Shangpung mobilised all her resources to defect Manar, but as usual Shanpung met with failure. Thus seeing that Manar could not be subjugated by means of war the people of Shangpung started a peaceful offensive proposing unilaterally a case-fire and offered to sign a peace treaty. The people of Manar welcomed the proposal and agreed to meet the people of Shangpung on a fixed day and time at a place called Thangskai which was midway between the two villages, where they would sign the treaty. Both parties also agreed that the armistice be celebrated in a fitting manner and that each party bring to the place as many white and unspotted goats for making sacrifices as a mark of their gratitude to the gods who had brought about an end to their long-drawn enimity.

The appointed day came and the people of Manar went to Thangskai taking with them many white and unspotted goats. They arrived at Thangskai much earlier and waited several hours for the arrival of the people of Shangpung. But the latter did not come as expected. Meantime the people of Manar decided to start sports and festivities specially arranged for the day, despite the absence of the people of Shangpung.
Just in the afternoon the people of Shangpung arrived with numerous white goats with them. They were welcomed heartily by the people of Manar. The goats were no other than the warriors and stalwart soldiers of the armed forces of Shangpung who were covered with white woollen cloth and made to crawl like goats. On coming near the people of Manar they stood up and killed them to the last man.

One man of Manar escaping ran to Queen Jalapang to inform her about the treacherous act of the people of Shangpung. She listened anxiously to the messenger. Understanding that she could no longer save her village and her people from the enemy's hands, the Queen decided to abdicate her throne and she fled from her village towards the Tiniang Hill\(^\text{23}\). She took with herself her bow and an arrow. She climbed the hill with a heavy heart and a great sorrow. On reaching the top of the Tiniang Hill, Queen Jalapang began to wail over the tragic misfortune of her people. She prayed and decided to shoot the arrow so that she may take her abode where the arrow falls. The arrow struck a rock and rent it into four parts. As resolved she went and lived there. She had a friend, a poor widow who used to pay her a visit off and on.

\(^{23}\) The Tiniang Hill near the village of Mawkiew and to the north of Raliang, is one of the important peaks in Jaintia Hills.
The Queen was very beautiful and rich - she had large amount of gold and silver. Nobody went from her home unhappy. She fell in love with U Miet Larunsut, a strong and beautiful farmer.

One day she was ill and called for U Miet to carry her home. On reaching her hut she would not allow him to return back even to untie the oxen off their yoke. The oxen are believed to have turned into rock by dint of waiting. They are still to be seen today in the Latubah valley.

The village of Manar had gone out of existence but the relics of its natural fortifications remain still today. The people of Shangpung and of the surrounding areas still bless the place where the hut of Queen Jalapang is believed to have stood once.

13. CREATION

God created the sun, water, air and fire. They were brothers and sisters. Fire is the brother and the others are sisters. But they quarrelled among themselves for supremacy. They went before God and each wished to rule the world. In this situation, God devised a means to test their strength.

God took a piece of flesh and they were asked to consume it. The sun tried first, it shone scorching but the flesh became harder and harder and gradually, it was reduced to a small hard piece. Then water tried the job. Water came rushing, engulfed it merged it into water. But the piece of flesh became swollen in size. Next came air. Air blew the piece, it began floating in the air. So, air also failed. Fourth came fire. The heat of fire dried it first and then in one gust it consumed the piece. So God selected fire as the king among the four elements in the world.

14. CONFLICT BETWEEN GOD AND JOM

In his kingdom God had Jom as his chief servant. Jom, in course of time, earned all the powers except creation. Powers made him proud. He challenged the authority of God. So God drove him out from heaven. He went to a place and established his own kingdom, Ka Mynkoi U Jom or hell. But the opposition of Jom towards God or whatever godly remained. Jom had his minious, the chief among whom was Sani. Sani was a forceful orator who could influence or induce anybody to commit wrong. J Jom sent Sani to this earth. Sani made the creature inimical to one another by his oratary and trickery.

25. From the collections of Rev. Herman . Raliang.
The quarrel was between the birds i.e. flying ones and the beasts, the non flying ones.

15. **THE MESSENGERS OF GOD : THE SEVEN FAMILIES**

God sent down seven families to earth in order to restore order and neutralise the effects of Jom and his minions. It is believed that there were sixteen families in heaven with God. So the remaining nine families could visit the earth during the day through a golden ladder or as some believe through a rubber plantation.

The earthly families were led by their leader i.e., syiem U Lakriah. These human beings had godly qualities for which the other creatures accepted their mastery over the earth. The order was thus restored.

16. **CREATION OF THE EARTH**

The seven heavenly families soon found that the world was full of stones. They faced lot of difficulties for cultivation and house construction. So syiem U Lakriah was sent to God for the earth and good soil.

26. Narrated by Henry Lamin age 28, Jowai
27. Teng Kein Ksiar
28. Kajir Hakhya
29. Narrated by Rev. Albera age 63, Raliang
The God directed the supreme goddess Ka Blai Synshar, to give three baskets full of earth from heaven.

Lakriah got down with these three baskets and strewn the earth over the stones. In another version, it is said that Ka Blei Synshar sent down Bei Rymaw with three baskets full of earth. Bei Rymaw covered the stones with earth. Then God finding only stones decided to cover those by earth and so deputed U Simsong and Ka Syiemmadiah to cover the earth with that soil. U Simsong lost the soil in gambling, but Ka Syiemmadiah did her job well in the plains. When she found the hill was still uncovered, she shook off what remained in her sack on the hill. That explains why stones are more and soil is scanty in the hills and not in the plains.

However, God did not remain silent. He sent his minister U Thor U Parvat divided the land and made gorges, falls, streams etc.

Now trees and vegetations began to grow up. Birds started chirping and singing and man began to cultivate.

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30. maw
31. the mother earth
32. God
33. goddess
The mother earth made the injunction that men are to walk and cultivate on her, but not to spoil her by laying dead bodies on her. So they cremate the dead bodies. The God can be reached by wine libation through her i.e. pouring wine libation on the ground.

17. \textbf{SEVERENCE OF THE LINK}

Sani and his minions somehow managed to ill-adviser either man or a civet cat to cut off the ladder connecting the heaven and earth. Sani succeeded in his mission. Another tradition maintains that it was God's indiscretion to delink the earth from heaven so that man could not be equal to God. Once again the world became a world of conflict and confusion.

Now God found the world unfit for his stay and so He called a durbar of all the creatures. In that durbar, the rat came late intoxicated, his speech irrelevant and body imbalanced. God demanded an explanation of his behaviour. The rat narrated that on the way, out of hunger, he ate the root of a plant. God deputed the monkey to check up the matter.

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34. Bei Rymaw
35. Narrated by the people of Puriang
36. thtat
The monkey came and confirmed the story. Then God forbade man from eating that root and any other intoxicating thing because by doing so,-

1. a man would lose the confidence of the people.
2. his life would be cut short
3. he would lose the durbar as his speech could not be relied on and
4. his happiness would become unhappiness.

so, wine or liquor should be used only for God and during religious festivities as oblation.

18. GOD CAN BE APPROACHED THROUGH PRAYER

The machination of Jom, Sani and other evil spirits made the world full of misery. The people prayed and appealed to God for the alleviation of the sufferings. They solicited His presence. The God came down to earth once again and met U Lakriah at some unknown place. He conveyed his wishes and advice through Syiem Lakriah. Those are known as Niams or commandments. The mostly known niams are:

1. Earn righteousness.
2. Respect thy parents.

37. Narrated by Sr. Catherine Susngi, Nongbah.
3. Service to being is service to God.
4. Do not be intoxicated.

God also expressed that He could be reached through prayer and sacrifice. It should with folded hands and by bowing down the head. In prayer one should wear shoes. Prayer might be individual or mass and either outdoor or indoor. The prayer starts and ends with the phrase one thousand thanks.

When God was asked how to determine if the prayer reached Him or if the boon was granted, the God said that His wish might be read in anguries and divinations by things like egg, bow, arrows, lime pot etc.

19. **LAHO DANCE**

When U Lahriah came to his people with message of God all became very happy. They wished to observe the happiness and commemorate the event by a dancing festival.

As for God's wishes U Lakriah went for a type of divination. A gourd pitcher was filled in with country liquor.

38. Narrated by A. Pyrtuh M.A. age 40 Mawkyndeng.
It was decided that if forth comes up to the brim then God was willing and if not, He was unwilling. U Lakriah first asked for permission of a dance in pair, but no forth was oozing up. It was taken as God's refusal and was interpreted that a pair-dance would result in social evil and misunderstanding. It might spoil the chastity and character of the young ones. Then, U Lakriah sought the divine wish on a dancing by three, two boys encompassing a girl in the middle. Then the forth came up to the brim which was the sign of God's willingness and consent. This is the traditional Laho dance of the Pnars.

20. INCESTUOUS OVERTURE AND SUN'S HIDING

U Lakriah called a durbar of all the creatures for the observance of a gala. All assembled in a place. Dancing started where one played the flute, the other drum and so on. The sun was enjoying the festival from above. She could not resist the temptation of coming down and participating in that gala. She came down with her brother the Moon. They did not know the taboo prohibiting the dance in pair. Both of them began dancing and in the process, the Moon made love overtures to his sister thereby rousing a wave of laughter from the

39. Ibid
assembled spectators. This made the sun much embarrassed and ashamed of the episode. She fled away to a certain cave. The Moon because excited in the amusement and proposed to his sister for marriage. This infuriated the sister much and in her anger, she threw charcoal ashes over his face. This explains the black spots in the Moon.  

21. THE MISSION OF THE COCK

The sun fled away and took shelter in a cave. There was no light on this earth. U Lakriah called again a durbar of all creatures. They discussed how to get the sun back. U Lakriah asked for volunteers who could go and persuade the sun out of the cave. All the animals volunteered but failed to get back the sun. Next came the turn of the birds. The hornbill went to the cave, but he forgot his mission in the presence of beautiful sun. Instead he got drunk and wished to marry the sun. Barbet also tried out his best, but failed in his mission.

They were very much perturbed over the issue. Then somebody mentioned that the cock was absent from the meeting. The Syiem sent messengers for him.

They found the cock who had no dress for which he failed to attend the meeting. However when the Syiem, U Lakriah promised to look after his younger ones during his absence from home, he agreed to go out in search of the sun. The cock was provided with garments to wear. He went out in search of the sun. On the way he felt tired and sat on a stone. The stone asked a favour from the cock in the coming world of sun. The cock assured the stone that in the world of sun, stone would be used for preserving bones and for erecting monolith. Then the cock resumed his journey and finally reached into the cave. The sun tried to allure him by charm and drink. But the cock was conscious of his mission and responsibility. The sun narrated to him how she was laughed at, sneered and abused. The cock promised to the sun that thence forth no creature would abuse her in any way. Then the sun agreed to reappear only when the cock would signal her by crowing thrice. The cock also assured the sun that henceforth he would be responsible for all acts of omissions and commissions by any creature under the sun.

The cock came back and reported to U Lakriah how he persuaded the sun to reappear. Then U Lakriah warned all the creatures not to abuse the sun nor to commit anything wrong under the sun lest the responsibility would be of the cock.
Since then the cock used to hold a sacred position in the mind of the Pnars. The cock is generally sacrificed before the cremation of a dead body or in times of illness. The idea behind the former is that the cock can lead the soul in the darkness to the abode of God. It is darkness after death. On other occasions, it is thought that cock can remove the sin committed in the world of sun if he is sacrificed. Whenever anyone dies, a cock, preferably red, should be taken along with the dead body, to the cremation ground. The pre-sacrifice rites involves throwing of rice thrice over the head of the cock. In the process, words are uttered which mean that the cock has thus attained holiness and it will obey the orders. Then the story is related and the cock is ordered to lead the departed soul to the abode of ancestors. The cock is sacrificed by cutting its wind-pipe. This resembles the Muslim jabai. But these people cut the neck at one blow when they sacrifice he-goats which resembles the Hindus. The body of the cock is thrown on the ground. If it fails on its left-side, then the man's death occurred due to some accidental reasons; but if it falls in its right side then the man died a natural death. In case of accidental death, relevant puja and sacrifices are necessary.  

41. Narrated by the people of Puriang.
An unmarried girl, named Ka Lisan went for bathing in a river. While bathing she saw a fruit floating. She picked it up and ate it. After that incident, she was feeling some unknown sensation in her lower abdomen. Another version holds that when Lisan was bathing the Shillong-god was also bathing in the up-stream. After that incident she conceived a child.

However, her brother took her to a diviner who told her brother, after due divination, that his sister was carrying a baby. This announcement enraged the brother who thought that the man was deliberately defaming the prestige and honour of the family. So he caught hold of the diviner and dashed him down.

But the inevitable was going to happen. She developed all symptoms of pregnancy and in due time gave birth to a male child. The boy was growing. It was found that the boy could not speak even when he was of six years. Then the maternal uncle went to another diviner who said that the boy would not speak unless the other diviner, whom he abused, was satisfied. So the uncle went to that diviner and begged excuse of his earlier conduct.
Then the diviner told him to go back home and tocry out Synriang before the boy. The uncle did so and to his surprise found that the boy began talking.

The boy reached manhood, developed charming personality. He told his mother that he was a reformer and sought her permission on some occasions to have undisturbed sleep. During such sleeping state, he had communion with God. He slept once for nine nights and after the death of his mother, for another three nights when he got ordinances, commandments, rules and regulations for the society.

At that time, there were many evil practices in the society. There was no bar in marrying anyone by anyone; forcible abduction, rape, kidnapping etc. made the society loose and aimless. So, Synriang announced that henceforth none should marry the sister of one's brother's wife or vice versa. He also ordained that none should marry within the mother's clan or in certain cases, in the father's clan or within three generations of the paternal side. Also the boy or his parents should go to the girl's side and propose marriage. Before such marriage, the name, clan, ancestry etc. should be checked. There should not be any consanguinous marriage.
Earlier the dead body was burnt by the fire of fire-fly. That fire was unreliable and in consequence dead body could not be burnt sometimes fully. This resulted in visitation of dead body by ghosts which might harm the people of the locality. Therefore, U Synriang went to see God of fire, U Blai Biskuram and begged for divine fire. The God advised him and demonstrated how to make fire by frictions of two pieces of woods. Then the god disappeared. U Synriang tried to make the fire but failed. He was at a loss. But a monkey on a tree saw the whole event. Seeing the predicament of U Synriang, the monkey volunteered and demonstrated once again the way of making the fire. So, that fire is known as Din-shrieh or the monkey-fire. Since then, the cremation of dead bodies was being done by this fire.\textsuperscript{42}

23. \textbf{BONE PRESERVATION}

When the mother of U Synriang died, she went to heaven. U Synriang could go to heaven and after his mother's death he also went to heaven. He resided there with his mother for some time. When he wished to come back, his mother gave him a bundle wrapped in cloth. She told him that it contained rice, meat for his eating. But she had advised him not to open the bundle before crossing the river that divides the earth and heaven.

\textsuperscript{42} Reported by Siang Pohthmi M.A. age 40 . Lamin
But U Synriang got impatient and forgot the induction for a while. He opened the bundle before crossing that river. To his utter surprise, he found that the bundle contains remains of cremation viz ash, bones, charcoal etc. He was at a loss what to do with those things when a divine voice told Synriang that those were the mortal remains of his mother. He should preserve those in a cairn after reaching his home. Also the oracle said that bones should not be left scattered over the crematorium which would become, in that case, a play-ground of fox, dog and other animals. Bones are holy and should be respected. Bones should be collected after the cremation is over, washed and wrapped in a clean or new piece of cloth. Those should be kept in a cairn for some time till the next bone-collection ceremony of the clan-cromlech, customarily, clan-wise bone-collection should be performed after some rites, Ka niam Ielaw, when monoliths and megaliths should be erected. Since then have forgotten the intricate details, they now prefer to deposit the bones into clan-repository directly. It was also ordained that the bones of the husband should go to his mother's clan repository. But in case of an alien husband, his bones might be kept in the same compound of the clan-repository of bones but in a separate place.
All the Pnars revere the memory of U Synriang and consider him as a prophet. In every Pnar house compound, a place in the right hand side is meant for U Synriang. In that place a sacred altar is maintained where food-offerings are made annually or whenever necessary. It is believed that U Synriang protects the devout one from danger. The place is known as U Synriang Ksiar 43.

24. THE COW AND THE CROW

Jom, Sani and other evil spirits made the world full of misery. People had to toil hand to mouth for feeding themselves. Cultivation would depend on manual hoeing and labour. They could not cultivate enough to feed the mouths. Moreover, natural calamities put many obstacles in their struggle. Their difficulties made god sympathetic. So God told Ka Blai Synshar the supreme goddess, in heaven for a solution. Ka Blai Synshar, at the instance of God, ordered the cow Ka Masi to go down to earth and to deliver the blessings that thence-forth a fistfull of rice would be sufficient for a family, mere wish to have something would bring the thing. But at the instance of Jom, Sani sent the crow to misguide the cow. On the way, the crow met the cow and induced her in useless talking.

43. Reported by Siang Pohthim M.A. age 40 Lamin M.E. School Headmaster.
The monotony of talk made the cow sleepy. When the cow woke up, she forgot the details of the message and her mission. Then the crow told her that she knew the mission and the message. The crow misdirected her. The cow came to the world and told the people that thenceforth they were to toil dawn to dusk for food, but yet they would be unable to satisfy their hunger. The more they would need the more they would have to work.

After delivering the message, the cow went back to heaven and reported to Ka Blai Synshar what blessings she had conveyed. She understood that it was the crow who misguided the cow. So she got furious with the crow and threw over her a blackened earthen-pot. This made the white crow black. She struck the cow on her face with the wooden-spoon used for cooking and so, the cow's face was changed. She ordered the cow to go down to earth and to serve the human-beings in all possible ways. That is the reason cows give milk, manures the field etc. 44

It reflects a period of the society when in a hostile nature hoeing by hand was much too laborious for agriculture. The introduction of cow helped then in many ways. It also imparted a kind of respect to the cow who landed down to earth for helping mankind.

44. Reported by Rev. Balavan age 59 Nandong.