In every human society, economy is one of the important factor for the survival of human kind. Like any other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh the Memba have their own means of economic pattern for their sustenance. Being located in a strategic place, bordering India and Tibet, it plays an important role in the economy of the state. The condition of their economic life was well observed by a Political Officer who visited Menchuka in 1958 A.D.

*The economy of the Memba themselves, much better off than the Memba of Gelling or even the Khambas of the Yang Sang Valley.*

Legally the Menchuka was private estate of Tibetan aristocratic *Lhalu* family and the Memba people had to pay revenue for staying in Menchuka. However, the Memba people followed their own independent economic activity uninterrupted from the political authority.

**Land Tenure**

Land tenure may be defined as the terms and condition on which land is held, used and transacted. In broader sense, it includes the right to occupy a homestead, to use land for annual and perennial crops, to make permanent improvement, to bury the dead and to have access for gathering fuel in the form of woods, wild fruit, grassland for

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1 *Menchuka Tour Report, Arunachal Pradesh State Archive, Bundle no.5- 1957-1959, file no. 50/59, p. 5.*
grazing. The land in tribal economy may be considered as the most precious treasure because most of the required product for their survival was produced from the land only. The land in tribal area is not only important for agriculture but also because of hunting and gathering provide subsistence economy in their life.

The land tenure system amongst the Memba can be classified into five groups. The pattern of land tenure is known as communal land tenure where a particular vast land area is under the ownership of particular tribe viz. Ziro Valley area owned by Apatani tribe, Dafla hill ranges mostly owned by Nyishi tribe, Menchuka Valley area owned by Memba tribe. They further divided community land into village land, clan land and individual land depending on the utility of the land available. The Memba classify their land as Nam (forestland), Ram-Sa (agriculture land), Bo-Go (grass land), Khim-Gapse (Settlement land) and Gan-Sa.

Nam (Forestland)

It covers most of the area of the Memba community. They generally use it for the purpose of hunting and gathering. Village people own most of the Nam land. Besides this, a particular clan from the community also owns some of the plot of Nam, where any member of the clan can carry out hunting and gathering activities. They generally demarcate Nam land from the Nam land of other village by mountain ranges, rivers or stream as boundaries.

3 Tsering Chukla, op.cit., date 5-5-2013.
**Ram-Sa (Agriculture land)**

Ram-Sa is a major source of vegetables and crop production where varieties of vegetables and crops are cultivated as per their requirement. This land generally comes under individual ownership, where the owner has the right to sell the plot of Ram-Sa to anyone within the community. The right to ownership is generally followed by the next descendant of the individual owner. Here the descendant refers to the male member of the family, since women in the Memba society enjoy no right on their community land.

**Bo-Go (Grassland)**

Bo-Go is an important classification of land for the Memba. In Bo-Go they leave cattle to move freely for grazing. Bo-Go comes under the ownership of the village and some plot of it comes under the family ownership. In Bo-Go, they did not give much importance to the occurrence of inheritance because all the member of the family and village commonly use it. It is interesting to learn that the Memba for many centuries unlike the other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh know the importance of manure in agriculture and even produces manure naturally with the help of fern like plant locally known as Pha. They call the land where it grows as Pha-Sa. Pha is so valued that the land where it grows, they treasured it as important and owned by individuals. This land generally exists near the Ram-Sa so that they can transport the manure easily and conveniently.

**Khim-Gapse (Settlement land)**

The land where Memba construct their house is called Khim-Gapse. In early days, the clan commonly owned the Khim-Gapse, where any member of the clan could
construct house in a suitable place. But gradually in the later period because of increase in population among the clan members the Khim-Gapse came under individual ownership of already settled members. The inheritance of ownership of the khim-Gapse passes to their offspring.

**Gan-Sa**

It is a plot of land, owned by the elderly members of the family. When division of landed property takes place amongst the children, the elderly members retains the right of the gan-sa to themself until death. After which, the son taking care of the elderly parents inherits the gan-sa as a gift of inheritance.

**Agriculture**

The Memba follow mixed pastoral and agriculture economy in which cattle plays a dominant role. In every tribal society, there is a less scope to earn their livelihood without agriculture and accordingly they classified their land as per its use for the community. According to legend and oral tradition, it is said that during their early settlement the Memba managed their food from the forest products in the form of roots and fruits. Soon they began to starve because of the shortage of forest produce and in order to save themselves from starving they sent a messenger to his holiness the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (1617 to 1682) at Lhasa (Tibet). He was the son of a peasant of a place called Chung-gye, two days journey from South-east of Lhasa on foot. After declaring him as a reincarnation of fourth Dalai Lama by the Head lamas of the monastery, he reigned as the 5th Dalai Lama in 1642. The messenger sent by

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4 Charles Bell, *Tibet Past And Present*, Low price Publication, Delhi, 1st Published 1924, 1997, pp. 35-36.
Memba before his court gave the message that in such a difficult and harsh situation they could not survive and had nothing to eat. They also requested permission to return to Tibet. His Holiness the Great Dalai Lama gave an order to his minister to send seeds from Tawang (now a District of Arunachal Pradesh) to Menchuka Valley so that the Memba could survive. It was under his order, that they sent a seed of Dre (rice), Asum or Oshum (maize), Tami (Millet) and kodo for Menchuka with a group of people from Naksang Clan. Later Memba brought various seeds from different parts of Tibet which comprises of three varieties of wheat named Neh, Doh and Khyong, large garlic, Khae (Red potato), Orsh (small beans), Lobhu (reddhish), Garb (used as dough for noodles) etc. They also gathered some seeds of vegetables and wild potato like Benji (Chilly), Mem, Agong (cucumber), Guyang, Dumsh (Pumkin) and Solum. It is said that the Monpas of Tawang knew the technique of use of plough in agriculture, taught to them by the Tawang Monasteries from many centuries. Thus, the Naksang clan brought the same technique and taught it to the Memba. It is believed that Memba began to cultivate in Menchuka Valley during the late 17th century A.D.

**Shifting Cultivation (Singe)**

At the beginning of the settlement, the Memba practiced the system of agriculture called Jhum Cultivation (shifting cultivation) in some clusters of area, which was a traditional method of agriculture and is still being practiced by most tribal communities in many parts of the world, particularly in wet tropics. It has been

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7 The period fixed is based on the period of reign of 5th Dalai Lama.
established by the archeological evidences that this type of cultivation was prevalent in the Neolithic period some 10,000 years back, when man discovered that seed of certain grass that could be eaten and accidentally hit upon the method of shifting cultivation.\textsuperscript{8}

Shifting cultivation is regarded as one of the traditional methods for cultivation in hilly areas of tropical region in which the jungle is cut and burned on site. This system of land use and agriculture are widespread in the mountainous areas of the north-east region of India. According to estimates made by task force of shifting cultivation in India (1983) were approximately 622.2 thousand families practicing shifting cultivation in India, from which 443.3 thousand families, constituting 71.25 percent of India practicing the slash and burned cultivation were located in the north-east region.\textsuperscript{9} It involves a plot of land selected by owner of the land either in hill side or in the plain side for cultivating temporarily. Mostly hill side land is selected and after few years, the land is abandoned and left for regenerating to their natural vegetation while they move to another plot of land. The length of time that allowed regenerating by lying fallow plot is shorter than the time that a place is cultivated. Here they uses the technique of slash and burn where a part of hill side is cleared by uprooting medium size tree and bushes, the big trees are cut down and if not possible only their branches are cut off. After this all are left to dry so that it can burnt easily. Fire is an integral part of shifting cultivation as it helps in organic management because burning plays an extremely important role in soil fertility. It helps in reducing acidity, increasing the availability of phosphorus, other Nutrients released from biomass and even parent material during burning may become

\textsuperscript{8} K.P. Sagareiya, Forest & Forestry, National Book Trust, Delhi, 2009, pp. 4-5.
available for crop uptake, escape via volatilization, leaching or surface runoff, remained bound in a recalcitrant ash complexes. These outcomes are highly dependent upon the intensity of the burn. It is considered the most important factor influencing shifting soil fertility.\textsuperscript{10}

The Memba inaugurated Singe (shifting cultivation) with a selection of plot of land for cultivation, generally selected by the elderly members of the family. Memba traditionally use Nam right to exploit the land surrounding their village. It is perceived in three types of forest land. First the village forest most probably surrounding the village, second the forest fallow land earlier used for cultivation and third the primary forest. They usually select secondary forest for cultivation. The plot selected by several group of family generally use to be adjacent to each other. They choose size of the plot depending on the number of work force available in a house.

They do slashing operation of the selected plot in the month of February-March by simply slashing the vegetation to dry in the sun for about three to four weeks. They usually selects the day for burning by choosing hottest day. The burning enables the soil to manage its fertility itself by helping in quick decomposition of vegetation and controls the growth of weeds and pest in labour efficient manner. Usually, they burnt the entire plot in the same day. Sometimes, they do the burning of slashed forest for second time depending on the quality of the first burning.

The tilling of the land follows the burning of the land. However, if they used the same plot consecutively for a second time, then they performed tillage and weeding using small hoe or machete. It is significant to note that the women folk of the community mostly perform tilling and weeding activity, which is a long and exhausting process. After it, they do sowing of seeds in the Month of April-May. Maize and upland rice is the main crop grown by the Memba in addition to several other crops viz., cassava, yam, chilies, pumpkin, beans and sweet potato that are grown in smaller quantity in the same plot or in the adjacent plot. In shifting cultivation, they generally practice mixed or multiple cropping. For making hole in the plot, they use dibbling stick and sow the seed in it. Most of the crop grown in the shifting cultivation is produced for self-sufficiency but many products are also used for commercial purpose in exchange of other goods or product with the fellow villagers or neighbouring villages.

The labour force for the shifting cultivation is only the member of the family and hence whoever has large numbers of members in their family gets more working force for their cultivation. The implements used by them was of primitive type and are locally made such as dibble stick or hoe available to them naturally. Some of the Memba family who are well to do use slave as a working labour. For slash and burn, the tools used by them are various types of Machetes (dao) and Axe. The sowing of seeds is mostly done by the female member of the family by digging the land with the help of dibble stick and male member generally does the slash and burn part but in some case both the gender of the family works together.

The water supply for shifting cultivation totally depends on rainwater during the monsoon because of the absence of artificial irrigation system. Regular weeding of the
cultivated land is done when required, so that crops can grow healthy. They consider this as most tedious and labour consuming activity of the crop cycle. The women and children, using small Machete (dao), knife and hoes, mostly do this work. They also make provision of fencing, which they constructed before or after sowing around the selected plot with bamboos, wood and tree branches so to protect their crop from stray cattle, horse, goats, pigs and wild animals. They also make small hut mostly with no walls that provide shelter and rest during their visit to the cultivated land for weeding, cooking and eating, plucking vegetables, harvesting of the crop. The hut is especially more useful when the location of the shifting fields is far away from the house or village because at times they spent the night in the fields.

Harvesting is the final stage of shifting cultivation and does it when crop is ready to harvest. Female members of the family mostly do the harvesting of the crop. They use two basic techniques to harvest upland rice. In first technique, they simply strip the grain from the panicles in the field using bare hands, and put it straight into the basket. Here, they required no threshing and grain can be immediately stored in granaries. In second technique, they use sickle for cutting stem and threshing them. The harvesting of maize is basically done with hand and the bunch of maize is tied together and left hanging to dry in the roof of the granaries or sometimes in the kitchen itself. Millet is the staple food of Memba and is widely cultivated among them. Transportation of grain to the granaries is mostly done with the help of a basket, which the women used to carry in their back, and in some case horse or pony are also used for transportation of the grains.

After harvesting, they left the plot to fallow. They practiced fallow period so that the cultivated plot can recover its fertility. They apply fellow period of three to five
years to allow the forest to regenerate. However, in some villages where population are
less and vast forest area, the fellow period could be for a period of five to twenty years.\textsuperscript{11}
In scientific point of view, this is the perfect time required by the fellow land to
regenerate its fertility and nutrients. Shortening of fellow period leads to fertility decline,
forest destruction and loss of biodiversity.

\textit{Nyeshing (irrigation farming)}

Memba follow the practice of irrigation farming in most of the area available,
expect for Menchuka which is a valley but many of the settlement villages are located in
upland areas where the soil is usually stony, brown, reddish and acidic in nature and
there is very limited option for irrigation farming. Those who inhabited in the valley
areas usually practiced the irrigation farming and the field is prepared mostly adjacent to
the house so that they can look after in better way. In this form of agriculture, they
usually follow wet rice and maize cultivation. The elderly member of the family and
villagers generally fix the timing for the cultivation. The cultivation period normally
starts with the start of the rainy season in the month of March. The tilling of land is done
with handmade \textit{Thong bo} (plough) which in early days generally done by the man labour
but they gradually used horse and pony for it. The Memba knew the use of manure and
is prepared from the \textit{Pha} by drying and spreading it in the field. Which is later burned
on good sunny day and the ash is mixed with the soil.\textsuperscript{12} This idea of producing manure
by Burning \textit{Pha} in irrigation farming might learned from the shifting cultivation, where

\textsuperscript{11} Pema Chukla, \textit{op.cit.}, date 11-5-2013.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ibid.}
the slash forest is burned to serve as manure and natural insecticides. Again they use dung of cow, horse, pony and pig in their agriculture field for manure.

When the tilling is finished, they level the surface of the plot with the help of T-shape stick. After this, they can sow the sapling. The sapling for the sowing is grown in a temporally made nursery in a small plot of land called *Lama-kos* located adjacent to the cultivated land. The member of the family collectively in a small plot does the sowing, but in a large plot, the sowing is done with the help of the neighbor or some time with members of villagers. During the time of sowing the owner had take care of the feeding of the participants during the working hour and in return he has to do the same work in the participants plot. The sowing is done with the help of hand only. The water for wet rice cultivation is also mostly depending on the rainwater and water from nearby stream and river is connected through canal, which watered the fields. Facility to block the water is made in the field with the help of mound of soil surrounding the plot. Moment they sow the crop the regular maintenance of crop is required where they regularly check the condition of the crop and the water. Regular weeding is done in the field but unlike shifting cultivation here weeds grow in a very less quantity and less time consuming. The harvesting is done between five to six month after sowing and the day for harvesting is decided by the elderly member of the family. Here in wet rice cultivation both male and female assists each other. Harvesting is mainly done with knife or small machete were only the last part of the crop containing grain is cut off and remaining part is left in the plot which will later served as natural fertilizer for the next growing period. The grain is separated from the harvested crop with the help of stick. They carried grain in a basket and kept it in a granary for future consumption. They
follow different type of storage system such as, bamboo granaries on stilts, storage under house in a wooden box and wooden made granaries. In some villages rice granaries are located away from the house to protect them in case of accidental fire. This method of irrigation farming is practiced for both wet Rice cultivation and terrace cultivation by the Memba tribe.

The next part of the process is drying and threshing which implies in both shifting cultivation and irrigation cultivation. After harvesting, the crop is kept in open sun light for drying which normally take place in dry season of the year. Threshing of the crop is done according to the requirement of the family. The threshing is traditionally performed by using hand operated wooden utensils, in a tree trunk with two small holes and large one, where the crop is placed in a hole to thresh. For grinding some village used stone slabs kept in their house as grinding tools, but in a village located near the river developed a technique of water-wheel for the grinding the grain like millet, maize and wheat etc.

*Gorzo (Kitchen Garden)*

The entire Memba household has *gorzo* (kitchen garden) in the backyard of their house. The land is well fenced with bamboo or branches of tree or stone slab collected from the surrounding area to protect it from the cattle. Cattle dung and burnt dried leaves called *pha* is used as manure for the kitchen garden. The garden is done usually to fulfill the basic requirement of the house viz; ginger, potato, radish, chilly, pumpkin, beans, herbs and other green vegetables, which are grown in the garden for personal consumption. It is a plot of land where vegetables and herbs are grown in a small scale.

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13 Sange Naksang, *op.cit.*, date 16-6-2014.
We can say that it is the only plot where we will find production of vegetables almost throughout the year. The water supply is provided from the rain during the monsoon and from nearby streams during the dry winter season.\textsuperscript{14}

**Livestock**

Menchuka Valley with its large natural meadows, wild grass and watered canyons offer the best of grazing land and due to limited arable land the early settlers therefore naturally took to livestock and began to domesticate various animals. According to the migration stories, there are mention of the fact that the people brought the entire domestic animals from Tibet, Bhutan and Tawang, except for the bull that died in their journey to Menchuka Valley.\textsuperscript{15} Dog was a common domesticated animal among the Memba in early days as it is today, the most popular breed is a large dog called Tibetan Mastiff which is generally used as guards and hunting dog.

The cattle were mostly used for barter trade and in the time of sacrifices, the priest officiating the ritual was rewarded for his service with cattle. The value of cattle was fixed with reckoned in the heads of cattle. The domesticated animals mainly consist of Balag (cow), Lango (Ox), Yak, Zum or Chungri (high breed of cow), horse, Pony, Sheep, *Bamin (Mithun)*, *Pha* (pigs), Hen and *Ra* (goats) are reared mainly for food, shelter, cloth and to have used in the mode of exchange as well as in religious purpose. Most of the Livestock they reared were brought from Tibet. The livestock were kept predominantly outdoors and had to forage for food on the field, fallow land meadows or

\textsuperscript{14} Attam Goiba, *op.cit.*, date 18-6-2014.  \textsuperscript{15} Pema Chukla, *op.cit.*
in forests close to the village. The system of rearing livestock practiced by them is of primitive, rough and simple operating style and livestock product are major source of resource and the material for the improved livelihood of the Memba people.\textsuperscript{16}

Cattle are allowed to graze in a grazing ground called Bo-Go where they are left to move freely. The ownership of Bo-Go is of two type that are individual and family gazing ground. In case of inheritance of Bo-Go among the sons the ownership is vested to all instead of individual distribution. The cattle were brought back in the evening from Bo-Go and tied under the cattle shed called Khayap and they hardly cut grasses for the cattle. But a month before arrival of winter season they stock dried grass collected from supply of crop residue, and were stored in a Shingrang (Dried grass store room) to be used as a food for cattle in winter. Once in every year they burned the dried grassland to prevent growth of trees and pave the way for the growth of fresh and soft grass for the domesticated animal for grazing. Beside this the remaining ashes of the burnt over land provides manure for the growth of healthy grass. The Balang (cow) and Chungri (higher breed of Cow) is mainly domesticated for supply of milk for making butter, ghee and chulpee, which is one of the major diets of the Memba. The Memba also uses the cow skin for making sitting mat. During the day the cow is left open for grazing but in the evening the cow is kept in a Goda-Barang (cow shed). The ox is known as Lango. It is also said that they even brought yak from Tibet but because of different climatic condition the yak could not survive in Menchuka and hence is mainly consumed as meat by the Memba.

\textsuperscript{16} D.K. Dutta, \textit{op.cit}, p. 75-77.
Bamin (Mithun) is another important livestock but unlike other livestock Mithun is largely semi-domesticated by the Memba as practiced by other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The Mithun is allowed to graze freely in the jungle. The owner or caretaker of the animal visits it once or thrice in a month taking along with him small amount of salt to feed the animal. This is done in order to form a bond between the animal and the master and also for future identification and easy access to the animal. Traditionally the Mithun is regarded as a family wealth among the Memba and is mostly used for meat production. Memba might have learned the art of live stocking of Mithun from their neighbouring tribes because their place of origin is not suitable for Mithun to survive and they came to know about it only after their settlement in Menchuka Valley.

The Pha (pigs) are kept predominantly outdoors most of the year. Shelter is used for night and mostly in winter which is called Pha- Rang or phadung (pig shed). The pregnant pigs are kept separately in other phadung. The pigs are provided food made of husk of maize or rice mixed with hot water two times a day in a wooden pot at the courtyard or in the phadung. The material used in Pig shed is of wood, bamboo and stone. The cow shed and pig shed is attached together as one house. The Jom (Chicken) is one of the valuable livestock for the Memba. The Jom (chicken) are usually kept in a small house which are illuminated by natural lights through window made of bamboo and equipped with elevated perches and nest is made of bamboo basket mounted along the corner of the wall with a provision of opening for outlet. The outlet allowed the chicken to use the outdoor area. The chicken house is well protected to save chicken

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from. The pig and chicken are reared mostly for consumption and sacrifice ritual. They also fulfill their requirement of eggs from the chicken they have domesticated.\(^\text{18}\)

Some cluster of Memba people also rear sheep and goat in a large quantity. In many villages, the people rear a large number of goats. Sheep and Ra (Goat) are domesticated mostly for meat and hair of goat is used as wool to make garments and decorative items. The goats and cattle are mostly looked after by the young boys of the family or either by the domestic help of the family. It’s their duty to bring them safely from the grazing ground in the evening.

Unlike other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, the Memba also domesticates Ta or Tah (horse) and Jea (pony), which is mainly utilized for riding and carrying goods from place to place.\(^\text{19}\) Horse is generally kept loose during daytime so that it can graze in the Bo-Go and in the evening, they are brought back and tied near the house. A mixture of husk, peanut and grass is fed to the horse almost daily. Amongst the entire breed of domesticated animal the horse and pony is regarded as the most important. This is due to the reason that these animals used for transportations of goods purchased from Neighbouring Tibet.\(^\text{20}\)

**Rida (Hunting)**

Hunting is the earliest form of economic activity which mankind performed in order to fulfill his food requirement and other needful commodity. Hunting is an

\(^\text{18}\) Gebu Sona, *op.cit.*, date 21-6-2014.
\(^\text{19}\) Karma Maney, 34 years, Menchuka HQ, Menchuka Circle, West Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed on 16-5-2013.
\(^\text{20}\) Tashi Naksang, *op.cit.*, date 21-9-2013.
activity, which involves art of searching and killing wild animal and birds using
different tools and technique from the material available in their environment.

Before men learned the technique of domestication of animal and agriculture
they were hunter and gatherer, where the source of shelter and food requirement was
mostly acquired from the animals they killed. The practice of hunting for food continued
in all cultures of the world even after humankind discovered the knowledge of
agriculture and domestication of animal. Though hunting for meat of animals does not
provide the entire nutrients required for the body but it is the major source of protein.
The earliest instrument and technique used by human to hunt wild animal was stone
tools by about 2.5 million years ago which was proved when it first appeared in the
archeological record. But gradually the technique began to develop with the discovery of
new and more durable metal viz; bronze, iron etc. but there is difference in appliance of
technique and material used for hunting animal using traps and other method around the
world because of the geographical location, climate and resources.

All the tribes inhabiting in Arunachal Pradesh practices hunting. Before, the
introduction of Bore gun and rifle, the material and technique used by them is of
primitive type mostly consist of raw material available in their environment viz;
bamboo, stone, cane, branches of tree etc. The only metal equipment they used were
machete (dao), knife and arrow tip made of metal, which they usually purchased, from
either plain of Assam or from Tibet. The most lethal thing they used for hunting was

21 Q. Marak & J. kalita, “indigenous Knowledge System Advocated with Hunting Among Padam of
22 P. Chutia, “Studies on Hunting and the Conservation of Wild life Species in Arunachal Pradesh”,
poison, which they apply in the tip of arrow head especially for hunting a large animal. Hunting of animal from forest for sustenance has been the way of life among the people of Arunachal Pradesh from ages.

The Memba have been conventionally hunting wild animals and birds in Menchuka since many centuries. The hunting techniques and instruments used by them are of primitive type like other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. But in spite of such long history of hunting, most of the Memba areas are still rich in wildlife resources. Hunting by the community was primarily for the sustenance needs of the members, commercial, medicine and ceremonial purposes. In Memba community, hunting is an important activity for the member of the community. Like other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, the women are not allowed to participate in hunting activities because they had to look after the children and house in the absence of male members. Young boys start early to join adults on hunting trips, upon reaching manhood they track animal in deep forest either collectively or alone. They practice mostly two type of hunting, viz., communal and individual hunting. For individual, they have their own hunting territory and each man hunts exclusively within his area. This territory may be the fellow land left for two to three years after jhum cultivation or may be part of some land within their village territory. In individual hunting they mostly use traps to catch or kill small animals viz., mongoose, squirrels, wild chicken, porcupine etc. but if lucks favour them individually they sometimes kill large animal like wild boar, dear, bear etc. with the help of arrow coated with poison in its tip. A good individual hunter with a large catch is respected by the fellow villager and other members and is respected in the community.

Thinley Sona, op.cit., date 25-6-2014.
Community hunting is mainly done to hunt large animals like wild boar, deer, bear, leopard etc. The tools and equipment used are Mendh (Tibetan Gun), Da (bow) and Ame (poison arrow), Papsa (Machete), Duzung (small knife), and Dongi (spear). The community hunting system is practiced when hunting is to be done in a far away distance from their village. The member equally shares the animals they hunt during community hunting but the skin of the animal is generally kept for commercial purpose. Traditionally every individual and village have their own land demarcated for hunting in the form of natural geographical features such as mountain ridges and rivers which are frequently used as boundaries in tribal area. It is traditions that in beginning of their settlement in the particular area where they practiced shifting cultivation or places where a hunter or group of hunters constantly carried out hunting automatically get recognition as the hunting territory, which could be exclusively used by him or the group. No other individuals are allowed to hunt on that particular area without the prior permission from the owner, otherwise action is taken in the form of fine from the violator. The right to use hunting territory could be transferred to the descendants or close relatives in case there are no direct descendants.

The hunting season starts mostly with the coming of winter season (October to march) because it is the season not suitable for farming moreover animals trapped also remains fresh longer in the dry and cold weather. Hunting is mostly done with the help of various kinds of traps called Thi-Ghu (traps used for catching small animal) and Yam-Jeh (traps made with the help of stone slab to catch birds). It depends upon the

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25 Pema Chukla, *op.cit.*
individual to set number of trap they think is required. They usually set 10-50 traps, but in some case they set more than 50 traps to catch animal, which are organized into 2 to 4 trap lines, during each hunting season and is checked regularly by visiting the traps almost every week and sometime the hunters stays in the forest for two to three days. This type of technique is mostly used to catch small animals and Zanga (Wild Hen). In this kind of hunting, they are largely dependent on the shifting of the location of the trapping lint within their hunting territories from time to time to ensure sustainable catch.

Hunting of large animals starts with the proper survey of the area to find traces or path of the animal through the fresh animal footmark or animal dung. After the verification of the place they wait in the path for ambush. They sometime also make tree house in the place and wait for the animal. The other method of hunting is they surround the place where animal is supposed to be, with the help of hunting dog they chase the hunt from one side and on the other side fellow hunters waits for the animal to hunt down. This technique is mainly used while hunting deer in daytime. The participating hunters equally share the animal they kill and if the owner of the forest is another individual then some parts of the meat probably the best part is given to them. If the catch is abundant then meat is left to dry over the fire and is stored for later use. The animal they hunt is not only for consumption but also for commercial purpose and shelter. Animal such as tiger and Doamri (Bear) are not eaten by them and hunted only for commercial purpose. These animals are hunted for fur for garments and many of the animal parts like Lartsi (musk) of La (musk dear) used as perfume, medicine, and Dom

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26 Thinley Sona, *op.cit.*
(bile) and paws of Doamri (Bear) are used as a medicine in Tibet and among the other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. Thus, animals they hunt are one of the major sources of their trade economy.

**Fishing**

The Memba area is covered with number of streams and yargapchu river (Siyom River) which passes through the centre of the valley. The availability of so many places for Nya (fish) to breed automatically made the Memba to learn the art of catching Nya (fish). Nya (Fish) is less important than hunting and livestock; fishing are significant for some Memba communities, depending on their access to stream or water bodies. Fishing is usually done in a large quantity during the onset of monsoon, the breeding season of fishes. It is during this season that many varieties of fishes from the main river migrate towards the stream for mating and breeding purpose. Fishing is done mainly for consumption and they have their individual place for fishing where other people from outside the community are not allowed to carry out fishing without prior permission from the owner. They also have a place commonly owned by the villagers where any member of the village can partake in fishing. The technique and equipment they use are made from bamboo, which is locally available in the forest. They practice two type of fishing system, hand gathering and trapping. The Memba people have knowledge of fish behavior relating to their migration, foraging and habitat. Fishing by the method of hand catching is done by blocking portions of stream or rivulets with the help of stone, soil, bushes etc. once the blocking process is done, the collected water is poisoned with extracts from a few plants. Once the water becomes poisoned, fisherman waits for the fish to paralyze. The poison soon stunt fish when it passes through the gills or in some
case ingested. The fish then floats on the surface for easy capture. By using this method, they usually catch 2-10 kg fish a day. The caught fish is equally divided among the participants. This type of fishing technique requires not less than three people or more according to the size of the area and is generally done by group member from the family or by the community from the village. It is generally done in stagnant pools or slow flowing river or stream, which helps the poison to concentrate its power without being washed away. In this type of fishing both male and female members of the community can participate and enjoy the catch where the gathering of fish is done by hand but sometimes traditional fishing basket are employed. The trapping system of fishing is mainly done by an individual person and is the most commonly preferred type of fishing method. They use various kind of trapping technique viz; basket trapping, cage trapping etc. which are locally known as Nya-Shong; Phurang; Nyabe-Dirchop. The trap is generally kept against running water source between stone boulders where there is maximum flow of fish. The cage trap, a unique mechanism, where there is an open door through which the fish can enter but prevents them from escaping. It is upon the individual to lay as many traps as possible but it also constant checking on regular basis. Interestingly only male member indulge in this type of fishing.  

Forest Gathering

Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh since many generations have had a very close relationship with forest. Many of the activities and beliefs of the tribes are greatly influenced by the forest. Their economy is largely based on forest resources, which constitute bamboo, timber, cane fruit, wild fruits etc. The United Nation in its report on

27 Phurpa Naksang, op. cit., date 10-6-2014
development of tribal (1973), mentions about the importance of forest to the tribal’s who directly or indirectly obtain substantial amount of their livelihood from the forest.\textsuperscript{28}

The forest areas that the Memba tribe occupies posses all the necessary characteristics that is required for the favorable growth of flora and fauna. Since the time of migration to Menchuka Valley, they have depended on the various forest products such as wild fruit, roots, and vegetables and have also possessed the knowledge and use of medicinal plants that grow in abundance.

The forest products gathered by Memba can be categorised into two groups, the wood or timber forest product and Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs). The timber products are timber or wood, which is mainly used for construction of house, bridge, and firewood, which is the only means of energy sources of the Memba. Firewood is required for the cooking of food, preparation of food material for the domesticated animal and is also used as fuel in the form of firewood during winter season. The wood is also used as pillar for the demarcation of boundary in cultivated land. The male member of the family does the collection of timber for construction of house but on the other hand, the female member of the family generally collects firewood, which they usually gather from the fallow land. Most of the wood found in the Memba area is of pine family and the commonly used pine trees are locally known as \textit{Gorzen} and \textit{Tangsin} or \textit{Tangzin}.

The Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) refers to all biological material other then timber or wood, which are collected from natural forest for human use.\textsuperscript{29} NTFPs

provide most of the component of day today life of the Memba tribe and their traditional knowledge on NTFPs resources is unique. This knowledge is basically related with a socio-economy activity which can be classified into health, food, shelter and trade.

Forest product constitutes an integral component of food for the Memba. It provides mainly leafy vegetables, *Shom* (edible mushroom), Herbs, edible root and wild fruits, which are mostly gathered by the female member of the family. Most of the edible vegetables are found near the water stream area and collection of which requires time and patience. There are various types of mushrooms available in the forest from which they use few of the species as food. The climatic condition of the area is favorable for natural occurrence of mushroom (fungus) and some of them are regularly collected and use as food by the Memba.

But there is one species of mushroom which is used for its medicinal property and is of great importance to them. Locally it is called *yarsa Gumbu* (*cordyceps sinensis*) also known as caterpillar fungus. It grows naturally at an altitude of 9000 to 16000 feet in the mountain of Bhutan, China, Nepal, India and Tibet. This fungus is collected naturally in its habitat and is an important resource for the Memba. The harvest season begins in the month of May or June, where it is buried in the ground. It is a fungus, which grows on the larva of a caterpillar. The vegetation body is enclosed in the body of the insect from which the fungus develops. The futility body that buds from the caterpillar has a dark brown base and a black top. It looks like a twig without the typical

cap that mushroom generally exhibit. These fruiting bodies occasionally branch out and recombine to look like deer antlers.\textsuperscript{30} This mushroom has been used as medicine in Tibet and China from almost two thousand years in treatment of ailments going from cough and other lung problem to kidney deficiency and bleeding issue.\textsuperscript{31} Thus the collection of this mushroom for trade in Tibet represent significant fraction of the economy of the Memba. Besides this, the Memba have knowledge of numbers of the plant that can be used as natural dyes, herbs and medicine, which grow in forest since antiquities. The Memba for their health care regularly collects this plant. In recent years, they have successfully started cultivating some of this plant in their kitchen garden. Some of the commonly used medicinal plants are \textit{Rubia manjith}, \textit{Rubus ellipticus}, \textit{Primula denticulate} etc. the knowledge of gathering such plant is mainly retained by elder members of the family from which the knowledge is passed to next generation through practical and oral narration.

The bamboo, a fast growing tall grass belonging to the family of \textit{Poaceae} and Cane are Prickly Palm belonging to the family of \textit{Arecaceae},\textsuperscript{32} which occurs naturally in some parts of Menchuka is another important NTFPs product, which is used by the Memba. Only four variety of bamboo of thin quality is found in Menchuka and bamboo of large size is taken from the neighbouring tribal areas. The cane is mostly supplied from the neighbouring Tagin tribes. These are mainly used for making house, boundary of cultivated land and household articles like basket, carpet, bag etc. They also make

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 121.
\textsuperscript{32} L.R.Bhuyan, \textit{op.cit}, pp. 48–49.
hunting traps and weapon from bamboo and cane and it is also one of the main sources of fire fuel used in the Memba household.

Stone and mud can be also considered as NTFPs product, which Memba collect from the nearby forestland. Stone and mud is usually used for making statue, *Mane* (*Stupa*) a religious shrine by the Memba and in the construction of house and material for grinding food crop. The Memba also make fine quality of stone utensil used for cooking. It is also used for making grinding stone called *Lah-Garh*, which is of small size used in the house and large grinding stone used in *Anda-Khim* (Grinding water wheel). The man who is specializes in stone carving is known as *Umjeh* (Stone Carver).

**Cottage Industry**

The Memba tribes have a developed and self sufficient cottage industry which was mostly confined to their village only, where all the production was carried out in their house and mostly used by the member of the family but some products are used for trade purpose with the neighbouring tribes and Tibet. The cottage industry can be classified as follows.

**Bamboo production**

Bamboo and cane locally known as *Yas* and *Beda*.

*Drela* (*Grain drying mat*): Made by smoothly weaving bamboo mainly used as protective sheet for drying millet and rice.

*(Bamboo sieve)*: A tray of square type used for sieving rice husk and millet to separate unwanted grain and particles.
**Baling (Rain shield):** A bamboo made umbrella used extensively during farming which protects the farmer from rains.

**Komba (Haversack):** A basket made from bamboo and cane, mainly used to carry grain, vegetables and goods from one place to another.

**Patar (Hen coop):** A small hexagonal container with an opening lid at the top used for keeping chicken and their eggs.

**Beza (Hexagonal Basket):** A medium size basket made from bamboo or cane and used for storing vegetables.

**Yeh (Winnowing tray):** A tray made from bamboo and cane used for winnowing grains to separate husk and unwanted particles.

**Thuse (comb):** A comb of different size made of bamboo. Here a set of teeth is made on both sides of the bamboo frame.

**Traps:** They use various kind of traps made from bamboo such as Thi-Ghu, Nya-Shong and Phurang to catch small animal, birds and fish.

**Da and Ame (Bow and Arrow):** Made of bamboo where the tip of the bow is made of iron, mainly used for hunting and defense purpose.

**Timber Production**

**Dharma (Plate):** They made fine quality of plate with wood as material and used it for serving and keeping food. They select the size of the plate according to the choice of the person.
**Mendung (wooden tube):** A cylindrical tube made of different size, mainly used for carrying water from the sources. They filled the water by placing the tube vertically into the stream.

**Nyung Mo (wooden Pot):** A cylindrical pot made of wood used for keeping local beverage as stock for future consumption.

**Chum (pounder):** A thick block of wood where they dug a hole at the centre of upper side of wood. In it, they use long strong thin wood as a hammer to remove a husk from the grain.

**Sing-kyok (Round Spoon):** Memba people make round spoon of various shape and size from the piece of wood with the help of knife.

**Yok-Pa (Flat Spoon):** Memba make the flat spoon of various shape and size for stirring food while cooking with the help of knife and machete.

**Thong bo (plough):** They used fine quality of wood where they attached the tip with iron blade. They used it in field for tilling of soil.

**Gang-Sa (Smoke Pipe):** The Memba made handle of smoke pipe from a piece of bamboo root or stem. It helps them to inhale smoke from the burning of tobacco placed in the pipe. However, they also had metallic smoke pipe of various designs, which they procured from Tibet.

**Phur (Bowl):** The Memba made fine quality of wooden bowl and used it for serving food.
**Pharsing (Decorated Bowl):** They make fine quality of decorated wooden bowl. They used it in a prayer hall for serving offering to Gods.

**Chir-Shing (Noddle making instrument):** This is an instrument used for making noodles. They made it from a piece of wood, where they put dough of floor to be chopped or divided into noodles shape.

**Temi-Gam (wooden Box):** Memba make large rectangular shaped wooden box, They used for storing grains of maize, rice and millet in the house.

**Nyong-Ph (Jug):** A cylindrical shape Jug made of wood and decorated with silver and brass used as jug to serve wine. They also used bamboo for making Nyong-Ph.

**Ba (Mask):** They made Mask of various designs by carving wood. They used this mask image to relate certain mythological figure, animal and Buddha of religious importance. They used them while performing Mask dance.

**Textile and leather production**

Memba textile production since early days was mostly made from the skin and fur of animal like monkey, goat, leopard and deer, which protected them from the frigid cold climate of Menchuka, otherwise without which they might not be able to survive due to hypothermia especially during winter season. The production starts with soaking of animal skin in running water for several days until it becomes very soft and loose. Then they fitted the skin in Palmn (wooden frame) for extraction of inner portion of the skin with the help of various types of machete and knives until it becomes very thin. Next, they used animal skin with hair or sometimes remove the hair from it, tanned it
with vegetable oil or animal fats and kept to dry and later woven together to utilize as garments. They also decorate some of this fur with silk brocade. They made wool from the fur of goat and used it for weaving cloth, caps, hats, coat, carpet and blanket with their traditional loom. They also bring wool from Tibet, which was made of hair of yak, sheep, and goat and later use them to make the required item. They used excess finished product for trading purposes with their neighbouring tribes. However, they brought most of the fine quality of textile product from Tibet. The Memba also make fine quality of cushion from tanned skin of domesticated animal by using very soft grass called *Shuth*. They also make fine quality of fur mats made of deer skin, which can be found in every household of Memba community.

**Iron smelting (Chaksow)**

Unlike other tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, the Monpa and Memba tribe have known the art of making iron implements and were actively involved in commercial activity of iron tools making. Verrier Elwin while on his tour in northern Siang area came across a camp of Memba who had brought a black-smith-shop and were repairing the people tools. Again on his halt in Shimong village of Adi tribe he mention of presence of Memba blacksmith showing that they had plenty of iron.\(^{33}\)

They brought required wrought iron from Tibet. Iron work required process of carving, stretching, flattening, rolling and bending for which the iron needed to be heated to a red heat before it can work in a locally made furnace. When they achieved the required heat, the metal bending was done and rolled to create complex shape with

the help of different size and shape of hammer depending on what type of surface being worked. However, they mostly performed repairing work of broken sword and knife of the nearby people of their community or other tribes. They regarded this craft as spiritually dangerous and laced it with a number of taboos. It is generally confined to certain families who go from village to village making and repairing tools as required.

**Beverage making**

The local alcoholic beverage consumed by Memba is known as *Chang* and *Arra*. Every household of the Memba community prepares *Chang*. They served it to family member and guest visiting their house. They prepared it from rice and corn by boiling them in water and then spread into a bamboo or cane mat. They then mixed the spread-cooked millet or rice with yeast, put them into a thick wooden barrel, and kept for three to seven days with its opening tightly closed with leaves, so that the process of fermentation can occur quickly. After, being kept for the required time, they took out the barrel in open and allow some hot water to pass in the barrel through the fermented product. The water obtained after mixing with fermented product becomes *Chang* (alcohol beverage) and the quality of the percentage of alcohol depends on the quantity of water mixed in the barrel filled with the fermented product, more the quantity of water less the quality of alcohol percentage. *Arra* was an alcohol in spirit form prepared by process of distillation of liquid by collecting of steam produced by boiling *chang*.

**Paper making**

The indigenous handmade papermaking finds its place as one of the most important part of Memba culture and tradition. The technique is in still preserved among
few of the elder folks. They made traditional paper (*Shuk*) from the bark of *Shukso* or *Shuk-Shing* (*Dhapne*) tree, widely used in the past. They mostly used it to write religious scriptures, text and official record, using tradition ink and pen made of bamboo. The plant used is found naturally abundant in slopes of Himalayas between elevation of 5,250 and 13,000 feet. The process usually takes place during starting of winter season when there is less chance of rain. The process starts with harvesting of the bark of Daphne tree, followed by chopping into a fine piece of required size. They then put the chopped bark into a large metal bowl mixed with water to boil. After attaining required boiling, they take out the boiled bark and put it into a *shendong* (wooden container) for preparing paste. From *shendong* they poured prepared paste into a rectangle frame. Next, they leveled poured bark into a rectangle frame having several holes with the help of wooden scale. They then put the frame for drying in open sunlight for two to three days. After drying process, they separated the finished product in the form of thin paper from the rectangle frame. Paper was also one of the important products used by the Memba for trade in Tibet.

**Trade**

Trade had played a vital role in the progress of civilization of mankind since many decades. For the past many centuries, the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh erstwhile NEFA had followed extensive trade with Burma (Myanmar), Tibet and with the plains of Assam. The people living in the southern part of the State close to the boundary of Assam followed trade with Assam people. The *Ahom* and British open many *duar* (trade fare) in between the border of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh to facilitate trade with the
The hill tribes inhabiting in the north of Arunachal Pradesh had no facility to come downwards towards the plain of Assam because of hostile attitude and fear of being captured for slave by the in-between tribes. Their close proximity towards the Tibet made them to established trade relation with them. Christoph Von Furer Hamendorf in 1944-45, while on his tour to Mengio observed:

_There are people known as Boru (Bangros) living in the upper kamla valley in a place called Hure act as a middleman in trade between Tibetans and Nishis of the Khuru and Panyi valley._

Membā oral tradition verifies that earlier they had migrated from Tibet. Hence, they already knew the way back to Tibet and therefore could have made trade connections with Tibet. The practice of trade relation and role of middle-man by Memba continued until the international border was sealed after indo-China war of 1961-62.

The Memba has been the keen traders who always seek to look for new places for spread of their trade activity. J.F.S.william (APO) while on his tour, during 1943-44 writes.

_Raiding for slaves and cattle had ceased over a wide area under the newly established condition of peace man from village far up the valley who had never visited plain before came down to Pasighat to trade. Fewer Memba, then usual came down to tribute collecting forays and those who did found the Abor no longer willing to pay._

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35 Christoph Von Furer Hamendorf, _op. cit_, p. 55.
36 Lama Lakpa Sona, 86 years, Lah-Lhung Village, Menchuka Circle, West Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed on 01-7-2014.
According to the oral tradition of the Ramo and Libos the Memba got the trade monopoly right in their area because the Ramo and Libos could not go to Tibet for trade due to the brutal killing of Deb Tamden of Menchuka. By them, the Deb Tamden was a Tibetan by birth and sent by Tibet authority to Menchuka in order to set up their authority over the tribes inhabiting near Menchuka area. On arrival of Deb Tamden the Memba rendered their service to him as they were under the administration of Tibet authority. However, Ramo and Libos on other hand decided to retaliate and later killed him in Pailibos Village of Tamen Pake. Therefore they decided not to go to Tibet for trade for fear of being captured by the Tibetans and may be punished in the same fate as they had done to their King Tamden. This incident came as a blessing for the Memba because now they were the only community in the region, who could go to Tibet for trade, as they were recognized citizen of Tibet. And in return they could also do trade with the Ramo and Pailibos.

As per the report of Verrier Elwin on his Half way camp to Rego (Ramo village) on Saturday, 1st November 1958, he noticed many of the Ramo man had long Tibetan coat, either dark brown or deep brick-red. Ramo said that they paid the Memba, two or three hundred rupees for one of them, which was much higher price than usual. Again on 10th November 1958, while in Tagru (Pailibos village), he noticed that Pailibos bought woolen cloth blanket and red shawl from Memba at very high price. He also writes that pailibos have little idea of value of money because the tiger skin, which was stuffed in their honour was bartered with one year old dzomo which was bought from

Galang (Galo) tribe for three hundred rupees. The report indicates that the Memba applied trade monopoly or exploitative trade policy towards their neighbor tribes as and when required, which may be because they were the only tribes in that area who carried extensive trade with Tibet.  

The Memba carried important item for trade in Tibet, which consisted mostly of plant and animal categories i.e. skin, fur, horns, bones, herbs, dyes etc. from their native. The mode of carrying exchange was barter. The barter was a system in which instead of using money to purchase goods, they do it through a mode of direct exchange of goods or service for other goods or services. In this system if feuds occurred between the two groups it also exited as quickly as it came because of complementary nature of dependence on neighbor. They immediately try to restore peace for the continuation of trade between them. In exchange of their goods Memba bartered their requirement like salt, beads, brocades, colored tapes, decorated hats, Pabdung (Tibetan Sword), cloth, tea leaves and others usual paraphernalia to which they were so greatly attached. The Memba usually went to Tibet in a group along with their slaves and used to carry goods with the help of horse if possible. Besides having trade relation with Tibet to the north on the one hand, they had trade relation with the neighbouring tribes i.e. Ramo, Pailibos, Tagin, Bokar and Boris to the south from whom they again bartered Tibetan goods with all the item mostly of plant and animal categories on the other hand. They even bartered Tibetan item in exchange of slave from the neighbouring tribes. They exchanged goods bought from Tibet with the neighbouring tribes on quite exorbitant terms of barter. They

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40 Ibid, p. 135.
do barter with organised system of weight and measurement of the commodity. The Memba also had system of circulation of Tibetan Money in the form of brass coin, silver coin and gold coin. However, they seldom used coins for trade in Tibet and within their community. They confined their trade with neighbouring tribes through barter system only.

One important and precious product they brought from Tibet through trade was Tsa (salt), which was an essential element in the diet of not only humans but of animal also. Being positioned outside the line to commutate between Tibet and other tribes of West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh, Memba had for long enjoyed a monopoly over the trade in salt and it had been interwoven into the daily lives of the community for countless periods. Salt was found in abundance in many parts of Tibet. The Salt brought by the Memba from Tibet, had been produced in a place called Horb, from where it was brought to Molo by Tibetan traders, the nearest trade centre in Tibet from Menchuka. Before 1947 in Arunachal Pradesh, salt was found and prepared only by the of Tutsa, Tangsa and Nockte tribes inhabiting the eastern part of the state in early days and there was no evidence of finding of salt in any other place in the state. Due to scarcity of salt in most part in Arunachal Pradesh, there was heavy demand of salt among the tribes of the state, which made salt crucial and important economically. They even exchanged salt for slave with other tribes.

Tea known as Jsa is another important product mostly consumed in the form of traditional salted butter tea by the Memba. The Tea in the form of brick called Cheri and

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41 Lama Sange Khandu Sona, date 26-6-2014.
ball shaped called Zadi, brought by Memba from Tibet. However, Tibetan on the other hand imported it from place called Tsa-Rong in China who held wholesale monopoly of the export of tea trade and had granted the retail monopoly to the Lama priest. Tea trade provided very high profit to the Chinese traders. Therefore, when the opening of commercial intercourse with Europeans of Assam for Assam tea garden, the Chinese in order to safeguard their tea trade, they prevented Europeans of British India from entering into Tibet. For the same reason they arrested T.T. Copper, because of this suspicion by two hundred Lama Soldiers who obliged him to change his route and ultimately sent to Chinese prison in the city of Weisee-foo. He was later rescued by the interference of some friendly tribes.44

The Tibetan authority also tried to organize the planting of experimental tea garden in the border of Upper Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh under the leadership of Dzongpon Tsarong with the help of Nah people. They organized plantation at a site named Kepembe between present day Taksing and Lengbang. Due to resistance from the local people, they abandoned the operation. The idea of organizing such tea plantation operation also reveals the importance of tea in Tibetan society and their zeal to have their own production. This was naturally not possible in Tibet landscape.45

Silk was another item, which was in immense demand. They mostly used Silk in the form of khada (ceremonial scarf) as a medium of social transactions. They presented and exchanged Khada on all social occasions of the community. It is a piece of white,

yellow or blue silk of very thin and sheer in texture. They also wore cloak made of silk. The value of silk varied according to quality and size. They purchased most of the silk they used from Tibet. The Tibetans on the other hand, due to their Buddhist doctrine prevented them from rearing silk, got the supplies from China.\(^46\) They also got supply of silk of poor quality from their neighbouring tribe of Ramo, Pailibo and Bori. The source of silk brought by neighbouring tribe was from Assam through the Gallong (Galo) and Adi community.\(^47\)

**Slave Trade**

A slave by is definition someone who is legally owned by another person and who serves or works for them without any payment or materials whatsoever in return. Ancient Indian epic *Mahabharata* declares that it is a law of war that vanquished should be the victor’s slave and would served his captor until ransomed.\(^48\) which according to Romila Thaper, “Slaves referred to in the Mahabharata are generally said to have those captured in the war or those reduced to slavery as a result of loss in gambling or those born as such from slaves mother.”\(^49\) A. K. Thakur opines that, “Slavery is a socio-economic and political set-up over the long period of human history.”\(^50\) Slavery far from being a peculiar institution has deep and far-reaching roots. Human civilization from countless centuries has been practicing the trade of man. The system was widespread practiced during the earliest known history of all the continents in the world. Slavery in the *Greek* and

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\(^{47}\) K. Kumar, *The Boris*, Director of research Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Shillong, 1979, p 103-105.
\(^{50}\) Amrendra Kumar Thakur, *Slavery in Arunachal Pradesh*, Mittal publication, New Delhi, 2003, p. 1.
Roman Empire were well known, where the transfer of man from the western Asia and North Africa brought continuous stream of slave. These slaves were engaged in enormous verities of activities, as estate manager, field ward, shepherds, hunters, servants, midwives, potters. In addition to private sector employment, they also served in military support function. Private individuals as well as the state, temples and partnership owned the slave. When Mohammedans invaded Africa, they put many of the captured Negro women for their harems and Negro Man for military and menial service. Europe in fifteen and sixteenth century concentrated their alternative towards the slave trade, which they procured either by capturing or by purchasing them from the tribes of Africa. The European mainly used the slave as a labour in their cash crop field for production of goods to make money with almost free investment in labour force. It is pertinent to note that both Mohammedans and European forced the slave to convert in their religious belief.51

The system of slavery was in practice among the various tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. The transition of society from semi-nomadic pastoralist to agro based pastoral economy created the environment for the requirement of human labour for high production and which was acquired from enslavement through various means. Reference given by various British Officer, mentioned of the slavery in Arunachal Pradesh earlier known as North East frontier of India. In one such incident in 1837, when party of British officer was sent to patkoi, on the way they encountered a Singpho war party, who

fresh from the sack of Naga settlements and dragging along gang of captives to make them slave. E.T. Dalton in his letter to Major Jenkins writes about Abor and Meris that:

*There are no very material differences between the Abors and Meris. They intermarry with them, exchange slaves, and are generally in the habit of constant intercourse.*

H.M. Crowe in his Account of Journey to Apa Tanang Country mentions of an existence of slavery among them in a very mitigation form; where slave were used simply as servant, fed and cloth by their master and shared the vicissitudes of their masters fortune. Verrier Elwin tells about the existence of two great classes in Nyishi community, free man and serfs. Where one of the free classes reduced to a serf by his own act, but serf never became a free man. Christoph Von Furer-Hamendorf mentions about the slavery in Nyishi tribe that:

*In the days of warfare many men, women and children captured in raids were ransomed by their kinsman, kept as slave by their captors, or sold to people in no way connected with the feud that had triggered off the raid in which they had lost their freedom.*

Most of the slavery in Arunachal Pradesh was not practiced as an institution, which was used primarily for the production of goods from which wealth could be derived. Since there was no existence of cash crop field during that period. Slave in this regard was essentially servants, and the extent of the demand from them depended in a large measure on the wealth and power of the potential master.

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55 *Ibid.*, p. 188.
The Memba like any other tribes of the state did follow the system of Slavery. The slaves were called as Pakbo, Yogpo or yok. The earliest reference of slaves in Memba tribe find in a tour note of S.M Krishnatry, while on his duty in Lemiking in Upper Subansiri on 1st to 15th may, 1956. He came across a person named Tagyo, a Tagin from lower area and found that he had been sold a year earlier to a Menchuka trader with whom he had visited Lasha for trade, had regained his freedom from slavery along with others.57

A tour report of the advisor for tribal affairs in Northern Siang, from October 23rd to Dec 3rd, 1958, mentions of Memba tribe which for generation had kept a very large number of Tagin slave. They enslaved them by capturing or purchasing them from across the ranges of hills to the west of Menchuka. The neighbouring tribes of Memba like Palibo, Ramo and Bori also kept slaves, but were comparatively good to them and fairly well, which according to him was because of the cloth which the slave wore were much similar to the cloths of the masters and live in a very much the same way. However, he noticed that the Memba were different from their slave by their life style, dress and temperament and even the religion were different. Number of person at different places also informed him of the harsh treatment of beating and even mutilating of slave on various occasions. The Memba kept slaves mainly as a servant to do a great deal of work in the fields. The slaves were particularly important for their trade with Tibet. They were used a potter to carry goods in Tibet and same as while returning from Tibet.58

58 Mechuka Tour Report, Arunachal Pradesh State Archive, Bundle no. 5-1957-1959; Flie no. R.50/59.
The native whenever were raided they offered stiff resistance to their captor and against their transportation to unknown new area for sale. Fierce war broke out between them when the member of one sought to capture members of another to make them slave, but on some occasion, all the native people ran away leaving only sick and elderly person of the village to take. They always tied captured person in the initial because without such safeguard the slave would make their escape. They seldom practiced capturing of yokpo. However, the Memba occasionally exploited the opportunity of factional war of other tribes. A person named Same Kotin, was the Gambo (leader) of Ramo, sought the help of Memba to attack Duyi faction of Tagin, it was offered to them by Moso faction of Tagin. The Moso called on Ramo to attack Duyi fiction of Tagin with a promise that all those captured from Duyi will be given as slaves to the Ramo, which Ramo on the other hand offered the Memba to share the slaves in return of their service. Thus, Memba and Ramo jointly attacked Duyi Village of Tagin. The Memba had superior weapon in the form of Tibetan Gun as compare to their counter parts. The Memba fired the gun towards the Tagin which Tagin of Duyi responded by running towards the jungle of being fear and Ramo burnt the entire village of Duyi Tagin and looted their property. While returning from the expedition the Duyi Tagin ambushed and attacked them. In the ambush the Same Kotin died by the hit of poisonous arrow and twelve of the Memba and Ramo were seriously injured.59

Another form of procuring slave was by purchasing. While purchasing a yokpo (slave) from their neighbouring tribe, the price varies greatly depending on the age of the yokpo, the place of trading, and location of the place. The transaction was mere barter.

59 M.M. Dhasmana, op.cit., pp. 31-32.
The mode of barter was high for a healthy young man and women, where as the elderly yokpo was sold at low price. The exchange was made in the form of product like salt, woolen cloth, Tibetan bell, Tibetan sword, Brass Plate and Mithun.\textsuperscript{60}

The Tagin regularly traded with Memba and Ramo. They were not always treated friendly and sometimes if bad luck stuck the Tagin traders were caught and sold as yokpo in neighbouring areas. There is a story of Lipo kotin, a Ramo person who caught one Tagin who came to Papum village for trading, sold to Memba.\textsuperscript{61} Memba usually preferred yokpo from distant Tagin areas because the yokpo living far from his original homeland and without aid rarely succeeded in escaping. Even then, occurrence of some case of escape of yokpo from their master house took place. Verrier Elwin while on his visit to Menchuka in 1958, got news from a group of Memba person that three of their slaves had run away.\textsuperscript{62}

It is interesting to note that if any of the yokpo escaped from their master’s house and given shelter by someone, then the owner claimed compensation from the person who had provided the shelter. Otherwise, if the owner of the yokpo was too strong and wealthy, he will attack them. The practice of such system also made the escape of yokpo more difficult. Apart from attacking and capturing yokpo, Memba also preferred to buy them from other tribes.

No doubt, there was a cruelty and oppression of Memba slaves as there was no place where the institution could developed. It is important to note that, there was no racial discrimination of slavery. They enslaved whatever people they captured or bought

\textsuperscript{60} Tashi Philley, \textit{op.cit.}, date 21-6-2014.
\textsuperscript{61} M.M. Dhasmana, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 31-32.
to perform personal service and to till the field. They also had practiced slave’s trade to Tibet where even yokpo were used as medium of exchange as practiced by many tribes of that State.63

The yokpo trade with Tibet was evident by the incident occurred in the year 1930 where a tragedy struck to the family of Thinle and Sunju- husband and wife who lived in Menchuka. It so happened that one of the villagers while accompanying Thinle for trade forcefully sold him and his minor elder son to the Tagin of bordering Tibet. They were later sold to the Tibetan by the Tagin. The same man later sold Thinle’s other son and forced Sunju to live with him as wife from whom she later gave birth a girl child.64

It appear that yokpo among the Memba was mostly due to shortage of labour force in their community and easy access of yokpo. In long run, they gave land to some of the yokpo to live and cultivate in return for their dedicated service. They also gave yokpo (slaves) a low quality of semi precious beads and earring to wear as ornaments. Sometimes well to do family also gave high quality of semi precious beads to their Yokpo in order to show their prestige in society, which later became private property of yokpo.

The reference of their knowledge of trade and importance of buying slave is found in their folk song, as follows:

_Tsering tsongba masem tsongba tse leh,_

_Tsering tsongba dorjee dolah tse leh,_

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Meje manyoh tsabeh nyoso tse leh,
Meje nyonah gyaser gebu nyoh leh,
Cheye nga-gao tehlu ma-senh na leh,
Gyaser gebu ngobeh deh-ngo chung leh.

Tsering tsongba masem tsongba tse leh,
Tsering tsongba dorjee dolah tse leh,
Menjeh manyoh tsebeh nyoso tse leh,
Menjeh nyonah sengjang dongmuh nyoh leh,
Nangeh nyongbuh khyongle ma-senh na leh,
Sengjang dongmeh nyoyeh peh-ngo chung leh.

Tsering tsongba masemh rsongba tse leh,
Tsering tsongba dorjee dolah tse leh,
Jajeh manyoh tsabeh nyoso tse leh,
Lajeh nyonah tsebuh tsemerh nyoh leh,
Tsebuh nabhseh sungluh masenh mna leh,
Tsebuh tsemerh nyobeh deh-ngo chung leh.

Tsering tsongba masem tsongba tse leh,
Tsering tsongba dorjee dolah tse leh,
Kege manyoh tsebeh nyoso tse leh,
Kege nyonah dhomru nye-ngrh nyoh leh,
Kebuh chareh korhluh masenh na leh,
**Dhomru nye-ngrh dehngo chung leh.**

The translation version of the song reveals that a person named Tsering, sang the folk song. Where he describes, I am not interested in business, but even then, I became a businessperson. Being a businessperson, first off all I bought one man. And if you want to buy a man, then buy the one who looks like prince, so that he will destroy our enemy. If the man is incapable of doing this, then buying a person will be useless. Next, he bought one girl. If you want to buy a girl, then buy the girl having nice and humble personality, so that she will make us happy through her service. If she does not have such character, then buying a girl will be useless. Next, I bought a fowl. If you want to buy a fowl, and then buy the fowl, which will wake up early in the morning and will wake us. If the fowl does not do it, then buying a fowl will be useless. Next, I bought a dog. If you want to buy a dog, then the dog should be like a lion, so that he will protect your house. If the dog is not like a lion, the buying of dog will be useless.\(^6\)

The song revelation provides that how Memba were professional trader that always looks for good quality of person and animal they were buying. The song also indicates that they use their slaves as soldiers in case of war. The mention of buying a person by Tsering tells how important it was for a Memba to have a slave in their possession.

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Weight and Measures

The Memba also possessed the ideas of weight and measurement, which they had learnt from their Tibetan counterpart. They used weight instrument called *Tang* or *Taung* of different size with different number of iron weight. They mostly used this instrument for trade purpose in Tibet and within their community. They used small and medium sized *Tang* for weighting and measurement of butter, salt, yak tail, meat, ghee. The large sized of *tang* was used for weighting and measurement of wools, natural dyes, millet, chillies.⁶⁶

The Memba also measured commodity with the help of various size of basket made of bamboo and wooden bowl of different size. Interestingly, every size had fixed weight, which they measured by making use of *tang*. The basic measurement frequently used by them: *One Gyogi* = 5Kg approx, *One Bow* = 5Kg approx, *One Keya* (5Kg x 4 Bow) = 20 Kg approx, *One Ballen* (20 Kg x 4 Keya) = 80Kg approx.⁶⁷

They also used their fingers as a medium of measurement. They measured the measurement by stretching their thumb finger and middle finger for running meter cloth during the time of barter trade. The required measurement was then cut off and given to the customer in exchange for natural dye or animal fur.⁶⁸

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⁶⁶ Tashi Naksang, *op.cit.*
⁶⁷ Tashi Philley, *op.cit.*
⁶⁸ Tashi Naksang, *op.cit.*
Trade route

A trade route was a series of pathway and stoppages used for commercial transport of goods by allowing them to reach distant market. They continuously followed this route and it served as a dependence network, used by humankind for many centuries. The route contain long distance main road, which was further connected to smaller networks of commercial and non-commercial routes and worked as fixed transhuman route by which essential goods had been transported to region that lacked it. The course of the route was result of adaption to the relief. Man as the constructor of trade route always wanted to travel without difficulties to the destination area. They chose direct course, if possible with small loss of incline with acceptance of some steep inclines.

Menchuka Valley represents a natural contact between two large regions. They used the valley as a direct form of communication between Tibet in the north and Neighbouring tribes of the state in the south for many past centuries. Among the chief of these routes was one which ran from Lol-la Pass located in south-eastern boundary of Tibet, not far from Menchuka Valley, up the mountain to a place called Zilling. Here the caravan had to camp for the night, and then to Drog-doh (another camp for the night), they next reached Molo an important village and trade centre where traders from various part of Tibet gathered and carried trade. They reached Zadang-Pang (another camp for the night), then to Yideham (camp for the night), Li-Lung village, where they halt for the night. They next reach Gyabang village where they halt for the night and then the next day they reach Gaza town where they halt for three to five days and do trade with Tibetans, from Gaza they move and reach Meh village and then to Zage village, then
they reach Kham-Zang village and Riph village. From Riph they proceed to Czen-dho village and to Toh village. They then pass through Kong-Ngal hill, where, they camp in a place called Gyat-solo. Next day they then reached to Cze-dang-shae a village and nang-Zong, a big village with a fairly large population. Then they reach to Orh village and Drom-de village, and then to Pom-deh village and Wosh-Drog village, from here they reach to Sherlin village, Zam village and La-shor village. Next, they passes through Pudang-La, where there was a check post guarded by soldiers, after crossing it they reached Chango-Toyar village, then to Lha-Giri village, which is said to be a village exempted from tax, inhabited by the family members of high officials of Tibet government that are exempted to pay tax. This may be in exchange for their dedicated service towards the authority. From Lha-Giri village, they reached to Rong-Chap-Khar village and then to Chedang town, a big market place for trade where they stay for some days. From there they reach Same-Lo village and Sa-mei village and to Chumi-Dando village. Next, they pass through Gogar-La hill and then through Che-Dizing village, from there they had to cross Tsangpo river via boat, prepared by sewing together skins of four yaks, that have the carrying capacity of ten to twelve person without load or ten to five person with heavy load. After crossing the Tsangpo River, they reach Lasha, the capital of Tibet. It takes almost eleven to fourteen days to reach Molo village, the nearest trade centre in Tibet. To reach Gaza town it took almost sixteen to nineteen days and almost a month to reach Lasha. It is said that sometimes the journey starts with the sowing of crops in the agriculture field and ends with their return during the time of harvesting, which almost took six to seven months to complete their trade activity up to Lasha. Throughout the century, this route to Tibet had been the main artery of Memba tribe. The Memba cared for this route, marked this with mile stone in the form of Mane.
(Stupa) having religious value also and resting place at regular intervals. Some of the neighbouring Tagin also used to go to Tibet for trade via Menchuka.

However, the main route for trading with neighbouring tribes passed through three Ramo village of Rego, Rapum, Harme and then to Pailibos village of Tato, Tagur, Irgo, Yapuik, Paum and to Ro a Boris village. There was another route leading towards Manigong, which took six days to reach. Another route went from the western side of Menchuka and Niyingsh Valley to the hills going up to the Tagin area. Memba also mentioned about the route towards Monigong from Dojeeling village called Song pangri track. But because of the dense forest, terrain and hostile attitude of most of the neighbouring tribes discouraged travel to that extent. They avoided going to far-flung areas inside Arunachal Pradesh and hence the Northern route of Menchuka towards south-eastern Tibet was the most important route until 1962.

The Memba had mastered the art of engineering a bridge in rivers or large stream and the regularly maintained it at required intervals. Numerous rivers, large stream and small stream crossed en routed by these routes were bridged with the help of cane, stone and timber. In the rainy season and in winter the route were practically impassable due to river and stream in spate and the route being covered with heavy snow. All the travelling was ceased, even the Memba pilgrimages who walked in Tibet from one shrine to another, settled down until the rains had passed and snow was cleared. But at other time of the year, especially in spring and early winter when the weather remained

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69 Tashi Naksang, op.cit., He himself personally went upto Lasha (Tibet) for two time during his lifetime.
70 S. M. Krishnatry, op.cit., p. 84
71 “The Ramo, while escaping from Manigong, followed a secret jungle track and in the process discovered the Song Pangri track connecting Menchuka and Manigong,” see M. M. Dhasmana, op.cit., p.35-36.
72 Tsering Chukla, op.cit., date 22-6-2014.
clear, small group of traders or long caravan of traders with pack animal traveled the 
dusty trade route.

The trade route was dangerous to the traders- caravan. Many of the trade route 
linking the trade centre passed through dense forest, terrain and over hills where 
nomadic people and other tribes dwelt. There were whole nomads of professional 
robbers in Tibet who were regularly in a mood to waylaid raids and plunder to traders.⁷³

On the other hand, there was fear of capture by other neighbouring tribes for slavery. 
Other dangers were incurred in the form of wild beast- tiger, clouded leopard, snow 
leopard, bear and snake in particular. There was also a belief of existence of demons of 
many kind in a sacred place who were reputed for hunting the soul of travelers. Under 
this circumstance, the traders group preferred to share their perils together. The elderly 
and experienced person of the community, undertook to give guidance and safe conduct 
over a specific route, guided the band of traders.⁷⁴

Neighbouring tribe also heavily protected some of the route leading toward 
Menchuka. The Bokar in most of the cases had no conduct of direct trade with the 
Memba. They had to depend largely on Ramo for procuring commodities supplied from 
Memba area. The Ramo enjoyed the privilege of being immediate neighbors of Memba 
discouraged Boris to have direct trade relation with the Memba and Tibet. Ramo wanted 
to play the leading role as intermediary and therefore they earned more profit from it. If 
they found Bokar person violating the practice, they took harsh action by snatching all

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⁷⁴ Tashi Naksang, *op.cit.*
his possession. Ramo also extract toll tax from the traders crossing the Song Pangri track connecting Menchuka with Manigong circle.

**Barter system**

Barter is a system followed by human civilization for many centuries before the invention of monetary system. In barter system of trade, the commodity is a product, which is collected or produced to use it as a mode of exchange for other goods of their requirement. Most of the commodity that Memba exported to Tibet comprised of hunting, forest and agriculture products and in exchange, they imported metal products, salt, brick tea, domestic animal, beads and woolen from Tibet.

Again when they traded with their neighbouring tribes the system of exchange became reverse and almost all the goods brought from Tibet and agriculture product they produced was used as commodity for barter in exchange of hunting and forest product. It is believed that Memba play the important role of intermediary in trade between Tibet and neighbouring tribes. It is defined that barter was a system of economy where there is an absence of profiteering because of the absence of value of money and market. But until and unless there was no profit then the role of Memba playing as middleman among Tibet and neighbouring tribes was in question.

The Memba barter trade activity the profit was in the form of increase in quantity of commodity they exchanged. An elderly member of Memba informs that, they used to exchange one tiger skin for three Tibetan bells in Tibet. On the other hand, they takes same tiger skin from neighbouring tribes in exchange of one Tibetan bell. Which means

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from three Tibetan bells they got three tiger skin and again from three tiger skin they got nine Tibetan bells from Tibet. Similarly, they exchanged one yogpo with one large brass vessel or with two pairs of cloths with some amount of salt weighting one Kg approximately with the neighbouring tribes. Again, with the Tibetan counterpart they exchanged one Yogpo for good quality of Tiger fur or Leopard fur. Hand full of dyes was exchanged with same amount of Tsa (salt) or one Digong-Sond (poor quality of Blanket) in Tibet and two leather skin with a costly or fine quality of Kong-Sond (high quality blanket) or Chub-Gyam (Male dress) and Pu-Gushi or Tiba-Gushi (female dress). The same material was traded with the Tagin for four small basket of dyes with eight hand of salt measured with one hand and two leather skins with one Digong-Sond (poor quality of Blanket). Neighbouring tribes also followed the same pattern of barter trade to earn profit. For instance, the Memba sold one metallic bowl for one tiger skin to Pailibo, who again sold it for three mithuns to their neighbouring tribes. Thus, these activities of Memba reveal that how cleverly they made profit by increasing quantity and quality of their commodity through barter system.

77 Tashi Philley, op.cit.
78 Interview with Jigme Onge, 42 years, Block Education Officer, Dechang-Tang West Village, Menchuka Circle, West Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh, interviewed on 5-4-2015.
79 Tashi Naksang, op.cit.
Table. No. 4.1: Export and import commodity from Tibet and Neighbouring tribes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tibet</th>
<th>Neighbouring Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Export</td>
<td>Import</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musk of Musk dear</td>
<td>Tibetan bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiger fur</td>
<td>Sword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiger bone</td>
<td>Salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bile of Bear</td>
<td>Brick tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pawn of Bear</td>
<td>Wool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leopard fur</td>
<td>Hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monkey fur</td>
<td>Woolen coat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried-Fish</td>
<td>Knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coptis teeta</td>
<td>Printed paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caterpillar fungus</td>
<td>Brass plate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slave</td>
<td>Gold ornaments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried Mushroom</td>
<td>Silver ornaments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Dye</td>
<td>Beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>Ghee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk-cloth</td>
<td>Butter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicinal herbs</td>
<td>Copper vessel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edible roots</td>
<td>Brass vessel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goat hair</td>
<td>Woolen garments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horn</td>
<td>House hold utensils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried Tobacco leaves</td>
<td>Pony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beans</td>
<td>Horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chilly</td>
<td>Blanket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter</td>
<td>Bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghee</td>
<td>Tibetan medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wool</td>
<td>Religious article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain Paper</td>
<td>Iron</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Honey carpet beans
Dog House hold utensils
Yak & Yak tail cow
Cow

Sources: Field study.  

The Memba people also maintained proper documents and records of their trade exchange. They also took loans, which they returned with some sort of interest as agreed. They followed proper written agreement system while giving loan. The system was done in the form of barter, but here the same material taken was returned with increase in some quantity on the promised date. If the loan was not return on the agreed date then the matter was taken to a higher authority for judgment. The higher authority on listening the matter gives verdict in the form of penalty. In some of the cases, the person was made to work as serfs as punishment for certain period. The following was a translation of some of the paper scrolls deciphered giving details of deeds of agreement done between the two business people.

In the first case, the agreement was done between a person named Passang and Dhada Choesang, where it was mentioned that, Passang from Baechakshiri has taken 10 Kg butter as loan from Dhada Choesang of Kongpo, and Passang promised to return back the loan within nine months from the date of agreement. If Passang failed to return

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81 The document has been translated with the help of Tashi Philley, op.cit. & Phurba Tsering Naksang, op.cit., date 21-6-2014.
82 The document has been translated with the help of Tashi Philley, op.cit. & Phurba Tsering Naksang, op.cit., date 21-6-2014.
it in the agreed month then Dhada Choesang would complain the matter to Gaza Deb. With first seal of Passang and second seal of Dhada Choesang.  

In the second case, a case verdict of deed of trade of agreement in the presence of third person as witness had been recorded. Where it was mentioned that one Passang of Molo village in Tibet had taken 12 kg butter, 20.2 Ngosang (money), one comp'h (one small basket) of dry chilly, 3 Kg salt as loan from Choisang and could not return it as promised. As punishment, they made Passang to work as serf for three months and four days in Tromoh village. After completion of his punishment, Passang had to return 1.8 Ngosang (money), 9 dungsang, and 2Kg ghee within a period of thirty days. When he was unable to return it within the period, then the further complain would be made to Deb for further action. The document contains the seal of Do-sa Sangmi.  

**Property**

Property among the Memba tribe can be classified into two groups, the movable property and immovable property. The immovable property was that property, which was not movable, which included agricultural land, settlement land, forestland and grassland. The movable property included that property which was immovable from one place to another and the movable property included ornaments, arms, dress. The immovable property again classified into three categories that were community property, clan property and individual property. In community property all the resident of the villages had right to conduct activity and no one can claim his individual right on that property. The forest and rivers of the surrounding area was generally a community

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83 See Plate xxiii.  
84 See Plate xxvii.
property. The people belonging to same clan owned the clan property. The other clan people had no right to carry out any activity without their permission. The clan property included forestland, agriculture land and settlement land. But individual immovable property was property where an individual has every right to do whatever he wanted. Unlike community property and clan property, the owner of the individual immovable property had right to sell or give the property, as he desires. The individual immovably property included mostly of agriculture land, settlement land and some cluster of forest land.\textsuperscript{85}

Unlike immovable property, they categorised movable property only into individual property. They consider movable articles, which directly or indirectly related to their livelihood as individual property. They foremost consider the dress and ornaments like earrings, gold, silver, brass plate, Tibetan bell and beads of different shape and size as most valuable property and the female member of the family owned most of the ornaments. The advisor for tribal affairs in north Siang on tour 1958 provides information that:

\begin{quote}
Some of them had great brass dishes whose value estimated at two slaves or more and some have wonderful clothes at their houses. They also had coat made of Monkey skin decorated with silk brocade which could made an honored place in any museum in the world.\textsuperscript{86}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{85} Kessang Goiba, \textit{op.cit.}, date 19-6-2014.
\textsuperscript{86} Mechuka Tour Report, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 5.
The household articles such as products made from bamboo and cane, machete, the cooking utensils and agriculture implements were also included as individual property. The weapons like Tibetan sword, knife, spear, antique Tibetan guns, bow and arrows were important individual property of Memba which they mainly used for defense and hunting purpose. The male member of the family mostly owned the weapon individually. The livestock also included under individual property. They also owned slaves individually, which formed an important part in their economy. However, the male children to whom they divide equally or accordingly their wishes inherited the most of their property. Interestingly most of the property owned by the female member was inherits by their daughters especially after marriage.