CHAPTER I

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The Zeliangrong tribal Naga inhabits in the present state of Assam, Nagaland and Manipur forming a major tribe among the Nagas. Zeliangrong Nagas are ancient community and are one of the major tribes of the present North-East India having distinct identity of their own. Previously before the independence of India, their territory was known as the Naga Hills in which their land was contiguous. They are of Sino-Mongoloid stock. Among the North-Eastern tribes, the Zeliangrong were the first recorded tribal who raise an uprising against the mighty British Empire under the brave leadership of Jadonnang and Rani Gaidinliu. They were freedom loving people believing in the equality of all men. These people were untouched neither by Hinduism nor by the Buddhism of Burma. Songs, dances, music, games and sports, practices of different arts and handicrafts with religious consciousness are inseparable parts of the Zeliangrong tribal folks. They are known to have a very rich cultural heritage in which the world did not notice, as it should be. The culture and religion of the Zeliangrong tribe needs to be exposed systematically and philosophically which includes the existence of God and gods' intervention and influence to the people. Each and every act is intertwined and shaped in relation to the God and gods. Oral tradition is one of the major sources of culture and religion even though it is said that once upon a time they were having a script of their own which cannot be traced now to supply information about them. The Zeliangrong culture and religion are almost dying out now with the encountering of many ethnic groups and religion to some extent. They believe the existence of a Supreme God, the creator who is in control of each and every thing and who is a rewarder of every man. They also believe in the existence of smaller or inferior gods or spirits. They believe that some of them are malevolent while others are benevolent in nature\(^1\). They believe in the immortality of the soul but once a man died they have a belief that the soul of the death, person go and lives in

the world of the death called "taruai ram". They also believe that the God or
gods or various spirits are living in the midst of the people in the world; they
strongly believed and felt that gods are always with them in all forms of
activities, even though they may not be seen. In order to understand them
and to present to the world, as it should be presented necessitates one to
study their cultural and religion philosophically.

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

Philosophy is an attempt at comprehending the problems of the
universe aiming at knowledge of truth. It deals with the general laws of being
and human thinking and the process of cognition. It studies with the
expression of the way of life. Pythagoras was the first to use the term
'philosophy'. It comes from a Greek word philosophia meaning love of
wisdom. This term is used in a variety of senses. Here in this thesis we may
note down only the most central ones.

a) Philosophy as an intellectual activity can be variously defined,
depending on whether the emphasis is placed on its method, its
subject-matter or its purpose. The method of philosophy is rational
inquiry. As for the subject-matter, it was common in earlier times to
bestow the name of philosophy on inquiry into different subjects,
provided they are guided by canons of rationality. For example,
physics and indeed the natural sciences generally were called natural
philosophy. The title of Newton's great work of 1687 illustrates this:
'The Principia: The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy'.
Nevertheless, it is often held that philosophy has as a distinctive
subject-matter the most fundamental or general concepts and
principles involved in thought, action and reality. It is also a common
view that philosophical inquiry is a second-order inquiry which has for
its subject matter the concepts, theories and presuppositions present
in various disciples and in everyday life. It has been a common view

that the activity of philosophizing should lead towards wisdom, virtue or happiness.

b) Philosophy is a theory arrived at as a result of philosophical inquiry,
c) Philosophy is a comprehensive view of reality and man's place in it.4

The main concerns of philosophy are; Self or soul, body, the world, space, time, life and death, heaven and hell, life after death, God, ethics, bondage and liberation of self and various methods of cognition or the sources of knowledge or knowing etc. (epistemology, ontology, ethics, metaphysics, etc.). We can also inquire whether various sources of knowledge like rationalism, empiricism, intuitionism, materialism are valid sources of knowledge. Philosophy of religion is even interested in the 'religious experience' as one of the possible sources of knowledge. The position stands according to the philosophy that until and unless we find genuine reason to deny certain claims say, here, religious experience, we cannot say that those statements are not true. None of the sources mentioned are free from criticism from one point or the other. But such enquiries help in maintaining the world to a balance in that the world is neither too materialistic nor only idealistic or spiritualistic ignoring the claims of empiricism.

Man is the subject of historical process, of developing material and spiritual culture on earth, a bio-social being, genetically linked to other forms of life. The different approaches to understand his nature are idealist, mystico-religious, Marxist and existentialist point of view and so on. As for instance, Descartes advocates dualism of man's body and soul while the materialist argue of being possessing of only a material body as Feuerbach and the Carvakas. Some thinkers believe that the world or the universe is created by an intelligent being while some took it to be here by itself or by chance and then evolution like Darwinsim. The materialist as the Carvaka, atheists or Marxists follow the motto of "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow

3 Madhumita Maltra Pattrea, DGP Question Bank Philosophy, New Delhi: Dhillon Group of Publications, 2000, p.22
we may not live as they do not believe in life after death but only this life to
be the only life. There are others who believe in the theory or the laws of
karma and in the chain of birth and rebirth cycle until liberation is obtain
(Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism concept of nirvana). But, some believe in
one earthly, temporal life and then eternal life in heaven or hell as for example
Judeo-Christian tradition or as a whole, Semitic religion. There are still others
who believe in eternal after dead in the land of the death people like
Zeliangrong (taruairam) or the Japanese belief in pure land. Still there are
others who do believe in any of these like the agnostics.

Many of the Indian school of thought (astika or the orthodox school) as
the Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta believe in the
authority of the Vedas or in common parlance as also in modern Indian
language ‘theist’ or one believing in God. Some other school (nastika or
heterodox school) do not believe in the existence of God and rejects the
authority of the Vedas too as the Carvaka, Baudhha and Jaina school. In the
West too, many people believe in the existence of God, the creator or the
intelligent designer God and His intervention in all the activities of life as for
instance, the Judeo-Christian tradition. Still some other considered God to be
the creator but who do not intervene in all the affairs of mankind and the world
but to the few intellectuals as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle's view. While on
the other extreme, lie the Greek atomist, the bedrock of modern science,
materialist, Marxist or the existentialists who are atheists and the
philosophical anthropologists as Feuerbach and Freud who consider God to
be a mere projection of human imagination.6

Some ethics as the ethical hedonism are worldly oriented or pleasure
oriented while some ethics transcend beyond pleasure orientation basing on
acceptance of the authority of the elders or cultural tradition or of the
supernatural being's instruction and command. Various ethics have their
basing on intuition, emotivism, naturalism, utilitarianism or prescriptivism.
Some thinkers base on the pragmatic value or pragmatism while others

transcend beyond it. Some opted for the duty for the sake of duty (Kantian ethics) and still others opted for motiveless action. Some base their ethical standards from the command of God, society, or other external sources while people like Kant talks of the Categorical imperatives dictating from within oneself that we cannot afford to disobey it. Still some others based their ethical standards on power or will to power, like Nietzsche. Then there are the others who go for altruism. In the ethical stand, the materialist's or hedonist sum\textit{mon bonum} is that of the attainment of pleasure while for others liberation from bondage or salvation from the bondage of sin or \textit{karmas} (in Indian context). Philosophical inquiry can delve into all these areas and can try to find a more critical study of each to give us a broader outlook on how we see at things.

Philosophy can also delve into the major theories of punishment like the Deterrent theory, reformative theory or retributive theory. We know none of the theories are perfect because in deterrent theory we find a loophole in which the criminal is being used as a means to deter others from committing such crimes in future. He is not being punished for he deserves it but the main motive here is to deter others but Immanuel Kant says we cannot use others as means but each one should be treated as an ends. Still we find defects in the reformative theory too when the Psycho-analyst and the anthropologists think that somebody is committing crimes because of his psychosomatic disorder or diseases like schizophrenia and should be sent to rehabilitation centre, hospital and asylum but the problem is here that not all the criminals are suffering from disease like schizophrenia and the like. The sociologist takes this position of saying that there are crimes and disorders in society because of economic inequality or disparity. But here too the main problem is that most of the thieves or corrupted people are not mainly from the poorer section but much more corruption and ill doings are being committed by richer people. Then thirdly we have the retributive theory and the law of morality justifies that each one must reap what one has sown but rigorous retributive theory is also problematic because we need to look into the situation (Situational ethics as advocated by American Pragmatists John Dewey), motives and intention that has been associated with certain incidents
as well. Say a medical doctor may treat a patient out of good will but it may turn out to have a different unwanted result. Then we have the mollified form of retributive theory of punishment which is widely practiced in the world over now looking into the situation, motives and so on that retributive punishment are being done in a fairer way. All these understandings of the pros and cons of various implementations of rules, laws came to being in a fairer way because of the critical analysis or else it would be dogmatic and one sidedness will do no good to anyone or any society. Therefore critical evaluation is a necessity in acquiring fuller knowledge of any branch of study.

The above mentioned points are some of the main concerns of philosophy. Philosophy and culture are very closely linked as it studies on the expression and ways of life of the people and their relation with the world and heavenly beings and so on as much it is with philosophy and religion.

WHAT IS CULTURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF CULTURE?

History has left us with no consensual definition of culture, nor could a completely satisfactory definition be given. The term culture is a very broad concept covering almost all the affairs of man in which man can ever thought of. Even if around three hundred definitions of the concept “culture” have been given since the beginning of the social sciences, cultural anthropology and sociology and even if the concept is about one hundred and twenty-five years old (since the second part of the nineteenth century), we still have the need to look into it strictly from a philosophical perspective. Therefore in the light of what the nineteenth and twentieth century’s figures including Malinowski, George Orwell, Freud, James Joyce, Marx, Edgar Allen Poe, Nietzsche, Oscar Wilde, T.S. Eliot, A.L. Kroeber, Kluckhohn and even Matthew Arnold’s view on culture is given a greater emphasis. Arnold strongly called for the need of maintaining a balance of the traditions of ‘Hebraism’ (moral discipline) and ‘Hellenism’ (intellectual freedom and creativity) to infuse society with sweetness and light (beauty and truth). The philosophical key

thinkers who shaped culture and society and the way in which we view them ranging from Arnold to Le Corbusier and from Eco to Marx offering a lucid analysis of the world of influential figures in the study of cultural theory become a necessity in the study.

The important development of the concept of "culture" took place between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries mainly from both English and German social thought. Broadly, the concept of "culture" was developed in four ways, all of which still affect its meaning. Firstly, "culture" came to mean a general state or habit of the mind, with close relations to the idea of human perfection. Secondly, it came to mean a general state of intellectual and moral development in society as a whole. Thirdly, it came to mean the general body of the arts and intellectual work. Fourthly, it came to mean the whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual, of a given society. Another great aspect of the philosophy of culture is the high valuation of folk life.

Three emphases can subsequently be traced as three concepts of culture from the above view. First, there is the idealist emphasis, which survives in very much of its original form in which culture is seen as a process and a state of cultivation that should be a universal idea. This usage is ethical, spiritual and expresses an idea of human perfection. Second, it is a body of actual artistic and intellectual work and third, it is an embodiment of universal and absolute values. The emphasis on culture has been an attempt to redefine the nature of society and of civilization itself. The problem also creeps in when we try to relate the theories of culture to fundamental materialist or idealist position alone.

As Aristotle says that man is a rational animal, man right from morning till night follows certain principles of behavior or else would be like any other animal. In anyone else's culture, barring the materialist, altruism is what is considered to be a way of life.

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Culture is the quality, activity, or group of qualities or activities that mark off the human personality from the animal organisms. The animal is driven by impulses or instincts operating more or less automatically and blindly, and his movements belong more or less to the realm of causal necessity. Secondly, the movements and responses of the animal organism are directed towards the fulfillment of its biological needs. Man partakes of animal nature but through his developing cultural consciousness, endeavors continually to transcend the limitations imposed by that nature. This transcendence takes two significant forms: man learns to take interests in meanings or values which have no relation whatsoever to his biological needs of existence and survival; and he learns to choose and appreciate these values in the light of consciously framed standards. This twofold transcendence of biological nature is made possible by the prior transcendence of physical necessity through a measure of mastery attained over the forces of nature.

Approaches to Culture and Cultural Studies:

Perhaps we may say that the most significant implications of various developments for the understanding of culture are that the meaning of the term has come to be increasingly discourse-specific rather than discipline-or theory-specific. It is probably now more informative to know in what discursive practice a given author or researcher is engaged than to ask with what discipline they are involved, of which academic department they are a member, or what particular subject matter interest them. This makes sense because, the term culture, like paradigm or discourse tends to be employed across disciplines.

A cultural study has both a general meaning and a more specialized one. In its broad and more theoretical sense, it indicates the range of modern discourses that go beyond disciplines and their particular theories, employing the notion of culture in a distinctive way and specifying certain critical practices as appropriate for analyzing given cultural activities, products, and institutions. In its narrower sense, it indicates a recently developed sort of
discourse that first appeared in several British universities in the 1950s. While eclectically drawing on certain theoretical aspects of earlier forms of critical cultural discourse, cultural studies is oriented toward the analysis and practical critique of concrete, contemporary cultural distinctions that are based on and that propagate differentials in economic and political power.

Here cultural studies include both of these senses and as in fact, we could not discuss one without dealing with the other. On the one hand, understanding almost any text in recent cultural studies requires a detailed knowledge of the theoretical terms and critical strategies that it has deliberately "poached" from other discourses; this involves an acquaintance with the discursive tradition within which theses terms and strategies first came to prominence. On the other hand, contemporary cultural studies are only one form of critical discourse that must take its place, both theoretical and historical, alongside other still vital and viable traditions, with which it often also contends. For this reason, contemporary cultural studies in the narrower sense itself must be subjected to a broader historical critique based on a sound understanding of other discourses and their paths of historical development. ⁹

In order to understand any concept, definition, theory clearly, conceptual understanding and the critical evaluation or analysis becomes essential. Here, we need to consider the varieties of Critical discourse about Culture from a historical and conceptual overview.

i. The Liberal Humanism of the Enlightenment Era,
ii. The Romantic Reaction Against the Enlightenment: Hermeneutics,
iii. Demystifying Romantic Attitudes: Materialist Critique,
iv. From Society to Psyche: The New "Science" of Psychoanalysis,
v. Semiological and Structural Critique: The New Science of Signs in Society,

vi. Cultural Critique Between the World Wars: The Frankfurt School of Critical Theory,

vii. New Attacks on Liberal Humanism: Poststructuralist and Postmodernist Critiques,

In trying to understand the philosophy of culture we need to delve into the definitions given by various thinkers, though, not a single one may be able to cover the concept of culture in a satisfactory manner, including certain aspects and excluding many important areas as well. Yet it is important. It is also essential to critically analyze the different theories and understandings of cultures given by different thinkers at different times from various disciplines of study. In that way, culture cannot be studied from a water-tight compartment kind of principle but must be opened to all disciplines to get the best result of the study.

WHAT IS RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION?

Religion played a vital role in the history of mankind since time immemorial. From the primitive to modern times, religion captured and dominated the structure of a particular society and thereby influenced and directed the activities of mankind either directly or indirectly. Knowledge of a particular culture is obtained through religion. Whether religion is prior or subsequent to early social institutions is a debatable issue. Nevertheless, that religion dominates both the conscious and the unconscious is an undeniable fact.

The most commonly accepted explanation of religion made by saint Augustine about 1600 years ago is that “religion” comes from the words “re” and “ligare”, which together mean “to tie back”, that is, to reunite a broken bond. If the “re” is also taken to allude to the Latin word “res” meaning “substance” or “reality”, then we could say that religion is the human

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experience of reuniting the broken bond between mankind and some transcendent Reality called "God" in most religions.

It is hard to start defining a religion. For most people, beliefs in God and in afterlife are the essential ingredients of religion because these are prominent elements in the religions we know best. But if we include these in a definition of religion, we shall find ourselves committed to excluding many primitive and some advanced religions. In Buddhism, for instance, there is neither a personal god nor personal immortality. But in general we can have at least some understanding about religion. All the major religions of the world hold religion to be the path or way of divinity. Religion unites man with divinity. Religion promises man to provide him something divine, something higher, something which the man does not possess, something which man needs, something for which man should aspire and ultimately religion supports man in many ways. To understand the real nature of religion we must discuss the essential parts of religion. In other words, we must look into the subject matter of religion and then we must see which part of the religion is much emphasized in the major religions of the world.

- The first and foremost important part of the religion is metaphysics. Every religion has its own metaphysics no matter how different it may be from others. Metaphysical aspect of religion deals with nature of the world, man, or soul for some, and purpose behind creation of the world and the highest goal of the man. The concept of the soul for instance for the Hindus, Christian, Islam, Jain etc and even many tribal religions of the world is immortal and but the concept as understood by the Buddhist is impermanency of the soul though the theory of karma is well accepted in Buddhism too. The teaching that tells that it is impermanent but accepting transmigration of the soul is a kind of metaphysics. Metaphysical aspect of the religion is called its divine aspect.

- Religion tells about the divine aspect and promises to unite the man with divinity. Religion shows the path or way to achieve this goal. The path of achieving divinity is the second important part of religion. In this
aspect religion deals with the nature and kinds of prayer, worship, yogic practices or *sadhana*.

- Along with this, religion deals with the divine law. Religion tells about the divine law and issues command to obey. Man has to follow the divine law and obey the commandments of religion. So to deal with righteousness of action and issue moral codes of conduct is the third important aspect of religion.

- Religion is meant for all its followers. It bears the responsibility of the welfare of all its members. Religion takes care of an individual and also cares about the welfare of society. Thus religion has social phenomenon too. It prescribes rules and regulations to fix the relationship of man with society. Thus the social law is the fourth important part of the religion.

- Religion also deals with divinity which is understood to be beyond the realm of general human understanding or intellectual knowledge. So, generally religious knowledge of divinity is based on religious experiences which are of the mystic characters. In this way mysticism is the fifth important part of religion.\(^\text{11}\)

All the above mentioned points are found in almost all the major religions of the world. Therefore it is difficult to say that a particular religion emphasizes on a particular characteristic and so religion is meant in terms of that characteristic. Every religion has its own metaphysics, its own code of moral conduct, and its own promise to abridge the man with divinity. Thus religion can be defined or understood in terms of these characteristics of religion. In this way, it may be said that religion is the way to lead a life which goes towards divinity as its goal. This spirit of religion is found in almost all the major religions of the world.

Philosophy of religion is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with the philosophical study of religion, including the arguments over the nature and existence of God, man, immortality of the soul, transmigration of the soul,

salvation, liberation or attainment of moksa, nirvana, the world and the
universe, religious language, miracles, efficacy of prayer, the problems of evil,
relation between culture and religion, relation between science and religion,
religious experience or mysticism, morality, and eventually ethics. It is
sometimes distinguished from religious philosophy, the philosophical thinking
that is inspired and directed by religion, such as Christian philosophy, Hindu
Philosophy and Islamic philosophy. Instead, philosophy of religion is the
philosophical thinking about religion, which can be carried out passionately or
dispassionately by a believer and non-believer alike.

Philosophy of religion is not just finding out about the basic so-called
"truths" of a religion, but it is actually concerned with analyzing the truths that
religious people make, and analyzing them to see whether they make sense
or not. Or can it be logically proved in some way. And this is where the
thinking part really starts to come in. As one cannot draw a limit to the doubt
beyond phenomenon, even the primitive religion of any simple tribal people
cannot be ignored even if it lacks written scripture. We cannot overlook the
importance of the tribal religion. There is much to be explored whether
culture and religion are rationally philosophical or not. There could be a
tragedy in strictly following one's religion and culture without giving rooms to
other faith and culture. But the problem that we have in reality is that many
people stick to one's own religion and some may even consider people's
religious act to be a sin for instance, idol worship is encouraged by the Hindus
(essential particularly for the initiates, or beginners) but idol worship is viewed
by many other religion as a grave sin. So the quest here is whether we can
find some common ground of religion bringing plurality of religion allowing
peaceful co-existence. Religious dialogue is permissible from certain religious
point of view without compromising one's strict religious conviction is another
issue. Is religion existent only for social cohesion or is it something much
more than this?

Man is a being who wants to live in conscious relationship with the
totality of existence. It is interesting to note that there is no great religion and
no great philosophy that does not assign a superior role to the quest of
spiritual values such as truth and virtue than to the satisfaction of the animal
needs and the addiction to creature comforts. The more man learns and takes interest in meanings or values; his culture is being essentially bound up with a religion. The religious attitude marks the highest development of a culture.

Since time immemorial, man has been trying to cultivate what is good in man and to discard the negative part of it. As in the word of Gandhi, man is seen to be composed of the soul and brute force, it is also a fact that man has been trying to cultivate the good nature that is already in man and to suppress or discard the brute's nature. The struggle in the dichotomy in the nature of man is always expressed.

One of the things that have been puzzling the western people for centuries about Indian culture is that religion and culture are well integrated. An interesting thing to delve here is that whether Zeliangrong culture and religion are also well integrated or not. When Christianity was first embraced by the Zeliangrong, their culture and religion was almost fully discarded. Now the people are also beginning to realize that good cultures could have been kept up which will even go well with their new found faith or religion and is going well in many respects but not in all. This could be the difference between consistently following one's religion like Indian culture and religion and embracing another religion like the Western people or the Zeliangrong embracing Christianity.

Culture and religion has been a remarkable source of providing ethical values or social norms to human society in sustaining it. Inevitable questions that can be raise is that whether cultural norms or values came into being purely from cultural concept without subscribing to any form of religious belief or supernatural concept or sanction. Olden days' people believed and practiced in calling spade a spade. One needs to know from where all those cultural practices relating to socio-politics, economics or religious practices and ethical norms derived its authentic authority. They observed such norms, values and etiquette with such reverence even if they never had an organized

kind of military or army to enforce it in olden days. Ethnologists witnessed the fact that religious practices were being practiced even in the old days when there were no grain-based agriculture been developed\(^\text{14}\). We can also ask the relation between religion and morality- whether religion is an offshoot of morality or morality an offshoot of religion or are they totally a different and separate entity existing in close relation.

Understanding of culture and religion of a particular group/ community is the first and foremost requirement for any comprehensive understanding of their worldview. Conceptual study and understanding is essential. Culture and religion are expressions and ways of life. Exploration of the definitions, theories and concepts for the understanding of cultures has been attempted mainly by the sociologist, anthropologist, historian and folklorist. The main discussion here is centered on the philosophical aspect which has not been done by many people.

Discussion on the history of religion, definition, concepts or features of religion or the essence of religion itself and the various arguments put forward by the materialist, idealist, anthropologist, sociologist, psychologist etc., and their controversies become a necessity. Several approaches followed in the study of religion like the anthropological, sociological, psychological and philosophical approach are of great significance in understanding religion in a deeper way. The deeply rooted forces or element of religion in which religions have continuity since time immemorial is been challenged by many thinkers. Feuerbach says that religion is nothing but a projection of human imagination for his wish fulfillment. Erich Fromm and Freud, who too did root their materialism on Feuerbach's philosophical anthropology, too realized the importance of having a religion to control destruction in human society. Erikson's knowledge of the deep motivational forces against religion does not lead him to deny the contribution of the religious reformation itself. He rather emphasizes the fusing and forming power of the religious element to

synthesize motivational conflicts and control destructive impulses. The impact of religion is very great in all communities.

Philosophy of religion was at one time generally understood to mean religious philosophizing in the sense of the philosophical defense of religious convictions. It was seen as continuing the work of “natural” distinguished from “revealed” theology. Its program was to demonstrate rationally the existence of God, thus preparing the way for the claims of revelation. But that endeavor can be called “natural theology” and the wider philosophical defense of religious beliefs as “apologetics”. Philosophy of religion is not an organ of religious teaching. Indeed, it need not be taken from a religious standpoint at all. The atheists, the agnostics, and the person of faith, all can and do philosophize about religion. It is not a branch of theology but a branch of philosophy. It emphasize on the study of the concepts and belief systems of the religions as well as the prior phenomena of religious experience and the activities of worship and mediation on which these belief systems rest and out of which they have arisen.

There are certain approaches to the study of religion like anthropological approach, sociological approach, psychological approach and philosophical approach and so on. To have a better understanding of religion, we may also consider the nature and origin of religion advocated by various thinkers. It is also important to find whether we can have a common universalized world’s culture or it should be understood from its own point of view as is held by the relativist. Whether culture is subjective or objective or both are also another interesting quest in this search. Secondly, we shall try to inquire whether religion should be understood from a pluralistic point of view, whether we can see a common root in all the religions or any religion is unique and sui generis that will have to understand from its own context. Where do Zeliangrong culture and religion stands in this scientifically advance age? Is there any message this culture and religion can contribute to the

welfare of various disciplines of learning and to the present human society at large?

Right from the time when man were living in a stage of collection of food for survival where there were no grain-based agriculture up to this advance scientific age, culture and religion is still flourishing in spite of all the attempts been made to reverse by challenging its rationality and authority. Even tribal culture and religion did and do face tremendous challenge in sustaining their beliefs and practices of their way of life from different angles.

"Most scholars when they write about tribes are of the opinion that the tribal's mind is so colored with vague ideas and even vaguer emotions, that when it comes to forming answers to fundamental questions of life, he is silent in world of mystical fearsome and supernatural power"\(^{17}\).

These kinds of statement are statements undermining the unique tribal culture and religion which may not be lower than the so-called highly developed culture and religion. It shows that tribal's mind and expressions are misunderstood and needs an honest interpretation. The value or moral system they follow may be more or less the same with the so-called developed culture and religion. As for example as is found in A. MacBeath's work, *Experiments in Living*, amongst the instructions which the Murray Islanders give to their children are "reticence, thoughtfulness, respectful behavior, prompt obedience, generosity, diligence, kindness to parents and other relatives in deed and word, truthfulness, helpfulness, manliness, discretion in dealing with women, quiet temper.... The prohibitions are against theft, borrowing without leave, shirking duty, talkativeness, abusive language, talking scandal, marriage with certain individuals". \(^{18}\) Similar lists might be cited from many other primitive tribes, and the lists might have come from present-day pulpit or classroom. Understanding Zeliangrong culture and religion from the socio-anthropological, historical, folkloristic or theological approach is not sufficient philosophical inquiry is also required to have an


intellectual perspective of thinking all things logically, systematically, critically and persistently.

The Zeliangrong tribe is both misunderstood and ignored in many important aspects, misunderstood because enough attention has not been drawn to understand their culture and religion. No individual, community or age, left to its own resources, can visualize and live the infinite possibility of human existence consisting in multifarious and multitudinous contacts, physical and spiritual, actual and imagine, at innumerable points with the multiform reality. Zeliangrong were left with their own resources to be lived by themselves. Social reformers like Jadonnang and Rani Gaidinliu have introduced movements influencing not only the Zeliangrong but also the Naga community as a whole in respect of socio-cultural, religion and political matters. Jadonnang’s movement has created political consciousness to the Nagas in general and to the Zeliangrong in particular, which has ultimately led into the movement for full independence. Rani Gaidinliu who was a strong follower of Jadonnang introduced a religious movement or cult known as “Heraka” which tried to modify and develop Zeliangrong culture and religion.

Taking these and other aspects into consideration, philosophical analysis will be made. No serious attempt has been made so far to understand their culture and religion from a philosophical point of view. A systematic and comprehensive understanding is necessary less they will still be ignored and discarded as unsystematic and primitive. It may be unsystematic and primitive but there is no denying to the fact that it is rich in culture and religion. This richness can make positive double contributions. It can contribute a new culture and religion to the corpus of cultural and religious studies and it can also help them to have better understanding of their culture and religion and its meanings or values that will ultimately placed them to have comprehensive understanding of other cultures and religions.

The important question arises whether culture can exist without religion or not. For the western culture as for instance, fiction, fairy-tale, religion, rites, and myths and so on can co-exist with science and technology. Will the

Zeliangrong culture be able to do the same? Is Zeliangrong religious cultural belief or practice existent merely because of the inexplicability of various mysteries or is it a bizarre attempt? Or is there any other forces or witnesses that inspire the people to acknowledge in their heart that there is a Creator God who is in control of everything or gods and each and every act is an act before God or gods? One of the most profound and undeniable facts about culture and religion of man is that it is as old as human existence. Culture and religious factors had kept man moving in proper order and harmony in the society of man. Sometimes, these two seem to move together forming the two sides of a coin but may not be always. Soren Kierkegaard is of the opinion that when one comes in conflict with the social norms or ethical value in society to that of a religious life, religious life goes far beyond the moral or ethical life\textsuperscript{20}. However, numerous cultures cannot also be understood without knowing religious belief. The pragmatic and theoretical contributions of culture and religion is so significant that it is impossible to wipe away completely from the minds of the people of all ages.

Like the many diverse cultures of the Indians that go very well with religion, the Zeliangrong culture is one in which it cannot be understood without knowing their religious belief. The two are closely intertwined. It is also notable why people of all generations willingly and happily follow one's culture and religion as if it is something sacred and irrefutable even at times it may lead to the denial of the instinctual drives of man. Sigmund Freud sees culture to be something of which it is a denial to the instinctual drives of man\textsuperscript{21}. Another great problem also arises in this modern age where equality and rationality is emphasized enraging the elderly people who strictly follow their culture and religion with love and reverence. There is a great problem when the modern youth or younger generation questions the sanction and authority of the age-old practices of the people as for instance when the issue of human rights conflict with their traditional practices. Therefore, the study of

\textsuperscript{20} Soren Kierkegaard, \textit{Fear and Trembling}, Denmark: 1843 (first translated into English in 1939) pp. 60,69 and 80

the contributions and limitations of one's culture and religion also becomes a necessity even if contributions and limitations alone do not limit philosophy. It also implies a deep philosophical investigation through descriptive, analytical and critical method in understanding one's culture and religion to arrive at some rational understandings.