ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my deep heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor Prof. R. Khongsdier, Head of Department of Anthropology, NEHU for his valuable suggestions and untiring guidance with constant encouragement throughout the study, without which this work could not have been brought into its present form. In addition, Prof. R. Khongsdier deserves the highest praise for his forbearance in coping up with the colossal number of alterations throughout my prolonged and demanding pursuit.

I am also very much thankful to Prof. T.B. Subba, for his suggestions and personal encouragement throughout the year.

I specially wish to express my gratefulness to Dr. B. Francis Kulirani Head of Office, Anthropological Survey of India NERC, Shillong, for his interest, personal encouragement and sustained help in supplying the secondary materials related to the present work. I am also grateful to all my friends and colleagues of the Department and Anthropological Survey of India, NERC Shillong, for their manifold support.

I am also very thankful to the People of Sekmai, Kourtuk and Phayeng for their unremitting help and warm hospitality throughout the year.

Last but not least, I am very grateful to my family members, especially to my father and mother, I owe a debt for bearing with me the innumerable hardships, but at the same time encouraging me to complete my work.

And above all to GOD Almighty, for everything.

Tonjam Joshila Chanu

Shillong
The October 2007.